

proved to be; for halting before my retreat, they began to address themselves one after another to me thus:—

"Are you still there, mousey!" they began.

"Here am I," I replied; "but what in the name of common sense does all this 'pomp and circumstance of war' mean?"

"Mean? why we want you to join us, of course, so come out at once, and enlist under our banners."

"But why don't you come in to *me*, and give up all that sort of thing?"

"Why, you dear little insignificant mouse, it is simply impossible with all these banners, vestments, and other paraphernalia; yours is such a strait gate and *narrow* way, so *inelastic*, and besides it is so *low* we couldn't possibly stoop down to it; and if we *did*, what should we gain by it? We are 'rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;' but you, why you are poor and miserable!"

"Well, but now stop a bit, there seems a very great company of you, to judge by the noise you make in the church."

"Oh! that's no proof of numbers; we cats, you know, are noted for discordant and loud voices; why two of us at any time could make more noise than two hundred of *your* family!"

"Yes, so it seems, and some members of my family are very much annoyed by your dreadful discord, and somewhat *alarmed* too, for they seem to think you want the church all to yourselves, and that *your* family are bent on *exterminating* my family."

"Well, well, never mind that now, we'll *evade* that question if you please, but come out and have a little pleasure; what do you say to a trip down the river?"

"Oh! I so dearly love the water! 'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of our God; but what river do you propose to row or sail upon.'"

"Oh, the Tiber, of course!"

"But that is a long way off—in Italy, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's in Italy, but it is here too. Do you not know that we have cut a canal from the ancient stream, and that it reaches even to Oxford? So, if you'll only come to Oxford, you know, you may step aboard at once and it's all plain sailing."

"You are well supplied with boats, then, I presume?"

"Boats, oh, yes, I should think we are, an *7* quantity of them; there is the E.C.U., the C.B.S., the A P.U.C., and