

Mabel, who glares back at him with infinite promise of a future settlement of all their disputes in her ethereal eyes. " 'Twas *my* salt-cellar, not hers ! "

" Ladies first—pleasure afterwards," says his father somewhat idly.

" Oh *Freddy* ! " says his wife.

" Seditious language *I* call it," says Jocelyne with a laugh.

" Eh ? " says Mr. Monkton. " Why what on earth have I been saying now. I quite believed I was doing the heavy father to perfection and teaching Tommy his duty. "

" Nice duty," says Jocelyne, with a pretence of indignation, that makes her charming face a perfect picture. " Teaching him to regard us as second best ! I like that. "

" Good heavens ! did I give that impression ? I must have swooned," says Mr. Monkton penitently. " When last in my senses I thought I had been telling Tommy that he deserved a good whipping ; and that if good old Time could so manage as to make me my own father, he would assuredly have got it. "

" Oh ! *your* father ! " says Mrs. Monkton in a low tone ; there is enough expression in it, however, to convey the idea to everyone present that in her opinion her husband's father would be guilty of any atrocity at a moment's notice.

" Well, 'twas my salt-cellar," says Tommy again stoutly, and as if totally undismayed by the vision of the grand-fatherly scourge held out to him. After all we none of us feel things much, unless they come personally home to us.

" Was it ? " says Mr. Monkton mildly. " Do you know, I really quite fancied it was mine. "

" What ? " says Tommy, cocking his ear. He, like his sister, is in a certain sense a fraud. For Tommy has the face of a seraph with the heart of a hardy Norseman. There is nothing indeed that Tommy would not dare.

" Mine, you know," says his father, even more mildly still.

" No, it wasn't," says Tommy with decision, " it was at *my* side of the table. *Yours* is over there. "

" Thomas ! " says his father, with a rueful shake of the head that signifies his resignation of the argument ; " it is indeed a pity that I am *not* like my father ! "

" Like him ! Oh *no*," says Mrs. Monkton emphatically,