

"To be sure you are, gov'nor."

"Yes, yes, yes; you are very good to me, Tom. Bless you, my boy, bless you."

The weak tears stood in the old man's eyes, and his voice shook as he spoke.

"Nonsense, gov'nor, nonsense," said Tom, taking one of the thin withered hands. "I'm not much good to you; I think more of cigars and billiards than anything else. Have a cigar, gov'nor?"

"No, my boy, no thank you; it would make me smell so, and her ladyship might notice it. But, my boy, I see everything, though I'm getting a little old and weak, and don't speak. You stand between her ladyship and me very often, Tom, and make matters more easy. But don't you take any notice of me, my boy, and don't you think I sighed because I was unhappy, for—for I'm very proud of you, Tom, I'm deuced proud of you, my boy; but it does upset me a bit about Diana going. India's a long way off, Tom."

"Yes, gov'nor, but old Goole isn't a bad sort. The old lady wanted a rich husband for Di, and she has got him. Di will be quite a Begum out in India."

"Ye—es, Tom; and I suppose all the female Diphooses marry elderly husbands and marry well. I am a bit anxious about Maude, now."

"No good to be. The old girl will settle all that. But I say, gov'nor, what a set of studs! Come here; one of them's unfastened. You'll lose it."

"I hope not, my boy—I hope not," said the old man, anxiously as his son busied himself over the shirt-front. "Her ladyship would be so vexed. She has