

great cathedrals, it has grown up through generations, and that growth has left its trace in some irregularities, and some co-existence in it of different styles. But these things rather increase than

diminish its time-honoured and venerable beauty; and the very variety of its elements has given it variety of interest and of spiritual power over all sorts and conditions of men.

## JOHN HARKER'S BOND.

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### CHAPTER V.

#### A PUBLIC MEETING.



**B**RUNTDALÉ was all astir. It had a double excitement. Timmy Brodie and his donkey-cart had been espied approaching the village, while in the evening a "public meeting" to discuss the question of the new Club was to be held in the schoolroom; and as by the big bills posted at the forge and on the door of the school-house—the two most frequented spots in the village—it was announced that discussion was invited, the whole of Bruntdale intended turning out in a body to hear, or take part in, the meeting. The advent of Timmy Brodie always marked an era in the housekeeping annals of the village, for Timmy was the only chimney-sweep who ever visited the place, and on his visits depended the safety of the village. Timmy was somewhat of an autocrat; he came and went as it pleased him best. Messages, notes, and entreaties might be, and often were, sent to his lodgings at Skirley, by those housewives who were anxious to plunge into the annual excitement of spring-cleaning, but to no avail. Timmy was of opinion that he knew best when the chimneys required sweeping. "Mrs. Ashford now," Timmy would say on hearing one of these appeals; "she thinks I be going up to the farm after her chimleys. Well, then, I ain't, so there! And you may tell her that straight from me. I knows when her chimleys wants sweepin'; and when their time comes round I shall be there to do it. Tell her she bain't to get in no sort of a hoe 'bout it; I shall come when 'tis time, and 'tain't no use to talk to me about wanting to begin house cleanin'; house cleanin' can wait. Like enough she'll want a fire again in her best parlour 'fore the week's out." So all the households, who depended upon any higher skill than a furze bush, pulled up and down the chimneys for cleansing purposes, had to wait for Timmy's pleasure; and when his burly form seated in his cart was seen approaching the village there followed a great raking out of fires and preparation of rooms for the sooty event to follow. The village loafer, too, hailed his appearance with delight; for Timmy was an orator, and the taproom of the "Crook and Shears" was sure to be crowded on the nights of his visit to Skirley. He had had the advantage of being born in London, and during his youth and early manhood had tramped the country in search of work. In this manner he had acquired an amount of