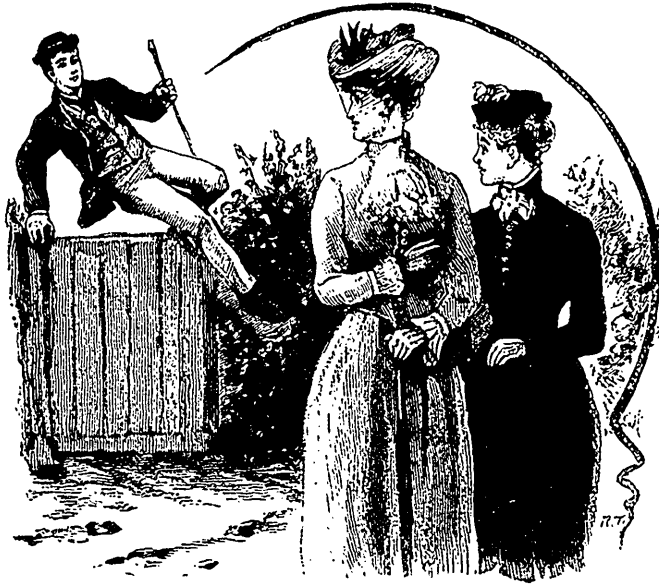




"TOM WAS NOT WHOLLY UNEXPECTED."

that lane after nightfall. But now it was day, the sun was inclining to the west, but the summer evenings were long; two hours would elapse before the sun set, and even then there would be twilight.

On the present occasion only Jemima Anne and Jessie were walking down White Pig Lane; they were, however, startled, and uttered an exclamation of alarm, when over an orchard gate at the side leaped Tom Nayles.

"Oh my!" exclaimed Jemima Anne. "You did make my poor heart stand still. I thought it was the ghostesses."

Then, remembering the humming bird in her white straw hat, she held up her head, and turned, so that the full blaze of the flame-coloured bow, and the glitter of the shining-plumaged bird, might flash in the eyes of Tom Nayles.

"Well, Jessie!" he exclaimed, "how goes the book?"

"Tom, what *do* you think? I am ahead of you now!"

"Nonsense!"

"It is true. I have half-a-crown."

"Are you fond of brandy-balls?" asked Jemima, pulling a cornet out of her pocket. "Do take one and suck it."

"Thank you. I have a bad tooth."

"But *do*—do now, to please me. If you will take one so will I."

"I," said he, "I only eat them when I buy them myself. If offered me, I find

they don't agree with my tooth. Where are you going, Jess?"

"Nowhere particular, Tom."

"That's remarkable. It's precisely where I was going, and as we are both going in the same direction we will trudge along to Nowhere-in-Particular together. It's a highroad, and not very far off."

"Do, please, have some brandy-balls," said Jemima. "They are intended for you."

"Not for me?" asked Tom in astonishment.

"Indeed they are. I heard you

liked them, and so I got them for you."

"Not all?"

"Take them all. I shall be but too pleased."

"Come along, Jess," said Tom. "It's very good of Jemima, and I thankfully accept. Let's trot along to Nowhere-in-Particular; and we'll suck Jemima's brandy-balls together."

Was ever a girl so dismayed

Actually! Tom paid no attention to her, to her red velvet stamped dress, to her white straw and flame ribbon, and to her spangled veil; he did not even lift his eyes to the humming bird; and, to make matters worse, he had accepted her cornet of brandy-balls, was marching off with them, and Jessie was helping him to consume them.

"Jess," said Tom, "I've news to tell you. What do you think? I've been made horse-man by master, and my wage is increased to fifteen shillings a week. Is not that fine? I shall begin to pile up in my book."

"And I've news too, Tom," said Jessie, "I haven't broken any crockery. Mistress is so pleased; she has given me a shilling, and that shall go into the book on Monday."

"That's fine!" said Tom.

"But there's finer behind," said Jessie. "The cook is going. She says there's too much work, as we've had company for two days. Mistress has spoken to