

of a good Mudport family, and it's not every offer that would have been acceptable in that quarter. But Stelling's not an every-day man; rather a particular fellow as to the people he chooses to be connected with. But I *think* he would have no objection to take your son; I *think* he would not, on my representation."

"I don't know what he could have *against* the lad," said Mrs. Tulliver, with a slight touch of motherly indignation; "a nice fresh-skinned lad as anybody need wish to see."

"But there's one thing I'm thinking on," said Mr. Tulliver, turning his head on one side and looking at Mr. Riley, after a long perusal of the carpet. "Wouldn't a parson be almost too high-learn't to bring up a lad to be a man o' business? My notion o' the parsons was as they'd got a sort o' learning as lay mostly out o' sight. And that isn't what I want for Tom. I want him to know figures, and write like print, and see into things quick, and know what folks mean, and how to wrap things up in words as aren't actionable. It's an uncommon fine thing, that is," concluded Mr. Tulliver, shaking his head, "when you can let a man know what you think of him without paying for it."

"Oh, my dear Tulliver," said Mr. Riley, "you're quite under a mistake about the clergy; all the best schoolmasters are of the clergy. The schoolmasters who are not clergymen are a very low set of men generally."

"Ay, that Jacobs is, at the 'cademy," interposed Mr. Tulliver.

"To be sure,—men who have failed in other trades, most likely. Now, a clergyman is a gentleman by profession and education; and besides that, he has the knowledge that will ground a boy, and prepare him for entering on any career with credit. There may be some clergymen who are mere bookmen; but you may depend upon it, Stelling is not one of them,—a man that's wide awake, let me tell you. Drop him a hint, and that's enough. You talk of figures, now; you have only to say to Stelling, 'I want my son to be a thorough arithmetician,' and you may leave the rest to him."

Mr. Riley paused a moment, while Mr. Tulliver, somewhat reassured as to clerical tutorship, was inwardly rehearsing to