

respected father. "Keep moving, why I am worn out already; my appointment with Colonel Tippits is not until one o'clock; and I shall have to sit here and bite my nails for the next two hours."

"Bite your nails!" exclaims the younger traveller, "nothing of the sort."

"I shall not stir from here until the time," says old Pigeon, carefully seating himself on an old-fashioned sofa.

"All right," replies his son. Rings the bell. "Waiter!"

"Yes, sir," responds the chief waiter of the Dragon.

"Where's Miller's farm?"

"Who's Miller?" asks Mr. Pigeon senior.

"Never mind who Miller is," responds the son, "that's my affair—that's my secret, giv. You have your secrets; I have mine;—that's fair, eh? But you shall see my secret, dad, nevertheless. Waiter, why don't you tell me how far it is to Miller's farm? Say you will or you won't—that is all I ask—you will or you won't."

"You never give me time, sir," says the waiter.

"Time, sir!" exclaims Tom; "give you time; time is not to be given away, waiter; take it by the forelock and keep moving; that's the way to deal with time."

"Two mile, sir—that's the distance."

"Right you are; when you have anything to say, say it quickly and at once. What can we have for dinner?"

"But, sir," began the waiter.

"Don't but me," says Tom, familiarly pushing the waiter out of the room. "Be off and see what there is for dinner; and order a four-wheeler to take me to Mr. Miller's farm."

"For shame, Tommy, you should not be so impetuous," says Mr. Pigeon senior, who, instead of stopping the torrent only increased its velocity.

"There you are again," says Tom; "now didn't I tell you not to call me Tommy—did I or did I not?—here we are a-going into Society, and you are Tommying me just as if we were on the shop-board. And what do you mean by impetuous?—I never heard of such a word—you will have to go to a School Board and be polished, governor. Now it is not much a doating son asks of a doating father; will you drop the Tommy, the shop, and the tailor?"

"All right, Tommy," says the father, sinning again in his very promise of amendment. "Oh, for! Tom—I mean, my dear Tom."

"There, that will do," says Tom, patting Mr. Pigeon senior affectionately on the back. "Now will you tell me your business with this swell at Tinsell Castle. Secret for secret, eh?"

"No, Tom, I will not."

"You won't!"

"No."

"That's what I like," says Tom. "Smart and to the point."

"It's only an old bill for liveries."

"Governor—governor, that's a fib."

"Well, look here, Tom, my boy," says the father, preparing to make a statement: "look here now—"

"No, no, Theophilus Pigeon, Esq., keep your secret; tell no fibs."

"Well then, Tommy—" begins the father.

"Tommy again—hang Tommy. Can't you say Tom or Thomas or Jackass, or anything but Tommy? what is the good of our going into society if it is always Tommy?"

"Well, then, Tom; for jackass you are not."

"Sir to you," says Tom.

"Well, then—"

"You've said that before; don't say it again."

"No, I will not," says Mr. Pigeon senior, getting up from his seat a little angrily; "no, I will not. Remain in the dark."

"In the dark be it," says Tom, nothing disconcerted; "anything, so that it is decisive."

"O, I am so tired," says Mr. Pigeon, senior.

"Then go to sleep, dear old boy," says his son, promptly.

"There, tuck up your legs, and have a nap—a little drop of something short and an hour's nap."

Tom's prescription was accepted. The reader would have been agreeably surprised could he have seen how affectionately Tom covered his father over with a travelling-rug, and made the sofa comfortable. If the son had no reverence for the author of his being he was not devoid of affection; though it tried his patience greatly that his father did not acquire with more rapidity what Tom considered the true habits and manners of society.

CHAPTER III.

TOM DISCOVERS HIS FATHER'S SECRET.

Mr. Tom Pigeon, having seen his father comfortably asleep, resolved to sit down quietly for a moment and reflect upon the situation. Miller's farm contained one of the prettiest and roundest little girls that the Cattle Show had ever brought to London with an English farmer. Tom was thinking that he would like to have driven tandem to Jessie Miller's home.

"That would have been the style," he said to himself, imitating, as he sat in his chair, the action of driving a pair of restive horses. "Dashing leader prancing through the town, cantering through the lanes—pull up at the farm—out runs Jessie to meet me—farmer wondering at the turn-out, and pretty little Jessie. Hello!"

The exclamation was one of pain. Tom had been sitting on his father's overcoat.

"Hello! Oh, jimminy! Scissors and paving-stones! A needle a yard long! What the deuce does the governor do with needles in his pocket now that we have retired from the profession and are going into society?"

Examining old Mr. Pigeon's coat, Tom discovered a needle-case and thimble.

"He promised me faithfully that he would drop the shop, and go into society with me like a gentleman; and here he is going on worse than that fellow Kite, who used to be his head cutter-out."

While Tom was discussing his father's shortcomings there fell out of the old man's coat a letter, addressed. It was addressed to Theophilus Pigeon, Esquire.

"Oh! oh! Esquire, eh? That means a hand in the governor's pocket, I'll swear," said Tom, alternately glancing at his father asleep and the letter. "We must read this, Thomas Pigeon, junior, only son and heir of your father; we must not allow our dear father to be swindled; no. Here we go, then."

"Col. Tippits will be glad to extend the mortgage to £20,000, and hopes to see Mr. Pigeon on the first of September;

"and Col. Tippits further hopes that Mr. Pigeon will introduce his interesting son at Tinsell Castle on the first opportunity."

"Tinsell Castle, Aug. 20."

Tom made a variety of significant gestures signifying surprise and delight. He shook his fist affectionately at the old man asleep on the sofa, and laughed silently all over his face. It was an expressive face, full of humour and intelligence. The mouth was large and flexible. It worked in comic sympathy with a peculiar wink, with which Tom kept in good humour persons with whom he pretended to be very angry.

"That's the dear old governor's secret," he said. "He's worth twenty thousand pounds more than I thought, and, I dare say, another five-and-twenty thou to boot. Bravo, dad! Bravo, Theophilus Pigeon, Esquire! Bravo, Pigeon and Son!"

"Thought I'd remind you of the fly, sir," said the waiter, entering just upon the consummation of Tom's discovery.

"Fly, sir. What do you mean?"

"The four-wheeler, sir."

"Four-wheeler," said Mr. Pigeon, junior, remembering, for the first time since his arrival at the Dragon, that he had brought an eye-glass to accompany him into society. "Fly, four-wheeler—what do you mean?"

"The fly you ordered," said the waiter.

"Some mistake," said Mr. Pigeon, junior, remembering that, with the eye-glass, he intended to revise his mode of speech. "Ah, waiter, ah, some mistake. If I did order a fly it must have been months ago. I have found five-and-twenty thousand pounds since then. Make it a carriage and four, waiter. Yes, yes."

The waiter disappeared, with a puzzled air; while Mr. Pigeon, senior, slept on, unconscious of the additional filip which had been given to his son's ambitious views in regard to society.

"Yes," said Tom, waving his hand to himself in a misty glass over the mantel-shelf. "Yes, this is the happiest day of my life. For a slow coach, the governor has kept moving after all. Go into society! I should think we would—rather! See life! Just so. Motto, still keep moving."

Mr. Kite, who had by this time sufficiently remembered his old friend, now entered the room.

"How do you do?" he said. "Who would have thought to find you in Inglenook?"

"Eh?" said Mr. Pigeon, junior, critically examining Mr. Kite's boots and cravat through his glass.

"I asked after your health, sir," said Kite, drawing himself up to his full height and looking down upon his friend.

"Indeed," said young Pigeon. "Yes, yes."

"Don't you know me?" asked Mr. Kite.

"Never saw you in my life before—never—assure you," said Tom.

"Not remember your father's shopman?"

"Father never had a shop; therefore never had a shopman, d'ye see. Father's son don't know shops or shopmen. See?"

"Yes, I see. Very good; I see," said Mr. Kite. "My name ain't Kite. I never was a shopman, nor a cutter, nor anything of the sort. I am a gentleman; so are you, sir, I perceive. Mr. Pigeon, sir, I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you well."

"Very well, indeed thank you—" said Tom. "Are you in society, Kite?"

"I should think I was," said Mr. Kite, stretching out first his right arm and then his left, and pulling down a pair of white shirt-cuffs over a pair of faultlessly gloved hands. "Should think I was in society."

"Ah, father and I are just going in," said Tom, as if society were an exhibition for which he had secured reserved seats.

"Indeed; Mr. Pigeon, I am delighted; we shall often meet. I am down here professionally, preparing the way for the return of Colonel Tippits as a member of Parliament."

"Ah, yes; we know Tippits," said Mr. Pigeon. "How is Tippits?"

"Very well indeed," said Kite, "charming thing your knowing Tippits; he is the *ton* here. I am his agent, accredited to the house of Topham and Downham, Bribery Court, E. C."

"Just so. Very glad to hear it, Kite," said Tom, trying to find his eye-glass, and pulling out his watch by mistake.

"Glass is in your left hand."

"Thanks," said Pigeon, evidently a little nettled that Kite had noticed his confusion. "Now look here, Kite, no more nonsense; let us understand each other: it is agreed that we drop the shop."

"Certainly."

"The Pigeons of Belgrave Square are worth a hundred thousand pounds if they are worth a penny; the Pigeons are now seeking change of air; the Pigeons are on their travels; they are going into society; it is not much they ask, but that much they mean to have, you understand."

Mr. Kite assured his friend that he perfectly understood him, and hoped to call him friend for many a long year to come. He said he was going to call at the Castle, and offered to leave the cards of Pigeon and Son with his own, whereupon Tom broke out into a towering passion.

"You have just promised me, in the most solemn manner, that you would sink the shop, and you talk of cards. I tell you we have neither cards nor patterns; Pigeon and Son have retired for ever; Pigeon and Son are gentlemen residing at the family mansion in Belgrave Square, and anything to the contrary from you, Kite, will simply get you kicked out of society straight, in addition to being cut off with a shilling by your old master."

"My dear sir," said Kite, "you do not understand. In society gentlemen have address cards—private affairs which they call pasteboard—you will know all about it by-and-bye; you may trust Charlie Kite; he will be true to himself and to his honourable friends the Pigeons."

With which grandiloquent assurance of friendship and protection, Mr. Kite bowed profoundly to his friend and withdrew.

"Now to wake the governor," said Tom, shaking old Pigeon by the collar.

"What is it?" grumbled the old man.

"Wake up; I've found a letter with five-and-twenty thousand pounds in it."

"Where, Tommy, where?" The old man was wide awake now.

"Here, here," Tom replied, flourishing the letter of Colonel Tippits.

"Oh, you rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Pigeon, senior, trying to snatch the letter from his son.

"Why you rich old Belgravian swell, you are worth a hundred thousand—something like a secret—oh you Cressus, you Rothschild, you Bank of England—a hundred thousand; and still you are not happy."

"Yes I am, my boy—I am indeed," said old Pigeon; for he knew nothing of Aladdin the Second and the Tycoon.

"I repeat," said young Pigeon, throwing his head back and jerking out his chin. "And still you are not happy?"

"Yes, dear boy, I am," said Mr. Pigeon, senior, putting his hand on Tom's shoulder; "but money has its cares, Tommy—I mean Tom or Thomas."

"Go on, giv, I forgive you; you can call me Tommy now and then, when nobody's near, you know; it is only in the presence of other people that it makes me so wild to hear you sinking dignity and high life."

"Very good, dear Tom, I will remember; but as I was a saying, my old partner used to observe, Ah, Pigeon, my friend, he used to say—ah, Pigeon, you are a lucky dog, your needle is always sticking in the right place."

"Blow your needle," said Tom, rubbing his back, "I differ with your old partner; but tell me, sir, tell your son and heir, who only lives to make you happy, tell Thomas Pigeon, Esq., junior, how much you are really worth."

Old Pigeon listened cautiously, and looked to see that nobody was within hearing near door or window.

"What do you say to a plum, Tommy?" he whispered.

"Tommy again—never mind, the plum makes up for it," said young Pigeon. "It's enough to drive a fellow mad, governor. A plum—a plummy plum plum! Now look here, my dear old friend and father, Theophilus Pigeon, of Belgrave Square, plumber;—no, I don't mean that; I'm a little off my head, you see, what with plums, and Kites, and castles. Henceforth we are in society. From this moment we are swells; we must dress better than this (looking at his trousers and examining his father's coat); we must give some rascally tailor an order at once; blow him up and do the haaw-haw business, and wink at his daughter if he has one, and swear politely, and smoke shilling cigars."

"No, Tommy, if we are going to be gentlemen let us behave as such; that is my motto."

"Come in," bawled the younger Pigeon, in reply to a knock at the door.

"Will you please to order dinner, sir," asked the waiter, entering.

"Yes," said Mr. Pigeon, junior, "yes, we'll have everything you've got."

"Yes, sir. And please, sir, the carriage is waiting."

"Dismiss it," said the rich young man; "we shall delay our visit to the farmer's; we are expecting a call from the Castle."

"Yes, sir."

"And, waiter."

"Yes, sir."

"Are there any rascally tailors in this place?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many rascally tailors?"

"Two, sir."

"Tell them to send me half a dozen suits of clothes, morning and dress."

"I suppose you are another candidate for the borough, sir. Yes, sir."

"Don't tell me what you suppose; tell the rascally tailors what you please."

"Yes, sir; when shall they call to measure you, sir?"

"Measure me," said Tom, with well-feigned bewilderment.

"Oh, ah, yes, of course, true—true; they measure you (imitating the operation of measuring)—I remember; we will be measured, waiter, we will be measured."

"Yes, sir; I will order the rascally tailors at once," said the waiter, leaving the room.

"The impudent puppy," said old Pigeon, when the door was shut. "Tommy, I don't like this new-fangled manner of yours; tone it down, dear boy; tone it down. I never knew a real gentleman as had that style; it ain't true breeding."

"Nonsense, governor; you don't understand the laws of fashionable life; it's no good a fellow wearing an eye-glass, and being a swell unless he has eye-glass on the brain," said Tom, making a great show of polishing his glass, fixing it in his eye, and trying to let it fall suddenly from its position while he was speaking.

"I differ with you, Tommy, but I'm willing to let you have your fling. You know I love you with all my heart; my fortune is yours. Spend the money honourably and fairly; if you could spend it without going into society, as you calls it, I should be all the better pleased."

"All right, dad; rely on me. I'll do nothing to disgrace the name of Pigeon; but society's a *sing gey non*. I only ask you to sink the shop and keep moving—onward, and keep moving."

"Well, I shouldn't mind, Tom, if we moved a little now. Couldn't we take a bit of a walk together until the Colonel comes?"

"A bit of a walk!" Tom exclaimed, seizing his father by the arm. "Hang it, governor, we'll have a gallop together."

With which remark Tom ran his father gaily into the hotel passage; then into the yard; and, finally, into the High Street, where the shopkeepers seemed to have considerable business on their doorsteps. The majority of the Inglenook tradesmen, or their assistants, were standing at their doors on this Feast of St. Partridge. Some of them were out in the adjacent meadows; you could almost hear their guns going off in the stubbles. The sportsmen who were left behind consoled themselves with the thought that the bags would be smaller on account of their absence.

(To be continued.)

The last theory is that tea, like coffee, is slow poison. Till now we have all been under the impression that it is the simplest, the healthiest, and the most renovating refreshment that one can take, and that nothing restores the tone of an exhausted brain quicker. But, according to Dr. Aldridge, this is all a delusion. It is simply the worst thing you can take, unless you take it in infinitesimal doses, and drunk by pints and quarts, as it often is by the poor, with nothing more to eat than bread and butter, it is working ten times more mischief in the country than all the beer and gin and brandy that is turned out. The question now is—Is there any edible or potable created that is not "slow poison?"