

military celebrities, professional assassins, and so on, in old Mrs. Prichard's room upstairs. And sometimes nothing *was* broke. Otherwise one day at No. 7, Sapps Court, was much the same as another.

Uncle Mo's residence in Sapps Court dated many years before the coming of Aunt M'riar; in fact, as far back as the time he was deprived of his anchorage in Soho. He was then taken in by his brother, recently a widower; and no question had ever arisen of his quitting the haven he had been, as it were, towed into as a derelict; until, some years later, David announced that he was thinking of Dolly Tarver at Ealing. Moses smoked through a pipe in silence, so as to give full consideration; then said, like an easy-going old boy as he was:—"You might do worse, Dave. I can clear out, any minute. You've only got to sing out." To which his brother had replied:—"Don't you talk of clearing out, not till Miss Tarver she tells you." Moses' answer was:—"I'm agreeable, Dave"; and the matter dropped until some time after, when he had made Dolly Tarver's acquaintance. She, on hearing that her union with David would send Mo again adrift, had threatened to declare off if such a thing was so much as spoke of. So Moses had remained on, in the character of a permanency saturated with temporariness; and, when the little boy Dave began to take his place in Society, proceeded to appropriate—so said the child's parents—more than an uncle's fair share of him.

Then came the tragedy of his mother's death, causing the Court to go into mourning, and leaving Dave with a sister, too young to be conscious of responsibility for it. Not too young, however, to make her case heard—the case all living things have against the Power that creates them without so much as asking leave. The riot she made being interpreted by both father and uncle as protest against Mrs. Twiggins, a midwife who made herself disagreeable—or, strictly speaking, more disagreeable; being normally unpleasant, and apt to snap when spoke to, however civil—it was thought desirable to call in the help of her Aunt M'riar, who was living with her family at Ealing as a widow without incumbrance. Dolly junior appeared to calm down under Aunt M'riar's auspices, though every now and then her natural indignation got the better of her self-restraint. Dave junior was disgusted with his sister at first, but softened gradually towards her as she matured.

His father did not long survive the death of his young wife. Even an omnibus-driver is not exempt from inflammation of the