

ney High-street. A man and a girl came down the footpath locked in the most intimate conversation. I could see that they were perfectly absorbed in each other. And I heard the man say:—

“Yes, Charlie is a very good judge of beer—Charlie is!”

And then they were out of hearing, vanished from the realm of my senses for ever more. And yet people complain that the suburbs are dull! As for me, when I grasped the fact that Charlie was a good judge of beer I knew for certain that I was back in England, the foundation of whose greatness we all know. I walked on a little farther and overtook two men, silently smoking pipes. The companionship seemed to be a taciturn communion of spirits, such as Carlyle and Tennyson are said to have enjoyed on a certain historic evening. But I was destined to hear strange messages that night. As I forged ahead of them, one murmured:—

“I done him down a fair treat!”

No more! I loitered to steal the other's answer. But there was no answer. Two intelligences that exist from everlasting to everlasting had momentarily joined the path of my intelligence, and the unique message was that some one had been done down a fair treat. They disappeared into the unknown of Werter-road, and I was left meditating upon the queer coincidence of the word “beer” preceding the word “treat.” A disturbing coincidence, a caprice of hazard! And my mind flew back to a smoking-concert of my later youth, in which