

illness or trouble was the sufferer's own fault, it was not in the practice of the Dodson family to shrink from saying so. In short, there was in this family a peculiar tradition as to what was the right thing in household management and social demeanor, and the only bitter circumstance attending this superiority was a painful inability to approve the condiments or the conduct of families ungoverned by the Dodson tradition. A female Dodson, when in "strange houses," always ate dry bread with her tea, and declined any sort of preserves, having no confidence in the butter, and thinking that the preserves had probably begun to ferment from want of due sugar and boiling. There were some Dodsons less like the family than others, that was admitted; but in so far as they were "kin," they were of necessity better than those who were "no kin." And it is remarkable that while no individual Dodson was satisfied with any other individual Dodson, each was satisfied, not only with him or her self, but with the Dodsons collectively. The feeblest member of a family—the one who has the least character—is often the merest epitome of the family habits and traditions; and Mrs. Tulliver was a thorough Dodson, though a mild one, as small-beer, so long as it is anything, is only describable as very weak ale: and though she had groaned a little in her youth under the yoke of her elder sisters, and still shed occasional tears at their sisterly reproaches, it was not in Mrs. Tulliver to be an innovator on the family ideas. She was thankful to have been a Dodson, and to have one child who took after her own family, at least in his features and complexion, in liking salt and in eating beans, which a Tulliver never did.

In other respects the true Dodson was partly latent in Tom, and he was as far from appreciating his "kin" on the mother's side as Maggie herself, generally absconding for the day with a large supply of the most portable food, when he received timely warning that his aunts and uncles were coming,—a moral symptom from which his aunt Glegg deduced the gloomiest views of his future. It was rather hard on Maggie that Tom always absconded without letting her into the secret, but the weaker sex are acknowledged to be serious *impedimenta* in cases of flight.