

—a bright one—and stirred the fire vigorously.

“My son, sir,” he continued, when Richard had yielded to his wishes, and was red in the face and puffing with the heat. “My son, sir, has often mentioned you to us. Mary, my dear! *do* turn that cat out! And he says that you are very great friends. What do you think of my son’s pictures? Just get another cup and saucer, Mary! You’ll take some tea, of course, sir?”

Richard thought the tea might be a happy medium through which to introduce the object of his visit. So he agreed very readily to take a cup. This made Mr. Grey as delighted as he was busy.

“Mary, my dear! Just reach me that toasting fork! Don’t cut the bread too thick! There, that will do!” And he thrust the fork into a round of bread, leant down towards the grate, and blew a strong breath,—starting the winding-sheets that