

knees, embraced by their weary arms. Fractional children were wrangling on the pavement. From lines, stretched from side to side above it, drooped clothes whose motionless moistness did not freshen the hot, hushed air. The women seated on the common doorstep of the house in which Bob lodged, gave my companion a very sulky "Good evenin', sir," as they dragged up their tired limbs to make way for us. Bob's door opened just inside the common lobby, and when we knocked at it, it was a pleasant change to hear his cheery "Come in." He pushed his chair to the open window, and was chipping away in the fading light at one of his little men.

"What are you so busy about, Bob?" asked the clergyman.

"Well, sir," he answered, "perhaps you'll laugh, but somebody says there's 'sermons in stones, and good in everything;' and I've been thinking that there might be texts in toys; anyhow there shouldn't be any bad in 'em. After that blackguard fight at Farnbro', you know, sir, Sayers and Heenan were all the rage, and my shop got me to make them for the children. You turned the handle, you see, and then they squared up and pitched into one another. It was rather a pretty bit o' work, and took with the little uns uncommon. I never thought about any harm there could be in it till yesterday. The bricklayer man next door was settin' two young uns to fight, so I told 'em to stop it. 'You're a nice un to preach about fightin',' says he, 'why you teach 'em!' 'I!' says I. 'Yes,' says he. 'How?' says I. 'With yer whirligigs,' says he. That struck me all of a heap like, and I'm trying to make Sayers and Heenan a-shakin' hands, but Tom's an obstinate feller, and won't lift his arm quick enough. I expect I shall have to make out that it's on account of the rap the American give him. Isn't it strange, sir, that it's so much easier to make even a bit of wood do what it oughtn't?"

All this time my introduction was delayed, but I was well content to wait whilst I listened to the mingled earnestness and humour with which the crippled toy-maker unfolded his difficulty. There was something pleasant in his voice. For one thing, he neither dropped nor lavished his h's, although having lived all his life amongst the lower class of Londoners, it would have been impossible for him to avoid catching some Cockneyisms.

"Well, sir," he said, as we sat together after my introducer had departed; "so you want to know how a poor lamester like me has managed to rub on. I don't see what pleasure it can give you to hear about a nobody, but you should know best. But first let's light a bit of candle. When I'm alone, I like to sit a bit in the dark—you can think plainer, I fancy—but it seems unsociable like when you're talkin' to a friend, if you'll excuse me, sir. I'm a Colchester man by birth. Yes, sir, I was born just as I am—let's see, it must be close on fifty years ago. My father was a lighterman at the Hythe. Poor old father! He's been in St. Leonard's churchyard this many a year—but he did whop me cruel. You see, sir, he was disapp'inted at getting a poor thing