

Grace, the amiable, would never have made a speech like that. Look here, Tony, you have overdone it, and nothing will do you good but a week's walking tour."

"Nonsense! Impossible!" I cried.

"Then you'll break down like the governor did once. Ever since, he says that a man must oil his wheels and slacken his bands. Now you've got to oil your wheels and slacken your bands for a week. When shall we start?"

"I tell you it's impossible," I said testily.

"I tell you that, so far from its being impossible, if you don't give in with a good grace—that isn't meant for a pun—I'll go and frighten Miss Carr, and see the governor, and tell him how bad you are."

"Rubbish, Tom," I cried. "Why, you couldn't go and leave Linny Hallett for a week," I added.

"Sneering, too," he said, with a mock assumption of concern. "My dear Tony, this is getting serious. You are worse, far worse, than I thought for."

"Don't talk stuff," I cried petulantly.

The result of it all was, that as he was pulling the string in the direction that pleased me, I began to yield, and a proposition he made carried the day.

"Look here, Tony," he cried, as if in a fit of inspiration. "A walking-tour is the thing! you told me all about your tramp up when you ran away from Blakeford's. Let's go and tramp it all down again, over the very road."

His words seemed to strike an electric chord, and I grasped eagerly at the plan. The result was, that after arranging with Hallett to keep an eye on the preparations, and after winning from him a declaration that he would not think I was forsaking him at a critical time, and also after receiving endorsement and persuasion from Miss Carr, I found myself one bright summer morning at Paddington, lightly equipped for the start, and together Tom Girtley and I strode along by the side of the dirty canal.

How familiar it all seemed again, as we walked on! There was the public-house where I had obtained the pot of beer for Jack's father, when I had to part from them at the end of my journey up; and there, too, directly after, was just such a boy in charge of a couple of bony horses, one of which had a shallow tin bucket hanging from the collar-hames, as they tugged at a long rope which kept splashing the water, and drew on Londonward one of the narrow red and yellow-painted canal-boats, covered in with just such a tarpaulin as that under which Jack and I had slept.

Resting on the tiller was just such another heavy, red-faced, dreamy man, staring straight before him as he sucked at a short black pipe, while forming herself into a living kit-cat picture was