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MEERSCHAUM.

“THE foam of the sea,” or if you choose, the “scum” of sea, is the meaning of the name which poetical Germans gave to this singular substance before English science stepped in and called it “soapstone.”

Forty years ago it was not much known in England; now, combined with amber, it is in the mouth of half the lawyers' clerks in London. It is a wondrous vehicle for tobacco; better even than the root of the *bruyere* or wooden pipe, which is made of the root of the Mediterrean heath, but the name of which has been vulgarized into “briar-root,” and is derived, after all, from the Welsh “brwg,” heather. We repeat that meerschaum is the best vehicle for tobacco: and now the question arises, what is the best tobacco to put into it? The milder, we should say, the better; such tobacco as we have just lit will hurt no one: puff! there goes the cloud. How it rolls up and obscures the prints which hang before me! the dead emperor, with the crucifix on his breast, is no longer visible; the woman looking for the piece of silver has her lamp put out. Lord Dufferin, Bishop Wilberforce, Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Gilbert Scott, have disappeared; Anne Boleyn was being arrested just now, we suppose they have carried her off.

The smoke swells like storm clouds, and rolls about like ocean waves, with no obvious figure at first. Stay, there is one forming, growing more real every instant: now distinct as he was years ago.

A boy, large for his age, say about twelve years, with very bold, fearless, courageous, handsome features, and most remarkable eyes; head well shaped, and well set on, a curly crop of fine hair in want of the barber; dress, two garments only, a ragged shirt, with no buttons, and an old pair of footman's breeches with but a few buttons.

There he stands at the end of the bench, just come in, holding his breeches and shirt together by a clutch with his left hand on his left hip. We have never seen him before. On the tramp? no, his well-shaped feet show no signs of it. A thief? no, he would be better dressed. Tried with a hymn-book upside down, he knows no difference, but says that he came there to see if the gentlemen would teach him something to get his living by. The demand for technical education being postponed until the proper time, the boy is asked if he knows anything; he replies that he learnt some of the Catechism; here is an opening:

“What is your name?”