UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

A SON OF HAGAR.	*Hall Caine.*
THE PRINCESS SOPHIA.	*E. F. Benson.*
SIR GEORGE TRESSADY.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
THE FARM OF THE DAGGER.	*Eden Phillpotts.*
THE EXPENSIVE MISS DU CANE.	*S. Macnaughtan.*
LADY ROSE'S DAUGHTER.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
THE PROFESSOR ON THE CASE.	*Jacques Futrelle.*
LOVE AND THE SOUL HUNTERS.	*John O. Hobbes.*
THE SECRET OF THE LEAGUE.	*Ernest Bramah.*
VALERIE UPTON.	*Miss A. D. Sedgwick.*
THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON.	*H. G. Wells.*
KATHARINE FRENSHAM.	*Beatrice Harraden.*
THE WAR OF THE CAROLINAS.	*Meredith Nicholson.*
HISTORY OF DAVID GRIEVE.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
ROMANCE.	*Joseph Conrad.*
THE PRIMROSE PATH.	*Mrs. Oliphant.*
KIPPS.	*H. G. Wells.*
MARRIAGE OF WILLIAM ASHE.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
THOMPSON'S PROGRESS.	*C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne.*
CYNTHIA'S WAY.	*Mrs. A. Sidgwick.*
RAFFLES.	*E. W. Hornung.*
FRENCH NAN.	*Agnes & Egerton Castle.*
THE FOOD OF THE GODS.	*H. G. Wells.*
MARCELLA.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
SPRINGTIME.	*H. C. Bailey.*
MOONFLEET.	*J. Meade Falkner.*
WHITE FANG.	*Jack London.*
LOVE AND MR. LEWISHAM.	*H. G. Wells.*
ROBERT ELSMERE.	*Mrs. Humphry Ward.*
THE AMERICAN PRISONER.	*Eden Phillpotts.*
FORTUNE OF CHRISTINA M'NAB.	*S. Macnaughtan.*
THE AMERICAN.	*Henry James.*
SELAH HARRISON.	*S. Macnaughtan.*

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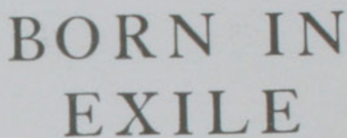
The routine of his life disgusted him, and the hope of release was a mockery.



BORN IN EXILE

GEORGE GISSING

THOMAS NELSON AND
SONS

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PART I

BORN IN EXILE

I

THE summer day in 1874 which closed the annual session of Whitelaw College was marked by a special ceremony, preceding the wonted distribution of academic rewards. At eleven in the morning (just as a heavy shower fell from the smoke-canopy above the roaring streets) the municipal authorities, educational dignitaries, and prominent burgesses of Kingsmill assembled on an open space before the college to unveil a statue of Sir Job Whitelaw. The honoured baronet had been six months dead. Living, he opposed the desire of his fellow-citizens to exhibit even on canvas his gnarled features and bald crown; but when his modesty ceased to have a voice in the matter, no time was lost in raising a memorial of the great manufacturer, the self-made millionaire, the borough member in three Parliaments, the enlightened and benevolent founder of an institute which had conferred humane distinction on the money-making Midland town. Beneath such a sky, orations were necessarily curtailed; but Sir Job had always been impatient of much talk. An interval of two or three hours dispersed the rain-clouds and bestowed such grace of sunshine as Kingsmill might at this season temperately desire; then, whilst the marble figure was

getting dried,—with soot-stains which already foretold its nigritude of a year hence,—again streamed towards the college a varied multitude, official, parental, pupillary. The students had nothing distinctive in their garb, but here and there flitted the cap and gown of Professor or lecturer, signal for doffing of beavers along the line of its progress.

Among the more deliberate of the throng was a slender, upright, ruddy-cheeked gentleman of middle age, accompanied by his wife and a daughter of sixteen. On alighting from a carriage, they first of all directed their steps towards the statue, conversing together with pleasant animation. The father (Martin Warricombe, Esq. of Thornhaw, a small estate some five miles from Kingsmill) had a countenance suggestive of engaging qualities—genial humour, mildness, a turn for meditation, perhaps for study. His attire was informal, as if he disliked abandoning the freedom of the country even when summoned to urban ceremonies. He wore a grey felt hat, and a light jacket which displayed the straightness of his shoulders. Mrs. Warricombe and her daughter were more fashionably equipped, with taste which proclaimed their social standing. Save her fresh yet delicate complexion the lady had no particular personal charm. Of the young girl it could only be said that she exhibited a graceful immaturity, with perchance a little more earnestness than is common at her age; her voice, even when she spoke gaily, was seldom audible save by the person addressed.

Coming to a pause before Sir Job, Mr. Warricombe put on a pair of eyeglasses which had dangled against his waistcoat, and began to scrutinise carefully the sculptured lineaments. He was addressing certain critical remarks to his companions when an interruption appeared in the form of a young man whose first words announced his relation to the group.

'I say, you're very late! There'll be no getting a

decent seat, if you don't mind. Leave Sir Job till afterwards.'

'The statue somehow disappoints me,' observed his father, placidly.

'Oh, it isn't bad, I think,' returned the youth, in a voice not unlike his father's, save for a note of excessive self-confidence. He looked about eighteen; his comely countenance, with its air of robust health and habitual exhilaration, told of a boyhood passed amid free and joyous circumstances. It was the face of a young English plutocrat, with more of intellect than such visages are wont to betray; the native vigour of his temperament had probably assimilated something of the modern spirit. 'I'm glad,' he continued, 'that they haven't stuck him in a toga, or any humbug of that sort. The old fellow looks baggy, but so he was. They ought to have kept his chimney-pot, though. Better than giving him those scraps of hair, when everyone knows he was as bald as a beetle.'

'Sir Job should have been granted Cæsar's privilege,' said Mr. Warricombe, with a pleasant twinkle in his eyes.

'What was that?' came from the son, with abrupt indifference.

'For shame, Buckland!'

'What do I care for Cæsar's privileges? We can't burden our minds with that antiquated rubbish nowadays. You would despise it yourself, father, if it hadn't got packed into your head when you were young.'

The parent raised his eyebrows in a bantering smile.

'I have lived to hear classical learning called antiquated rubbish. Well, well!—Ha! there is Professor Gale.'

The Professor of Geology, a tall man, who strode over the pavement as if he were among granite hills, caught sight of the party and approached. His greeting was that of a familiar friend; he addressed young Warri-

combe and his sister by their Christian names, and inquired after certain younger members of the household. Mr. Warricombe, regarding him with a look of repressed eagerness, laid a hand on his arm, and spoke in the subdued voice of one who has important news to communicate.

'If I am not much mistaken, I have chanced on a new species of *hamalonctus!*'

'Indeed!—not in your kitchen garden, I presume?'

'Hardly. Dr. Pollock sent me a box of specimens the other day'——

Buckland saw with annoyance the likelihood of prolonged discussion.

'I don't know whether you care to remain standing all the afternoon,' he said to his mother. 'At this rate we certainly shan't get seats.'

'We will walk on, Martin,' said the lady, glancing at her husband.

'We come! we come!' cried the Professor, with a wave of his arm.

The palæontological talk continued as far as the entrance of the assembly hall. The zest with which Mr. Warricombe spoke of his discovery never led him to raise his voice above the suave, mellow note, touched with humour, which expressed a modest assurance. Mr. Gale was distinguished by a blunter mode of speech; he discoursed with open-air vigour, making use now and then of a racy colloquialism which the other would hardly have permitted himself.

As young Warricombe had foreseen, the seats obtainable were none too advantageous; only on one of the highest rows of the amphitheatre could they at length establish themselves.

'Buckland will enjoy the more attention when he marches down to take his prizes,' observed the father. 'He must sit at the end here, that he mayn't have a struggle to get out.'

'Don't, Martin, don't!' urged his wife, considerately.

'Oh, it doesn't affect me,' said Buckland, with a laugh. 'I feel pretty sure I have got the Logic and the Chemistry, and those are what I care most about. I dare say Peak has beaten me in Geology.'

The appearance in the lower part of the hall of a dark-robed procession, headed by the tall figure of the Principal, imposed a moment's silence, broken by outbursts of welcoming applause. The Professors of Whitelaw College were highly popular, not alone with the members of their classes, but with all the educated inhabitants of Kingsmill; and deservedly, for several of them bore names of wide recognition, and as a body they did honour to the institution which had won their services. With becoming formality they seated themselves in face of the public. On tables before them were exposed a considerable number of well-bound books, shortly to be distributed among the collegians, who gazed in that direction with speculative eyes.

Among the general concourse might have been discovered two or three representatives of the wage-earning multitude which Kingsmill depended upon for its prosperity, but their presence was due to exceptional circumstances; the college provided for proletarian education by a system of evening classes, a curriculum necessarily quite apart from that followed by the regular students. Kingsmill, to be sure, was no nurse of Toryism; the robust employers of labour who sent their sons to Whitelaw—either to complete a training deemed sufficient for an active career, or by way of transition-stage between school and university—were for the most part avowed Radicals, in theory scornful of privilege, practically supporters of that mode of freedom which regards life as a remorseless conflict. Not a few of the young men (some of these the hardest and most successful workers) came from poor, middle-class homes, whence, but for Sir Job's foundation, they must have

set forth into the world with no better equipment of knowledge than was supplied by some 'academy' of the old type: a glance distinguished such students from the well-dressed and well-fed offspring of Kingsmill plutocracy. The note of the assembly was something other than refinement; rather, its high standard of health, spirits, and comfort—the characteristic of Capitalism. Decent reverence for learning, keen appreciation of scientific power, warm liberality of thought and sentiment within appreciable limits, enthusiasm for economic, civic, national ideals,—such attributes were abundantly discoverable in each serried row. From the expanse of countenances beamed a boundless self-satisfaction. To be connected in any way with Whitelaw formed a subject of pride, seeing that here was the sturdy outcome of the most modern educational endeavour, a noteworthy instance of what Englishmen can do for themselves, unaided by bureaucratic machinery. Every student who achieved distinction in to-day's class lists was felt to bestow a share of his honour upon each spectator who applauded him.

With occasional adjustment of his eyeglasses, and smiling his smile of modest tolerance, Mr. Warricombe surveyed the crowded hall. His connection with the town was not intimate, and he could discover few faces that were familiar to him. A native and, till of late, an inhabitant of Devon, he had come to reside on his property near Kingsmill because it seemed to him that the education of his children would be favoured by a removal thither. Two of his oldest friends held professorships at Whitelaw; here, accordingly, his eldest son was making preparation for Cambridge, whilst his daughter attended classes at the admirable High School, of which Kingsmill was only less proud than of its College.

Seated between his father and his sister, Buckland drew their attention to such persons or personages as interested his very selective mind.

'Admire the elegant languor of Wotherspoon,' he remarked, indicating the Professor of Greek. 'Watch him for a moment, and you'll see him glance contemptuously at old Plummer. He can't help it; they hate each other.'

'But why?' whispered the girl, with timid eagerness.

'Oh, it began, they say, when Plummer once had to take one of Wotherspoon's classes; some foolery about a second aorist. Thank goodness, I don't understand the profound dispute.—Oh, do look at that fatuous idiot Chilvers!'

The young gentleman of whom he spoke, a student of Buckland's own standing, had just attracted general notice. Rising from his seat in the lower part of the amphitheatre, at the moment when all were hushed in anticipation of the Principal's address, Mr. Chilvers was beckoning to someone whom his eye had descried at a great distance, and for whom, as he indicated by gesture, he had preserved a place.

'See how it delights him to make an exhibition of himself!' pursued the censorious youth. 'I'd bet a sovereign he's arranged it all. Look how he brandishes his arm to display his cuffs and gold links. Now he touches his hair, to point out how light and exquisite it is, and how beautifully he parts it!'

'What a graceful figure!' murmured Mrs. Warricombe, with genuine admiration.

'There, that's just what he hopes everyone is saying,' replied her son, in a tone of laughing disgust.

'But he certainly *is* graceful, Buckland,' persisted the lady.

'And in the meantime,' remarked Mr. Warricombe, drily, 'we are all awaiting the young gentleman's pleasure.'

'Of course; he enjoys it. Almost all the people on that row belong to him—father, mother, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and cousins to the fourth degree. Look at their eyes fondly fixed upon him! Now he pretends

to loosen his collar at the throat, just for a change of attitude—the puppy!'

'My dear!' remonstrated his mother, with apprehensive glance at her neighbours.

'But he is really clever, isn't he, Buckland?' asked the sister,—her name was Sidwell.

'After a fashion. I shouldn't wonder if he takes a dozen or two prizes. It's all a knack, you know.'

'Where is your friend Peak?' Mr. Warricombe made inquiry.

But at this moment Mr. Chilvers abandoned his endeavour and became seated, allowing the Principal to rise, manuscript in hand. Buckland leaned back with an air of resignation to boredom; his father bent slightly forward, with lips close pressed and brows wrinkled; Mrs. Warricombe widened her eyes, as if hearing were performed with those organs, and assumed the smile she would have worn had the speaker been addressing her in particular. Sidwell's blue eyes imitated the movement of her mother's, with a look of profound gravity which showed that she had wholly forgotten herself in reverential listening; only when five minutes' strict attention induced a sense of weariness did she allow a glance to stray first along the professorial rank, then towards the place where the golden head of young Chilvers was easily distinguishable.

Nothing could be more satisfactory than the annual report summarised by Principal Nares, whose mellifluous voice and daintily pedantic utterance fell upon expectant hearing with the impressiveness of personal compliment. So delivered, statistics partook of the grace of culture; details of academic organisation acquired something more than secular significance. In this the ninth year of its existence, Whitelaw College was flourishing in every possible way. Private beneficence had endowed it with new scholarships and exhibitions; the scheme of lectures had been extended; the number of its students

steadily increased, and their successes in the field of examination had been noteworthy beyond precedent. Truly, the heart of their founder, to whom honour had this day been rendered, must have gladdened if he could but have listened to the story of dignified progress! Applause, loud and long, greeted the close of the address. Buckland Warricombe was probably the only collegian who disdained to manifest approval in any way.

'Why don't you clap?' asked his sister, who, girl-like, was excited to warmth of cheek and brightness of eye by the enthusiasm about her.

'That kind of thing is out of date,' replied the young man, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets.

As Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy, Dr. Nares began the distribution of prizes. Buckland, in spite of his resolve to exhibit no weakness, waited with unmistakable tremor for the announcement of the leading name, which might possibly be his own. A few words of comment prefaced the declaration—never had it been the Professor's lot to review more admirable papers than those to which he had awarded the first prize. The name of the student called upon to come forward was—Godwin Peak.

'Beaten!' escaped from Buckland's lips.

Mrs. Warricombe glanced at her son with smiling sympathy; Sidwell, whose cheek had paled as her nerves quivered under the stress of expectancy, murmured a syllable of disappointment; Mr. Warricombe set his brows and did not venture to look aside. A moment, and all eyes were directed upon the successful student, who rose from a seat half-way down the hall and descended the middle passage towards the row of Professors. He was a young man of spare figure and unhealthy complexion, his age not easily conjectured. Embarrassment no doubt accounted for much of the awkwardness of his demeanour; but, under any circumstances, he must have appeared ungainly, for his

long arms and legs had outgrown their garments, which were no fashionable specimens of tailoring. The nervous gravity of his countenance had a peculiar sternness; one might have imagined that he was fortifying his self-control with scorn of the elegantly clad people through whom he passed. Amid plaudits, he received from the hands of the Principal a couple of solid volumes, probably some standard work of philosophy, and, thus burdened, returned with hurried step to his place.

'No one expected that,' remarked Buckland to his father. 'He must have crammed furiously for the exam. It's outside his work for the First B.A.'

'What a shame!' Sidwell whispered to her mother; and the reply was a look which eloquently expressed Mrs. Warricombe's lack of sympathy with the victor.

But a second prize had been awarded. As soon as silence was restored, the Principal's gracious voice delivered a summons to 'Buckland Martin Warricombe.' A burst of acclamation, coming especially from that part of the amphitheatre where Whitelaw's nurslings had gathered in greatest numbers, seemed to declare the second prize-man distinctly more popular than the first. Preferences of this kind are always to be remarked on such occasions.

'Second prize be hanged!' growled the young man, as, with a flush of shame on his ruddy countenance, he set forth to receive the honour, leaving Mr. Warricombe convulsed with silent laughter.

'He would far rather have had nothing at all,' murmured Sidwell, who shared her brother's pique and humiliation.

'Oh, it'll do him good,' was her father's reply. 'Buckland has got into a way of swaggering.'

Undeniable was the swagger with which the good-looking, breezy lad went and returned.

'What is the book?' inquired Mr. Warricombe.

'I don't know.—Oh, Mill's Logic. Idiotic choice! They might have known I had it already.'

'They clap him far more than they did Mr. Peak,' Sidwell whispered to her mother, with satisfaction.

Buckland kept silence for a few minutes, then muttered:

'There's nothing I care about now till Chemistry and Geology. Here comes old Wotherspoon. Now we shall know who is strongest in second aorists. I shouldn't wonder if Peak takes both Senior Greek and Latin. I heartily hope he'll beat that ass Chilvers.'

But the name so offensive to young Warricombe was the first that issued from the Professor's lips. Beginning with the competition for a special classical prize, Professor Wotherspoon announced that the honours had fallen to 'Bruno Leathwaite Chilvers.'

'That young man is not badly supplied with brains, say what you will,' remarked Mr. Warricombe.

Upon Bruno Leathwaite Chilvers keen attention was directed; every pair of female eyes studied his graces, and female hands had a great part in the applause that greeted his arising. Applause different in kind from that hitherto bestowed; less noisy, but implying, one felt, a more delicate spirit of commendation. With perfect self-command, with singular facial decorum, with a walk which betokened elegant athleticism and safely skirted the bounds of foppery, Mr. Chilvers discharged the duty he was conscious of owing to a multitude of kinsfolk, friends, admirers. You would have detected something clerical in the young man's air. It became the son of a popular clergyman, and gave promise of notable aptitude for the sacred career to which Bruno Leathwaite, as was well understood, already had designed himself. In matters sartorial he presented a high ideal to his fellow-students; this seemly attention to externals, and the delicate glow of health discernible through the golden down of his cheeks, testified the compatibility of hard study and social observances. Bruno had been heard to say that the one thing it behoved Whitelaw to

keep carefully in mind was the preservation of 'tone,' a quality far less easy to cultivate than mere academic excellence.

'How clever he must be!' purred Mrs. Warricombe. 'If he lives, he will some day be an archbishop.'

Buckland was leaning back with his eyes closed, disgusted at the spectacle. Nor did he move when Professor Wotherspoon's voice made the next announcement.

'In Senior Greek, the first prize is taken by—Bruno Leathwaite Chilvers.'

'Then I suppose Peak comes second,' muttered Buckland.

So it proved. Summoned to receive the inferior prize, Godwin Peak, his countenance harsher than before, his eyes cast down, moved ungracefully to the estrade. And during the next half-hour this twofold exhibition was several times repeated. In Senior Latin, in Modern and Ancient History, in English Language and Literature, in French, first sounded the name of Chilvers, whilst to the second award was invariably attached that of Peak. Mrs. Warricombe's delight expressed itself in every permissible way: on each occasion she exclaimed, 'How clever he is!' Sidwell cast frequent glances at her brother, in whom a shrewder eye could have divined conflict of feelings—disgust at the glorification of Chilvers and involuntary pleasure in the successive defeats of his own conqueror in Philosophy. Buckland's was by no means an ignoble face; venial malice did not ultimately prevail in him.

'It's Peak's own fault,' he declared at length, with vexation. 'Chilvers stuck to the subjects of his course. Peak has been taking up half-a-dozen extras, and they've done for him. I shouldn't wonder if he went in for the Poem and the Essay: I know he was thinking about both.'

Whether Godwin Peak had or had not endeavoured

for these two prizes remained uncertain. When, presently, the results of the competition were made known it was found that in each case the honour had fallen to a young man hitherto undistinguished. His name was John Edward Earwaker. Externally he bore a sort of generic resemblance to Peak, for his face was thin and the fashion of his clothing indicated narrow means.

'I never heard you mention him,' said Mr. Warricombe, turning to his son with an air of surprise.

'I scarcely know him at all; he's only in one or two of my classes. Peak is thick with him.'

The subject of the prize poem was 'Alaric'; that of the essay, 'Trades Unionism.' So it was probable that John Edward Earwaker did not lack versatility of intellect.

On the rising of the Professor of Chemistry, Buckland had once more to subdue signs of expectancy. He knew he had done good papers, but his confidence in the result was now clouded by a dread of the second prize—which indeed fell to him, the first being taken by a student of no account save in this special subject. Keen was his mortification; he growled, muttered, shrugged his shoulders nervously.

'If I had foreseen this, you'd never have caught me here,' was his reply, when Sidwell whispered consolation.

There still remained a chance for him, signalled by the familiar form of Professor Gale. Geology had been a lifelong study with Martin Warricombe, and his son pursued it with hereditary aptitude. Sidwell and her mother exchanged a look of courageous hope; each felt convinced that the genial Professor could not so far disregard private feeling as to place Buckland anywhere but at the head of the class.

'The results of the examination are fairly good; I'm afraid I can't say more than that,' thus rang out Mr. Gale's hearty voice. 'As for the first two names on my list, I haven't felt justified in placing either before the

other. I have bracketed them, and there will be two prizes. The names are—Godwin Peak and Buckland Martin Warricombe.'

'He might have mentioned Buckland first,' murmured Mrs. Warricombe, resentfully.

'He of course gave them out in alphabetical order,' answered her husband.

'Still, it isn't right that Buckland should come second.'

'That's absurd,' was the good-natured reply.

The lady of course remained unconvinced, and for years she nourished a pique against Professor Gale, not so much owing to his having bracketed her son as because the letter P has alphabetical precedence of W.

In what remained of the proceedings the Warricombes had no personal interest. For a special reason, however, their attention was excited by the rising of Professor Walsh, who represented the science of Physics. Early in the present year had been published a speculative treatise, which, owing to its supposed incompatibility with Christian dogmas, provoked much controversy and was largely discussed in all educated circles. The work was anonymous, but a rumour which gained general currency attributed it to Professor Walsh. In the year 1874 an imputation of religious heresy was not lightly to be incurred by a Professor—even Professor of Physics—at an English College. There were many people in Kingsmill who considered that Mr. Walsh's delay in repudiating so grave a charge rendered very doubtful the propriety of his retaining the chair at Whitelaw. Significant was the dispersed applause which followed slowly upon his stepping forward to-day; on the Professor's face was perchance legible something like a hint of amused defiance. Ladies had ceased to beam; they glanced meaningly at one another, and then from under their eyelids at the supposed heretic.

'A fine fellow, Walsh!' exclaimed Buckland, clapping vigorously.

His father smiled, but with some uneasiness. Mrs. Warricombe whispered to Sidwell:

'What a very disagreeable face! The only one of the Professors who doesn't seem a gentleman.'

The girl was aware of dark reports affecting Mr. Walsh's reputation. She hazarded only a brief examination of his features, and looked at the applauding Buckland with alarm.

'His lectures are splendid,' said her brother, emphatically. 'If I were going to be here next session I should take them.'

For some minutes after the Professor's return to his seat a susurration was audible throughout the hall; bonnets bent together, and beards exchanged curt comments.

The ceremony, as is usual with all ceremonies, grew wearisome before its end. Buckland was deep in one of the chapters of his geologic prize when the last speaker closed the last report and left the assembly free to disperse. Then followed the season of congratulations: Professors, students, and the friendly public mingled in a conversazione. A nucleus of vivacious intercourse formed at the spot where young Mr. Chilvers stood amid trophies of examinational prowess. When his numerous relatives had all shaken hands with him, and laughed, smiled, or smirked their felicitations, they made way for the press of eager acquaintances. His prize library was reverently surveyed, and many were the sportive sallies elicited by the victor's obvious inability to carry away what he had won. Suavely exultant, ready with his reply to every flattering address, Bruno Chilvers exhibited a social tact in advance of his years: it was easy to imagine what he would become when Oxford terms and the seal of ordination had matured his youthful promise.

At no great distance stood his competitor, Godwin Peak—embarrassed, he also, with wealth of spoils; but

about this young man was no concourse of admiring kinsfolk. No lady offered him her hand or shaped compliments for him with gracious lips. Half-a-dozen fellow-students, among them John Earwaker, talked in his vicinity of the day's results. Peak's part in the gossip was small, and when he smiled it was in a forced, anxious way, with brief raising of his eyes. For a moment only was the notice of a wider circle directed upon him when Dr. Nares, moving past with a train of colloquial attendants, turned aside to repeat his praise of the young man's achievements in Philosophy: he bestowed a kindly shake of the hand, and moved on.

The Warricombe group descended, in purposeless fashion, towards the spot where Chilvers held his court. Their personal acquaintance with Bruno and his family was slight, and though Mrs. Warricombe would gladly have pushed forward to claim recognition, natural diffidence restrained her. Sidwell kept in the rear, risking now and then a glance of vivid curiosity on either hand. Buckland, striving not to look petulant or sullen, allowed himself to be led on; but when he became aware of the tendency Bruno-wards, a protest broke from him.

'There's no need to swell that fellow's conceit. Here, father, come and have a word with Peak; he looks rather down in the mouth among his second prizes.'

Mr. Warricombe having beckoned his companions, they reluctantly followed to the more open part of the hall.

'It's very generous of Buckland,' fell from the lady's lips, and she at length resolved to show an equal magnanimity. Peak and Earwaker were conversing together when Buckland broke in upon them with genial outburst.

'Confound it, Peak! what do you mean by getting me stuck into a bracket?'

'I had the same question to ask *you*,' returned the other, with a grim smile.

Mr. Warricombe came up with extended hand.

'A species of bracket,' he remarked, smiling benevolently, 'which no algebraic process will remove. Let us hope it signifies that you and Buckland will work through life shoulder to shoulder in the field of geology. What did Professor Gale give you?'

Before he could reply, Peak had to exchange greetings with Mrs. Warricombe and her daughter. Only once hitherto had he met them. Six months ago he had gone out with Buckland to the country-house and passed an afternoon there, making at the time no very favourable impression on his hostess. He was not of the young men who easily insinuate themselves into ladies' affections: his exterior was against him, and he seemed too conscious of his disadvantages in that particular. Mrs. Warricombe found it difficult to shape a few civil phrases for the acceptance of the saturnine student. Sidwell, repelled and in a measure alarmed by his bilious countenance, could do no more than grant him her delicately gloved fingers. Peak, for his part, had nothing to say. He did not even affect an interest in these persons, and turned his eyes to follow the withdrawing Earwaker. Mr. Warricombe, however, had found topic for discourse in the prize volume; he began to comment on the excellence of certain sections of the book.

'Do you go home?' interrupted Buckland, addressing the question to his rival. 'Or do you stay in Kingsmill until the First B.A.?'

'I shall go home,' replied Peak, moving uneasily.

'Perhaps we may have the pleasure of seeing you at Thornhaw when you are up again for the examination?' said Mrs. Warricombe, with faltering tongue.

'I'm afraid I shan't be able to come, thank you,' was the awkward response

Buckland's voice came to the relief.

'I daresay I may look in upon you at your torture. Good luck, old fellow! If we don't see each other again, write to me at Trinity before the end of the year.'

As soon as she was sufficiently remote, Mrs. Warricombe ejaculated in a subdued voice of irritation:

'Such a very unprepossessing young man I never met! He seems to have no breeding whatever.'

'Overweighted with brains,' replied her husband; adding to himself, 'and by no means so with money, I fear.'

Opportunity at length offering, Mrs. Warricombe stepped into the circle irradiated by Bruno Chilvers; her husband and Sidwell pressed after. Buckland, with an exclamation of disgust, went off to criticise the hero among a group of his particular friends.

Godwin Peak stood alone. On the bench where he had sat were heaped the prize volumes (eleven in all, some of them massive), and his wish was to make arrangements for their removal. Gazing about him, he became aware of the college librarian, with whom he was on friendly terms.

'Mr. Poppleton, who would pack and send these books away for me?'

'An *embarras de richesse!*' laughed the librarian. 'If you like to tell the porter to take care of them for the present, I shall be glad to see that they are sent wherever you like.'

Peak answered with a warmth of acknowledgment which seemed to imply that he did not often receive kindnesses. Before long he was free to leave the College, and at the exit he overtook Earwaker, who carried a brown paper parcel.

'Come and have some tea with me across the way, will you?' said the literary prizeman. 'I have a couple of hours to wait for my train.'

'All right. I envy you that five-volume Spenser.'

'I wish they had given me five authors I don't possess instead. I think I shall sell this.'

Earwaker laughed as he said it—a strange chuckle from deep down in his throat. A comparison of the

young men, as they walked side by side, showed that Peak was of better physical type than his comrade. Earwaker had a slight, unshapely body and an ill-fitting head; he walked with excessive strides and swung his thin arm nervously. Probably he was the elder of the two, and he looked twenty. For Peak's disadvantages of person, his studious bashfulness and poverty of attire were mainly responsible. With improvement in general health even his features might have a tolerable comeliness, or at all events would not be disagreeable. Earwaker's visage was homely, and seemed the more so for his sprouting moustache and beard.

'Have you heard any talk about Walsh?' the latter inquired, as they walked on.

Peak shrugged his shoulders, with a laugh.

'No. Have you?'

'Some women in front of me just now were evidently discussing him. I heard "How shocking!" and "Disgraceful!"'

Peak's eyes flashed, and he exclaimed in a voice of wrath:

'Besotted idiots! How I wish I were in Walsh's position! How I should enjoy standing up before the crowd of fools and seeing their fear of me! But I couldn't keep it to myself; I should give in to the temptation to call them blockheads and jackasses.'

Earwaker was amused at his friend's vehemence. He sympathised with it, but had an unyouthful sobriety in the expression of his feelings.

'Most likely he despises them far too much to be disturbed by what they think of him. But, I say, isn't it desperately comical that one human being can hate and revile another because they think differently about the origin of the universe? Couldn't you roar with laughter when you've thought over it for a moment? "You be damned for your theory of irregular verbs!" is nothing to it.' And he uttered his croak of mirth,

whilst Peak, with distorted features, laughed in rage and scorn.

They had crossed the open space in front of the College buildings, and were issuing into the highway, when a voice very unlike those that were wont to sound within the academic precincts (or indeed in the streets of Kingsmill) made sudden demand upon Peak's attention.

'Thet you, Godwin? Thoughts I, it must be 'im! 'Ow goes it, my bo–oy? You 'ardly reckonise me, I dessay, and I couldn't be sure as it was you till I'd 'ed a good squint at yer. I've jest called round at your lodgin's, and they towld me as you was at the Collige.'

He who thus accosted the student, with the most offensive purity of Cockney accent, was a man of five-and-forty, dressed in a new suit of ready-made tweeds, the folding crease strongly marked down the front of the trousers and the coat sleeves rather too long. His face bore a strong impress of vulgarity, but at the same time had a certain ingenuousness, a self-absorbed energy and simplicity, which saved it from being wholly repellent; the brow was narrow, the eyes small and bright, and the coarse lips half hid themselves under a struggling reddish growth. In these lineaments lurked a family resemblance to Godwin Peak, sufficient to support a claim of kindred which at this moment might have seemed improbable. At the summons of recognition Godwin stood transfixed; his arms fell straight, and his head drew back as if to avoid a blow. For an instant he was clay colour, then a hot flush broke upon his cheeks.

'I shan't be able to go with you,' he said, in a thick abrupt voice, addressing Earwaker but not regarding him. 'Good-bye!'

The other offered his hand and, without speaking, walked away.

'Prize-dye at the Collige, they tell me,' pursued God-

win's relative, looking at a cluster of people that passed. 'What 'ave you took?'

'One or two class-prizes,' replied the student, his eyes on the ground. 'Shall we walk to my lodgings?'

'I thought you might like to walk me over the show. But pr'aps you're in a 'urry?'

'No, no. But there's nothing particular to see. I think the lecture-rooms are closed by now.'

'Oo's the gent as stands there?—the figger, I mean.'

'Sir Job Whitelaw, founder of the College.'

'Job, eh? And was you a-goin' 'ome to yer tea, Godwin?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, look 'ere, 'spose we go to the little shop opposyte—nice little plyce it looks. I could do a cup o' tea myself, and we can 'ev a quiet confab. It's a long time since we 'ed a talk together. I come over from Twybridge this mornin'; slep' there last night, and saw yer mother an' Oliver. They couldn't give me a bed, but that didn't mike no matter; I put up at the Norfolk Harms—five-an-six for bed an' breakfast. Come along, my bo–oy; I stand treat.'

Godwin glanced about him. From the College was approaching what seemed to be a formal procession; it consisted of Bruno Chilvers, supported on either hand by ladies and followed by an admiring train.

'You had better come to my lodgings with me, uncle,' said the young man hurriedly, moving forward.

'No, no; I won't be no expense to you, Godwin, bo–oy. And I 'ave a reason for wantin' to go to the little shop opposyte.'

Already several collegians had passed, giving Peak a nod and scanning his companion; a moment's delay and Chilvers would be upon him. Without another word, Godwin moved across the broad street to the place of refreshment which his uncle had indicated, and whither Earwaker had preceded them. It was a pastry-

cook's, occasionally visited by the alumni of Whitelaw. In the rear of the shop a little room offered seats and tables, and here, Godwin knew, Earwaker would be found.

'Let us go up-stairs,' he said, leading to a side entrance. 'There's a quieter room.'

'Right you are!'

The uncle—his name was Andrew Peak—paused to make a survey of the premises. When he entered, his scrutiny of the establishment was close, and he seemed to reflect with interest upon all he saw. The upper room was empty; a long table exhibited knives and forks, but there were no signs of active business. Andrew pulled a bell-rope; the summons was answered by an asthmatic woman, who received an order for tea, toast, 'water-creases,' and sundry other constituents of a modest meal.

'Come 'ere often, Godwin?' inquired Andrew, as he stood by the window and mused.

'Now and then, for a bun.'

'Much custom from your show over the wye?'

'Not so much as a better place would have.'

'Young gents don't live at the Collige, they tell me?'

'No, there's no residence.'

'So naturally they want a plyce where they can 'ev a nibble, somewheres 'andy?'

'Yes. We have to go further into the town for a decent dinner.'

'Jest what I thought!' exclaimed Andrew, slapping his leg. 'With a establishment like that opposyte, there'd ought to be a medium-sized Spiers & Pond at this 'ere street corner for any man as knows 'is wye about. That's *my* idea, Godwin—see?'

Peak had as yet given but half an ear to his relative's discourse; he had answered mechanically, and only now was constrained to serious attention by a note of meaning in the last interrogative. He looked at the speaker;

and Andrew, in the manner of one accustomed to regard life as a game of cunning, first winked with each eye, then extended one cheek with the pressure of his tongue. Sickened with disgust, Godwin turned suddenly away,—a movement entirely lost upon his uncle, who imagined the young man to be pondering a fruitful suggestion.

'I don't mind tellin' you, Godwin,' pursued Andrew presently, in a cautious voice, laying an open hand against his trousers-pocket, 'as I've been a-doin' pretty good business lytely. Been growin' a bit—see? I'm runnin' round an' keepin' my heyes open—understand? Thoughts I, now, if I could come acrosst a nicet little openin', somethink in the rest'rant line, *that's* what 'ud sewt me jest about down to the ground. I'm cut out for it—see? I've got the practical experience, and I've got the capital; and as soon as I got a squint of this little corner shop—understand what I mean?'

His eyes gleamed with eagerness which was too candid for the typically vulgar mind. In his self-satisfaction he exhibited a gross cordiality which might have made rather an agreeable impression on a person otherwise disinterested.

At this point the asthmatic woman reappeared, carrying a laden tray. Andrew at once entered into conversation with her, framing his remarks and queries so as to learn all he could concerning the state of the business and the disposition of its proprietors. His nephew, meanwhile, stung to the core with shame, kept apart, as if amusing himself with the prospect from the window, until summoned to partake of the meal. His uncle expressed contempt of everything laid before them.

'*This* ain't no wye of caterin' for young gents at Collige!' he exclaimed. 'If there ain't a openin' 'ere, then I never see one. Godwin, bo-oy, 'ow much longer 'll it be before you're out of your time over there?'

'It's uncertain—I can't say.'

'But ain't it understood as you stay till you've passed the top standard, or whatever it's called?'

'I really haven't made up my mind what to do.'

'But you'll be studyin' 'ere for another twelve months, I dessay?'

'Why do you ask?'

'Why? cos s'posin' I got 'old o' this 'ere little shop, or another like it close by, me an' you might come to a understandin'—see? It might be worth your while to give a 'int to the young gents as you're in with—eh?'

Godwin was endeavouring to masticate a piece of toast, but it turned to sawdust upon his palate. Of a sudden, when the bilious gloom of his countenance foretold anything but mirth, he burst into hard laughter. Andrew smote him jovially on the back.

'Tickles you, eh, bo-oy? "Peak's Refreshment an' Dinin' Rooms!" Everything tip-top, mind; respectable business, Godwin; nothing for nobody to be ashamed of—*that* wouldn't do, of course.'

The young man's laughter ended as abruptly as it had begun, but his visage was no longer clouded with bitter misery. A strange indifference seemed to have come upon him, and whilst the speculative uncle talked away with increasing excitement, he ate and drank heedlessly.

'Mother expects you to-morrow, she tells me,' said Andrew, when his companion's taciturnity had suggested a change of topic. 'Shouldn't wonder if you see me over at Twybridge again before long. I was to remember your awnt and your cousin Jowey to you. You wouldn't know Jowey? the sharpest lad of his age as ever I knowed, is Jowey. Your father 'ud a' took a delight in 'im, if 'e'd lived, that 'e would.'

For a quarter of an hour or so the dialogue was concerned with domestic history. Godwin gave brief reply to many questions, but asked none, not even such as civility required. The elder man, however, was un-

affected by this reticence, and when at length his nephew pleaded an engagement as excuse for leave-taking he shook hands with much warmth. The two parted close by the shop, and Godwin, casting a glance at the now silent College, walked hastily towards his lodgings.

II

In the prosperous year of 1856, incomes of between a hundred and a hundred and fifty pounds were chargeable with a tax of elevenpence halfpenny in the pound: persons who enjoyed a revenue of a hundred and fifty or more had the honour of paying one and fourpence. Abatements there were none, and families supporting life on two pounds a week might in some cases, perchance, be reconciled to the mulct by considering how equitably its incidence was graduated.

Some, on the other hand, were less philosophical; for instance, the household consisting of Nicholas Peak, his wife, their three-year-old daughter, their newly-born son, and a blind sister of Nicholas, dependent upon him for sustenance. Mr. Peak, aged thirty and now four years wedded, had a small cottage on the outskirts of Greenwich. He was employed as dispenser, at a salary of thirty-five shillings a week, by a medical man with a large practice. His income, therefore, fell considerably within the hundred pound limit; and, all things considered, it was not unreasonable that he should be allowed to expend the whole of this sum on domestic necessities. But it came to pass that Nicholas, in his greed of wealth, obtained supplementary employment, which benefited him to the extent of a yearly ten pounds. Called upon to render his statement to the surveyor of income-tax, he declared himself in possession of a hundred and one pounds per annum; consequently, he stood indebted to the Exchequer in the sum of four

pounds, sixteen shillings, and ninepence. His countenance darkened, as also did that of Mrs. Peak.

'This is wrong and cruel—dreadfully cruel!' cried the latter, with tears in her eyes.

'It is; but that's no new thing,' was the bitter reply.

'I think it's wrong of *you*, Nicholas. What need is there to say anything about that ten pounds? It's taking the food out of our mouths.'

Knowing only the letter of the law, Mr. Peak answered sternly:

'My income is a hundred and one pounds. I can't sign my name to a lie.'

Picture the man. Tall, gaunt, with sharp intellectual features, and eyes of singular beauty, the face of an enthusiast—under given circumstances, of a hero. Poorly clad, of course, but with rigorous self-respect; his boots polished, *propria manu*, to the point of perfection; his linen washed and ironed by the indefatigable wife. Of simplest tastes, of most frugal habits, a few books the only luxury which he deemed indispensable; yet a most difficult man to live with, for to him applied precisely the description which Robert Burns gave of his own father;' he was 'of stubborn, ungainly integrity and headlong irascibility.'

Ungainly, for his strong impulses towards culture were powerless to obliterate the traces of his rude origin. Born in a London alley, the son of a labourer burdened with a large family, he had made his way by sheer force of character to a position which would have seemed proud success but for the difficulty with which he kept himself alive. His parents were dead. Of his brothers, two had disappeared in the abyss, and one, Andrew, earned a hard livelihood as a journeyman baker; the elder of his sisters had married poorly, and the younger was his blind pensioner. Nicholas had found a wife of better birth than his own, a young woman with country kindred in decent circumstances, though she

herself served as nursemaid in the house of the medical man who employed her future husband. He had taught himself the English language, so far as grammar went, but could not cast off the London accent; Mrs. Peak was fortunate enough to speak with nothing worse than the note of the Midlands.

His bent led him to the study of history, politics, economics, and in that time of military outbreak he was frenzied by the conflict of his ideals with the state of things about him. A book frequently in his hands was Godwin's *Political Justice*, and when a son had been born to him he decided to name the child after that favourite author. In this way, at all events, he could find some expression for his hot defiance of iniquity.

He paid his income-tax, and felt a savage joy in the privation thus imposed upon his family. Mrs. Peak could not forgive her husband, and in this case, though she had but dim appreciation of the point of honour involved, her censures doubtless fell on Nicholas's vulnerable spot; it was the perversity of arrogance, at least as much as honesty, that impelled him to incur taxation. His wife's perseverance in complaint drove him to stern impatience, and for a long time the peace of the household suffered.

When the boy Godwin was five years old, the death of his blind aunt came as a relief to means which were in every sense overtaxed. Twelve months later, a piece of unprecedented good fortune seemed to place the Peaks beyond fear of want, and at the same time to supply Nicholas with a fulfilment of hopeless desires. By the death of Mrs. Peak's brother, they came into possession of a freehold house and about nine hundred pounds. The property was situated some twelve miles from the Midland town of Twybridge, and thither they at once removed. At Twybridge lived Mrs. Peak's elder sister, Miss Cadman; but between this lady and her nearest kinsfolk there had been but slight corres-

pondence—the deceased Cadman left her only a couple of hundred pounds. With capital at command, Nicholas Peak took a lease of certain fields near his house, and turned farmer. The study of chemistry had given a special bent to his economic speculations; he fancied himself endowed with exceptional aptitude for agriculture, and the scent of the furrow brought all his energies into feverish activity—activity which soon impoverished him: that was in the order of things. 'Ungainly integrity' and 'headlong irascibility' wrought the same results for the ex-dispenser as for the Ayrshire husbandman. His farming came to a chaotic end; and, when the struggling man died, worn out at forty-three, his wife and children (there was now a younger boy, Oliver, named after the Protector) had no very bright prospects.

Things went better with them than might have been anticipated. To Mrs. Peak her husband's death was not an occasion of unmingled mourning. For the last few years she had suffered severely from domestic discord, and when left at peace by bereavement she turned with a sense of liberation to the task of caring for her children's future. Godwin was just thirteen, Oliver was eleven; both had been well schooled, and with the help of friends they might soon be put in the way of self-support. The daughter, Charlotte, sixteen years of age, had accomplishments which would perhaps be profitable. The widow decided to make a home in Twybridge, where Miss Cadman kept a millinery shop. By means of this connection, Charlotte presently found employment for her skill in fine needlework. Mrs. Peak was incapable of earning money, but the experiences of her early married life enabled her to make more than the most of the pittance at her disposal.

Miss Cadman was a woman of active mind, something of a busy-body—dogmatic, punctilious in her claims to respect, proud of the acknowledgment by her

acquaintances that she was not as other tradespeople; her chief weakness was a fanatical ecclesiasticism, the common blight of English womanhood. Circumstances had allowed her a better education than generally falls to women of that standing, and in spite of her shop she succeeded in retaining the friendship of certain ladies long ago her schoolfellows. Among these were the Misses Lumb—middle-aged sisters, who lived at Twybridge on a small independence, their time chiefly devoted to the support of the Anglican Church. An eldest Miss Lumb had been fortunate enough to marry that growing potentate of the Midlands, Mr. Job Whitelaw. Now Lady Whitelaw, she dwelt at Kingsmill, but her sisters frequently enjoyed the honour of entertaining her, and even Miss Cadman the milliner occasionally held converse with the baronet's wife. In this way it came to pass that the Widow Peak and her children were brought under the notice of persons who sooner or later might be of assistance to them.

Abounding in emphatic advice, Miss Cadman easily persuaded her sister that Godwin must go to school for at least two years longer. The boys had been at a boarding school twenty miles away from their country home; it would be better for them now to be put under the care of some Twybridge teacher—such an one as Miss Cadman's acquaintances could recommend. For her own credit, the milliner was anxious that these nephews of hers should not be running about the town as errand-boys or the like, and with prudence there was no necessity for such degradation. An uncommon lad like Godwin (she imagined him named after the historic earl) must not be robbed of his fair chance in life; she would gladly spare a little money for his benefit; he was a boy to repay such expenditure.

Indeed it seemed probable. Godwin devoured books, and had a remarkable faculty for gaining solid information on any subject that took his fancy. What might

be the special bent of his mind one could not yet discover. He read poetry with precocious gusto, but at the same time his aptitude for scientific pursuits was strongly marked. In botany, chemistry, physics, he made progress which the people about him, including his schoolmaster, were incapable of appreciating; and already the collection of books left by his father, most of them out of date, failed to satisfy his curiosity. It might be feared that tastes so discursive would be disadvantageous to a lad who must needs pursue some definite bread-study, and the strain of self-consciousness which grew strong in him was again a matter for concern. He cared nothing for boyish games and companionship; in the society of strangers—especially of females—he behaved with an excessive shyness which was easily mistaken for a surly temper. Reproof, correction, he could not endure, and it was fortunate that the decorum of his habits made remonstrance seldom needful.

Ludicrous as the project would have appeared to any unbiassed observer of character, Miss Cadman conceived a hope that Godwin might become a clergyman. From her point of view it was natural to assume that uncommon talents must be devoted to the service of the Church, and she would have gladly done her utmost for the practical furthering of such an end. Mrs. Peak, though well aware that her son had imbibed the paternal prejudices, was disposed to entertain the same hope, despite solid obstacles. For several years she had nourished a secret antagonism to her husband's spirit of political, social, and religious rebellion, and in her widowhood she speedily became a pattern of the conservative female. It would have gratified her to discern any possibility of Godwin's assuming the priestly garb. And not alone on the ground of conscience. Long ago she had repented the marriage which connected her with such a family as that of the Peaks,

and she ardently desired that the children, now exclusively her own, might enter life on a plane superior to their father's.

'Godwin, how would you like to go to College and be a clergyman?' she asked one Sunday afternoon, when an hour or two of congenial reading seemed to have put the boy into a gentle humour.

'To go to College' was all very well (diplomacy had prompted this preface), but the words that followed fell so alarmingly on Godwin's ear that he looked up with a resentful expression, unable to reply otherwise.

'You never thought of it, I suppose?' his mother faltered; for she often stood in awe of her son, who, though yet but fourteen, had much of his father's commanding severity.

'I don't want to be a parson,' came at length, bluntly.

'Don't use that word, Godwin.'

'Why not? It's quite a proper word. It comes from the Latin *persona*.'

The mother had enough discretion to keep silence, and Godwin, after in vain trying to settle to his book again, left the room with disturbed countenance.

He had now been attending the day-school for about a year, and was distinctly ahead of his coevals. A Christmas examination was on the point of being held, and it happened that a singular test of the lad's moral character coincided with the proof of his intellectual progress. In a neighbouring house lived an old man named Rawmarsh, kindly but rather eccentric; he had once done a good business as a printer, and now supported himself by such chance typographic work of a small kind as friends might put in his way. He conceived an affection for Godwin; often had the boy to talk with him of an evening. On one such occasion, Mr. Rawmarsh opened a desk, took forth a packet of newly-printed leaves, and with a mysterious air silently spread them before the boy's eyes. In an instant Godwin

became aware that he was looking at the examination papers which a day or two hence would be set before him at school; he saw and recognised a passage from the book of Virgil which his class had been reading.

'That is *sub rosa*, you know,' whispered the old printer, with half averted face.

Godwin shrank away, and could not resume the conversation thus interrupted. On the following day he went about with a feeling of guilt. He avoided the sight of Mr. Rawmarsh, for whom he had suddenly lost all respect, and suffered torments in the thought that he enjoyed an unfair advantage over his class-mates. The Latin passage happened to be one which he knew thoroughly well; there was no need, even had he desired, to 'look it up'; but in sitting down to the examination, he experienced a sense of shame and self-rebuke. So strong were the effects of this, that he voluntarily omitted the answer to a certain important question which he could have 'done' better than any of the other boys, thus endeavouring to adjust in his conscience the terms of competition, though in fact no such sacrifice was called for. He came out at the head of the class, but the triumph had no savour for him, and for many a year he was subject to a flush of mortification whenever this incident came back to his mind.

Mr. Rawmarsh was not the only intelligent man who took an interest in Godwin. In a house which the boy sometimes visited with a school-fellow, lodged a notable couple named Gunnery—the husband about seventy, the wife five years older; they lived on a pension from a railway company. Mr. Gunnery was a dabbler in many sciences, but had a special enthusiasm for geology. Two cabinets of stones and fossils gave evidence of his zealous travels about the British Isles; he had even written a little hand-book of petrology which was for sale at certain booksellers' in Twybridge, and probably nowhere else. To him, about this time, Godwin began

to resort, always sure of a welcome; and in the little uncarpeted room where Mr. Gunnery pursued his investigations many a fateful lesson was given and received. The teacher understood the intelligence he had to deal with, and was delighted to convey, by the mode of suggested inference, sundry results of knowledge which it perhaps would not have been prudent to declare in plain, popular words.

Their intercourse was not invariably placid. The geologist had an irritable temper, and in certain states of the atmosphere his rheumatic twinges made it advisable to shun argument with him. Godwin, moreover, was distinguished by an instability of mood peculiarly trying to an old man's testy humour. Of a sudden, to Mr. Gunnery's surprise and annoyance, he would lose all interest in this or that science. Thus, one day the lad declared himself unable to name two stones set before him, felspar and quartz, and when his instructor broke into angry impatience he turned sullenly away, exclaiming that he was tired of geology.

'Tired of geology?' cried Mr. Gunnery, with flaming eyes. 'Then *I* am tired of *you*, Master Peak! Be off, and don't come again till I send for you!'

Godwin retired without a word. On the second day he was summoned back again, but his resentment of the dismissal rankled in him for a long time; injury to his pride was the wrong he found it hardest to forgive.

His schoolmaster, aware of the unusual pursuits which he added to the routine of lessons, gave him as a prize the English translation of a book by Figuier—*The World before the Deluge.* Strongly interested by the illustrations of the volume (fanciful scenes from the successive geologic periods), Godwin at once carried it to his scientific friend. 'Deluge?' growled Mr. Gunnery. '*What* deluge? *Which* deluge?' But he restrained himself, handed the book coldly back, and began to talk of something else. All this was highly significant to

Godwin, who of course began the perusal of his prize in a suspicious mood. Nor was he long before he sympathised with Mr. Gunnery's distaste. Though too young to grasp the arguments at issue, his prejudices were strongly excited by the conventional Theism which pervades Figuier's work. Already it was the habit of his mind to associate popular dogma with intellectual shallowness; herein, as at every other point which fell within his scope, he had begun to scorn average people, and to pride himself intensely on views which he found generally condemned. Day by day he grew into a clearer understanding of the memories bequeathed to him by his father; he began to interpret remarks, details of behaviour, instances of wrath, which, though they had stamped themselves on his recollection, conveyed at the time no precise significance. The issue was that he hardened himself against the influence of his mother and his aunt, regarding them as in league against the free progress of his education.

As women, again, he despised these relatives. It is almost impossible for a bright-witted lad born in the lower middle class to escape this stage of development. The brutally healthy boy contemns the female sex because he sees it incapable of his own athletic sports, but Godwin was one of those upon whose awaking intellect is forced a perception of the brain-defect so general in women when they are taught few of life's graces and none of its serious concerns,—their paltry prepossessions, their vulgar sequaciousness, their invincible ignorance, their absorption in a petty self. And especially is this phase of thought to be expected in a boy whose heart blindly nourishes the seeds of poetical passion. It was Godwin's sincere belief that he held girls, as girls, in abhorrence. This meant that he dreaded their personal criticism, and that the spectacle of female beauty sometimes overcame him with a despair which he could not analyse. Matrons and

elderly unmarried women were truly the objects of his disdain; in them he saw nothing but their shortcomings. Towards his mother he was conscious of no tenderness; of as little towards his sister, who often censured him with trenchant tongue; as for his aunt, whose admiration of him was modified by reticences, he could never be at ease in her company, so strong a dislike had he for her look, her voice, her ways of speech.

He would soon be fifteen years old. Mrs. Peak was growing anxious, for she could no longer consent to draw upon her sister for a portion of the school fees, and no pertinent suggestion for the lad's future was made by any of the people who admired his cleverness. Miss Cadman still clung in a fitful way to the idea of making her nephew a cleric; she had often talked it over with the Misses Lumb, who of course held that 'any sacrifice' was justifiable with such a motive, and who suggested a hope that, by the instrumentality of Lady Whitelaw, a curacy might easily be obtained as soon as Godwin was old enough. But several years must pass before that Levitical stage could be reached; and then, after all, perhaps the younger boy, Oliver, placid of temper and notably pliant in mind, was better suited for the dignity of Orders. It was lamentable that Godwin should have become so intimate with that earth-burrowing Mr. Gunnery, who certainly never attended either church or chapel, and who seemed to have imbued his pupil with immoral theories concerning the date of creation. Godwin held more decidedly aloof from his aunt, and had been heard by Charlotte to speak very disrespectfully of the Misses Lumb. In short, there was no choice but to discover an opening for him in some secular pursuit. Could he, perhaps, become an assistant teacher? Or must he 'go into an office'?

No common lad. A youth whose brain glowed like a furnace, whose heart throbbed with tumult of high am-

bitions, of inchoate desires; endowed with knowledge altogether exceptional for his years; a nature essentially militant, displaying itself in innumerable forms of callow intolerance—apt, assuredly, for some vigorous part in life, but as likely as not to rush headlong on traverse roads if no judicious mind assumed control of him. What is to be done with the boy?

All very well, if the question signified, in what way to provide for the healthy development of his manhood. Of course it meant nothing of the sort, but merely: What work can be found for him whereby he may earn his daily bread? We—his kinsfolk even, not to think of the world at large—can have no concern with his growth as an intellectual being; we are hard pressed to supply our own mouths with food; and now that we have done our recognised duty by him, it is high time that he learnt to fight for his own share of provender. Happily, he is of the robust sex; he can hit out right and left, and make standing room. We have armed him with serviceable weapons, and now he must use them against the enemy—that is to say, against all mankind, who will quickly enough deprive him of sustenance if he fail in the conflict. We neither know, nor in great measure care, for what employment he is naturally marked. Obviously he cannot heave coals or sell dogs' meat, but with negative certainty not much else can be resolved, seeing how desperate is the competition for minimum salaries. He has been born, and he must eat. By what licensed channel may he procure the necessary viands?

Paternal relatives Godwin had as good as none. In quitting London, Nicholas Peak had ceased to hold communication with any of his own stock save the younger brother Andrew. With him he occasionally exchanged a letter, but Andrew's share in the correspondence was limited to ungrammatical and often unintelligible hints of numerous projects for money-making. Just after the

removal of the bereaved family to Twybridge, they were surprised by a visit from Andrew, in answer to one of whose letters Mrs. Peak had sent news of her husband's death. Though her dislike of the man amounted to loathing, the widow could not refuse him hospitality; she did her best, however, to prevent his coming in contact with anyone she knew. Andrew declared that he was at length prospering; he had started a coffee-shop at Dalston, in north-east London, and positively urged a proposal (well-meant, beyond doubt) that Godwin should be allowed to come to him and learn the business. Since then the Londoner had once again visited Twybridge, towards the end of Godwin's last school-year. This time he spoke of himself less hopefully, and declared a wish to transfer his business to some provincial town, where he thought his metropolitan experience might be of great value, in the absence of serious competition. It was not difficult to discover a family likeness between Andrew's instability and the idealism which had proved the ruin of Nicholas.

On this second occasion Godwin tried to escape a meeting with his uncle. Unable to do so, he sat mute, replying to questions monosyllabically. Mrs. Peak's shame and annoyance, in face of this London-branded vulgarian, were but feeble emotions compared with those of her son. Godwin hated the man, and was in dread lest any school-fellow should come to know of such a connection. Yet delicacy prevented his uttering a word on the subject to his mother. Mrs. Peak's silence after Andrew's departure made it uncertain how she regarded the obligation of kindred, and in any such matter as this the boy was far too sensitive to risk giving pain. But to his brother Oliver he spoke.

'What is the brute to us? When I'm a man, let him venture to come near me, and see what sort of a reception he'll get! I hate low, uneducated people! I hate them worse than the filthiest vermin!—don't you?'

Oliver, aged but thirteen, assented, as he habitually did to any question which seemed to await an affirmative.

'They ought to be swept off the face of the earth!' pursued Godwin, sitting up in bed—for the dialogue took place about eleven o'clock at night. 'All the grown-up creatures, who can't speak proper English and don't know how to behave themselves, I'd transport them to the Falkland Islands,'—this geographic precision was a note of the boy's mind,—'and let them die off as soon as possible. The children should be sent to school and purified, if possible; if not, they too should be got rid of.'

'You're an aristocrat, Godwin,' remarked Oliver, simply; for the elder brother had of late been telling him fearful stories from the French Revolution, with something of an anti-popular bias.

'I hope I am. I mean to be, that's certain. There's nothing I hate like vulgarity. That's why I can't stand Roper. When he beat me in mathematics last midsummer, I felt so ashamed I could hardly bear myself. I'm working like a nigger at algebra and Euclid this half, just because I think it would almost kill me to be beaten again by a low cad.'

This was perhaps the first time that Godwin found expression for the prejudice which affected all his thoughts and feelings. It relieved him to have spoken thus; henceforth he had become clear as to his point of view. By dubbing him aristocrat, Oliver had flattered him in the subtlest way. If indeed the title were justly his, as he instantly felt it was, the inference was plain that he must be an aristocrat of nature's own making—one of the few highly favoured beings who, in despite of circumstance, are pinnacled above mankind. In his ignorance of life, the boy visioned a triumphant career; an aristocrat *de jure* might possibly become one even in the common sense did he but pursue that end with sufficient zeal. And in his power of persistent endeavour he had no lack of faith.

The next day he walked with exalted head. Encountering the objectionable Roper, he smiled upon him contemptuously tolerant.

There being no hope of effective assistance from relatives, Mrs. Peak turned for counsel to a man of business, with whom her husband had made acquaintance in his farming days, and who held a position of influence at Twybridge. This was Mr. Moxey, manufacturing chemist, famous in the Midlands for his 'sheep and cattle dressings,' and sundry other products of agricultural enterprise. His ill-scented, but lucrative, works were situated a mile out of the town; and within sight of the reeking chimneys stood a large, plain house, uncomfortable like an 'institution' of some kind, in which he dwelt with his five daughters. Thither, one evening, Mrs. Peak betook herself, having learnt that Mr. Moxey dined at five o'clock, and that he was generally to be found digging in his garden until sunset. Her reception was civil. The manufacturer—sparing of words, but with no unkindly face—requested that Godwin should be sent to see him, and promised to do his best to be of use. A talk with the boy strengthened his interest. He was surprised at Godwin's knowledge of chemistry, pleased with his general intelligence, and in the end offered to make a place for him at the works, where, though for a year or two his earnings must be small, he would gain experience likely to be of substantial use to him. Godwin did not find the proposal distasteful; it brought a change into his life, and the excitement of novelty; it flattered him with the show of release from pupilage. To Mr. Moxey's he went.

The hours were not long, and it was understood that his theoretical studies should continue in the evening. Godwin's home was a very small house in a monotonous little street; a garret served as bedroom for the two boys, also as the elder one's laboratory. Servant Mrs. Peak had none. She managed everything herself, as in

the old Greenwich days, leaving Charlotte free to work at her embroidery. Godwin took turns with Oliver at blacking the shoes.

As a matter of course the boys accompanied their mother each Sunday morning to the parish church, and this ceremony was becoming an insufferable tax on Godwin's patience. It was not only that he hated the name of religion, and scorned with much fierceness all who came in sympathetic contact therewith; the loss of time seemed to him an oppressive injury, especially now that he began to suffer from restricted leisure. He would not refuse to obey his mother's wish, but the sullenness of his Sabbatic demeanour made the whole family uncomfortable. As often as possible he feigned illness. He tried the effect of dolorous sighs and groans; but Mrs. Peak could not dream of conceding a point which would have seemed to her the condonation of deadly sin. 'When I am a man!' muttered Godwin. 'Ah! when I am a man!'

A year had gone by, and the routine to which he was bound began to have a servile flavour. His mind chafed at subjugation to commercial interests. Sick of 'sheep and cattle dressings,' he grew tired of chemistry altogether, and presently of physical science in general. His evenings were given to poetry and history; he took up the classical schoolbooks again, and found a charm in Latin syntax hitherto unperceived. It was plain to him now how he had been wronged by the necessity of leaving school when his education had but just begun.

Discontent becoming ripe for utterance, he unbosomed himself to Mr. Gunnery. It happened that the old man had just returned from a visit to Kingsmill, where he had spent a week in the museum, then newly enriched with geologic specimens. After listening in silence to the boy's complaints, and pondering for a long time, he began to talk of Whitelaw College.

'Does it cost much to study there?' Godwin asked, gloomily.

'No great sum, I think. There are scholarships to be had.'

Mr. Gunnery threw out the suggestion carelessly. Knowing the hazards of life, he could not quite justify himself in encouraging Godwin's restiveness.

'Scholarships? For free study?'

'Yes; but that wouldn't mean free living, you know. Students don't live at the College.'

'How do you go in for a scholarship?'

The old man replied, meditatively, 'If you were to pass the Cambridge Local Examination, and to get the first place in the Kingsmill district, you would have three years of free study at Whitelaw.'

'Three years?' shouted Godwin, springing up from his chair.

'But how could you live, my boy?'

Godwin sat down again, and let his head fall forward.

How to keep oneself alive during a few years of intellectual growth?—a question often asked by men of mature age, but seldom by a lad of sixteen. No matter. He resolved that he would study for this Cambridge Local Examination, and have a try for the scholarship. His attainments were already up to the standard required for average success in such competitions. On obtaining a set of 'papers,' he found that they looked easy enough. Could he not come out first in the Kingsmill district?

He worked vigorously at special subjects; aid was needless, but he wished for more leisure. Not a word to any member of his household. When his mother discovered that he was reading in the bedroom till long past midnight, she made serious objection on the score of health and on that of gas bills. Godwin quietly asserted that work he must, and that if necessary he would buy candles out of his pocket-money. He had unexpectedly become more grave, more restrained; he

even ceased to grumble about going to church, having found that service time could be utilised for committing to memory lists of dates and the like, jotted down on a slip of paper. When the time for the examination drew near, he at length told his mother to what end he had been labouring, and asked her to grant him the assistance necessary for his journey and the sojourn at Kingsmill; the small sum he had been able to save, after purchase of books, would not suffice. Mrs. Peak knew not whether to approve her son's ambition or to try to repress it. She would welcome an improval in his prospects, but, granting success, how was he to live whilst profiting by a scholarship? And again, what did he propose to make of himself when he had spent three years in study?

'In any case,' was Godwin's reply, 'I should be sure of a good place as a teacher. But I think I might try for something in the Civil Service; there are all sorts of positions to be got.'

It was idle to discuss the future whilst the first step was still speculative. Mrs. Peak consented to favour the attempt, and what was more, to keep it a secret until the issue should be known. It was needful to obtain leave of absence from Mr. Moxey, and Godwin, when making the request, stated for what purpose he was going to Kingsmill, though without explaining the hope which had encouraged his studies. The project seemed laudable, and his employer made no difficulties.

Godwin just missed the scholarship; of candidates in the prescribed district, he came out second.

Grievous was the disappointment. To come so near success exasperated his impatient temper, and for a few days his bondage at the chemical works seemed intolerable; he was ready for almost any venture that promised release and new scope for his fretting energies. But at the moment when nervous irritation was most acute, a remarkable act of kindness suddenly restored

to him all the hopes he had abandoned. One Saturday afternoon he was summoned from his surly retreat in the garret, to speak with a visitor. On entering the sitting-room, he found his mother in company with Miss Cadman and the Misses Lumb, and from the last-mentioned ladies, who spoke with amiable alternation, he learnt that they were commissioned by Sir Job Whitelaw to offer for his acceptance a three-years' studentship at Whitelaw College. Affected by her son's chagrin, Mrs. Peak had disclosed the story to her sister, who had repeated it to the Misses Lumb, who in turn had made it the subject of a letter to Lady Whitelaw. It was an annual practice with Sir Job to discover some promising lad whom he could benefit by the payment of his fees for a longer or shorter period of college study. The hint from Twybridge came to him just at the suitable time, and, on further inquiry, he decided to make proffer of this advantage to Godwin Peak. The only condition was that arrangements should be made by the student's relatives for his support during the proposed period.

This generosity took away Godwin's breath. The expenditure it represented was trifling, but from a stranger in Sir Job's position it had something which recalled to so fervent a mind the poetry of Medicean patronage. For the moment no faintest doubt gave warning to his self-respect; he was eager to accept nobly a benefaction nobly intended.

Miss Cadman, flattered by Sir Job's attention to her nephew, now came forward with an offer to contribute towards Godwin's livelihood. Her supplement would eke into adequacy such slender allowance as the widow's purse could afford. Details were privately discussed, resolves were taken. Mr. Moxey, when it was made known to him, without explanation, that Godwin was to be sent to Whitelaw College, behaved with kindness; he at once released the lad, and added a present to the salary that was due. Proper acknowledgment of the

Baronet's kindness was made by the beneficiary himself, who wrote a letter giving truer testimony of his mental calibre than would have been offered had he expressed himself by word of mouth. A genial reply summoned him to an interview as soon as he should have found an abode in Kingsmill. The lodging he had occupied during the examination was permanently secured, and a new period of Godwin's life began.

For two years, that is to say until his age drew towards nineteen, Peak pursued the Arts curriculum at Whitelaw. His mood on entering decided his choice, which was left free to him. Experience of utilitarian chemistry had for the present made his liberal tastes predominant, and neither the splendid laboratories of Whitelaw nor the repute of its scientific Professors tempted him to what had once seemed his natural direction. In the second year, however, he enlarged his course by the addition of one or two classes not included in Sir Job's design; these were paid for out of a present made to him by Mr. Gunnery.

It being customary for the regular students of Whitelaw to graduate at London University, Peak passed his matriculation, and worked on for the preliminary test then known as First B.A. In the meanwhile he rose steadily, achieving distinction in the College. The more observant of his teachers remarked him even where he fell short of academic triumph, and among his fellow-students he had the name of a stern 'sweater,' one not easily beaten where he had set his mind on excelling. He was not generally liked, for his mood appeared unsocial, and a repelling arrogance was sometimes felt in his talk. No doubt—said the more fortunate young men—he came from a very poor home, and suffered from the narrowness of his means. They noticed that he did not subscribe to the College Union, and that he could never join in talk regarding the diversions of the town. His two or three intimates were chosen from among

those contemporaries who read hard and dressed poorly.

The details of Godwin's private life were noteworthy. Accustomed hitherto to a domestic circle, at Kingsmill he found himself isolated, and it was not easy for him to surrender all at once the comforts of home. For a time he felt as though his ambition were a delinquency which entailed the punishment of loneliness. Nor did his relations with Sir Job Whitelaw tend to mitigate this feeling. In his first interview with the Baronet, Godwin showed to little advantage. A deadly bashfulness forbade him to be natural either in attitude or speech. He felt his dependence in a way he had not foreseen; the very clothes he wore, then fresh from the tailor's, seemed to be the gift of charity, and their stiffness shamed him. A man of the world, Sir Job could make allowance for these defects. He understood that the truest kindness would be to leave a youth such as this to the forming influences of the College. So Godwin barely had a glimpse of Lady Whitelaw in her husband's study, and thereafter for many months he saw nothing of his benefactors. Subsequently he was twice invited to interviews with Sir Job, who talked with kindness and commendation. Then came the Baronet's death. Godwin received an assurance that this event would be no check upon his career, but he neither saw nor heard directly from Lady Whitelaw.

Not a house in Kingsmill opened hospitable doors to the lonely student; nor was anyone to blame for this. With no family had he friendly acquaintance. When, towards the end of his second year, he grew sufficiently intimate with Buckland Warricombe to walk out with him to Thornhaw, it could be nothing more than a scarcely welcome exception to the rule of solitude. Impossible for him to cultivate the friendship of such people as the Warricombes, with their large and joyous scheme of life. Only at a hearth where homeliness and

cordiality united to unthaw his proud reserve could Godwin perchance have found the companionship he needed. Many such homes existed in Kingsmill, but no kindly fortune led the young man within the sphere of their warmth.

His lodgings were in a very ugly street in the ugliest outskirts of the town ; he had to take a long walk through desolate districts (brick-yard, sordid pasture, degenerate village) before he could refresh his eyes with the rural scenery which was so great a joy to him as almost to be a necessity. The immediate vicinage offered nothing but monotone of grimy, lower middle-class dwellings, occasionally relieved by a public-house. He occupied two rooms, not unreasonably clean, and was seldom disturbed by the attentions of his landlady.

An impartial observer might have wondered at the negligence which left him to arrange his life as best he could, notwithstanding youth and utter inexperience. It looked indeed as if there were no one in the world who cared what became of him. Yet this was merely the result of his mother's circumstances, and of his own character. Mrs. Peak could do no more than make her small remittances, and therewith send an occasional admonition regarding his health. She did not, in fact, conceive the state of things, imagining that the authority and supervisal of the College extended over her son's daily existence, whereas it was possible for Godwin to frequent lectures or not, to study or to waste his time, pretty much as he chose, subject only to official inquiry if his attendance became frequently irregular. His independent temper, and the seeming maturity of his mind, supplied another excuse for the imprudent confidence which left him to his own resources. Yet the perils of the situation were great indeed. A youth of less concentrated purpose, more at the mercy of casual allurement, would probably have gone to wreck amid trials so exceptional.

Trials not only of his moral nature. The sums of money with which he was furnished fell short of a reasonable total for bare necessities. In the calculation made by Mrs. Peak and her sister, outlay on books had practically been lost sight of; it was presumed that ten shillings a term would cover this item. But Godwin could not consent to be at a disadvantage in his armoury for academic contest. The first month saw him compelled to contract his diet, that he might purchase books; thenceforth he rarely had enough to eat. His landlady supplied him with breakfast, tea, and supper—each repast of the very simplest kind; for dinner it was understood that he repaired to some public table, where meat and vegetables, with perchance a supplementary sweet when nature demanded it, might be had for about a shilling. That shilling was not often at his disposal. Dinner as it is understood by the comfortably clad, the 'regular meal' which is a part of English respectability, came to be represented by a small pork-pie, or even a couple of buns, eaten at the little shop over against the College. After a long morning of mental application this was poor refreshment; the long afternoon which followed, again spent in rigorous study, could not but reduce a growing frame to ravenous hunger. Tea and buttered bread were the means of appeasing it, until another four hours' work called for reward in the shape of bread and cheese. Even yet the day's toil was not ended. Godwin sometimes read long after midnight, with the result that, when at length he tried to sleep, exhaustion of mind and body kept him for a long time feverishly wakeful.

These hardships he concealed from the people at Twybridge. Complaint, it seemed to him, would be ungrateful, for sacrifices were already made on his behalf. His father, as he well remembered, was wont to relate, with a kind of angry satisfaction, the miseries through which he had fought his way to education and the income-

tax. Old enough now to reflect with compassionate understanding upon that life of conflict, Godwin resolved that he too would bear the burdens inseparable from poverty, and in some moods was even glad to suffer as his father had done. Fortunately he had a sound basis of health, and hunger and vigils would not easily affect his constitution. If, thus hampered, he could outstrip competitors who had every advantage of circumstance, the more glorious his triumph.

Sunday was an interval of leisure. Rejoicing in deliverance from Sabbatarianism, he generally spent the morning in a long walk, and the rest of the day was devoted to non-collegiate reading. He had subscribed to a circulating library, and thus obtained new publications recommended to him in the literary paper which again taxed his stomach. Mere class-work did not satisfy him. He was possessed with throes of spiritual desire, impelling him towards that world of unfettered speculation which he had long indistinctly imagined. It was a great thing to learn what the past could teach, to set himself on the common level of intellectual men; but he understood that college learning could not be an end in itself, that the Professors to whom he listened either did not speak out all that was in their minds, or, if they did, were far from representing the advanced guard of modern thought. With eagerness he at length betook himself to the teachers of philosophy and of geology. Having paid for these lectures out of his own pocket, he felt as if he had won a privilege beyond the conventional course of study, an initiation to a higher sphere of intellect. The result was disillusion. Not even in these class-rooms could he hear the word for which he waited, the bold annunciation of newly discovered law, the science which had completely broken with tradition. He came away unsatisfied, and brooded upon the possibilities which would open for him when he was no longer dependent.

His evening work at home was subject to a disturbance which would have led him to seek other lodgings, could he have hoped to find any so cheap as these. The landlady's son, a lank youth of the clerk species, was wont to amuse himself from eight to ten with practice on a piano. By dint of perseverance he had learned to strum two or three hymnal melodies popularised by American evangelists; occasionally he even added the charm of his voice, which had a pietistic nasality not easily endured by an ear of any refinement. Not only was Godwin harassed by the recurrence of these performances; the tunes worked themselves into his brain, and sometimes throughout a whole day their burden clanged and squalled incessantly on his mental hearing. He longed to entreat forbearance from the musician, but an excess of delicacy—which always ruled his behaviour—kept him silent. Certain passages in the classics, and many an elaborate mathematical formula, long retained for him an association with the cadences of revivalist hymnody.

Like all proud natures condemned to solitude, he tried to convince himself that he had no need of society, that he despised its attractions, and could be self-sufficing. So far was this from the truth that he often regarded with bitter envy those of his fellow-students who had the social air, who conversed freely among their equals, and showed that the pursuits of the College were only a part of their existence. These young men were either preparing for the University, or would pass from Whitelaw to business, profession, official training; in any case, a track was marked out for them by the zealous care of relatives and friends, and their efforts would always be aided, applauded, by a kindly circle. Some of them Godwin could not but admire, so healthful were they, so bright of intellect, and courteous in manner,—a type distinct from any he had formerly observed. Others were antipathetic to him. Their

aggressive gentility conflicted with the wariness of his self-esteem ; such a one, for instance, as Bruno Chilvers, the sound of whose mincing voice, as he read in the class, so irritated him that at times he had to cover his ears. Yet, did it chance that one of these offensive youths addressed a civil word to him, on the instant his prejudice was disarmed, and his emotions flowed forth in a response to which he would gladly have given free expression. When he was invited to meet the relatives of Buckland Warricombe, shyness prepossessed him against them ; but the frank kindness of his reception moved him, and on going away he was ashamed to have replied so boorishly to attentions so amiably meant. The same note of character sounded in what personal intercourse he had with the Professors. Though his spirit of criticism was at times busy with these gentlemen, he had for most of them a profound regard ; and to be elected by one or other for a word of commendation, a little private assistance, a well-phrased inquiry as to his progress, always made his heart beat high with gratitude. They were his first exemplars of finished courtesy, of delicate culture ; and he could never sufficiently regret that no one of them was aware how thankfully he recognised his debt.

In longing for the intimacy of refined people, he began to modify his sentiments with regard to the female sex. His first prize-day at Whitelaw was the first occasion on which he sat in an assembly where ladies (as he understood the title) could be seen and heard. The impression he received was deep and lasting. On the seat behind him were two girls whose intermittent talk held him with irresistible charm throughout the whole ceremony. He had not imagined that girls could display such intelligence, and the sweet clearness of their intonation, the purity of their accent, the grace of their habitual phrases, were things altogether beyond his experience. This was not the English he had been wont

to hear on female lips. His mother and his aunt spoke with propriety; their associates were soft-tongued; but here was something quite different from inoffensiveness of tone and diction. Godwin appreciated the differentiating cause. These young ladies behind him had been trained from the cradle to speak for the delight of fastidious ears; that they should be grammatical was not enough—they must excel in the art of conversational music. Of course there existed a world where only such speech was interchanged, and how inestimably happy those men to whom the sphere was native!

When the proceedings were over, he drew aside and watched the two girls as they mingled with acquaintances; he kept them in view until they left the College. An emotion such as this he had never known; for the first time in his life he was humiliated without embitterment.

The bitterness came when he had returned to his home in the back street of Twybridge, and was endeavouring to spend the holidays in a hard 'grind.' He loathed the penurious simplicity to which his life was condemned; all familiar circumstances were become petty, coarse, vulgar, in his eyes; the contrast with the idealised world of his ambition plunged him into despair. Even Mr. Gunnery seemed an ignoble figure when compared with the Professors of Whitelaw, and his authority in the sciences was now subjected to doubt. However much or little might result from the three years at college, it was clear to Godwin that his former existence had passed into infinite remoteness; he was no longer fit for Twybridge, no longer a companion for his kindred. Oliver, whose dulness as a schoolboy gave no promise of future achievements, was now learning the business of a seedsman; his brother felt ashamed when he saw him at work in the shop, and had small patience with the comrades to whom Oliver dedicated his leisure. Charlotte was estranged by religious differences. Only

for his mother did the young man show increased consideration. To his aunt he endeavoured to be grateful, but his behaviour in her presence was elaborate hypocrisy. Hating the necessity for this, he laid the blame on fortune, which had decreed his birth in a social sphere where he must ever be an alien.

III

With the growth of his militant egoism, there had developed in Godwin Peak an excess of nervous sensibility which threatened to deprive his character of the initiative rightly belonging to it. Self-assertion is the practical complement of self-esteem. To be largely endowed with the latter quality, yet constrained by a coward delicacy to repress it, is to suffer martyrdom at the pleasure of every robust assailant, and in the end be driven to the refuge of a moody solitude. That encounter with his objectionable uncle after the prize distribution at Whitelaw showed how much Godwin had lost of the natural vigour which declared itself at Andrew Peak's second visit to Twybridge, when the boy certainly would not have endured his uncle's presence but for hospitable considerations and the respect due to his mother. The decision with which he then unbosomed himself to Oliver, still characterised his thoughts, but he had not courage to elude the dialogue forced upon him, still less to make known his resentment of the man's offensive vulgarity. He endured in silence, his heart afire with scornful wrath.

The affliction could not have befallen him at a time when he was less capable of supporting it resignedly. Notwithstanding his noteworthy success in two classes, it seemed to him that he had lost everything—that the day was one of signal and disgraceful defeat. In any case that sequence of second prizes must have filled him with chagrin, but to be beaten thus repeatedly by

such a fellow as Bruno Chilvers was humiliation intolerable. A fopling, a mincer of effeminate English, a rote-repeater of academic catch-words—bah! The by-examinations of the year had whispered presage, but Peak always felt that he was not putting forth his strength; when the serious trial came he would show what was really in him. Too late he recognised his error, though he tried not to admit it. The extra subjects had exacted too much of him; there was a limit to his powers. Within the College this would be well enough understood, but to explain a disagreeable fact is not to change it; his name was written in pitiful subordination. And as for the public assembly—he would have sacrificed some years of his life to have stepped forward in facile supremacy, beneath the eyes of those clustered ladies. Instead of that, they had looked upon his shame; they had interchanged glances of amusement at each repetition of his defeat; had murmured comments in their melodious speech; had ended by losing all interest in him—as intuition apprised him was the wont of women.

As soon as he had escaped from his uncle, he relapsed into musing upon the position to which he was condemned when the new session came round. Again Chilvers would be in the same classes with him, and, as likely as not, with the same result. In the meantime, they were both 'going in' for the First B.A.; he had no fear of failure, but it might easily happen that Chilvers would achieve higher distinction. With an eye to awards that might be won—substantial cash-annuities—he was reading for Honours; but it seemed doubtful whether he could present himself, as the second examination was held only in London. Chilvers would of course be an Honours candidate. He would smile—confound him!—at an objection on the score of the necessary journey to London. Better to refrain altogether than again to see Chilvers come out ahead. General surprise

would naturally be excited, questions asked on all hands. How would it sound: 'I simply couldn't afford to go up'——?

At this point of the meditation he had reached his lodgings; he admitted himself with a latch-key, turned into his murky sitting-room, and sat down.

The table was laid for tea, as usual. Though he might have gone to Twybridge this evening, he had preferred to stay overnight, for an odd reason. At a theatre in Kingsmill a London company, headed by an actress of some distinction, was to perform 'Romeo and Juliet,' and he purposed granting himself this indulgence before leaving the town. The plan was made when his eye fell upon the advertisement, a few days ago. He then believed it probable that an evening at the theatre would appropriately follow upon a day of victory. His interest in the performance had collapsed, but he did not care to alter his arrangements.

The landlady came in bearing the tea-pot. He wanted nothing, yet could not exert himself to say so.

But he was losing sight of a menace more formidable than defeat by Chilvers. What was it his blackguard uncle had said? Had the fellow really threatened to start an eating-house opposite the College, and flare his name upon a placard? 'Peak's Dining and Refreshment Rooms'—merciful heavens!

Again the mood of laughter came upon him. Why, here was a solution of all difficulties, as simple as unanticipated. If indeed that awful thing came to pass, farewell to Whitelaw! What possibility of pursuing his studies when every class-companion, every Professor,—nay, the very porters,—had become aware that he was nephew to the man who supplied meals over the way? Moral philosophy had no prophylactic against an ordeal such as this. Could the most insignificant lad attending lectures afford to disregard such an occasion of ridicule and contempt?

But the scheme would not be realised; it sounded too unlikely. Andrew Peak was merely a loose-minded vagabond, who might talk of this and that project for making money, but would certainly never quit his dirty haunts in London. Godwin asked himself angrily why he had submitted to the fellow's companionship. This absurd delicacy must be corrected before it became his tyrant. The idea of scrupling to hurt the sensibilities of Andrew Peak! The man was coarse-hided enough to undergo kicking, and then take sixpence in compensation,—not a doubt of it. This detestable tie of kindred must no longer be recognised. He would speak gravely to his mother about it. If Andrew again presented himself at the house he should be given plainly to understand that his visits were something less than welcome,—if necessary, a downright blunt word must effect their liberation. Godwin felt strong enough for that, musing here alone. And, student-like, he passed on to debate the theory of the problem. Andrew was his father's brother, but what is a mere tie of blood if nature has alienated two persons by a subtler distinction? By the dead man, Andrew had never been loved or esteemed; memory supplied proof of this. The widow shrank from him. No obligation of any kind lay upon them to tolerate the London ruffian.—Enough; he should be got rid of!

Alternating his causes of misery, which—he could not quite forget—might blend for the sudden transformation of his life, Godwin let the tea grow cold upon the table, until it was time, if he still meant to visit the theatre, for setting forth. He had no mind to go, but as little to sit here and indulge harassing reflection. With an effort, he made ready and left the house.

The cost of his seat at the theatre was two shillings. So nicely had he adjusted the expenses of these last days that, after paying the landlady's bill to-morrow morning, there would remain to him but a few pence more than

the money needed for his journey home. Walking into the town, he debated with himself whether it were not better to save this florin. But as he approached the pit door, the spirit of pleasure revived in him; he had seen but one of Shakespeare's plays, and he believed (naturally at his age) that to see a drama acted was necessary for its full appreciation. Sidling with affected indifference, he added himself to the crowd.

To stand thus, expectant of the opening doors, troubled him with a sense of shame. To be sure, he was in the spiritual company of Charles Lamb, and of many another man of brains who has waited under the lamp. But contact with the pittites of Kingsmill offended his instincts; he resented this appearance of inferiority to people who came at their leisure, and took seats in the better parts of the house. When a neighbour addressed him with a meaningless joke which defied grammar, he tried to grin a friendly answer, but inwardly shrank. The events of the day had increased his sensibility to such impressions. Had he triumphed over Bruno Chilvers, he could have behaved this evening with a larger humanity.

The fight for entrance—honest British stupidity, crushing ribs and rending garments in preference to seemly order of progress—enlivened him somewhat, and sent him laughing to his conquered place; but before the curtain rose he was again depressed by the sight of a familiar figure in the stalls, a fellow-student who sat there with mother and sister, black-uniformed, looking very much a gentleman. 'I, of course, am not a gentleman,' he said to himself, gloomily. Was there any chance that he might some day take his ease in that orthodox fashion? Inasmuch as it was conventionality, he scorned it; but the privileges which it represented had strong control of his imagination. That lady and her daughter would follow the play with intelligence. To exchange comments with them would be a keen delight.

As for him—he had a shop-boy on one hand and a grocer's wife on the other.

By the end he had fallen into fatigue. Amid clamour of easily-won applause he made his way into the street, to find himself in a heavy downpour of rain. Having no umbrella, he looked about for a sheltered station, and the glare of a neighbouring public-house caught his eye; he was thirsty, and might as well refresh body and spirit with a glass of beer, an unwonted indulgence which had the pleasant semblance of dissipation. Arrived at the bar he came upon two acquaintances, who, to judge by their flushed cheeks and excited voices, had been celebrating jovially the close of their academic labours. They hailed him.

'Hollo, Peak! Come and help us to get sober before bedtime!'

They were not exactly studious youths, but neither did they belong to the class that Godwin despised, and he had a comrade-like feeling for them. In a few minutes his demeanour was wholly changed. A glass of hot whisky acted promptly upon his nervous system, enabled him to forget vexations, and attuned him to kindred sprightliness. He entered merrily into the talk of a time of life which is independent of morality—talk distinct from that of the blackguard, but equally so from that of the reflective man. His first glass had several successors. The trio rambled arm in arm from one place of refreshment to another, and presently sat down in hearty fellowship to a supper of such viands as recommend themselves at bibulous midnight. Peak was drawing recklessly upon the few coins that remained to him; he must leave his landlady's claim undischarged, and send the money from home. Prudence be hanged! If one cannot taste amusement once in a twelvemonth, why live at all?

He reached his lodgings, at something after one o'clock, drenched with rain, gloriously indifferent to

that and all other chances of life. Pooh! his system had been radically wrong. He should have allowed himself recreation once a week or so; he would have been all the better for it, body and mind. Books and that kind of thing are all very well in their way, but one must live; he had wasted too much of his youth in solitude. *O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos!* Next session he would arrange things better. Success in examinations—what trivial fuss when one looked at it from the right point of view! And he had fretted himself into misery, because Chilvers had got more 'marks,'—ha, ha, ha!

The morrow's waking was lugubrious enough. Headache and nausea weighed upon him. Worse still, a scrutiny of his pockets showed that he had only the shamefaced change of half-a-crown wherewith to transport himself and his belongings to Twybridge. Now, the railway fare alone was three shillings; the needful cab demanded eighteenpence. O idiot!

And he hated the thought of leaving his bill unpaid; the more so because it was a trifling sum, a week's settlement. To put himself under however brief an obligation to a woman such as the landlady gnawed at his pride. Not that only. He had no business to make a demand upon his mother for this additional sum. But there was no way of raising the money; no one of whom he could borrow it; nothing he could afford to sell—even if courage had supported him through such a transaction. Triple idiot!

Bread turned to bran upon his hot palate; he could only swallow cups of coffee. With trembling hands he finished the packing of his box and portmanteau, then braced himself to the dreaded interview. Of course, it involved no difficulty, the words once uttered; but, when he was left alone again, he paced the room for a few minutes in flush of mortification. It had made his headache worse.

The mode of his homeward journey he had easily arranged. His baggage having been labelled for Twybridge, he himself would book as far as his money allowed, then proceed on foot for the remaining distance. With the elevenpence now in his pocket he could purchase a ticket to a little town called Dent, and by a calculation from the railway tariff he concluded that from Dent to Twybridge was some five-and-twenty miles. Well and good. At the rate of four miles an hour it would take him from half-past eleven to about six o'clock. He could certainly reach home in time for supper.

At Dent station, ashamed to ask (like a tramp) the way to so remote a place as Twybridge, he jotted down a list of intervening railway stoppages, and thus was enabled to support the semblance of one who strolls on for his pleasure. A small hand-bag he was obliged to carry, and the clouded sky made his umbrella a requisite. On he trudged steadily, for the most part by muddy ways, now through a pleasant village, now in rural solitude. He had had the precaution, at breakfast time, to store some pieces of bread in his pocket, and after two or three hours this resource was welcome. Happily the air and exercise helped him to get rid of his headache. A burst of sunshine in the afternoon would have made him reasonably cheerful, but for the wretched meditations surviving from yesterday.

He pondered frequently on his spasmodic debauch, repeating, as well as memory permitted, all his absurdities of speech and action. Defiant self-justification was now far to seek. On the other hand, he perceived very clearly how easy it would be for him to lapse by degrees of weakened will into a ruinous dissoluteness. Anything of that kind would mean, of course, the abandonment of his ambitions. All he had to fight the world with was his brain; and only by incessant strenuousness in its exercise had he achieved the moderate prominence

declared in yesterday's ceremony. By birth, by station, he was of no account; if he chose to sink, no influential voice would deplore his falling off or remind him of what he owed to himself. Chilvers, now—what a wide-spreading outcry, what calling upon gods and men, would be excited by any defection of that brilliant youth! Godwin Peak must make his own career, and that he would hardly do save by efforts greater than the ordinary man can put forth. The ordinary man?—Was he in any respect extraordinary? were his powers noteworthy? It was the first time that he had deliberately posed this question to himself, and for answer came a rush of confident blood, pulsing through all the mechanism of his being.

The train of thought which occupied him during this long trudge was to remain fixed in his memory; in any survey of the years of pupilage this recollection would stand prominently forth, associated, moreover, with one slight incident, which at the time seemed a mere interruption of his musing. From a point on the high-road he observed a small quarry, so excavated as to present an interesting section; though weary, he could not but turn aside to examine these strata. He knew enough of the geology of the county to recognise the rocks and reflect with understanding upon their position; a fragment in his hand, he sat down to rest for a moment. Then a strange fit of brooding came over him. Escaping from the influences of personality, his imagination wrought back through eras of geologic time, held him in a vision of the infinitely remote, shrivelled into insignificance all but the one fact of inconceivable duration. Often as he had lost himself in such reveries, never yet had he passed so wholly under the dominion of that awe which attends a sudden triumph of the pure intellect. When at length he rose, it was with wide, blank eyes, and limbs partly numbed. These needed half-an-hour's walking before he could recover his mood of practical self-search.

Until the last moment he could not decide whether to let his mother know how he had reached Twybridge. His arrival corresponded pretty well with that of a train by which he might have come. But when the door opened to him, and the familiar faces smiled their welcome, he felt that he must have nothing to do with paltry deceit; he told of his walk, explaining it by the simple fact that this morning he had found himself short of money. How that came to pass, no one inquired. Mrs. Peak, shocked at such martyrdom, tended him with all motherly care; for once, Godwin felt that it was good to have a home, however simple.

This amiable frame of mind was not likely to last beyond the first day. Matter of irritation soon enough offered itself, as was invariably the case at Twybridge.

It was pleasant enough to be feted as the hero of the family, to pull out a Kingsmill newspaper and exhibit the full report of prize-day at Whitelaw, with his own name, in very small type, demanding the world's attention, and finally to exhibit the volumes in tree-calf which his friend the librarian had forwarded to him. But domestic circumstances soon made assault upon his nerves, and trial of his brief patience.

First of all, there came an unexpected disclosure. His sister Charlotte had affianced herself to a young man of Twybridge, one Mr. Cusse, whose prospects were as slender as his present means. Mrs. Peak spoke of the affair in hushed privacy, with shaking of the head and frequent sighs, for to her mind Mr. Cusse had few even personal recommendations. He was a draper's assistant. Charlotte had made his acquaintance on occasions of church festivity, and urged the fact of his zeal in Sunday-school tuition as sufficient reply to all doubts. As he listened, Godwin bit his lips.

'Does he come here, then?' was his inquiry.

'Once or twice a week. I haven't felt able to say

anything against it, Godwin. I suppose it will be a very long engagement.'

Charlotte was just twenty-two, and it seemed probable that she knew her own mind; in any case, she was of a character which would only be driven to obstinacy by adverse criticism. Godwin learnt that his aunt Emily (Miss Cadman) regarded this connection with serious disapproval. Herself a shopkeeper, she might have been expected to show indulgence to a draper's assistant, but so far from this, her view of Mr. Casse was severely scornful. She had nourished far other hopes for Charlotte, who surely at her age (Miss Cadman looked from the eminence of five-and-forty) should have been less precipitate. No undue harshness had been exhibited by her relatives, but Charlotte took a stand which sufficiently declared her kindred with Godwin. She held her head higher than formerly, spoke with habitual decision which bordered on snappishness, and at times displayed the absent-mindedness of one who in silence suffers wrong.

There passed but a day or two before Godwin was brought face to face with Mr. Cusse, who answered too well to the idea Charlotte's brother had formed of him. He had a very smooth and shiny forehead, crowned by sleek chestnut hair; his chin was deferential; the bend of his body signified a modest hope that he did his duty in the station to which Providence had summoned him. Godwin he sought to flatter with looks of admiring interest; also, by entering upon a conversation which was meant to prove that he did not altogether lack worldly knowledge, of however little moment that might be in comparison with spiritual concerns. Examining, volume by volume and with painful minuteness, the prizes Godwin had carried off, he remarked fervently, in each instance, 'I can see how very interesting that is! So thorough, so thorough!' Even Charlotte was at length annoyed, when Mr. Cusse had exclaimed upon the 'thor-

oughness' of Ben Jonson's works; she asked an abrupt question about some town affair, and so gave her brother an opportunity of taking the books away. There was no flagrant offence in the man. He spoke with passable accent, and manifested a high degree of amiability; but one could not dissociate him from the counter. At the thought that his sister might become Mrs. Cusse, Godwin ground his teeth. Now that he came to reflect on the subject, he found in himself a sort of unreasoned supposition that Charlotte would always remain single; it seemed so unlikely that she would be sought by a man of liberal standing, and at the same time so impossible for her to accept any one less than a gentleman. Yet he remembered that to outsiders such fastidiousness must show in a ridiculous light. What claim to gentility had they, the Peaks? Was it not all a figment of his own self-conceit? Even in education Charlotte could barely assert a superiority to Mr. Cusse, for her formal schooling had ended when she was twelve, and she had never cared to read beyond the strait track of clerical inspiration.

There were other circumstances which helped to depress his estimate of the family dignity. His brother Oliver, now seventeen, was developing into a type of young man as objectionable as it is easily recognised. The slow, compliant boy had grown more flesh and muscle than once seemed likely, and his wits had begun to display that kind of vivaciousness which is only compatible with a nature moulded in common clay. He saw much company, and all of low intellectual order; he had purchased a bicycle, and regarded it as a source of distinction, a means of displaying himself before shopkeepers' daughters; he believed himself a modest tenor, and sang verses of sentimental imbecility; he took in several weekly papers of unpromising title, for the chief purpose of deciphering cryptograms, in which pursuit he had singular success. Add to these characteristics a

penchant for cheap jewellery, and Oliver Peak stands confessed.

It appeared to Godwin that his brother had leapt in a few months to these heights of vulgar accomplishment; each separate revelation struck unexpectedly upon his nerves and severely tried his temper. When at length Oliver, waiting for supper, began to dance grotesquely to an air which local talent had somehow caught from the London music-halls, Godwin's self-control gave way.

'Is it your ambition,' he asked, with fiery sarcasm, 'to join a troupe of nigger minstrels?'

Oliver was startled into the military posture of attention. He answered, with some embarrassment:

'I can't say it is.'

'Yet anyone would suppose so,' went on Godwin, hotly. 'Though you are employed in a shop, I should have thought you might still aim at behaving like a gentleman.'

Indisposed to quarrel, and possessed of small skill in verbal fence, Oliver drew aside with shadowed brow. As the brothers still had to share one bedroom, they were presently alone together, and their muteness, as they lay down to sleep, showed the estrangement that had at length come between them. When all had been dark and still for half-an-hour, Godwin spoke.

'Are you awake?'

'Yes.'

'There was something about Uncle Andrew I didn't mention. He talks of opening an eating-house just opposite Whitelaw.'

'Oh.'

The tone of this signified nothing more than curiosity.

'You don't see any reason why he shouldn't?'

Oliver delayed a little before replying.

'I suppose it wouldn't be very nice for you.'

'That's rather a mild way of putting it. It would

mean that I should have to leave the College, and give up all my hopes.'

'I see,' returned the other, with slow apprehension.

There followed several minutes of silence. Then Godwin sat up in bed, as had always been his wont when he talked with earnestness at night.

'If you think I lost my temper without cause at supper-time, just remember that I had that blackguard before my mind, and that it isn't very pleasant to see you taking after that branch of our family.'

'Do you mean to say I am like uncle?'

'I mean to say that, if you are not careful, you won't be the kind of man I should like to see you. Do you know what is meant by inherited tendencies? Scientific men are giving a great deal of attention to such things nowadays. Children don't always take after their parents; very often they show a much stronger likeness to a grandfather, or an uncle, or even more distant relatives. Just think over this, and make up your mind to resist any danger of that sort. I tell you plainly that the habits you are getting into, and the people you make friends of, are detestable. For heaven's sake, spend more of your time in a rational way, and learn to despise the things that shopkeepers admire. Read! Force yourself to stick hard at solid books for two or three hours every day. If you don't, it's all up with you. I am speaking for your own good. Read, read, read!'

Quietness ensued. Then Oliver began to move uneasily in his bed, and at length his protest became audible.

'I can't see what harm I do.'

'No!' burst from his brother's lips, scornfully. 'And that's just your danger. Do you suppose *I* could sing nigger songs, and run about the town with shopboys, and waste hours over idiotic puzzles?'

'We're not all alike, and it wouldn't do for us to be.'

'It would do very well for us all to have brains and to use them. The life you lead is a brainless life, brainless and vulgar.'

'Well, if I haven't got brains, I can't help it,' replied Oliver, with sullen resignation.

'You have enough to teach you to live respectably, if only you look to the right kind of example.'

There followed a vehement exhortation, now angry, now in strain of natural kindliness. To this Oliver made only a few brief and muttered replies; when it was all over, he fell asleep. But Godwin was wakeful for hours.

The next morning he attempted to work for his approaching examination, but with small result. It had begun to be very doubtful to him whether he should 'go up' at all, and this uncertainty involved so great a change in all his prospects that he could not command the mental calm necessary for study. After dinner he went out with unsettled purpose. He would gladly have conversed with Mr. Gunnery, but the old people were just now on a stay with relatives in Bedfordshire, and their return might be delayed for another week. Perhaps it behoved him to go and see Mr. Moxey, but he was indisposed to visit the works, and if he went to the house this evening he would encounter the five daughters, who, like all women who did not inspire him with admiration, excited his bashful dislike. At length he struck off into the country and indulged restless thoughts in places where no one could observe him.

A result of the family's removal first from London to the farm, and then into Twybridge, was that Godwin had no friends of old standing. At Greenwich, Nicholas Peak formed no intimacies, nor did a single associate remain to him from the years of his growth and struggle; his wife, until the renewal of intercourse with her sister at Twybridge, had no society whatever beyond her home. A boy reaps advantage from the half parental kindness of men and women who have watched his growth from

infancy; in general it affects him as a steadying influence, keeping before his mind the social bonds to which his behaviour owes allegiance. The only person whom Godwin regarded with feeling akin to this was Mr. Gunnery, but the geologist found no favour with Mrs. Peak, and thus he involuntarily helped to widen the gap between the young man and his relatives. Nor had the intimacies of school time supplied Godwin with friendships for the years to come; his Twybridge class-fellows no longer interested him, nor did they care to continue his acquaintance. One was articled to a solicitor; one was learning the drug-trade in his father's shop; another had begun to deal in corn; the rest were scattered about England, as students or salary-earners. The dominion of the commonplace had absorbed them, all and sundry; they were the stuff which destiny uses for its every-day purposes, to keep the world a-rolling.

So that Godwin had no ties which bound him strongly to any district. He could not call himself a Londoner; for, though born in Westminster, he had grown to consciousness on the outskirts of Greenwich, and remembered but dimly some of the London streets, and a few places of public interest to which his father had taken him. Yet, as a matter of course, it was to London that his ambition pointed, when he forecast the future. Where else could he hope for opportunity of notable advancement? At Twybridge? Impossible to find more than means of subsistence; his soul loathed such a prospect. At Kingsmill? There was a slender hope that he might establish a connection with Whitelaw College, if he devoted himself to laboratory work; but what could come of that—at all events for many years? London, then? The only acceptable plan for supporting himself there was to succeed in a Civil Service competition. That, indeed, seemed the most hopeful direction for his efforts; a government office might afford

him scope, and, he had heard, would allow him abundant leisure.

Or to go abroad? To enter for the Indian clerkships, and possibly cleave a wider way than could be hoped in England? There was allurement in the suggestion; travel had always tempted his fancy. In that case he would be safely severed from the humble origin which in his native country might long be an annoyance, or even an obstacle; no Uncle Andrew could spring up at inconvenient moments in the middle of his path. Yes; this indeed might be best of all. He must send for papers, and give attention to the matter.

Musing in this way, he had come within sight of the familiar chemical works. It was near the hour at which Mr. Moxey was about to go home for his afternoon dinner; why not interrupt his walk, and have a word with him? That duty would be over.

He pushed on, and, as he approached the buildings, was aware of Mr. Moxey stepping into the road, unaccompanied. Greetings speedily followed. The manufacturer, who was growing stout in his mellow years and looking more leisurely than when Godwin first knew him, beamed with smiles of approbation.

'Glad to see you; glad to see you! I have heard of your doings at College.'

'Nothing to boast of, Mr. Moxey.'

'Why, what would satisfy you? A nephew of mine was there last Friday, and tells me you carried off half a hundredweight of prizes. Here he comes, I see.'

There drew near a young man of about four-and-twenty, well-dressed, sauntering with a cane in his hand. His name was Christian Moxey.

'Much pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Peak,' he said, with a winning smile. 'I was at Whitelaw the other day, when you distinguished yourself, and if I had known then that you were an acquaintance of my uncle's

I should have been tempted to offer a word of congratulation. Very glad indeed to meet you.'

Godwin, grateful as always for the show of kindness and flattered by such a reception, at once felt a liking for Christian Moxey. Most people would have admitted the young man's attractiveness. He had a thin and sallow face, and seemed to be of weak constitution. In talking he leant upon his cane, and his movements were languid; none the less, his person was distinguished by an air of graceful manhood. His features, separately considered, were ordinary enough; together they made a countenance of peculiar charm, vividly illumined, full of appeal to whosoever could appreciate emotional capabilities. The interest he excited in Peak appeared to be reciprocal, for his eyes dwelt as often and as long as possible on Godwin's features.

'Come along, and have something to eat with us,' said Mr. Moxey, in a tone of genial invitation. 'I daresay you had dinner long enough ago to have picked up a new appetite.'

Godwin had a perturbing vision of the five Miss Moxeys and of a dinner table, such as he was not used to sit at; he wished to decline, yet knew not how to do so with civility.

'Yes, yes; come along!' added his friend, heartily. 'Tell us something about your chemistry paper. Any posers this time? My nephew won't be out of it; he belongs to the firm of Bates Brothers—the Rotherhithe people, you know.'

This information was a surprise to Godwin. He had imagined Christian Moxey either a gentleman at large, or at all events connected with some liberal profession. Glancing at the attractive face, he met a singular look, a smile which suggested vague doubts. But Christian made no remark, and Mr. Moxey renewed his inquiries about the examination in chemistry.

The five daughters—all assembled in a homely sitting-

room—were nothing less than formidable. Plain, soft-spoken, not ill educated, they seemed to live in perfect harmony, and to derive satisfaction from pursuits independent of external society. In the town they were seldom seen; few families called upon them; and only the most inveterate gossips found matter for small-talk in their retired lives. It had never been heard that any one of them was sought in marriage. Godwin, superfluously troubled about his attire, met them with grim endeavour at politeness; their gravity, a result of shyness, he misinterpreted, supposing them to hold aloof from a young man who had been in their father's employ. But before he could suffer much from the necessity of formal conversation the door opened to admit yet another young lady, a perfect stranger to him. Her age was about seventeen, but she had nothing of the sprightly grace proverbially connected with that time of life in girls; her pale and freckled visage expressed a haughty reserve, intensified as soon as her eye fell upon the visitor. She had a slight but well-proportioned figure, and a mass of auburn hair carelessly arranged.

'My sister,' said Christian, glancing at Godwin. 'Marcella, you recognise Mr. Peak.'

'Oh yes,' the girl replied, as she came forward, and made a sudden offer of her hand.

She too had been present the other day at Whitelaw. Her 'Oh yes' sounded offensive to Godwin, yet in shaking hands with her he felt a warm pressure, and it flattered him when he became aware that Marcella regarded him from time to time with furtive interest. Presently he learnt that Christian and his sister were on a short visit at the house of their relatives; their home was in London. Marcella had seated herself stiffly by a window, and seemed to pay more attention to the view without than to the talk which went on, until dinner was announced.

Speculating on all he saw, Godwin noticed that Chris-

tian Moxey showed a marked preference for the youngest of his cousins, a girl of eighteen, whose plain features were frequently brightened with a happy and very pleasant smile. When he addressed her (by the name of Janet), his voice had a playful kindness which must have been significant to everyone who heard it. At dinner, his place was by her side, and he attended to her with more than courtesy. This astonished Peak. He deemed it incredible that any man should conceive a tender feeling for a girl so far from beautiful. Constantly occupied with thought of sexual attachments, he had never imagined anything of the kind apart from loveliness of feature in the chosen object; his instincts were, in fact, revolted by the idea of love for such a person as Janet Moxey. Christian seemed to be degraded by such a suggestion. In his endeavour to solve the mystery, Godwin grew half unconscious of the other people about him.

Such play of the imaginative and speculative faculties accounts for the common awkwardness of intelligent young men in society that is strange to them Only the cultivation of a double consciousness puts them finally at ease. Impossible to converse with suavity, and to heed the forms of ordinary good-breeding, when the brain is absorbed in all manner of new problems; one must learn to act a part, to control the facial mechanism, to observe and anticipate, even whilst the intellect is spending its sincere energy on subjects unavowed. The perfectly graceful man will always be he who has no strong apprehension either of his own personality or of that of others, who lives on the surface of things, who can be interested without emotion, and surprised without contemplative impulse. Never yet had Godwin Peak uttered a word that was worth listening to, or made a remark that declared his mental powers, save in most familiar colloquy. He was beginning to understand the various reasons of his seeming clownishness,

but this very process of self-study opposed an obstacle to improvement.

When he found himself obliged to take part in conversation about Whitelaw College, Godwin was disturbed by an uncertainty which had never left his mind at rest during the past two years;—was it, or was it not, generally known to his Twybridge acquaintances that he studied as the pensioner of Sir Job Whitelaw? To outward seeming all delicacy had been exercised in the bestowal of Sir Job's benefaction. At the beginning of each academic session Mrs. Peak had privately received a cheque which represented the exact outlay in fees for the course her son was pursuing; payment was then made to the registrar as if from Peak himself. But Lady Whitelaw's sisters were in the secret, and was it likely that they maintained absolute discretion in talking with their Twybridge friends? There seemed, in the first instance, to be a tacit understanding that the whole affair should remain strictly private, and to Godwin himself, sensible enough of such refinements, it was by no means inconceivable that silence had been strictly preserved. He found no difficulty in imagining that Sir Job's right hand knew nothing of what the left performed, and it might be that the authorities of Whitelaw had no hint of his peculiar position. Still, he was perchance mistaken. The Professors perhaps regarded him as a sort of charity-boy, and Twybridge possibly saw him in the same light. The doubt flashed upon his mind while he was trying to eat and converse with becoming self-possession. He dug his heel into the carpet and silently cursed the burden of his servitude.

When the meal was over, Mr. Moxey led the way out into the garden. Christian walked apart with Janet; Godwin strolled about between his host and the eldest Miss Moxey, talking of he knew not what. In a short half-hour he screwed up his courage to the point of leave-taking. Marcella and three of her cousins had

disappeared, so that the awkwardness of departure was reduced. Christian, who seemed to be in a very contented mood, accompanied the guest as far as the garden gate.

'What will be your special line of work when you leave Whitelaw ?' he inquired. 'Your tastes seem about equally divided between science and literature.'

'I haven't the least idea what I shall do,' was Peak's reply.

'Very much my own state of mind when I came home from Zurich a year ago. But it had been taken for granted that I was preparing for business, so into business I went.' He laughed good-humouredly. 'Perhaps you will be drawn to London ?'

'Yes—I think it likely,' Godwin answered, with an absent glance this way and that.

'In any case,' pursued the other, 'you'll be there presently for First B.A. Honours. Try to look in at my rooms, will you ? I should be delighted to see you. Most of my day is spent in the romantic locality of Rotherhithe, but I get home about five o'clock, as a rule. Let me give you a card.'

'Thank you.'

'I daresay we shall meet somewhere about here before then. Of course you are reading hard, and haven't much leisure. I'm an idle dog, unfortunately. I should like to work, but I don't quite know what at. I suppose this is a transition time with me.'

Godwin tried to discover the implication of this remark. Had it any reference to Miss Janet Moxey ? Whilst he stood in embarrassed silence, Christian looked about with a peculiar smile, and seemed on the point of indulging in further self-revelation ; but Godwin of a sudden held out his hand for good-bye, and with friendly smiles they parted.

Peak was older than his years, and he saw in Christian one who might prove a very congenial associate, did but

circumstances favour their intercourse. That was not very likely to happen, but the meeting at all events turned his thoughts to London once more.

His attempts to 'read' were still unfruitful. For one thing, the stress and excitement of the Whitelaw examinations had wearied him; it was characteristic of the educational system in which he had become involved that studious effort should be called for immediately after that frenzy of college competition. He ought now to have been 'sweating' at his London subjects. Instead of that, he procured works of general literature from a Twybridge library, and shut himself up with them in the garret bedroom.

A letter from Mr. Gunnery informed him that the writer would be home in a day or two. This return took place late one evening, and on the morrow Godwin set forth to visit his friend. On reaching the house, he learnt that Mr. Gunnery had suffered an accident which threatened serious results. Walking barefoot in his bedroom the night before, he had stepped upon the point of a large nail, and was now prostrate, enduring much pain. Two days elapsed before Godwin could be admitted; he then found the old man a mere shadow of his familiar self—bloodless, hollow-eyed.

'This is the kind of practical joke that Fate likes to play upon us!' the sufferer growled in a harsh, quaking voice, his countenance divided between genial welcome and surly wrath. 'It'll be the end of me. Pooh! who doesn't know that such a thing is fatal at my age? Blood-poisoning has fairly begun. I'd a good deal rather have broken my neck among honest lumps of old red sandstone. A nail! A damned Brummagem nail!—So you collared the first prize in geology, eh? I take that as a kindness, Godwin. You've got a bit beyond Figuier and his *Deluge*, eh? His Deluge, bah!'

And he laughed discordantly. On the other side of the bed sat Mrs. Gunnery, grizzled and feeble dame.

Shaken into the last stage of senility by this alarm, she wiped tears from her flaccid cheeks, and moaned a few unintelligible words.

The geologist's forecast of doom was speedily justified. Another day bereft him of consciousness, and when, for a short while, he had rambled among memories of his youth, the end came. It was found that he had made a will, bequeathing his collections and scientific instruments to Godwin Peak; his books were to be sold for the benefit of the widow, who would enjoy an annuity purchased out of her husband's savings. The poor old woman, as it proved, had little need of income; on the thirteenth day after Mr. Gunnery's funeral, she too was borne forth from the house, and the faithful couple slept together.

To inherit from the dead was an impressive experience to Godwin At the present stage of his development, every circumstance affecting him started his mind upon the quest of reasons, symbolisms, principles; the 'natural supernatural' had hold upon him, and ruled his thought whenever it was free from the spur of arrogant instinct. This tendency had been strengthened by the influence of his friend Earwaker, a young man of singularly complex personality, positive and analytic in a far higher degree than Peak, yet with a vein of imaginative vigour which seemed to befit quite a different order of mind. Godwin was not distinguished by originality in thinking, but his strongly featured character converted to uses of his own the intellectual suggestions he so rapidly caught from others. Earwaker's habit of reflection had much to do with the strange feelings awakened in Godwin when he transferred to his mother's house the cabinets which had been Mr. Gunnery's pride for thirty or forty years. Joy of possession was subdued in him by the conflict of metaphysical questionings.

Days went on, and nothing was heard of Uncle Andrew. Godwin tried to assure himself that he had been need-

lessly terrified; the eating-house project would never be carried out. Practically dismissing that anxiety, he brooded over his defeat by Chilvers, and thought with extreme reluctance of the year still to be spent at Whitelaw, probably a year of humiliation. In the meantime, should he or should he not present himself for his First B.A.? The five pound fee would be a most serious demand upon his mother's resources, and did the profit warrant it, was it really of importance to him to take a degree?

He lived as much as possible alone, generally avoiding the society of his relatives, save at meal times. A careless remark (not intentionally offensive) with reference to Mr. Cusse had so affronted Charlotte that she never spoke to him save in reply to a question. Godwin regretted the pain he had given, but could not bring himself to express this feeling, for a discussion would inevitably have disclosed all his mind concerning the draper's assistant. Oliver seemed to have forgiven his brother's reproaches, but no longer behaved with freedom when Godwin was present. For all this, the elder's irritation was often aroused by things he saw and heard; and at length—on a memorable Saturday afternoon—debate revived between them. Oliver, as his custom was, had attired himself sprucely for a visit to acquaintances, and a silk hat of the very newest fashion lay together with his gloves upon the table.

'What is this thing?' inquired Godwin, with ominous calm, as he pointed to the piece of head-gear.

'A hat, I suppose,' replied his brother.

'You mean to say you are going to wear that in the street?'

'And why not?'

Oliver, not venturing to raise his eyes, stared at the table-cloth indignantly.

'Can't you feel,' burst from the other, 'that it's a disgrace to buy and wear such a thing?'

'Disgrace! what's the matter with the hat? It's the fashionable shape.'

Godwin mastered his wrath, and turned contemptuously away. But Oliver had been touched in a sensitive place; he was eager to defend himself.

'I can't see what you're finding fault with,' he exclaimed. 'Everybody wears this shape.'

'And isn't that quite sufficient reason why anyone who respects himself should choose something as different as possible? Everybody! That is to say, all the fools in the kingdom. It's bad enough to follow when you can't help it, but to imitate asses gratuitously is the lowest depth of degradation. Don't you know that that is the meaning of vulgarity? How you can offer such an excuse passes my comprehension. Have you no *self?* Are you made, like this hat, on a pattern with a hundred thousand others?'

'You and I are different,' said Oliver, impatiently. 'I am content to be like other people.'

'And I would poison myself with vermin-killer if I felt any risk of such contentment! Like other people? Heaven forbid and forfend! Like other people? Oh, what a noble ambition!'

The loud passionate voice summoned Mrs. Peak from an adjacent room.

'Godwin! Godwin!' she remonstrated. 'Whatever is it? Why should you put yourself out so?'

She was a short and slender woman, with an air of gentility, independent of her badly made and long worn widow's dress. Self-possession marked her manner, and the even tones in which she spoke gave indication of a mild, perhaps an unemotional, temperament.

Oliver began to represent his grievance.

'What harm is there, if I choose to wear a hat that's in fashion? I pay for it out of my own'——

But he was interrupted by a loud visitor's knock at the front door, distant only a few paces. Mrs. Peak turned

with a startled look. Godwin, dreading contact with friends of the family, strode upstairs. When the door was opened, there appeared the smiling countenance of Andrew Peak; he wore the costume of a traveller, and by his side stood a boy of ten, too plainly his son.

'Well, Grace!' was his familiar greeting, as the widow drew back. 'I told you you'd 'ev the pleasure of seein' me again before so very long. Godwin at 'ome with you, I s'pose? Thet you, Noll? 'Ow do, my bo-oy? 'Ere's yer cousin Jowey. Shike 'ands, Jowey bo-oy! Sorry I couldn't bring my old lady over this time, Grace; she sends her respects. as usual. 'Ow's Charlotte? Bloomin', I 'ope?'

He had made his way into the front parlour, dragging the youngster after him. Having deposited his handbag and umbrella on the sofa, he seated himself in the easy-chair, and began to blow his nose with vigour.

'Set down, Jowey; set down, bo-oy! Down't be afride of your awnt.'

'Oi ain't afride!' cried the youth, in a tone which supported his assertion.

Mrs. Peak trembled with annoyance and indecision. Andrew evidently meant to stay for some time, and she could not bring herself to treat him with plain discourtesy; but she saw that Oliver, after shaking hands in a very strained way, had abruptly left the room, and Godwin would be anything but willing to meet his uncle. When the name of her elder son was again mentioned she withdrew on the pretence of summoning him, and went up to his room. Godwin had heard the hateful voice, and was in profound disturbance.

'What does he say, mother?' he inquired anxiously. 'Anything about Kingsmill?'

'Not yet. Oh, I *do* so wish we could bring this connection to an end!'

It was the first time Mrs. Peak had uttered her sentiments so unreservedly.

'Then, shall I see him in private,' said Godwin, 'and simply let him know the truth?'

'I dread the thought of that, Godwin. He would very likely be coarse and violent. I must try to show him by my manner. Oliver has gone out, and when Charlotte comes home I'll tell her to keep out of sight. He has brought his boy. Suppose you don't come down at all? I might say you are too busy.'

'No, no; you shan't have to do it all alone. I'll come down with you. I must hear what he has to say.'

They descended. As soon as his nephew appeared, Andrew sprang up, and shouted joyfully:

'Well, Godwin, bo-oy! It's all settled! Got the bloomin' shop from next quarter dye! "Peak's Dinin' and Refreshment Rooms!" Jowey an' me was over there all yisterday—wasn't us, Jowey? Oh, it's immense!'

Godwin felt the blood buzz in his ears, and a hot choking clutch at his throat. He took his stand by the mantelpiece, and began to turn a little glass ornament round and round. Fate had spoken. On the instant, all his College life was far behind him, all his uneasiness regarding the next session was dispelled, and he had no more connection with Kingsmill.

Mrs. Peak had heard from Oliver of her brother-in-law's proposed undertaking. She had spoken of it with anxiety to Godwin, who merely shrugged his shoulders and avoided the topic, ashamed to dwell on the particulars of his shame. In hearing Andrew's announcement she had much ado to repress tears of vexation; silently she seated herself, and looked with pained countenance from uncle to nephew.

'Shall you make any changes in the place?' Godwin asked, carelessly.

'Shan't I, jest! It'll take a month to refit them eatin' rooms. I'm agoin' to do it proper—up to Dick! and I want your 'elp, my bo-oy. You an' me 'll jest

write a bit of a circular—see? to send round to the big pots of the Collige, an' all the parents of the young fellers as we can get the addresses of—see?'

Even amid his pangs of mortification Godwin found himself pondering an intellectual question. Was his uncle wholly unconscious of the misery he was causing? Had it never occurred to him that the public proximity of an uneducated shopkeeping relative must be unwelcome to a lad who was distinguishing himself at Whitelaw College? Were that truly the case, then it would be unjust to regard Andrew resentfully; destiny alone was to blame. And, after all, the man might be so absorbed in his own interest, so strictly confined to the views of his own class, as never to have dreamt of the sensibilities he wounded. In fact, the shame excited by this prospect was artificial. Godwin had already felt that it was unworthy alike of a philosopher and of a high-minded man of the world. The doubt as to Andrew's state of mind, and this moral problem, had a restraining effect upon the young man's temper. A practical person justifies himself in wrath as soon as his judgment is at one with that of the multitude. Godwin, though his passions were of exceptional force, must needs refine, debate with himself points of abstract justice.

'I've been tellin' Jowey, Grace, as I 'ope he may turn out such another as Godwin 'ere. 'E'll go to Collige, will Jowey. Godwin, jest arst the bo-oy a question or two, will you? 'E ain't been doin' bad at 'is school. Jest put 'im through 'is pyces, as yer may sye. Stend up, Jowey, bo-oy.'

Godwin looked askance at his cousin, who stood with pert face, ready for any test.

'What's the date of William the Conqueror?' he asked, mechanically.

'Ow!' shouted the youth. 'Down't mike me larff! Zif I didn't know thet! Tensixsixtenightysivn, of course!'

The father turned round with an expression of such sincere pride that Godwin, for all his loathing, was obliged to smile.

'Jowey, jest sye a few verses of poitry; them as you learnt larst. 'E's good at poitry, is Jowey.'

The boy broke into fearsome recitation:

> 'The silly buckits *on* the deck
> That 'ed so long rem'ined,
> I dreamt as they was filled with jew,
> End when I awowk, it r'ined.'

Half-a-dozen verses were thus massacred, and the reciter stopped with the sudden jerk of a machine.

'Goes str'ight on, don't 'e, Grace?' cried the father, exultantly. 'Jowey ain't no fool. Know what he towld me the other day? Somethin' as I never knew, and shouldn't never 'ave thought of s'long as I lived. We was talkin' about jewellery, an' Jowey, 'e pops up all at wunst. "It's called jewellery," says 'e, "'cos it's mostly the Jews as sell it." Now, oo'd a thought o' that? But you see it's right as soon as you're towld, eh? Now ain't it right, Godwin?'

'No doubt,' was the dry answer.

'It never struck me,' murmured Mrs. Peak, who took her son's assent seriously, and felt that it was impossible to preserve an obstinate silence.

''E ain't no fool, ain't Jowey!' cried the parent. 'Wite till 'e gits to Collige. Godwin 'll put us up to all the ins and outs. Plenty o' time for that; 'e'll often run over an' 'ev a bit o' dinner, and no need to talk about p'yment.'

'Do you stay in Twybridge to-night?' inquired Godwin, who had changed in look and manner, so that he appeared all but cheerful.

'No, we're on our w'y 'ome, is Jowey an' me. Jest thought we'd break the journey 'ere. We shall ketch the six-fifty hup.'

'Then you will have a cup of tea with us,' said Mrs. Peak, surprised at Godwin's transformation, but seeing that hospitality was now unavoidable.

Charlotte presently entered the house, and, after a private conversation with her mother, went to greet Andrew. If only to signify her contempt for Godwin's prejudices, Charlotte would have behaved civilly to the London uncle. In the end, Andrew took his leave in the friendliest possible way, repeating often that he would soon have the pleasure of entertaining Mrs. Peak and all her family at his new dining-rooms over against Whitelaw College.

IV

Immediately upon his uncle's departure, Godwin disappeared; Mrs. Peak caught only a glimpse of him as he went by the parlour window. In a short time Oliver came home, and, having learned what had happened, joined his mother and sister in a dull, intermittent conversation on the subject of Godwin's future difficulties.

'He won't go back to Whitelaw,' declared the lad. 'He said he wouldn't.'

'People must be above such false shame,' was Charlotte's opinion. 'I can't see that it will make the slightest difference in his position or his prospects.'

Whereupon her mother's patience gave way.

'Don't talk such nonsense, Charlotte! You understand perfectly well how serious it will be. I never knew anything so cruel.'

'I was never taught,' persisted the girl, with calm obstinacy, 'that one ought to be ashamed of one's relatives just because they are in a humble position.'

Oliver brought the tedious discussion to an end by clamouring for supper. The table was laid, and all were about to sit down when Godwin presented himself. To the general astonishment, he seemed in excellent spirits, and ate more heartily than usual. Not a word was spoken of Uncle Andrew, until Mrs. Peak and her elder son were left alone together; then Godwin remarked in a tone of satisfied decision:

'Of course, this is the end of my work at Whitelaw. We must make new plans, mother.'

'But how can we, dear? What will Lady Whitelaw say?'

'I have to think it out yet. In a day or two I shall very likely write a letter to Lady Whitelaw. There's no need, you know, to go talking about this in Twybridge. Just leave it to me, will you?'

'It's not a subject I care to talk about, you may be sure. But I do hope you won't do anything rash, Godwin.'

'Not I. To tell you the truth, I'm not at all sorry to leave. It was a mistake that I went in for the Arts course—Greek, and Latin, and so on, you know; I ought to have stuck to science. I shall go back to it now. Don't be afraid. I'll make a position for myself before long. I'll repay all you have spent on me.'

To this conclusion had he come. The process of mind was favoured by his defeat in all the Arts subjects; in that direction he could see only the triumphant Chilvers, a figure which disgusted him with Greeks, Romans, and all the ways of literature. As to his future efforts he was by no means clear, but it eased him greatly to have cast off a burden of doubt; his theorising intellect loved the sensation of life thrown open to new, however vague, possibilities. At present he was convinced that Andrew Peak had done him a service. In this there was an indication of moral cowardice, such as commonly connects itself with intense pride of individuality. He desired to shirk the combat with Chilvers, and welcomed as an excuse for doing so the shame which another temper would have stubbornly defied.

Now he would abandon his B.A. examination,—a clear saving of money. Presently it might suit him to take the B.Sc. instead; time enough to think of that. Had he but pursued the Science course from the first, who at Whitelaw could have come out ahead of him? He had wasted a couple of years which might have been

most profitably applied: by this time he might have been ready to obtain a position as demonstrator in some laboratory, on his way perhaps to a professorship. How had he thus been led astray? Not only had his boyish instincts moved strongly towards science, but was not the tendency of the age in the same direction? Buckland Warricombe, who habitually declaimed against classical study, was perfectly right; the world had learned all it could from those hoary teachers, and must now turn to Nature. On every hand, the future was with students of the laws of matter. Often, it was true, he had been tempted by the thought of a literary career; he had written in verse and prose, but with small success. An attempt to compose the Prize Poem was soon abandoned in discouragement; the essay he sent in had not been mentioned. These honours had fallen to Earwaker, with whom it was not easy to compete on such ground. No, he was not born a man of letters. But in science, granted fair opportunity, he might make a name. He might, and he would!

On the morrow, splendour of sunshine drew him forth to some distance from the town. He went along the lanes singing; now it was holiday with him, and for the first time he could enjoy the broad golden daylight, the genial warmth. In a hollow of grassy fields, where he least expected to encounter an acquaintance, it was his chance to come upon Christian Moxey, stretched at full length in the company of nibbling sheep. Since the dinner at Mr. Moxey's, he had neither seen nor heard of Christian, who, it seemed probable, was back at his work in Rotherhithe. As their looks met, both laughed.

'I won't get up,' said Christian; 'the effort would be too great. Sit down and let us have a talk.'

'I disturb your thoughts,' answered Godwin.

'A most welcome disturbance; they weren't very pleasant just then. In fact, I have come as far as this

in the hope of escaping them. I'm not much of a walker, are you?'

'Well, yes, I enjoy a good walk.'

'You are of an energetic type,' said Christian, musingly. 'You will do something in life. When do you go up for Honours?'

'I have decided not to go in at all.'

'Indeed; I'm sorry to hear that.'

'I have half made up my mind not to return to Whitelaw.'

Observing his hearer's look of surprise, Godwin asked himself whether it signified a knowledge of his footing at Whitelaw. The possibility of this galled him; but it was such a great step to have declared, as it were in public, an intention of freeing himself, that he was able to talk on with something of aggressive confidence.

'I think I shall go in for some practical work of a scientific kind. It was a mistake for me to pursue the Arts course.'

Christian looked at him earnestly.

'Are you sure of that?'

'Yes, I feel sure of it.'

There was silence. Christian beat the ground with his stick.

'Your state of mind, then,' he said at length, 'is more like my own than I imagined. I, too, have wavered for a long time between literature and science, and now at last I have quite decided—quite—that scientific study is the only safe line for me. The fact is, a man must concentrate himself. Not only for the sake of practical success, but—well, for his own sake.'

He spoke lazily, dreamily, propped upon his elbow, seeming to watch the sheep which panted at a few yards from him.

'I have no right,' he pursued, with a shadow of kindly anxiety on his features, 'to offer you advice, but—well, if you will let me insist on what I have learned from

my own experience. There's nothing like having a special line of work and sticking to it vigorously. I, unfortunately, shall never do anything of any account,—but I know so well the conflict between diverging tastes. It has played the deuce with me, in all sorts of ways. At Zurich I utterly wasted my time, and I've done no better since I came back to England. Don't think me presumptuous. I only mean—well, it is so important to—to go ahead in one line.'

His air of laughing apology was very pleasant. Godwin felt his heart open to the kind fellow.

'No one needs the advice more than I,' he replied. 'I am going back to the line I took naturally when I first began to study at all.'

'But why leave Whitelaw?' asked Christian, gently.

'Because I dislike it—I can't tell you why.'

With ready tact Moxey led away from a subject which he saw was painful.

'Of course there are many other places where one can study just as well.'

'Do you know anything of the School of Mines in London?' Godwin inquired, abruptly.

'I worked there myself for a short time.'

'Then you could tell me about the—the fees, and so on?'

Christian readily gave the desired information, and the listener mused over it.

'Have you any friends in London?' Moxey asked, at length.

'No. But I don't think that matters. I shall work all the harder.'

'Perhaps so,' said the other, with some hesitation. And he added thoughtfully, 'It depends on one's temperament. Doesn't answer to be too much alone—I speak for myself at all events. I know very few people in London—very few that I care anything about. That, in fact, is one reason why I am staying here longer than

I intended.' He seemed to speak rather to himself than to Godwin; the half-smile on his lips expressed a wish to disclose circumstances and motives which were yet hardly a suitable topic in a dialogue such as this. 'I like the atmosphere of a—of a comfortable home. No doubt I should get on better—with things in general—if I had a home of my own. I live in lodgings, you know; my sister lives with friends. Of course one has a sense of freedom, but then'——

His voice murmured off into silence, and again he beat the ground with his cane. Godwin was strongly interested in this broken revelation; he found it difficult to understand Moxey's yearning for domesticity, all his own impulses leading towards quite a contrary ideal. To him, life in London lodgings made rich promise; that indeed would be freedom, and full of all manner of high possibilities!

Each communed with his thoughts. Happening to glance at Christian, Godwin was struck with the graceful attitude in which the young man reclined; he himself squatted awkwardly on the grass, unable to abandon himself in natural repose, even as he found it impossible to talk with the ease of unconsciousness. The contrast, too, between his garments, his boots, and those of the Londoner was painful enough to him. Without being a dandy, Christian, it was evident, gave a good deal of thought to costume. That kind of thing had always excited Godwin's contempt, but now he confessed himself envious; doubtless, to be well dressed was a great step towards the finished ease of what is called a gentlemanly demeanour, which he knew he was very far from having attained.

'Well,' exclaimed Christian, unexpectedly, 'if I can be of ever so little use to you, pray let me. I must get back to town in a few days, but you know my address. Write to me, I beg, if you wish for any more information.'

The talk turned to less difficult topics. Godwin made inquiries about Zurich, then about Switzerland in general.

'Did you see much of the Alps?'

'Not as a climber sees them. That sort of thing isn't in my way; I haven't the energy—more's the pity. Would you like to see a lot of good photographs I brought back? I have them here; brought them to show the girls.'

In spite of the five Miss Moxeys and Christian's sister, Peak accepted the invitation to walk back with his companion, and presently they began to stroll towards Twybridge.

'I have an absurd tendency to dream—to lose myself amid ideals—I don't quite know how to express it,' Christian resumed, when both had been silent for some minutes. 'That's why I mean to go in earnestly for science—as a corrective. Fortunately, I have to work for my living; otherwise, I should moon my life away—no doubt. My sister has ten times as much energy—she knows much more than I do already. What a splendid thing it is to be of an independent character! I had rather be a self-reliant coal-heaver than a millionaire of uncertain will. My uncle—there's a man who knows his own mind. I respect those strong practical natures. Don't be misled by ideals. Make the most of your circumstances. Don't aim at—but I beg your pardon; I don't know what right I have to lecture you in this way.' And he broke off with his pleasant, kind-hearted laugh, colouring a little.

They reached Mr. Moxey's house. In a garden chair on the lawn sat Miss Janet, occupied with a book. She rose to meet them, shook hands with Godwin, and said to her cousin:

'The postman has just left a letter for you—forwarded from London.'

'Indeed? I'm going to show Mr. Peak my Swiss

photographs. You wouldn't care to come and help me in the toil of turning them over?'

'O lazy man!'

Her laugh was joyous. Any one less prejudiced than Peak would have recognised the beauty which transformed her homely features as she met Christian's look.

On the hall table lay the letter of which Janet had spoken. Christian took it up, and Godwin, happening at that moment to observe him, caught the tremor of a sudden emotion on lip and eyelid. Instantly, prompted by he knew not what perception, he turned his gaze to Janet, and in time to see that she also was aware of her cousin's strong interest in the letter, which was at once put away in Christian's pocket.

They passed into the sitting-room, where a large portfolio stood against the back of a chair. The half-hour which ensued was to Godwin a time of uneasiness. His pleasure in the photographs suffered disturbance from a subtle stress on his nerves, due to something indeterminable in the situation, of which he formed a part. Janet's merry humour seemed to be subdued. Christian was obviously forcing himself to entertain the guest whilst his thoughts were elsewhere. As soon as possible, Godwin rose to depart. He was just saying good-bye to Janet, when Marcella entered the room. She stood still, and Christian said, hurriedly:

'It's possible, Marcella, that Mr. Peak will be coming to London before long. We may have the pleasure of seeing him there.'

'You will be glad, I'm sure,' answered his sister. Then, as if forcing herself to address Peak directly, she faced to him and added, 'It isn't easy to find sympathetic companions.'

'I, at all events, haven't found very many,' Godwin replied, meaning to speak in a tone only half-serious, but conscious at once that he had made what might

seem an appeal for sympathy. Thereupon his pride revolted, and in a moment drove him from the room.

Christian followed, and at the front door shook hands with him. Nervous impatience was unmistakable in the young man's look and words. Again Godwin speculated on the meaning of this, and wondered, in connection therewith, what were the characteristics which Marcella Moxey looked for in a 'sympathetic companion.'

V

In the course of the afternoon, Godwin sat down to pen the rough draft of a letter to Lady Whitelaw. When the first difficulties were surmounted, he wrote rapidly, and at considerable length. It was not easy, at his time of life, to compress into the limits of an ordinary epistle all he wished to say to the widow of his benefactor. His purpose was, with all possible respect yet as firmly as might be, to inform Lady Whitelaw that he could not spend the last of his proposed three years at the College in Kingsmill, and furthermore to request of her that she would permit his using the promised sum of money as a student at the Royal School of Mines. This had to be done without confession of the reasons for his change of plan; he could not even hint at them. Yet cause must be assigned, and the best form of words he could excogitate ran thus: 'Family circumstances render it desirable—almost necessary—that I should spend the next twelve months in London. In spite of sincere reluctance to leave Whitelaw College, I am compelled to take this step.' The lady must interpret that as best she might. Very hard indeed was the task of begging a continuance of her bounty under these changed conditions. Could he but have resigned the money, all had been well; his tone might then have been dignified without effort. But such disinterestedness he could not afford. His mother might grant him money enough barely to live upon until he discovered means of support—for his

education she was unable to pay. After more than an hour's work he had moderately satisfied himself; indeed, several portions of the letter struck him as well composed, and he felt that they must heighten the reader's interest in him. With an author's pleasure (though at the same time with much uneasiness) he perused the appeal again and again.

Late in the evening, when he was alone with his mother, he told her what he had done, and read the letter for her opinion. Mrs. Peak was gravely troubled.

'Lady Whitelaw will ask her sisters for an explanation,' she said.

'I have thought of that,' Godwin replied, with the confident, cheerful air he had assumed from the first. 'If the Miss Lumbs go to aunt, she must be prepared to put them off in some way. But look here, mother, when uncle has opened his shop, it's pretty certain that some one or other will hit on the true explanation of my disappearance. Let them. Then Lady Whitelaw will understand and forgive me.'

After much musing, the mother ventured a timid question, the result of her anxieties rather than of her judgment on the point at issue.

'Godwin, dear, are you quite sure that his shop would make so much difference?'

The young man gave a passionate start.

'What! To have the fellows going there to eat, and hearing his talk, and——? Not for a day could I bear it! Not for an hour!'

He was red with anticipated shame, and his voice shook with indignation at the suggested martyrdom. Mrs. Peak dried a tear.

'You would be so alone in London, Godwin.'

'Not a bit of it. Young Mr. Moxey will be a useful friend, I am convinced he will. To tell you the whole truth, I aim at getting a place at the works in Rotherhithe, where he no doubt has influence. You see, mother,

I might manage it even before the end of the year. Our Mr. Moxey will be disposed to help me with his recommendation.'

'But, my dear, wouldn't it come to the same thing, then, if you went back to Mr. Moxey's?'

He made a gesture of impatience.

'No, no, no! I couldn't live at Twybridge. I have my way to make, mother, and the place for that is London. You know I am ambitious. Trust me for a year or two, and see the result. I depend upon your help in this whole affair. Don't refuse it me. I have done with Whitelaw, and I have done with Twybridge: now comes London. You can't regard me as a boy, you know.'

'No—but'——

'But me no buts!' he cried, laughing excitedly. 'The thing is settled. As soon as possible in the morning I post this letter. I feel it will be successful. See aunt to-morrow, and get her support. Mind that Charlotte and Oliver don't talk to people. If you all use discretion, there's no need for any curiosity to be excited.'

When Godwin had taken a resolve, there was no domestic influence strong enough to prevent his acting upon it. Mrs. Peak's ignorance of the world, her mild passivity, and the faith she had in her son's intellectual resources, made her useless as a counsellor, and from no one else—now that Mr. Gunnery was dead—would the young man have dreamt of seeking guidance. Whatever Lady Whitelaw's reply, he had made up his mind to go to London. Should his subsidy be refused, then he would live on what his mother could allow him until—probably with the aid of Christian Moxey—he might obtain a salaried position. The letter was despatched, and with feverish impatience he awaited a reply.

Nine days passed, and he heard nothing. Half that delay sufficed to bring out all the self-tormenting capa-

cities of a nature such as his. To his mother's conjectural explanations he could lend no ear. Doubtless Lady Whitelaw (against whom, for subtle reasons, he was already prejudiced) had taken offence; either she would not reply at all, or presently there would come a few lines of polite displeasure, intimating her disinclination to aid his project. He silently raged against 'the woman.' Her neglect was insolence. Had she not delicacy enough to divine the anxiety natural to one in his dependent position? Did she take him for an every-day writer of mendicant appeals? His pride fed upon the outrage and became fierce.

Then arrived a small glossy envelope, containing a tiny sheet of very thick note-paper, whereon it was written that Lady Whitelaw regretted her tardiness in replying to him (caused by her absence from home), and hoped he would be able to call upon her, at ten o'clock next morning, at the house of her sisters, the Misses Lumb, where she was stopping for a day—she remained his sincerely.

Having duly contorted this note into all manner of painful meanings, Godwin occupied an hour in making himself presentable (scornful that he should deem such trouble necessary), and with furiously beating heart set out to walk through Twybridge. Arrived at the house, he was led by a servant into the front room on the ground floor, where Lady Whitelaw, alone, sat reading a newspaper. Her features were of a very common order, and nothing distinguished her from middle-aged women of average refinement; she had chubby hands, rather broad shoulders, and no visible waist. The scrutiny she bestowed upon her visitor was close. To Godwin's feelings it too much resembled that with which she would have received an applicant for the post of footman. Yet her smile was friendly enough, and no lack of civility appeared in the repetition of her excuses for having replied so late.

'Let us talk about this,' she began, when Godwin was uneasily seated. (She spoke with an excess of precision, as though it had at one time been needful for her to premeditate polished phrases.) 'I am very sorry you should have to think of quitting the College; very sorry indeed. You are one of the students who do honour to the institution.'

This was pleasant, and Godwin felt a regret of the constraint that was upon him. In his endeavour not to display a purring smile, he looked grim, as if the compliment were beneath his notice.

'Pray don't think,' she pursued, 'that I wish you to speak more fully about the private circumstances you refer to in your letter. But do let me ask you: Is your decision final? Are you sure that when the vacations are over you will see things just as you do now?'

'I am quite sure of it,' he replied.

The emphasis was merely natural to him. He could not so govern his voice as to convey the respectful regret which at this moment he felt. A younger lady, one who had heightened the charm of her compliment with subtle harmony of tones and strongly feminine gaze, would perhaps have elicited from him a free confession. Gratitude and admiration would have made him capable of such frankness. But in the face of this newspaper-reading woman (yes, he had unaccountably felt it jar upon him that a lady should be reading a newspaper), under her matronly smile, he could do no more than plump out his 'quite sure.' To Lady Whitelaw it sounded altogether too curt; she was conscious of her position as patroness, and had in fact thought it likely that the young man would be disposed to gratify her curiosity in some measure.

'I can only say that I am sorry to hear it,' fell from her tightened lips, after a moment's pause.

Instantly Godwin's pride expelled the softer emotion. He pressed hard with his feet upon the floor, every nerve

in his body tense with that distressing passion peculiar to the shyly arrogant. Regard him, and you had imagined he was submitting to rebuke for an offence he could not deny.

Lady Whitelaw waited. A minute almost, and Peak gave no sign of opening his mouth.

'It is certainly much to be regretted,' she said at length, coolly. 'Of course, I don't know what prospects you may have in London, but, if you had remained at the College, something advantageous would no doubt have offered before long.'

There went small tact to the wording of this admonition. Impossible for Lady Whitelaw to understand the complexities of a character such as Godwin's, even had she enjoyed opportunities of studying it; but many a woman of the world would have directed herself more cautiously after reading that letter of his. Peak's impulse was to thank her for the past, and declare that henceforth he would dispense with aid; only the choking in his throat obstructed some such utterance. He resented profoundly her supposition (natural enough) that his chief aim was to establish himself in a self-supporting career. What? Am I to be grateful for a mere chance of earning my living? Have I not shown that I am capable of something more than the ordinary lot in life? From the heights of her assured independence, does she look down upon me as a young man seeking a 'place'? He was filled with wrath, and all because a good, commonplace woman could not divine that he dreamt of European fame.

'I am very sorry that I can't take that into account,' he managed to say. 'I wish to give this next year exclusively to scientific study, and after that I shall see what course is open to me.'

He was not of the men who can benefit by patronage, and be simply grateful for it. His position was a false one: to be begging with awkward show of thankfulness

for a benefaction which in his heart he detested. He knew himself for an undesigning hypocrite, and felt that he might as well have been a rascal complete. Gratitude! No man capable of it in fuller measure than he; but not to such persons as Lady Whitelaw. Before old Sir Job he could more easily have bowed himself. But this woman represented the superiority of mere brute wealth, against which his soul rebelled.

There was another disagreeable silence, during which Lady Whitelaw commented on her protégé very much as Mrs. Warricombe had done.

'Will you allow me to ask,' she said at length, with cold politeness, 'whether you have acquaintances in London?'

'Yes. I know some one who studied at the School of Mines.'

'Well, Mr. Peak, I see that your mind is made up. And no doubt you are the best judge of your private circumstances. I must ask you to let me think over the matter for a day or two. I will write to you.'

'And I to you,' thought Godwin; a resolve which enabled him to rise with something like a conventional smile, and thus put an end to a very brief and quite unsatisfactory interview.

He strode homewards in a state of feverish excitement. His own behaviour had been wretchedly clownish; he was only too well aware of that. He ought to have put aside all the grosser aspects of his case, and have exhibited the purely intellectual motives which made such a change as he purposed seem desirable to him. That would have been to act with dignity; that would have been the very best form of gratitude for the kindness he had received. But no, his accursed lack of self-possession had ruined all. 'The woman' was now offended in good earnest; he saw it in her face at parting. The fault was admittedly on his side, but what right had she to talk about 'something ad-

vantageous'? She would write to him, to be sure; that meant, she could not yet make up her mind whether to grant the money or not. Pluto take the money! Long before sitting down to her glossy note-paper she should have received a letter from *him*.

Composed already. Now he was up in the garret bedroom, scribbling as fast as pen could fly over paper. He had been guilty of a mistake—so ran the epistle; having decided to leave Whitelaw, he ought never to have requested a continuance of the pension. He begged Lady Whitelaw would forgive this thoughtless impropriety; she had made him understand the full extent of his error. Of course he could not accept anything more from her. As for the past, it would be idle for him to attempt an expression of his indebtedness. But for Sir Job's munificence, he must now have been struggling to complete a radically imperfect education —instead of going into the world to make a place for myself among the scientific investigators of our time.'

One's claims to respectful treatment must be put forward unmistakably, especially in dealing with such people as Lady Whitelaw. Now, perhaps, she would understand what his reserve concealed. The satisfaction of declining further assistance was enormous. He read his letter several times aloud. This was the great style; he could imagine this incident forming a landmark in the biography of a notable man. Now for a fair copy, and in a hand, mind you, that gave no hint of his care for caligraphic seemliness: bold, forthright.

The letter in his pocket, he went downstairs. His mother had been out all the morning; now she was just returned, and Godwin saw trouble on her forehead. Anxiously she inquired concerning the result of his interview.

Now that it was necessary to make an intelligible report of what had happened, Godwin found his tongue falter. How could he convey to another the intangible

sense of wounded dignity which had impelled his pen? Instead of producing the letter with a flourish, he answered with affected carelessness:

'I am to hear in a day or two.'

'Did she seem to take it—in the right way?'

'She evidently thinks of me too much as a schoolboy.'

And he began to pace the room. Mrs. Peak sat still, with an air of anxious brooding.

'You don't think she will refuse, Godwin?' fell from her presently.

His hand closed on the letter.

'Why? Well, in that case I should go to London and find some occupation as soon as possible. You could still let me have the same money as before?'

'Yes.'

It was said absently, and did not satisfy Godwin. In the course of the conversation it appeared that Mrs. Peak had that morning been to see the legal friend who looked after her small concerns, and though she would not admit that she had any special cause for uneasiness, her son recalled similar occasions when an interview with Mr. Dutch had been followed by several days' gloom. The truth was that Mrs. Peak could not live strictly within the income at her disposal, and on being from time to time reminded of this, she was oppressed by passing worry. If Godwin and Oliver 'got on well,' things would come all right in the end, but in the meantime she could not face additional expenditure. Godwin did not like to be reminded of the razor's edge on which the affairs of the household were balanced. At present it brought about a very sudden change in his state of mind; he went upstairs again, and sat with the letter before him, sunk in misery. The reaction had given him a headache.

A fortnight, and no word from Lady Whitelaw. But neither was Godwin's letter posted.

Was he at liberty to indulge the self-respect which urged him to write? In a moment of heated confidence it was all very well to talk of 'getting some occupation' in London, but he knew that this might prove no easy matter. A year's work at the School of Mines would decidedly facilitate his endeavour; and, seeing that his mother's peace depended upon his being speedily self-supporting, was it not a form of selfishness to reject help from one who could well afford it? From a distance, he regarded Lady Whitelaw with more charity; a longer talk with her might have led to better mutual apprehension. And, after all, it was not she but her husband to whom he would stand indebted. Sir Job was a very kind-hearted old fellow; he had meant thoroughly well. Why, clearly, the bestower of this third year's allowance would not be Lady Whitelaw at all.

If it were granted. Godwin began to suffer a troublesome misgiving; perchance he had gone too far, and was now, in fact, abandoned to his own resources.

Three weeks. Then came the expected letter, and, as he opened it, his heart leaped at the sight of a cheque—talisman of unrivalled power over the emotions of the moneyless! Lady Whitelaw wrote briefly and formally. Having considered Godwin's request, she had no reason for doubting that he would make a good use of the proposed year at the School of Mines, and accordingly she sent him the sum which Sir Job had intended for his final session at Whitelaw College. She wished him all benefit from his studies, and prosperity henceforth.

Rejoicing, though shame-smitten, Godwin exhibited this remittance to his mother, from whom it drew a deep sigh of relief. And forthwith he sat down to write quite a different letter from that which still lay in his private drawer,—a letter which he strove to make the justification (to his own mind) of this descent to humility. At considerable length he dwelt upon the change of tastes of which he had been conscious lately, and did

not fail to make obvious the superiority of his ambition to all thought of material advancement. He offered his thanks, and promised to give an account of himself (as in duty bound) at the close of the twelvemonths' study he was about to undertake: a letter in which the discerning would have read much sincerity, and some pathos; after all, not a letter to be ashamed of. Lady Whitelaw would not understand it; but then, how many people are capable of even faintly apprehending the phenomena of mental growth?

And now to plan seriously his mode of life in London. With Christian Moxey he was so slightly acquainted that it was impossible to seek his advice with regard to lodgings; besides, the lodgings must be of a character far too modest to come within Mr. Moxey's sphere of observation. Other acquaintance he had none in the capital, so it was clear that he must enter boldly upon the unknown world, and find a home for himself as best he might. Mrs. Peak could offer suggestions as to likely localities, and this was of course useful help. In the meantime (for it would be waste of money to go up till near the end of the holiday season) he made schemes of study and completed his information concerning the School of Mines. So far from lamenting the interruption of his promising career at Whitelaw, he persuaded himself that Uncle Andrew had in truth done him a very good turn: now at length he was fixed in the right course. The only thing he regretted was losing sight of his two or three student-friends, especially Earwaker and Buckland Warricombe. They, to be sure, would soon guess the reason of his disappearance. Would they join in the laughter certain to be excited by 'Peak's Dining and Refreshment Rooms'? Probably; how could they help it? Earwaker might be superior to a prejudice of that kind; his own connections were of humble standing. But Warricombe must wince and shrug his shoulders. Perhaps even some of the Pro-

fessors would have their attention directed to the ludicrous mishap: they were gentlemen, and, even though they smiled, must certainly sympathise with him.

Wait a little. Whitelaw College should yet remember the student who seemed to have vanished amid the world's obscure tumult.

Resolved that he was about to turn his back on Twybridge for ever, he found the conditions of life there quite supportable through this last month or two; the family reaped benefit from his improved temper. Even to Mr. Cusse he behaved with modified contempt. Oliver was judicious enough to suppress his nigger minstrelsy and kindred demonstrations of spirit in his brother's presence, and Charlotte, though steadily resentful, did her best to avoid conflict.

Through the Misses Lumb, Godwin's change of purpose had of course become known to his aunt, who for a time took it ill that these debates had been concealed from her. When Mrs. Peak, in confidence, apprised her of the disturbing cause, Miss Cadman's indignation knew no bounds. What! That low fellow had been allowed to interfere with the progress of Godwin Peak's education, and not a protest uttered! He should have been *forbidden* to establish himself in Kingsmill! Why had they not taken *her* into council? She would have faced the man, and have overawed him; he should have been made to understand the gross selfishness of his behaviour. Never had she heard of such a monstrous case——

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Godwin spent much time in quiet examination of the cabinets bequeathed to him by Mr. Gunnery. He used a pound or two of Lady Whitelaw's money for the purchase of scientific books, and set to work upon them with freshened zeal. The early morning and late evening were given to country walks, from which he always returned with brain excited by the forecast of great achievements.

When the time of his departure approached, he decided to pay a farewell visit to Mr. Moxey. He chose an hour when the family would probably be taking their ease in the garden. Three of the ladies were, in fact, amusing themselves with croquet, while their father, pipe in mouth, bent over a bed of calceolarias.

'What's this that I hear?' exclaimed Mr. Moxey, as he shook hands. 'You are not going back to Whitelaw?'

The story had of course spread among all Twybridge people who knew anything of the Peaks, and it was generally felt that some mystery was involved. Godwin had reasonably feared that his obligations to Sir Job Whitelaw must become known; impossible for such a matter to be kept secret; all who took any interest in the young man had long been privately acquainted with the facts of his position. Now that discussion was rife, it would have been prudent in the Misses Lumb to divulge as much of the truth as they knew, but (in accordance with the law of natural perversity) they maintained a provoking silence. Hence whispers and suspicious questions, all wide of the mark. No one had as yet heard of Andrew Peak, and it seemed but too likely that Lady Whitelaw, for some good reason, had declined to discharge the expenses of Godwin's last year at the College.

Mr. Moxey himself felt that an explanation was desirable, but he listened with his usual friendly air to Godwin's account of the matter—which of course included no mention of Lady Whitelaw.

'Have you friends in London?' he inquired—like everyone else.

'No. Except that your nephew was so kind as to ask me to call on him, if ever I happened to be there.'

There passed over Mr. Moxey's countenance a curious shadow. Godwin noticed it, and at once concluded that the manufacturer condemned Christian for undue ad-

vances to one below his own station. The result of this surmise was of course a sudden coldness on Godwin's part, increased when he found that Mr. Moxey turned to another subject, without a word about his nephew.

In less than ten minutes he offered to take leave, and no one urged him to stay longer. Mr. Moxey made sober expression of good wishes, and hoped he might hear that the removal to London had proved 'advantageous.' This word sufficed to convert Godwin's irritation into wrath; he said an abrupt 'good-evening,' raised his hat as awkwardly as usual, and stalked away.

A few paces from the garden gate, he encountered Miss Janet Moxey, just coming home from walk or visit. Another grab at his hat, and he would have passed without a word, but the girl stopped him.

'We hear that you are going to London, Mr. Peak.'

'Yes, I am, Miss Moxey.'

She examined his face, and seemed to hesitate.

'Perhaps you have just been to say good-bye to father?'

'Yes.'

Janet paused, looked away, again turned her eyes upon him.

'You have friends there, I hope?' she ventured.

'No, I have none.'

'My cousin—Christian, you remember—would, I am sure, be very glad to help you in any way.' Her voice sank, and at the same time she coloured just perceptibly under Godwin's gaze.

'So he assured me,' was the reply. 'But I must learn to be independent, Miss Moxey.'

Whereupon Godwin performed a salute, and marched forward.

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His boxes were packed, and now he had but one more evening in the old home. It was made less pleasant than it might have been by a piece of information upon which

he by chance alighted in a newspaper. The result of the Honours examination for the First B.A. at London had just been made known, and in two subjects a high place was assigned to Bruno Leathwaite Chilvers—not the first place happily, but it was disagreeable enough.

Pooh! what matter? What are academic successes? Ten years hence, which name would have wider recognition—Bruno Chilvers or Godwin Peak? He laughed with scornful superiority.

No one was to accompany him to the station; on that he insisted. He had decided for as early a train as possible, that the dolours of leave-taking might be abridged. At a quarter to eight the cab drove up to the door. Out with the trunks labelled 'London!'

'Take care of the cabinets!' were his last words to his mother. 'I may want to have them sent before long.'

He implied, what he had not ventured to say plainly, that he was leaving Twybridge for good, and henceforth would not think of it as home. In these moments of parting, he resented the natural feeling which brought moisture to his eyes. He hardened himself against the ties of blood, and kept repeating to himself a phrase in which of late he had summed his miseries: 'I was born in exile—born in exile.' Now at length had he set forth on a voyage of discovery, to end perchance in some unknown land among his spiritual kith and kin.

PART II

I

In the spring of 1882 Mr. Jarvis Runcorn, editor and co-proprietor of the London *Weekly Post*, was looking about for a young man of journalistic promise whom he might associate with himself in the conduct of that long established Radical paper. The tale of his years warned him that he could not hope to support much longer a burden which necessarily increased with the growing range and complexity of public affairs. Hitherto he had been the autocrat of the office, but competing Sunday papers exacted an alertness, a versatile vigour, such as only youth can supply; for there was felt to be a danger that the *Weekly Post* might lose its prestige in democratic journalism. Thus on the watch, Mr. Runcorn—a wary man of business, who had gone through many trades before he reached that of weekly literature—took counsel one day with a fellow-campaigner, Malkin by name, who owned two or three country newspapers, and had reaped from them a considerable fortune; in consequence, his attention was directed to one John Earwaker, then editing the *Wattleborough Courier*. Mr. Malkin's eldest son had recently stood as Liberal candidate for Wattleborough, and though defeated was loud in his praise of the *Courier;* with its editor he had come to be on terms of intimate friendship. Earwaker was well acquainted with journalistic life in the provinces. He sprang from a humble family living at Kingsmill, had studied at Whitelaw College, and was now but nine-and-twenty: the style of his 'leaders' seemed to mark him

for a wider sphere of work. It was decided to invite him to London, and the young man readily accepted Mr. Runcorn's proposals. A few months later he exchanged temporary lodgings for chambers in Staple Inn, where he surrounded himself with plain furniture and many books.

In personal appearance he had changed a good deal since that prize-day at Whitelaw when his success as versifier and essayist foretold a literary career. His figure was no longer ungainly; the big head seemed to fit better upon the narrow shoulders. He neither walked with extravagant paces, nor waved his arms like a windmill. A sufficiency of good food, and the habit of intercourse with active men, had given him an every-day aspect; perhaps the sole peculiarity he retained from student times was his hollow chuckle of mirth, a laugh which struggled vainly for enlargement. He dressed with conventional decency, even submitting to the chimney-pot hat. His features betrayed connection with a physically coarse stock; but to converse with him was to discover the man of original vigour and wide intellectual scope. With ordinary companions, it was a rare thing for him to speak of his professional interests. But for his position on *The Weekly Post* it would not have been easy to surmise how he stood with regard to politics, and he appeared to lean as often towards the conservative as to the revolutionary view of abstract questions.

The newspaper left him time for other literary work, and it was known to a few people that he wrote with some regularity for reviews, but all the products of his pen were anonymous. A fact which remained his own secret was that he provided for the subsistence of his parents, old people domiciled in a quiet corner of their native Kingsmill. The strict sobriety of life which is indispensable to success in such a career as this cost him no effort. He smoked moderately, ate and drank as little as might be, could keep his health on six hours of

sleep, and for an occasional holiday liked to walk his twenty or thirty miles. Earwaker was naturally marked for survival among the fittest.

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On an evening of June in the year '84, he was interrupted whilst equipping himself for dinner abroad, by a thunderous rat-tat-tat.

'You must wait, my friend, whoever you are,' he murmured placidly, as he began to struggle with the stiff button-holes of his shirt.

The knock was repeated, and more violently.

'Now there's only one man of my acquaintance who knocks like that,' he mused, elaborating the bow of his white tie. 'He, I should imagine, is in Brazil; but there's no knowing. Perhaps our office is on fire.—Anon, anon!'

He made haste to don waistcoat and swallow-tail, then crossed his sitting-room and flung open the door of the chambers.

'Ha! Then it *is* you! I was reminded of your patient habits.'

A tall man, in a light overcoat and a straw hat of spacious brim, had seized both his hands, with shouts of excited greeting.

'Confound you! Why did you keep me waiting? I thought I had missed you for the evening. How the deuce are you? And why the devil have you left me without a line from you for more than six months?'

Earwaker drew aside, and allowed his tumultuous friend to rush into the nearest room.

'Why haven't you written?—confound you!' was again vociferated, amid bursts of boyish laughter. 'Why hasn't anybody written?'

'If everybody was as well informed of your movements as I, I don't wonder,' replied the journalist. 'Since you left Buenos Ayres, I have had two letters, each containing twenty words, which gave me to un-

derstand that no answer could by possibility reach you.'

'Humbug! You could have written to half-a-dozen likely places. Did I really say that? Ha, ha, ha!—Shake hands again, confound you! How do you do? Do I look well? Have I a tropical colour? I say, what a blessed thing it was that I got beaten down at Wattleborough! All this time I should have been sitting in the fog at Westminster. What a time I've had! What a time I've had!'

It was more than twelve months since Malkin's departure from England. Though sun and sea had doubtless contributed to his robustness, he must always have been a fair example of the vigorous Briton. His broad shoulders, upright bearing, open countenance, and frank resonant voice, declared a youth passed amid the wholesome conditions which wealth alone can command. The hearty extravagance of his friendliness was only possible in a man who has never been humiliated by circumstances, never restricted in his natural needs of body and mind. Yet he had more than the heartiness of a contented Englishman. The vivacity which made a whirlwind about him probably indicated some ancestral mingling with the blood of a more ardent race. Earwaker examined him with a smile of pleasure.

'It's unfortunate,' he said, 'that I have to go out to dinner.'

'Dinner! Pooh! we can get dinner anywhere.'

'No doubt, but I am engaged.'

'The devil you are! Who is she? Why didn't you write to tell me?'

'The word has a less specific meaning, my dear fellow,' replied Earwaker, laughing. 'Only you of all men would have rushed at the wrong one. I mean to say—if your excitement can take in so common a fact—that I have promised to dine with some people at Notting Hill, and mustn't disappoint them.'

Malkin laughed at his mistake, then shouted:

'Notting Hill! Isn't that somewhere near Fulham? We'll take a cab, and I can drop you on my way.'

'It wouldn't be on the way at all.'

The journalist's quiet explanation was cut short by a petulant outcry.

'Oh, very well! Of course if you want to get rid of me! I should have thought after sixteen months'——

'Don't be idiotic,' broke in the other. 'There's a strong feminine element in you, Malkin; that's exactly the kind of talk with which women drive men to frenzy.'

'Feminine element!' shouted the traveller with hot face. 'What do you mean? I propose to take a cab with you, and you'——

Earwaker turned away laughing. 'Time and distance are nothing to you, and I shall be very glad of your company. Come by all means.'

His friend was instantly appeased.

'Don't let me make you late, Earwaker. Must we start this moment? Come along, then. Can I carry anything for you? Lord! if you could only see a tropical forest! How do you get on with old Runcorn? *Write?* What the devil was the use of my writing, when words are powerless to describe——? What a rum old place this seems, after experiences like mine; how the deuce can you live here? I say, I've brought you a ton of curiosities; will make your rooms look like a museum. Confound it! I've broken my shin against the turn in the staircase! Whew! Who are you going to dine with?—Moxey? Never heard the name.'

In Holborn a hansom was hailed, and the friends continued their dialogue as they drove westward. Having at length effervesced, Malkin began to exchange question and answer with something of the calm needful for mutual intelligibility.

'And how do you get on with old Runcorn?'

'As well as can be expected where there is not a single subject of agreement,' Earwaker replied. 'I have hopes of reducing our circulation.'

'What the deuce do you mean?'

'In other words, of improving the paper. Runcorn is strong on the side of blackguardism. We had a great fight the other day over a leader offered by Kenyon,—a true effusion of the political gutter-snipe. I refused point-blank to let it go in; Runcorn swore that, if I did not, *I* should go *out*. I offered to retire that moment. "We must write for our public," he bellowed. "True," said I, "but not necessarily for the basest among them. The standard at the best is low enough." "Do you call yourself a Radical?" "Not if this be Radicalism." "You ought to be on the *Morning* instead of the *Weekly Post*." I had my way, and probably shall end by sending Mr. Kenyon back to his tinker's work shop. If not, I must look out for cleaner occupation.'

'Go it, my boy! Go it!' cried Malkin, slapping his companion's knee violently. 'Raise the tone! To the devil with mercenary considerations! Help the proletariat out of its grovelling position.'

They approached the street where Earwaker had to alight. The other declared his intention of driving on to Fulham in the hope of finding a friend who lived there.

'But I must see you again. When shall you be home to-night?'

'About half-past eleven, I dare say.'

'Right! If I am free I'll come out to Staple Inn, and we'll talk till three or four.'

The house at which the journalist presented himself was such as might be inhabited by a small family of easy means. As he was taking off his overcoat, a door opened and Christian Moxey came forward to greet him. They shook hands like men who stood on friendly, but not exactly on intimate, terms.

'Will you come up to the laboratory for a moment?' said Moxey. 'I should like to show you something I have under the microscope.'

The room he spoke of was at the top of the house; two chambers had been made into one, and the fittings were those required by a student of physical science. Various odours distressed the air. A stranger to the pursuits represented might have thought that the general disorder and encumberment indicated great activity, but the experienced eye perceived at once that no methodical work was here in progress. Mineralogy, botany, biology, physics, and probably many other sciences, were suggested by the specimens and apparatus that lay confusedly on tables, shelves, or floor.

Moxey looked very slim and elegant in his evening costume. When he touched any object, his long, translucent fingers seemed soft and sensitive as a girl's. He stepped with peculiar lightness, and the harmonious notes of his voice were in keeping with these other characteristics. Ten years had developed in him that graceful languor which at four-and-twenty was only beginning to get mastery over the energies of a well-built frame.

'This stuff here,' he said, pointing to an open box full of mud, 'is silt from down the Thames. It's positively loaded with *diatomaceæ*,—you remember our talking about them when you were last here? I am working at the fabric of the valves. Now, just look!'

Earwaker, with attentive smile, followed the demonstration.

'Peak is busy with them as well,' said Christian, presently. 'Has he told you his theory of their locomotion? Nobody has found out yet how the little beggars move about. Peak has a bright idea.'

They spent ten minutes in the laboratory, then went downstairs. Two other guests had meanwhile arrived and were conversing with the hostess, Miss Moxey. The

shy, awkward, hard-featured girl was grown into a woman whose face made such declaration of intellect and character that, after the first moment, one became indifferent to its lack of feminine beauty. As if with the idea of compensating for personal disadvantages she was ornately dressed; her abundant tawny hair had submitted to much manipulation, and showed the gleam of jewels; expense and finished craft were manifest in every detail of her garb. Though slightly round-shouldered, her form was well-proportioned and suggested natural vigour. Like Christian, she had delicate hands.

'Do you know a distinguished clergyman, named Chilvers?' she asked of Earwaker, with a laugh, when he had taken a place by her.

'Chilvers?—Is it Bruno Chilvers, I wonder?'

'That's the name!' exclaimed one of the guests, a young married lady of eager face and fidgety manners.

'Then I knew him at College, but I had no idea he was become distinguished.'

Miss Moxey again laughed.

'Isn't it amusing, the narrowness of a great clerical reputation? Mrs. Morton was astonished that I had never heard his name.'

'Please don't think,' appealed the lady, looking anxiously at Earwaker, 'that I consider it shameful not to know him. I only happened to mention a very ridiculous sermon of his, that was forced upon me by a distressingly orthodox friend of mine. They tell me, he is one of the newest lights of the Church.'

Earwaker listened with amusement, and then related anecdotes of Bruno Chilvers. Whilst he was talking, the door opened to admit another arrival, and a servant's voice announced 'Mr. Peak.' Miss Moxey rose, and moved a step or two forward; a change was visible on her countenance, which had softened and lightened.

'I am very sorry to be late,' said the new-comer, in a

dull and rather husky voice, which made strong contrast with the humorous tones his entrance had interrupted.

He shook hands in silence with the rest of the company, giving merely a nod and a smile as reply to some gracious commonplace from Mrs. Morton.

'Has it come to your knowledge,' Earwaker asked of him, 'that Bruno Chilvers is exciting the orthodox world by his defence of Christianity against neo-heathenism?'

'Chilvers?—No.'

'Mrs. Morton tells us that all the Church newspapers ring with his name.'

'Please don't think,' cried Mrs. Morton, with the same anxious look as before, 'that I read such papers. We never have such a thing in our house, Mr. Peak. I have only been told about it.'

Peak smiled gravely, but made no other answer. Then he turned to Earwaker.

'Where is he?'

'I can't say. Perhaps Mrs. Morton'——

'They tell me he is somewhere in Norfolk,' replied the lady. 'I forget the town.'

A summons to dinner broke off the conversation. Moxey offered his arm to the one lady present as guest, and Earwaker did the same courtesy to the hostess. Mr. Morton, a meditative young man who had been listening with a smile of indifference, sauntered along in the rear with Godwin Peak.

At the dinner-table Peak was taciturn, and seemed to be musing on a disagreeable subject. To remarks, he answered briefly and absently. As Moxey, Earwaker, and Mrs. Morton kept up lively general talk, this muteness was not much noticed, but when the ladies had left the room, and Peak still frowned over his wine-glass, the journalist rebuked him.

'What's the matter with you? Don't depress us.'

The other laughed impatiently, and emptied his glass.

'Malkin has come back,' pursued Earwaker. 'He burst in upon me, just as I was leaving home—as mad as a March hare. You must come and meet him some evening.'

'As you please.'

Returned to the upper room, Peak seated himself in a shadowy corner, crossed his legs, thrust his hands into his pockets, and leaned back to regard a picture on the wall opposite. This attitude gave sufficient proof of the change that had been wrought in him by the years between nineteen and nine-and-twenty; even in a drawing-room, he could take his ease unconcernedly. His face would have led one to suppose him an older man; it was set in an expression of stern, if not morose, thoughtfulness.

He had small, hard lips, indifferent teeth (seldom exhibited), a prominent chin, a long neck; his body was of firm, not ungraceful build. Society's evening uniform does not allow a man much scope in the matter of adornments; it was plain, however, that Godwin no longer scorned the tailor and haberdasher. He wore a suit which confidently challenged the criticism of experts, and the silk socks visible above his shoes might have been selected by the most fastidious of worldlings.

When he had sat there for some minutes, his eyes happened to stray towards Miss Moxey, who was just then without a companion. Her glance answered to his, and a smile of invitation left him no choice but to rise and go to a seat beside her.

'You are meditative this evening,' she said, in a voice subdued below its ordinary note.

'Not very fit for society, to tell the truth,' Godwin answered, carelessly. 'One has such moods, you know. But how would you take it if, at the last moment, I sent a telegram, "Please excuse me. Don't feel able to talk"?'

'You don't suppose I should be offended?'

'Certainly you would.'

'Then you know less of me than I thought.'

Her eyes wandered about the room, their smile betokening an uneasy self-consciousness.

'Christian tells me,' she continued, 'that you are going to take your holiday in Cornwall.'

'I thought of it. But perhaps I shan't leave town at all. It wouldn't be worth while, if I go abroad at the end of the year.'

'Abroad?' Marcella glanced at him. 'What scheme is that?'

'Haven't I mentioned it? I want to go to South America and the Pacific islands. Earwaker has a friend, who has just come back from travel in the tropics; the talk about it has half decided me to leave England. I have been saving money for years to that end.'

'You never spoke of it—to me,' Marcella replied, turning a bracelet on her wrist. 'Should you go alone?'

'Of course. I couldn't travel in company. You know how impossible it would be for me to put up with the moods and idiosyncrasies of other men.'

There was a quiet arrogance in his tone. The listener still smiled, but her fingers worked nervously.

'You are not so unsocial as you pretend,' she remarked, without looking at him.

'Pretend! I make no pretences of any kind,' was his scornful answer.

'You are ungracious this evening.'

'Yes—and can't hide it.'

'Don't try to, I beg. But at least tell me what troubles you.'

'That's impossible,' Peak replied, drily.

'Then friendship goes for nothing,' said Marcella, with a little forced laugh.

'Yes—in all but a very few human concerns. How often could *you* tell *me* what it is that prevents your taking life cheerfully?'

He glanced at her, and Marcella's eyes fell; a moment after, there was a suspicion of colour in her cheek.

'What are you reading?' Peak asked abruptly, but in a voice of more conventional note.

'Still Hafiz.'

'I envy your power of abstraction.'

'Yet I hear that you are deeply concerned about the locomotive powers of the *diatomaceæ?*'

Their eyes met, and they laughed—not very mirthfully.

'It preserves me from worse follies,' said Peak. 'After all, there are ways more or less dignified of consuming time'——

As he spoke, his ear caught a familiar name, uttered by Christian Moxey, and he turned to listen. Moxey and Earwaker were again talking of the Rev. Bruno Chilvers. Straightway disregarding Marcella, Peak gave attention to the men's dialogue, and his forehead wrinkled into scornful amusement.

'It's very interesting,' he exclaimed, at a moment when there was silence throughout the company, 'to hear that Chilvers is really coming to the front. At Whitelaw it used to be prophesied that he would be a bishop, and now I suppose he's fairly on the way to that. Shall we write letters of congratulation to him, Earwaker?'

'A joint epistle, if you like.'

Mr. Morton, who had brightened since dinner, began to speak caustically of the form of intellect necessary nowadays in a popular clergyman.

'He must write a good deal,' put in Earwaker, 'and that in a style which would have scandalised the orthodox of the last century. Rationalised dogma is vastly in demand.'

Peak's voice drew attention.

'Two kinds of books dealing with religion are now greatly popular, and will be for a long time. On the one hand there is that growing body of people who, for whatever reason, tend to agnosticism, but desire to be

convinced that agnosticism is respectable; they are eager for anti-dogmatic books, written by men of mark. They couldn't endure to be classed with Bradlaugh, but they rank themselves confidently with Darwin and Huxley. Arguments matter little or nothing to them. They take their rationalism as they do a fashion in dress, anxious only that it shall be "good form." Then there's the other lot of people—a much larger class—who won't give up dogma, but have learnt that bishops, priests, and deacons no longer hold it with the old rigour, and that one must be "broad"; these are clamorous for treatises which pretend to reconcile revelation and science. It's quite pathetic to watch the enthusiasm with which they hail any man who distinguishes himself by this kind of apologetic skill, this pious jugglery. Never mind how washy the book from a scientific point of view. Only let it obtain vogue, and it will be glorified as the new evangel. The day has gone by for downright assaults on science; to be marketable, you must prove that *The Origin of Species* was approvingly foreseen in the first chapter of Genesis, and that the Apostles' Creed conflicts in no single point with the latest results of biblical criticism. Both classes seek to avoid ridicule, and to adapt themselves to a standard of respectability. If Chilvers goes in for the newest apologetics, he is bound to be enormously successful. The man has brains, and really there are so few such men who still care to go into the Church.'

There was a murmur of laughing approval. The speaker had worked himself into eloquent nervousness; he leaned forward with his hands straining together, and the muscles of his face quivering.

'And isn't it surprising,' said Marcella, 'in how short a time this apologetic attitude has become necessary?'

Peak flashed a triumphant look at her.

'I often rejoice to think of it!' he cried. 'How magnificent it is that so many of the solemn jackasses

who brayed against Darwin from ten to twenty years ago should live to be regarded as beneath contempt! I say it earnestly: this thought is one of the things that make life tolerable to me!'

'You have need of charity, friend Peak,' interposed Earwaker. 'This is the spirit of the persecutor.'

'Nothing of the kind! It is the spirit of justified reason. You may say that those people were honestly mistaken;—such honesty is the brand of a brainless obstructive. *They* would have persecuted, but too gladly! There were, and are, men who would have committed Darwin to penal servitude, if they had had the power. Men like Lyell, who were able to develop a new convolution in their brains, I respect heartily. I only speak of the squalling mass, the obscene herd of idiot mockers.'

'Who assuredly,' remarked Earwaker, 'feel no shame whatever in the retrospect of their idiocy. To convert a *mind* is a subject for high rejoicing; to confute a *temper* isn't worth the doing.'

'That is philosophy,' said Marcella, 'but I suspect you of often feeling as Mr. Peak does. I am sure *I* do.'

Peak, meeting an amused glance from the journalist, left his seat and took up a volume that lay on one of the tables. It was easy to see that his hands shook, and that there was perspiration on his forehead. With pleasant tact, Moxey struck into a new subject, and for the next quarter of an hour Peak sat apart in the same attitude as before his outburst of satire and invective. Then he advanced to Miss Moxey again, for the purpose of taking leave. This was the signal for Earwaker's rising, and in a few minutes both men had left the house.

'I'll go by train with you,' said Earwaker, as they walked away. 'Farringdon Street will suit me well enough.'

Peak vouchsafed no reply, but, when they had proceeded a little distance, he exclaimed harshly:

'I hate emancipated women!'

His companion stopped and laughed loudly.

'Yes, I hate emancipated women,' the other repeated, with deliberation. 'Women ought neither to be enlightened nor dogmatic. They ought to be sexual.'

'That's unusual brutality on your part.'

'Well, you know what I mean.'

'I know what you think you mean,' said Earwaker. 'But the woman who is neither enlightened nor dogmatic is only too common in society. They are fools, and troublesome fools.'

Peak again kept silence.

'The emancipated woman,' pursued his friend, 'needn't be a Miss Moxey, nor yet a Mrs. Morton.'

'Miss Moxey is intolerable,' said Peak. 'I can't quite say why I dislike her so, but she grows more antipathetic to me the better I know her. She has not a single feminine charm—not one. I often feel very sorry for her, but dislike her all the same.'

'Sorry for her,' mused Earwaker. 'Yes, so do I. I can't like her either. She is certainly an incomplete woman. But her mind is of no low order. I had rather talk with her than with one of the imbecile prettinesses. I half believe you have a sneaking sympathy with the men who can't stand education in a wife.'

'It's possible. In some moods.'

'In no mood can I conceive such a prejudice. I have no great attraction to women of any kind, but the uneducated woman I detest.'

'Well, so do I,' muttered Peak. 'Do you know what?' he added, abruptly. 'I shall be off to the Pacific. Yes, I shall go this next winter. My mind is made up.'

'I shan't try to dissuade you, old fellow, though I had rather have you in sight. Come and see Malkin. I'll drop you a note with an appointment.'

'Do.'

They soon reached the station, and exchanged but few more words before Earwaker's leaving the train at Farringdon Street. Peak pursued his journey towards the south-east of London.

On reaching home, the journalist flung aside his foolish coat of ceremony, indued a comfortable jacket, lit a pipe with long stem, and began to glance over an evening newspaper. He had not long reposed in his arm-chair when the familiar appeal thundered from without. Malkin once more shook his hand effusively.

'Had my journey to Fulham for nothing. Didn't matter; I ran over to Putney and looked up my old landlady. The rooms are occupied by a married couple, but I think we shall succeed in persuading them to make way for me. I promised to find them lodgings every bit as good in two days' time.'

'If that is so easy, why not take the new quarters yourself?'

'Why, to tell you the truth, I didn't think of it!—Oh, I had rather have the old crib; I can do as I like there, you know. Confound it! Now I shall have to spend all to-morrow lodging-hunting for other people. Couldn't I pay a man to do it? Some confidential agent—private police—you know what I mean?'

'A man of any delicacy,' replied Earwaker, with grave countenance, 'would feel bound by such a promise to personal exertion.'

'Right; quite right! I didn't mean it; of course I shall hunt conscientiously. Oh, I say; I have brought over a couple of armadilloes. Would you like one?'

'Stuffed, do you mean?'

'Pooh! Alive, man, alive! They only need a little care. I should think you might keep the creature in your kitchen; they become quite affectionate.'

The offer was unhesitatingly declined, and Malkin looked hurt. There needed a good deal of genial ex-

planation before Earwaker could restore him to his sprightly mood.

'Where have you been dining?' cried the traveller. 'Moxey's—ah, I remember. But who *is* Moxey? A new acquaintance, eh?'

'Yes; I have known him about six months. Got to know him through Peak.'

'Peak? Peak? What, the fellow you once told me about—who disappeared from Whitelaw because of his uncle, the cat's-meat man?'

'The man's-meat man, rather.'

'Yes, yes—the eating-house; I remember. You have met him again? Why on earth didn't you tell me in our letters? What became of him? Tell me the story.'

'Certainly, if you will cease to shake down plaster from the ceiling.—We met in a restaurant (appropriate scene), happening to sit at the same table. Whilst eating, we stared at each other fitfully. "I'll be hanged if that isn't Peak," I kept saying to myself. And at the same moment we opened our lips to question each other.'

'Just the same thing happened once to a friend of mine and a friend of his. But it was on board ship, and both were devilish sea-sick. Walker—you remember my friend Walker?—tells the story in a side-splitting way. I wonder what has become of Walker? The last time I met him he was travelling agent for a menagerie—a most interesting fellow, Walker.—But I beg your pardon. Go on, old fellow!'

'Well, after that we at once saw a good deal of each other. He has been working for years at a chemical factory down on the river; Moxey used to be there, and got him the place.'

'Moxey?—Oh yes, the man you dined with. You must remember that these are new names to me. I must know all these new people, I say. You don't mind?'

'You shall be presented to the whole multitude, as soon as you like. Peak wants to see you. He thinks of an excursion like this last of yours.'

'He does? By Jove, we'll go together! I have always wanted a travelling companion. We'll start as soon as ever he likes!—well, in a month or two. I must just have time to look round. Oh, I haven't done with the tropics yet! I must tell him of a rattling good insect-powder I have invented; I think of patenting it. I say, how does one get a patent? Quite a simple matter, I suppose?'

'Oh, always has been. The simplest and least worrying of all business enterprises.'

'What? Eh? That smile of yours means mischief.'

In a quarter of an hour they had got back to the subject of Peak's history.

'And did he really run away because of the eating-house?' Malkin inquired.

'I shall never venture to ask, and it's not very likely he will admit it. It was some time before he cared to talk much of Whitelaw.'

'But what is he doing? You used to think he would come out strong, didn't you? Has he written anything?'

'A few things in *The Liberator*, five or six years ago.'

'What, the atheistic paper?'

'Yes. But he's ashamed of it now. That belongs to a bygone stage of development.'

'Turned orthodox?'

Earwaker laughed.

'I only mean that he is ashamed of the connection with street-corner rationalism.'

'Quite right. Devilish low, that kind of thing. But I went in for it myself once. Did I ever tell you that I debated with a parson on Mile-end Waste? Fact! That was in my hot-headed days. A crowd of coster-

mongers applauded me in the most flattering way.—I say, Earwaker, you haven't any whisky?'

'Forgive me; your conversation makes me forget hospitality. Shall I make hot water? I have a spirit-kettle.'

'Cold for me. I get in such a deuced perspiration when I begin to talk.—Try this tobacco; the last of half a hundred-weight I took in at Bahia.'

The traveller refreshed himself with a full tumbler, and resumed the conversation cheerily.

'Has he just been wasting his time, then, all these years?'

'He goes in for science—laboratory work, evolutionary speculations. Of course I can't judge his progress in such matters; but Moxey, a clever man in the same line, thinks very highly of him.'

'Just the fellow to travel with. I want to get hold of some solid scientific ideas, but I haven't the patience to work steadily. A confounded fault of mine, you know, Earwaker,—want of patience. You must have noticed it?'

'Oh—well, now and then, perhaps.'

'Yes, yes; but of course I know myself better. And now tell me about Moxey. A married man, of course?'

'No, lives with a sister.'

'Unmarried sister?—Brains?'

'Pretty well supplied with that commodity.'

'You must introduce me to her. I do like women with brains.—Orthodox or enlightened?'

'Bitterly enlightened.'

'Really? Magnificent! Oh, I must know her. Nothing like an emancipated woman! How any man can marry the ordinary female passes my understanding. What do *you* think?'

'My opinions are in suspense; not yet precipitated, as Peak might say.'

One o'clock sounded from neighbouring churches, but

Malkin was wide awake as ever. He entered upon a detailed narrative of his travels, delightful to listen to, so oddly blended were the strains of conscious and unconscious humour which marked his personality. Two o'clock ; three o'clock ;—he would have talked till breakfast-time, but at last Earwaker declared that the hour had come for sleep. As Malkin had taken a room at the Inns of Court Hotel, it was easy for him to repair to his quarters. The last his friend heard of him was an unexplained laugh, echoing far down the staircase.

II

PEAK's destination was Peckham Rye. On quitting the railway, he had a walk of some ten minutes along a road which smelt of new bricks and stucco heated by the summer sun; an obscure passage led him into a street partly of dwelling-houses, partly of shops, the latter closed. He paused at the side door of one over which the street lamp dimly revealed—'Button, Herbalist.'

His latch-key admitted him to total darkness, but he moved forward with the confidence of long use. He softly ascended two flights of stairs, opened a door, struck a match, and found himself in a comfortable sitting-room, soon illumined by a reading lamp. The atmosphere, as throughout the house, was strongly redolent of dried simples. Anyone acquainted with the characteristics of furnished lodgings must have surmised that Peak dwelt here among his own movables, and was indebted to the occupier of the premises for bare walls alone; the tables and chairs, though plain enough, were such as civilisation permits; and though there were no pictures, sundry ornaments here and there made strong denial of lodging-house affinity. It was at once laboratory, study, and dwelling-room. Two large cabinets, something the worse for transportation, alone formed a link between this abode and the old home at Twybridge. Books were not numerous, and a good microscope seemed to be the only scientific instrument of much importance. On door-pegs hung a knapsack, a botanist's vasculum, and a geologist's wallet.

A round table was spread with the materials of supper, and here again an experienced lodger must have bestowed contemplative scrutiny, for no hand of common landlady declared itself in the arrangement. The cloth was spotless, the utensils tasteful and carefully disposed. In a bowl lay an appetising salad, ready for mingling; a fragment of Camembert cheese was relieved upon a setting of green leafage; a bottle of ale, with adjacent corkscrew, stood beside the plate; the very loaf seemed to come from no ordinary baker's, or was made to look better than its kin by the fringed white cloth in which it nestled.

The custom of four years had accustomed Peak to take these things as a matter of course, yet he would readily have admitted that they were extraordinary enough. Indeed, he even now occasionally contrasted this state of comfort with the hateful experiences of his first six years in London. The subject of lodgings was one of those on which (often intemperate of speech) he spoke least temperately. For six years he had shifted from quarter to quarter, from house to house, driven away each time by the hateful contact of vulgarity in every form,—by foulness and dishonesty, by lying, slandering, quarrelling, by drunkenness, by brutal vice,—by all abominations that distinguish the lodging-letter of the metropolis. Obliged to practise extreme economy, he could not take refuge among self-respecting people, or at all events had no luck in endeavouring to find such among the poorer working-class. To a man of Godwin's idiosyncrasy the London poor were of necessity abominable, and it anguished him to be forced to live among them.

Rescue came at last, and in a very unexpected way. Resident in the more open part of Bermondsey (winter mornings made a long journey to Rotherhithe intolerable), he happened to walk one day as far as Peckham Rye, and was there attracted by the shop window of a herbalist. He entered to make a purchase, and got into conversa-

tion with Mr. Button, a middle-aged man of bright intelligence and more reading than could be expected. The herbalist led his customer to an upper room, in which were stored sundry curiosities, and happened casually to say that he was desirous of finding a lodger for two superfluous chambers. Peak's inquiries led to his seeing Mrs. Button, whom he found to be a Frenchwoman, of very pleasing appearance; she spoke fluent French-English, anything but disagreeable to an ear constantly tormented by the London vernacular. After short reflection he decided to take and furnish the rooms. It proved a most fortunate step, for he lived (after the outlay for furniture) at much less expense than theretofore, and in comparative luxury. Cleanliness, neatness, good taste by no means exhausted Mrs. Button's virtues; her cooking seemed to the lodger of incredible perfection, and the infinite goodwill with which he was tended made strange contrast with the base usage he had commonly experienced.

In these ten years he had paid but four visits to Twybridge, each of brief duration. Naturally there were changes among his kinsfolk: Charlotte, after an engagement which prolonged itself to the fifth twelvemonth, had become Mrs. Cusse, and her husband now had a draper's shop of his own, with two children already born into the world of draperdom. Oliver, twice fruitlessly affianced, had at length (when six-and-twenty) wedded a young person whom his mother and his aunt both regarded as a most undesirable connection, the daughter (aged thirty-two) of a man who was drinking himself to death on such money as he could earn by casual reporting for a Twybridge newspaper. Mrs. Peak the elder now abode with her sister at the millinery shop, and saw little of her two married children. With Oliver and Charlotte their brother had no sympathy, and affected none; he never wrote to them, nor they to him; but years had strengthened his regard for his mother, and

with her he had fairly regular correspondence. Gladly he would have seen her more often, but the air of shop-keeping he was compelled to breathe when he visited Twybridge nauseated and repelled him. He recognised the suitability both of Oliver and Charlotte for the positions to which life had consigned them—they suffered from no profitless aspiration; but it seemed to him a just cause of quarrel with fate that his kindred should thus have relapsed instead of bettering the rank their father had bequeathed to them. He would not avow to such friends as Moxey and Earwaker the social standing of his only recognised relatives.

As for the unrecognised, he had long ago heard with some satisfaction that Andrew Peak, having ultimately failed in his Kingsmill venture, returned to London. Encounter with the fatal Andrew had been spared him ever since that decisive day when Master Jowey Peak recited from Coleridge and displayed his etymological genius.

For himself, he had earned daily bread, and something more; he had studied in desultory fashion; he had seen a good deal of the British Isles and had visited Paris. The result of it all was gnawing discontent, intervals of furious revolt, periods of black despair.

He had achieved nothing, and he was alone.

Young still, to be sure; at twenty-nine it is too early to abandon ambitions which are supported by force of brain and of will. But circumstances must needs help if the desires of his soul were to be attained. On first coming to London, received with all friendliness by Christian Moxey, he had imagined that it only depended upon himself to find admission before long to congenial society—by which he then understood the companionship of intelligent and aspiring young men. Christian, however, had himself no such circle, and knew that the awkward lad from Twybridge could not associate with the one or two wealthy families to which he could have

presented him. The School of Mines was only technically useful; it helped Godwin to get his place with Bates & Sons, but supplied no friendships. In the third year, Moxey inherited means and left the chemical works for continental travel.

By tormenting attraction Godwin was often led to walk in the wealthy districts of London. Why was no one of these doors open to him? There were his equals; not in the mean streets where he dwelt. There were the men of culture and capacity, the women of exquisite person and exalted mind. Was he the inferior of such people? By heaven, no!

He chanced once to be in Hyde Park, on the occasion of some public ceremony, and was brought to pause at the edge of a gaping plebeian crowd, drawn up to witness the passing of aristocratic vehicles. Close in front of him an open carriage came to a stop; in it sat, or rather reclined, two ladies, old and young. Upon this picture Godwin fixed his eyes with the intensity of fascination; his memory never lost the impress of these ladies' faces. Nothing very noteworthy about them; but to Godwin they conveyed a passionate perception of all that is implied in social superiority. Here he stood, one of the multitude, of the herd; shoulder to shoulder with boors and pickpockets; and within reach of his hand reposed those two ladies, in Olympian calm, seeming unaware even of the existence of the throng. Now they exchanged a word; now they smiled to each other. How delicate was the moving of their lips! How fine must be their enunciation! On the box sat an old coachman and a young footman; they too were splendidly impassive, scornful of the multitudinous gaze.—The block was relieved, and on the carriage rolled.

They were his equals, those ladies; merely his equals. With such as they he should by right of nature associate.

In his rebellion, he could not hate them. He hated the malodorous rabble who stared insolently at them

and who envied their immeasurable remoteness. Of mere wealth he thought not; might he only be recognised by the gentle of birth and breeding for what he really was, and be rescued from the promiscuity of the vulgar!

Yet at this time he was drawn into connection with the movement of popular Radicalism which revolts against religious respectability. Inherited antipathy to all conventional forms of faith outweighed his other prejudices so far as to induce him to write savage papers for *The Liberator*. Personal contact with artisan freethinkers was disgusting to him. From the meeting of emancipated workmen he went away with scorn and detestation in his heart; but in the quiet of his lodgings he could sit down to aid their propaganda. One explanation of this inconsistency lay in the fact that no other channel was open to his literary impulses. Pure science could not serve him, for he had no original results to announce. Pure literature seemed beyond his scope, yet he was constantly endeavouring to express himself. He burned with the desire of fame, and saw no hope of achieving it save as an author. *The Liberator* would serve him as a first step. In time he might get foothold in the monthly reviews, and see his name side by side with those of the leaders of thought.

Occasions of course offered when he might have extended his acquaintance, but they were never of a kind that he cared to use; at best they would only have admitted him to the homes of decent, semi-educated families, and for such society he was altogether unfitted. The licence of the streets but seldom allured him. After his twenty-fourth year he was proof against the decoys of venal pleasure, and lived a life of asceticism exceedingly rare in young and lonely men. When Christian Moxey returned to London and took the house at Notting Hill, which he henceforth occupied together with his sister, a possibility of social intercourse at length appeared.

Indeed it was a substantial gain to sit from time to time at a civilised table, and to converse amid graceful surroundings with people who at all events followed the intellectual current of the day. Careless hitherto of his personal appearance, he now cultivated an elegance of attire in conformity with his aristocratic instincts, and this habit became fixed. When next he visited Twybridge, the change in his appearance was generally remarked. Mrs. Peak naturally understood it as a significant result of his intercourse with Miss Moxey, of whom, as it seemed to her, he spoke with singular reticence.

But Marcella had no charm for Godwin's imagination, notwithstanding that he presently suspected a warmth of interest on her side which he was far from consciously encouraging. Nor did he find among his friends any man or woman for whose acquaintance he greatly cared. The Moxeys had a very small circle, consisting chiefly of intellectual inferiors. Christian was too indolent to make a figure in society, and his sister suffered from peculiarities of mind and temperament which made it as difficult for her as for Peak himself to form intimate friendships.

When chance encounter brought him into connection with Earwaker, the revival of bygone things was at first doubtfully pleasant. Earwaker himself, remarkably developed and become a very interesting man, was as welcome an associate as he could have found, but it cost him some effort to dismiss the thought of Andrew Peak's eating-house, and to accept the friendly tact with which the journalist avoided all hint of unpleasant memories. That Earwaker should refrain from a single question concerning that abrupt disappearance nearly ten years ago, sufficiently declared his knowledge of the unspeakable cause, a reflection which often made Godwin writhe. However, this difficulty was overcome, and the two met very frequently. For several weeks God-

win enjoyed better spirits than he had known since the first excitement of his life in London faded away.

One result was easily foreseen. His mind grew busy with literary projects, many that he had long contemplated and some that were new. Once more he aimed at contributing to the 'advanced' reviews, and sketched out several papers of sociological tenor. None of these were written. As soon as he sat down to deliberate composition, a sense of his deficiencies embarrassed him. Godwin's self-confidence had nothing in common with the conceit which rests on imaginary strength. Power there was in him; of that he could not but be conscious: its true direction he had not yet learned. Defect of knowledge, lack of pen-practice, confusion and contradictoriness of aims, instability of conviction,—these faults he recognised in himself at every moment of inward scrutiny.

On his table this evening lay a library volume which he had of late been reading, a book which had sprung into enormous popularity. It was called *Spiritual Aspects of Evolution*, and undertook, with confidence characteristic of its kind, to reconcile the latest results of science with the dogmas of Oriental religion. This work was in his mind when he spoke so vehemently at Moxey's; already he had trembled with an impulse to write something on the subject, and during his journey home a possible essay had begun to shape itself. Late as was the hour he could not prepare for sleep. His brain throbbed with a congestion of thought; he struggled to make clear the lines on which his satire might direct itself. By two o'clock he had flung down on paper a conglomerate of burning ideas, and thus relieved he at length went to bed.

Two days later came a note from Staple Inn, inviting him to meet Malkin the next evening. By this time he had made a beginning of his critical essay, and the exordium so far satisfied him that he was tempted to

take it for Earwaker's judgment. But no; better his friend should see the thing when it was complete.

About eight o'clock he reached the journalist's chambers. Malkin had not yet arrived. Peak amused himself with examining certain tropical products which the traveller had recently cast pell-mell into his friend's sitting-room. Then sounded a knock at the door, but it was not such as would have heralded the expected man.

'A telegram,' observed Earwaker, and went to take it in.

He returned with hoarse sounds of mirth.

'Our friend excuses himself. Read this characteristic despatch.'

Peak saw with surprise that the telegram far exceeded familiar dimensions. 'Unspeakably grieved,' it began. 'Cannot possibly with you. At moment's notice undertaken escort two poor girls Rouen. Not even time look in apologise. Go *viâ* Dieppe and leave Victoria few minutes. Hope be back Thursday. Express sincerest regret Mr. Peak. Lament appearance discourtesy. Will apologise personally. Common humanity constrains go Rouen. Will explain Thursday. No time add another word. Rush tickets train.'

'There you have the man!' cried Earwaker. 'How do you class such a mind as that? Ten to one this is some Quixotic obligation he has laid upon himself, and probably he has gone without even a handbag.'

'Vocally delivered,' said Peak, 'this would represent a certain stage of drunkenness. I suppose it isn't open to such an explanation?'

'Malkin never was intoxicated, save with his own vivacity.'

They discussed the singular being with good-natured mirth, then turned by degrees to other topics.

'I have just come across a passage that will delight you,' said Earwaker, taking up a book. 'Perhaps you know it.'

He read from Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. '"Men's names should not only distinguish them. A man should be something that all men are not, and individual in somewhat beside his proper name. Thus, while it exceeds not the bound of reason and modesty, we cannot condemn singularity. *Nos numerus sumus* is the motto of the multitude, and for that reason are they fools."'

Peak laughed his approval.

'It astonishes me,' he said, lighting his pipe, 'that you can go on writing for this Sunday rag, when you have just as little sympathy with its aims as I have. Do get into some less offensive connection.'

'What paper would you recommend?' asked the other, with his significant smile.

'Why need you journalise at all?'

'On the whole, I like it. And remember, to admit that the multitude are fools is not the same thing as to deny the possibility of progress.'

'Do you really believe yourself a democrat, Earwaker?'

'M—m—m! Well, yes, I believe the democratic spirit is stronger in me than any other.'

Peak mused for a minute, then suddenly looked up.

'And what am I?'

'I am glad nothing much depends on my successfully defining you.'

They laughed together.

'I suppose,' said Godwin, 'you can't call a man a democrat who recognises in his heart and soul a true distinction of social classes. Social, mark. The division I instinctively support is by no means intellectual. The well-born fool is very often more sure of my respect than the working man who struggles to a fair measure of education.'

Earwaker would have liked to comment on this with remarks personal to the speaker, but he feared to do so.

His silence, however, was eloquent to Peak, who resumed brusquely.

'I am not myself well-born,—though if my parents could have come into wealth early in their lives, perhaps I might reasonably have called myself so. All sorts of arguments can be brought against my prejudice, but the prejudice is ineradicable. I respect hereditary social standing, independently of the individual's qualities. There's nothing of the flunkey in this, or I greatly deceive myself. Birth in a sphere of refinement is desirable and respectable; it saves one, absolutely, from many forms of coarseness. The masses are not only fools, but very near the brutes. Yes, they can send forth fine individuals—but remain base. I don't deny the possibility of social advance; I only say that at present the lower classes are always disagreeable, often repulsive, sometimes hateful.'

'I could apply that to the classes above them.'

'Well, I can't. But I am quite ready to admit that there are all sorts of inconsistencies in me. Now, the other day I was reading Burns, and I couldn't describe what exaltation all at once possessed me in the thought that a ploughman had so glorified a servant-girl that together they shine in the highest heaven, far above all the monarchs of earth. This came upon me with a rush —a very rare emotion. Wasn't that democratic?'

He inquired dubiously, and Earwaker for a moment had no reply but his familiar 'M—m—m!'

'No, it was not democratic,' the journalist decided at length; 'it was pride of intellect.'

'Think so? Then look here. If it happens that a whining wretch stops me in the street to beg, what do you suppose is my feeling? I am ashamed in the sense of my own prosperity. I can't look him in the face. If I yielded to my natural impulse, I should cry out 'Strike me! spit at me! show you hate me!—anything but that terrible humiliation of yourself before me!'

That's how I feel. The abasement of which *he* isn't sensible affects *me* on his behalf. I give money with what delicacy I can. If I am obliged to refuse, I mutter apologies and hurry away with burning cheeks. What does that mean?'

Earwaker regarded him curiously.

'That is mere fineness of humanity.'

'Perhaps moral weakness?'

'I don't care for the scalpel of the pessimist. Let us give it the better name.'

Peak had never been so communicative. His progress in composition these last evenings seemed to have raised his spirits and spurred the activity of his mind. With a look of pleasure he pursued his self-analysis.

'Special antipathies—sometimes explicable enough—influence me very widely. Now, I by no means hate all orders of uneducated people. A hedger, a fisherman, a country mason,—people of that kind I rather like to talk with. I could live a good deal with them. But the London vulgar I abominate, root and branch. The mere sound of their voices nauseates me; their vilely grotesque accent and pronunciation—bah! I could write a paper to show that they are essentially the basest of English mortals. Unhappily I know so much about them. If I saw the probability of my dying in a London lodging-house, I would go out into the sweet-scented fields and there kill myself.'

Earwaker understood much by this avowal, and wondered whether his friend desired him so to do.

'Well, I can't say that I have any affection for the race,' he replied. 'I certainly believe that, socially and politically, there is less hope of them than of the lower orders in any other part of England.'

'They are damned by the beastly conditions of their life!' cried Godwin, excitedly. 'I don't mean only the slum-denizens. All, all—Hammersmith as much as St.

George's-in-the-East. I must write about this; I must indeed.'

'Do by all means. Nothing would benefit you more than to get your soul into print.'

Peak delayed a little, then:

'Well, I am doing something at last.'

And he gave an account of his projected essay. By this time his hands trembled with nervous agitation, and occasionally a dryness of the palate half choked his voice.

'This may do very well,' opined Earwaker. 'I suppose you will try *The Critical?*'

'Yes. But have I any chance? Can a perfectly unknown man hope to get in?'

They debated this aspect of the matter. Seeing Peak had laid down his pipe, the journalist offered him tobacco.

'Thanks; I can't smoke just yet. It's my misfortune that I can't talk earnestly without throwing my body into disorder.'

'How stolid I am in comparison!' said Earwaker.

'That book of M'Naughten's,' resumed the other, going back to his subject. 'I suppose the clergy accept it?'

'Largely, I believe.'

Peak mused.

'Now, if I were a clergyman'——

But his eye met Earwaker's, and they broke into laughter.

'Why not?' pursued Godwin. 'Did I ever tell you that my people originally wished to make a parson of me? Of course I resisted tooth and nail, but it seems to me now that I was rather foolish in doing so. I wish I *had* been a parson. In many ways the position would have suited me very well.'

'M—m—m!'

'I am quite serious. Well, if I were so placed, I should preach Church dogma, pure and simple. I would

have nothing to do with these reconciliations. I would stand firm as Jeremy Taylor; and in consequence I should have an immense and enthusiastic congregation.'

'I daresay.'

'Depend upon it, let the dogmas do what they still can. There's a vast police force in them, at all events. A man may very strongly defend himself for preaching them.'

The pursuit of this argument led Earwaker to ask:

'What proportion of the clergy can still take that standing in stolid conscientiousness?'

'What proportion are convinced that it is untenable?' returned Peak.

'Many wilfully shut their eyes to the truth.'

'No, they don't shut their eyes!' cried Godwin. 'They merely lower a nictitating membrane which permits them to gaze at light without feeling its full impact.'

'I recommend you to bring that into your paper,' said the journalist, with his deep chuckle.

An hour later they were conversing with no less animation, but the talk was not so critical. Christian Moxey had come up as a topic, and Earwaker was saying that he found it difficult to divine the man's personality.'

'You won't easily do that,' replied Peak, 'until you know more of his story. I can't see that I am bound to secrecy—at all events with you. Poor Moxey imagines that he is in love, and the fancy has lasted about ten years.'

'Ten years?'

'When I first knew him he was paying obvious attentions to a rather plain cousin down at Twybridge. Why, I don't know, for he certainly was devoted to a girl here in London. All he has confessed to me is that he had given up hopes of her, but that a letter of some sort or other revived them, and he hastened back to town. He might as well have stayed away; the girl very soon married another man. Less than a year later she had

bitterly repented this, and in some way or other she allowed Moxey to know it. Since then they have been Platonic lovers—nothing more, I am convinced. They see each other about once in six months, and presumably live on a hope that the obnoxious husband may decease. I only know the woman as "Constance"; never saw her.'

'So that's Moxey? I begin to understand better.'

'Admirable fellow, but deplorably weak. I have an affection for him, and have had from our first meeting.'

'Women!' mused Earwaker, and shook his head.

'You despise them?'

'On the whole, I'm afraid so.'

'Yes, but *what* women?' cried the other with impatience. 'It would be just as reasonable to say that you despise men. Can't you see that?'

'I doubt it.'

'Now look here; the stock objections to women are traditional. They take no account of the vast change that is coming about. Because women were once empty-headed, it is assumed they are all still so *en masse*. The defect of the female mind? It is my belief that this is nothing more nor less than the defect of the uneducated human mind. I believe most men among the brutally ignorant exhibit the very faults which are cried out upon as exclusively feminine. A woman has hitherto been an ignorant human being; that explains everything.'

'Not everything; something, perhaps. Remember your evolutionism. The preservation of the race demands in women many kinds of irrationality, of obstinate instinct, which enrage a reasoning man. Don't suppose I speak theoretically. Four or five years ago I had really made up my mind to marry; I wasted much valuable time among women and girls, of anything but low social standing. But my passions were choked by my logical faculty. I foresaw a terrible possibility—that I might beat my wife. One thing I learned with

certainty was that the woman, *qua* woman, hates abstract thought—hates it. Moreover (and of consequence) she despises every ambition that has not a material end.'

He enlarged upon the subject, followed it into all its ramifications, elaborated the inconsistencies with which it is rife. Peak's reply was deliberate.

'Admitting that some of these faults are rooted in sex, I should only find them intolerable when their expression took a vulgar form. Between irrationality and coarseness of mind there is an enormous distinction.'

'With coarse minds I have nothing to do.'

'Forgive me if I ask you a blunt question,' said Peak, after hesitating. 'Have you ever associated with women of the highest refinement?'

Earwaker laughed.

'I don't know what that phrase means. It sounds rather odd on your lips.'

'Well, women of the highest class of commoners. With peeresses we needn't concern ourselves.'

'You imagine that social precedence makes all that difference in women?'

'Yes, I do. The daughter of a county family is a finer being than any girl who can spring from the nomad orders.'

'Even supposing your nomads produce a Rachel or a Charlotte Brontë?'

'We are not talking of genius,' Peak replied.

'It was irrelevant, I know.—Well, yes, I *have* conversed now and then with what you would call well-born women. They are delightful creatures, some of them, in given circumstances. But do you think I ever dreamt of taking a wife drenched with social prejudices?'

Peak's face expressed annoyance, and he said nothing.

'A man's wife,' pursued Earwaker, 'may be his superior in whatever you like, *except* social position. That is precisely the distinction that no woman can forget or forgive. On that account they are the ob-

structive element in social history. If I loved a woman of rank above my own she would make me a renegade; for her sake I should deny my faith. I should write for the *St. James's Gazette*, and at last poison myself in an agony of shame.'

A burst of laughter cleared the air for a moment, but for a moment only. Peak's countenance clouded over again, and at length he said in a lower tone:

'There are men whose character would defy that rule.'

'Yes—to their own disaster. But I ought to have made one exception. There *is* a case in which a woman will marry without much regard to her husband's origin. Let him be a parson, and he may aim as high as he chooses.'

Peak tried to smile. He made no answer, and fell into a fit of brooding.

'What's all this about?' asked the journalist, when he too had mused awhile. 'Whose acquaintance have you been making?'

'No one's.'

The suspicion was inevitable.

'If it were true, perhaps you would be justified in mistrusting my way of regarding these things. But it's the natural tendency of my mind. If I ever marry at all, it will be a woman of far higher birth than my own.'

'Don't malign your parents, old fellow. They gave you a brain inferior to that of few men. You will never meet a woman of higher birth.'

'That's a friendly sophism. I can't thank you for it, because it has a bitter side.'

But the compliment had excited Peak, and after a moment's delay he exclaimed:

'I have no other ambition in life—no other! Think the confession as ridiculous as you like; my one supreme desire is to marry a perfectly refined woman. Put it in the correct terms: I am a plebeian, and I aim at marrying a lady.'

The last words were flung out defiantly. He quivered as he spoke, and his face flushed.

'I can't wish you success,' returned his friend, with a grave smile.

'You couldn't help it sounding like a sneer, if you did. The desire is hopeless, of course. It's because I know that, that I have made up my mind to travel for a year or two; it'll help me on towards the age when I shall regard all women with indifference. We won't talk about it any more.'

'One question. You seriously believe that you could find satisfaction in the life to which such a marriage would condemn you?'

'What life?' asked Peak, impatiently.

'That of an average gentleman, let us say, with house in town and country, with friends whose ruling motive was social propriety.'

'I could enjoy the good and throw aside the distasteful.'

'What about the distastefulness of your wife's crass conventionalism, especially in religion?'

'It would not be *crass*, to begin with. If her religion were genuine, I could tolerate it well enough; if it were merely a form, I could train her to my own opinions. Society is growing liberal—the best of it. Please remember that I have in mind a woman of the highest type our civilisation can produce.'

'Then you mustn't look for her in society!' cried Earwaker.

'I don't care; where you will, so long as she had always lived among people of breeding and high education, and never had her thoughts soiled with the vile contact of poverty.'

Earwaker started up and reached a volume from a shelf. Quickly finding the desired page, he began to read aloud:

'Dear, had the world in its caprice
Deigned to proclaim—I know you both,
Have recognised your plighted troth,
Am sponsor for you; live in peace!'——

He read to the end of the poem, and then looked up with an admiring smile.

'An ideal!' exclaimed Peak. 'An ideal akin to Murger's and Musset's grisettes, who never existed.'

'An ideal, most decidedly. But pray what is this consummate lady you have in mind? An ideal every bit as much, and of the two I prefer Browning's. For my own part, I am a polygamist; my wives live in literature, and too far asunder to be able to quarrel. Impossible women, but exquisite. They shall suffice to me.'

Peak rose, sauntered about the room for a minute or two, then said:

'I have just got a title for my paper. I shall call it "The New Sophistry."'

'Do very well, I should think,' replied the other, smiling. 'Will you let me see it when it's done?'

'Who knows if I shall finish it? Nothing I ever undertook has been finished yet—nothing won that I ever aimed at. Good night. Let me hear about Malkin.'

In a week's time Godwin received another summons to Staple Inn, with promise of Malkin's assured presence. In reply he wrote:

'Owing to a new arrangement at Bates's, I start to-morrow for my holiday in Cornwall, so cannot see you for a few weeks. Please offer Malkin my apologies; make them (I mean it) as profuse as those he telegraphed. Herewith I send you my paper, "The New Sophistry," which I have written at a few vehement sittings, and have carelessly copied. If you think it worth while, will you have the kindness to send it for me to *The Critical?* I haven't signed it, as my unmeaning name would perhaps indispose the fellow to see much good

in it. I should thank you if you would write in your own person, saying that you act for a friend; you are probably well known in those quarters. If it is accepted, time enough to claim my glory. If it seems to you to have no chance, keep it till I return, as I hate the humiliation of refusals.—Don't think I made an ass of myself the other night. We will never speak on that subject again. All I said was horribly sincere, but I'm afraid you can't understand that side of my nature. I should never have spoken so frankly to Moxey, though he has made no secret with me of his own weaknesses. If I perish before long in a South American swamp, you will be able to reflect on my personality with completer knowledge, so I don't regret the indiscretion.'

III

'*Pereunt et imputantur.*'

Godwin Peak read the motto beneath the clock in Exeter Cathedral, and believed it of Christian origin. Had he known that the words were found in Martial, his rebellious spirit would have enjoyed the consecration of a phrase from such an unlikely author. Even as he must have laughed had he stood in the Vatican before the figures of those two Greek dramatists who, for ages, were revered as Christian saints.

His ignorance preserved him from a clash of sentiments. This afternoon he was not disposed to cynicism; rather he welcomed the softening influence of this noble interior, and let the golden sunlight form what shapes it would—heavenly beam, mystic aureole—before his mind's eye. Architecture had no special interest for him, and the history of church or faith could seldom touch his emotions; but the glorious handiwork of men long dead, the solemn stillness of an ancient sanctuary, made that appeal to him which is independent of names.

'*Pereunt et imputantur.*'

He sat down where the soft, slow ticking of the clock could guide his thoughts. This morning he had left London by the earliest train, and after a night in Exeter would travel westward by leisurely stages, seeing as much as possible of the coast and of that inland scenery which had geological significance. His costume declared him bent on holiday, but, at the same time, distinguished him with delicate emphasis from the tourist of the season.

Trustworthy sartorial skill had done its best for his person. Sitting thus, he had the air of a gentleman who enjoys no unwonted ease. He could forget himself in reverie, and be unaware of soft footfalls that drew near along the aisle.

But the sound of a young voice, subdued yet very clear, made claim upon his attention.

'Sidwell!—Sidwell!'

She who spoke was behind him; on looking up, he saw that a lady just in front had stopped and turned to the summons; smiling, she retraced her steps. He moved, so as to look discreetly in the backward direction, and observed a group of four persons, who were occupied with a tablet on the wall: a young man (not long out of boyhood), a girl who might be a year or two younger, and two ladies, of whom it could only be said that they were mature in the beauty of youth, probably of maidenhood—one of them, she who had been called back by the name of 'Sidwell.'

Surely an uncommon name. From a guide-book, with which he had amused himself in the train, he knew that one of the churches of Exeter was dedicated to St. Sidwell, but only now did his recollection apprise him of a long past acquaintance with the name of the saint. Had not Buckland Warricombe a sister called Sidwell? And—did he only surmise a connection between the Warricombes and Devon? No, no; on that remote day, when he went out with Buckland to the house near Kingsmill, Mr. Warricombe spoke to him of Exeter,—mentioning that the town of his birth was Axminster, where William Buckland, the geologist, also was born; whence the name of his eldest son. How suddenly it all came back!

He rose and moved apart to a spot whence he might quietly observe the strangers. 'Sidwell,' once remarked, could not be confused with the companion of her own age; she was slimmer, shorter (if but slightly), more

sedate in movement, and perhaps better dressed—though both were admirable in that respect. Ladies, beyond a doubt. And the young man——

At this distance it was easy to deceive oneself, but did not that face bring something back? Now, as he smiled, it seemed to recall Buckland Warricombe—with a difference. This might well be a younger brother; there used to be one or two.

They were familiar with the Cathedral, and at present appeared to take exclusive interest in certain mural monuments. For perhaps ten minutes they lingered about the aisle, then, after a glance at the west window, went forth. With quick step, Godwin pursued them; he issued in time to see them entering an open carriage, which presently drove away towards High Street.

For half an hour he walked the Cathedral Close. Not long ago, on first coming into that quiet space, with its old houses, its smooth lawns, its majestic trees, he had felt the charm peculiar to such scenes—the natural delight in a form of beauty especially English. Now, the impression was irrecoverable; he could see nothing but those four persons, and their luxurious carriage, and the two beautiful horses which had borne them—whither? As likely as not the identity he had supposed for them was quite imaginary; yet it would be easy to ascertain whether a Warricombe family dwelt at Exeter. The forename of Buckland's father——? He never had known it. Still, it was worth while consulting a directory.

He walked to his hotel.

Yes, the name Warricombe stood there, but it occurred more than once. He sought counsel of the landlord. Which of these Warricombes was a gentleman of position, with grown-up sons and daughters? To such a description answered Martin Warricombe, Esquire, well known in the city. His house was in the Old Tiverton Road, out beyond St. Sidwell's, two miles away; anyone in that district would serve as guide to it.

With purpose indefinite, Godwin set forth in the direction suggested. At little more than a saunter, he passed out of High Street into his continuation, where he soon descried the Church of St. Sidwell, and thence, having made inquiry, walked towards the Old Tiverton Road. He was now quite beyond the town limits, and few pedestrians came in sight; if he really wished to find the abode of Martin Warricombe, he must stop the first questionable person. But to what end this inquiry? He could not even be certain that Martin was the man he had in mind, and even were he right in all his conjectures, what had he to do with the Warricombes?

Ten years ago the family had received him courteously as Buckland's fellow-student; he had spent an hour or two at their house, and subsequently a few words had passed when they saw him on prize-day at Whitelaw. To Buckland he had never written; he had never since heard of him; that name was involved in the miserable whirl of circumstances which brought his College life to a close, and it was always his hope that Buckland thought no more of him. Even had there been no disagreeable memories, it was surely impossible to renew after this interval so very slight an acquaintance. How could they receive him, save with civilly mild astonishment?

An errand-boy came along, whistling townwards, a big basket over his head. No harm in asking where Mr. Warricombe lived. The reply was prompt: second house on the right hand, rather a large one, not a quarter of a mile onward.

Here, then. The site was a good one. From this part of the climbing road one looked over the lower valley of the Exe, saw the whole estuary, and beyond that a horizon of blue sea. Fair, rich land, warm under the westering sun. The house itself seemed to be old, but after all was not very large; it stood amid laurels, and in the garden behind rose a great yew-tree. No person was visible; but for the wave-like murmur of neigh-

bouring pines, scarce a sound would have disturbed the air.

Godwin walked past, and found that the road descended into a deep hollow, whence between high banks, covered with gorse and bracken and many a summer flower, it led again up a hill thick planted with firs; at the lowest point was a bridge over a streamlet, offering on either hand a view of soft green meadows. A spot of exquisite retirement: happy who lived here in security from the struggle of life!

It was folly to spoil his enjoyment of country such as this by dreaming impossible opportunities. The Warricombes could be nothing to him; to meet with Buckland would only revive the shame long ago outlived. After resting for a few minutes he turned back, passed the silent house again, delighted himself with the wide view, and so into the city once more, where he began to seek the remnants of its old walls.

The next morning was Sunday, and he had planned to go by the Plymouth train to a station whence he could reach Start Point; but his mood was become so unsettled that ten o'clock, when already he should have been on his journey, found him straying about the Cathedral Close. A mere half-purpose, a vague wavering intention, which might at any moment be scattered by common sense, drew his steps to the door of the Cathedral, where people were entering for morning service; he moved idly within sight of the carriages which drew up. Several had discharged their freightage of tailoring and millinery, when two vehicles, which seemed companions, stopped at the edge of the pavement, and from the second alighted the young ladies whom Godwin had yesterday observed; their male companion, however, was different. The carriage in advance also contained four persons: a gentleman of sixty, his wife, a young girl, and the youth of yesterday. It needed but a glance to inform Godwin that the oldest of the party was Mr.

Warricombe, Buckland's father; ten years had made no change in his aspect. Mrs. Warricombe was not less recognisable. They passed at once into the edifice, and he had scarcely time to bestow a keen look upon Sidwell.

That was a beautiful girl; he stood musing upon the picture registered by his brain. But why not follow, and from a neighbouring seat survey her and the others at his leisure? Pooh! But the impulse constrained him. After all, he could not get a place that allowed him to see Sidwell. Her companion, however, the one who seemed to be of much the same age, was well in view. Sisters they could not be; nothing of the Warricombe countenance revealed itself in those handsome but strongly-marked features. A beautiful girl, she also, yet of a type that made slight appeal to him. Sidwell was all he could imagine of sweet and dignified; more modest in bearing, more gracile, more——

Monday at noon, and he still walked the streets of Exeter. Early this morning he had been out to the Old Tiverton Road, and there, on the lawn amid the laurels, had caught brief glimpse of two female figures, in one of which he merely divined Sidwell. Why he tarried thus he did not pretend to explain to himself. Rain had just come on, and the lowering sky made him low-spirited; he mooned about the street under his umbrella.

And at this rate, might vapour away his holiday. Exeter was tedious, but he could not make up his mind to set forth for the sea-shore, where only his own thoughts awaited him. Packed away in his wallet lay geological hammer, azimuth compass, clinometer, miniature microscope,—why should he drag all that lumber about with him? What to him were the bygone millions of ages, the hoary records of unimaginable time? One touch of a girl's hand, one syllable of musical speech,—was it not that whereof his life had truly need?

As remote from him, however, as the age of the pterodactyl. How often was it necessary to repeat this? On

a long voyage, such as he had all but resolved to take, one might perchance form acquaintances. He had heard of such things; not impossibly, a social circle might open to him at Buenos Ayres. But here in England his poor origin, his lack of means, would for ever bar him from the intimacy of people like the Warricombes.

He loitered towards the South-Western station, dimly conscious of a purpose to look for trains. Instead of seeking the time-tables he stood before the bookstall and ran his eye along the titles of new novels; he had half a mind to buy one of Hardy's and read himself into the temper which suited summer rambles. But just as his hand was stretched forth, a full voice, speaking beside him, made demand for a London weekly paper. Instantly he turned. The tones had carried him back to Whitelaw; the face disturbed that illusion, but substituted a reality which threw him into tremor.

His involuntary gaze was met with one of equal intensity. A man of his own years, but in splendid health and with bright eyes that looked enjoyment of life, suddenly addressed him.

'Godwin Peak—surely——?'

'Buckland Warricombe, no less surely.'

They shook hands with vigour, laughing in each other's faces; then, after a moment's pause, Warricombe drew aside from the bookstall, for sake of privacy.

'Why did we lose sight of each other?' he asked, flashing a glance at Godwin's costume. 'Why didn't you write to me at Cambridge? What have you been doing this half-century?'

'I have been in London all the time.'

'I am there most of the year. Well, I rejoice to have met you. On a holiday?'

'Loitering towards Cornwall.'

'In that case, you can come and have lunch with me at my father's house. It's only a mile or two off. I was going to walk, but we'll drive, if you like.'

There was no refusing, and no possibility of reflection. Buckland's hearty manner made the invitation in itself a thoroughly pleasant one, and before Peak could sufficiently command his thoughts to picture the scene towards which he was going they were walking side by side through the town. In appearance, Warricombe showed nothing of the revolutionary which, in old days, he aimed at making himself, and his speech had a suavity which no doubt resulted from much intercourse with the polished world; Godwin was filled with envious admiration of his perfect physique, and the mettle which kept it in such excellent vigour. Even for a sturdy walker, it was no common task to keep pace with Buckland's strides; Peak soon found himself conversing rather too breathlessly for comfort.

'What is your latest record for the mile?' he inquired.

Warricombe, understanding at once the reference to his old athletic pastime and its present application, laughed merrily, and checked his progress.

'A bad habit of mine; it gets me into trouble with everyone. By-the-bye, haven't you become a stronger man than used to seem likely? I'm quite glad to see how well you look.'

The sincerity of these expressions, often repeated, put Godwin far more at his ease than the first moment's sensation had promised. He too began to feel a genuine pleasure in the meeting, and soon bade defiance to all misgivings. Delicacy perhaps withheld Warricombe from further mention of Whitelaw, but on the other hand it was not impossible that he knew nothing of the circumstances which tormented Godwin's memory. On leaving the College perchance he had lost all connection with those common friends who might have informed him of subsequent jokes and rumours. Unlikely, to be sure; for doubtless some of his Whitelaw contemporaries encountered him at Cambridge; and again, was it not probable that the younger Warricombe had become a

Whitelaw student? Then Professor Gale—no matter! The Warricombes of course knew all about Andrew Peak and his dining-rooms, but they were liberal-minded, and could forgive a boy's weakness, as well as overlook an acquaintance's obscure origin. In the joy of finding himself exuberantly welcomed by a man of Buckland's world he overcame his ignoble self-consciousness.

'Did you know that we were in this part of the country?' Warricombe asked, once more speeding ahead.

'I always thought of you in connection with Kingsmill.'

'We gave up Thornhaw seven years ago. My father was never quite comfortable out of Devonshire. The house I am taking you to has been in our family for three generations. I have often tried to be proud of the fact, but, as you would guess, that kind of thing doesn't come very natural to me.'

In the effort to repudiate such sentiment, Buckland distinctly betrayed its hold upon him. He imagined he was meeting Godwin on equal ground, but the sensibility of the proletarian could not thus be deceived. There was a brief silence, during which each looked away from the other.

'Still keep up your geology?' was Warricombe's next question.

'I can just say that I haven't forgotten it all.'

'I'm afraid that's more than I can. During my Cambridge time it caused disagreeable debates with my father. You remember that his science is of the old school. I wouldn't say a word to disparage him. I believe the extent of his knowledge is magnificent; but he can't get rid of that old man of the sea, the Book of Genesis. A few years ago I wasn't too considerate in argument, and I talked as I oughtn't to have done, called names, and so on. The end of it was, I dropped science altogether, having got as much out of it as I needed. The good old pater has quite forgiven my rudeness. At

present we agree to differ, and get on capitally. I'm sure he'll be delighted to see you. There are some visitors with us; a Miss Moorhouse and her brother. I think you'll like them. Couldn't you stay overnight?'

Godwin was unable to reply on the instant, and his companion proceeded with the same heartiness.

'Just as you like, you know. But do stay if you can. On Wednesday morning I must go back to town. I act as secretary to Godolphin, the member for Slacksea.'

Peak's acquaintance with current politics was slight, but Mr. Ellis Godolphin, the aristocratic Radical, necessarily stood before his imagination with some clearness of outline. So this was how life had dealt with Buckland. The announcement was made with a certain satisfaction, as if it implied more than the hearer would readily appreciate. Again there was a slight shrinking on Godwin's part; it would be natural for him to avow his own position, and so leave no room for misunderstandings, but before he could shape a phrase Buckland was again questioning.

'Do you ever see any of the old fellows?'

'I have met one or two of them, by chance.'

As if his tact informed him that this inquiry had been a mistake, Warricombe resumed the subject of his family.

'My brother Louis is at home—of course you can't remember him; he was a youngster when you were at Thornhaw. The younger boy died some years ago, a pony accident; cut up my father dreadfully. Then there's my sister Sidwell, and my sister Fanny—that's all of us. I can't quite answer for Louis, but the rest are of the old school. Liberal enough, don't be afraid. But—well, the old school.'

As Godwin kept silence, the speaker shot a glance at him, keenly scrutinising. Their eyes did not meet; Peak kept his on the ground.

'Care much about politics nowadays?'

'Not very much.'

'Can't say that I do myself,' pursued Buckland. 'I rather drifted into it. Godolphin, I daresay, has as little humbug about him as most parliamentarians; we stick to the practical fairly well. I shall never go into the House on my own account. But there's a sort of pleasure in being in the thick of public movements. I'm not cut out for debate; should lose my temper, and tell disagreeable truths—which wouldn't do, you know. But behind the scenes—it isn't bad, in a way.'

A longer pause obliged Godwin to speak of himself.

'My life is less exciting. For years I have worked in a manufacturing laboratory at Rotherhithe.'

'So science has carried the day with you, after all. It used to be very doubtful.'

This was a kind and pleasant way of interpreting necessity. Godwin felt grateful, and added with a smile:

'I don't think I shall stick to it much longer. For one thing, I am sick of town. Perhaps I shall travel for a year or two; perhaps—I'm in a state of transition, to tell the truth.'

Buckland revolved this information; his face told that he found it slightly puzzling.

'You once had thoughts of literature.'

'Long given up.'

'Leisure would perhaps revive them?'

'Possibly; but I think not.'

They were now quitting the town, and Peak, unwilling to appear before strangers in a state of profuse perspiration, again moderated his friend's speed. They began to talk about the surrounding country, a theme which occupied them until the house was reached. With quick-beating heart, Godwin found himself at the gate by which he had already twice passed. Secure in the decency of his apparel, and no longer oppressed by bashfulness, he would have gone joyously forward but for the dread of a possible ridiculous association which his name might revive in the thoughts of Mr. and Mrs.

Warricombe. Yet Buckland—who had no lack of kindly feeling—would hardly have brought him here had the reception which awaited him been at all dubious.

'If we don't come across anyone,' said Warricombe, 'we'll go straight up to my room.'

But the way was not clear. Within the beautiful old porch sat Sidwell Warricombe and her friend of the striking countenance, whom Godwin now knew as Miss Moorhouse. Buckland addressed his sister in a tone of lively pleasure.

'Whom do you think I have met and brought home with me? Here is my old friend, Godwin Peak.'

Under the two pairs of female eyes, Godwin kept a calm, if rather stern, face.

'I should have had no difficulty in recognising Mr. Peak,' said Sidwell, holding out her hand. 'But was the meeting quite by chance?'

To Godwin himself the question was of course directed, with a look of smiling interest—such welcome as could not have been improved upon; she listened to his reply, then presented him to Miss Moorhouse. A slight languor in her movements and her voice, together with the beautiful coldness of her complexion, made it probable that she did not share the exuberant health manifest in her two brothers. She conversed with mature self-possession, yet showed a slight tendency to abstractedness. On being addressed, she regarded the speaker steadily for an instant before shaping her answer, which always, however trifling the subject, seemed carefully worded. In these few moments of dialogue, Godwin reached the conclusion that Sidwell had not much sense of humour, but that the delicacy of her mind was unsurpassable.

In Miss Moorhouse there was no defect of refinement, but her conversation struck a note of sprightliness at once more energetic and more subtle than is often found in English girls. Thus, though at times she looked so

young that it might be doubted whether she had long been out of her teens, at others one suspected her older than Sidwell. The friends happened to be as nearly as possible of an age, which was verging to twenty-six.

When he spoke to Miss Moorhouse, Buckland's frank tone subdued itself. He watched her face with reverent attention, smiled when she smiled, and joined in her laughter with less than his usual volume of sound. In acuteness he was obviously inferior to her, and there were moments when he betrayed some nervousness under her rejoinders. All this was matter of observation for Peak, who had learnt to exercise his discernment even whilst attending to the proprieties.

The sounding of the first luncheon-bell left the young men free to go upstairs. When at length they presented themselves in the drawing-room, Mrs. Warricombe and her younger daughter sat there alone. The greeting of his hostess did not quite satisfy Godwin, though it was sufficiently courteous; he remembered that ten years ago Mrs. Warricombe had appeared to receive him with some restraint, and his sensation in renewing her acquaintance was one of dislike. But in a moment the master of the house joined them, and no visitor could have had a more kindly welcome than that he offered to his son's friend. With genial tact, Mr. Warricombe ignored the interval since his last conversation with Godwin, and spoke as if this visit were the most natural thing in the world.

'Do you already know the country about Exeter?'

'I have seen very little of it yet.'

'Oh, then, we must show you our points of view. Our own garden offers a glimpse of the river-mouth and a good prospect of Haldon—the ridge beyond the Exe; but there are many much better points within easy reach. You are in no hurry, I hope?'

Louis Warricombe and Miss Moorhouse's brother were away on a long walk; they did not return for lunch.

Godwin was glad of this, for time had wrought the change in him that he felt more at ease in female society than under the eyes of young men whose social position inclined them to criticism. The meal proved as delightful as luncheon is wont to be in a luxurious country-house, when brilliant sunshine gleams on the foliage visible from windows, and the warmth of the season sanctions clear colours in costume. The talk was wholly of country pleasures. It afforded the visitor no little satisfaction to be able to make known his acquaintance with parts of England to which the Warricombes had not penetrated. Godwin learnt that the family were insular in their tastes; a mention by Miss Moorhouse of continental scenes led the host to avow a strong preference for his own country, under whatever aspect, and Sidwell murmured her sympathy.

No less introspective than in the old days, though he could better command his muscles, Peak, after each of his short remarks, made comparison of his tone and phraseology with those of the other speakers. Had he still any marks of the ignoble world from which he sprang? Any defect of pronunciation, any native awkwardness of utterance? Impossible to judge himself infallibly, but he was conscious of no vulgar mannerism. Though it was so long since he left Whitelaw, the accent of certain of the Professors still remained with him as an example; when endeavouring to be graceful, he was wont to hear the voice of Dr. Nares, or of Professor Barber who lectured on English Literature. More recently he had been observant of Christian Moxey's speech, which had a languid elegance worth imitating in certain particulars. Buckland Warricombe was rather a careless talker, but it was the carelessness of a man who had never needed to reflect on such a matter, the refinement of whose enunciation was assured to him from the nursery. That now was a thing to be aimed at. Preciseness must be avoided, for in a young man it seemed to argue con-

scious effort: a loose sentence now and then, a colloquialism substituted for the more grammatical phrase.

Heaven be thanked that he was unconcerned on the point of garb! Inferiority in that respect would have been fatal to his ease. His clothes were not too new, and in quality were such as he had the habit of wearing. The Warricombes must have immediately detected any pretentiousness, were it but in a necktie; that would impress them more unfavourably than signs of poverty. But he defied inspection. Not Sidwell herself, doubtless sensitive in the highest degree, could conceive a prejudice against him on this account.

His misgivings were overcome. If these people were acquainted with the 'dining-rooms' joke, it certainly did not affect their behaviour to him, and he could hope, by the force of his personality, to obliterate from their minds such disagreeable thoughts as they might secretly entertain. Surely he could make good his claim to be deemed a gentleman. To Buckland he had declared his position, and no shame attached to it. A man of scientific tastes, like Mr. Warricombe, must consider it respectable enough. Grant him a little time, and why should he not become a recognised friend of this family?

If he were but resident in Exeter.

For the first time, he lost himself in abstraction, and only an inquiry from Sidwell recalled him.

'You have seen the Cathedral, Mr. Peak?'

'Oh yes! I attended service there yesterday morning.'

Had he reflected, perhaps he would not have added this circumstance; even in speaking he suffered a confused doubtfulness. But as soon as the words were uttered, he felt strangely glad. Sidwell bestowed upon him an unmistakable look of approval; her mother gazed with colder interest; Mr. Warricombe regarded him, and mused; Buckland, a smile of peculiar meaning on his close lips, glanced from him to Miss Moorhouse.

'Ah, then, you heard Canon Grayling,' remarked the father of the family, with something in his tone which answered to Sidwell's facial expression. 'How did you like his sermon?'

Godwin was trifling with a pair of nut-crackers, but the nervousness evident in his fingers did not prevent him from replying with a natural air of deliberation.

'I was especially struck with the passage about the barren fig-tree.'

The words might have expressed a truth, but in that case a tone of sarcasm must have winged them. As it was, they involved either hypocrisy or ungenerous irony at the expense of his questioner. Buckland could not but understand them in the latter sense; his face darkened. At that moment, Peak met his eye, and encountered its steady searching gaze with a perfectly calm smile. Half-a-dozen pulsings of his heart—violent, painful, and the fatal hour of his life had struck.

'What had he to say about it?' Buckland asked, carelessly.

Peak's reply was one of those remarkable efforts of mind—one might say, of character—which are sometimes called forth, without premeditation, almost without consciousness, by a profound moral crisis. A minute or two ago he would have believed it impossible to recall and state in lucid terms the arguments to which, as he sat in the Cathedral, he had barely given ear; he remembered vaguely that the preacher (whose name he knew not till now) had dwelt for a few moments on the topic indicated, but at the time he was indisposed to listen seriously, and what chance was there that the chain of thought had fixed itself in his memory? Now, under the marvelling regard of his conscious self, he poured forth an admirable rendering of the Canon's views, fuller than the original—more eloquent, more subtle. For five minutes he held his hearers in absorbed attention, even Buckland bending forward with an air

of genuine interest; and when he stopped, rather suddenly, there followed a silence.

'Mr. Peak,' said the host, after a cough of apology, 'you have made that clearer to me than it was yesterday. I must thank you.'

Godwin felt that a slight bow of acknowledgment was perhaps called for, but not a muscle would obey his will. He was enervated; perspiration stood on his forehead. The most severe physical effort could not have reduced him to a feebler state.

Sidwell was speaking:

'Mr. Peak has developed what Canon Grayling only suggested.'

'A brilliant effort of exegesis,' exclaimed Buckland, with a good-natured laugh.

Again the young men exchanged looks. Godwin smiled as one might under a sentence of death. As for the other, his suspicion had vanished, and he now gave way to frank amusement. Luncheon was over, and by a general movement all went forth on to the lawn in front of the house. Mr. Warricombe, even more cordial than hitherto, named to Godwin the features of the extensive landscape.

'But you see that the view is in a measure spoilt by the growth of the city. A few years ago, none of those ugly little houses stood in the mid-distance. A few years hence, I fear, there will be much more to complain of. I daresay you know all about the ship-canal: the story of the countess, and so forth?'

Buckland presently suggested that the afternoon might be used for a drive.

'I was about to propose it,' said his father. 'You might start by the Stoke Canon Road, so as to let Mr. Peak have the famous view from the gate; then go on towards Silverton, for the sake of the reversed prospect from the Exe. Who shall be of the party?'

It was decided that four only should occupy the

vehicle, Miss Moorhouse and Fanny Warricombe to be the two ladies. Godwin regretted Sidwell's omission, but the friendly informality of the arrangement delighted him. When the carriage rolled softly from the gravelled drive, Buckland holding the reins, he felt an animation such as no event had ever produced in him. No longer did he calculate phrases. A spontaneous aptness marked his dialogue with Miss Moorhouse, and the laughing words he now and then addressed to Fanny. For a short time Buckland was laconic, but at length he entered into the joyous tone of the occasion. Earwaker would have stood in amazement, could he have seen and heard the saturnine denizen of Peckham Rye.

The weather was superb. A sea-breeze mitigated the warmth of the cloudless sun, and where a dark pine-tree rose against the sky it gave the azure depths a magnificence unfamiliar to northern eyes.

'On such a day as this,' remarked Miss Moorhouse, dividing her look between Buckland and his friend, 'one feels that there's a good deal to be said for England.'

'But for the vile weather,' was Warricombe's reply, 'you wouldn't know such enjoyment.'

'Oh, I can't agree with that for a moment! My capacity for enjoyment is unlimited. That philosophy is unworthy of you; it belongs to a paltry scheme called "making the best of things."'

'In which you excel, Miss Moorhouse.'

'That she does!' agreed Fanny—a laughing, rosy-cheeked maiden.

'I deny it! No one is more copious in railing against circumstances.'

'But you turn them all to a joke,' Fanny objected.

'That's my profound pessimism. I am misunderstood. No one expects irony from a woman.'

Peak found it difficult not to gaze too persistently at the subtle countenance. He was impelled to examine it

by a consciousness that he himself received a large share of Miss Moorhouse's attention, and a doubt as to the estimation in which she held him. Canon Grayling's sermon and Godwin's comment had elicited no remark from her. Did she belong to the ranks of emancipated women? With his experience of Marcella Moxey, he welcomed the possibility of this variation of the type, but at the same time, in obedience to a new spirit that had strange possession of him, recognised that such phenomena no longer aroused his personal interest. By the oddest of intellectual processes he had placed himself altogether outside the sphere of unorthodox spirits. Concerning Miss Moorhouse he cared only for the report she might make of him to the Warricombes.

Before long, the carriage was stopped that he might enjoy one of the pleasantest views in the neighbourhood of the city. A gate, interrupting a high bank with which the road was bordered, gave admission to the head of a great cultivated slope, which fell to the river Exe; hence was suddenly revealed a wide panorama. Three well-marked valleys—those of the Creedy, the Exe, and the Culm—spread their rural loveliness to remote points of the horizon; gentle undulations, with pasture and woodland, with long winding roads, and many a farm that gleamed white amid its orchard leafage, led the gaze into regions of evanescent hue and outline. Westward, a bolder swell pointed to the skirts of Dartmoor. No inappropriate detail disturbed the impression. Exeter was wholly hidden behind the hill on which the observers stood, and the line of railway leading thither could only be descried by special search. A foaming weir at the hill's foot blended its soft murmur with that of the fir branches hereabouts; else, no sound that the air could convey beyond the pulsing of a bird's note.

All had alighted, and for a minute or two there was silence. When Peak had received such geographical

instruction as was needful, Warricombe pointed out to him a mansion conspicuous on the opposite slope of the Exe valley, the seat of Sir Stafford Northcote. The house had no architectural beauty, but its solitary lordship amid green pastures and tracts of thick wood declared the graces and privileges of ancestral wealth. Standing here alone, Godwin would have surveyed these possessions of an English aristocrat with more or less bitterness; envy would, for a moment at all events, have perturbed his pleasure in the natural scene. Accompanied as he was, his emotion took a form which indeed was allied to envy, but had nothing painful. He exulted in the prerogatives of birth and opulence, felt proud of hereditary pride, gloried that his mind was capable of appreciating to the full those distinctions which, by the vulgar, are not so much as suspected. Admitted to equal converse with men and women who represented the best in English society, he could cast away the evil grudge, the fierce spirit of self-assertion, and be what nature had proposed in endowing him with large brain, generous blood, delicate tissues. What room for malignancy? He was accepted by his peers, and could regard with tolerance even those ignoble orders of mankind amid whom he had so long dwelt unrecognised.

A bee hummed past him, and this sound—of all the voices of nature that which most intenerates—filled his heart to overflowing. Moisture made his eyes dim, and at the impulse of a feeling of gratitude, such as only the subtlest care of psychology could fully have explained, he turned to Buckland, saying:

'But for my meeting with you I should have had a lonely and not very cheerful holiday. I owe you a great deal.'

Warricombe laughed, but as an Englishman does when he wishes to avoid show of emotion.

'I am very glad indeed that we did meet. Stay with

us over to-morrow. I only wish I were not obliged to go to London on Wednesday.—Look, Fanny, isn't that a hawk, over Cowley Bridge?'

'Do you feel you would like to shoot it?' asked Miss Moorhouse—who a moment ago had very closely examined Peak's face.

'To shoot it—why do you ask that?'

'Confess that you felt the desire.'

'Every man does,' replied Buckland, 'until he has had a moment to recover himself. That's the human instinct.'

'The male human instinct. Thank you for your honesty.'

They drove on, and by a wide circuit, occasionally stopping for the view, returned to the Old Tiverton Road, and so home. By this time Louis Warricombe and Mr. Moorhouse were back from their walk. Reposing in the company of the ladies, they had partaken of such refreshments as are lawful at five o'clock, and now welcomed with vivacity the later arrivals. Moorhouse was something older than Buckland, a sallow-cheeked man with forehead and eyes expressive of much intelligence. Till of late he had been a Cambridge tutor, but was now privately occupied in mathematical pursuits. Louis Warricombe had not yet made up his mind what profession to follow, and to aid the process of resolve had for the present devoted himself to physical exercise.

Tea-cup in hand, Godwin seated himself by Sidwell, who began by inquiring how the drive had pleased him. The fervour of his reply caused her to smile with special graciousness, and their conversation was uninterrupted for some minutes. Then Fanny came forward with a book of mosses, her own collection, which she had mentioned to Peak as they were talking together in the carriage.

'Do you make special study of any science?' Sidwell

asked, when certain remarks of Godwin's had proved his familiarity with the things he was inspecting.

'It is long since I worked seriously at anything of the kind,' he answered; adding in a moment, 'Except at chemistry—that only because it is my business.'

'Organic or inorganic chemistry?' inquired Fanny, with the promptness of a schoolgirl who wishes to have it known that her ideas are no longer vague.

'Organic for the most part,' Godwin replied, smiling at her. 'And of the most disagreeable kind.'

Sidwell reflected, then put another question, but with some diffidence.

'I think you were once fond of geology?'

It was the first allusion to that beginning of their acquaintance, ten years ago. Peak succeeded in meeting her look with steadiness.

'Yes, I still like it.'

'Father's collections have been much improved since you saw them at Thornhaw.'

'I hope Mr. Warricombe will let me see them.'

Buckland came up and made an apology for drawing his friend aside.

'Will you let us send for your traps? You may just as well have a room here for a night or two.'

Perpetually imagining some kind chance that might associate him with civilised people, Godwin could not even pack his portmanteau for a ramble to Land's End without stowing away a dress suit. He was thus saved what would have been an embarrassment of special annoyance. Without hesitation, he accepted Buckland's offer, and named the hotel at which the luggage was deposited.

'All right; the messenger shall explain. Our name's well enough known to them. If you would like to look up my father in his study, he'll be delighted to go over

his collections with you. You still care for that kind of thing?'

'Most certainly. How can you doubt it?'

Buckland smiled, and gave no other reply.

'Ask Fanny to show you the way when you care to go.' And he left the room.

IV

Sidwell had fallen into conversation with Mr. Moorhouse. Miss Moorhouse, Mrs. Warricombe, and Louis were grouped in animated talk. Observing that Fanny threw glances towards him from a lonely corner, Peak went over to her, and was pleased with the smile he met. Fanny had watchet eyes, much brighter than Sidwell's; her youthful vivacity blended with an odd little fashion of schoolgirl pedantry in a very piquant way. Godwin's attempts at conversation with her were rather awkward; he found it difficult to strike the suitable note, something not too formal yet not deficient in respect.

'Do you think,' he asked presently, 'that I should disturb your father if I went to him?'

'Oh, not at all! I often go and sit in the study at this time.'

'Will you show me the way?'

Fanny at once rose, and together they crossed the hall, passed through a sort of anteroom connecting with a fernery, and came to the study door. A tap was answered by cheerful summons, and Fanny looked in.

'Well, my ladybird? Ah, you are bringing Mr. Peak; come in, come in!'

It was a large and beautiful room, its wide windows, in a cushioned recess, looking upon the lawn where the yew tree cast solemn shade. One wall presented an unbroken array of volumes, their livery sober but handsome; detached bookcases occupied other portions of

the irregular perimeter. Cabinets, closed and open, were arranged with due regard to convenience. Above the mantelpiece hung a few small photographs, but the wall-space at disposal was chiefly occupied with objects which illustrated Mr. Warricombe's scientific tastes. On a stand in the light of the window gleamed two elaborate microscopes, provocative of enthusiasm in a mind such as Godwin's.

In a few minutes, Fanny silently retired. Her father, by no means forward to speak of himself and his pursuits, was led in that direction by Peak's expressions of interest, and the two were soon busied with matters which had a charm for both. A collection of elvans formed the starting-point, and when they had entered upon the wide field of palæontology it was natural for Mr. Warricombe to invite his guest's attention to the species of hamalonotus which he had had the happiness of identifying some ten years ago—a discovery now recognised and chronicled. Though his sympathy was genuine enough, Godwin struggled against an uneasy sense of manifesting excessive appreciation. Never oblivious of himself, he could not utter the simplest phrase of admiration without criticising its justice, its tone. And at present it behoved him to bear in mind that he was conversing with no half-bred sciolist. Mr. Warricombe obviously had his share of human weakness, but he was at once a gentleman and a student of well-stored mind; insincerity must be very careful if it would not jar upon his refined ear. So Godwin often checked himself in the utterance of what might sound too much like flattery. A young man talking with one much older, a poor man in dialogue with a wealthy, must under any circumstances guard his speech; for one of Godwin's aggressive idiosyncrasy the task of discretion had peculiar difficulties, and the attitude he had assumed at luncheon still further complicated the operations of his mind. Only at moments could he speak in his true voice, and

silence meant for the most part a studious repression of much he would naturally have uttered.

Resurgent envy gave him no little trouble. On entering the room, he could not but exclaim to himself, 'How easy for a man to do notable work amid such surroundings! If I were but thus equipped for investigation!' And as often as his eyes left a particular object to make a general survey, the same thought burned in him. He feared lest it should be legible on his countenance.

Taking a pamphlet from the table, Mr Warricombe, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, inquired whether Peak read German; the answer being affirmative:

'Naturally,' he rejoined, 'you could hardly have neglected so important a language. I, unfortunately, didn't learn it in my youth, and I have never had perseverance enough to struggle with it since. Something led me to take down this brochure the other day—an old attempt of mine to write about the weathering of rocks. It was printed in '76, and no sooner had it seen the light than friends of mine wanted to know what I meant by appropriating, without acknowledgment, certain facts quite recently pointed out by Professor Pfaff of Erlangen! Unhappily, Professor Pfaff's results were quite unknown to me, and I had to get them translated. The coincidences, sure enough, were very noticeable. Just before you came in, I was reviving that old discomfiture.'

Peak, in glancing over the pages, murmured with a smile:

'*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt!*'

'Even so!' exclaimed Mr. Warricombe, laughing with a subdued heartiness which was one of his pleasant characteristics. And, after a pause, he inquired, 'Do you find any time to keep up your classics?'

'By fits and starts. Sometimes I return to them for a month or two.'

'Why, it's pretty much the same with me. Here on my table, for instance, lies Tacitus. I found it mentioned

not long ago that the first sentence of the *Annals* is a hexameter—did you know it ?—and when I had once got hold of the book I thought it a shabby thing to return it to the dust of its shelf without reading at least a few pages. So I have gone on from day to day, with no little enjoyment. Buckland, as you probably know, regards these old fellows with scorn.'

'We always differed about that.'

'I can't quite decide whether he is still sincere in all he says about them. Time, I suspect, is mellowing his judgment.'

They moved to the shelves where Greek and Latin books stood in serried order, and only the warning dinner-bell put an end to their sympathetic discussion of the place such authors should hold in modern educational systems.

'Have they shown you your room ?' Mr. Warricombe asked.

But, as he spoke, the face of his eldest son appeared at the door.

'Your traps have safely arrived, Peak.'

The bedroom to which Godwin was conducted had a delicious fragrance, of source indeterminable. When he had closed the door, he stood for a few moments looking about him ; it was his first experience of the upper chambers of houses such as this. Merely to step upon the carpet fluttered his senses ; merely to breathe the air was a purification. Luxury of the rational kind, dictated by regard for health of body and soul, appeared in every detail. On the walls were water-colours, scenery of Devon and Cornwall ; a hanging book-case held about a score of volumes—poets, essayists, novelists. Elsewhere, not too prominent, lay a Bible and a Prayer-book.

He dressed, as never before, with leisurely enjoyment of the process. When the mirror declared him ready, his eyes returned frequently to an inspection of the figure he presented, and it seemed to him that he was not un-

worthy to take his place at the dinner-table. As for his visage, might he not console himself with the assurance that it was of no common stamp? 'If I met that man in a room, I should be curious about him; I should see at once that he didn't belong to the vulgar; I should desire to hear him speak.' And the Warricombes were not lacking in discernment. He would compare more than favourably with Mr. Moorhouse, whose aspect, bright and agreeable enough, made no promise of originality.—It must be time to go down. He left the room with an air of grave self-confidence.

At dinner he was careful to attempt no repetition of the display which had done very well at luncheon; it must not be thought that he had the habit of talking for effect. Mrs. Warricombe, unless he mistook, had begun to view him more favourably; her remarks made less distinction between him and the other guests. But he could not like his hostess; he thought her unworthy to be the mother of Sidwell and Fanny, of Buckland and Louis; there was a marked strain of the commonplace in her. The girls, costumed for the evening, affected him with a return of the awe he had all but overcome. Sidwell was exquisite in dark colours, her sister in white. Miss Moorhouse (addressed by her friends as 'Sylvia') looked older than in the day-time, and had lost something of her animation; possibly the country routine had begun to weary her a little.

Peak was at a vast distance from the hour which saw him alight at Exeter and begin his ramble about the city. He no longer felt himself alone in the world; impossible to revive the mood in which he deliberately planned to consume his economies in a year or two of desert wandering; far other were the anticipations which warmed his mind when the after-dinner repose attuned him to unwonted hopefulness. This family were henceforth his friends, and it depended only upon himself to make the connection lasting, with all manner of benefits

easily imagined. Established in the country, the Warricombes stood to him in quite a different relation from any that could have arisen had he met with them in London. There he would have been nothing more than a casual dinner-guest, welcomed for the hour and all but forgotten when he had said good-night. For years he had understood that London offered him no prospect of social advancement. But a night passed under this roof practically raised him to a level whence he surveyed a rich field of possible conquest. With the genial geologist he felt himself on excellent terms, and much of this was ascribable to a singular chance which had masked his real being, and represented him, with scarce an effort of his own, in a light peculiarly attractive to Mr. Warricombe. He was now playing the conscious hypocrite; not a pleasant thing to face and accept, but the fault was not his—fate had brought it about. At all events, he aimed at no vulgar profit; his one desire was for human fellowship; he sought nothing but that solace which every code of morals has deemed legitimate. Let the society which compelled to such an expedient bear the burden of its shame.

That must indeed have been a circle of great intellects amid which Godwin Peak felt himself subordinate. He had never known that impression, and in the Warricombe family was no one whom he could regard even as his equal. Buckland, doubtless, had some knowledge of the world, and could boast of a free mind; but he lacked subtlety: a psychological problem would easily puzzle him. Mr. Warricombe's attainments were respectable, but what could be said of a man who had devoted his life to geology and still (in the year 1884) remained an orthodox member of the Church of England? Godwin, as he sat in the drawing-room and enjoyed its atmosphere of refinement, sincerely held himself of far more account as an intellectual being than all the persons about him.

But if his brain must dwell in solitude his heart might

compass worthy alliances—the thing most needful to humanity. One may find the associates of his intellect in libraries—the friend of one's emotions must walk in flesh and blood. Earwaker, Moxey—these were in many respects admirable fellows, and he had no little love for them, but the world they represented was womanless, and so of flagrant imperfection. Of Marcella Moxey he could not think emotionally; indeed she emphasised by her personality the lack which caused his suffering. Sidwell Warricombe suggested, more completely than any woman he had yet observed, that companionship without which life must to the end taste bitter. His interest in her was not strictly personal; she moved and spoke before him as a typical woman, not as the daughter of Martin Warricombe and the sister of Buckland. Here at last opened to his view that sphere of female society which he had known as remotely existing, the desperate aim of ambition.

Conventional women—but was not the phrase tautological? In the few females who have liberated their souls, was not much of the woman inevitably sacrificed, and would it not be so for long years to come? On the other hand, such a one as Sidwell might be held a perfect creature, perfect in relation to a certain stage of human development. Look at her, as she sat conversing with Moorhouse, soft candle-light upon her face; compare her on the one hand with an average emancipated girl, on the other with a daughter of the people. How unsatisfying was the former; the latter, how repulsive! Here one had the exquisite mean, the lady as England has perfected her towards the close of this nineteenth century. A being of marvellous delicacy, of purest instincts, of unsurpassable sweetness. Who could not detail her limitations, obvious and, in certain moods, irritating enough? These were nothing to the point, unless one would roam the world a hungry idealist; and Godwin was weary of the famined pilgrimage.

The murmur of amiable voices softened him to the reception of all that was good in his present surroundings, and justified in the light of sentiment his own dishonour. This English home, was it not surely the best result of civilisation in an age devoted to material progress? Here was peace, here was scope for the kindliest emotions. Upon him—the born rebel, the scorner of average mankind, the consummate egoist—this atmosphere exercised an influence more tranquillising, more beneficent, than even the mood of disinterested study. In the world to which sincerity would condemn him, only the worst elements of his character found nourishment and range; here he was humanised, made receptive of all gentle sympathies. Heroism might point him to an unending struggle with adverse conditions, but how was heroism possible without faith? Absolute faith he had none; he was essentially a negativist, guided by the mere relations of phenomena. Nothing easier than to contemn the mode of life represented by this wealthy middle class; but compare it with other existences conceivable by a thinking man, and it was emphatically good. It aimed at placidity, at benevolence, at supreme cleanliness,—things which more than compensated for the absence of higher spirituality. We can be but what we are; these people accepted themselves, and in so doing became estimable mortals. No imbecile pretensions exposed them to the rebuke of a social satirist; no vulgarity tainted their familiar intercourse. Their allegiance to a worn-out creed was felt as an added grace; thus only could their souls aspire, and the imperfect poetry of their natures be developed.

He took an opportunity of seating himself by Mrs. Warricombe, with whom as yet he had held no continuous dialogue.

'Has there been anything of interest at the London theatres lately?' she asked.

'I know so little of them,' Godwin replied, truth-

fully. 'It must be several years since I saw a play.'

'Then in that respect you have hardly become a Londoner.'

'Nor in any other, I believe,' said Peak, with a smile. 'I have lived there ten years, but am far from regarding London as my home. I hope a few months more will release me from it altogether.'

'Indeed!—Perhaps you think of leaving England?'

'I should be very sorry to do that—for any length of time. My wish is to settle somewhere in the country, and spend a year or two in quiet study.'

Mrs. Warricombe looked amiable surprise, but corrected herself to approving interest.

'I have heard some of our friends say that their minds get unstrung, if they are long away from town, but I should have thought that country quietness would be much better than London noise. My husband certainly finds it so.'

'People are very differently constituted,' said Godwin. 'And then it depends much on the nature of one's work.'

Uttering these commonplaces with an air of reflection, he observed that they did not cost him the self-contempt which was wont to be his penalty for concession to the terms of polite gossip; rather, his mind accepted with gratitude this rare repose. He tasted something of the tranquil self-content which makes life so enjoyable when one has never seen a necessity for shaping original remarks. No one in this room would despise him for a platitude, were it but recommended with a pleasant smile. With the Moxeys, with Earwaker, he durst not thus have spoken.

When the hour of separation was at hand, Buckland invited his guest to retire with him to a part of the house where they could smoke and chat comfortably.

'Moorhouse and Louis are fagged after their twenty mile stretch this morning; I have caught both of them

nodding during the last few minutes. We can send them to bed without apology.'

He led the way upstairs to a region of lumber-rooms, whence a narrow flight of steps brought them into a glass-house, octangular, and with pointed tops, out upon the roof. This, he explained, had been built some twenty years ago, at a time when Mr. Warricombe amused himself with photography. A few indications of its original purposes were still noticeable; an easel and a box of oil-colours showed that someone—doubtless of the younger generation—had used it as a painting-room; a settee and deep cane chairs made it an inviting lounge on a warm evening like the present, when, by throwing open a hinged wall, one looked forth into the deep sky and tasted the air from the sea.

'Sidwell used to paint a little,' said Buckland, as his companion bent to examine a small canvas on which a landscape was roughed in. It lay on a side table, and was half concealed by an ordnance map, left unfolded. 'For the last year or two I think she has given it up. I'm afraid we are not strong in matters of art. Neither of the girls can play very well, though of course they both tinkle for their own amusement. Maurice—the poor lad who was killed—gave a good deal of artistic promise; father keeps some little water-colours of his, which men in that line have praised—perhaps sincerely.'

'I remember you used to speak slightingly of art,' said Godwin, as he took an offered cigar.

'Did I? And of a good many other things, I dare-say. It was my habit at one time, I believe, to grow heated in scorn of Euclid's definitions. What an interesting book Euclid is! Half a year ago, I was led by a talk with Moorhouse to go through some of the old 'props,' and you can't imagine how they delighted me. Moorhouse was so obliging as to tell me that I had an eminently deductive mind.'

He laughed, but not without betraying some pleasure in the remark.

'Surprising,' he went on, 'how very little such a mind as Moorhouse's suggests itself in common conversation. He is really profound in mathematics, a man of original powers, but I never heard him make a remark of the slightest value on any other subject. Now his sister—she has studied nothing in particular, yet she can't express an opinion that doesn't bear the stamp of originality.'

Godwin was contented to muse, his eyes fixed on a brilliant star in the western heaven.

'There's only one inconsistency in her that annoys and puzzles me,' Buckland pursued, speaking with the cigar in his mouth. 'In religion, she seems to be orthodox. True, we have never spoken on the subject, but—well, she goes to church, and carries prayer-books. I don't know how to explain it. Hypocrisy is the last thing one could suspect her of. I'm sure she hates it in every form. And such a clear brain!—I can't understand it.'

The listener was still star-gazing. He had allowed his cigar, after the first few puffs, to smoulder untasted; his lips were drawn into an expression very unlike the laxity appropriate to pleasurable smoking. When the murmur of the pines had for a moment been audible, he said, with a forced smile:

'I notice you take for granted that a clear brain and religious orthodoxy are incompatible.'

The other gave him a keen look.

'Hardly,' was Buckland's reply, spoken with less ingenuousness of tone than usual. 'I say that Miss Moorhouse has undeniably a strong mind, and that it is impossible to suspect her of the slightest hypocrisy.'

'Whence the puzzle that keeps you occupied,' rejoined Peak, in a voice that sounded like assumption of superiority, though the accent had an agreeable softness.

Warricombe moved as if impatiently, struck a match to rekindle his weed, blew tumultuous clouds, and finally put a blunt question:

'What do you think about it yourself?'

'From my point of view, there is no puzzle at all,' Godwin replied, in a very clear voice, smiling as he met the other's look.

'How am I to understand that?' asked Buckland, good-naturedly, though with a knitting of his brows.

'Not as a doubt of Miss Moorhouse's sincerity. I can't see that a belief in the Christian religion is excluded by any degree of intellectual clearness.'

'No—your views have changed, Peak?'

'On many subjects, this among them.'

'I see.'

The words fell as if involuntarily from Warricombe's lips. He gazed at the floor awhile, then, suddenly looking up, exclaimed:

'It would be civil to accept this without surprise, but it is too much for me. How has it come about?'

'That would take me a long time to explain.'

'Then,' pursued his companion, watching him closely, 'you were quite in sympathy with that exposition you gave at lunch to-day?'

'Quite. I hope there was nothing in my way of speaking that made you think otherwise?'

'Nothing at all. I couldn't help wondering what it meant. You seemed perfectly in earnest, yet such talk had the oddest sound on your lips—to me, I mean. Of course I thought of you as I used to know you.'

'Naturally.' Peak was now in an attitude of repose, his legs crossed, thumb and forefinger stroking his chin. 'I couldn't very well turn aside to comment on my own mental history.'

Here again was the note of something like genial condescension. Buckland seemed sensible of it, and slightly raised his eyebrows.

'I am to understand that you have become strictly orthodox in matters of religious faith ?'

'The proof is,' replied Godwin, 'that I hope before long to take Orders.'

Again there was silence, and again the sea-breath made its whispering in the pines. Warricombe, with a sudden gesture, pointed towards the sky.

'A shooting star—one of the brightest I ever saw !'

'I missed it,' said Peak, just glancing in that direction.

The interruption enabled Buckland to move his chair ; in this new position he was somewhat further from Peak, and had a better view of his face.

'I should never have imagined you a clergyman,' he said, thoughtfully, 'but I can see that your mind has been developing powers in that direction.—Well, so be it ! I can only hope you have found your true work in life.'

'But you doubt it ?'

'I can't say that I doubt it, as I can't understand you. To be sure, we have been parted for many years. In some respects *I* must seem much changed '——

'Greatly changed,' Godwin put in, promptly.

'Yes,' pursued the other, correctively, 'but not in a way that would seem incredible to anyone whatever. I am conscious of growth in tolerance, but my attitude in essentials is unchanged. Thinking of you—as I have often enough done—I always kept the impression you made on me when we were both lads ; you seemed most distinctly a modern mind—one of the most modern that ever came under my notice. Now, I don't find it impossible to understand my father, when he reconciles science with religion ; he was born sixty years ago. But Godwin Peak as a—a '——

'Parson,' supplied Peak, drily.

'Yes, as a parson—I shall have to meditate much before I grasp the notion.'

'Perhaps you have dropped your philosophical

studies?' said Godwin, with a smile of courteous interest.

'I don't know. Metaphysics have no great interest for me, but I philosophise in a way. I thought myself a student of human nature, at all events.'

'But you haven't kept up with philosophical speculation on the points involved in orthodox religion?'

'I confess my ignorance of everything of the kind—unless you include Bishop Blougram among the philosophers?'

Godwin bore the gaze which accompanied this significant inquiry. For a moment he smiled, but there followed an expression of gravity touched with pain.

'I hadn't thought of broaching this matter,' he said, with slow utterance, but still in a tone of perfect friendliness. 'Let us put it aside.'

Warricombe seemed to make an effort, and his next words had the accent of well-bred consideration which distinguished his ordinary talk.

'Pray forgive my bad joke. I merely meant that I have no right whatever to argue with anyone who has given serious attention to such things. They are altogether beyond my sphere. I was born an agnostic, and no subtlety of demonstration could incline me for a moment to theological views; my intellect refuses to admit a single preliminary of such arguments. You astonish me, and that's all I am justified in saying.'

'My dear Warricombe, you are justified in saying whatever your mind suggests. That is one of the principles which I hold unaltered—let me be quite frank with you. I should never have decided upon such a step as this, but for the fact that I have managed to put by a small sum of money which will make me independent for two or three years. Till quite lately I hadn't a thought of using my freedom in this way; it was clear to me that I must throw over the old drudgery at Rotherhithe, but this resolve which astonishes you

had not yet ripened,—I saw it only as one of the possibilities of my life. Well, now, it's only too true that there's something of speculation in my purpose; I look to the Church, not only as a congenial sphere of activity, but as a means of subsistence. In a man of no fortune this is inevitable; I hope there is nothing to be ashamed of. Even if the conditions of the case allowed it, I shouldn't present myself for ordination forthwith; I must study and prepare myself in quietness. How the practical details will be arranged, I can't say; I have no family influence, and I must hope to make friends who will open a way for me. I have always lived apart from society; but that isn't natural to me, and it becomes more distasteful the older I grow. The probability is that I shall settle somewhere in the country, where I can live decently on a small income. After all, it's better I should have let you know this at once. I only realised a few minutes ago that to be silent about my projects was in a way to be guilty of false pretences.'

The adroitness of this last remark, which directed itself, with such show of candour, against a suspicion precisely the opposite of that likely to be entertained by the listener, succeeded in disarming Warricombe; he looked up with a smile of reassurance, and spoke encouragingly.

'About the practical details I don't think you need have any anxiety. It isn't every day that the Church of England gets such a recruit. Let me suggest that you have a talk with my father.'

Peak reflected on the proposal, and replied to it with grave thoughtfulness:

'That's very kind of you, but I should have a difficulty in asking Mr. Warricombe's advice. I'm afraid I must go on in my own way for a time. It will be a few months, I daresay, before I can release myself from my engagements in London.'

'But I am to understand that your mind is really made up?'

'Oh, quite!'

'Well, no doubt we shall have opportunities of talking. We must meet in town, if possible. You have excited my curiosity, and I can't help hoping you'll let me see a little further into your mind some day. When I first got hold of Newman's *Apologia*, I began to read it with the utmost eagerness, flattering myself that now at length I should understand how a man of brains could travel such a road. I was horribly disappointed, and not a little enraged, when I found that he began by assuming the very beliefs I thought he was going to justify. In you I shall hope for more logic.'

'Newman is incapable of understanding such an objection,' said Peak, with a look of amusement.

'But you are not.'

The dialogue grew chatty. When they exchanged good-night, Peak fancied that the pressure of Buckland's hand was less fervent than at their meeting, but his manner no longer seemed to indicate distrust. Probably the agnostic's mood was one of half-tolerant disdain.

Godwin turned the key in his bedroom door, and strayed aimlessly about. He was fatigued, but the white, fragrant bed did not yet invite him; a turbulence in his brain gave warning that it would be long before he slept. He wound up his watch; the hands pointed to twelve. Chancing to come before the mirror, he saw that he was unusually pale, and that his eyes had a swollen look.

The profound stillness was oppressive to him; he started nervously at an undefined object in a dim corner, and went nearer to examine it; he was irritable, vaguely discontented, and had even a moment of nausea, perhaps the result of tobacco stronger than he was accustomed to smoke. After leaning for five minutes at the open

window, he felt a soothing effect from the air, and could think consecutively of the day's events. What had happened seemed to him incredible; it was as though he revived a mad dream, of ludicrous coherence. Since his display of rhetoric at luncheon all was downright somnambulism. What fatal power had subdued him? What extraordinary influence had guided his tongue, constrained his features? His conscious self had had no part in all this comedy; now for the first time was he taking count of the character he had played.

Had he been told this morning that—— Why, what monstrous folly was all this? Into what unspeakable baseness had he fallen? Happily, he had but to take leave of the Warricombe household, and rush into some region where he was unknown. Years hence, he would relate the story to Earwaker.

For a long time he suffered the torments of this awakening. Shame buffeted him on the right cheek and the left; he looked about like one who slinks from merited chastisement. Oh, thrice ignoble varlet! To pose with unctuous hypocrisy before people who had welcomed him under their roof, unquestioned, with all the grace and kindliness of English hospitality! To lie shamelessly in the face of his old fellow-student, who had been so genuinely glad to meet him again!

Yet such possibility had not been unforeseen. At the times of his profound gloom, when solitude and desire crushed his spirit, he had wished that fate would afford him such an opportunity of knavish success. His imagination had played with the idea that a man like himself might well be driven to this expedient, and might even use it with life-long result. Of a certainty, the Church numbered such men among her priests,—not mere lukewarm sceptics who made religion a source of income, nor yet those who had honestly entered the portal and by necessity were held from withdrawing, though their convictions had changed; but deliberate

schemers from the first, ambitious but hungry natures, keen-sighted, unscrupulous. And they were at no loss to defend themselves against the attack of conscience. Life is a terrific struggle for all who begin it with no endowments save their brains. A hypocrite was not necessarily a harm-doer; easy to picture the unbelieving priest whose influence was vastly for good, in word and deed.

But he, he who had ever prided himself on his truth-fronting intellect, and had freely uttered his scorn of the credulous mob! He who was his own criterion of moral right and wrong! No wonder he felt like a whipped cur. It was the ancestral vice in his blood, brought out by over-tempting circumstance. The long line of base-born predecessors, the grovelling hinds and mechanics of his genealogy, were responsible for this. Oh for a name wherewith honour was hereditary!

His eyes were blinded by a rush of hot tears. Down, down——into the depths of uttermost despondency, of self-pity and self-contempt! Had it been practicable, he would have fled from the house, leaving its occupants to think of him as they would; even as, ten years ago, he had fled from the shame impending over him at Kingsmill. A cowardly instinct, this; having once acted upon it gave to his whole life a taint of craven meanness. Mere bluster, all his talk of mental dignity and uncompromising scorn of superstitions. A weak and idle man, whose best years were already wasted!

He gazed deliberately at himself in the glass, at his red eyelids and unsightly lips. Darkness was best; perhaps he might forget his shame for an hour or two ere the dawn renewed it. He threw off his garments heedlessly, extinguished the lamp, and crept into the ready hiding-place.

PART III

I

'WHY are you obstinately silent?' wrote Earwaker, in a letter addressed to Godwin at his Peckham lodgings. 'I take it for granted that you must by this time be back from your holiday. Why haven't you replied to my letter of a fortnight ago? Nothing yet from *The Critical*. If you are really at work as usual, come and see me to-morrow evening, any time after eight. The posture of my affairs grows dubious; the shadow of Kenyon thickens about me. In all seriousness I think I shall be driven from *The Weekly Post* before long. My quarrels with Runcorn are too frequent, and his blackguardism keeps more than pace with the times. Come or write, for I want to know how things go with you. *Tuissimus*, J. E. E.'

Peak read this at breakfast on a Saturday morning. It was early in September, and three weeks had elapsed since his return from the west of England. Upon the autumn had fallen a blight of cold and rainy weather, which did not enhance the cheerfulness of daily journeying between Peckham Rye and Rotherhithe. When it was necessary for him to set forth to the train, he muttered imprecations, for a mood of inactivity possessed him; he would gladly have stayed in his comfortable sitting-room, idling over books or only occupied with languid thought.

In the afternoon he was at liberty to follow his impulse, and this directed him to the British Museum,

whither of late he had several times resorted as a reader. Among the half-dozen books for which he applied was one in German, Reusch's *Bibel und Natur*. After a little dallying, he became absorbed in this work, and two or three hours passed before its hold on his attention slackened. He seldom changed his position; the volume was propped against others, and he sat bending forward, his arms folded upon the desk. When he was thus deeply engaged, his face had a hard, stern aspect; if by chance his eye wandered for a moment, its look seemed to express resentment of interruption.

At length he threw himself back with a sudden yielding to weariness, crossed his legs, sank together in the chair, and for half-an-hour brooded darkly. A fit of yawning admonished him that it was time to quit the atmosphere of study. He betook himself to a restaurant in the Strand, and thence about eight o'clock made his way to Staple Inn, where the journalist gave him cheerful welcome.

'Day after day I have meant to write,' thus he excused himself. 'But I had really nothing to say.'

'You don't look any better for your holiday,' Earwaker remarked.

'Holiday? Oh, I had forgotten all about it. When do *you* go?'

'The situation is comical. I feel sure that if I leave town, my connection with the *Post* will come to an end. I shall have a note from Runcorn saying that we had better take this opportunity of terminating my engagement. On the whole I should be glad, yet I can't make up my mind to be ousted by Kenyon—that's what it means. They want to get me away, but I stick on, postponing holiday from week to week. Runcorn can't decide to send me about my business, yet every leader I write enrages him. But for Kenyon, I should gain my point; I feel sure of it. It's one of those cases in which homicide would be justified by public interest. If

Kenyon gets my place, the paper becomes at once an organ of ruffiandom, the delight of the blackguardry.'

'How's the circulation?' inquired Peak.

'Pretty sound; that adds to the joke. This series of stories by Doubleday has helped us a good deal, and my contention is, if we can keep financially right by help of this kind, why not make a little sacrifice for the sake of raising our political tone? Runcorn won't see it; he listens eagerly to Kenyon's assurance that we might sell several thousand more by striking the true pot-house note.'

'Then pitch the thing over! Wash your hands, and go to cleaner work.'

'The work I am doing is clean enough,' replied Earwaker. 'Let me have my way, and I can make the paper a decent one and a useful one. I shan't easily find another such chance.'

'Your idealism has a strong root,' said Godwin, rather contemptuously. 'I half envy you. There must be a distinct pleasure in believing that any intellectual influence will exalt the English democracy.'

'I'm not sure that I do believe it, but I enjoy the experiment. The chief pleasure, I suppose, is in fighting Runcorn and Kenyon.'

'They are too strong for you, Earwaker. They have the spirit of the age to back them up.'

The journalist became silent; he smiled, but the harassment of conflict marked his features.

'I hear nothing about "The New Sophistry,"' he remarked, when Godwin had begun to examine some books that lay on the table. 'Dolby has the trick of keeping manuscripts a long time. Everything that seems at the first glance tolerable, he sends to the printer, then muses over it at his leisure Probably your paper is in type.'

'I don't care a rap whether it is or not. What do you think of this book of Oldwinkle's?'

He was holding a volume of humorous stories, which had greatly taken the fancy of the public.

'It's uncommonly good,' replied the journalist, laughing. 'I had a prejudice against the fellow, but he has overcome me. It's more than good farce,—something like really strong humour here and there.'

'I quite believe it,' said Peak, 'yet I couldn't read a page. Whatever the mob enjoys is at once spoilt for me, however good I should otherwise think it. I am sick of seeing and hearing the man's name.'

Earwaker shook his head in deprecation.

'Narrow, my boy. One must be able to judge and enjoy impartially.'

'I know it, but I shall never improve. This book seems to me to have a bad smell; it looks mauled with dirty fingers. I despise Oldwinkle for his popularity. To make them laugh, and to laugh *with* them—pah!'

They debated this point for some time, Peak growing more violent, though his friend preserved a smiling equanimity. A tirade of virulent contempt, in which Godwin exhibited all his powers of savage eloquence, was broken by a visitor's summons at the door.

'Here's Malkin,' said the journalist; 'you'll see each other at last.'

Peak could not at once command himself to the look and tone desirable in meeting a stranger; leaning against the mantelpiece, he gazed with a scowl of curiosity at the man who presented himself, and when he shook hands, it was in silence. But Malkin made speech from the others unnecessary for several minutes. With animated voice and gesture, he poured forth apologies for his failure to keep the appointment of six or seven weeks ago.

'Only the gravest call of duty could have kept me away, I do assure you! No doubt Earwaker has informed you of the circumstances. I telegraphed—I think I telegraphed; didn't I, Earwaker?'

'I have some recollection of a word or two of scant excuse,' replied the journalist.

'But I implore you to consider the haste I was in,' cried Malkin; 'not five minutes, Mr. Peak, to book, to register luggage, to do everything; not five minutes, I protest! But here we are at last. Let us talk! Let us talk!'

He seated himself with an air of supreme enjoyment, and began to cram the bowl of a large pipe from a bulky pouch.

'How stands the fight with Kenyon and Co.?' he cried, as soon as the tobacco was glowing.

Earwaker briefly repeated what he had told Peak.

'Hold out! No surrender and no compromise! What's your opinion, Mr. Peak, on the abstract question? Is a popular paper likely, or not, to be damaged in its circulation by improvement of style and tone—within the limits of discretion?'

'I shouldn't be surprised if it were,' Peak answered, drily.

'I'm afraid you're right. There's no use in blinking truths, however disagreeable. But, for Earwaker, that isn't the main issue. What he has to do is to assert himself. Every man's first duty is to assert himself. At all events, this is how I regard the matter. I am all for individualism, for the development of one's personality at whatever cost. No compromise on points of faith! Earwaker has his ideal of journalistic duty, and in a fight with fellows like Runcorn and Kenyon he must stand firm as a rock.'

'I can't see that he's called upon to fight at all,' said Peak. 'He's in a false position; let him get out of it.'

'A false position? I can't see that. No man better fitted than Earwaker to raise the tone of Radical journalism. Here's a big Sunday newspaper practically in his hands; it seems to me that the circumstances give him

a grand opportunity of making his force felt. What are we all seeking but an opportunity for striking out with effect?'

Godwin listened with a sceptical smile, and made answer in slow, careless tones.

'Earwaker happens to be employed and paid by certain capitalists to increase the sale of their paper.'

'My dear sir!' cried the other, bouncing upon his seat. 'How can you take such a view? A great newspaper surely cannot be regarded as a mere source of income. These capitalists declare that they have at heart the interests of the working classes; so has Earwaker, and he is far better able than they to promote those interests. His duty is to apply their money to the best use, morally speaking. If he were lukewarm in the matter, I should be the first to advise his retirement; but this fight is entirely congenial to him. I trust he will hold his own to the last possible moment.'

'You must remember,' put in the journalist, with a look of amusement, 'that Peak has no sympathy with Radicalism.'

'I lament it, but that does not affect my argument. If you were a high Tory, I should urge you just as strongly to assert yourself. Surely you agree with this point of mine, Mr. Peak? You admit that a man must develop whatever strength is in him.'

'I'm not at all sure of that.'

Malkin fixed himself sideways in the chair, and examined his collocutor's face earnestly. He endeavoured to subdue his excitement to the tone of courteous debate, but the words that at length escaped him were humorously blunt.

'Then of what *are* you sure?'

'Of nothing.'

'Now we touch bottom!' cried Malkin. 'Philosophically speaking, I agree with you. But we have to live

our lives, and I suppose we must direct ourselves by some conscious principle.'

'I don't see the necessity,' Peak replied, still in an impassive tone. 'We may very well be guided by circumstances as they arise. To be sure, there's a principle in that, but I take it you mean something different.'

'Yes I do. I hold that the will must direct circumstances, not receive its impulse from them. How, then, are we to be guided? What do you set before yourself?'

'To get through life with as much satisfaction and as little pain as possible.'

'You are a hedonist, then. Well and good! Then that is your conscious principle'——

'No, it isn't.'

'How am I to understand you?'

'By recognising that a man's intellectual and moral principles as likely as not tend to anything but his happiness.'

'I can't admit it!' exclaimed Malkin, leaping from his chair. 'What *is* happiness?'

'I don't know.'

'Earwaker, *what* is happiness? What *is* happiness?'

'I really don't know,' answered the journalist, mirthfully.

'This is trifling with a grave question. We all know perfectly well that happiness is the conscious exertion of individual powers. Why is there so much suffering under our present social system? Because the majority of men are crushed to a dead level of mechanical toil, with no opportunity of developing their special faculties. Give a man scope, and happiness is put within his reach.'

'What do you mean by scope?' inquired Godwin.

'Scope? Scope? Why, room to expand. The vice

of our society is hypocrisy; it comes of over-crowding. When a man isn't allowed to be himself, he takes refuge in a mean imitation of those other men who appear to be better off. That was what sent me off to South America. I got into politics, and found that I was in danger of growing dishonest, of compromising, and toadying. In the wilderness, I found myself again.—Do you seriously believe that happiness can be obtained by ignoring one's convictions?'

He addressed the question to both, snuffing the air with head thrown back.

'What if you have no convictions?' asked Peak.

'Then you are incapable of happiness in any worthy sense! You may graze, but you will never feast.'

The listeners joined in laughter, and Malkin, after a moment's hesitation, allowed his face to relax in good-humoured sympathy.

'Now look here!' he cried. 'You—Earwaker; suppose you sent conscience to the devil, and set yourself to please Runcorn by increasing the circulation of your paper by whatever means. You would flourish, undoubtedly. In a short time you would be chief editor, and your pockets would burst with money. But what about your peace of mind? What about happiness?'

'Why, I'm disposed to agree with Peak,' answered the journalist. 'If I *could* take that line, I should be a happier man than conscientiousness will ever make me.'

Malkin swelled with indignation.

'You don't mean it! You are turning a grave argument into jest!—Where's my hat? Where the devil is my hat? Send for me again when you are disposed to talk seriously.'

He strode towards the door, but Earwaker arrested him with a shout.

'You're leaving your pipe!'

'So I am. Where is it?—Did I tell you where I bought this pipe?'

'No. What's the wood?'

On the instant Malkin fell into a cheerful vein of reminiscence. In five minutes he was giving a rapturous description of tropical scenes, laughing joyously as he addressed now one now the other of his companions.

'I hear you have a mind to see those countries, Mr. Peak,' he said at length. 'If you care for a travelling-companion—rather short-tempered, but you'll pardon that—pray give me the preference. I should enjoy above all things to travel with a man of science.'

'It's very doubtful whether I shall ever get so far,' Godwin replied, musingly.

And, as he spoke, he rose to take leave. Earwaker's protest that it was not yet ten o'clock did not influence him.

'I want to reflect on the meaning of happiness,' he said, extending his hand to Malkin; and, in spite of the smile, his face had a sombre cast.

The two who were left of course discussed him.

'You won't care much for Peak,' said Earwaker. 'He and I suit each other, because there's a good deal of indifferentism in both of us. Moral earnestness always goes against the grain with him; I've noticed it frequently.'

'I'm sorry I spoke so dogmatically. It wasn't altogether good manners. Suppose I write him a short letter, just expressing my regret for having been led away'——

'Needless, needless,' laughed the journalist. 'He thinks all the better of you for your zeal. But happiness is a sore point with him; few men, I should think, have known less of it. I can't imagine any circumstances which would make him thoroughly at peace with himself and the world.'

'Poor fellow! You can see something of that in his face. Why doesn't he get married?'

'A remarkable suggestion!—By the way, why don't *you?*'

'My dear boy, there's nothing I wish more, but it's a business of such fearful precariousness. I'm one of those men whom marriage will either make or ruin. You know my characteristics; the slightest check upon my independence, and all's up with me. The woman I marry must be perfectly reasonable, perfectly good-tempered; she must have excellent education, and every delicacy of breeding. Where am I to find this paragon?'

'Society is open to you.'

'True, but I am not open to society. I don't take kindly to the people of my own class No, I tell you what—my only chance of getting a suitable wife is to train some very young girl for the purpose. Don't misunderstand me, for heaven's sake! I mean that I must make a friendship with some schoolgirl in whose education I can have a voice, whose relatives will permit me to influence her mind and develop her character. What do you think of this idea?'

'Not bad, but it demands patience.'

'And who more patient than I? But let us talk of that poor Mrs. Jacox and her girls. You feel that you know them pretty well from my letters, don't you? Nothing more monstrous can be imagined than the treatment to which this poor woman has been subjected! I couldn't have believed that such dishonesty and brutality were possible in English families of decent position. Her husband deserted her, her brother robbed her, her sister-in-law libelled her,—the whole story is nauseating!'

'You're quite sure that she tells you the truth?'

Malkin glared with sudden resentment.

'The truth? What! you also desire to calumniate

her? For shame, Earwaker! A poor widow toiling to support herself in a foreign country, with two children dependent on her.'

'Yes, yes, yes; but you seem to know very little of her.'

'I know her perfectly, and all her circumstances!'

Mrs. Jacox was the mother of the two girls whom Malkin had escorted to Rouen, after an hour or so of all but casual acquaintance. She and her history had come in a very slight degree under the notice of certain good-natured people with whom Malkin was on friendly terms, and hearing that the children, Bella and Lily, aged fourteen and twelve respectively, were about to undertake alone a journey to the Continent, the erratic hero felt it incumbent upon him to see them safe at their mother's side. Instead of returning forthwith, he lingered in Normandy for several weeks, striking off at length, on the summons of a friend, to Orleans, whence he was only to-day returned. Two or three letters had kept Earwaker informed of his movements. Of Mrs. Jacox he wrote as he now spoke, with compassionate respect, and the girls, according to him, were exquisite models of budding maidenhood.

'You haven't told me,' said Earwaker, calmly fronting the indignant outburst, 'what her circumstances are—at present.'

'She assists an English lady in the management of a boarding-house,' Malkin replied, with an air which forbade trivial comment. 'Bella and Lily will of course continue their studies. I daresay I shall run over now and then to see them.'

'May I, without offence, inquire if either of these young ladies seems suitable for the ideal training of which you spoke?'

Malkin smiled thoughtfully. He stood with his legs apart and stroked his blond beard.

'The surmise is not unnatural. Well, I confess that

Bella has inspired me with no little interest. She is rather mature, unfortunately; I wish she had been Lily's age. We shall see; we shall see.'

Musing, he refilled his pipe, and gossip was prolonged till something after one o'clock. Malkin was never known to retire willingly from an evening's congenial talk until the small hours were in progress.

Peak, on reaching home about eleven, was surprised to see a light in his sitting-room window. As he entered, his landlady informed him that Mr. Moxey had been waiting upstairs for an hour or two. Christian was reading. He laid down the book and rose languidly. His face was flushed, and he spoke with a laugh which suggested that a fit of despondency (as occasionally happened) had tempted him to excess in cordials. Godwin understood these signs. He knew that his friend's intellect was rather brightened than impaired by such stimulus, and he affected not to be conscious of any peculiarity.

'As you wouldn't come to me,' Christian began, 'I had no choice but to come to you. My visit isn't unwelcome, I hope?'

'Certainly not. But how are you going to get home? You know the time?'

'Don't trouble. I shan't go to bed to-night. Let me sit here and read, will you? If I feed tired I can lie down on the sofa. What a delightful book this is! I must get it.'

It was a history of the Italian Renaissance, recently published.

'Where does this phrase come from?' he continued, pointing to a scrap of paper, used as a book-mark, on which Godwin had pencilled a note. The words were: '*Foris ut moris, intus ut libet.*'

'It's mentioned there,' Peak replied, 'as the motto of those humanists who outwardly conformed to the common faith.'

'I see. All very well when the Inquisition was flourishing, but sounds ignoble nowadays.'

'Do you think so? In a half-civilised age, whether the sixteenth or the nineteenth century, a wise man may do worse than adopt it.'

'Better be honest, surely?'

Peak stood for a moment as if in doubt, then exclaimed irritably:

'Honest? Honest? Who is or can be honest? Who truly declares himself? When a man has learnt that truth is indeterminable, how is it more moral to go about crying that you don't believe a certain dogma than to concede that the dogma may possibly be true? This new morality of the agnostics is mere paltry conceit. Why must I make solemn declaration that I don't believe in absolute knowledge? I might as well be called upon to inform all my acquaintances how I stand with regard to the theories of chemical affinity. One's philosophy has nothing to do with the business of life. If I chose to become a Church of England clergyman, what moral objection could be made?'

This illustration was so amusing to Moxey, that his surprise at what preceded gave way to laughter.

'I wonder,' he exclaimed, 'that you never seriously thought of a profession for which you are so evidently cut out.'

Godwin kept silence; his face had darkened, and he seated himself with sullen weariness.

'Tell me what you've been doing,' resumed Moxey. 'Why haven't I heard from you?'

'I should have come in a day or two. I thought you were probably out of town.'

'Her husband is ill,' said the other, by way of reply. He leaned forward with his arms upon the table, and gazed at Godwin, with eyes of peculiar brightness.

'Ill, is he?' returned Godwin, with slow interest. 'In the same way as before?'

'Yes, but much worse.'

Christian paused; and when he again spoke it was hurriedly, confusedly.

'How can I help getting excited about it? How can I behave decently? You're the only man I ever speak to on the subject, and no doubt I both weary and disgust you; but I *must* speak to some one. My nerves are strung beyond endurance; it's only by speaking that I can ease myself from the intolerable strain.'

'Have you seen her lately?'

'Yesterday, for a moment, in the street. It's ten months since the last meeting.'

'Well,' remarked Godwin, abruptly, 'it's probable the man will die one of these days, then your trials will have a happy end. I see no harm in hoping that his life may be short—that's a conventional feeling. If two people can be benefited by the death of a single person, why shouldn't we be glad in the prospect of his dying? Not of his suffering—that's quite another thing. But die he must; and to curtail the life of a being who at length wholly ceases to exist is no injury. You can't injure a nonentity. Do you think I should take it ill if I knew that some persons were wishing my death? Why, look, if ever I crush a little green fly that crawls upon me in the fields, at once I am filled with envy of its fate—sincerest envy. To have passed so suddenly from being into nothingness—how blessed an extinction! To feel in that way, instinctively, in the very depths of your soul, is to be a true pessimist. If I had ever doubted my sincerity in pessimism, this experience, several times repeated, would have reassured me.'

Christian covered his face, and brooded for a long time, whilst Godwin sat with his eyes on vacancy.

'Come and see us to-morrow,' said the former, at length.

'Perhaps.'

'Why do you keep away?'

'I'm in no mood for society.'

'We'll have no one. Only Marcella and I.'

Again a long silence.

'Marcella is going in for comparative philology,' Christian resumed, with the gentle tone in which he invariably spoke of his sister. 'What a mind that girl has! I never knew any woman of half her powers.'

Godwin said nothing.

'No,' continued the other fervently, 'nor of half her goodness. I sometimes think that no mortal could come nearer to our ideal of moral justice and purity. If it were not for her, I should long ago have gone to perdition, in one way or another. It's her strength, not my own, that has saved me. I daresay you know this?'

'There's some truth in it, I believe,' Peak answered, his eye wandering.

'See how circumstances can affect one's judgment. If, just about the time I first knew you, I had abandoned myself to a life of sottish despair, of course I should have charged Constance with the blame of it. Now that I have struggled on, I can see that she has been a blessing to me instead of a curse. If Marcella has given me strength, I have to thank Constance for the spiritual joy which otherwise I should never have known.'

Peak uttered a short laugh.

'That is only saying that she *might* have been ruinous, but in the course of circumstances has proved helpful. I envy your power of deriving comfort from such reflections.'

'Well, we view things differently. I have the habit of looking to the consolatory facts of life, you to the depressing. There's an unfortunate lack in you, Peak; you seem insensible to female influence, and I believe that is closely connected with your desperate pessimism.'

Godwin laughed again, this time with mocking length of note.

'Come now, isn't it true?' urged the other. 'Sincerely, do you care for women at all?'

'Perhaps not.'

'A grave misfortune, depend upon it! It accounts for nearly everything that is unsatisfactory in your life. If you had ever been sincerely devoted to a woman, be assured your powers would have developed in a way of which you have no conception. It's no answer to tell me that *I* am still a mere trifler, never likely to do anything of account; I haven't it in me to be anything better, and I might easily have become much worse. But you might have made yourself a great position—I mean, you *might* do so; you are still very young. If only you knew the desire of a woman's help.'

'You really think so?' said Godwin, with grave irony.

'I am sure of it! There's no harm in repeating what you have often told me—your egoism oppresses you. A woman's influence takes one out of oneself. No man can be a better authority on this than I. For more than eleven years I have worshipped one woman with absolute faithfulness'——

'Absolute?' interrupted Godwin, bluntly.

'What exception occurs to you?'

'As you challenge inquiry, forgive me for asking what your interest was in one of your cousins at Twybridge?'

Christian started, and averted his face with a look of embarrassment.

'Do you mean to say that you knew anything about that?'

'I was always an observer,' Peak replied, smiling. 'You don't remember, perhaps, that I happened to be present when a letter had just arrived for you at your uncle's house—a letter which evidently disturbed you?'

'This is astonishing! Peak, you're a terrible fellow! Heaven forbid that I should ever be at your mercy! Yes, you are quite right,' he continued, despondently. 'But that was no real unfaithfulness. I don't quite know how to explain it. I *did* make love to poor Janet, and with the result that I have never since seen any of the family. My uncle, when he found I had drawn back, was very savage—naturally enough. Marcella and I never again went to Twybridge. I liked Janet; she was a good, kind girl. I believed just then that my love for Constance was hopeless; my mood impelled me to the conviction that the best thing I could do was to marry Janet and settle down to a peaceful domestic life. Then came that letter—it was from Constance herself. It meant nothing, yet it was enough to revive all my hopes. I rushed off——! How brutally I had behaved! Poor little Janet!'

He let his face fall upon his hands.

'Allow me an indiscreet question,' said Peak, after a silence. 'Have you any founded hope of marrying Constance if she becomes a widow?'

Christian started and looked up with wide eyes.

'Hope? Every hope! I have the absolute assurance of her love.'

'I see.'

'But I mustn't mislead you,' pursued the other, hurriedly. 'Our relations are absolutely pure. I have only allowed myself to see her at very long intervals. Why shouldn't I tell you? It was less than a year after her marriage; I found her alone in a room in a friend's house; her eyes were red with weeping. I couldn't help holding my hand to her. She took it, and held it for a moment, and looked at me steadily, and whispered my name—that was all. I knew then that she repented of her marriage—who can say what led her into it? I was poor, you know; perhaps—but in spite of all, she *did* love me. There has never since

been anything like a scene of emotion between us—*that* her conscience couldn't allow. She is a noble-minded woman, and has done her duty. But if she is free '——

He quivered with passionate feeling.

'And you are content,' said Godwin, drily, 'to have wasted ten years of your life for such a possibility?'

'Wasted!' Christian exclaimed. 'Come, come, Peak; why *will* you affect this wretched cynicism? Is it waste of years to have lived with the highest and purest ideal perpetually before one's mind? What can a man do better than, having found an admirable woman, to worship her thenceforth, and defy every temptation that could lead him astray? I don't like to seem boastful, but I *have* lived purely and devotedly. And if the test endured to the end of my life, I could sustain it. Is the consciousness of my love nothing to Constance? Has it not helped her?'

Such profound sincerity was astonishing to Peak. He did not admire it, for it seemed to him, in this case at all events, the fatal weakness of a character it was impossible not to love. Though he could not declare his doubts, he thought it more than probable that this Laura of the voiceless Petrarch was unworthy of such constancy, and that she had no intention whatever of rewarding it, even if the opportunity arrived. But this was the mere speculation of a pessimist; he might be altogether wrong, for he had never denied the existence of high virtue, in man or woman.

'There goes midnight!' he remarked, turning from the subject. 'You can't sleep, neither can I. Why shouldn't we walk into town?'

'By all means; on condition that you will come home with me, and spend to-morrow there.'

'Very well.'

They set forth, and with varied talk, often broken by long silences, made their way through sleeping suburbs to the dark valley of Thames.

There passed another month, during which Peak was neither seen nor heard of by his friends. One evening in October, as he sat studying at the British Museum, a friendly voice claimed his attention. He rose nervously and met the searching eye of Buckland Warricombe.

'I had it in mind to write to you,' said the latter. 'Since we parted down yonder I have been running about a good deal, with few days in town. Do you often read here?'

'Generally on Saturday afternoon.'

Buckland glanced at the open volume, and caught a heading, 'Apologetic Theology.'

'Still at the works?'

'Yes; I shall be there till Christmas—no longer.'

'Are you by chance disengaged to-morrow? Could you dine with me? I shall be alone; perhaps you don't mind that? We could exchange views on "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute."'

Godwin accepted the invitation, and Warricombe, unable to linger, took leave of him.

They met the next evening in Buckland's rooms, not far from the Houses of Parliament. Commonplace comfort was the note of these quarters. Peak wondered that a man who had it in his power to surround himself with evidences of taste should be content to dwell thus. His host seemed to detect this thought in the glances Godwin cast about him.

'Nothing but a *pied-à-terre*. I have been here three or four years, but I don't think of it as a home. I suppose I shall settle somewhere before long: yet, on the whole, what does it matter where one lives? There's something in the atmosphere of our time that makes one indisposed to strike roots in the old way. Who knows how long there'll be such a thing as real property? We are getting to think of ourselves as lodgers; it's as well to be indifferent about a notice to quit.'

'Many people would still make a good fight for the old homes,' replied Peak.

'Yes; I daresay I should myself, if I were a family man. A wife and children are strong persuasions to conservatism. In those who have anything, that's to say. Let the families who have nothing learn how they stand in point of numbers, and we shall see what we shall see.'

'And you are doing your best to teach them that.'

Buckland smiled.

'A few other things at the same time. One isn't necessarily an anarchist, you know.'

'What enormous faith you must have in the metaphysical powers of the multitude!'

'Trenchant! But say, rather, in the universal self-interest. That's the trait of human nature which we have in mind when we speak of enlightenment. The aim of practical Radicalism is to instruct men's selfishness. Astonishing how capable it is of being instructed! The mistake of the Socialist lies in his crediting men with far too much self-esteem, far too little perception of their own limits. The characteristic of mankind at large is humility.'

Peak began to understand his old acquaintance; he had imagined him less acute. Gratified by the smile of interest, Warricombe added:

'There are forces of madness; I have shown you that I make allowance for them. But they are only dangerous so long as privilege allies itself with hypocrisy. The task of the modern civiliser is to sweep away sham idealisms.'

'I agree with you,' Godwin replied.

With sudden change of mood, Buckland began to speak of an indifferent topic of the day, and in a few minutes they sat down to dinner.

Not till the welcome tobacco blended its aroma with

that of coffee did a frankly personal note sound in their conversation.

'So at Christmas you are free,' said Warricombe. 'You still think of leaving London?'

'I have decided to go down into Devonshire.'

'The seaside?'

'I shall stay first of all in Exeter,' Godwin replied, with deliberation; 'one can get hold of books there.'

'Yes, especially of the ecclesiastical colour.'

'You are still unable to regard my position with anything but contempt?' Peak asked, looking steadily at the critical face.

'Come now; what does it all mean? Of course I quite understand how tolerant the Church is becoming: I know what latitude it permits in its servants. But what do you propose to yourself?'

'Precisely what you call the work of the civiliser—to attack sham ideals.'

'As for instance——?'

'The authority of the mob,' answered Peak, suavely.

'Your clericalism is political, then?'

'To a great extent.'

'I discern a vague sort of consistency in this. You regard the Church formulas as merely symbolical—useful for the purposes of the day?'

'Rather for the purposes of eternity.'

'In the human sense.'

'In every sense.'

Warricombe perceived that no directness of questioning would elicit literal response, and on the whole this relieved him. To hear Godwin Peak using the language of a fervent curate would have excited in him something more than disgust. It did not seem impossible that a nature like Peak's—intellectually arrogant, vehemently anti-popular—should have been attracted by the traditions, the social prestige, of the Anglican Church; nor at all unlikely that a mind so constituted should justify

a seeming acceptance of dogmas, which in the strict sense it despised. But he was made uneasy by his ignorance of Peak's private life during the years since their parting at College. He did not like to think of the possible establishment of intimacy between this man of low origin, uncertain career, boundless ambition, and the household of Martin Warricombe. There could be no doubt that Peak had decided to go to Exeter because of the social prospects recently opened to him. In the vulgar phrase, he had probably 'taken stock' of Mr. Warricombe's idiosyncrasy, and saw therein a valuable opportunity for a theological student, who at the same time was a devotee of natural science. To be sure, the people at Exeter could be put on their guard. On the other hand, Peak had plainly avowed his desire to form social connections of the useful kind; in his position such an aim was essential, a mere matter of course.

Godwin's voice interrupted this train of thought.

'Let me ask you a plain question. You have twice been kind enough to introduce me to your home as a friend of yours. Am I guilty of presumption in hoping that your parents will continue to regard me as an acquaintance? I trust there's no need to assure you that I know the meaning of discretion.'

An appeal to Buckland's generosity seldom failed. Yes, it was true that he had more than once encouraged the hope now frankly expressed. Indulging a correspondent frankness, he might explain that Peak's position was so distasteful to him that it disturbed the future with many kinds of uncertainty. But this would be churlish. He must treat his guest as a gentleman, so long as nothing compelled him to take the less agreeable view.

'My dear Peak, let us have none of these formalities. My parents have distinctly invited you to go and see them whenever you are in the neighbourhood. I am quite sure they will help to make your stay in Exeter a pleasant one.'

Therewith closed the hazardous dialogue. Warricombe turned at once to a safe topic—that of contemporary fiction, and they chatted pleasantly enough for the rest of the evening.

Not many days after this, Godwin received by post an envelope which contained certain proof sheets, and therewith a note in which the editor of *The Critical Review* signified his acceptance of a paper entitled 'The New Sophistry.' The communication was originally addressed to Earwaker, who had scribbled at the foot, 'Correct, if you are alive, and send back to Dolby.'

The next morning he did not set out as usual for Rotherhithe. Through the night he had not closed his eyes; he was in a state of nervousness which bordered on fever. A dozen times he had read over the proofs, with throbbing pulse, with exultant self-admiration: but the printer's errors which had caught his eye, and a few faults of phrase, were still uncorrected. What a capital piece of writing it was! What a flagellation of M'Naughten and all his tribe! If this did not rouse echoes in the literary world——

Through the long day he sat in langour or paced his room like one made restless by pain. Only when the gloom of nightfall obliged him to light his lamp did he at length sit down to the table and carefully revise the proofs, pen in hand. When he had made up the packet for post, he wrote to Earwaker.

'I had forgotten all about this thing. Proofs have gone to Dolby. I have not signed; probably he would object to my doing so. As it is, the paper can be ascribed to anyone, and attention thus excited. We shall see paragraphs attributing it to men of mark—perhaps scandal will fix it on a bishop. In any case, don't let out the secret. I beg this seriously, and for a solid reason. Not a word to anyone, however intimate. If Dolby betrays *your* name, grin and bear it. I depend upon your friendship.'

II

In a by-way which declines from the main thoroughfare of Exeter, and bears the name of Longbrook Street, is a row of small houses placed above long strips of sloping garden. They are old and plain, with no architectural feature calling for mention, unless it be the latticed porch which gives the doors an awkward quaintness. Just beyond, the road crosses a hollow, and begins the ascent of a hill here interposed between the city and the inland-winding valley of Exe. The little terrace may be regarded as urban or rural, according to the tastes and occasions of those who dwell there. In one direction, a walk of five minutes will conduct to the middle of High Street, and in the other it takes scarcely longer to reach the open country.

On the upper floor of one of these cottages, Godwin Peak had made his abode. Sitting-room and bedchamber, furnished with homely comfort, answered to his bachelor needs, and would allow of his receiving without embarrassment any visitor whom fortune might send him. Of quietness he was assured, for a widow and her son, alike remarkable for sobriety of demeanour, were the only persons who shared the house with him. Mrs. Roots could not compare in grace and skill with the little Frenchwoman who had sweetened his existence at Peckham Rye, but her zeal made amends for natural deficiency, and the timorous respect with which she waited upon him was by no means disagreeable to God-

win. Her reply to a request or suggestion was always, 'If you please, sir.' Throughout the day she went so tranquilly about her domestic duties, that Godwin seldom heard anything except the voice of the cuckoo-clock, a pleasant sound to him. Her son, employed at a nurseryman's, was a great sinewy fellow with a face of such ruddiness that it seemed to diffuse warmth; on Sunday afternoon, whatever the state of the sky, he sat behind the house in his shirt-sleeves, and smoked a pipe as he contemplated the hart's-tongue which grew there upon a rockery.

'The gentleman from London'—so Mrs. Roots was wont to style her lodger in speaking with neighbours—had brought his books with him; they found place on a few shelves. His microscope had its stand by the window, and one or two other scientific implements lay about the room. The cabinets bequeathed to him by Mr. Gunnery he had sent to Twybridge, to remain in his mother's care. In taking the lodgings, he described himself merely as a student, and gave his landlady to understand that he hoped to remain under her roof for at least a year. Of his extreme respectability, the widow could entertain no doubt, for he dressed with aristocratic finish, attended services at the Cathedral and elsewhere very frequently, and made the most punctual payments. Moreover, a casual remark had informed her that he was on friendly terms with Mr. Martin Warricombe, whom her son knew as a gentleman of distinction. He often sat up very late at night, but, doubtless, that was the practice of Londoners. No lodger could have given less trouble, or have acknowledged with more courtesy all that was done for his convenience.

No one ever called upon Mr. Peak, but he was often from home for many hours together, probably on visits to great people in city or country. It seemed rather strange, however, that the postman so seldom brought anything for him. Though he had now been more than

two months in the house he had received only three letters, and those at long intervals.

Noticeable was the improvement in his health since his arrival here. The pallor of his cheeks was giving place to a wholesome tinge; his eye was brighter; he showed more disposition to converse, and was readier with pleasant smiles. Mrs. Roots even heard him singing in his bedroom—though, oddly enough, it was a secular song on Sunday morning. The weekly bills for food, which at first had been very modest, grew richer in items. Godwin had, in fact, never felt so well. He extended his walks in every direction, sometimes rambling up the valley to sleepy little towns where he could rest in the parlours of old inns, sometimes striking across country to this or that point of the sea-coast, or making his way to the nearer summits of Dartmoor, noble in their wintry desolation. He marked with delight every promise of returning spring. When he could only grant himself a walk of an hour or two in the sunny afternoon, there was many a deep lane within easy reach, where the gorse gleamed in masses of gold, and the little oak-trees in the hedges were ruddy with last year's clinging leafage, and catkins hung from the hazels, and the fresh green of sprouting ivy crept over bank and wall. Had he now been in London, the morning would have awakened him to fog and slush and misery. As it was, when he looked out upon the glow of sunrise, he felt the sweet air breathing health into his frame and vigour into his mind. There were moments when he could all but say of himself that he was at peace with the world.

As on a morning towards the end of March, when a wind from the Atlantic swept spaces of brightest blue amid the speeding clouds, and sang joyously as it rushed over hill and dale. It was the very day for an upland walk, for a putting forth of one's strength in conflict with boisterous gusts and sudden showers, that give a taste of earth's nourishment. But Godwin had some-

thing else in view. After breakfast, he sat down to finish a piece of work which had occupied him for two or three days, a translation from a German periodical. His mind wrought easily, and he often hummed an air as his pen moved over the paper. When the task was completed, he rolled his papers and the pamphlet together, put them into the pocket of his overcoat, and presently went forth.

Twenty minutes' walk brought him to the Warricombes' house. It was his second call within the present week, but such assiduity had not hitherto been his wont. Though already summoned twice or thrice by express invitation, he was sparing of voluntary visits. Having asked for Mr. Warricombe, he was forthwith conducted to the study. In the welcome which greeted his appearance, he could detect no suspicion of simulated warmth, though his ear had unsurpassable discrimination.

'Have you looked through it?' Martin exclaimed, as he saw the foreign periodical in his visitor's hand.

'I have written a rough translation——'

'Oh, how could you think of taking such trouble! These things are sent to me by the dozen—I might say, by the cartload. My curiosity would have been amply satisfied if you had just told me the drift of the thing.'

'It seemed to me,' said Peak, modestly, 'that the paper was worth a little careful thought. I read it rapidly at first, but found myself drawn to it again. It states the point of view of the average scientific mind with such remarkable clearness, that I wished to think it over, and the best way was to do so pen in hand.'

'Well, if you really did it on your own account'——

Mr. Warricombe took the offered sheets and glanced at the first of them.

'My only purpose,' said Godwin, 'in calling again so soon was to leave this with you.'

He made as though he would take his departure.

'You want to get home again? Wait at least till this

shower is over. I enjoy that pelting of spring rain against the window. In a minute or two we shall have the laurels flashing in the sunshine, as if they were hung with diamonds.'

They stood together looking out on to the garden. Presently their talk returned to the German disquisition, which was directed against the class of quasi-scientific authors attacked by Peak himself in his *Critical* article. In the end Godwin sat down and began to read the translation he had made, Mr. Warricombe listening with a thoughtful smile. From time to time the reader paused and offered a comment, endeavouring to show that the arguments were merely plausible; his air was that of placid security, and he seemed to enjoy the irony which often fell from his lips. Martin frequently scrutinised him, and always with a look of interest which betokened grave reflection.

'Here,' said Godwin at one point, 'he has a note citing a passage from Reusch's book on *The Bible and Nature*. If I am not mistaken, he misrepresents his author, though perhaps not intentionally.'

'You know the book?'

'I have studied it carefully, but I don't possess it. I thought I remembered this particular passage very well.'

'Is it a work of authority?'

'Yes; it is very important. Unfortunately, it hasn't yet been translated. Rather bulky, but I shouldn't mind doing it myself if I were sure of finding a publisher.'

'*The Bible and Nature*,' said Martin, musingly. 'What is his scheme? How does he go to work?'

Godwin gave a brief but lucid description of the book, and Mr. Warricombe listened gravely. When there had been silence for some moments, the latter spoke in a tone he had never yet used when conversing with Peak. He allowed himself, for the first time, to betray a troubled doubt on the subject under discussion.

'So he makes a stand at Darwinism as it affects man?'

Peak had yet no means of knowing at what point Martin himself 'made a stand.' Modes of reconcilement between scientific discovery and religious tradition are so very numerous, and the geologist was only now beginning to touch upon these topics with his young acquaintance. That his mind was not perfectly at ease amid the conflicts of the day, Godwin soon perceived, and by this time he had clear assurance that Martin would willingly thrash out the whole debate with anyone who seemed capable of supporting orthodox tenets by reasoning not unacceptable to a man of broad views. The negativist of course assumed from the first that Martin, however respectable his knowledge, was far from possessing the scientific mind, and each conversation had supplied him with proofs of this defect; it was not at all in the modern spirit that the man of threescore years pursued his geological and kindred researches, but with the calm curiosity of a liberal intellect which has somehow taken this direction instead of devoting itself to literary study. At bottom, Godwin had no little sympathy with Mr. Warricombe; he too, in spite of his militant instincts, dwelt by preference amid purely human interests. He grasped with firm intelligence the modes of thought which distinguish scientific men, but his nature did not prompt him to a consistent application of them. Personal liking enabled him to subdue the impulses of disrespect which, under other circumstances, would have made it difficult for him to act with perfection his present part. None the less, his task was one of infinite delicacy. Martin Warricombe was not the man to unbosom himself on trivial instigation. It must be a powerful influence which would persuade him to reveal whatever self-questionings lay beneath his genial good breeding and long-established acquiescence in a practical philosophy. Godwin guarded himself

against his eager emotions; one false note, one syllable of indiscretion, and his aims might be hopelessly defeated.

'Yes,' was his reply to the hesitating question. 'He argues strenuously against the descent of man. If I understand him, he regards the concession of this point as impossible.'

Martin was deep in thought. He held a paper-knife bent upon his knee, and his smooth, delicate features wore an unquiet smile.

'Do you know Hebrew, Mr. Peak?'

The question came unexpectedly, and Godwin could not help a momentary confusion, but he covered it with the tone of self-reproach.

'I am ashamed to say that I am only now taking it up seriously.'

'I don't think you need be ashamed,' said Martin, good-naturedly. 'Even a mind as active as yours must postpone some studies. Reusch, I suppose, is sound on that head?'

The inquiry struck Godwin as significant. So Mr. Warricombe attached importance to the verbal interpretation of the Old Testament.

'Distinctly an authority,' he replied. 'He devotes whole chapters to a minute examination of the text.'

'If you had more leisure,' Martin began, deliberately, when he had again reflected, 'I should be disposed to urge you to undertake that translation.'

Peak appeared to meditate.

'Has the book been used by English writers?' the other inquired.

'A good deal.—It was published in the sixties, but I read it in a new edition dated a few years ago. Reusch has kept pace with the men of science. It would be very interesting to compare the first form of the book with the latest.'

'It would, very.'

Raising his head from the contemplative posture. Godwin exclaimed, with a laugh of zeal:

'I think I must find time to translate him. At all events, I might address a proposal to some likely publisher. Yet I don't know how I should assure him of my competency.'

'Probably a specimen would be the surest testimony.'

'Yes. I might do a few chapters.'

Mr. Warricombe's lapse into silence and brevities intimated to Godwin that it was time to take leave. He always quitted this room with reluctance. Its air of luxurious culture affected his senses deliciously, and he hoped that he might some day be permitted to linger among the cabinets and the library shelves. There were so many books he would have liked to take down, some with titles familiar to him, others which kindled his curiosity when he chanced to observe them. The library abounded in such works as only a wealthy man can purchase, and Godwin, who had examined some of them at the British Museum, was filled with the humaner kind of envy on seeing them in Mr. Warricombe's possession. Those publications of the Palæontological Society, one volume of which (a part of Davidson's superb work on the *Brachiopoda*) even now lay open within sight—his hand trembled with a desire to touch them! And those maps of the Geological Surveys, British and foreign, how he would have enjoyed a day's poring over them!

He rose, but Martin seemed in no haste to bring the conversation to an end.

'Have you read M'Naughten's much-discussed book?'

'Yes.'

'Did you see the savage attack in the *Critical* not long ago?'

Godwin smiled, and made quiet answer:

'I should think it was the last word of scientific bitterness and intolerance.'

'Scientific?' repeated Martin, doubtfully. 'I don't

think the writer was a man of science. I saw it somewhere attributed to Huxley, but that was preposterous. To begin with, Huxley would have signed his name; and, again, his English is better. The article seemed to me to be stamped with literary rancour; it was written by some man who envies M'Naughten's success.'

Peak kept silence. Martin's censure of the anonymous author's style stung him to the quick, and he had much ado to command his countenance.

'Still,' pursued the other, 'I felt that much of his satire was only too well pointed. M'Naughten is suggestive, very suggestive; but one comes across books of the same purpose which can have no result but to injure their cause with all thinking people.'

'I have seen many such,' remarked Godwin.

Mr. Warricombe stepped to a bookcase and took down a small volume.

'I wonder whether you know this book of Ampère's, *La Grèce, Rome, et Dante?* Delightful for odd moments!—There came into my mind a passage here at the beginning, apropos of what we were saying: "Il faut souvent un vrai courage pour persister dans un opinion juste en dépit de ses défenseurs."—Isn't that capital?'

Peak received it with genuine appreciation; for once he was able to laugh unfeignedly. The aphorism had so many applications from his own point of view.

'Excellent!—I don't remember to have seen the book.'

'Take it, if you care to.'

This offer seemed a distinct advance in Mr. Warricombe's friendliness. Godwin felt a thrill of encouragement.

'Then you will let me keep this translation for a day or two?' Martin added, indicating the sheets of manuscript. 'I am greatly obliged to you for enabling me to read the thing.'

They shook hands. Godwin had entertained a slight hope that he might be asked to stay to luncheon; but

it could not be much past twelve o'clock, and on the whole there was every reason for feeling satisfied with the results of his visit. Before long he would probably receive another invitation to dine. So with light step he went out into the hall, where Martin again shook hands with him.

The sky had darkened over, and a shrilling of the wind sounded through the garden foliage—fir, and cypress, and laurel. Just as Godwin reached the gate, he was met by Miss Warricombe and Fanny, who were returning from a walk. They wore the costume appropriate to March weather in the country, close-fitting, defiant of gusts; and their cheeks glowed with health. As he exchanged greetings with them, Peak received a new impression of the sisters. He admired the physical vigour which enabled them to take delight in such a day as this, when girls of poorer blood and ignoble nurture would shrink from the sky's showery tumult, and protect their surface elegance by the fireside. Impossible for Sidwell and Fanny to be anything but graceful, for at all times they were perfectly unaffected.

'There'll be another storm in a minute,' said the younger of them, looking with interest to the quarter whence the wind came. 'How suddenly they burst! What a rush! And then in five minutes the sky is clear again.'

Her eyes shone as she turned laughingly to Peak.

'You're not afraid of getting wet? Hadn't you better come under cover?'

'Here it is!' exclaimed Sidwell, with quieter enjoyment. 'Take shelter for a minute or two, Mr. Peak.'

They led the way to the portico, where Godwin stood with them and watched the squall. A moment's downpour of furious rain was followed by heavy hailstones, which drove horizontally before the shrieking wind. The prospect had wrapped itself in grey gloom. At a hundred yards' distance, scarcely an object could be distinguished;

the storm-cloud swooped so low that its skirts touched the branches of tall elms, a streaming, rushing raggedness.

'Don't you enjoy that?' Fanny asked of Godwin.

'Indeed I do.'

'You should be on Dartmoor in such weather,' said Sidwell. 'Father and I were once caught in storms far worse than this—far better, I ought to say, for I never knew anything so terrifically grand.'

Already it was over. The gusts diminished in frequency and force, the hail ceased, the core of blackness was passing over to the eastern sky. Fanny ran out into the garden, and pointed upward.

'Look where the sunlight is coming!'

An uncloaked patch of heaven shone with colour like that of the girl's eyes—faint, limpid blue. Reminding himself that to tarry longer in this company would be imprudent, Godwin bade the sisters good-morning. The frank heartiness with which Fanny pressed his hand, sent him on his way exultant. Not too strong a word; for, independently of his wider ambitions, he was moved and gratified by the thought that kindly feeling towards him had sprung up in such a heart as this. Nor did conscience so much as whisper a reproach. With unreflecting ingenuousness he tasted the joy as if it were his right. Thus long he had waited, through years of hungry manhood, for the look, the tone, which were in harmony with his native sensibilities. Fanny Warricombe was but an undeveloped girl, yet he valued her friendship above the passionate attachment of any woman bred on a lower social plane. Had it been possible, he would have kissed her fingers with purest reverence.

When out of sight of the house, he paused to regard the sky again. Its noontide splendour was dazzling; masses of rosy cloud sailed swiftly from horizon to horizon, the azure deepening about them. Yet before long the west would again send forth its turbulent

spirits, and so the girls might perhaps be led to think of him.

By night the weather grew more tranquil. There was a full moon, and its radiance illumined the ever-changing face of heaven with rare grandeur. Godwin could not shut himself up over his books; he wandered far away into the country, and let his thoughts have freedom.

He was learning to review with calmness the course by which he had reached his now steadfast resolve. A revulsion such as he had experienced after his first day of simulated orthodoxy, half a year ago, could not be of lasting effect, for it was opposed to the whole tenor of his mature thought. It spoilt his holiday, but had no chance of persisting after his return to the atmosphere of Rotherhithe. That he should have been capable of such emotion was, he said to himself, in the just order of things; callousness in the first stages of an undertaking which demanded gross hypocrisy would signify an ignoble nature—a nature, indeed, which could never have been submitted to trial of so strange a kind. But he had overcome himself; that phase of difficulty was outlived, and henceforth he saw only the material obstacles to be defied by his vindicated will.

What he proposed to himself was a life of deliberate baseness. Godwin Peak never tried to play the sophist with this fact. But he succeeded in justifying himself by a consideration of the circumstances which had compelled him to a vile expedient. Had his project involved conscious wrong to other persons, he would scarcely even have speculated on its possibilities. He was convinced that no mortal could suffer harm, even if he accomplished the uttermost of his desires. Whom was he in danger of wronging? The conventional moralist would cry: Everyone with whom he came in slightest contact! But a mind such as Peak's has very little to do with conventional morality. Injury to himself he foresaw and

accepted ; he could never be the man nature designed in him ; and he must frequently submit to a self-contempt which would be very hard to bear. Those whom he consistently deceived, how would they suffer ? Martin Warricombe to begin with. Martin was a man who had lived his life, and whose chief care would now be to keep his mind at rest in the faiths which had served him from youth onwards. In that very purpose, Godwin believed he could assist him. To see a young man, of strong and trained intellect, championing the old beliefs, must doubtless be a source of reassurance to one in Martin's position. Reassurance derived from a lie ?—And what matter, if the outcome were genuine, if it lasted until the man himself was no more ? Did not every form of content result from illusion ? What was truth without the mind of the believer ?

Society, then—at all events that part of it likely to be affected by his activity ? Suppose him an ordained priest, performing all the functions implied in that office. Why, to think only of examples recognised by the public at large, how would he differ for the worse from this, that, and the other clergyman who taught Christianity, all but with blunt avowal, as a scheme of human ethics ? No wolf in sheep's clothing he ! He plotted against no man's pocket, no woman's honour ; he had no sinister design of sapping the faith of congregations—a scheme, by-the-bye, which fanatic liberators might undertake with vast self-approval. If by a word he could have banished religious dogma from the minds of the multitude, he would not have cared to utter it. Wherein lay, indeed, a scruple to be surmounted. The Christian priest must be a man of humble temper ; he must be willing, even eager, to sit down among the poor in spirit as well as in estate, and impart to them his unworldly solaces. Yes, but it had always been recognised that some men who could do the Church good service were personally unfitted for those meek ministrations. His place was in

the hierarchy of intellect; if he were to be active at all, it must be with the brain. In his conversation with Buckland Warricombe, last October, he had spoken not altogether insincerely. Let him once be a member of the Church militant, and his heart would go with many a stroke against that democratic movement which desired, among other things, the Church's abolition. He had power of utterance. Roused to combat by the proletarian challenge, he could make his voice ring in the ears of men, even though he used a symbolism which he would not by choice have adopted.

For it was natural that he should anticipate distinction. Whatever his lot in life, he would not be able to rest among an inglorious brotherhood. If he allied himself with the Church, the Church must assign him leadership, whether titular or not was of small moment. In days to come, let people, if they would, debate his history, canvass his convictions. His scornful pride invited any degree of publicity, when once his position was secure.

But in the meantime he was leaving aside the most powerful of all his motives, and one which demanded closest scrutiny. Not ambition, in any ordinary sense; not desire of material luxury; no incentive recognised by unprincipled schemers first suggested his dishonour. This edifice of subtle untruth had for its foundation a mere ideal of sexual love. For the winning of some chosen woman, men have wrought vehemently, have ruined themselves and others, have achieved triumphs noble or degrading. But Godwin Peak had for years contemplated the possibility of baseness at the impulse of a craving for love capable only of a social (one might say, of a political) definition. The woman throned in his imagination was no individual, but the type of an order. So strangely had circumstances moulded him, that he could not brood on a desire of spiritual affinities, could not, as is natural to most cultivated men, inflame himself with the ardour of soul reaching to soul; he

was preoccupied with the contemplation of qualities which characterise a class. The sense of social distinctions was so burnt into him, that he could not be affected by any pictured charm of mind or person in a woman who had not the stamp of gentle birth and breeding. If once he were admitted to the intimacy of such women, then, indeed, the canons of selection would have weight with him; no man more capable of disinterested choice. Till then, the ideal which possessed him was merely such an assemblage of qualities as would excite the democrat to disdain or fury.

In Sidwell Warricombe this ideal found an embodiment; but Godwin did not thereupon come to the conclusion that Sidwell was the wife he desired. Her influence had the effect of deciding his career, but he neither imagined himself in love with her, nor tried to believe that he might win her love if he set himself to the endeavour. For the first time he was admitted to familiar intercourse with a woman whom he *could* make the object of his worship. He thought much of her; day and night her figure stood before him; and this had continued now for half a year. Still he neither was, nor dreamt himself, in love with her. Before long his acquaintance would include many of her like, and at any moment Sidwell might pale in the splendour of another's loveliness.

But what reasoning could defend the winning of a wife by false pretences? This, his final aim, could hardly be achieved without grave wrong to the person whose welfare must in the nature of things be a prime motive with him. The deception he had practised must sooner or later be discovered; lifelong hypocrisy was incompatible with perfect marriage; some day he must either involve his wife in a system of dishonour, or with her consent relinquish the false career, and find his happiness in the obscurity to which he would then be relegated. Admit the wrong. Grant that some woman whom he

loved supremely must, on his account, pass through a harsh trial—would it not be in his power to compensate her amply? The wife whom he imagined (his idealism in this matter was of a crudity which made the strangest contrast with his habits of thought on every other subject) would be ruled by her emotions, and that part of her nature would be wholly under his governance. Religious fanaticism could not exist in her, for in that case she would never have attracted him. Little by little she would learn to think as he did, and her devotedness must lead her to pardon his deliberate insincerities. Godwin had absolute faith in his power of dominating the woman whom he should inspire with tenderness. This was a feature of his egoism, the explanation of those manifold inconsistencies inseparable from his tortuous design. He regarded his love as something so rare, so vehement, so exalting, that its bestowal must seem an abundant recompense for any pain of which he was the cause.

Thus, with perfect sincerity of argument, did Godwin Peak face the undertaking to which he was committed. Incidents might perturb him, but his position was no longer a cause of uneasiness—save, indeed, at those moments when he feared lest any of his old acquaintances might hear of him before time was ripe. This was a source of anxiety, but inevitable; one of the risks he dared.

Had it seemed possible, he would have kept even from his mother the secret of his residence at Exeter; but this would have necessitated the establishment of some indirect means of communication with her, a troublesome and uncertain expedient. He shrank from leaving her in ignorance of his whereabouts, and from passing a year or two without knowledge of her condition. And, on the whole, there could not be much danger in this correspondence. The Moxeys, who alone of his friends had ever been connected with Twybridge, were now

absolutely without interests in that quarter. From them he had stolen away, only acquainting Christian at the last moment, in a short letter, with his departure from London. 'It will be a long time before we again see each other—at least, I think so. Don't trouble your head about me. I can't promise to write, and shall be sorry not to hear how things go with you; but may all happen as you wish!' In the same way, he had dealt with Earwaker, except that his letter to Staple Inn was much longer, and contained hints which the philosophic journalist might perchance truly interpret. '"He either fears his fate too much"—you know the old song. I have set out on my life's adventure. I have gone to seek that without which life is no longer worth having. Forgive my shabby treatment of you, old friend. You cannot help me, and your displeasure would be a hindrance in my path. A last piece of counsel: throw overboard the weekly rag, and write for people capable of understanding you.' Earwaker was not at all likely to institute a search; he would accept the situation, and wait with quiet curiosity for its upshot. No doubt he and Moxey would discuss the affair together, and any desire Christian might have to hunt for his vanished comrade would yield before the journalist's surmises. No one else had any serious reason for making inquiries. Probably he might dwell in Devonshire, as long as he chose, without fear of encountering anyone from his old world.

Occasionally—as to-night, under the full moon—he was able to cast off every form of trouble, and rejoice in his seeming liberty. Though every step in the life before him was an uncertainty, an appeal to fortune, his faith in himself grasped strongly at assurance of success. Once more he felt himself a young man, with unwearied energies; he had shaken off the burden of those ten frustrate years, and kept only their harvest of experience. Old in one sense, in another youthful, he had

vast advantages over such men as would henceforth be his competitors—the complex brain, the fiery heart, passion to desire, and skill in attempting. If with such endowment he could not win the prize which most men claim as a mere matter of course, a wife of social instincts correspondent with his own, he must indeed be luckless. But he was not doomed to defeat! Foretaste of triumph urged the current of his blood and inflamed him with exquisite ardour. He sang aloud in the still lanes the hymns of youth and of love; and, when weariness brought him back to his lonely dwelling, he laid his head on the pillow, and slept in dreamless calm.

As for the details of his advance towards the clerical state, he had decided to resume his career at the point where it was interrupted by Andrew Peak. Twice had his education received a check from hostile circumstances: when domestic poverty compelled him to leave school for Mr. Moxey's service, and when shame drove him from Whitelaw College. In reflecting upon his own character and his lot he gave much weight to these irregularities, no doubt with justice. In both cases he was turned aside from the way of natural development and opportunity. He would now complete his academic course by taking the London degree at which he had long ago aimed; the preliminary examination might without difficulty be passed this summer, and next year he might write himself Bachelor of Arts. A return to the studies of boyhood probably accounted in some measure for the frequent gaiety which he attributed to improving health and revived hopes. Everything he undertook was easy to him, and by a pleasant self-deception he made the passing of a school task his augury of success in greater things.

During the spring he was indebted to the Warricombes' friendship for several new acquaintances. A clergyman named Lilywhite, often at the Warricombes' house, made friendly overtures to him; the connection might be a

useful one, and Godwin made the most of it. Mr. Lilywhite was a man of forty—well-read, of scientific tastes, an active pedestrian. Peak had no difficulty in associating with him on amicable terms. With Mrs. Lilywhite, the mother of six children and possessed of many virtues, he presently became a favourite,—she saw in him 'a great deal of quiet moral force.' One or two families of good standing made him welcome at their houses; society is very kind to those who seek its benefits with recognised credentials. The more he saw of these wealthy and tranquil middle-class people, the more fervently did he admire the gracefulness of their existence. He had not set before himself an imaginary ideal; the girls and women were sweet, gentle, perfect in manner, and, within limits, of bright intelligence. He was conscious of benefiting greatly, and not alone in things extrinsic, by the atmosphere of such homes.

Nature's progress towards summer kept him in a mood of healthful enjoyment. From the window of his sitting-room he looked over the opposite houses to Northernhay, the hill where once stood Rougemont Castle, its wooded declivities now fashioned into a public garden. He watched the rooks at their building in the great elms, and was gladdened when the naked branches began to deck themselves, day by day the fresh verdure swelling into soft, graceful outline. In his walks he pried eagerly for the first violet, welcomed the earliest blackthorn blossom; every common flower of field and hedgerow gave him a new, keen pleasure. As was to be expected he found the same impulses strong in Sidwell Warricombe and her sister. Sidwell could tell him of secret spots where the wood-sorrel made haste to flower, or where the white violet breathed its fragrance in security from common pilferers. Here was the safest and pleasantest matter for conversation. He knew that on such topics he could talk agreeably enough, revealing without stress or importunity his tastes, his powers, his attain-

ments. And it seemed to him that Sidwell listened with growing interest. Most certainly her father encouraged his visits to the house, and Mrs. Warricombe behaved to him with increase of suavity.

In the meantime he had purchased a copy of Reusch's *Bibel und Natur*, and had made a translation of some fifty pages. This experiment he submitted to a London publishing house, with proposals for the completion of the work; without much delay there came a civil letter of excuse, and with it the sample returned. Another attempt again met with rejection. This failure did not trouble him. What he really desired was to read through his version of Reusch with Martin Warricombe, and before long he had brought it to pass that Martin requested a perusal of the manuscript as it advanced, which it did but slowly. Godwin durst not endanger his success in the examination by encroaching upon hours of necessary study; his leisure was largely sacrificed to *Bibel und Natur*, and many an evening of calm golden loveliness, when he longed to be amid the fields, passed in vexatious imprisonment. The name of Reusch grew odious to him, and he revenged himself for the hypocrisy of other hours by fierce scorn, cast audibly at this laborious exegetist.

III

It occasionally happens that a woman whose early life has been directed by native silliness and social bias, will submit to a tardy education at the hands of her own children. Thus was it with Mrs. Warricombe.

She came of a race long established in squirearchic dignity amid heaths and woodlands. Her breeding was pure through many generations of the paternal and maternal lines, representative of a physical type, fortified in the males by much companionship with horse and hound, and by the corresponding country pursuits of dowered daughters. At the time of her marriage she had no charms of person more remarkable than rosy comeliness and the symmetry of supple limb. As for the nurture of her mind, it had been intrusted to home-governesses of respectable incapacity. Martin Warricombe married her because she was one of a little circle of girls, much alike as to birth and fortune, with whom he had grown up in familiar communication. Timidity imposed restraints upon him which made his choice almost a matter of accident. As befalls often enough, the betrothal became an accomplished fact whilst he was still doubting whether he desired it or not. When the fervour of early wedlock was outlived, he had no difficulty in accepting as a matter of course that his life's companion should be hopelessly illogical and at heart indifferent to everything but the small graces and substantial comforts of provincial existence. One of the advantages of wealth is that it allows husband

and wife to keep a great deal apart without any show of mutual unkindness, a condition essential to happiness in marriage. Time fostered in them a calm attachment, independent of spiritual sympathy, satisfied with a common regard for domestic honour.

Not that Mrs. Warricombe remained in complete ignorance of her husband's pursuits; social forms would scarcely have allowed this, seeing that she was in constant intercourse, as hostess or guest, with Martin's scientific friends. Of fossils she necessarily knew something. Up to a certain point they amused her; she could talk of ammonites, of brachiopods, and would point a friend's attention to the *Calceola sandalina* which Martin prized so much. The significance of palæontology she dimly apprehended, for in the early days of their union her husband had felt it desirable to explain to her what was meant by geologic time, and how he reconciled his views on that subject with the demands of religious faith. Among the books which he induced her to read were Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise and the works of Hugh Miller. The intellectual result was chaotic, and Mrs. Warricombe settled at last into a comfortable private opinion, that though the record of geology might be trustworthy, that of the Bible was more so. She would admit that there was no impiety in accepting the evidence of nature, but held to a secret conviction that it was safer to believe in Genesis. For anything beyond a quasi-permissible variance from biblical authority as to the age of the world she was quite unprepared, and Martin, in his discretion, imparted to her nothing of the graver doubts which were wont to trouble him.

But as her children grew up, Mrs. Warricombe's mind and temper were insensibly modified by influences which operated through her maternal affections, influences no doubt aided by the progressive spirit of the time. The three boys—Buckland, Maurice, and Louis—were dis-

tinctly of a new generation. It needed some ingenuity to discover their points of kindred with paternal and maternal grandparents; nor even with father and mother had they much in common which observation could readily detect. Sidwell, up to at least her fifteenth year, seemed to present far less change of type. In her Mrs. Warricombe recognised a daughter, and not without solace. But Fanny again was a problematical nature, almost from the cradle. Latest born, she appeared to revive many characteristics of the youthful Buckland, so far as a girl could resemble her brother. It was a strange brood to cluster around Mrs. Warricombe. For many years the mother was kept in alternation between hopes and fears, pride and disapproval, the old hereditary habits of mind, and a new order of ideas which could only be admitted with the utmost slowness. Buckland's Radicalism deeply offended her; she marvelled how such depravity could display itself in a child of hers. Yet in the end her ancestral prejudices so far yielded as to allow of her smiling at sentiments which she once heard with horror. Maurice, whom she loved more tenderly, all but taught her to see the cogency of a syllogism—amiably set forth. And Louis, with his indolent good-nature, laughed her into a tolerance of many things which had moved her indignation. But it was to Sidwell that in the end she owed most. Beneath the surface of ordinary and rather backward girlhood, which discouraged her father's hopes, Sidwell was quietly developing a personality distinguished by the refinement of its ethical motives. Her orthodoxy seemed as unimpeachable as Mrs. Warricombe could desire, yet as she grew into womanhood, a curiosity, which in no way disturbed the tenor of her quietly contented life, led her to examine various forms of religion, ancient and modern, and even systems of philosophy which professed to establish a moral code, independent of supernatural faith. She was not of studious disposition—that is to

say, she had never cared as a schoolgirl to do more mental work than was required of her, and even now it was seldom that she read for more than an hour or two in the day. Her habit was to dip into books, and meditate long on the first points which arrested her thoughts. Of continuous application she seemed incapable. She could read French, but did not attempt to pursue the other languages of which her teachers had given her a smattering. It pleased her best when she could learn from conversation. In this way she obtained some insight into her father's favourite sciences, occasionally making suggestions or inquiries which revealed a subtle if not an acute intelligence.

Little by little Mrs. Warricombe found herself changing places with the daughter whom she had regarded as wholly subject to her direction. Sidwell began to exercise an indeterminate control, the proofs of which were at length manifest in details of her mother's speech and demeanour. An exquisite social tact, an unfailing sincerity of moral judgment, a gentle force which operated as insensibly as the qualities of pure air: these were the points of character to which Mrs. Warricombe owed the humanisation observable when one compared her in 1885 with what she was, say, in 1874, when the sight of Professor Walsh moved her to acrimony, and when she conceived a pique against Professor Gale because the letter P has alphabetical precedence of W. Her limitations were of course the same as ever, and from her sons she had only learnt to be ashamed of announcing them too vehemently. Sidwell it was who had led her to that degree of genuine humility, which is not satisfied with hiding a fault but strives to amend it.

Martin Warricombe himself was not unaffected by the growth about him of young men and maidens who looked upon the world with new eyes, whose world, indeed, was another than that in which he had spent the better part of his life. In his case contact with the young

generation tended to unsettlement, to a troublesome persistency of speculations which he would have preferred to dismiss altogether. At the time of his marriage, and for some years after, he was content to make a broad distinction between those intellectual pursuits which afforded him rather a liberal amusement than the pleasures of earnest study and the questions of metaphysical faith which concerned his heart and conscience. His native prejudices were almost as strong, and much the same, as those of his wife; but with the vagueness of emotional logic natural to his constitution, he satisfied himself that, by conceding a few inessential points, he left himself at liberty to follow the scientific movements of the day without damage to his religious convictions. The tolerant smile so frequently on his countenance was directed as often in the one quarter as in the other. Now it signified a gentle reproof of those men of science who, like Professor Walsh, 'went too far,' whose zeal for knowledge led them 'to forget the source of all true enlightenment'; now it expressed a forbearing sympathy with such as erred in the opposite direction, who were 'too literal in their interpretation of the sacred volume.' Amiable as the smile was, it betrayed weakness, and at moments Martin became unpleasantly conscious of indisposition to examine his own mind on certain points. His life, indeed, was one of debate postponed. As the realm of science extended, as his intercourse with men who frankly avowed their 'infidelity' grew more frequent, he ever and again said to himself that, one of these days, he must sit down and 'have it out' in a solemn self-searching. But for the most part he got on very well amid his inconsistencies. Religious faith has rarely any connection with reasoning. Martin believed because he believed, and avoided the impact of disagreeable arguments because he wished to do so.

The bent of his mind was anything but polemical; he

cared not to spend time even over those authors whose attacks on the outposts of science, or whose elaborate reconcilements of old and new, might have afforded him some support. On the other hand, he altogether lacked that breadth of intellect which seeks to comprehend all the results of speculation, to discern their tendency, to derive from them a consistent theory of the nature of things. Though a man be well versed in a science such as palæontology it does not follow that he will view it in its philosophical relations. Martin had kept himself informed of all the facts appertaining to his study which the age brought forth, but without developing the new modes of mental life requisite for the recognition of all that such facts involved. The theories of evolution he did not venture openly to resist, but his acceptance of them was so half-hearted that practically he made no use of their teaching. He was no man of science, but an idler among the wonders which science uses for her own purposes.

He regarded with surprise and anxiety the tendencies early manifested in his son Buckland. Could he have had his way the lad would have grown up with an impossible combination of qualities, blending the enthusiasm of modern research with a spirit of expansive teleology. Whilst Buckland was still of boyish years, the father treated with bantering good-humour such outbreaks of irreverence as came immediately under his notice, weakly abstaining from any attempt at direct argument or influence. But, at a later time, there took place serious and painful discussions, and only when the young man had rubbed off his edges in the world's highways could Martin forget that stage of most unwelcome conflict.

At the death of his younger boy, Maurice, he suffered a blow which had results more abiding than the melancholy wherewith for a year or two his genial nature was overshadowed. From that day onwards he was

never wholly at ease among the pursuits which had been wont to afford him an unfailing resource against whatever troubles. He could no longer accept and disregard, in a spirit of cheerful faith, those difficulties science was perpetually throwing in his way. The old smile of kindly tolerance had still its twofold meaning, but it was more evidently a disguise of indecision, and not seldom touched with sadness. Martin's life was still one of postponed debate, but he could not regard the day when conclusions would be demanded of him as indefinitely remote. Desiring to dwell in the familiar temporary abode, his structure of incongruities and facile reconcilements, he found it no longer weather-proof. The times were shaking his position with earthquake after earthquake. His sons (for he suspected that Louis was hardly less emancipated than Buckland) stood far aloof from him, and must in private feel contemptuous of his old-fashioned beliefs. In Sidwell, however, he had a companion more and more indispensable, and he could not imagine that *her* faith would ever give way before the invading spirit of agnosticism. Happily she was no mere pietist. Though he did not quite understand her attitude towards Christianity, he felt assured that Sidwell had thought deeply and earnestly of religion in all its aspects, and it was a solace to know that she found no difficulty in recognising the large claims of science. For all this, he could not deliberately seek her confidence, or invite her to a discussion of religious subjects. Some day, no doubt, a talk of that kind would begin naturally between them, and so strong was his instinctive faith in Sidwell that he looked forward to this future communing as to a certain hope of peace.

That a figure such as Godwin Peak, a young man of vigorous intellect, preparing to devote his life to the old religion, should excite Mr. Warricombe's interest was of course to be anticipated; and it seemed probable

enough that Peak, exerting all the force of his character and aided by circumstances, might before long convert this advantage to a means of ascendency over the less self-reliant nature. But here was no instance of a dotard becoming the easy prey of a scientific Tartufe. Martin's intellect had suffered no decay. His hale features and dignified bearing expressed the mind which was ripened by sixty years of pleasurable activity, and which was learning to regard with steadier view the problems it had hitherto shirked. He could not change the direction nature had given to his thoughts, and prepossession would in some degree obscure his judgment where the merits and trustworthiness of a man in Peak's circumstances called for scrutiny; but self-respect guarded him against vulgar artifices, and a fine sensibility made it improbable that he would become the victim of any man in whom base motives predominated.

Left to his own impulses, he would still have proceeded with all caution in his offers of friendly services to Peak. A letter of carefully-worded admonition, which he received from his son, apprising him of Peak's resolve to transfer himself to Exeter, scarcely affected his behaviour when the young man appeared. It was but natural—he argued—that Buckland should look askance on a case of 'conversion'; for his own part, he understood that such a step might be prompted by interest, but he found it difficult to believe that to a man in Peak's position, the Church would offer temptation thus coercive. Nor could he discern in the candidate for a curacy any mark of dishonourable purpose. Faults, no doubt, were observable, among them a tendency to spiritual pride—which seemed (Martin could admit) an argument for, rather than against, his sincerity. The progress of acquaintance decidedly confirmed his favourable impressions; they were supported by the remarks of those among his friends to whom Peak presently became known.

It was not until Whitsuntide of the next year, when the student had been living nearly five months at Exeter, that Buckland again came down to visit his relatives. On the evening of his arrival, chancing to be alone with Sidwell, he asked her if Peak had been to the house lately.

'Not many days ago,' replied his sister, 'he lunched with us, and then sat with father for some time.'

'Does he come often?'

'Not very often. He is translating a German book which interests father very much.'

'Oh, what book?'

'I don't know. Father has only mentioned it in that way.'

They were in a little room sacred to the two girls, very daintily furnished and fragrant of sweet-brier, which Sidwell loved so much that, when the season allowed it, she often wore a little spray of it at her girdle. Buckland opened a book on the table, and, on seeing the title, exclaimed with a disparaging laugh:

'I can't get out of the way of this fellow M'Naughten! Wherever I go, there he lies about on the tables and chairs. I should have thought he was thoroughly smashed by an article that came out in the *Critical* last year.'

Sidwell smiled, evidently in no way offended.

'That article could "smash" nobody,' she made answer. 'It was too violent; it overshot the mark.'

'Not a bit of it!—So you read it, eh? You're beginning to read, are you?'

'In my humble way, Buckland.'

'M'Naughten, among other things. Humble enough, that, I admit.'

'I am not a great admirer of M'Naughten,' returned his sister, with a look of amusement.

'No? I congratulate you.—I wonder what Peak thinks of the book?'

'I really don't know.'

'Then let me ask another question. What do you think of Peak?'

Sidwell regarded him with quiet reflectiveness.

'I feel,' she said, 'that I don't know him very well yet. He is certainly interesting.'

'Yes, he is. Does he impress you as the kind of man likely to make a good clergyman?'

'I don't see any reason why he should not.'

Her brother mused, with wrinkles of dissatisfaction on his brow.

'Father gets to like him, you say?'

'Yes, I think father likes him.'

'Well, I suppose it's all right.'

'All right?'

'It's the most astounding thing that ever came under my observation,' exclaimed Buckland, walking away and then returning.

'That Mr. Peak should be studying for the Church?'

'Yes.'

'But do reflect more modestly!' urged Sidwell, with something that was not quite archness, though as near it as her habits of tone and feature would allow. 'Why should you refuse to admit an error in your own way of looking at things? Wouldn't it be better to take this as a proof that intellect isn't necessarily at war with Christianity?'

'I never stated it so broadly as that,' returned her brother, with impatience. 'But I should certainly have maintained that *Peak's* intellect was necessarily in that position.'

'And you see how wrong you would have been,' remarked the girl, softly.

'Well—I don't know.'

'You don't know?'

'I mean that I can't acknowledge what I can't understand.'

'Then do try to understand, Buckland!—Have you ever put aside your prejudice for a moment to inquire what our religion really means? Not once, I think —at all events, not since you reached years of discretion.'

'Allow me to inform you that I studied the question thoroughly at Cambridge.'

'Yes, yes; but that was in your boyhood.'

'And when does manhood begin?'

'At different times in different persons. In your case it was late.'

Buckland laughed. He was considering a rejoinder, when they were interrupted by the appearance of Fanny, who asked at once:

'Shall you go to see Mr. Peak this evening, Buckland?'

'I'm in no hurry,' was the abrupt reply.

The girl hesitated.

'Let us all have a drive together—with Mr. Peak, I mean—like when you were here last.'

'We'll see about it.'

Buckland went slowly from the room.

Late the same evening he sat with his father in the study. Mr. Warricombe knew not the solace of tobacco, and his son, though never quite at ease without pipe or cigar, denied himself in this room, with the result that he shifted frequently upon his chair and fell into many awkward postures.

'And how does Peak impress you?' he inquired, when the subject he most wished to converse upon had been postponed to many others. It was clear that Martin would not himself broach it.

'Not disagreeably,' was the reply, with a look of frankness, perhaps over-emphasised.

'What is he doing? I have only heard from him once since he came down, and he had very little to say about himself.'

'I understand that he proposes to take the London B.A.'

'Oh, then, he never did that? Has he unbosomed himself to you about his affairs of old time?'

'No. Such confidences are hardly called for.'

'Speaking plainly, father, you don't feel any uneasiness?'

Martin deliberated, fingering the while an engraved stone which hung upon his watch-guard. He was at a disadvantage in this conversation. Aware that Buckland regarded the circumstances of Peak's sojourn in the neighbourhood with feelings allied to contempt, he could neither adopt the tone of easy confidence natural to him on other occasions of difference in opinion, nor express himself with the coldness which would have obliged his son to quit the subject.

'Perhaps you had better tell me,' he replied, 'whether *you* are really uneasy.'

It was impossible for Buckland to answer as his mind prompted. He could not without offence declare that no young man of brains now adopted a clerical career with pure intentions, yet such was his sincere belief. Made tolerant in many directions by the cultivation of his shrewdness, he was hopelessly biassed in judgment as soon as his anti-religious prejudice came into play—a point of strong resemblance between him and Peak. After fidgeting for a moment, he exclaimed:

'Yes, I am; but I can't be sure that there's any cause for it.'

'Let us come to matters of fact,' said Mr. Warricombe, showing that he was not sorry to discuss this side of the affair. 'I suppose there is no doubt that Peak had a position till lately at the place he speaks of?'

'No doubt whatever. I have taken pains to ascertain that. His account of himself, so far, is strictly true.'

Martin smiled, with satisfaction he did not care to disguise.

'Have you met some acquaintance of his?'

'Well,' answered Buckland, changing his position, 'I went to work in rather an underhand way, perhaps,—but the results are satisfactory. No, I haven't come across any of his friends, but I happened to hear not long ago that he was on intimate terms with some journalists.'

His father laughed.

'Anything compromising in that association, Buckland?'

'I don't say that—though the fellows I speak of are hot Radicals.'

'Though?'

'I mean,' replied the young man, with his shrewder smile, 'that they are not exactly the companions a theological student would select.'

'I understand. Possibly he has journalised a little himself?'

'That I can't say, though I should have thought it likely enough. I might, of course, find out much more about him, but it seemed to me that to have assurance of his truthfulness in that one respect was enough for the present.'

'Do you mean, Buckland,' asked his father, gravely, 'that you have been setting secret police at work?'

'Well, yes. I thought it the least objectionable way of getting information.'

Martin compressed his lips and looked disapproval.

'I really can't see that such extreme measures were demanded. Come, come; what is all this about? Do you suspect him of planning burglaries? That was an ill-judged step, Buckland; decidedly ill-judged. I said just now that Peak impressed me by no means disagreeably. Now I will add that I am convinced of his good faith—as sure of it as I am of his remarkable talents and aptitude for the profession he aims at. In spite of your extraordinary distrust, I can't feel a moment's doubt of

his honour. Why, I could have told you myself that he has known Radical journalists. He mentioned it the other day, and explained how far his sympathy went with that kind of thing. No, no; that was hardly permissible, Buckland.'

The young man had no difficulty in bowing to his father's reproof when the point at issue was one of gentlemanly behaviour.

'I admit it,' he replied. 'I wish I had gone to Rotherhithe and made simple inquiries in my own name. That, all things considered, I might have allowed myself; at all events, I shouldn't have been at ease without getting that assurance. If Peak had heard, and had said to me, "What the deuce do you mean?" I should have told him plainly, what I have strongly hinted to him already, that I don't understand what he is doing in this galley.'

'And have placed yourself in a position not easy to define.'

'No doubt.'

'All this arises, my boy,' resumed Martin, in a tone of grave kindness, 'from your strange inability to grant that on certain matters you may be wholly misled.'

'It does.'

'Well, well; that is forbidden ground. But do try to be less narrow. Are you unable then to meet Peak in a friendly way?'

'Oh, by no means! It seems more than likely that I have wronged him.'

'Well said! Keep your mind open. I marvel at the dogmatism of men who are set on overthrowing dogma. Such a position is so strangely unphilosophic that I don't know how a fellow of your brains can hold it for a moment. If I were not afraid of angering you,' Martin added, in his pleasantest tone, 'I would quote the Master of Trinity.'

'A capital epigram, but it is repeated too often.'