JOSEPH'S COAT.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

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"I am not to be debarred, Mister Joseph," he said, very picked and precise in every syllable, as men only educated late in life are apt to be,—"I am not to be debarred, Mr. Joseph, from doing my duty by any pretended contempt you may assume. It is my business to warn you, and I do it without fear. If my warnings are disregarded by you I shall carry them elsewhere. I have already told you that I have watched you closely. witnessed your parting last night from that unhappy girl whom you are endeavoring to entrap."

"Eh?" saidyoung Joe, an octave higher than his common speech, and very softly.

"I spoke to her," said the Reverend Paul, "and admonished her. And I shall make it my business now, for her soul's safety and yours, to tell your parents and hers what I know about this matter."

"You will, will you?" said the other in the same soft key.

"I can tell already," said the Reverend Paul, "that it will be useless to appeal to any honorable instinct in you. And I have seen enough of the girl whom you have endeavored to make the victim of your arts and wiles, to know that only constant watching could ensure her safety."

At that instant three people were tremendously surprised. And I cannot tell who was the most profoundly amazed amongst them. I record the fact. Young Joe struck the Reverend Paul and knocked him headlong into the arms of Bushell senior, at that moment in the act of entering the room. Father and son regarded each other across the semi prostrate figure of the minister with blank amazement, for young Joe was as wildly astonished at his own deed as even the Reverend Paul himself could be. Yet having done the deed, he must abide by it.

"Why, what's all this?" demanded the old man sternly.

"This fellow," said young Joe, scornfully indicting the minister, who held a white handkerchief to his mouth, "has the insolence to tell me that he has been watching me this long time past. He says he saw me kiss a pretty girl last night, and that he's going to tell her mother and my mother, and have us looked after an' taken care of. And he has the audacity to tell me that nothing but close watching can save my—my sweetheart's virtue."

O disingenuous and cowardly young Joe! It was not too late even then, and one honest word might have saved you, but you would not speak it.

"An' becos a minister o' God's word, as is a old man likewise, speaks a honest word o' warnin' to you, you go an' knock him down! An' you do it in your father's house, of a Sunday!"

"He insulted a lady," said young Joe, "for whom I have a great respect and regard. I never meant to strike him. I tried to leave the room, and he stood in the doorway, and wouldn't let me pass. Suppose a man had attacked my mother's reputation before you married her, wouldn't you have knocked him down?"

Old Joe had been a little too handy at knocking people down in his own youth, on slighter provocation, to feel that he had any great right to be severe about this matter. Yet he felt keenly that an outrage had been committed, and that it must in some way be atoned for. He was angry, but he was puzzled, and, as his readiest refuge from bewilderment, he looked angrier than he was. As for young Joe, he began to feel that he was dangerous and incendiary. He had knocked down two men in one day, and he was now bitterly ashamed of the achievement. One of the men was his closest friend, and the other was elderly and laid under professional obligations not to fight. But the more ashamed he grew, the more shameful his last misdeed seemed likely to appear in the eyes of others, and the more necessary it became to shroud himself in a sort of cloak of tacit scorn of everybody, and be sulky in as dignified a way as came easily.

The rustle of a silk dress was heard, and Mrs. Bushell stood in the doorway, by her husband's side. At the bare sight of his mother young Joe recognized the hopelessness of any defense, and threw himself upon the sofa.

"What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Bushell.

"Your son," said the Reverend Paul Screed, removing the handkerchief, "has answered the solemn word of warning you desired me to address to him by blows."

"Not blows," said the culprit from the sofa, hardening himself, "a blow."

"I do not know," said the minister, "whether I received one blow or more. I am still a little shaken by his violence."

"Joseph," said Mrs. Bushell, advancing, "leave this house, and never come back to it again."

"Very well," said the young man rising. Even at that moment the mother's heart yearned over him, but she must acquit herself of duty first and be tender afterwards. She knew her husband would interfere, and she never dreamed that her only child would leave her, even though she ordered him away.

"Rot an' nonsense!" said the old man angrily. "If it's anybody's business to order my son out o' the house, it's mine. Fair play's a jewel. Joe's done wrong, but we do' know—(meaning don't know)—the rights o' this business yet. Now, parson, it's your turn. Say thy say."

Mr. Screed answered nothing, and Mrs. Bushell, still confident in her husband's interference, turned again upon her son.

"Leave the house, Joseph."

"Very well," said young Joe again, and passing from the room went upstairs, and began to pack his belongings together. Meanwhile the minister told his story, and from his own point of view told it fairly.

"Mr. Banks," said Mrs. Bushell, "ain't a godly person, but I've known Dinah ever since her was a baby, an' her's as good a gell as ever lived, I believe. I've seen as Joe an' her was fond o' each other, an' I always thought somethin' ud come of it."

"Cus it all, parson," said old Joe in great heat, "why shouldn't the lad kiss his sweetheart, an' why should yo' go and black her character to him?"

"I did my duty," said Mr. Screed with dignity.

"Forgiveness is a Christian duty," said Mrs. Bushell, alarmed by the sounds which came from above, where young Joe was vigorously cording a box. "I needn't tell you that, sir. But Joseph shall beg your pardon on his bended knees, or out of this house he goes."

"I am willing to accept his apology," said the Reverend Paul, with a real effort towards charity, which cost him dear.

Mrs. Bushell mounted the stairs and entered her son's bed-room. He was hastily searching the pockets of an old light overcoat, and when his mother entered he threw the garment upon the bed, where it lay with all its pockets turned inside out. Whatever he searched for was not found, for he turned, and, disregarding his mother's presence, took a hasty look through a number of documents—old letters scraps of newspapers, and what not—in an open drawer, and then, as if putting off the search to a more convenient moment, tumbled the papers loosely together into a portmanteau which he strapped and locked. His mother watched him with a cold demeanor which belied the longing of her heart.

"Joseph!" she said harshly, yearning over him.

"Yes mother," said he, looking up for a minute.

"Come downstairs an' beg Mr. Screed's pardon, or out o' this house you go."

"Beg his pardon for insulting me!" said young Joe bitterly. "No, thank you, mother. As for leaving the house, I've been ready and willing to do that this many a day. It's been none too happy a home for me, with its parsons and prayer meetings."

"Where do you think you're going?" asked Mrs. Bushell severely, wounded by this last allusion. "A wise son maketh a glad father, but he that is foolish despiseth his mother. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul, but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. You come down and beg Mr. Sceed's pardon, or out o' this house you go."

"Very well mother," said young Joe; and Mrs. Bushell, her mission having failed, went down stairs again.

"Joseph," she said, addressing her husband, "I can do nothin' with him. Will you speak to him?"

The old man called his son from the foot of the stairs, and Joe came down with a box on his shoulder and a portmanteau in his hand. He set them down outside the parlor, door, and stood there sulkily.

"I've heerd this thing through o' one side," said old Joe, striving to deal honestly with the case. "What ha' you got to say?"

"I have said all that I have to say," young Joe answered. "He was insolent, and I lost my temper. I told him once that he was my father's guest, and that I had no right to quarrel with him. I had him good afternoon, but he stopped me, and was more insolent than ever."

"Now, look here, Joseph," said the old man: "you ask Mr. Screed's pardon, and tak' them things upstairs again, and be a good lad, and let's hear no more about it."

"I wouldn't forgive Mr. Screed," said young Joe, feeling himself to be a very plucky martyr now, "if he asked my pardon fifty times, and that I should apologize to him is out of the question."

"Then leave the house," said Mrs. Bushell, still belying herself and thinking it righteous to do so.

"I can send for these, I suppose?" said young Joe, indicating the chest and portmanteau. "Good-bye, father. Good-bye, mother. When next you feel inclined to be insolent, sir, remember the deserved chastisement you once met with at my hands."

With that final defiance, young Joe was gone. He was very miserable, and very much ashamed; but there was not one of the three who remained behind who did not confess that he had at least a shadow of right on his side. Indeed the whole of this poor quarrel was conducted by people who were ashamed of their part in it. The Rev. Paul felt that he had gone further with the lad than duty impelled him. The mother repented of her cruel ultimatum, and cried to think she had not used softer means. The father was angry with himself for having allowed young Joe to go. The lad himself, as we have seen already, was heartily ashamed. Of course each member of the quartette would have fought the quarrel through again, rather than admit just then a shade of wrong on his or her own side.

Young Joe could scarcely analyze his own sensations at that time. He was very fond of his father and very proud of him, in spite of an education which had done much to weaken all family ties. For his mother he had an affection much less keen. There had never been any sympathy between them, so far as young Joe knew; and although his negative knowledge was necessarily incomplete, it was a barrier more than sufficient against love's progress. I regret that we shall see but little of that hard old Calvinist, for to one who knew her well she was a woman well worth knowing. She had more affection in her than anybody gave her credit for, and she loved her only child with so passionate a tenderness that she prayed every night and morning that she might not make an "idol" of him. In this wise she succeeded in disguising her love so perfectly that young Joe had grown up in belief that his very presence was distasteful to her.

So, with a sore heart and with some burdens of conscience, the young fellow dawled away from the house in which he was born, resolved never to return to it. The future looked blank enough, for he had no business or profession, and had discovered in himself no special aptitudes which were likely to be profitable to him. He had ten pounds in his pocket, and might be able, perhaps, on his personal possessions of jewelry and what not, to realise fifty. The prospect was altogether dreary, and in spite of his resolve not to return, he was conscious of a very definite longing that his father would run after him and take forcible possession of him by ear or shoulder. He would willingly have gone back—even ignominiously—so that the ignomny had not seemed voluntary. But nobody ran after him; no restraining voice called him; and young Joe went his way to shame and sorrow, as many many a thousand worse and better men have gone before him; for the want of one wise courage in himself, or, failing that, one word of friendly resolution from outside him.

There was nothing to invite or encourage him in the blank Sabbath street, where one cur lay in the sunshine snapping at the flies. Young Joe had upon him an impulse to kick the cur, but restrained himself, and went miserably and moodily along. It was counted highly improper and even immoral to smoke in the streets on Sunday in that quarter of the world; but Joe, feeling that he was leaving the town and could afford to despise its edict, lit a cigar and hardened himself. He chose a way which led him across certain mournful meadows, where the grass was poisoned by the exhalations of a chemical factory near at hand, and rambled on through frowsy verdure until he reached a canal. The artificial hills rose high on each side of the cutting, and on one side ran clean into the water, wooded to the very edge. On the other, the towing path was green except for one little streak. The water was without motion, or the place might have passed for an unusually favorable scrap of English river scenery. The artificial bluffs were bold and precipitous, and they had the merit of hiding the defaced country which lay beyond them. Up and down the towing-path young Joe wandered with the air of a man who had appointed a rendezvous. He waited for perhaps an hour, when round the corner of the farthest bluff came a figure in fluttering white muslin and a straw hat. His back was turned, and the new-comer, with innocent mirthful mischief in her face, ran tiptoe along the sward, and clapped both hands across his eyes.

"Guess who it is," said the new-comer blithely.

Young Joe returned no answer. The expression in the girl's face changed. She moved her hands, and saw—what she had only felt before—that they were wet with tears. She threw one arm around his neck, and seeking his left hand with hers, asked with tender solicitude,

"What is it, Joe, dear? What's the matter?"

Young Joe, facing about, kissed her, and took both her hands in his. The tears still glistened on the lashes over his gloomy eyes, and the girl regarded him with a look of fear and anxiety.

"I have bad news for you, Dinah," said young Joe at last. "I am turned out of house and home, and I shall have to go away somewhere and face the world."

"Turned out of house and home?" questioned Dinah, with brown frightened eyes wide open.

"Turned out of house and home," young Joe repeated sombrely. "But don't be afraid, Dinah. I shall be able to take care of myself and you. I shall cast about for something to do, and I'll work my fingers to the bone rather than see you want anything."

"Turned away from home?" Dinah again asked. "Who turned you away?"

Joe related the incidents of the afternoon, with some little natural bias.

"And you see, dear, there's nothing for it but to go away and"—with a bitter little laugh—"and seek my fortune."

"But, Joe,' said Dinah, "you hadn't ought to have hit him and him a middle-aged man. Wouldn't it be better, darling, to go back, and say as you was sorry?"

"Good heavens, Dinah!" said young Joe, "don't say hadn't ought. How can I go back and say I'm sorry? I'm not sorry; and even if I were, I couldn't go back and say so, to have them think I was afraid to face the world."

Dinah stood grave and thoughtful for a minute, and then said.

"I suppose I mustn't tell your father as we're a going?"

"My darling," said young Joe, "you mustn't think of coming with me. Not at first, you know. I must go away and get something to do, and make a home for you. We can't run away like two babes in the wood, in that fashion. It won't be long, Dinah, don't cry, my darling, don't cry. We shan't be long apart. I'll take care of that."

"I don't see any use," said Dinah, sitting disconsolately on the side of the spoil-bank and wiping her eyes with her little muslin apron—"I don't see any use in being married if a wife can't go along with her husband when he's turned out of house an' home, and hasn't got anywhere to go to. O Joe, you can't leave me behind—you can't be so cruel. No Joe, no, you couldn't have the heart to leave me."

Joe sat down beside her on the grass-grown bank and soothed her, feeling himself very guilty all the while. Dinah refused to be comforted, and yet found his proffered comfort pleasant. But by-and by a certain coquettish little petulance took the place of grief, and young Joe knew that he had half won his cause, which he admitted was a poor one to win.

"Don't tell me, Joe," said pretty Dinah, "as your folks are going to drive you away for always—I know better. If you take 'em at their word, and stay away a week, they'll be glad to have you back again."

Young Joe recognised the truth of this observation, but it played such havoc with the heroics of the case that he resented it and pooh-poohed it with a sombre gloom.

"It isn't very kind of you, Dinah," said Joe, glad to appear as the injured person of the two, "to make light of such a serious matter. And I would not lower myself in my own esteem by begging myself back again for anything the world could give me. I couldn't do it, darling, even for your sake. No, I'll work for you, and struggle for you, but I won't do a mean thing, even for you."

He said "even for you" so tenderly, and there was such an obvious self-accusation in him when he said it, that the girl threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"I know you're noble an' high sperited, my dear," she said "and I shall never say a word to ask you to be nothing else for me, no not a word, Joe. And I've been a very thankless girl, Joe, to make believe as it was my trouble when it was yours all the time. Why, dear me! it's no great matter for me to go on livin' at home with my father an' mother, till you can afford to send for me, is it, Joe? No, darlin,' I shan't fret no more about myself."

He read the devotion and the affection in her heart, and had a dim notion that he could not be altogether a bad fellow, since she gave him such unstinted love. It stirred a vague comfort in him and strengthened him to approve of himself. He bullied his conscience into quiet, therefore, and began to take quite a high tone with it.

"It's perhaps a good thing, after all," he said. "A man ought not to be dependent upon anybody. He ought to be able to take care of himself. And I shall go into the world and fight for you, Dinah, and that will help me. And when I have made a place for you——" He smiled in appreciation of the work already done—in fancy.

"Don't mind about its being a fine place at first, dear," said Dinah, nestling to him and admiring him with all her heart—his courage, his misfortune, his love.

"Not too fine a place at first," said Joe, "but later on a palace of a place."

He said it lightly, and she laughed at the badinage, but in a moment they were grave again. It was a bitter business, after all. When the time for parting came, Joe strained her to his breast, and she hung about him sobbing.

"Go," she said, struggling to be brave. "Go, an' God bless you, my own dear, dear, ever dearest Joe."

At this courageous sorrow young Joe melted.

"Yes," he said, "I will go. I'll go home and beg old Screed's pardon, and I'll—I'll tell my father that we're married, Dinah, and if he likes to cut up rough about it he can, but I can at least feel that I've acted like a man, and not a coward. And if he likes to send me away then, I can work with a clear conscience, and I shall know that I have done my duty."

Now, women have always been puzzles to me, and I understand very little of them, but I have noticed in them one consistent peculiarity. If you once succeed in awakening in a woman that sense of protecting strength and tenderness which the most helpless of women are capable of feeling over even the most helpful of men, she will protect you, at the cost of serious wounds, from the merest scratch of any little thorn. Dinah would have none of this wholesome and honest sacrifice for her sake.

"No," she said, fairly yearning over him and worshipping him for his bare promise of bare justice. "Don't vex him with any talk about me yet, my dear. Why, you know, darling," she went on, strangling her own hopes with the bowstring her sultan had sent her a month before, "that if you hadn't him when he's vexed a'ready."

"I don't care," said Joe, feeling heroic. "He can't do anything worse than he has done. I'll do the right thing."

But Dinah clung to him.

"No," she said. "You shan't ruin yourself for me, Joe." And she clung to her point with such vehemence that Joe yielded, and had all the satisfaction of seeming heroic without incurring any danger—a joy which I have myself experienced.

They kissed and embraced again, and Joe wiped her eyes, and promised brokenly to write often.

"You're not a-goin' far away, my darlin', are you?" said Dinah, trying to be brave again.

"No, dear, no," said he in answer; "not far."

"And, Joe, darlin'," she said after a tearful pause, relieved by many sad kisses, "will you let me keep my marriage lines?"

She whispered the question at his ear, and he bent over tenderly the while.

"Yes, yes, my dear," he answered; "I meant to bring them to you this afternoon, but I was in such a hurry. They are packed up in my portmanteau, but I will send them to you."

"You don't mind my askin' for 'em, do you, Joe?"

"I was wrong all through," he said; "we ought to have been married openly. But I shall do you justice, Dinah. You know that, don't you?"

And so, with protestations, caresses, and hopes, and with some repentances on his side, they parted. Joe climbed the bank again, and waved adieu from the top. She answered with a motion of the hand, and he was gone.

Chapter III.

Mrs. Bushell did what she could to atone to the minister for the terrible insult which had been put upon him by her son. Old Joe sat awhile and smoked in silence, and, being greatly exercised by the whole business, drank rather more whiskey and water than was good for him. Finally a streak of light appeared, and he went, a little flushed, towards it. It led him for a while by the road young Joe had taken an hour or two before, but he stopped short of the mangy meadow and sounded a heavy rat tat at the door of a smart looking house, which stood a little back from the lane. A neat servant maid responded to his summons.

"Is Brother George in?" asked the old man.

"Yes, sir," said the damsel, and led the way into a gaudily furnished parlor, where in black broadcloth sat an intensely respectable man in an arm chair by the fireplace.

"Joe ziph," said the intensely respectable man, dividing the name into two balanced syllables, "how are you?"

"George," said old Joe, seating himself, "I'm in a bit o' trouble."

"You don't say so, Joe-ziph," said the respectable man, with a wooden want of interest.

"Yis," said old Joe, rubbing his grey hair with an enormous palm. "I'm in a peck o' trouble. My Rebecca has been and ordered my Joe out o' my house, an' he's took her at a word, an' he's gone."

"Dear me," said Brother George, as woodenly as before.

"Yes," said old Joe again, "he's took her at a word an' he's gone."

"What did her order him off for?" asked Brother George.

Old Joe told the story, with rough-hewn brevity, and his brother nodded now and then to signify attention. In point of fact, it interested him more than it seemed to do. He was pretty nearly as wooden as he looked, but he had a very remarkable eye for the main chance. He saw money with an eye at once telescopic and microscopic, and he scented it, or seemed to scent it, as a sleuth-hound scents his game. Joe Bushell had made his money by a remarkably profitable patent, was worth a quarter of a million if a penny, and lived on less than a twentieth part of his income George had borrowed from his brother to start life as a charter-master, had worked hard and lived hard, and screwed down all under him to the uttermost farthing, and having made his money chiefly by hardfistedness, was hated by his workpeople, and knew it, and rather rejoiced in it than otherwise, as being in some sense a tribute to his business capacity. He was a mean and grudging creature, with no instinct of active dishonesty. He had a dull, slow, wooden dislike for Joe, because young Joe would one day inherit old Joe's fortune. Not that George had ever had a hope of it himself, but he grudged wealth to anybody, and could have nursed a spite against the very walls of a bank's strong room for holding so much money. And now for the first time in his life dawned upon him some dim fancy scarcely a hope, that he might handle Brother Joseph's money as his own some day. It was that dim fancy which made old Joe's story interesting to him.

"Now," said the father, when his narrative was finished, "what I want thee to do, George, is just this. Thee go an' find Joe, an' fetch him hum. Tak no sort o' denial. He can stop wi' thee a day or two, an' then, when it's blowed over wi' Rebecca, he can come back to me. Dost see?"

"Ah," said Brother George, "I see." And he saw more than he confessed to seeing. He intended no wrong to anybody, but was it likely that young Joe would listen to his solicitations? He thought not. And if that unguided young man declined to listen, might not his absence become a source of profit to his uncle? "Where is he?" the uncle asked, after giving these reflections time to form.

"Well, thee seest," said old Joe, rubbing his head perplexedly, "we do' rightly know wheer he is. But he's boun' to send for his luggage."

"Ah," said Brother George again, "I see."

"I think," old Joe resumed, "as he's likely to send for it to-night. Our Joe's allays in a bit of a hurry, an' does everything hot-foot."

"Then," said George, "I'd better come up to your place, eh?"

"Just what I wanted," answered old Joe; and the two set out together. "Not a word to the missis, mind." George nodded in reply, turning over in that stiff jointed mind of his the question—Shall I break or keep that promise? Which is likely to pay? He would not have robbed young Joe—he would not have robbed anybody. Theft was "agen the law." But although any straight forward method of transferring a neighbor's coin to his pouch was a thing to be reprehended, the construction of any crooked scheme for that purpose was praiseworthy, and the carriage of the same to triumphal effect was althing to be proud of. In short, Brother George was a diplomatist, and had some personal advantages in the diplomatic way—singular as that statement may appear. He could lie, for instance, with a stolidity which defied scrutiny. Practice had done much for him, but the first great gift was Nature's. He was inscrutable enough to have realised a Tory journalist's idea of a prime minister. His respectable countenance, clean shaven but for its respectable tufts of grey whisker, was scarcely more mobile than a mask. Since he never lied apart from strictest necessity, he was commonly regared as a veracious man. He is not the scoundrel of this story—which, indeed, scarcely aspires to the portraiture of a real rascal—and nobody who knew him thought of him as being anything but a very respectable self made man, who did unusual credit to his original station in life. The remarkable woodenness of his manner, and a certain solemn drawl he had, were mainly responsible for the family belief in his wisdom. He was the final authority on family affairs.

The Reverend Paul had left the house when the brothers had reached it. Mrs. Bushell was sitting in the kitchen with a big Bible before her, earnestly and believingly seeking comfort in the utterances of Habakkuk. There are people who find Christian philosophies in Solomon's Song and seek satisfaction out of Ecclesiastes; and Mrs. Bushell was of them. But at this sorrowful hour, a philippie against the Chaldeans, "that bitter and hasty nation," had little power to soothe.

"Brother George," she said, as that respectable person entered, "has Joseph been a-asking your advice?"

"Rebecker," Brother George replied with weighty solemnity, "far be it from me to deny anything as is true. That's what Joe-ziph come to see me for, as far as I can see."

"Why," read Mrs. Bushell with her finger tracking the denouncing lines in the great Bible, "why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievances? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth."

"Well, well, Rebecker," said Brother George with a propitiatory accent, "boys will be boys, you know, an' allays was."

"They wouldn't be boys if they wasn't," said old Joe, with a touch of the local humor.

"Joseph!" said Mrs. Bushell warningly.

"Becky, my gell!" said old Joe, leaning above her chair and laying a heavy hand upon her shoulder.

She felt the appeal thus conveyed, for she was by nature a woman of much tenderness. But she only straightened herself and laid her finger once more upon the warning text.

"There's my guide, Joseph," she made answer, when she could trust her voice, for she was sore disturbed, and her "wordly longings," as she called them, moved strongly in her heart.

Old Joe moved away from the back of her chair, and Brother George sat down with an air of wisdom on him, and looked as one who is prepared to proffer counsel. There was silence for a time; then Mrs. Bushell turned her head away and asked:

"What do you advise, Brother George?"

"Well," said Brother George, venting an elaborate and prolonged wink upon old Joe, "I should advise as nothing should be done not to say precipitate.'

"Yes," said old Joe, nodding at his brother, "give him a day or two an' he'll come round."

"Joseph," said Mrs. Bushell, with unfortunate solemnity, "if you look for any healin' of this breach apart from his repentance, you will wait in vain. If you mean as I shall come round, you are mistaken. In this case, Joseph there is duty to be done, an' I've spoke my last word a'ready."

Joe shook his head at Brother George mournfully and George shook his head in answer. Matters were growing rather bright for Brother George, and if the brightness were only nebulous as yet, it might reveal things pleasant to look at by-and-by. Notwithstanding this cheerful inward knowledge, however, George looked upon his brother with a solemn countenance. He would fain have appealed seriously to his sister-in-law's forbearance, and so have drawn from her a more emphatic and forcible denial of her own desires, but he was afraid of that experiment.

"Becky," said old Joe, being perhaps a little more accessible to emotion at that moment than he commonly was, "the lad was hard put on. The parson go's an' says things to him about his sweetheart, an' it stands to r'ason as Joe got humped at it. He axed me, Becky, afore you come into the room, what I'd ha' done if any man had said things to me about yo' afore we got married. It wouldn't ha' made much differ to me, I think," said old Joe, driving one great hand into the palm of the other, "who is's was a said it. I'd ha' floored him, if he'd ha' killed me the next minute."

Brother George nodded gloomily in assent to this, for it seemed to him an unanswerable argument in young Joe's favor. But Mrs. Bushell held firm.

"I've spoke my last word, Joseph. He struck a minister o' God's word, in his own father's house, of a Sunday; an' if that ain't worth sayin' 'I'm sorry for,' I've got no more to say."

Brother George nodded again in acquiescence, for this view of the case also seemed unanswerable.

"Gi'e the lad time," urged old Joe.

"Let him take his own time, Joseph," said the mother staunchly. "When he's tired o' the husks o' the Prodigal, he'll come back again. But I fear he'll sup sorrow by spoonfuls i' the way."

She left the room, and old Joe, with a troubled face, set tobacco and a glass of whiskey before his brother. The pair sat in gloomy silence for a while when a knock came to the door. Old Joe answered this summons.

"Who's?" theer he asked.

"Well," said a voice from the dark outside, "as far as my apinium go's, it's a young feller o' the name o' Bowker."

"Come in, William," siad old Joe in a shaky voice. "What be you come fer?"

"Why, your son's at Dudley Arms," said Mr. Bowker entering the kitchen, "an' he's sent me up here t' ax for his box. He's a goin' into Brummagem to-night, an' on to London i' the mornin'."

"Goo an' say a word to him, George," said the father. "Do' let the lad go further 'n Brummagem. Mak' him send word to you wheer he is, when he gets theer, an' we'll tek care on him. But, George, don't go to let him know as I ain't angry wi' him. Mind that. Do it all as if it was comin' from yourself like. D'ye see?"

"I see," said Brother George. Could any thing have been designed to play better into the hands of a respectable man who desired to secure an advantage and was afraid of crime. He would not in this case have even the shadow of a lie upon his conscience. All that was to be done was to tell the truth, and obey inst ructions—in breaking them. Mrs Bushell, without an apology, was implacable, and her husband wished to have it supposed that he also was very angry. George knew very well that his nephew would tender no pology just then, and began to look complacently on the promise of the future.

Young Joe sat moody and alone in the smoke room of the Dudley Arms, awaiting the return of his emissary, when Uncle George entered, and with a solemn aspect took a seat before him.

"This is a bad job, Joe-ziph," said he, shaking his head. "I've heard all about it from your mother and father. I don't say as you was in the wrong, not to say altogether, but you know as it was a dreadful thing to do—a dreadful thing. But look thee here, my lad," he continued, with a wooden assumption of geniality which went, howsoever unreal it might be, clean to the lad's sore heart, "blood's thicker than water, an' when all's said and done you're my nevew and I'm your uncle. Now, what d'ye mean to do? They'm hard on you at home, fearful hard."

"I shall go out and face the world," said young Joe. "I'm not afraid!"

"Of course you ain't, a fine built young fellow like you! It ain't likely as you would be. But look here, my lad—you can't face the world on nothing. Can you, now?"

"I have something to begin with," said Joe in answer. "I am not altogether without money. And then, I have a little swing to me."

"Ah, dear me. Well. I can see as you're just as hot-foot as your father and mother But, come now, wheer do you think o' goin to?"

"I'd go to America," said young Joe, "if I only had the chance."

"Merriky?" echoed Uncle George. "It's a long way there."

"The longer the better," said Joe bitterly.

"No, no, Joseph," said Uncle George. "Don't say that. But if you're bent on it, why, I——. No, no, Joseph, don't think on it."

"Yes," said Joe, "I'll do it if I work my passage out. There's room for a man to move in, in America."

"Don't you talk nonsense," said Uncle George.

"By jove," quoth young Joe, rising, and feeling already the glow of a successful explorer, "I'll show you whether or not I'm talking nonsense. I tell you sir I'll do it, and I will."

"Pooh!" said Uncle George; "you ain't going to work your passage out. Not while you've got an uncle as can put his hand in his pocket to help you. No, no, Joseph."

"You're very kind, uncle," said Joe, "but I can't accept any help from you. And he wondered why did I never see what a good fellow Uncle George is until now.

"Wait here a bit," said the benevolent uncle, and with that arose, and left the room with stagey stealth. When he returned, he bore with him a sheet of letter paper and an inkstand. He sat down in silence, and wrote in a slow and labored manner. Then he produced a pocket book, from which, after an intricate search, he drew a crumpled receipt stamp. Gazing hard at Joe, he moistened this with his tongue, affixed it to the paper, and then, squaring his elbows, he set his head down sideways to the table, and laboriously signed the document. Joe watched him, not knowing what all this might mean, until the sheet, carefully dried before the fire, was placed in his own hands. He read it with a swift moistening of the eyes, less at the gift than at the kindness which dictated it.

"Thank you, uncle," said young Joe. "God bless you for your goodness. You are the only friend I have."

"If they knowed," said his only friend truthfully, "as I'd helped you i' this way, they'd never forgive me. But wherever you goo, Joseph, remember as you've got a friend in me. Allays write to me, my lad; allays write to me."

Therewith the benevolent uncle squeezed his nephew's hand and left him. Young Joe sat with his elbows on the table, and looked with new-born affection and gratitude after him. Why had he never understood Uncle George until now?"

"A dear good fellow!" he said aloud in his enthusiasm; "a most kindly, generous fellow!"

And with tears of gratitude hot in his eyes, he folded up his uncle's cheque for a hundred pounds.

Chapter IV.

Young Joe, his heart still warmed by his uncle's generosity, sat at the side of the bed in his room at the Dudley Arms that Sunday night, and surveyed the situation. Starting in this well provided way, it did not seem easy to fail in the world. Practically, as everybody knows, there is an end to the productive powers of a hundred pounds, but, for all that, a hundred pounds is a good round sum for a start in the world, and Young Joe saw already in fancy his fortune made.

"And I'll make poor little Dinah happy, anyhow," he thought. She haunted him, and her memory filled him with a keen and poignant remorse. "The poor child," he said to himself, "must have her marriage lines." With that he unstrapped his portmanteau, tumbled out its disorderly papers on the carpet, and set to work to search for the certificate of the marriage between Joseph Bushell, bachelor, and Dinah Banks, spinster. First, he made a hasty and confident grope amongst the papers; next, with a little shade of perplexity on his face, he took a more careful search; and finally, having separately examined every scrap, turned out his pockets, unlocked his chest and searched though its contents, and still met with no success, he sat down on the lid of his box in the midst of his tumbled belongings and clawed his hair with vexation.

"Confound it all!" said Joe. "The thing's somewhere here, I'm sure. I must look for it by daylight." With this promise by way of consolation for almost certain loss, he undressed and got into bed. He had but a poor night of it, for Dinah's appealing face was always before him, and he felt alternately base and heroic as he thought of his encounter with the minister. The candle burned down and went out, with the result particularised in the Honorable Mr. Suckletumbkin's account of a public execution. Towards the moonlight sent into the room a beam which traveled very very slowly across the carpet, and rose very slowly up the fireplace, and when Joe had tossed about for long ages, reached the mirror, and crept along the wall, and slid slowly toward the window, as its brightness faded and died. Then the swallows who built beneath the roof pipes began to chirrup and the window glimmered grey. Joe pulled up the blind and lighted a cigar, and looked a last look on the familiar High street; a last conscious look at least, for always when memory brought her budget of pictures to no one knows what may happen. When the coffin is deposited in the vault every person present shall pass by and cast upon it the ashes of his pipe.'

The will was carried out. The funeral was splendid and veiled in a thick cloud of smoke. The poor blessed the memory of the deceased, and the country still rings with his fame.

All over New England clay pipes are offered for sale with the initials T. D. There once lived in Newburyport, Mass., an eccentric genius by the name of Dexter, who wrote his name with the suffix "My Lord Timothy." He was a great smoker, and invariably used a clay pipe manufactured in a pipe factory of that city. In order that his name or its initials might not be lost to posterity, Dexter endowed this factory with the understanding that every pipe offered for sale should bear the initial letters of his name, and from the day of the endowment until the present every pipe made by the Newburyport Manufacturing company bears the twentieth and fourth letters of the alphabet, meaning Timothy Dexter. Thus can New England furnish a Dexter for Von Klaes of Holland.

FRANKLIN REMINISCENCES.

Captain Adams' Account of his Recent Voyages.

A correspondent has had a most interesting interview with the now famous Captain Adams at Dundee, and learned from him many interesting particulars of his dashing voyage in the Arctic seas. He entered Lancaster sound in June, giving the slip to the other whalers, who love to hunt in company and do not like to trust themselves alone in unfrequented regions. He pushed up Prince Regent's Inlet, but was driven out by the ice. Crossing Lancaster Sound he visited Beechy Island and then carried his vessel to the very head of Wellington Channel and thence back again into Barrow Straits. He then boldly ventured into Peel Sound and penetrated within a short distance of the spot where the Erebus and Terror were abandoned. Had Captain Adams not been on a whaling voyage he says he could have gone on and reached Cease and Simpson's Straits and made the Northwest passage, a feat never yet accomplished. "I believe," he said, "that the Northwest passage can be made by way of Peel Sound, and by that way only, and that if Franklin's vessels had been steamers he would have made it in 1840. I may myself live to go into Lancaster Sound and report myself at Honolulu." Returning from Peel Sound he again tried St. Regent's Inlet, and this time successfully advanced to the very entrance of the Fury and Hecla straits. Then as the brief season open to such hazardous navigation was ended, he pushed for home, rewarded by a most ample cargo.

A most interesting incident in the adventurous and fortunate voyage of Captain Adams was his meeting with an Esquimaux who told something which shed fresh light on the dark, pathetic story of the Franklin expedition. Successive search voyages have almost cleared the mystery which once surrounded the missing crews of the Erebus and Terror. The spot where the ships were beset by the ice and where they were abandoned, the fate of the commander and many of the crew, all these are points long ago made known to the world. But there was one matter which remained a mystery. What had become of Crozier? Captain Adams here remarked:

"During the course of my voyage I had on board a very intelligent Esquimaux. He belonged to the Igloolik settlement, on the northeastern coast of the Melville peninsula. He told me that when he was a boy and traveling with his father he met three men, being the survivors of a party of seventeen who had traveled from two English ships far to the west. I showed him a chart and questioned him very minutely upon this important subject, but he never wavered in the least, and I could not shake his story. He said the three men were very much worn and severely frostbitten.

"One was a great captain, and was looked up to by the others. He died and was buried by them, and they cried very much. The other two men lived in his father's hut some time, but they also died. All three were buried in their clothes, and the last two with all they possessed, according to the custom of the Esquimaux."

Captain Adams then showed the correspondent on his chart the track of the three survivors and the places where they are buried, as pointed out to him by the Esquimaux. It is highly probable that those three worn, frostbitten men were the last survivors of the crew of Sir John Franklin.

In answer to an enquiry, Captain Nilson reports from Gothenburg that the Oscar Dickson was crushed in the ice on the 2d of Aug., but that the crew were saved.

—A sturdy old son of the plough
Had a genuine creamery cough,
But she took a bad cough
Which carried her off,
And he don't run a creamery now.

ENGLISH NOTES.

—In one week lately a London firm imported forty five tons of rabbits.

—It is estimated that the recent terrible storms cost the Yarmouth, England, fishers, $50,000 in nets alone.

—Lord Bute is about to build a new dock at Cardiff, larger than any now existing. He and his family have already invested over two millions sterling in docks. Cardiff must be going ahead.

—The Leeds staff of the telegraph office there are receiving high honors for having transmitted to the London papers on one night of the Gladstone ovation over half a million of words. One London paper took a special train, with a parlor car for its staff to London the instant the banquet was over. The entire report was finished on the arrival of the train in London, and a mounted messenger flew with it to the compositors.

—The English Medical Press gives the following warning: "We are concerned, in the interests of of impressionable females and weakminded young men, to notice the arrival in England of Messrs. Moody and Sankey of explosive revival fame. Former experience of the pernicious influence of the hystero-religious mania with which these clever men are identified leads to the hope that most people will guard against an undue preponderance of the emotione passion.

—The strange practice prevails among some classes of London pawnbrokers of taking Bank of England notes in pledge. A London pawnbroker's manager recently admitted having taken in pledge from one individual two notes for £100 each, besides one for £50, and four for £5 each, advancing upon the whole £1 only. The explanation given was that the customer had volunteered the statement that he merely desired to place them temporarily in safe keeping. As a fact, these notes were the produce of a robbery.

—London is at present infested with some gangs of ruffians, each consisting of 40 members and calling itself the forty thieves. Their organization and training are perfect. Their modes of approach when they have elected a victim are marvels of dexterity, and their codes of signals marvels of ingenuity. The number of each band is always maintained. When one leaves there are many eager to take his place, so popular among London street boys is the profession. This fact baffles the police and makes the tactics of the bands almost incomprehensible.

—Pall Mall, London, is about to be further architecturally enriched by the addition of another palace. The new edifice is, of course, to be a club. For reasons best known to themselves, it seems that the Wanderers' Club, of which Lord Headley is chairman, resolved that it was no longer desirable that that institution should be the property of a private individual, as many of the London clubs are. Accordingly negotiations were set on foot for acquiring it as common property, and the old building is to come down and a new structure to be erected on its site equal in magnificence to the two great