

## THE HISTORY OF A LOAFER.

## CHAP. X.

## THE LUNCH AND ITS TERMINATION.

And the Directors and men of science set to work eating and drinking as though they fasted for a month previously. And then the celebrated port and claret was brought in, and toast and speeches followed as a matter of course. The Chairman made a speech and the Secretary made a speech, in which the two engineers, old and young, were loaded with compliments. And then the old Northumbrian made the longest speech he had ever been known to make in his life. He disclaimed all credit for the new bridge, the honor of which, he said, undoubtedly belonged to his young friend, Winter. He had merely assisted him, and given him the results of his experience in devising the details of the structure. He had given to the new principle, the sanction of his name, because he knew that without that, it would never have been built; but now, that the principle had succeeded beyond the hopes of all, it was time that honor should be given to the right man. And then, as if wonders were never to cease, the old man wound up with a peroration which made many stare with astonishment, and which must be given verbatim.

"Gentlemen, in the present day, there is too much idolatry of those called 'practical men.' Many of these are the greatest quacks in the world. Who laughed at Stephenson when he modestly stated his ability to travel twelve miles an hour? Who caricatured Jenner with two horses and a tail? Your practical men,—men who do things in a certain way because, say they, 'This is the way we always do it, and I understand my business.' I was one of these practical men once, but when I found that I was, every day, abandoning the practices which I had learned in my youth, I thought I might as well abandon the title as well. Now, this is a day of confession. You have confessed that my young friend and myself are not quite such *duft watties* (here his burr came out tremendously), as you thought us a few hours ago. I, for my part, give up an old prejudice which, till lately, I held all my life. I always hated University men,—but now,—well,—my youngest boy shall go to Cambridge next year. When Winter first came to me I despised him; but when I came to try of what stuff he was made,—when I found that I never instructed him in a detail, but that he suggested an undoubted improvement to it,—when I saw that he had acquired, somewhere, most prodigious habits of study and application,—and that that big head of his could retain more than my big memorandum book, I soon saw that there must be something in the system which had educated him. People are asking continually, now-a-days, 'What is the best education to enable a man to get on in the world?' Not one specially adapted to the business he is to follow. That is all nonsense. We do not send boys to school to learn to be butchers, or carpenters, bankers or parsons, but a boy wants to acquire habits of perseverance, habits of thinking and reasoning, habits of analyzing and combining. He must learn to cultivate his memory, and last, not least, to love his God and his neighbor. When he leaves school, he will know nothing of any trade or profession. These he must learn elsewhere, and we shall find hereafter that the butcher's beef, the carpenter's roof, the banker's credit, and the parson's sermon will be none the worse for retaining a decided flavor of what was learnt at school."

Now, what was the old man's motive for making this for him, unusually long speech? He had two. In the first place he wished to obtain for Gilbert, the appointment of assistant

engineer of the line. In the second place, the directors had been very unruly lately, and he wished to administer to them a quiet rub in his own quaint way. And now, of course, Gilbert's health was proposed, and he, in his turn, had to make a speech. The Cambridge wrangler, who knew much of Demosthenes and Cicero by heart, rose, became very red in the face, trembled like a leaf, uttered a few almost inaudible words, and then sat down in most ignominious confusion. His old chief laughed heartily, and liked Gilbert all the better; but the Directors were much disappointed. They wanted a little buttering, and expected it from the young man at least.

Just after this occurrence, a messenger entered the room, and placed a letter marked "immediate" in Gilbert's hands. He read it hastily, and turned deadly pale, and, after briefly apologizing to the company, informed them that he must go to London directly. He whispered a few words to his chief, and walked out of the room without saying another word. In passing the bow window of the house, he stumbled on the disreputable looking youth whom we mentioned in the last chapter, and who advanced to him with out-stretched hand.

"Gilbert, brother,—I have overheard all—I must shake hands before I go."

Gilbert had not yet heard the news of his brother's disappearance.

"Gerald," said he, in same surprise, "what does this mean?"

"It means that I ran away from home, and I am never going back as long as I live."

"You will come to London with me directly," said Gilbert, in his sternest tones.

"Never!"

"Silence, boy. Father is dying!"

Not another word was spoken then. Gerald followed his brother almost mechanically, and scarcely did either open his lips till they arrived in the metropolis. They found their father at a well-known lodging house in Thavies' Inn, much frequented by clergymen. They were met at the door by their sister, Lizzie.

"He is more sensible now," said she, "and is asking for Gerald as if nothing had happened."

His erring son was received with the warmest affection by Mr. Winter. No idea of his misconduct was evidently at that time present in his wandering mind. With marked contrast he responded to Gilbert's respectful enquiries. He treated him coldly, and with a manner full of distrust. Gilbert left him, followed his sister into an adjoining room, and then the strong man broke down altogether, and he wept like a child.

But Mr. Winter did not die after all. He came to London in search of his youngest son. He was there stricken with paralysis which partially deprived him of the use of his lower limbs. He was crippled for life, and his once fine intellect reduced to a state of semi-idiocy.

(To be continued.)

## HORRIBLE BARBARITY.

The attention of the "Sec. of the So. for the Sup." is called to a recipe for cooking lobsters, which appeared in one or more of the city papers a few days ago. The cook is directed to butter and pepper the poor creature alive, secure it to a spit, and set it to roast. When the shell cracks off in small pieces, the fish will remain, done to a turn.

No doubt of it;—just in the same way that the old woman's cat, which she tied by the tail to her bed-post to keep her from stealing the cream, jumped out of her skin, and left the fur for her mistress to make a boa of!