

taken care of them these ten years, and said I had better wear them to-day."

"Did she?" said Tom, gruffly. "There: that will do. Why, you look quite a buck this morning. That wig's a regular fizzer. Old Launay has touched you up."

"I'm glad I look well, Tom, deuced glad," said the old man, brightening up with pleasure. "And you think Goole's a nice fellow?"

"Ye—es," said Tom, "only, hang it all, gov'nor, there's no romance about it. They are both so confoundedly cool and matter-of-fact. Why if I were going to be married, I should feel all fire and excitement."

"No, my boy, no—oh, no," said the old man sadly; and he shook his head, glancing nervously at the glass the next moment to see if his wig was awry. "You read about that sort of thing in books, but it doesn't often come off in fashionable life. I—I—I remember when—when I married her ladyship, it was all very matter-of-fact and quiet. And there was that poultice. But you will stand by and catch her if she faints, Tom?"

"Oh, she won't faint, gov'nor," said Tom, curling up his lip.

"I—I—I don't know, my boy, I don't know. She said that very likely she should. Mammas do faint, you know, when they are losing their children. I feel very faint myself, Tom: this affair upsets me. I should like just one glass of port."

"No, no, don't have it, gov'nor; it will go right down into your toe. Have a brandy and seltzer."