

called this friend Affability Bob and Uncle Moses gave him his christened name, Aunt M'riar always spoke of him, quite civil-like, thus.

"You see the young nippers, Jerry?" said the old prize-fighter; who always got nervous, as you might say, though scarcely alarmed, when they got out of sight and hearing; even if it was for no more time than what an egg takes.

"Jist a step beyond the archway, Mosey," said Mr. Alibone. "Paddlin' and sloppin' about with the water off o' the shore-pump. It's all clean water, Mrs. Catchpole, only for a little clay." Aunt M'riar, whose surname was an intrinsic improbability in the eyes of Public Opinion, and who was scarcely ever called by it, except by Mr. Jerry, expressed doubts. So he continued:—"You see, they're sinking for a new shore clear of the old one. So nothing's been opened into."

"Well," said Aunt M'riar, "I certainly did think the flavour was being kep' under wonderful. But now you put it so, I understand. What I say is—If dirt, then clean dirt; and above all no chemicals! . . . What's that you're saying, Uncle Mo?"

"Why, I was a-thinking," said Uncle Moses, who seemed restless, "I was a-thinking, Bob, that you and me might have our pipes outside, being dry underfoot." For Uncle Moses, being gouty, was ill-shod for wet weather. He was slippered, though not lean. And though Mrs. Burr, coming in just then, added her testimony that the children were quite safe and happy, only making a great mess, Uncle Moses would not be content to remain indoors, but must needs be going out. "These here young juveniles," said he, outside in the Court, "where was it you took stock of 'em, did you say?"

"Close to hand," said Affability Bob. "One step out of the archway. There you'll find 'em, old man. Don't you fret your kidneys. *They're* all right. Hear the engines?"

"Whereabouts is the fire?"

"Somewhere down by Walworth. I saw the smoke, crossing Hungerford Bridge. This engine's coming down our road outside."

"I reckon she may be, by the sound. She'll be half-way to Blackfriars before we're out of this here Court. If she gets by where the road's up! Maybe she'll have to go back."

"There she stops! What's the popilation shoutin' at?" For the tramp of the engine's horses, heard plain enough on the main road, came to an end abruptly, and sounds ensued—men's shouts, women's cries—not reconcilable with the mere