

her husband only remarking, that, if it were so, it was a shame eggs were so dear.

The Snubbsses had their wits about them. They went through every thing; water, drains, chimneys, damp, roof, rent, rates, tithe, and taxes; nothing was forgotten. They had more worldly wisdom than their predecessors the Lathams. All possible inquiries being made, they went away, the one admiring the gravel drive up to the door, and the other declaring that it cut up the garden sadly.

How poor Mr. and Mrs. Snubbss could ever choose a house together, appeared an unsolvable problem; and they left us with the satisfactory persuasion that they were not to be our successors.

The remainder of Monday went on quietly, and on Tuesday we again sat down to our manuscripts, forgot all about the Lathams and the Snubbsses, and were at the very winding-up of the story, when, as on the day before, at twelve o'clock precisely, another ring at the gate! With an instant determination that our dishabille should not shame us a third time, we ran up stairs, and in about five minutes returned to the room in a tolerably handsome morning-dress. A lady and gentleman were seated there; Mr. and Mrs. Timms, as plainly as if their names were painted on their forehead. A tallish, stoutish man, with a complacent, well-fed countenance, in a blue dress-coat unbuttoned, a smart flowered waistcoat, and opal studs with gilt eyes on the smart shirt-front. Oh, yes, it was Mr. Timms to the life, and he had a great hardware shop somewhere in the city. We could see "Timms" in great gold letters over the door, and all the iron pots and pans, and the tin and brass ware in the windows, and Mr. Timms himself standing in the middle of his shop, not behind his counter, receiving his customers with the very same bow, and back-waving of his open palms, with which he received us. But Mr. Timms was a very rich man for all that—had the cut of an alderman, if not of a lord mayor, and had his country house; and Mrs. Timms was a very well-dressed person, and had a good deal of the lady about her. They were altogether unlike either the Lathams or the Snubbsses.

To our great amazement neither Mr.

nor Mrs. Timms discovered that the dining-room was too narrow; perhaps that at their country house had some worse defect. But we took heart upon this. As we went the round of the place, we could obtain far less their opinion of the one they were looking at than of their own residence, and possessions, and way of life. Their country house was at Epping; had lofty rooms, two staircases, a shower-bath, and a laundry. There was a chandelier in the drawing-room, and three windows; they always made use of silk in preference to worsted damask. Mr. Timms had had his portrait painted twice; Mrs. Timms made use of a warm-bath. They had no opinion of railroads; they went to Ascott and Epsom races; they had two men-servants, a close carriage, and a pair of horses. They did not keep a cow, nor poultry; Mrs. Timms thought them more trouble than profit, and, in fact, knew nothing about them; it was evident that she was city-bred, and had no country tastes. Their children were grown up, but they had grandchildren; and Mr. Timms quite chuckled to think how his grandchildren could run up and down the drive. He was a good-natured man, that was certain.

Having gone the round of the place, and left not a single particular uninquied into—for, like the Snubbsses, they had their wits about them—they made their adieus, informing us that they were on a house-seeking expedition, and had several more in view before they left the neighbourhood. We mentioned Mr. Rawlinson, on the hint that Mr. Latham had given, as the person to whom they would communicate their decision. "Oh no," said the knowing Mr. Timms, "I always prefer the principal! Never go to an agent when you can go to the principal! You shall hear from me direct by letter." Mr. Timms was a man of business.

One incident of the Timms's visit we have omitted, which was very characteristic. "I think," said he, "I am familiar with your name—H——? H——? I seem to have heard it, but I cannot recollect where." "Most probably you have, sir," was our reply; "we flatter ourselves that it is a little known." "H——," said he, balancing the name on his tongue, as he would have balanced a guinea on his finger, "in