

"Ruined, Theophilus—Henry?" cried Mrs. Sampson.

"The slip between the cup and the lip," he murmured. "What a devil of a slip! what a glorious cup! what a delicious lip to lose with that cup! Lavinia's lips! Lavinia, for the third time we are parted."

"What is it?" she asked again.

"This telegram." He picked it up, and put on his gold double eye-glasses to give effect to the reading. "This telegram"—he looked round, patting it with the emphasis of an undertaker in the exercise of his trade—"This telegram, my friends, announces no less stupendous an event than the removal of Lord Addlehedde to a private lunatic asylum. It was effected this morning. The stoppage of the first year's preliminary expenses is a natural consequence. I need return to the office no more."

"But is there no one else in your council who will find the expenses?" asked Mrs. Sampson.

"No one, Lavinia: there is no one else in the council at all as yet. Lord Addlehedde! poor Lord Addlehedde!"—Bodkin raised his handkerchief to his eyes—"was the president, the treasurer, the committee, all rolled into one. We had as yet only drawn up a written list of the committee. I was the secretary. Fortunately I did get a quarter's salary in advance. And, by great good luck, the cheque is already cashed. Poor Lord Addlehedde! There have been many other philanthropic noblemen, but none so abundantly gullible as he. And I had him in lavender, all to myself."

"And what was this society?" asked John, "Was it to do any good to anybody?"

"Yes, sir," said Bodkin savagely. "It was to do good to a penniless adventurer: to me, sir, to me. All the societies exist to support their secretary, or to push forward their chairman and committee. Mine was the youngest of the bubbles."

"I regret to hear, Bodkin," said Sir Jacob solemnly—he had arrived without being heard by Bodkin—"that you have induced me to lend my name—MINE—to a—a—a BUBBLE. A Bubble Society I presume to be one whose objects are not worthy of being carried out, or one whose objects are only a pretence. It is needless to say how much you are lowered in my estimation by such a connection—avowed, too—an open, barefaced con-

nection with a Bubble Society! This is indeed a depth of moral turpitude which I confess I can hardly bring myself to fathom!"

Bodkin was extinguished. He bowed his head before the storm.

"Moral turpitude!" he echoed. "You were never poor, Sir Jacob."

"Poor! I was penniless," rejoined the good man cheerfully. "And I resolved to get rich. How does one get rich? You can answer that question, Reuben, for me. By resolving to get rich."

"Ay, ay!" said Reuben, rubbing his hands as if he was congratulating himself over his own good fortune. "Ay, fortune came at a full tide."

"A tide," said Sir Jacob, "that has had its ebb occasionally, but a full tide."

Mrs. Sampson was sitting during this talk as far from Mr. Bodkin as the limits of the sofa would allow her to go. It was evident to Bodkin that the third chance was gone. He looked at her and then at Sir Jacob, and said with a humorous twist of his features:

"Something ought to be done about these tides. It is always ebb tide with me."

"If Sir Jacob," said Mrs. Sampson softly—and it seemed to Bodkin like the well-known voice which had greeted in succession the late Mr. Chiltern and the late Mr. Sampson—"If Sir Jacob cannot control the action of fortune's tide, who can?"

Said Sir Jacob: "Thank you, Mrs. Sampson. Truly, yes. I am grateful to say that I have been enabled to recognise the duties of wealth, which is the main secret of controlling these tides. I have lived, my friends, mainly for doing good. Not by—by BUBBLE Societies, Bodkin. To do good we must make money."

"Else," said Bodkin, growing desperate, "what would become of the secretaries?"

Mrs. Sampson rose from the couch as one in a kind of rapture. "Sir Jacob's noble sentiment," she said, "expresses the GREAT HEART of England. We make money in order that we may do good. That is the reason why whenever any thing happens the generous impulse is obeyed of getting up a subscription."

"Very neatly put, Mrs. Sampson," said Sir Jacob. "The Great Heart of England. Yes. We now sit at home and subscribe. We no longer fight with our enemies, we no longer send out armies and navies for the protection of old allies, we subscribe—the