

that he immediately entered it in his notebook for subsequent development. "Branches of shelter, fruits of comfort—or consolation. Query—How can trees be said to Do Good?"

"I am glad to see you take it so cheerfully, Jacob. I thought you'd a pined a bit over it," said Reuben, doubtfully.

"Pined? not I. Why?"

"And as you are so cheerful, I won't tell you what I was going to tell you about my son John."

"Your son John? Ay—ay—he is in my works, I believe. Yes, I remember. What about him?"

"Some affairs of the boy's, Jacob."

"John's affairs." Sir Jacob laughed. He was actually in good humour again, he—going to be bankrupt in less than a fortnight, and for two millions at least. "John's affairs? A ten-pound note in a savings' bank, a share in a building society, a quarrel in an Odd Fellows' lodge. Well, well, let us hear."

"It is more than that," said Reuben. "John has got an invention, and he wanted to show it to you; but his ideas are absurd, ludicrous. I told him so. Remember, Jacob, they are not mine; don't be offended with me."

"He always was a hot-headed boy, your son, Reuben. But we will see. Look here. Bring him over to dinner this evening. There will be no one there except Rose and Julian Carteret, and—yes—at the same time drop a note over to Bodkin at his new Society, and ask him to come too. And now I've got a deputation to receive in a few minutes, and we must stop this interview. Don't be downcast, Reuben. Bankruptcy? It will establish my fortune on a broader basis than ever. Telegraph to Dolmen that not the smallest concession will be made. Don't sell out a single Eldorado Bond; send a paragraph to all the papers that their Government has failed to make the regular payments to Sir Jacob Escomb, the great railway contractor: make everything as public as you can. Work, Reuben, work. We shall have our reward after the smash."

"And now," he said, "I shall have another glass of sherry. Have a glass, Reuben? Better. Send me down the books for the time when I invested Julian's money. I will take care of *them*."

A knock at the door. His own private

clerk opens it, and shows a head, nothing more.

"The deputation, Sir Jacob."

"The deputation? What deputation?"

"Secretary and deputation from the council of the Friends of the Patagonians, Sir Jacob. By appointment."

"Ah! yes—I had forgotten. They are in the reception-room? I will come. Send up the porter with sherry. Two glasses each. The deputation sherry, not the dry. I will not keep them waiting long."

"Always," said Sir Jacob, addressing Reuben, "always send up sherry to your deputation, and always keep them waiting. Nothing like sherry to warm the heart, and ten minutes' patience to cool the heels. I wonder if I shall have many more deputations after the smash."

He went and received them graciously: heard what was agreed on behalf of the Patagonians, how this fine race of giants had been too long allowed to run wild without any of the benefits of civilisation and religion, and how it was proposed—and so on. And then he made his speech, which he set purposely in a frame of sadness. He said that the condition of Patagonia had long been in his mind, that when constructing a railway in Brazil many years ago he had personally visited the South American Continent, and reflected even then . . . Lastly, that in these times of change and sudden disaster it was impossible to promise anything, but they might announce, if that would help, his own sympathy with the cause; that he would gladly become a member of their general committee; and that in the course of the year he would see in what manner he should be able to help them.

The deputation gone, other people who also had appointments began to call: beggars, promoters, all kinds of people who wanted to use the name of the great philanthropist for their own objects, and these objects, if not for their own gain, were for their own glory. Find me a man or woman in this London, the nest of societies and institutions, who promotes a cause anonymously and without the desire of gain. London consists of many cities. There are London Commercial, London Aristocratic, London Frivolous, London Ecclesiastic, London Benevolent, London Lazy, London Artistic, London Literary. London Benevolent, a field hitherto little explored, is a City whose