

you were to set yourselves to *guess* the place where my client has hidden herself, why—why—”

“What then?” eagerly.

“I should be very much annoyed, my lord—exceedingly annoyed; indeed, with a low chuckle, “were you to guess right, I think I should—I should—”

“What should you do?”

“Get up and leave the room, and slam the door behind me.”

“Come on, Moxon,” says Muiraven gleefully, as he draws a chair to the table again. “Let’s begin and guess all the places in England alphabetically, till we come to the right one.”

“But I don’t know any of them. I’ve forgotten all about my geography,” replies Moxon.

“Oh, nonsense! it’s as easy as can be. Now for A: Aldersgate (oh, no! that’s in London). Aylesbury, Aberdeen, A—, A—. Bother it! which *are* the places that begin with A?”

“Ammersmith,” suggests Moxon; at which old Walmsley laughs.

“If you’re going to play the fool, I give it up,” says Muiraven, sulkily.

“All right, dear old fellow! I thought it did begin with A. Arundel, Aberystwith, Axminster. There are three proper ones for you instead.”

“Alnwick, Alresford, Andover,” continues his friend; and then, after a long pause, “There are no more A’s. Let’s go on to B. Bristol, Brighton, Birmingham, Balmoral, Baltimore—”

“Stay; that’s in America, old boy! Basingstoke, Bath, Beamister.—Doesn’t it remind one of ‘I love my love with a B, because she is Beautiful? I hate her with a B, because she is Bumptious.’”

“Can’t you be sane for five minutes together, Moxon? If this matter is sport to you, remember it’s death to me.”

“Better give it up, Muiraven, and write instead. You can’t expect to go on at this rate and keep your senses. To go through all the towns in the United Kingdom, alphabetically, would ruin the finest mental constitution. Perhaps Mr. Walmsley could oblige us with a gazetteer.”

“I don’t keep such a thing at my office, sir.”

“Let’s try C, at all events, Moxon, and then I’ll think about writing the letter. Cambridge, Canterbury, Carlisle, Cardiff, Cheltenham, Chester, Chatham—”

“Caistor, Caribee Islands,” interposes Moxon.

“Chichester, Cornwall, Clifton,” goes on Muiraven, with silent contempt; “Croydon, Cocklebury—Holloa! Moxon (starting), *what’s that?*” as

a loud slam of the office-door interrupts his dreamy catalogue.

“Only that Walmsley has rushed out of the room as if the old gentleman were after him.”

“But what did I say?”

“Nothing that I know of. You were jabbering over your towns beginning with C.”

“But the word—the word—was it Croydon or Cocklebury? Don’t you understand? I have hit the right one at last! By Jove! what luck.” He is beaming all over, as he speaks, with *loye* and expectation.

“I suppose you must have; but I’m whipped if I know which it can be.”

“It’s Cocklebury. I’m sure it’s Cocklebury. It can’t be Croydon. No one who wanted to hide would go to Croydon. It must be Cocklebury?”

“And where the deuce is Cocklebury?”

“Down in Hampshire, the most out-of-the-way place in the world. I was there once for a few days’ fishing; but how the name came into my head beats me altogether. It was Providence or inspiration that put it there. But it’s all right now. I don’t care for anything else. I shall go down to Cocklebury to-night.” And leaping up from his chair, Muiraven commences to button his great-coat and draw on his gloves again preparatory to a start.

“Hum!” says Moxon. “You promised to see that man Cray to-night.”

“You can see him for me. You can tell him all I should have done. There is no personal feeling in the matter.”

“Cocklespillbury, or what ever its name is, being an obscure fishing hamlet, there is probably not another train to it to-day.”

“Oh, nonsense! there is a train—there must be a train—there *shall* be a train.”

“All right! And if not, you can have a special. Money’s no object.”

“Moxon, I always thought you were rather a well-meaning fellow; but it strikes me that you’ve not got much feeling in this matter.”

“I always thought you were a man of sense; but it strikes me that you’re going to make an ass of yourself.”

“Do you want to quarrel with me?” says Muiraven, grandly, as he steps opposite to his friend.

“Not in the least, my dear fellow; but if any thing could make us quarrel, it would be to see you acting with so little forethought.”

“Ah, Moxon, you don’t know what it is to—”

“To be the father of ‘a charming child,’ no;