

ing job at a stationer's over in Finsbury, that I heard of poor old father's death. I was sixteen or seventeen then, and had got a few shillings put by. I'd been thinkin' that, hard as he'd been, he was my father after all, and my mother had loved him, though he did whop her, and that it wasn't right to take no more notice of him than if he'd been a dog. So I was a-goin' to write down to him, and if I found he was hard up, to send him a crown or so. I dare say there was a bit of pride in that—I wanted to show him that I'd been able to get on without him. I've mostly found there was summat o' that in anything I've been very proud of. Well, sir, the very night I was goin' to write, as I hopped home from work, thinkin' what a good son I was, and all that, I ran against one of the porters in the yard. He didn't know me, but I knew him as soon as I set my eyes on him. He was a Colchester man that used to live in Magdalen Street. Well, sir, I asked him about my father, and he told me that he was dead and buried. He'd walked off the quay one Saturday-night, and was half drowned in the water, and half smothered in the mud. It give me a turn, as you may think, sir. I wished I could spend the money as the Catholics do. I can't bear to think of it now. The thief on the cross is my only comfort when I do think about it. But, perhaps, we're too ready to judge. 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'—that's another comfort."

The poor cripple was silent for a minute or two after this, but then he went on in his old cheerful voice. "I'm sure I'm much obliged to you for givin' me your company so long. No, sir, thankee, there's nothing you can do for me. I've everything I want—enough and to spare. I've got work as long as I've got my health; and when that fails, I've got my hospital; and when I die, I humbly hope, through Christ's mercy, to creep into heaven. I've everything to make me contented. The curate talks to me like a brother, sir. I've only to ask my other good friend for an order for the hospital, and he gets it for me just as if I was a gentleman. The little ones all love me, and most of the people about here are very kind. If they'd only be a bit kinder to themselves, poor souls, I should be quite happy. Do you know, sir, I call my old chair here my Ebenezer? Hitherto the Lord hath helped, and He's a friend that will never fail. Good night, sir, and again I thank ye."

As I picked my way through the rain-pools of the Folly's flags, and thought of the little toy-maker, heartily grateful after weed-like tossings on life's sea for even that poor shelter, and, in spite of his infirmities, not only earning for himself an honest living, but acting as a moral leaven and even a material benefactor to his poor neighbours, it occurred to me that "the bricklayer man next door" was not the only lazy man, or woman, whom my lame man should make ashamed. Contrasted with his beneficent energy under difficulties, how utterly contemptible appears the *cunni* that springs from "nothing to do" in the midst of life's most luxurious appliances!