

after a pause, "what I'm a bit afraid on is, as Tom hasn't got the right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy."

"Yes, that he does," said Mrs. Tulliver, accepting the last proposition entirely on its own merits; "he's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth. That was my brother's way, and my father's before him."

"It seems a bit of a pity, though," said Mr. Tulliver, "as the lad should take after the mother's side instead o' the little wench. That's the worst on't wi' the crossing o' breeds: you can never justly calkilate what'll come on't. The little un takes after my side, now: she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid," continued Mr. Tulliver, turning his head duhiously first on one side and then on the other. "It's no mischief much while she's a little un; but an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep,—she'll fetch none the higger price for that."

"Yes, it is a mischief while she's a little un, Mr. Tulliver, for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore 'two hours together passes my cunning. An' now you put me i' mind," continued Mrs. Tulliver, rising and going to the window, "I don't know where she is now, an' it's pretty nigh tea-time. Ah, I thought so,—wanderin' up an' down by the water, like a wild thing; she'll tumble in some day."

Mrs. Tulliver rapped the window sharply, heckoned, and shook her head,—a process which she repeated more than once before she returned to her chair.

"You talk o' 'cuteness, Mr. Tulliver," she observed as she sat down, "but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things; for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs. That niver run i' my family, thank God! no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face o' Providence, hut it seems hard as I should have but one gell, an' her so comical."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Mr. Tulliver; "she's a straight,