A Foot-Hold.

ANNA C. BRACKETT.

Hardly a steamer that crosses the sea
But carries one traveller more.
For a little time, out on the shoreless sea,
Than she counted when leaving the shore.

Blown far away from his mate whereshe sings,
By the pitiless sea-bound gale,
Lost, and plying his patient wings
Till heart and courage fail:

Lost on the shoreless, unknown main,
Blinded with salt white spray,
Dazed with the endless, waving plain,
Scared by the lengthening way;

Lost on the sea, and no land in sight;
Through the heavy and misty air
Struggling on through the dark and the light
To terror and mute despair;

Till on the horizon a cloudy speck
Clears to the mast, like a tree,
Clear to the solid and ground-like deck,
And his follows it wearily,

And clings and crouches, a welcome guest,
An eager and tremulous bird,
With the green and blue on his neck and breast
By his heart's hard panting stirred,

Then come pity, and food and drink to the brim,
And shelter from wave and cold;
But the quick head droops, and the bright eyes dim,
And the story all is told!

Pitiful comfort, yet comfort still
Not to drop in the hungry sea,
Reeling down out of the empty height
To that terrible agony.

Bitter and hard to be driven to roam
Between the sea and sky,
To find a foot-hold and warmth and home,
And then—only to die!

Yet it was harder, God He knows,
Who counts the sparrows that fall,
For the birds that were lost when the wild winds rose,
When the sea and the sky were all:

When the sky bent down to infold the sea,
And the sea reached up to the sky,
And between them only the wind blew free,
And never a ship went by!

Harpe's Magazine for March.

THE BARTON EXPERIMENT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HELEN'S BABIES."

CHAPTER XVI.

A REFORMER DISAPPOINTED.

During the day or two which followed his interview with Tappelmine, Father Baguss was consumed with conflicting emotions. He could not deny that his offer to help Tappelmine had taken an unpleasant load off of his own heart; but it was equally certain that the contemplation of the possible results of the arrangement gave him a sense of oppression, which differed from the first in quality, but of which the quantity was far too great to be endured with comfort. To find a way of getting out of the whole matter was a suggestion which came frequently to the heart of the old man, and was not as rigidly excluded as it would have been from that of the reader; but fortunately for the honesty of Father Baguss, his ingenuity was of the lowest order conceivable; so he did as thousands of his betters have done when unable, by any abandonment of self-respect, to avoid the inevitable; he submitted, and groaned frequently to the Lord. Sometimes these efforts before the Unseen increased the old man's ingubriousness; at other times, a song came to his rescue, followed by a troop of its own kind; but so uncertain were his moods that Mrs. Baguss, who never before had occasion to suppose that there was a single nerve in her husband's body, began to complain that she didn't "believe in this thing of lookin' out for other folks, if it makes you cranky with your own."

The old man's trouble increased on the third day, for Tappelmine dropped in and hinted vaguely that it was not too late to plant winter wheat. The old man went into Tappelmine's field with his own team, and plowed; he worked his horses longer hours than he ever did on his own ground; he lent an extra horse to work with Tappelmine's own before a harrow; he himself sowed the wheat, casting now plentifully, as he thought of what Tappelmine might owe him by harvest-time, and now scantily, as he thought of what might be his own fate if the crop should be troubled with rust, or blight, or rain, or drought. And all the while, as he followed his horses, the old man kept uttering short petitions for Tappelmine and himself; and all the while his soul was full of unspoken prayers for heavy rains or sudden cold, so that the work might be stopped by the hand of Providence himself. But no such fortune befell the good old man; such an open fall had not been known since the settlement of Barton; even the Indian summer lasted so long that the poet of the Barton *Register* found opportunity to publish, in three successive weekly numbers, "odes," which could be read in the weather which suggested them. When a heavy rain at last put an end to field work, there were twenty-seven acres in wheat on the Tappelmine estate. Father Baguss ached in soul and body, but the wheat-field work was not the beginning of sorrow. The Tappelmine larder was bareness itself; there was not a porker in the Tappelmine pen; there was not even corn enough in the Tappelmine crib to feed the family horse, let alone to send to mill, and be ground into meal which the Tappelmines fortunately preferred to fine flour. Father Baguss sold the necessaries of life in small quantities to his neighbor, with the understanding that they were to be repaid by the labor of Tappelmine, who was to set out material for barrel-staves and wheelwright's spokes on the old man's woodland; but, by the time the wheat was planted, Tappelmine, who, under the eye of Baguss, did more work in a month than he had done in the whole of the year which preceded, and who during the month had been pretty effectually kept from his accustomed stimulant, fell sick. Then the cup of misery which Father Baguss had put to his own lips was full; as the old man, in his homely way, explained to his own pastor, it didn't run over, and that was just the trouble; he had to drink it all. He sought for sympathy among his neighbors and acquaintances, but without much success; the Barton postmaster expressed the sentiment of the township when he said that "no one but a thick-headed blunderer like Baguss would attempt to reform a dead-and-gone soaker like Tappelmine." Besides, most of the inhabitants wanted to see how the case was going to turn out, and all of them indistinctively understood that the best point of view is always at a respectable distance from the object to be looked at. The sorrowing philantropist went to Crupp, Tomple and Deacon Jones; but these three reformers, knowing that Baguss could afford the loss, quietly agreed with each other that it would be indeed consolatory to have a companion in experience; so they made excuses and quoted figures in evidence, and Father Baguss went home with the settled conviction that he would have to look to Providence for his only assistance.

But while Providence was thus reforming Father Baguss, Tappelmine was growing steadily weaker, and Baguss found his causes of discomfort increased by a debate, which lasted long in his mind, whether it might not be better, for the sake of the drunkard's family, to let Tappelmine die, and then lease the farm himself at a price which would support the widow. While one phase of the case was present in his mind, he would suggest to the doctor that medicine didn't seem to do any good—which was certainly true—and that he didn't believe it would pay to come so often; when, on the contrary, conscience would argue for its own side, the old man would urge all three of the physicians visit Tappelmine in rapid succession. The doctors disagreed, as any one but Father Baguss would have known. Perry suggested electrical treatment, which would necessitate the purchase of a battery, no such piece of mechanism having ever been seen in the town except in a locked cabinet of the Barton High School. Dr. White outlined a course of treatment which seemed reasonable to Father Baguss, but which, put into practice, did neither good nor harm; while Pykem arranged for certain inexpensive applications of water, with results which were in the main encouraging. But Tappleinine was unable to leave his bed for three months, and when he was at all fit to work, he could labor for but two or three hours a day.

And so Father Baguss found himself brought down to the position of a man who was spending money without knowing what he was to get for it. Such a position he had never occupied before, and no one could wonder that he felt uncomfortable in it; but the duration of the period was such that the victim succumbed to the steady pressure of truths which, in their abstract form, would have been as ineffective against him as against an acute logician whose intellect had been trained by his pocket.

But Father Baguss was not the only instrument of the salvation of Tappelmine. In existence, but scarcely known of or recognized, there was a Mrs. Tappelmine. With face, hair, eyes, and garments of the same color, the color itself being neutral; small, thin, faded, inconspicuous, poorly clad, bent with labors which had yielded no return, as dead to the world as saints strive to be, yet remaining in the world for the sake of those whom she had often wished out of it. Mrs. Tapplemine devoted herself to the wreck of what was once a hope over which her eyes had been of a lustre which high-born maidens had envied, and a hope in which her heart had throbbed with a joy which had seemed too great for life to hold. About the bedside of her husband she hovered day and night. When she slept no one but herself knew, and she herself did not care. When Tappelmine made his verbal agreement with Father Baguss, she had listened with a joy whose earnestness was as nothing compared with her resolution. She had hurried away from the broken window to a corner where her dirty children were at quarrelsome play, and she had bestowed upon each of them a passionate caress which startled even the little wretches themselves into wondering silence. From that moment she watched her husband's every movement, and Tappelmine, like a true Pike—for the Pike, like the Transcendentalist, existed ages before he found his way into literature—Tappelmine subjected himself into his wife's dominion. He made numberless excuses to go to some place where liquor could be found; she, with the wisdom of the serpent, yet the gentleness of the dove, prevented him. As, through the course of her husband's labors, under the eye of Baguss, he had grown more silent than ever, she had increased her exertions for his comfort; when, finally, the task was completed, and Tappelmine, with thinner face and hollower eyes than ever, fell heavily upon his rude bed and uttered almost screamed—the single word "Whiskey," she was on her knees beside him in an instant.

"Jerry," she exclaimed, "you've got the better of whiskey these late days."

"Just a drop more—to keep me from dying," gasped Tappelmine.

"Don't, Jerry," she pleaded. "Let me hold you tight, so you can't die."

"Just a drop, for God's sake, Mariar!" said Tappelmine imploringly.

"O Jerry!" replied the wife, "don't—for the children's sake; they're more to you than God is. I hope he'll forgive me for sayin' it."

"Only a single mouthful, Mariar," said Tappelmine, "to keep me from sinkin'."

"You're sinkin', old man—Jerry, dear; you're gittin' up. Keep up, Jerry."

"I'll be all right in a day or two, Mariar, if I only get a taste. You don't want a sick man a-layin' around, not fit to do for his young ones?"

"You don't need to, Jerry. I'll do for 'em, if you'll only—only make 'em proud of you."

"It'll make me good for more to you, old woman—one single mouthful will," said Tappelmine.

"You've been better to me these three weeks than you ever was before, Jerry; keep on bein' so, won't you? It puts me in mind of old times—times when you used to laugh, an' kiss me."

"I'll be that way again," said Tappelmine, "if I only could pick up stren'th."

"You're that way now, Jerry, if you only stay as you are."

"You'll die, Mariar," said the man, "if I don't get out of this bed some way—you an' the young uns."

"I'd be glad enough," said the woman, "if you'd only stay, Jerry."

"An' the boys an' girls?" queried Tappelmine.

"Would be better off alongside of me in the ground, rather than have their dad go backwards again," said Mrs. Tappelmine. "People turn up their noses at 'em now, Jerry."

"What are you drivin' at, Mariar?"

"Why, Jerry, when the children go 'long the road—God knows I don't let 'em do it oftener than I can help—folks see 'em dirty, an' they're poor clothes, an' not lookin' over an' above fed up, an' they can't help kind o' twitchin' up their faces at 'em; once there was a time when I couldn't have helped doin' it to young ones lookin' that way."

"Curse people!" exclaimed Tappelmine.

"They do it to me, too," continued the woman.

Tappelmine sprang up, and exclaimed fiercely,

"What for?"

"Cause—'cause you've made 'em, I reckon, Jerry," answered Mrs. Tappelmine with some difficulty, occasioned by some choking sobs which nearly took exclusive possession of her.

"You know, Jerry, I don't say it to complain—complainin' never seems to bring one any good to a woman like me; but—I'm only knowed how folks look at me in—in stores, an' everywhere else, you—wouldn't blame me for not likin' it. I didn't ever do anything to bring it about, unless 'twas in marryin' you, and I ain't sorry I did that; but I wish I didn't ever have to see anybody again, if your goin' to keep on drinkin'."

The sick man fell back and was silent; his wife threw herself beside him, crying.

"Don't get mad at me, Jerry; God knows its the deadest truth."

After a moment or two Tappelmine laid a hand on his wife's cheek, which had not been before for twenty years; once its touch had brought blushes; now, tears hurried down to meet it, and yet Mrs. Tappelmine was happier than when she had been a pretty Kentucky girl, twenty years before.

"Mariar," said Tapplemine at last, "I've dragged you all down."

"No, you haven't, Jerry," asserted Mrs. Tappelmine, with a lie which she could not avoid.

"If dyin'll help you up again, I'm willin'," continued Tappelmine.

The apartments in the Tappelmine mansion were so few that it was impossible for anything unusual to transpire without attracting the attention of the inmates; so it followed that the children, beholding the actions of their parents, had gradually gone to bed with countenances whose blankness was painfully eloquent to the sick man. Tappelmine looked at them and grew more miserable of visage; he had the advantage to others would be great and certain. If those two five-pound notes had been the wages of shame, she could hardly have regarded them with a more intense loathing; her fingers closed upon them fiercely, savagely; she longed to tear them in pieces; most of all, she craved to return them, with a few civil but cutting words. That money, she felt, was as much given to her out of charity—and that a charity which had no mercy in it—as the cast-off clothes which were to follow. She felt like a beggar (though she had never been one) who has been refused the alms he asked, and has had the crust of bread flung at him instead. If she could only have done without the crust, and have flung it back to the giver! There was one way which would, she knew, have Jenny's hearty concurrence, namely, that they should sell some article of furniture in Bleabarrow, and pay the undertaker's bill with the proceeds. But Kitty, always just, reflected that such a course would excite country gossip, and bring great discredit upon the squire, who was not answerable for his wife's actions, and, indeed, hardly for his own. Another alternative was to borrow the money of Dr. Curzon. But they surely had had enough of borrowing—or rather of the attempt to borrow; and, moreover, they already owed the doctor for many a professional visit. No; Kitty felt she must take these two five-pound notes, and acknowledge their receipt with words of thanks. She had retired to her own room to read the letter, directly she had recognized Mrs. Campden's handwriting, and now she meant to do it before she who sent it could say that she could honestly say, "I have it not," if her sister asked to read it. But, hearing Jenny's knock at the door, she thrust the letter with its inclosure into her pocket, and rose to meet her.

"Well, Kitty, what news? I need scarcely ask, however; I can read it reflected in your face. From a husband whose conduct he has no control—if you can call his wife 'a reason'—Mr. Campden cannot keep his promise."

"My dear Jenny, you said you wouldn't—" she said I wouldn't interfere with what you resolved upon. I may surely flatter my own foresight by 'spotting,' as Jeff calls it, these good people beforehand. The squire is weak as water: he would if he could, he says, but he can't."

"He says nothing of the kind, Jenny. The letter does not come from him at all, but from Mrs. Campden. She opened my note, it seems, and wrote to me."

Jenny smiled.

"What luck she must have thought it! I can imagine her gloating over a letter meant for another wife."

"O, Jenny!" cried Kitty, reprovingly. The thought crossed her mind: "What strange bitterness possesses my dear sister! Three months ago—nay, ten days since, while your mother was yet alive—such sentiments would never have found harbor within her, far less expression."

"Well," continued Jenny, "of course she will not let her husband lend us the money, 'as a matter of principle,'"

"It is something like that," said Kitty, reluctantly. "She has sent us, however, ten pounds, which was all she could spare."

"I am glad it was no more," said Jenny, "for two reasons: first, because it corroborates my view of her; secondly—. But never mind 'secondly' for the present. Well, what else does she say? How bored she was to write a note at all for our own good? May I see the letter?"

"It is marked private and confidential."

"Then you may be sure, because I now know what it was about. You do not wish, I suppose, dear, to talk upon the subject?"

"No, Jenny, because it would be of no use."

"But you have not made up your mind?" cried Jenny, eagerly. "Before you do that I must speak to you, darling; I must—I must!"

"No, dear; I have made up my mind to nothing—except that we must take these ten pounds."

"Was there no message from Mary—dear Mary, who used to hang about your neck so lovingly? I am sure she was."

"Well, no; nothing particular. She is going to send us some things that her mother thinks may be useful to us."

"What things?" cried Jenny, contemptuously. "A pot of marmalade; some shilling novels; a yard of flannel—such as they send to the hospitals."

"There may be some flannel," said Kitty, quietly.

"Oh, I see: old clothes that are too fine for the lady's maid. We are in the first stage of our descent, my dear; they will send us next year all the dresses that are too fine-mounted for her. For my part, I always thought Mary a humbug."

"Don't say that, Jenny; she is not strong, that is all. You might just as well say half the world are humbugs."

"Half the world! I say nine hundred and ninety-nine hundredths of them are so! What saith the Scriptures?—'One man out of a thousand have I known.' There is Jeff, for example; and there is the doctor. But 'one woman in a thousand I have not known.' Or, at all events, she was not Mary Campden."

To this argument Kitty made nothing; and further questioning upon Jenny's part was put a stop to by the entrance of Tony in a wild state of excitement. Something had been found in the garden—indeed, she had met the postman in the village, and gone back to the office to sign for it; and what did they think it was! They would never guess if they guessed forever; it was a watch and chain! A beautiful gold watch and chain!

"Why, Tony, who could have sent it?" cried Jenny, delighted at the lad's delight; then the joy faded out of her face, and she looked at Kitty, whose cheeks had become rosy.

"Well, I don't know," cried Tony. "I should have thought it was Jeff, only dear old Jeff could never have—. The post-mark was Cornhill, too, and he said Mr. Holt's office was close by Cornhill."

"It came from Mr. Holt," said Jenny; "I know his handwriting. We must send it back again."

"Send it back?" cried Tony, growing very red in his turn. "Why should I send it back? I think it was very kind of him. He has always been very civil to me; and every fellow has a watch who goes to Eton."

"I don't think we can send it back, Jenny," said Kitty, gravely. "It is sent to Tony, you see."

"Yes; that is so mean of him," answered Jenny, stamping her little foot. "He knew there would be a difficulty about returning it."

"It would be exceedingly rude to return it just because you don't like him," said Tony, confidently. "If you did, you may depend on it he would never send me anything again. See here: when you touch this button, the back opens, and there are the wheels and things. My dear Kitty, what are you at?—Jenny, Kitty is prying into my watch-works."

And indeed, while endeavoring to be interested in Tony's treasure, poor Kitty had not been able to restrain a tear. She laughed the matter off, however, in an hysterical sort of way, and, before the afternoon post went, had helped Tony with his letter of thanks to the sender; his tutor and literary adviser in ordinary, Jenny, having flatly refused to have anything to do with it.

It gave Kitty a pang, we may be sure; but, since the presence of the watch existed, it was needful that it should be duly acknowledged. That watch and its works cost her more than it cost the buyer; it haunted her thoughts all that day, and even her dreams at night. This is what she dreamed: She was in a room full of figures like those at Madame Tussaud's, except that they moved by machinery. There was her dead mother looking at her with pitying eyes; and her lost father, with changed, remorseful face, his hair and clothes all wet. These and many others revolved slowly round her at some distance, but never approached her. She herself was borne slowly but irresistibly forward toward a figure with outstretched arms. It was Richard Holt. His chest was bare, and, where his heart should have been, she saw toothed wheels at work, all gold: just as she had seen in Tony's watch, only larger. She heard them moving and clicking with a harsh, monotonous noise, louder and louder as she drew nigh. Then, as she came quite close, the arms—a picture she had seen in a "History of the Inquisition" at home no doubt suggested this—suddenly shot out knives and daggers, and were just about to enfold her, when, with a shrill scream, she awoke.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AN AUTHOR AND HIS EDITOR.

About half-way between the Bank of England and Basinghall street—a position somewhat typical of many of its tenants—lies Abdell Lane—a street so narrow, although the houses are but three-storied, that in the sunniest days it is always dim and cool, except at noontide; while throughout the winter and half the spring the inhabitants pursue their avocations solely by artificial light. Their callings are various, and in many cases would be difficult to explain to the public satisfaction; and yet they have some right to be called respectable, since a rent of about two hundred pounds per annum is paid per room. Off Abdell Lane lies Abdell Court, connected with the larger thoroughfare by a huge arch (itself honey-combed by human tenements) through which the astonished passenger comes upon a tree, a pump, and a paved yard, in which for hours at certain seasons the sun is distinctly visible. The rents are higher here than in the lane, although the place is only approachable by foot-passengers. In fact, that is a circumstance which is a ground of boast to its residents, since it shows that the commercial element (in the shop-form) does not intrude itself. On the side of each door are painted, in black and white, the names of each occupant, as in Lincoln's Inn and the Temple; but there are no lawyers in Abdell Court. They are chiefly brokers, with a good sprinkling of that mysterious class of gentry called "financial agents." Unpromising as the material soil appeared, the seed of many a goodly mercantile tree had been dropped in Abdell Court, to grow and grow, and to bear golden fruit; also other trees, quite as promising, but which, never coming to maturity, were by many continuelessly termed "plants." On the ground-floor of one of these houses there sits, in what might be called, by contrast with its neighbors, quite a spacious apartment, a gentleman, with whom we have made acquaintance under other circumstances. Black and gray are now his only wear, but the neatness and completeness of Mr. Holt's attire are almost as remarkable as they were at Riverside. Perhaps it is the effect of that sombre dress, but he certainly looks paler and older than when we saw him last; the hair about his temples has thinned, and the lines about his mouth have deepened; if we did not know that his investments are always made with sagacity, and have never given him cause to suspect a wink of sleep, we should call his expression careworn. He has an open ledger before him and a pen in his hand; yet he is not engaged in calculation. A letter, in a large, round, and rather sprawling hand, lies on the paper beneath his eyes, and he is conning it attentively:

"DEAR MR. HOLT" (it runs): "I cannot say how much I am obliged to you for your beautiful present; the watch is much too handsome, I am afraid for a boy like me, but I will try to take great care of it. I have just found out that it strikes the hour and the quarters. We have been in great trouble, as Jeff will have doubtless told you; but my sisters are pretty well in health, and beg to be remembered to you. I am, yours truly and obliged,

"ANTHONY DALTON.

"P. S.—Please give my love to Jeff."

Mr. Holt had read this somewhat bald epistle half a dozen times, and yet was as interested in it as ever. "It is cleverly written," he muttered to himself; "but it is not all one piece. 'Much too handsome,' and 'Will try to take great care'—that is not the boy's. I wonder which of the girls helped him with it? 'Jeff will have told you;' that is like Jenny's touch. She pretends to believe that I only hear of their welfare through Derwent; and then, again, 'Give my love to Jeff' sounds like her sharp tongue; she writes that to annoy me. But those would never have made him say that they begged to be remembered to me. I am sure that's Kitty, dear, delicious, tender-hearted Kitty!" He heaved a deep sigh, and stroked his forehead with his hands.

"How nearly I lost her!" he went on softly to himself. "If things had not gone as they have, she would be far beyond my reach. What a frightful risk did that madman make me run! He rose from his seat, and pulling down the window, although the day was bitter cold, stood facing the draught. "Two months, three months, four months, and not a scrap of news of the ship. All must surely be safe now. The very stars in their courses have fought for me. However, it is the very last boon that I will ever ask of Fortune; hereafter, I am independent of her. If I were bankrupt to-morrow, my books would be a model. There is not a flaw from first to last. If it had happened otherwise, I wonder if I could have weathered the storm? With the world, perhaps; but with him, never. He would have been implacable, unmerciful. It would have been no wonder, poor devil! And she—yes, she would have loathed me. I can understand now how it is that men, who cannot possess those they love, are driven to kill them; as to killing themselves, that is the most natural thing in the world; and next to that—yes, I can understand it."

Besides the usual almanac in its frame, and one or two plans of estates, in the West Indies and elsewhere, there were several huge maps hung up in the room, to one of which he now directed his attention. This was a map of South America, showing a great deal of the ocean that lies between us and it, with the track of steamers marked out upon it. He had done so many a time before, and he now again took his pen, and with the handle of it traced out the course. So engaged was he in this occupation, that he did not notice a knock at his door nor the entrance of a visitor, until his voice—a rich, unctuous, and somewhat boastful voice—announced his presence.

"Holloa, Holt! how are you? Studying a sea-chart, eh? That looks dangerous for somebody, since you are a ship-owner."

"Yes," answered the other, coolly; "I was trying to fix upon the most convenient spot for scuttling a craft."

"Well, begad! you looked as if you really were when you first caught sight of me. South America, eh? Brazil I suppose? Mines, for a third of all the hair for the head forty years, and had triumphantly succeeded. He so beamed with blandness and good-nature that it was like being at Brighton, or standing in frontof one of Mr. Ayon's pictures, to look at him; you felt you wanted shade.

"How are you, Mr. Derwent? Delighted to see you," said he, holding out a podgy hand, and pressing Jeff's with fervency. "I have just been correcting your proof, for next month's number. I never saw so rapid an improvement in so young a writer—it's marvelous."

"Yes; I thought that second one would fetch you myself," said Jeff, coolly.

"Fetch me? Oh, I see! Well, the quaintness of the matter of course goes for something. But, as I said to you before, I cannot but think that the mind which could grasp the salient points of so dry a theme—could so clothe dry bones with flesh and blood—might essay something original."

"Your mind has done it," observed Jeff, dryly, producing a manuscript from his pocket. "Here is a story of old times: local coloring, archæological details, spirit of chivalry; in short, a masterpiece bolthat."

"The whole— Oh, I see! You mean it is all redolent of antiquity. Found in a chest, I hope, as I suggested, with a few words of introduction to explain the circumstance. Good-natured fellow, I perceive, with great frankness and simplicity. You find it easy to be frank, Mr. Derwent, I dare say?"

"My nature, Mr. Sanders," observed Jeff, indifferently.

"Yes. Now, what astonishes me in your writing is its objectiveness."

"Ah! that astonishes myself," said Jeff, with a little grin.

There was a long pause.

"Why, bless my soul," said the editor, whose face was now invisible behind the manuscript, "this is a satire?"

"I rather think it was," replied Jeff, "and a deucedly good satire, too."

"Eh?"—Mr. Sanders looked over the top of the manuscript at Jeff; the young gentleman's face was imperturbable; he was tapping his his right boot with his umbrella. "This is most extraordinary," murmured the editor.

"That is quite my idea of it," observed the other. "I never wrote anything half so good before."

"I was not referring to the manuscript," rejoined Mr. Sanders, blandly; "that is good, no doubt—in its way. But satires are scarcely quite the part of thing for the *Smellfungus Magazine*."

"I didn't mean it for the *Smellfungus*," cried Jeff.

"Eh? what?"

The editor looked up again, but Jeff was only tapping his other boot.

"This is not for you. This is to go to some magazine that pays—Pray, don't be angry, my dear sir; I am quite aware that your magazine is insolvent—I mean that it pays its proprietor."

"Now, this is hard," said Mr. Sanders, looking at his book-shelves for sympathy; "for it was I who brought this young man out—correct me, if I am mistaken, Mr. Derwent, but I think I was the first—as editor of the *Smellfungus Magazine*—"

"And proprietor," interrupted Jeff. "That is where the shoe pinches. The literary side of your character is perfection; it is the financial side which is in fault. I have never seen the color of your money."

Sanders murmured Mr. Sanders, "and yet so grasping; this is quite a revelation to me."

"Very good," said Jeff; "I shall make no extra charges on that account; but I must have twenty pounds for the story."

"Youth is sanguine," observed Mr. Sanders; "and likewise full of high spirits. You must be joking."

But Jeff only looked in the fire, and repeated, "Twenty pounds."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Mr. Sanders, clapping his knee, like a man who has resolved to do something, regardless of expense. "I'll tell you what. In consideration of the two papers I have had for nothing, added to the cost of this story—for these must be no doubt for the future about the market value of such articles—I will give you five pounds. But it must be understood that you give the *Smellfungus* the refusal of your next work, and at the same proportionate price."

"I'll take the five pounds," said Jeff, after a little pause, "on account. Or, look here; pay me ten pounds down, and you shall have the story."

The deft celerity with which Mr. Sanders produced his check-book, filled in a check, and also a receipt upon stamped paper, was quite pleasant to see.

"Short accounts make long friends," said he, cheerfully. "And now, my dear sir, that business is over, let me congratulate you on having permanently joined the staff of the *Smellfungus*. I see before you a great—or at least a considerable future. You have the art—a very rare one—of making dry details palatable; of putting fire into old-world facts. All you want are materials. You must come and dwell in the shadow of the British Museum."

"I live at Islington," observed Jeff, simply.

"Then you must come by the 'bus to Bloomsbury. The British Museum has been bequeathed to you by the nation to furnish you with facts for the *Smellfungus Magazine*."

"Very good," said Jeff. "I will accept the legacy."

"It is wonderful to me how—out at Islington—you can have procured such materials as you have done. However, the whole affair is remarkable; that at your time of life your taste should lead you to grasp these details of the past—"

"So young, so grasping," interrupted Jeff.

"Well, I must be off now. Ta-ta."

"Good-by, my young friend, good-by," said Mr. Sanders, impressively. Then softly repeated to himself: "Ta-ta. He said Ta-ta and a little money, will go in certain city callings which (like the ham in the sandwich) lie between the commercial and the official, and yet belong by rights to neither. Notwithstanding his speech to Mr. Dawkins, Mr. Holt did put trust in Geoffrey, for he had found out that the young fellow could hold his tongue; and, as he never confided to him anything discreditable, it was fair to suppose that the business of Holt and Company, though certainly of an heteroreneous description, was *bona fide* and respectable. Indeed, as Jeff reflected, how could it have been otherwise, since Mr. Dalton had been (as he understood) in some measure connected with it; nay, still more, had not Mrs. Dalton herself recommended him to his present employer? This fact alone had really given Jeff a certain respect for Mr. Holt, which, as we have seen, he had been far from entertaining at Riverside; and, being very sensitive to kindness, this feeling would in any other case, under the same circumstances, have grown to be regard; but it is quite possible to respect people without liking them—indeed, it is almost as common as to like them without respecting them—and Jeff disliked his employer very cordially. He would work for him faithfully, and consult his interests as though they were his own. But he could not return good-will for what he felt was only a pretense of it.

Every act of civility of his employer he, in fact, more or less resented, since he was well aware that he respected him not. That Kate Dalton. He knew that the other calculated upon his telling the truth concerning his life in Abdell Court, and was resolved that he should have nothing but good to tell. He was not even afraid of that pretty constant correspondence that he must have been aware went on between his enemy Jenny and his young assistant. There was security in Jeff's honesty equal to any guarantee that could be got with sign and seal in the neighborhood of Abdell Court. Holt had not been sorry that his one invitation to Jeff to dine with him at his club had been respectfully declined, upon the transparent pretense of a previous engagement: business relations ran comparatively easy even when folks are not *en rapport* with one another, but social intercourse is more difficult to be maintained. Mr. Holt had never so much as inquired where Jeff's lodgings were, and Jeff was not likely to volunteer the information; they were two very small rooms in a suburb of Islington, which had been recommended to him, through Mrs. Dalton, by Mrs. Haywood. They were cheap and clean, and he would be able to see green fields from them when the spring came. In spite of his loathing of Holt, and of his business, which was immense, he pined for the country even in these winter days. But on the occasion of which we speak—his hour's holiday—he did not go, as he usually did, to Paternoster Row, but with his steps to a spot which puts forth leaves at every season, Paternoster Row. What would Mr. Dawkins have thought of his friend's sanctum sanctorum? Would he have guessed that it was not only a fool but an author? Yet so it must be since Jeff enters an establishment over which is written, "Office of the *Smellfungus Magazine*," and, passing through the vestibule, traverses a common mind, would call a book-shop, knocks at a little door inscribed "Editor's Room." It is that knock which betrays him to us; any would-be contributor would have gone so far as to knock—but no; like that, the knock of a would-be contributor, especially one of tender years, is a very modest one; it sounds like that of a poor relation, or of a timid client. If it made the knocker known except with the tips of his fingers. Now, Jeff's summons, given sharply with the knob of his umbrella, was the knock of an accepted contributor, and something more: of a contributor who hasn't been paid.

He did not even wait for the answering "Come in," but entered at once. "The City"—whose motto, like that of poor Dalton's tempting companion, is "Push"—had already done a great deal for Jeff. Besides, he was still in some respects that most audacious and irreverent thing in Nature, a boy. We have at present only seen him in the society of his equals, or of his inferiors, or of his employer; but with the world at large Mr. Geoffrey Derwent was something more than at his ease. When he suspected that a man was impressed with his importance, in particular free-spoken to the verge of rudeness. He had not the modest and retiring manners which good and charitable people are accustomed to attribute to literary geniuses when discovered so young.

It must be owned that there was little in the sanctum into which Jeff thus impetuously intruded to excite veneration. It was a little room, with a skylight and a fireplace, but with no other furniture than a bookcase filled with volumes of the *Smellfungus Magazine*, a table, and two chairs; but in one of these two chairs was a Being who ought to have commanded respect, for he was an editor. A small, plump man, of cheerful aspect, whiskerless and bald, he presented the appearance of one who had been endeavoring to get a hundred?"

"You are always right as a rule, Dawkins; and since this particular case happens to be the exception that proves it. My mind was not fixed on the land at all, but on the sea. I was wondering whether, by any possibility, the Flamborough Head could be still above water."

"I'll bet you ten to one against it; come, I'll bet you twenty. You have not underwritten her, have you?"

"Not I. I was not thinking of the vessel at all, but of a poor fellow who sailed in her—John Dalton."

"Oh, indeed! Friend of yours, I remember. Well, I shall say nothing against him, then. But of all the overbearing, insolent fellows I ever met—wi hout a penny to bless himself, too—he was about the worst. By jingo! you should have heard what he said to Lady Beevor, in my own house, under my own roof. We all thought he was off his head."

"Yet he was a general favorite, and thought very agreeable," observed Holt.

"Agreeable? Then I don't know what it is to be agreeable."

"Possibly," said the other, dryly; "or perhaps you annoyed him. If Dalton was rubbed the wrong way, you saw sparks."

"Sparks, begad! It was a general conflagration. Lady Beevor has never forgiven my asking him to meet her. I perceive, with great frankness and simplicity. You find it easy to be frank, Mr. Derwent, I dare say?"

"My nature, Mr. Sanders," observed Jeff, indifferently.

"Yes. Now, what astonishes me in your writing is its objectiveness."

"Ah! that astonishes myself," said Jeff, with a little grin.

There was a long pause.

"Why, bless my soul," said the editor, whose face was now invisible behind the manuscript, "this is a satire?"

"I rather think it was," replied Jeff, "and a deucedly good satire, too."

"Eh?"—Mr. Sanders looked over the top of the manuscript at Jeff; the young gentleman's face was imperturbable; he was tapping his his right boot with his umbrella. "This is most extraordinary," murmured the editor.

"That is quite my idea of it," observed the other. "I never wrote anything half so good before."

"I was not referring to the manuscript," rejoined Mr. Sanders, blandly; "that is good, no doubt—in its way. But satires are scarcely quite the part of thing for the *Smellfungus Magazine*."

"I didn't mean it for the *Smellfungus*," cried Jeff.

"Eh? what?"

The editor looked up again, but Jeff was only tapping his other boot.

"This is not for you. This is to go to some magazine that pays—Pray, don't be angry, my dear sir; I am quite aware that your magazine is insolvent—I mean that it pays its proprietor."

"Now, this is hard," said Mr. Sanders, looking at his book-shelves for sympathy; "for it was I who brought this young man out—correct me, if I am mistaken, Mr. Derwent, but I think I was the first—as editor of the *Smellfungus Magazine*—"

"And proprietor," interrupted Jeff. "That is where the shoe pinches. The literary side of your character is perfection; it is the financial side which is in fault. I have never seen the color of your money."

Sanders murmured Mr. Sanders, "and yet so grasping; this is quite a revelation to me."

"Very good," said Jeff; "I shall make no extra charges on that account; but I must have twenty pounds for the story."

"Youth is sanguine," observed Mr. Sanders; "and likewise full of high spirits. You must be joking."

But Jeff only looked in the fire, and repeated, "Twenty pounds."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Mr. Sanders, clapping his knee, like a man who has resolved to do something, regardless of expense. "I'll tell you what. In consideration of the two papers I have had for nothing, added to the cost of this story—for these must be no doubt for the future about the market value of such articles—I will give you five pounds. But it must be understood that you give the *Smellfungus* the refusal of your next work, and at the same proportionate price."

"I'll take the five pounds," said Jeff, after a little pause, "on account. Or, look here; pay me ten pounds down, and you shall have the story."

The deft celerity with which Mr. Sanders produced his check-book, filled in a check, and also a receipt upon stamped paper, was quite pleasant to see.

"Short accounts make long friends," said he, cheerfully. "And now, my dear sir, that business is over, let me congratulate you on having permanently joined the staff of the *Smellfungus*. I see before you a great—or at least a considerable future. You have the art—a very rare one—of making dry details palatable; of putting fire into old-world facts. All you want are materials. You must come and dwell in the shadow of the British Museum."

"I live at Islington," observed Jeff, simply.

"Then you must come by the 'bus to Bloomsbury. The British Museum has been bequeathed to you by the nation to furnish you with facts for the *Smellfungus Magazine*."

"Very good," said Jeff. "I will accept the legacy."

"It is wonderful to me how—out at Islington—you can have procured such materials as you have done. However, the whole affair is remarkable; that at your time of life your taste should lead you to grasp these details of the past—"

"So young, so grasping," interrupted Jeff.

"Well, I must be off now. Ta-ta."

"Good-by, my young friend, good-by," said Mr. Sanders, impressively. Then softly repeated to himself: "Ta-ta. He said Ta-ta

That lad is a phenomenon. Antiquarianism is a passion with him, and yet how he talks! I wonder whether Chatterton talked like that? He reminds me very much of Chatterton in some respects."

CHAPTER XL.

THE EXODUS.

When an overwhelming grief befalls us, it seems for the moment, even to the humblest, to dwarf all other cares. It is only the rich, however, who can afford to indulge it. With the poor, the next day, or the day after, some miserable need pushes divine sorrow from the stool, and comp ls attention. Even Kate Dalton, whose sense of duty was so strong, and whose conscientiousness of responsibility so keen, had, in the anguish of her loss, underrated the more sordid troubles that were awaiting her. The cold touch of death had numbed her somewhat to the meaner pain. But though the weight of sorrow still ongres ed her soreiy, she now began to feel the other burdens that pressed upon her. Lucy was gone, her wages paid to the last farthing, and her fare to town—but without any present, such as her young mistress yearned to make her; and her loss was felt, but not in gain. One mouth the less to feed made but small difference in the household expenses, already reduced to the most economical figure. Do what she could, Kitty found her little income did but just keep pace with her outgoings. And there were still some debts. Dr. Curzon's bill—which must be grown to be a pretty long one by this time—had not been sent in; and Kitty dared not ask for it. Yet it seemed to her shocking, and almost sacrilegious, that what was due for medical attendance on her poor mother in those later weeks, as we l as on Jenny, should not be settled. The parcel of cast-off raiment had come from Riverside, and Kitty had humbly arrayed herself in one of Mary's dresses. It was nothing more, she had said to herself, than hundreds of well-born and well-bred girls, who are not rich, are wont to do. "You will not be offended if I send you baby's pelisse, who has grown out of all knowledge," is a very usual thing for one mother to write to another who is her friend or relative, but happens not to be so rich in this world's goods. It is as common as Dick's old clothes being "cut up" for his brother Jack. And it is the same or almost the same, with other garments. Yet somehow Kitty felt it. The change from complete equality with her cousin to this state of dependence, obligation, subordination—there was no actual term for it—had been too sudden for it to be accepted as a matter