

Every imaginable direction; that intermingling of all nations and languages in a confused medley mass; that rattling of carriage and cart wheels, and clatter of horses' hoofs against the rough pavement; the harsh, discordant sound of auction bells, the hoarse voices of oystermen and fish-women; children losing their parents in the nightfall scene of bustle, and crying in hopeless despair; until a mighty city is wrapped in a brief slumber—that is, if ever it sleeps—and one is temporarily relieved by a short repose.

Clara Abbott pushed her way through the busy throng, and, after purchasing some little necessities with her nine-and-sixpence (all to a few pence), she returned to her humble lodgings on Finsbury Hill. A slim tallow candle, pressed into the neck of a large black bottle, stood upon a rickety old table, and threw a faint light around her room—used as an apology for a parlour—whose walls, almost paperless, showed many secluded abodes for sundry domestic insects. A few coals burned slowly in the fire-place, and the baby of some eleven months, in the delight of its babyhood, was playing with its fingers and laughing at its toes on the tattered remnant of an old carpet, laid in the middle of the floor.

'Has Mr. Abbott been here since I went out, Nellie?' said Clara to a precocious little damsel of twelve years old, who lived with her mother in an ill-ventilated room on the same floor, and who volunteered to mind baby—as she often did from a pleasure which little girls usually take in amusing themselves with infants, as large as full-grown wax dolls—while Clara was absent upon her errand of need.

'Yes, mem,' said Nellie, 'but he only stopped a minute; he wondered where you were gone, and said to tell you he'd not be in till late, mem.'

Clara took little Charlie (the baby) upon her knee, and as she sat near a fire of dying embers, with her elbow resting upon the feeble old table, sealed the love which a Mother can only feel for her child, with a soft kiss upon her laughing infant's tender cheek, and, as if the vials of grief

were to be poured out, she suddenly burst into a flood of tears, moved by a passing thought of helpless distress; 'poor fellow!' thought Clara, 'I wonder if he saw Sanson this evening, and - if there's any chance at all.'

Now Harman Abbott—her husband—had held a respectable position, as banker's accountant for over three years, but for reasons best known to his employers, lost a remunerative post (considered economically) nearly three months before this same Saturday night, when the gnawing of hunger came upon them; and Clara, oh, who can tell her anguish—as the only alternative, had sallied out at nightfall, hopeless, and forlorn, in quest of a pawnbrokers.'

Seated in an easy chair, in his inner office, Mr. Theodore Bloat, the Managing Director of the Bank where Harman was employed, talked, or imagined he talked very philosophically to George Sanson—a friend of Harman's, and a slight acquaintance (more in a business way however) of the official in question, on the Saturday forenoon—who was evidently there to plead in behalf of the discarded clerk.

'We have nothing particularly against Abbott that there is any necessity for mentioning' at present, but still, there was a reason, sir for his dismissal,' said Mr. Bloat, seeming to feel the weight of the assertion by tightly compressing his lips and partly knitting his shaggy eye brows; 'however, sir, you'll excuse me, I have no further time to discuss the merits of your plea for Abbott's reinstatement,' and drawing up his chair to the writing-desk with an air of assumed dignity as if the whole responsibility of Britain's Finance depended on him—that would have done honor to a Home Secretary, or Chancellor of Exchequer, he began to arrange some business papers.

Mr. Theodore Bloat was a man who considered himself, in every sense of the word, a gentleman, if not *natural-born* at all events a *created* one, and finally believed that a small estate and tolerably good income as an official, was worthy of much reverence. It was highly instructive, in studying Natural Philosophy, to notice the inherent propensities of that individual, so unmistakably alike to many in the inferior