

"The wine-merchant's cellarage hunder 'Odge the tailor', in Jermyn-street, is mine. But my views is 'igher; 'igher, my lud. They haspires to hupholstery."

"To what?"

"To hupholstery," solemnly went on the ambitious Rooty. "Likewise, with a view to hupholstery, which, bein' neglected in my hown heddication, I am 'avin' my son James givin' classical tootition in one of the best commercial hupholsteries at 'Oxton. Han hupholster, a fash'nable hupholster and hupholster in St. James's-street, I 'ave made up my mind to be."

"And why not an undertaker too, oh, Rooty?"

"Why not, indeed! You may chaff, my lud; but let me tell you that hundertaking comes nateral hafter hupholstery and hupholstery; and let me tell you, that when you get into the line of berryin' dooks and herls, there's a deal of meat on the transaction."

"I don't think you'll get much out of my governor's funeral," the candid Viscount remarked. "Besides, we've had tick at Bantling's for the last three-quarters of a century."

"Hit hain't o' berryin' you h'im thinkin', my lud," replied the greengrocer amiably. "Hi want to put you in the way of makin' a livin'. Do you want to make one?"

"Yes; if I'm not obliged to work for it," he answered with perfect simplicity.

"I'll go ball that you shan't 'ave to work 'arder than ever you did in your life. You don't call goin' hout to dinner 'ard work?"

"No, not very."

"Good! Now, will your ludship go out to dinner at eight o'clock to-morrow evening at the 'ouse of—here he consulted a large account-book—"Singleton Fytch Fytch, Esquire, Boonerges-gate, 'ide park?"

"But I'm not asked, and I don't know the man from Adam."

"Never mind that. You'll be asked by the first post to-morrow mornin'. Will you go? You know a bold suaver wouldn't deceive you. Hand look 'ere, my lud. Hif you want a cool 'undered, jest to set you straight a little, jest put your 'and to a Hi Howe How, and the money's yours as soon as I can get it out of the cash-box in the back parlour."

Mr. Rooty, of Ourzon-street, Mayfair, greengrocer, fruiterer, and florist, interested in the pastrycook's shop over the way, and in the wine-merchant's premises under Mr. Hodge's, the tailor, in Jermyn-street, was not exactly the mocking demagogue; nor had Viscount Bowditch much of the stuff of Dr. Hiccup's Feast in his composition. Still there was a compact entered into between the Viscount and the ambitious greengrocer, that summer afternoon. The next morning Lord Bowditch received at his chambers a card of large dimensions and highly glazed, in which Mr. and Mrs. Singleton Fytch Fytch of Boonerges-gate, Hyde-park, solicited the honour of Viscount Bowditch's company at dinner that evening at eight o'clock, R.A.V.P. And Viscount Bowditch went to the dinner, and enjoyed himself tolerably well at a sumptuous banquet with a host and hostess and a number of guests, none of whom he had ever met before in his life.

The Viscount almost entirely absented himself from his accustomed haunts during the remainder of the season. The gallant dandies, his ex-chums, opined that "Bowley" was "up a tree" and "keeping dark." Some said that he had gone to Australia; others that he was at Homburg, backing rero. Sir Benjamin Backbite declared that Bowditch had married a wealthy old female at Cheltenham, and was doomed to constant attention on her cat; and Joseph Surface, Esq., was truly sorry to think so, but feared—no strongly and sadly feared—that the misguided young man had cut his throat, and that the awful tragedy had been hushed up. It was at Calais, Joseph Surface, Esq., had been told. But though Lord Bowditch was seen no more in the club smoking-room, or at the bow-windows thereof, he had by no means bid adieu to London life. He dined out most assiduously. Lepoul, his valet (from whom, indeed, I obtained the materials for this veracious history), showed me a whole pile of dinner invitations, all of which had been duly accepted and honoured between the months of May and August 18—. For example, there were Mr. and Mrs. Jarvey Caddington, Peckhambury-square; Mr. and Mrs. Treblepippin, Spontella Lodge, Lombard-gardens West; the Misses Hyde, Leatherumercrescent, Tanner's-park; Mr. and Mrs. Figg Sandilands Cottage, Cheshunt; Mr. and Mrs. Warmgroose, the Snipperry, Acton; and many more. Besides the dinners, the Viscount found time to attend during the season no less than a hundred and seventeen "at homes," "assemblies," and "the dances." I have heard, too, that he was on more than one occasion seen at the Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone, and at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough, in the company of ladies and gentlemen gorgeously attired, but personally unknown to the aristocratic acquaintances who, by chance, came across him. Towards the close of the season Lord Tom Tupper (the Marquis of Parnassus's fourth son) being by chance in the City, happened to meet Bowditch alighting from a hansom in Lombard-street. The Viscount seemed anxious to avoid Tom, and hurried up one of the courts of the auriferous thoroughfare. "Now what the dooce was Bowley doing in Lombard-street?" Lord Tom Tupper continually asked during the next fortnight of all the friends who would listen to him. "It ain't possible, we know, that he's got a banking account there; except on the wrong side of the slate."

Tom Tupper, there are more things in heaven and earth than we dream of in your philosophy.

About this time, if you scanned the evening papers, and especially the Observer, carefully, you might light on Viscount Bowditch's name very frequently as a director of the Jemima-Jane Opal Mining Company (Limited), the Universal Discount Association of the New Atlantic, the Credit Fonder of Utopia, the Hand-on-your-Throat Insurance Corporation, and kindred joint-stock enterprises. Lord Viscount Bowditch was President of the Cosmopolitan Washing, Ironing, Clear-starching, and Shirt-button Guarantee Society, and Deputy-chairman of the Intersolar Grand Trunk Railway. Meanwhile his lordship, although he began to look somewhat pale and careworn, was, in a worldly sense, flourishing exceedingly. He drove a mail phaeton with two splendidly-matched bays, and he could have driven four-in-hand had he liked, and have paid for his team too. He had an account at a banking-house in Lombard street (O shallow Tom Tupper!), and that account was on the right side of the slate, and a very round one. Fortune favours the fortunate; and there is nothing that succeeds like success. These may be platitudes; but they are true. Just as Lord Bowditch was beginning to think that he had



"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME DOWN,  
AND GLORY SHONE AROUND."

money enough, a merry little Fanny Clearthorn (to whom he had never, to his honour, been false), the Lord High Chancellor woke up one morning in a perfectly wassel-like state of wakefulness, and delivered a decree which somehow had the effect of moving the Court of Probate, and the Court of Common Pleas, and all manner of subsidiary tribunals, and of arousing the very wildest excitement in Lincoln's-inn and in the Inner and Middle Temple. No less than three leading articles were written in popular daily papers on the Chancellor's judgment; the effect of which was that the embargo so long laid upon the estate of the Honourable Lucrèce Honoria Dunnop, spinster, deceased, was all at once removed, and that a large property—mulcted, however, in a trifle like ten thousand pounds for costs—came into the sole and undivided possession of the Hon. Carlos de Ven Dunnop, commonly called Viscount Bowditch. He was recommended to his noble parents that very evening (how her ladyship wept!), and three weeks afterwards Fanny Clearthorn—the rector of St. George's, Hanover square, aiding and abetting—became Lady Bowditch. Miss Clementina Angelina Argentina Cramshobel remains unmarried. She is the Lady Superior of the Sisterhood of St. Verges, Old Brompton. The good Sisters devoted themselves to educational work; and the Lady Superior, it is said, does not disapprove of corporal chastisement in the training of the young.

But the "Mystery of Viscount Bowditch" Well, there is no longer a Lord Bowditch, or rather, the courtesy-title is now held by a chubby little boy with large blue eyes and curly

flaxen hair, whom you may see sometimes trotting on his Shetland pony in Rotten-row, his bridle held by the stout coachman, mounted on a cob as stout as his side. The Earl of Impycon has gone to the land where debtors are at rest, and Carlos his son—not a "hardened profligate"—reigns in his stead. I think I can best explain the "Mystery" as related to me in his lordship's own words, overheard one morning at breakfast by Lepoul, his man, who, besides, had known all about his master's occult proceedings for a very long time.

"You see, my pet," said his lordship, trifling with a partridge's wing on his plate, "when I left the Guards, and the poor old governor turned me up, and that bankruptcy business—I've paid all the fellows since then, with five per cent interest—was bothering me, I was awfully hard up, and didn't know literally which way to turn. I was thinking of enlisting in the Carabineers, or something desperate of that sort. Well, you know Rooty, the rich auctioneer, upholsterer, and undertaker, in St. James street? He furnished this house, you remember. He's disgustingly rich. They say he's going into Parliament. Well, when I was at the lowest ebb-water, he kept a little greengrocer's shop in Mayfair. He had been butler in our family, you know. Well, he was a good-natured fellow,

## SONG OF THE ANGELS.

LUKE, II. 8-15.

While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around  
Fear not, said he, (for mighty dread  
Had seiz'd their troubled mind.)  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.

To you, in David's town, this day  
Is born of David's line  
The Saviour who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign.  
The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view display'd,  
All meanly wrapt in swathing-bands,  
And in a manger laid.

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith  
Appear'd a shining throng  
Of angels, praising God, and thus  
Address'd their joyful song.  
All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Good-will henceforth from Heaven to men  
Begin, and never cease.

## CLEVEDON CHIMES:

### Their Christmas Peal for 1872.

#### CHAPTER I.

The bells of the village church of Clevedon were ringing out for morning service one brilliant August day, and mingling with their pleasant tones in the hot, lazy air, the voices and songs of the reapers, as they gathered in the golden corn, sounded like fragments of a grateful song.

Clevedon was a small village about twenty miles south of London, so primitive that one could quite imagine it to be at least fifteen times that distance from the great metropolis, and so exquisitely beautiful was its wooded scenery, its lightly swelling downs, and magnificent trees, that a painter might well have chosen it for the model of a perfect English landscape.

There were very few houses in Clevedon, and those few were far apart and solitary, yet all to keeping with the country round. They were old-fashioned homesteads, with gabled roofs and rustic porches, and large spacious rooms, and beamed roundly the well-doing of the various owners.

Far back from the broad, high Portsmouth road, in its park of rare oaks, and surrounded by its ancient trees, stood the Manor of Clevedon, where lived the Squire—the largest landowner in the county—and his little daughter, Sybil.

Close to the square-towered church of Norman architecture which faced the village green, the white stone Vicarage, with its battlemented front, looked out from a wealth of foliage and luxuriant garden on to the silent homes of all the holy dead. Here lived the clergyman—a widower for many years—and his only child.

Squire Clevedon—as the country people usually designated the owner of the Manor—looked often at Miss Rachel Grey in church than at any one or anything else, so rumour said. Be this as it may, Miss Rachel was totally unconscious of it at this period of her story; and if it ever occurred to her father that the sweet face he loved so well was an object of attraction to his rich neighbour, the Squire, it was only as an unpleasant thought to be dismissed, as soon as entertained, into the vague uncertainty from whence it had sprung.

The present owner of Clevedon, it must be explained, was a very recent importation from nobody knew where. To judge from his sunburnt countenance, one might naturally conclude that the greater part of his life—which had, perhaps, extended over some fifty years—had been passed under southern suns; otherwise, all knowledge of his antecedents was merely chimerical. He had succeeded to the Clevedon estates—which were entailed—as the nearest relation of the late owner, although the relationship was somewhat remote, being only a cousin in the fourth or fifth degree. He was not a popular man with his tenants: this is not to say that he was hard upon them, or ground them down to his own estimates of what rents in such a flourishing place should be; but he exacted his "pound of flesh" with scrupulous precision, neither more nor less. Strict, unwavering justice was the rigid rule by which he measured out his duty to his fellow-man. There was no blending in his inflexible heart of the mercy "that blest him that gives, and him that takes"—no reflection in his stern, proud countenance of the gentle virtue that "is an attribute of God Himself." It may be asked, could his own life bear the test of the harsh, uncompromising rule he laid down for others? There are for lives that could, we think. But, to have justice on one side, we must first read to the end of the story before we proceed to pass judgment on the Squire.

The Vicar of Clevedon next arrests our attention; and, in the study of his character, we may come to understand the aversion such a nature as his would have to the harsh cynicism of his neighbor. If it be a failing with some mortals to be unexceptionably charitable and forgiving towards their fellow-creatures, Mr. Grey possessed that failing in all its fullness. If it be an encouragement of vice to hold out the

and lent me some money, and then— Well, when a fellow's hard up he's obliged to do very shady things. I used to go out to dinner for him."

"Go out to dinner for him! What on earth do you mean, Charles?" asked Lady Impycon, kissing her husband's forehead.

"Just what I say," returned his lordship, swiftly avenging by the *lex talionis* the aggravated assault just recorded. "You see, Rooty was a pushing fellow, and had gone into the pastry-cook line, and used to send out dinners. He had no end of customers who had made heaps of money, but had been tradespeople, or something of that sort, and didn't know anybody in what is called 'Society' that they could ask to dine with them, or to come to their parties afterwards. They had lots of girls, but no men. Well, by Jove, if that Rooty didn't serve his customers with guests as well as with dinners, I know he served them with me, and I suppose he put me in the bill. You see I hadn't a penny, but then I was a Lord, and that was something. By degrees, by going to and fro among them, I met a lot of rich City fellows, and then I got made director of a lot of companies; and they used to give me two guineas every time I went down to lunch in the board-room; and besides, I got a lot of paid-up shares, and they used to tell me how to sell them at the right time; and altogether I did very well, till the Chanocery suit turned up trumps; and that's all about it, my darling." *Mime* *few* in the aggravated assault department, as before.

Such was the Mystery of Viscount Bowditch. Tom Tupper, you have not much money. *Ad* *in* *fac* *similior*.