

varied information during his wanderings; and had in addition picked up much political lore, with strong socialistic and revolutionary leanings. The "powers that be" found no favour in Timmy's eyes, and it was no crime from his point of view to speak evil of authorities. His religious ideas, or, to be more correct, his irreligious ideas, were equally pronounced, and his followers and admirers were wont to say that there was no creed in which Timmy could not pick a hole.

"Ay, iad," responded Timmy proudly, on overhearing this remark, "ay, I can pick a hole in 'em, and dig a hole in 'em, and bury 'em away out of sight. Best place for 'em too. Such things isn't for men, good enough for women and brats; but men want stronger stuff than any sort o' parsons can give us."

Brodie's quick eye soon espied the big bills which adorned the walls of the forge, and he pulled the donkey up that he might the better read the notice.

"Fine times! Fine times indeed!" he exclaimed. "Public meeting! And 'discussion invited.' S'pose there wouldn't be any room for me in the room. I might like to say a word, and just let these folks, who fancy they're the big-wigs, know that there's some one about who can say a word or two, and give 'em the benefit of a working man's opinion. Is a man to have things all his own way like, 'cause he've got a few pounds a year more behind him than we have? Who's the backbone of the country if it isn't the working man, that's what I want to know?"

"Well, we'll be all workin' men o' one sart or 'nother there to-night," said the smith coming out of the forge. "There's Farmer Ashford. He's a workin' man if you like, and 'bout the best master hereabouts; looks after his men like a father, that he do; and then there's Mr. Denman. He works, too, in his way, though you mightn't think so,

Timmy; and as for the rest, why, we'll be as free to speak as we likes." And somewhat exhausted with his long speech, the smith, who was a slow and heavy man, turned and re-entered the forge.

"Ay, well! 'Tis scarcely to be supposed that you can have much experience 'bout this sort of thing," retorted the sweep pityingly. "You've never bin far from the sight of your own doorstep. But now I must get on; there's work to be done to-day if I'm to go to this meetin' and let these fine workin' folks know my views on things."

"Well, 'pon my word now, Master Brodie, I can't say that I'm over pleased to see you," said Mrs. Harker. "I hadn't set out to have our chimneys swept for a week or two yet."

"Well, ma'am, I think 'tis 'bout time to give 'em a brush up afore long evenin's and big fires gets to be the fashion. I knows how 'twould be then, when your chimley was afire. You'd run and call for Tim Brodie then; and, holler as much as you would, I shouldn't hear you. 'Tis now or never, ma'am, with me."

And so Timmy worried all the housekeepers who had been wishing to get their day's work over to accompany their husbands to the meeting; but, however busy they might be, as a rule the women were resolved to go. They were as much interested in the matter of the club as their husbands, and were attracted by the novel idea that they might hear some of their neighbours speak, or even have the still greater pleasure and pride of listening while the man who was their own especial property, aired his views in public. As a result, the schoolroom was full to overflowing in good time for the meeting, and the arrival of Mr. Denman, Mr. Ashford, and one or two other farmers from the neighbourhood was received with vociferous applause and stamping of feet.

After a few preliminary remarks