

Nimrod: A Mighty Hunter Before the Lord

result was that his nails were all burnt and discoloured and the flesh round them cracked and bleeding. However, he had got it all off at last, and he was not sorry, for his right arm and shoulder were aching from the prolonged strain, and in the palm of the right hand there was a blister as large as a shilling, caused by the handle of the stripping knife.

All the old paper being off, Joe washed down the walls with water, and having swept the paper into a heap in the middle of the floor, he mixed some cement and proceeded to stop up the cracks and holes in the walls and ceiling. After a while, feeling very tired, it occurred to him that he deserved a spell and a smoke for five minutes. He closed the door and placed a pair of steps against it. There were two windows in the room almost opposite each other; these he opened wide in order that the smoke and smell of his pipe might be carried away. Having taken these precautions against surprise he ascended to the top of the step ladder that he had laid against the door and sat down at ease. Within easy reach was the top of a cupboard where he had concealed a pint of beer in a bottle. To this he now applied himself. Having taken a long pull at the bottle he tenderly replaced it on the top of the cupboard and proceeded to 'hinjoy' a quiet smoke, remarking to himself:

'This is where we get some of our own back.'

He held, however, his trowel in one hand, ready for immediate action in case of interruption.

Philpot wore no white jacket, only an old patched apron; his trousers were old, very soiled with paint and ragged where they fell over the much patched, broken and down-at-heel boots. The part of his waistcoat not protected by his apron was covered with spots of dried paint. He wore a coloured shirt and a 'dickey,' also soiled and splashed with paint, one side of which was projecting from the opening of the waistcoat. His head was covered with an old cap heavy and shining with paint. He was very thin and stooped slightly. Although he was really only fifty-five, he looked much older, for he was prematurely aged.

He had not been getting his own back for more than five minutes when Hunter softly turned the handle of the lock. Philpot immediately put out his pipe, and descending from his perch opened the door. When Hunter entered, Philpot closed it again and mounting the steps went on stopping the