

Poor old daddy!" I thought. But I was not ruined, for that crack on the head was the means of my making my fortune.

I didn't cry over things much, for I am a good shoemaker, and that is always a solid capital. I had a little money in my pocket, and went to San Francisco. I knew my old master would take me back, and he did so. I resumed my old place. There was an auctioneer among his customers with the tenderest feet I ever saw, and as I am a shoemaker, that explains all my good luck. This auctioneer had been grumbling ever since I left San Francisco. When he saw me he was delighted. "At least now," he said, "I am out of my great misery. I shall limp no longer." At once I made him a pair of shoes, and he was delighted.

One day he said to me: "I had an auction yesterday, and I put up without getting a single bidder, a lot of very fine French boots. They won't sell because there is a glut of boots on the market. They were imported a year ago, but the shape is out of fashion now. It was a square toe then, now it is a round one. Do you buy them?"

"How much?" I asked.

"Make your own price."

"But I have no money."

"That makes no difference; you may have them on credit; pay me when you can."

I went to look at those cases of boots. They were of the finest quality, and excellent as to make. Some of them were cavalry boots, but such as only dandy horsemen or General officers wear. Remember, I am a good shoemaker and know my trade. I bought these boots at one dollar per pair. The leather alone was worth twice that. At night I used to work on them. I made the square toes pointed; some of them I cut down into bootees. Oh! I worked night after night on them after hours. Then I hired a small shop and hung up a few pairs in the window.

A Mexican came first. "How much?" "Ten dollars." He took the boots. Then a miner passed. "How much?" "Fifteen dollars." Then a gentleman on a fine horse came by and looked from his horse at the boots, and he tied up his horse and asked, "How much?" "Twenty dollars." He put a double eagle down. I must have made \$2,500 clear on those boots. Then I found more of them—a mine of these boots, and I put in my pocket six thousand dollars in a short time. I worked on for a year and made money in my trade steadily. Then I got married in San Francisco to a woman I loved, and my married life has been a very happy one. It was a pain when I said to my wife: "I must leave you, my love, for a short time—only long enough to pay my dear old daddy a visit." I left my business in her charge. It was a voyage of business and pleasure, for I went to Paris to buy goods.

Poor old daddy! There was the same magpie in the wicker-work basket, and he saluted me, for he remembered me. When I was a little boy I stuck a tail of false feathers on his with some cobbler's wax. He never forgot me, and ruffled his feathers at me as soon as he saw me, as if my insult to him had been of recent date. There was hardly a change in the room. There hung father's old watch, as big as a saucer, ticking away, with a spray of box-wood over it for luck. Then there was on the shelf the same old earthenware jug. The handle I broke one unfortunate day, and a piece of leather was bound round it, and it hung on a nail by a thong. He had the same awl in his hand—at least it was the same handle, for once I came near getting a thrashing for having whittled it. Even an old almanac of a year long gone

past was there, tacked to the wall with shoe brads. He had on the same apron, only it was worn thinner.

The dear old father was bending over his work, pounding slowly at some bit of leather on a last. You could count one, two, three, four, between the hammerings. In my time it was rat-tat-tat, like a drum beating, with no interval between the strokes. I strode in and the old gentleman first looked at my feet; that was a way he had. At a glance, for he was the king of shoemakers, he could take in all the differences between your foot and the feet of the rest of the world. He looked and looked again. He must have recognized a family foot, for I saw his hand tremble, and then he pushed up his great steel-rimmed spectacles, and the tears ran down his cheeks as he rose, and then tottered, and then fell into my arms. How we kissed one another. "My son, my son, you never would have succeeded had you not been a good shoemaker; you never scamped anything; you did the best you could all the time," was what he said when I told him of my good luck. "Like my dear old daddy did before me," I added. Then I kicked over his work bench and said: "No more work for you, old pappy, for I am rich. I have a wife, I have a baby—a boy baby, named after you—and you are to take the cars—first class—to-morrow or the day after-ward, and come post-haste out of the old country to California, so that grandchild shall sit on your knee, and you shall teach him to be honest and pious, and to love you." "And may I not make him a good shoemaker?" he asked. "But you go too fast. Let me think over it. You ask me to leave this old Luxembourg where I was born. I should never see again the grave where your mother, my good wife, has slept for these last thirty odd years. I don't know. I am very old. I should be in the way. I love my old trade. Do they wear shoes in California? May I cobble there? I assure you, though the hog-bristles bother me just a little at times, and my hammer moves just a trifle slower, still I can turn out a decent job. I wonder if I cannot beat you now. Come, let us try."

To please the old man, I took up a bit of work and commenced on it. "It is well done," said father, admiringly. "I see you have not forgotten my lessons. Perhaps that one stitch there is not quite—quite as even as it should be. My remarks don't worry you? Still," and he held in his shabby hands the old boot near his eye, "it will pass muster."

At last the blessed old man consented to go with me. Next day we had a feast in the village. All the old cronies were invited, the cooper, the watchmaker, the butcher, the drover, the tailor and the tax-collector. The Curate gave the party his blessing. Oh, what a good time we had! The old man was radiant. I was introduced to every one as "M.—, the American shoemaker, who had learned his trade in the Luxembourg." We kept it up all that afternoon and late into the evening. It was a feast such as that sleepy old town will remember for many a day. Just occasionally I noticed that the old man weakened when some ancient chum took him by the hand to bid him good-bye. Then I would say "Dear Daddy, it's your grand-child that claims you. How do you expect that he will ever be a good shoemaker without your teaching him?" That was an all-powerful argument. The blessed old man made the trip across the ocean without much fatigue. How glad my wife was to see her husband and father, and, as to the baby, he went at once into his grandpapa's arms.

"Of course, father was too old to work, but still he in-