

2 HELEN WITH THE HIGH HAND

Now you enter it by emblazoned gates; it is surrounded by elegant railings; fountains and cascades babble in it; wild-fowl from far countries roost in it, on trees with long names; tea is served in it; brass bands make music on its terraces, and on its highest terrace town councillors play bowls on billiard-table greens while casting proud glances on the houses of thirty thousand people spread out under the sweet influence of the gold angel that tops the Town Hall spire. The other four towns are apt to ridicule that gold angel, which for exactly fifty years has guarded the borough and only been regilded twice. But ask the plumber who last had the fearsome job of regilding it whether it is a gold angel to be despised, and — you will see!

The other four towns are also apt to point to their own parks when Bursley mentions its park (especially Turnhill, smallest and most conceited of the Five); but let them show a park whose natural situation equals that of Bursley's park. You may tell me that the terra-cotta constructions within it carry ugliness beyond a joke; you may tell me that in spite of the park's vaunted situation nothing can be seen from it save the chimneys and kilns of earthenware manufactories, the scaffolding of pitheads, the ample dome of the rate-collector's offices, the railway, minarets of