

His father was a London tailor in a large way of business. But one of his favourite excursions was to a little shop in a back street of Poplar, where the basis of his present success had been laid. It had long since passed into humbler and less skilful hands, but old recollections endeared it to the great man still. It was this shop which indirectly led to the hope of the Hythes being sent to St. Osyth's at all.

By way of providing his young son with an agreeable afternoon's diversion, Mr. Hythe had escorted him one Saturday afternoon to the wilds of Poplar, and there pointed out the grimy shop to him with pardonable pride.

"It was there I made a living—an' a rattling good living, too. But I guess you are thanking your stars that times are changed, eh, sonny?" he said.

Reginald Taunton surveyed the small, sordid building, with its rows of ready-made trousers, and its greasy placard announcing that any purchaser of these delectable garments would receive a fancy ornamental waistcoat thrown in, with feelings which found utterance in an emphatic:

"Rather!"

"Well, don't you go being ashamed of your father, all the same," said his parent, an odd wistfulness, making itself heard in his blustering, vulgar voice.