

arose out of a circumstance and from a remark which seemed irrelevant. Martha Thrall was called from the table by some unusual domestic event, and Joe's first remark related to a pleasure tour which a friend of his had in contemplation.

"For sure," answered Amos, "young Warps is varry rich, and he can afford to fling his brass and his time away among foreigners, if he has no more sense than to do so. If a man reckons to spend his life in pleasure and larking, he had best do it while he's young, for he won't get much out o' such ways when he's old. So I don't say Warps is wrong if that is what he is after. But there's better jobs for a man to do: there's good work, and makin' something of t' gifts one hes for getting hold o' a bit of money—"

"But you would make life a drama in two acts, father—working and sleeping."

"I don't know what ta means by makin' life a drama. I'd niver do it. I sud think it would lead one into all sorts o' bother. Young Warps, and owd Warps, too, look over us a bit, I fancy; but we can put as much brass down as any of them, I dare say; ay, Joe, as any of them."

"Young Warps is a very good sort, I think."

"T' owd man couldn't see me yesterday; no, not even with t' help o' his eye-glasses. He looked as if he owned both sides of t' street"

"They have had more than a little trouble with their hands lately."

"Serve them right, too. They hev allays got some fad on hand about 'liftin' them up,' and makin' gentlemen and ladies of born hands. When a cup is made o' common pottery you can't turn it into fine Darby china; and it'll tak' a cleverer man than owd Warps to mak' gentlemen o' his hands by persuading them to read t' poets."

"He subscribed £500 to the new reading-room."

"Does ta think, Joe, I hev'n't heard tell o' that? Owd Warps likes to show himsen his better side out, and that is why he gave £500; but when all is reckoned up, he'll mebbe not hev given as much as other folk. I gave £100, but best givers are them as hev to pinch themsens a bit to spare aught; and what wi' buying wool, and paying wages, I hedn't a £500 to spare; I hedn't that. Keep your sitting, Joe." Then he pushed the wine across the table, and said, "Tak' a glass with me, my lad. I am going to mak' thee a fine offer, and we'll drink to it."

Joe looked steadily at his father, and then slowly filled his glass. There were a few moments of strained silence, then he asked,

"What is it, father?"

"I wer' thinking that thou must hev hed enough of learning by this time, and that happen thou would like to frame thysen to business."

"I am not likely ever to have enough of learning, father. But I do think that I ought to be doing something like work. Why! I am nearly twenty-two years old."