

SAMUEL WARREN

TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR.
VOLUME 3

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CHAPTER I

There had not been a contested election at Yatton, till the present one between Mr. Delamere and Mr. Titmouse, for a long series of years; its two members having been, till then, owing to the smallness of the constituency, their comparative unanimity of political sentiment, and the dominant influence of the Yatton family, returned, pretty nearly, as a matter of course. When, therefore, quiet little Yatton (for such it was, albeit politically enlarged by the new Act) became the scene of so sudden and hot a contest as that which I am going to describe, and under such novel and exciting circumstances, it seemed in a manner quite beside itself. The walls were everywhere covered with glaring placards—red, blue, green, yellow, white, purple—judiciously designed to stimulate the electors into a calm and intelligent exercise of their important functions. Here are the inscriptions upon a few of them:—

"Vote for Titmouse, the Man of the People!"

"Titmouse and Civil and Religious Liberty!"

"Titmouse and Cheap Ale!"

"Titmouse and Purity of Election!"

"Titmouse and Negro Emancipation!"

"Vote for Titmouse and No Mistake!"

"Titmouse and Quarterly Parliaments, Vote by Ballot,
and Universal Suffrage!"

['Twas thus that the name of my little friend, like that of many others of his species, was attached to great public questions, somewhat after the manner of a kettle tied to a dog's tail!]

But others were to be met with of a more elaborate and impressive character.

"Electors of Yatton!! Be not deceived!!! The enemy is among you! Do you wish to reap the full fruits of the glorious boon lately conferred on you? Rush to the poll, and Vote for Titmouse. Do you wish to see them torn from your grasp by a selfish and arrogant aristocracy? *Get a pair of handcuffs*, and go and vote for—Mr. Delamere!!!!

"Quære. If a *certain Boroughmongering Peer* should command his son to vote for the REPEAL of the Great Bill which enfranchised the inhabitants of Grilston, Succombe, and Warkleigh—would not that son obey him? *How would this be*, Mr. Delamere?"

'Twas not, to give the devil his due, Mr. Titmouse's fault that his placards did not contain many vulgar personalities against his opponent; but owing entirely to Mr. Gammon's want of the requisite wit and spirit. That gentleman felt, in fact, that such a candidate as Mr. Delamere afforded but few salient points of

in immense gilt letters. The walls and windows of each were, moreover, covered with varicolored placards—but I shall not weary the reader by attempting to describe in detail the humors of a country election, which have employed, already, thousands of able and graphic pens and pencils. Surely, what else are they than the sticks and straws which float along the eddying and roughened surface? The whole mass of water is moving along; and our object should be rather to discover its depth, force, and direction. Principles are in conflict; the fate of the nation is, in a measure, involved in a popular election. Such matters as I have alluded to, are but the laughable devices resorted to, in order to delude the grinning vulgar, and disguise the movements of those calm and calculating persons who are playing the deep game of politics. Under cover of a ludicrous hubbub, might be observed, for instance, in this little borough—subject to certain petty local disturbing forces—a deadly struggle for ascendancy between the monarchical and the democratical principle; between rampant innovation and obstinate immobility; between the wealthy few and the many poor; between property and ability. If anything like this *were* the case, how many of the electors—new or old—of Yatton—(who may perhaps be compared to chessmen in the hands of long-headed players)—knew any more about the matter than a private soldier at Waterloo thought of, comprehended, or appreciated, the complicated and mighty schemes of a Wellington or Napoleon, whose bidding he was doing, or of the prodigious consequences attached to the success or failure

of either? Some people talk vehemently about the "paramount necessity for educating the lower classes." It is, indeed, of incalculable importance that they should be instructed; but is it not of still greater importance that the UPPER CLASSES should be instructed, if only on account of their being the holders of that PROPERTY, in greater or less proportions, with its inseparable power and influence, which, directly or indirectly, determines all the movements of the state? Could universal suffrage be supposed to exist consistently with the preservation of social order—of society—it would still be impossible to extirpate or effectually to counteract the influence of property, in whose hands soever it might be placed. Pluck out of the vilest of the bellowing bullies surrounding the hustings, him (of course a non-elect) most conspicuous for his insolence and brutality; imagine him suddenly or gradually become the owner of a great, or a small property, with the influence it gives him over customers, tenants, dependents: do you suppose that he will not at once, either gently or roughly, according to his temper, begin to exercise his power, (that which is so dear to the heart of man,) by dictating the exercise of the elective franchise on behalf of those political opinions which he may happen to favor? Is not THIS the man to instruct, and the better in proportion to the extent of his real influence? Except in those brief and horrid intervals of social convulsion, in which [Greek: dika kai panta palin strepetai], however popularized and extended may apparently be the system of electing parliamentary representatives, those who

really return members to Parliament will—whether themselves actually electors or not, and whether directly or indirectly—be the holders of property, in villages, in towns, in cities, in boroughs and counties. The influence of property is, in truth, inevitable as that of gravitation: and losing sight of this, people may split their heads in vain, and chatter till the arrival of the Greek kalends, about extending farther and farther the elective franchise, shortening Parliaments, and voting by ballot. Whether it *ought* to be so, signifies little, when we know that it is, and *will* be so:—but now it is time to return to the Yatton election; and if I be but this once forgiven, I will not diverge again in a hurry from the main course of events.

Lord De la Zouch, who resided some eight or ten miles from Yatton, soon discovered, as also did sundry other able and experienced electioneering friends, taking an interest in his son's success, that the movements of the enemy were directed by a strong and skilful hand; and which never could be that of—*Mr. Titmouse*. However slight and faint may be the hopes of success with which a man enters into an interesting and important undertaking, they very soon begin to increase and brighten with eager action; and it was so with Lord De la Zouch. He was not long in tracing the powerful, but cautiously concealed agency of our friend Mr. Gammon. One or two such dangerous and artful snares were detected by the watchful and practised eyes of his Lordship and his friends, just in time to prevent Delamere from being seriously compromised, as

satisfied them that good Mr. Parkinson, with all his bustle, energy, and heartiness, was dreadfully overmatched by his astute opponent, Mr. Gammon; and that in the hands of Mr. Parkinson, the contest would become, so far as Delamere was concerned, a painful and ridiculous farce. A council of war, therefore, was called at Fotheringham Castle; the result of which was an express being sent off to London, to bring down immediately a first-rate electioneering agent—Mr. Crafty—and place in his hands the entire management of Mr. Delamere's cause. Mr. Crafty was between forty and forty-five years old. His figure, of middle height, was very spare. He was always dressed in a plain suit of black, with white neckerchief, and no shirt-collar; yet no one that knew the world could mistake him for a dissenting minister!—He was very calm and phlegmatic in his manner and movements—there was not a particle of passion or feeling in his composition. He was a mere *thinking machine*, in exquisite order. He was of marvellous few words. His face was thin and angular. His chin and temples formed an isosceles triangle; his chin being very peaked, and his forehead broad. His hair was dark, and cut almost as close as that of a foot-soldier—and this it was which helped to give his countenance that expression, both quaint and unaffected, which, once observed, was not likely to be soon forgotten. His eye was blue, and intensely cold and bright—his complexion fresh; he had no whiskers; there was a touch of sarcasm about the corners of his mouth. Everything about him bespoke a man cold, cautious, acute, matter-of-fact.

"*Business*" was written all over his face. He had devoted himself to electioneering tactics; and he might be said to have reduced them, indeed, to a science. No one could say whether he was of Whig or Tory politics; my impression is, that he cared not a straw for either.—This, then, was the man who was to be pitted against Gammon: and these two gentlemen may perhaps be looked upon as the real *players*, whose *backers* were—Delamere and Titmouse.

Mr. Crafty soon made his appearance at Yatton; and seemed, in a manner, to have dropped into Mr. Delamere's committee-room from the clouds. His presence did not appear *quite* unexpected; yet no one seemed to know why, whence, or at whose instance he had come. He never went near Fotheringham, nor ever mentioned the name of its noble owner, who (between ourselves) contemplated the accession of Crafty with feelings of calm exultation and confidence. Mr. Delamere's "*committee*" was instantly disbanded, and no new one named. In fact, *there was to be none at all*; and Mr. Titmouse's friends were, for a while, led to believe that the enemy were already beginning to beat a retreat. A quiet banker at Grilston, and a hard-headed land-surveyor and agent of the same place, were alone apparently taken into Mr. Crafty's confidence. Mr. Parkinson, even, was sent to the right about; and his rising pique and anger were suddenly quelled by the steadfast and significant look with which Mr. Crafty observed, in dismissing him—"It won't do." Adjoining, and opening into the large room in which, till Mr. Crafty's arrival,

Mr. Delamere's committee had been sitting, was a very small one; and in it Mr. Crafty established his headquarters. He came, accompanied—though no one for a while knew it—by three of his familiars; right trusty persons, in sooth! One of them always sat on a chair, at the outside of the door leading into Mr. Crafty's room, over which he kept guard as a sentinel. The other two disposed themselves according to orders. Mr. Gammon soon *felt* the presence of his secret and formidable opponent, in the total change—the quiet system—that became all of a sudden apparent in the enemy's tactics: his watchful eye and quick perception detected, here and there, the faint vanishing traces of a sly and stealthy foot—the evidences of experienced skill; and one morning early he caught a glimpse of Mr. Crafty, (with whose name and fame he was familiar,) and returned home with a grave consciousness that the contest had become one exceedingly serious; that—so to speak—he must instantly spread out every stitch of canvas to overtake the enemy. In short, he made up his mind for mischief, as soon as he gave Lord De la Zouch credit for being *resolved to win*; and felt the necessity for acting with equal caution and decision. During that day he obtained an advance from a neighboring banker of two thousand pounds, on the security of a deposit of a portion of the title-deeds of the Yatton property. He had, indeed, occasion for great resources, personal as well as pecuniary; for instance—he had reason to believe that the enemy had already penetrated to his stronghold, the Quaint Club at Grilston, (for that was the name

of the club into which the one hundred and nine new voters at Grilston had formed themselves.) Though Gammon had agreed, after much negotiation, to buy them at the very liberal sum of ten pounds a-head, he had reason, shortly after the arrival of Mr. Crafty, to believe that they had been tampered with; for, as he was late one evening moodily walking up to the Hall, he overtook, in the park, a man whose person he did not at first recognize in the darkness, but whose fearfully significant motions soon insured him recognition. It was, in fact, the man who had hitherto treated with him on behalf of the Quaint Club; one Benjamin Bran, (commonly called *Ben Bran*,) a squat, bow-legged baker of Grilston. He uttered not a word, nor did Mr. Gammon; but, on being recognized, simply held up to that gentleman his two outstretched hands, *twice*, with a significant and inquiring look. Gammon gazed at him for a moment with fury; and muttering—"to-morrow—here—same hour!" hurried on to the Hall in a state of the utmost perplexity and alarm. The dilemma in which he felt himself, kept him awake half the night! When once, indeed, you come to *this sort of work*, you are apt to give your opponent credit for deeper manœuvring than you can at the time fully appreciate; and the fate of the battle may soon be rendered really doubtful. Then, everything—inclusive of serious consequences, extending far beyond the mere result of the election—depends upon the skill, temper, and experience of the real and responsible directors of the election. Was Ben Bran's appearance a move on the part of Crafty? Had that gentleman

bought him over and converted him into a spy—was he now playing the traitor? Or was the purse of Titmouse to be *bonâ fide* measured against that of Lord De la Zouch? *That would be dreadful!* Gammon felt (to compare him for a moment to an animal with which he had some kindred qualities) much like a cat on a very high wall, topped with broken glass, afraid to stir in any direction, and yet unable to continue where he was. While the two candidates, attended by their sounding bands, and civil and smiling friends, were making their public demonstrations and canvassing the electors, as if thereby they exercised the slightest possible influence over one single voter on either side; as I have already intimated, the battle was being fought by two calm and crafty heads, in two snug and quiet little rooms in Grilston—one at the Hare and Hounds, the other at the Woodlouse Inn; of course, I mean Mr. Crafty, and Mr. Gammon. The former within a very few hours saw that the issue of the struggle lay with the Quaint Club; and from one of his trusty emissaries—a man whom no one ever saw in communication with him, who was a mere stranger in Grilston, indifferent as to the result of the election, but delighting in its frolics; who was peculiarly apt to get sooner drunk than any one he drank with—Mr. Crafty ascertained, that though the enlightened members of the Quaint Club had certainly formed a predilection for the principles of Mr. Titmouse, yet they possessed a candor which disposed them to hear all that might be advanced in favor of the principles of his opponent.

Mr. Crafty's first step was to ascertain what had been already done or attempted on behalf of Mr. Delamere, and also of Mr. Titmouse; then the exact number of the voters, whom he carefully classified. He found that there were exactly four hundred who might be expected to poll; the new electors amounting in number to one hundred and sixty, the old ones to two hundred and forty, and principally scot-and-lot voters. In due time he ascertained, that of the former class only *thirty-six* could be relied upon for Mr. Delamere. The tenants of the Yatton property within the borough amounted to one hundred and fifteen. They had been canvassed by Mr. Delamere and his friends with great delicacy; and twenty-three of them had voluntarily pledged themselves to vote for him, and risk all consequences; intimating that they hated and despised their new landlord as much as they had loved their old one, whose principles they understood to be those of Mr. Delamere. Then there remained a class of "*accessibles*," (to adopt the significant language of Mr. Crafty,) in number one hundred and twenty-five. These were persons principally resident in and near Yatton, subject undoubtedly to strong and direct influence on the part of Mr. Titmouse, but still not absolutely at his command. Of these no fewer than seventy had pledged themselves in favor of Mr. Delamere; and, in short, thus stood Mr. Crafty's calculations as to the probable force on both sides:—

DELAMERE.

TITMOUSE.

| | | | |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| New Voters | 36 | New Voters— | |
| Yatton Tenants | 23 | <i>Quaint Club</i> | 109 |
| Accessibles | 70 | Others | 21 |
| | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| | 129 | | 130 |
| | | Tenants | 92 |
| | | Accessibles | 35 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | | 257 |

Now, of the class of *accessibles*, twenty remained yet unpledged, and open to conviction; and, moreover, both parties had good ground for believing that they would *all* be convinced *one way*—*i. e.* towards either Mr. Titmouse or Mr. Delamere. Now, if the Quaint Club could be in any way detached from Mr. Titmouse, it would leave him with a majority of *seventeen*, only, over Mr. Delamere; and then, if by any means the twenty accessibles could be secured for Mr. Delamere, he would be placed in a majority of three over his opponent. Whichever way *they* went, however, it was plain that the Quaint Club held the election in their own hands, and intended to keep it so. Gammon's calculations differed but slightly from those of Crafty; and thenceforth both directed their best energies towards the same point, the Quaint Club—going on all the while with undiminished vigor and assiduity with their canvass, as the best mode of diverting attention from their important movements, and satisfying the public that the only weapons with which the fight was to be won were—bows, smiles, civil speeches, placards, squibs, banners, and bands of music. Mr. Crafty had received

a splendid sum for his services from Lord De la Zouch; but on the first distinct and peremptory intimation from his Lordship, being conveyed to him through Mr. Delamere, that there was to be, *bonâ fide*, no bribery—and that the only funds placed at his disposal were those sufficient for the *legitimate* expenses of the election—he smiled rather bitterly, and sent off a secret express to Fotheringham, to ascertain *for what* his services had been engaged—since what was the use of going to Waterloo *without powder*?—The answer he received was laconic enough, and verbatim as follows:—

"No intimidation; no treating; no bribery; *manœuvre* as skilfully as you can; *and watch the enemy night and day*, so that the close of the poll may not be the close of the election, nor the victor there, the sitting member."

To the novel, arduous, and cheerless duty, defined by this despatch from headquarters, Mr. Crafty immediately addressed all his energies; and, after carefully reconnoitring his position, unpromising as it was, he did not *despair* of success. All his own voters had been gained, upon the whole, fairly. The thirty-six new ones had been undoubtedly under considerable *influence*, of an almost inevitable kind indeed—inasmuch as they consisted of persons principally employed in the way of business by Lord De la Zouch, and by many of his friends and neighbors, all of whom were of his Lordship's way of political thinking. Every one of the twenty-three tenants had given a spontaneous and cordial promise; and the seventy "accessibles" had been

gained, after a very earnest and persevering canvass, by Mr. Delamere, in company with others who had a pretty decisive, but still a legitimate influence over them. The remaining twenty might, possibly, though not probably, be secured by equally unobjectionable means. That being the state of things with Delamere, how stood matters with Mr. Titmouse? First and foremost, the Quaint Club had been bought at ten pounds a-head, by Gammon—that was all certain. Crafty would also have bought them like a flock of sheep, had he been allowed, and would have managed matters most effectually and secretly; yet not more so than he found Mr. Gammon had succeeded in doing; at all events, as far as that gentleman himself, personally, was concerned. In fact, he had foiled Mr. Crafty, when that astute person looked about in search of legal evidence of what had been done. Still, however, he did not despair of being able to perform a series manœuvres which should secure one of the ends he most wished, in respect even of the Quaint Club. With equal good intentions, but actuated by a *zeal that was not according to knowledge*, some of Mr. Gammon's coadjutors had not imitated his circumspection. Quite unknown to him, one or two of them had most fearfully committed him, themselves, and Mr. Titmouse; giving Mr. Gammon such accounts of their doings as should serve only to secure his applause for their tact and success. Before Mr. Crafty, however, they stood detected as blundering novices in the art of electioneering. A small tinker and brazier at Warkleigh had received, with a wink, ten pounds from *a member*

of Mr. Titmouse's committee! in payment of an old outstanding account—Heaven save the mark!—delivered in by him, three years before, for mending pots, kettles, and sauce-pans, in the time of—the Aubreys! The wife of a tailor at Grilston received the same sum for a fine tomcat, which was a natural curiosity, since it could wink each eye separately and successively. A third worthy and independent voter was reminded that he had lent the applicant for his vote ten pounds several years before, and which that gentleman now took shame to himself, as he paid the amount, for having so long allowed to remain unpaid. Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, with superior astuteness, gave three pounds a-piece to three little boys, sons of a voter, whose workshop overlooked Messrs. Bloodsucks' back offices, on condition that they would desist from their trick of standing and putting their thumbs to their noses and extending their fingers towards him, as he sat in his office, and which had really become an insupportable nuisance. Here was, therefore, a *valuable consideration* for the payment, and bribery was out of the question! Such are samples of the ingenious devices which had been resorted to, in order to secure some thirty or forty votes! In short, Mr. Crafty caught them tripping in at least eleven clear, unquestionable cases of bribery, each supported by unimpeachable evidence, and each sufficing to avoid the election, to disqualify Mr. Titmouse from sitting in that Parliament for Yatton, and to subject both him and his agents to a ruinous amount of penalties. Then, again, there were clear indications either of a disposition to set at

defiance the stringent provisions of the law against TREATING, or of an ignorance of their existence. And as for *freedom* of election, scarcely ten of his tenants gave him a willing vote, or otherwise than upon compulsion, and after threats of raised rents or expulsion from farms. Tied as were Mr. Crafty's hands, the Quaint Club became a perfect eyesore to him. He found means, however, to open a secret and confidential communication with them, and resolved to hold out to them dazzling but indistinct hopes of pecuniary advantage from the regions of Fotheringham. His emissary soon got hold of the redoubtable Ben Bran, who, truth to say, had long been on the look-out for indications of the desired sort, from the other side. As Bran was late one evening walking slowly alone along the high-road leading to York, he was accosted by a genteel-looking person, who spoke in a low tone, and whom Bran now recollected to have seen, or spoken to, before. "Can you tell me where lies the gold mine?" said the stranger; "at Fotheringham, or Yatton?"—and the speaker looked round, apprehensive of being overheard. Ben pricked up his ears, and soon got into conversation with the mysterious stranger; in the course of which the latter threw out, in a very significant manner, that "a certain peer could never be supposed to send a certain near relative into the field, in order that that relative might be beaten, ... and especially for want of a few pounds; and besides, my friend, when only ...—eh?—...—*the other side*"—

"Why, who are you? Where do you come from?" inquired

Ben, with a violent start.

"Dropped out of the—*moon*," was the quiet and smiling answer.

"Then I must say they know a precious deal," replied Ben, after a troubled pause, "up there, of what's going on down here."

"To be sure, everything; everything!"... Here the stranger told Ben the precise sum which the club had received from Mr. Gammon.

"Are we both—gentlemen?" inquired the stranger, earnestly.

"Y—e—e—s, I hope so, sir," replied Ben Bran, hesitatingly.

"And men of business—men of our word?"

"Honor among thieves—ay, ay," answered Ben, in a still lower tone, and very eagerly.

"Then let you and me meet *alone*, this time to-morrow, at Darkling Edge; and by that time, do you see, turn this over in your mind," here the stranger twice held up both his hands, with outstretched thumbs and fingers. "*Sure* we understand each other?" he added. Ben nodded, and they were presently out of sight of each other. The stranger immediately pulled off his green spectacles, and also a pair of gray whiskers, and put both of them into his pocket. If any one attempted to *dog* him, he must have been led a pretty round! 'Twas in consequence of this interview that Ben made the application to Gammon, which had so disturbed him, and which has been already described. And to return to our friend: what was he to do? On entering the library at the Hall, he opened a secret drawer in his desk, and took out

a thin slip of paper which he had deposited there that morning, it having been then received by him from town, marked "*Private and Confidential*," and franked "Blossom and Box." 'Twas but a line, and written in a bold hand, but in evident haste; for it had in fact been penned by Lord Blossom and Box while he was sitting in the Court of Chancery. This is a copy of it:—

"The election *must* be won. You will hear from E— by this post. Don't address any note to *me*.

"B. and B."

With this great man, Lord Chancellor Blossom and Box, when plain Mr. Quicksilver, Mr. Gammon had had a pretty familiar acquaintance, as the reader may easily suppose; and had a natural desire to acquit himself creditably in the eyes of so distinguished and powerful a personage. Gammon had volunteered an assurance to his Lordship, shortly before leaving town, that the election was safe, and in his (Gammon's) hands; guess, then, his chagrin and fury at finding the systematic and determined opposition which had suddenly sprung up against him; and the intensity of his desire to defeat it. And the more anxious he was on this score, the more vividly he perceived the necessity of acting with a caution which should insure real ultimate success, instead of a mere noisy and temporary triumph, which should be afterwards converted into most galling, disgraceful, and public defeat. The more that Gammon reflected on the sudden but determined manner in which Lord De la Zouch had entered into the contest, the more confident he became that

his Lordship had an important ultimate object to secure; and that he had at command immense means of every description, Gammon but too well knew, in common with all the world. Was, for instance, Mr. Crafty brought down, at an enormous expense, for nothing? What the deuce were the Quaint Club about? Was ever anything so monstrous heard of—ten pounds a man actually received—the bargain finally struck—and now their original demand suddenly and peremptorily doubled? Venal miscreants! Were his miscreants! Were his opponents really outbidding him, or laying a deep plan for entrapping him into an act of wholesale bribery? In short, were the Quaint Club now actuated by avarice, or by treachery? Again and again did he go over his list of promises; having marked the *favorable, hostile, neutral, doubtful*, from a table as accurately compiled and classified as that of Mr. Crafty. Like his wily and practised opponent, also, Gammon intrusted his principal movements to scarce a soul of those who were engaged with him; fearing, indeed, though *then* with no definite grounds, that Messrs. Mudflint, Woodlouse, Centipede, Bloodsuck, and Going Gone, were already too deep in the secrets of the election. According to *his* calculations, supposing all his promises to stand, Titmouse was, independently of the Quaint Club, and some eighteen or twenty others whom he had set down as "*to be had*"—only *twenty-five* a-head of Delamere; thus making a difference of eight only between Gammon's reckoning, and that of Crafty. Of course, therefore, that cursed Quaint Club had it all their own way; and how to jockey them, was

a problem which well-nigh split his head. He gave Lord De la Zouch credit for doing all that he—Gammon—would do, to win the election; and believed him, therefore, capable of buying over any number of the club, to turn king's evidence against their *original* benefactor. The Bloodsucks assured him that the club were all good men and true—stanch—game to the backbone; but Gammon had obtained some information as to the political sentiments of several of the members, before they had acquired the new franchise, and become banded into so sudden and formidable a confederacy, which led him to speculate rather apprehensively on the effects which might follow any bold and skilful scheme resorted to by his enemies. Now, as far as the club were concerned, its members were all quiet respectable men, who made the affair a dry matter of business. They justly looked on each of the candidates as equally worthy of the honor they coveted of representing the borough, and considered that things would always go on right, at headquarters—*i. e.* that the country would be properly governed—without the least reference to the quality or complexion of the House of Commons. They saw the desperate and unceasing fight among their betters for the loaves and fishes; and imitated their example, with reference to the crumbs and fragments. First they divided themselves, as near as their number would admit of, into tens, giving one to the odd nine, equally with each body of ten, and thus produced a body of eleven representatives. These eleven, again, in the presence of the whole club, chose five of their number for the

purpose of conducting the negotiations between the club and the two candidates; and these five again selected one of themselves—Ben Bran—to be the direct medium of communication: the actual state of the market never went beyond the first body of eleven; and in the exercise of an exquisite dexterity, Mr. Crafty had contrived to inspire these eleven, through their deputy and mouthpiece, Bran, with a determination to exact *fifteen* pounds per head more from Titmouse, before recording their votes in his favor: and this untoward state of things was duly intimated to Gammon, by Ben Bran, by silently outstretching both hands, and then one hand. That would make a total of *two thousand seven hundred and twenty-five pounds* disbursed among that accursed Quaint Club alone!—thought Gammon with a shudder: and suppose they should even then turn tail upon him, seduced by the splendid temptations of Lord De la Zouch? Just to conceive the possibility, for one moment, of Mr. Benjamin Bran having been bought over to betray all his companions, and Gammon and his party also, into the hands of Lord De la Zouch? Saith the immortal author of *Hudibras*—

"Ah me, what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron!"

But Gammon was disposed to make an exclamation in a similar tone, though of a different sort—

What pen his troubles shall describe,

Who voters once begins to bribe!

"Oh!" thought Mr. Gammon, a thousand times, "that cursed Quaint Club!—That cursed Crafty!"

The very first person on whom Delamere waited, in order to solicit his support, was little Dr. Tatham, who, I need hardly say, gave it promptly and cordially; but he added, shaking his head, that he knew he was giving huge offence to the people at the Hall, who had already been several times very urgent indeed with him. "Well, rather, sir, than sow dissension between you and Mr. Titmouse, your neighbor," said Delamere, spiritedly, "I at once release you from your promise."

"Ah! indeed?" cried Dr. Tatham, briskly—"Do you? *Can* you? Ought you to do so? I look upon the exercise of my franchise to be a sacred duty, and I shall discharge it as readily and as conscientiously as any other duty, come what may." Delamere looked at him, and thought how often he had heard Miss Aubrey talk of him with affectionate enthusiasm, and he believed the little doctor to be every way worthy of it. "For myself," continued Dr. Tatham, "I care little; but I have reason greatly to apprehend the effects of his displeasure upon those who are disposed—as such I know there are—to go counter to his wishes. He'll make them rue the day."

"Ay?—Let him!" exclaimed Mr. Delamere, with an eye of bright defiance; but it kindled only a faint momentary spark of consolation in the breast of Dr. Tatham.

The rivals, Mr. Delamere and Mr. Titmouse, encountered one another, as it were in full state, on the second day of the former's canvass. 'T was in the street. Mr. Delamere was attended by Mr. Parkinson, Sir Percival Pickering, Mr. St. Aubyn, Mr. Aylward Elvet, Mr. Gold, and one or two others. Mr. Delamere looked certainly very handsome. About his person, countenance, and carriage, there was an air of manly frankness, refinement, and simplicity; and a glance at his aristocratic cast of features, told you that a certain latent tendency to *hauteur* was kept in check by sincere good-nature. He was tall and well-proportioned, and his motions had a natural ease and grace; and as for his dress, it combined a rigid simplicity with an undoubted fashion and elegance. Though the air was very cold and frosty, he wore only a plain dark-colored surtout, buttoned.

"Delamere! Delamere!" whispered, with a smile, Mr. St. Aubyn, (one of the former members for the borough,) on first catching sight of the enemy approaching them on the same side of the street, at about twenty yards' distance—"Here comes your opponent; he's a little beauty, eh?"

Mr. Titmouse walked first, dressed in a fine drab-colored great-coat, with velvet collar of the same hue, and sable near a foot deep at the wrists. It was buttoned tightly round a pinched-in waist, and a white cambric handkerchief peeped out of a pocket in the breast. He had a red and green plaid waistcoat, and a full satin stock, glistening with little pins and chains. His trousers were sky-blue, and very tight, and covered almost the whole

of his boot; so that it was a wonder to the vulgar how he ever got into, or out of them. The little that was seen of his boots shone wonderfully; and he wore spurs at his heels. His span-new glossy hat was perched aslant on his bushy hair; he wore lemon-colored kid gloves, and carried a delicate little ebony cane. Following this pretty figure were—the sallow insolent-looking "*Reverend*" Smirk Mudflint, (such was the title he assumed,) Mr. Centipede, Mr. Grogram, Mr. Bloodsuck, junior, (who had approached as near, in point of personal appearance, to his illustrious client, as he knew how,) and—Mr. Gammon. As the hostile companies neared each other, that of Delamere observed some one hastily whisper to Titmouse, who instantly stuck his chased gold eyeglass into his eye, and stared very vulgarly at Mr. Delamere—who, on passing him, with the courtesy which he conceived due to an opponent, took off his hat, and bowed with politeness and grace, his example being followed by all his party. Titmouse, however, took not the least notice of the compliment; but, without removing his glass from his eye, throwing an odious sneer into his face, stared steadily at Mr. Delamere, and so passed on. Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck ably seconded him. Mudflint, with a bitter smirk, touched his hat slightly; Centipede affected to look another way; Grogram blushed, and bowed as to his very best customer. Mr. Gammon came last; and filled with disgust at the reception given to Mr. Delamere, colored all over, as he took off his hat, and with an expression of very anxious and pointed politeness, endeavored to satisfy Mr. Delamere and his party,

that there was at all events *one* in the train of Titmouse, who had some pretensions to the character of a gentleman.

"Who *can* that last man be? He's a gentleman," inquired Sir Percival, with an air of much surprise.

"Mr. Gammon—a man who is lord-paramount at the Hall," replied one.

"Gammon!—Is *that* Mr.—" echoed Delamere, with much interest; and as he turned round to look at Gammon, observed that he was doing the same; on which both hastily turned away.

As the important day approached, each party *professed* complete confidence as to the result. The *Yorkshire Stingo* declared that it had authority for stating that Mr. Titmouse's majority would be at least three to one over Mr. Delamere—and that, too, in glorious defiance of the most lavish bribery and corruption, and the most tyrannical intimidation, which had ever disgraced the annals of electioneering. In fact, it was presumptuous in Mr. Delamere to attempt to foist himself upon a borough with which he had no connection; and was done with a wanton and malicious determination to occasion expense and annoyance to Mr. Titmouse. The *York True Blue*, on the contrary, assured its readers that Mr. Delamere's prospects were of the brightest description—and though by perhaps a small majority, yet he was sure of his election. He had been everywhere hailed with the greatest enthusiasm. Many of even Mr. Titmouse's tenantry had nobly volunteered their support to Mr. Delamere; and at Grilston, so long regarded as the very focus and hotbed

of democracy, his success had surpassed the most sanguine expectations of his friends, and so forth. Then there was a sly and mischievous caution to the electors, not to be led away by the ingenious and eloquent sophistries which might be expected from Mr. Titmouse at the hustings, on the day of nomination! All this might be very well for the papers, and probably produce its impression upon those who, at a distance, are in the habit of relying upon them. But as for the actors—the parties concerned—Mr. Delamere was repeatedly assured by Mr. Crafty that a decent minority was the very utmost that could be expected; while Titmouse and his friends, on the other hand, were in a very painful state of uncertainty as to the issue: only Gammon, however, and perhaps one or two others, being acquainted with the true source of uneasiness and difficulty—viz. the abominable rapacity of the Quaint Club.

At length dawned the day which was to determine how far Yatton was worthy or unworthy of the boon which had been conferred upon it by the glorious Bill for giving Everybody Everything—which was to witness the maiden contest between the two hopeful scions of the noble and ancient houses of Dreddlington and De la Zouch—on which it was to be ascertained whether Yatton was to be bought and sold, like any other article of merchandise, by a bitter old boroughmonger; or to signalize itself by its spirit and independence, in returning one who avowed, and would support, the noble principles which secured the passing of the Great Bill which has been so often

alluded to. As for my hero, Mr. Titmouse, it gives me pain to have to record—making even all due allowance for the excitement occasioned by so exhilarating an occasion—that during the canvass, there were scarcely two hours in the day during which he could be considered as sober. He generally left his bed about eleven o'clock in the morning—about two o'clock, reached his committee-room—there he called for a bottle or two of soda-water, with brandy; and, thus supported, set out on his canvass, and never refused an invitation to take a glass of ale, at the houses which he visited. About the real business of the election—about his own true position and prospects—Gammon never once deigned to consult or instruct him; but had confined himself to the preparation of a very short and simple speech, to be delivered by Titmouse, if possible, from the hustings, and which he had made that gentleman copy out many times, and *promise* that he would endeavor to learn off by heart. He might as well, however, have attempted to walk up the outside of the Monument!

Merrily rang the bells of Grilston church on the election morning, by order of the vicar, the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, who was a stanch Titmousite, and had long cast a sort of sheep's eye upon the living of Yatton; for he was nearly twenty years younger than its present possessor, Dr. Tatham. What a bustle was there in the town by eight o'clock! All business was to be suspended for the day. Great numbers from the places adjacent began to pour into the town about that hour. It was soon seen who was the popular candidate—he whose colors were *yellow*;

for wherever you went, yellow cockades, rosettes, and button-ties for the men, and yellow ribbons for the girls, yellow flags and yellow placards with "Titmouse for Yatton!" met the eye. Mr. Delamere's colors were a deep blue, but were worn, I am sorry to say, by only one in four or five of those who were stirring about; and who, moreover, however respectable, and in appearance superior to the adherents of Titmouse, yet wore no such look of confidence and cheerfulness as they. From the bow-window of the Hare and Hounds, Mr. Delamere's headquarters, streamed an ample and very rich blue silk banner, on which was worked, in white silk, the figure of a Bible, Crown, and Sceptre, and the words, "Delamere for Yatton." This would have probably secured some little favorable notice from his sullen and bitter opponents, had they known that it had been the workmanship of some fifteen of as sweet beautiful girls as could have been picked out of the whole county of York; and, by the way, 'tis a singular and melancholy sign of the times, that beauty, innocence, and accomplishment, are in England to be found uniformly arrayed on the side of tyranny and corruption, against the people. Then Mr. Delamere's *band* was equal to three such as that of his opponent—playing with equal precision and power: and, what was more, they played very bold, enlivening tunes as they paraded the town. There was one feature of the early proceedings of the day, that was rather singular and significant: viz. that though all the members of the formidable Quaint Club were stirring about, *not one of them wore the colors of either*

party, though (between ourselves) each man had the colors of both parties in his pocket. They appeared studiously to abstain from a display of party feeling—though several of them *could* not resist a leering wink of the eye when the yellow band went clashing past them. They also had a band, which went about the town, preceded by their own standard—a very broad sheet of sky-blue, stretched between two poles, supported by two men; and the droll device it bore, was—an enormous man's face, with an intense squint, and two hands, with the thumbs of each resting on the nose, and the fingers spread out towards the beholder. It produced—as it seemed designed to produce—shouts of laughter wherever it made its appearance. Every member of the Quaint Club, however, wore a grave face; as if they were the only persons who appreciated the nature of the exalted functions which they were entitled, and about to exercise. No one could tell which way they intended to vote, though all expected that they were to come in at the last, and place the yellows in a triumphant majority of a hundred, at least. Though it had been a matter of notoriety that they were Mr. Titmouse's men, before Mr. Delamere appeared in the field; yet, *since* then, they had suddenly exhibited a politic and persevering silence and reserve, even among their personal friends and acquaintance. The yellow band performed one feat which was greatly applauded by the yellow crowd which attended them, and evidenced the delicacy by which those who guided their movements were actuated: viz. they frequently passed and repassed Mr. Delamere's committee-

room, playing that truly inspiring air, "The Rogue's March." Then the yellows dressed up a poor old donkey in Mr. Delamere's colors, which were plentifully attached to the animal's ears and tail, and paraded him, with great cheering, before the doors of the Hare and Hounds, and Mr. Delamere's principal friends and adherents. Nay—one of the more vivacious of the crowd threw a stone at a little corner window of the blue committee-room, through which it went smashing on its way, till it hit and overturned the inkstand of calm Mr. Crafty, who sat alone in the little room, busy at work with pen, ink, and paper. He looked up for a moment, called for a fresh inkstand, and presently resumed his pen, as if nothing had happened.

The hustings were erected upon a very convenient and commodious green, at the southern extremity of the town; and thither might be seen, first on its way, a little after eleven o'clock, the procession of the popular candidate—Mr. Titmouse. Here and there might be heard, as he passed, the startling sounds of mimic ordnance, fired by little boys from house-tops. As they passed the church, its bells rang their merriest peal; and, at a little distance farther on, the little boys of Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc, each with a small rosette tied to his jacket, struck up a squeaking and enthusiastic "hurrah!" while from the upper windows, the young ladies (three in number) of Mrs. Hic Hæc Hoc's "establishment," waved their little white pocket-handkerchiefs. Next on their way, they passed the "*Reverend*" Smirk Mudflint's chapel, which was in very queer contiguity to an establishment of a very queer

character—in fact, adjoining it. Against the upper part of the chapel hung a device calculated to arrest, as it *did* arrest, universal attention—viz. an *inverted* copy of the New Testament; over it, the figure of a church turned upside down, with the point of its steeple resting on the word "Revelation;" and upon the aforesaid church stood proudly erect an exact representation of Mr. Smirk Mudflint's chapel, over which were the words—"Freedom of Opinion! and Truth Triumphant!" But I do not know whether another device, worked by Miss Mudflint—a skinny, tallow-faced, and flinty-hearted young lady of nine-and-twenty—was not still more striking and original; viz. a Triangle and an Eye with rays, and the words—"Titmouse! Truth! Peace!" Three cheers for Mr. Mudflint were given here; and Mr. Mudflint bowed all round with an air of proud excitement—feeling, moreover, an intense desire to stop the procession and make a speech, while opposite to his own little dunghill.

First in the procession marched a big fellow with one eye, bearing a flag, with a red cap on a pike, and the words, in large black characters—

"Titmouse or Death!!!

"Let Tyrants Tremble!!!!"

Then came the band, and next to them walked—Tittlebat Titmouse, Esq., dressed exactly as he was when he encountered, in their canvass, the party of his opponent, as I have already described—only that he wore a yellow rosette, attached to a button-hole on the left side of his drab great-coat. His protuberant light blue eyes danced with delight, and his face was flushed with excitement. His hat was off and on every moment, in acknowledgment of the universal salutations which greeted him, and which so occupied him that he even forgot to use his eyeglass. On his left hand walked, wrapped up in a plain dark-hued great-coat, a somewhat different person—Mr. Gammon. The expression which his features wore was one of intense anxiety; and any tolerably close observer might have detected the mortification and disgust with which his eye occasionally glanced at, and was as suddenly withdrawn from, the figure of the grinning idiot beside him. Who do you think, reader, walked on Mr. Titmouse's right-hand side? Sir Harkaway Rotgut Wildfire, Baronet; whose keen political feelings, added to a sincere desire to secure a chance of his daughter's becoming the mistress

of Yatton, had long ago obliterated all unkindly recollection of Mr. Titmouse's gross conduct on a former occasion, after having received, through the medium of Mr. Bloodsuck, senior, as a common friend, a satisfactory apology. Next walked Mr. Titmouse's mover and seconder, the "*Reverend*" Mr. Mudflint, and Going Gone, "*Esquire*." Then came Mr. Centipede and Mr. Woodlouse, Mr. Grogam and Mr. Ginblossom; Mr. Gargle Glisten, Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, and Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc; and others of the leading friends of Mr. Titmouse, followed by some two hundred of others, two and two. Thus passed along the main street of Grilston, in splendid array, what might too truly have been called the *triumphal* procession of the popular candidate; his progress being accompanied by the enlivening music of his band, the repeated acclamations of the excited and intelligent crowd, the waving of banners and flags below, and handkerchiefs and scarfs from the ladies at the windows, and desperate strugglings from time to time, on the part of the crowd, to catch a glimpse of Mr. Titmouse. Mr. Gammon had the day before judiciously hired ten pounds' worth of mob—a device alone sufficient to have made Mr. Titmouse the popular candidate, and it now told excellently; for the aforesaid ten pounds' worth disposed itself in truly admirable order, in front of the hustings—and, on Mr. Titmouse's making his appearance there, set up a sudden and enthusiastic shout, which rent the air, and was calculated to strike dismay into the heart of the enemy. Mr. Titmouse, on gaining the hustings, changed color

visibly, and, coming in front, took off his glossy hat, and bowed repeatedly in all directions. Mr. Delamere's procession was of a vastly superior description, yet too palpably that of the unpopular candidate—every member of it from first to last, having made up his mind to encounter incivility, and even insult, however really anxious to avoid the slightest occasion for it. The band was numerous, and played admirably. There was a profusion of gay and handsome flags and banners. Mr. Delamere walked next to the musicians, with a gallant bearing, a gay and cheerful smile, yet oft darkened by anxiety as he perceived indubitable symptoms of a disposition to rough treatment on the part of the crowd. On his right-hand side walked Mr. St. Aubyn; on his left, Sir Percival Pickering, the late member for the borough. Following them came Mr. Gold, the banker, and Mr. Milnthorpe, an extensive and highly-respectable flour factor—these being Mr. Delamere's mover and seconder: and they were followed by at least three hundred others, two and two, all of a substantial and respectable appearance, and most resolute air, to boot. No amount of mob, that day, in Grilston, would have ventured an attack, in passing, upon that stout-hearted body of yeomen. A great many white handkerchiefs were waved from the windows, as Delamere passed along—waved by the hands of hundreds of fair creatures, whose hearts throbbed with fond fears lest an unoffending gentleman should be maltreated by the reckless mob. When Mr. Delamere approached a certain prominent window, opposite to the town hall, his heart began to

beat quickly. *There* were four as beautiful and high-born young women as England could have produced, all gazing down upon him with eager and anxious looks. It was not they, however, who occasioned Mr. Delamere's emotion. He knew that in that room was Lady De la Zouch—*his mother*; and he grew silent and excited as he approached it. One of the loveliest of the four, as he stopped and with respectful bow looked up for an instant—Lady Alethea Lorymer—suddenly and quite unexpectedly stepped aside; and there stood revealed the figure of Lady De la Zouch. She would have waved her handkerchief, but that she required it to conceal her emotion. The lips of neither mother nor son moved; but their *hearts* uttered reciprocal benedictions—and Delamere passed on. As he neared the church, I regret to have it to put on record, but at the bidding of the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, the bells *tolled as for a funeral!!*

Could anything have been more lamentable and disgusting? If the sudden and unexpected sight of his mother had been calculated in any degree to subdue, for a moment, his feelings, what ensued within a minute or two afterwards was sufficient to excite his sternest mood; for as soon as ever the head of his procession became visible to the crowd on the green, there arose a tremendous storm of yelling, hooting, hissing, and groaning: and when Mr. Delamere made his appearance in front of the hustings, you might have imagined that you were witnessing the reception given to some loathsome miscreant mounting the gallows to expiate with his life a hideous and revolting crime. He

advanced, nevertheless, with a smile of cheerful resolution and good-humor, though he changed color a little; and, taking off his hat, bowed in all directions. Gracious Heaven! what a contrast he presented to his popular rival, Mr. Titmouse, who stood grinning and winking to the wretches immediately underneath, evidently with a spiteful gratification at the treatment which his opponent was experiencing. Any one on the hustings or in the crowd had but to call out "Three cheers for Mr. Titmouse!" to be instantly obeyed; then "Three *groans* for the young boroughmonger!" were responded to with amazing vehemence and effect. Viewed from a distance sufficient to prevent your observing the furious faces of the dense mob, and hearing the opprobrious epithets which were levelled against the unpopular candidate, the scene appeared both interesting and exciting. On the outskirts of the crowd were to be seen a great number of carriages, both close and open, principally occupied by ladies—and I need hardly say who was the favorite in *those* quarters. Then the rival bands moved continually about, playing well-known national airs; while the banners and flags, blue and yellow, heightened the exhilarating and picturesque effect of the whole. The hustings were strong and commodious; Mr. Titmouse and his friends stood on the right, Mr. Delamere and his friends on the left side. He was dressed in a simple dark blue surtout and plain black stock. He was tall, elegant, and easy in his person, appearance, and gestures; his countenance was prepossessing, and bespoke a little excitement, which did not, however, obscure its good-nature.

And beside him stood his mover and seconder, Mr. Gold and Mr. Milnthorpe: the two late members; and about twenty or thirty other gentlemen—the whole party forming such a strong contrast to their opponents, as must have challenged any one's observation in an instant. Titmouse stood in the centre, leaning (as he supposed) gracefully, against the front bar; on his right stood the burly, slovenly figure of Sir Harkaway Rotgut Wildfire, with his big, bloated, blotchy face: on Mr. Titmouse's left stood his proposer, the "Reverend" Smirk Mudflint. His lean, sallow face wore a very disagreeable and bitter expression, which was aggravated by a sinister cast of one of his eyes. He was dressed in black, with a white neckerchief and no shirt-collar. Next to him stood Going Gone, Esq., Mr. Titmouse's seconder, with a ruddy complexion, light hair, a droll eye, and an expression of coarse but by no means ill-natured energy. Gammon stood immediately behind Titmouse, into whose ear he whispered frequently and anxiously. There were also the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, (though he evidently did not wish to make himself conspicuous,) Mr. Glistler, Mr. Grogram, Mr. Woodlouse, Mr. Centipede, Mr. Ginblossom, Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc, the Messrs. Bloodsuck, father and son—and other "leading Liberals." The business of the day having been opened, with the ordinary formalities, by the returning officer, he earnestly besought the assembled multitude to remember that they were Englishmen, and to give both parties fair play, allowing every one who might address them from the hustings, to be heard without serious interruption. It had been

arranged between the two committees that Mr. Titmouse should be first proposed; and the moment, therefore, that the returning officer ceased speaking, the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint took off his hat and prepared to address the "electors;" but he had to wait for at least three minutes, in order that the applause with which he had been greeted might subside; during which little anxious interval, he could not help directing towards his opponents a look of bitter exultation. He spoke with the self-possession, fluency, and precision of a practised public speaker. If the day's proceedings were to take their tone from that of the opening speech, 't was a thousand pities that it had fallen to the lot of the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint to deliver it. He had so clear a voice, spoke with such distinctness and deliberation, and amid such silence, that every word he uttered was audible all over the crowd; and anything more unchristian, uncourteous, unfair, towards his opponents, and calculated to excite towards them the hatred of the crowd, could hardly have been conceived. In what offensive and indecent terms he spoke of the Established Church and its ministers! of the aristocracy, ("those natural tyrants," he said,) and indeed of all the best and time-hallowed institutions of dear glorious old England—which might, by the way, well blush to own such a creature as he, as one entitled by birth to call himself one of her sons! How he hailed the approaching downfall of "*priest-craft*" and "*king-craft*!"—"A new light," he said, "was diffusing itself over benighted mankind—'t was the pure and steady light of Reason, and all filthy things were flying

from before it," (immense cheers followed the announcement of this important and interesting fact.) "The Bible," he said, "was a book of excellent common sense; and nothing but villanous priestcraft had attempted to torture and dislocate it into all sorts of fantastic mysteries, which led to rank idolatry and blasphemy, equally revolting to God and man." (Perceiving, from the coolness with which it was received, that this was going a *little* too rapidly a-head, he dropped that subject altogether, and soon regained the ear of his audience, by descanting in very declamatory and inflammatory terms upon the resplendent victory which the people had recently gained in the glorious Bill for giving Everybody Everything.) "They had burst their bonds with a noble effort; but their chains would be quickly re-riveted, unless they followed up their advantage, and never stopped short of crushing a heartless, tyrannical, and insolent oligarchy; unless the people were now true to themselves, and returned to the House of Commons men resolved to watch over the energies of reviving liberty, lest they should be strangled in their way—(the remainder of the sentence was inaudible in the storm of applause which it excited.) Under these circumstances, Providence itself had pointed out an individual whom he was proud and happy to propose to their notice—(here he turned and bowed to Mr. Titmouse, who, plucking off his hat, bobbed in return, amid the deafening cheers of all before them, to whom also he bowed repeatedly.) A gentleman who seemed, as it were, made for them; who, in his own person, might be said to

afford a lively illustration of the regeneration of society—who, to borrow for a moment an absurd word from his opponents, had by a sort of *miracle* (with what an infernal emphasis he pronounced this word!) been placed where he was, in his present proud position; who had totally and happily changed the whole aspect of affairs in the neighborhood, which had already become the scene of his profuse and yet discriminating generosity and hospitality; who stood in bright and bold relief from out a long gloomy line of ancestors, all of whom, he lamented to say, had lived and died in enmity to the people, and had distinguished themselves by nothing except their bigotry, and hatred of civil and religious liberty. Mr. Titmouse was the first of his ancient family to claim the proud title of the—Man of the People. (Here a voice called out, 'three cheers for Mr. Titmouse!'—which were given spontaneously, and most effectively.) His '*Address*' was worthy of him—it did equal honor to his head and his heart, (it is impossible to describe the smile which here just glanced over the countenance of Mr. Gammon,) touching nothing that it did not adorn—at once bold, explicit, comprehensive, and uncompromising!—He had had the felicity of enjoying the acquaintance, he might venture perhaps to say, the friendship, of Mr. Titmouse, since he had taken up his abode at the home of his ancestors, and very proud was he—Mr. Mudflint—to be able to say so. He could assure the electors, from his own personal knowledge of Mr. Titmouse, that they would have cause to be proud of their future representative—of the choice which they

were about to make. (Here the worthy speaker had some sudden misgivings as to the display likely to be made by Titmouse, when it came to his turn to address the electors:—so he added in *rather* a subdued tone)—It was true that they might not have, in Mr. Titmouse, a magpie in the House, (*laughter*.) a mere chatterer—much cry and little wool; they had had enough of mere speechifiers at St. Stephen's—but they would have a good working member, (*cheers*;) one always at his post in the hour of danger, (*cheers*;) a good committee-man, and one whose princely fortune rendered him independent of party and of the blandishments of power. In the language of the ancient *poet* (!) Mr. Mudflint would exclaim on such an occasion; '*Facta, non verba quæro*,' (*great cheering*.) And now a word for his opponent, (*groans*.) He was a mere puppet, held in the hands of some one out of sight, (*laughter*.)—it *might* be of a base old boroughmonger, (*groans*)—who sought to make Yatton a rotten borough, (*hisses*.) a stepping-stone to ascendancy in the county, (Cries of 'Will he though, lad, eh?') who would buy and sell them like slaves, (*hisses*.) and would never rest satisfied till he had restored the intolerable old vassalage of feudalism, (groans and hisses here burst forth from that enlightened assemblage, at the bare idea of anything so frightful.) He meant nothing personally offensive to the honorable candidate—but *was* he worthy of a moment's serious notice? (*great laughter*.) Had he an opinion of his own? (*loud laughter*.) Had he not better, to use the language of a book that was much misunderstood, *tarry at Jerusalem*

(!!!) *till his beard was grown?* Was he not, in fact, a nonentity unworthy of a reasonable man's attention? Was he not reeking from Oxford, (*groans,*) that hotbed of pedantic ignorance and venerable bigotry, (*hootings,*) surrounded by a dismal and lurid halo of superstition?" (*groaning and hooting.*)

Finer and finer was Mr. Mudflint becoming every moment as he warmed with his subject—but unfortunately his audience was beginning very unequivocally to intimate that they were quite satisfied with what they had already heard. A cry, for instance, issued from the crowd—"the rest of my *discoorse* next Sunday!"—for they knew that they were being kept all this while from one of their greatest favorites, Mr. Going Gone, who had also himself been latterly rather frequently and significantly winking his eye at those before him, and shrugging his shoulders. Mr. Mudflint, therefore, with feelings of vivid vexation, pique, and envy, concluded rather abruptly by proposing Tittlebat Titmouse, Esquire, of Yatton, as a fit and proper person to represent them in Parliament. Up went hats into the air, and shouts of the most joyous and enthusiastic description rent the air for several minutes. Then took off his hat the jolly Mr. Going Gone—a signal for roars of laughter, and cries of coarse and droll welcome, in expectancy of fun. Nor were they disappointed. He kept them in good-humor and fits of laughter during the whole of his "Address;" and though destitute of any pretence to refinement, I must at the same time say, that there were to be detected in it no traces of ill-nature. He concluded by

seconding the nomination of Mr. Titmouse, amid tumultuous cheers; and after waiting for some few minutes, in order that they might subside, Mr. Gold took off his hat, and essayed to address the crowd. Now he really was, what he looked, an old man of unaffected and very great good-humor, and a benevolence which was extensive, and systematic. He had only the week before distributed soup, blankets, coals, and potatoes to two hundred poor families in the borough, even as he had done at that period of the year, for the preceding quarter of a century. No tale of distress, indeed, was ever told him in vain, unless palpably fictitious and fraudulent. The moment that his bare head, scantily covered with gray hairs, was visible, there arose, at a given signal from Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, a dreadful hissing, hooting, and groaning from all parts of the crowd. If he appeared disposed to persevere in addressing the two or three persons immediately around him, that only infuriated the mob against the poor old man, who bore it all, however, with great good-humor and fortitude. But it was in vain. After some twenty minutes spent in useless efforts to make himself audible, he concluded in mere dumb show, by proposing the Honorable Geoffrey Lovel Delamere, at the mention of whose name there again arose a perfect tempest of howling, hissing, groaning, and hooting. Then Mr. Milnthorpe came forward, determined not to be "*put down*." He was a very tall and powerfully built man; bold and determined, with a prodigious power of voice, and the heart of a lion. "Now, lads, I'm ready to try which can tire the other

out first!" he shouted in a truly stentorian voice, heard over all their uproar, which it *redoubled*. How vain the attempt! How ridiculous the challenge! Confident of his lungs, he smiled good-humoredly at the hissing and bellowing mass before him, and for nearly half an hour persevered in his attempts to make himself heard. At length, however, without his having in the slightest degree succeeded, his pertinacity began to irritate the crowd who, in fact, felt themselves being *bullied*; and *that* no crowd, that ever I saw, or heard of, can bear for one instant; and *what is one against so many?* Hundreds of fists were held up and shaken at him. A missile of some sort or another was flung at him, though it missed him; and then the returning officer advised him to desist from his attempts, lest mischief should ensue; on which he shouted at the top of his voice, "I second Mr. Delamere!" and, amid immense groaning and hissing, replaced his hat on his head, thereby owning himself vanquished; which the mob also perceiving, they burst into loud and long-continued laughter.

"Now, Mr. Titmouse!" said the returning officer, addressing that gentleman: who on hearing the words, turned as white as a sheet, and felt very much disposed to be sick. He pulled out of his coat-pocket a well-worn little roll of paper, on which was the speech which Mr. Gammon had prepared for him, as I have already intimated; and with a shaking hand he unrolled it, casting at its contents a glance—momentary and despairing. What then would that little fool have given for memory, voice, and manner enough to "speak the speech that had been set

down for him!" He cast a dismal look over his shoulder at Mr. Gammon, and took off his hat—Sir Harkaway clapping him on the back, exclaiming, "Now for't, lad—have at 'em, and away—never fear!" The moment that he stood bareheaded, and prepared to address the writhing mass of faces before him, he was greeted with a prodigious shout, while hats were some of them waved, and others flung into the air. It was, indeed, several minutes before the uproar abated in the least. With fearful rapidity, however, every species of noise and interruption ceased—and a deadly silence prevailed. The sea of eager excited faces—all turned towards *him*—was a spectacle which might for a moment have shaken the nerves of even a *man*—had he been "unaccustomed to public speaking." The speech, which—brief and simple though it was—he had never been able to make his own, even after copying it out half-a-dozen times, and trying to learn it off for an hour or two daily during the preceding fortnight, he had now utterly forgotten; and he would have given a hundred pounds to retire at once from the contest, or sink unperceived under the floor of the hustings.

"Begin! begin!" whispered Gammon, earnestly.

"Ya—a—s—but—what shall I say?" stammered Titmouse.

"Your speech"—answered Gammon, impatiently.

"I—I—'pon my—soul—I've—forgot every word of it!"

"Then *read* it," said Gammon, in a furious whisper—

"Good God, you'll be hissed off the hustings!—Read from the paper, do you hear!" he added, almost gnashing his teeth.

Matters having come to this fearful issue, "Gentlemen," commenced Mr. Titmouse, faintly—

"Hear him! Hear, hear!—Hush!—Sh! sh!" cried the impatient and expectant crowd.

Now, I happen to have a short-hand writer's notes of every word uttered by Mr. Titmouse, together with an account of the reception it met with: and I shall here give the reader, first, Mr. Titmouse's *real*, and secondly, Mr. Titmouse's *supposed* speech, as it appeared two days afterwards in the columns of the *Yorkshire Stingo*.

"Look on *this* picture—

—and on THIS!"

Mr. Titmouse's ACTUAL Speech.

Mr. Titmouse's REPORTED Speech.

"GENTLEMEN,—Most uncommon, unaccustomed as I am, (*cheers*)—happy—memorable,—proudest—high honor—unworthy, (*cheering*)—day of my life—important crisis, (*cheers*)—day gone by, and arrived—too late, (*cheering*)—civil and religious liberty all over the world, (*immense cheering, led off by Mr. Mudflint.*) Yes, gentlemen,—I would observe—it is unnecessary to say—passing of that truly glorious Bill—charter—no mistake—Britons never shall be slaves, (*enthusiastic cheers.*)—Gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am to address an assembly of this—ahem! (*'hear! hear! hear! and cheers*)—civil and religious liberty all over the world, (*cheers*)—yet the tongue can feel where the heart cannot express the (*cheers*)—so help me—! universal suffrage and cheap and enlightened equality, (*cries of 'that's it, lad!'*)—which can never fear to see established in this country—(*cheers*)—if only true to—industrious classes and corn-laws—yes, gentlemen, I say corn-laws—for I am of op—(*hush! cries of 'ay, lad, what dost say about THEM?'*) working out the principles which conduce to the establishment a—a—a—civil and religious liberty of the press! (*cheers!*) and the working classes, (*hush!*)—Gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am—well—at any rate—will you—I say—will you? (*vehement cries of 'No! No! Never!'*) unless you are true to yourselves! Gentlemen, without going into—vote by Ballot (*cheers*) and quarterly Parliaments, (*loud cheering,*) three polar stars of my public conduct—(here the great central banner was waved to and fro, amid enthusiastic cheering)—and reducing the overgrown Church Establishment to a—difference between me and my honorable opponent, (*loud cheers and groans,*) I live among you, (*cheers*)—spend my money in the borough, (*cheers*)—no business to come here, (*'No, no!'*)—right about, close borough, (*hisses!*)—patient attention, which I will not further trespass upon, (*'hear! hear! and loud cheering.*)—full explanation—rush early to the—base, bloody, and brutal (*cheers*)—poll triumphant—extinguish forever, (*cheers.*)—Gentlemen, these are my sentiments—wish, you many happy—re—hem! a—hem—and by early displaying a

"Silence having been restored, Mr. Titmouse said, that he feared it was but too evident that he was unaccustomed to scenes so exciting as the present one—that was one source of his embarrassment; but the greatest was, the enthusiastic reception with which he had been honored, and of which he owned himself quite unworthy, (*cheers.*) He agreed with the gentleman who had proposed him in so very able and powerful a speech, (*cheers,*) that we had arrived at a crisis in our national history, (*cheering*)—a point at which it would be ruin to go back, while to stand still was impossible, (*cheers;*) and, therefore, there was nothing for it but to go forward, (*great cheering.*) He looked upon the passing of the Bill for giving Everybody Everything, as establishing an entirely new order of things, (*cheers.*) in which the people had been roused to a sense of their being the only legitimate source of power, (*cheering.*) They had, like Samson, though weakened by the cruelty and torture of his tyrants, bowed down and broken into pieces the gloomy fabric of aristocracy. The words 'Civil and Religious Liberty' were now no longer a by-word and a reproach, (*cheers;*) but, as had been finely observed by the gentleman who had so eloquently proposed him to their notice, the glorious truth had gone forth to the ends of the earth, that no man was under any responsibility for his opinions or his belief, any more than for the shape of his nose, (*universal cheering.*) A spirit of tolerance, amelioration, and renovation, was now abroad, actively engaged in repairing our defective and dilapidated constitution, the relic of a barbarous age—with some traces of modern duty, but more of ancient ignorance and unsightliness, (*cheers.*) The great Bill he alluded to, had roused the masses into political being, (*immense cheering,*) and made them sensible of the necessity of keeping down a rapacious and domineering oligarchy, (*groans.*) Was not the liberty of the press placed now upon an intelligible and imperishable basis?—Already were its purifying and invigorating influences perceptible, (*cheering*)—and he trusted that it would never cease to direct its powerful energies to the demolition of the many remaining barriers to the improvement of mankind,

[And so on for a column more; in the course of which there were really so many flattering allusions to the opening speech of the proposer of Titmouse, that it has often occurred to me as probable, that the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint had supplied the above report of Mr. Titmouse's speech.]

CHAPTER II

Mr. Titmouse, on concluding, made a great number of very profound bows, and replaced his hat upon his head, amid prolonged and enthusiastic cheering, which, on Mr. Delamere's essaying to address the crowd, was suddenly converted into a perfect hurricane of hissing; like as we now and then find a shower of rain suddenly change into hail. Mr. Delamere stood the pitiless pelting of the storm with calmness, resolution, and good-humor. Ten minutes had elapsed, and he had not been allowed to utter one syllable audible to any one beyond four or five feet from him. Every fresh effort he made to speak caused a renewal of the uproar, and many very offensive and opprobrious epithets were applied to him. Surely this was disgraceful, disgusting! What had he done to deserve such treatment? Had he been guilty of offering some gross indignity and outrage to every person present, individually, could he have fared worse than he did? He had conducted his canvass with scrupulous and exemplary honor and integrity—with the utmost courtesy to all parties, whether adverse or favorable. He was surely not deficient in those qualities of head and of heart—of personal appearance, even, which usually secure man favor with his fellows. *Who* could lay *anything* to his charge—except that he had ventured to solicit the suffrages of the electors of Yatton, in competition with Mr. Titmouse? If men of a determined character and of

princely means have to calculate upon such brutal usage as this, can those who sanction or perpetrate it wonder at bribery and other undue means being resorted to, in absolute self-defence? Is it meant to deter any one from coming forward that has not a forehead of brass, leathern lungs, and heart of marble? After upwards of a quarter of an hour had been thus consumed, without Mr. Delamere's having been permitted to utter two consecutive sentences, though he stood up against it patiently and gallantly, the returning officer, who had often appealed to them in vain, earnestly besought Mr. Titmouse to use his influence with the crowd, in order to secure Mr. Delamere a moment's hearing.

"Pon my life—I—eh?" quoth Titmouse. "A likely thing! He'd do it for *me*, wouldn't he? Every man for himself—all fair at an election, eh, Gammon?"

"Do it, sir!" whispered Gammon, indignantly—"do it, and instantly—or you deserve to be kicked off the hustings!" Titmouse, on this, took off his hat with a very bad grace, and addressing the crowd, said—"I—I—suppose you'll hear what he's got to say for himself, gents"—But all was in vain; "Off! off! No!—Go home!—ah!—ah!—a—a—a—h!—St!—St!—Get away home with you, you young boroughmonger!—a—a—h!" came in louder and fiercer tones from the mob. Yet Mr. Delamere did not like to give up without another and a desperate effort to catch the ear of the mob; but while he was in the act of raising his right hand, and exclaiming—"Gentlemen, only a word or two—I pledge my honor that I will not keep you three

minutes"—some miscreant from the body of the crowd aimed at him a stone, not a very large one to be sure, yet flung with very considerable force, and hitting him just about the centre of the upper lip, which it cut open. He instantly turned pale, and applied to the wound his white pocket-handkerchief, which was speedily saturated with blood. Still the gallant young fellow stood his ground with firmness, and the smile which he endeavored to assume, it was enough to have brought tears into one's eyes to witness. The instant that Gammon had seen the stone take effect, he rushed over towards where Mr. Delamere stood amid his agitated friends, who were dissuading him from persevering in his attempt to address the crowd?—

"You are severely hurt, sir!" exclaimed Gammon, with much agitation, taking off his hat with an air of earnest and respectful sympathy. Then he turned with an air of excitement towards the mob, who seemed shocked into silence by the incident which had taken place, and were uttering increasing cries of "Shame! shame!"

"Shame?—shame, *shame*, indeed, gentlemen"—he exclaimed vehemently—"Where is that atrocious miscreant? In the name of Mr. Titmouse, who is too much agitated to address you himself, I conjure you to secure that abominable ruffian, and let him be brought to justice! If not, Mr. Titmouse protests solemnly that he will withdraw from the election."

"Bravo, Titmouse! bravo! Spoke like a man!" exclaimed several voices. A desperate struggle was soon perceived about

that quarter where the man who flung the stone must have been standing; he had been seized, and being in a trice most severely handled, a couple of men almost throttled him with the tightness of their grasp round his neck—these too the very men who had encouraged him to perpetrate the outrage!—and, amid a shower of kicks and blows, he was hauled off, and deposited, half dead, in the cage.

"Three cheers for Delamere!" cried a voice from the crowd; and never had a more vehement shout issued from them, than in response to that summons.

"Delamere! Delamere!—Hear him!—Speak out!—Delamere! Delamere!" cried a great number of voices, of people growing more and more excited as they beheld his handkerchief becoming suffused with blood. But he was not in a condition then to respond to their call. He was suffering really not a little pain; and, moreover, his feelings had for a moment—just for a moment—given way, when he adverted to the possibility that Lady De la Zouch might have witnessed the outrage, or received exaggerated accounts of it. Mr. St. Aubyn, however, stood forward in Mr. Delamere's stead—and in a very touching and judicious but brief address, roused the feelings of the crowd to a high pitch of sympathy for Mr. Delamere, who stood beside him, hat in hand—vehemently, and at length successfully, struggling to repress his rising emotions. If only one out of a hundred of those present had had a vote, this stone's throw might have changed the fate of the election!—No other candidate having been proposed, the

returning officer then proceeded to call for a show of hands; on which a very great number were held up in favor of Mr. Titmouse; but when Mr. Delamere's name was called, it really seemed as if every one present had extended both his hands!—there could be no mistake, no room for doubt. Titmouse turned as pale as a sheet, and gazed with an expression of ludicrous consternation at Gammon, who also looked, in common indeed with his whole party, not a little disconcerted. The returning officer, having procured silence, declared that the choice of the electors had fallen upon Mr. Delamere; on which a tremendous cheering followed, which lasted for several minutes; and, luckily recollecting the utter nullity of a show of hands as a test or evidence, either way, of the result of the election,¹ Mr. Gammon directed Mudflint formally to demand a poll on behalf of Mr. Titmouse; on which the returning officer announced that the poll would take place at eight o'clock the next morning; and thereupon the day's proceedings closed. Mr. Delamere, in a very few words, returned thanks to the electors for the honor which they had conferred upon him, and entreated them to go early to the poll. He and his friends then left the hustings. His procession quickly formed; his band struck up with extraordinary energy and spirit—"See the Conquering Hero comes!" but the rolling of the drums, the clashing of cymbals, the rich deep tones of the bassoons, trombones, and French horns, and clear and lively notes of flute

¹ "The show of hands" (says Lord Stowell, in *Anthony v. Seager*, 1 Hag. Cons. Rep. 13) "is only a rude and imperfect declaration of the sentiments of the electors."

and clarionet, were quite overpowered by the acclamations of the crowd which attended them to his committee-room. Sir Percival Pickering, throwing open the window, addressed a word or two to the dense crowd; and then, having given three lusty cheers, they withdrew. A glass of wine and water quickly refreshed the spirits of Mr. Delamere, and a surgeon having arrived, found it necessary to dress the wound with much care, for the cut was severe; in fact, the upper lip was partially laid open; and he declared it highly imprudent for Mr. Delamere to attempt to make his appearance out of doors on the morrow. As for Mr. Crafty, as soon as he heard what had taken place, he uttered, as he felt bound to do, a few casual expressions of sympathy; but what passed through his mind, as he resumed his seat before his papers, was—"What a pity that all those fellows had not had votes, and that the poll had not commenced *instanter!*" The truly unexpected issue of the day's proceedings, while it elevated the spirits of all Mr. Delamere's friends, produced only one effect upon the imperturbable Mr. Crafty; he strongly suspected that the other side would probably be resorting during the night to measures of a desperate and unscrupulous description, in order to counteract the unfavorable impression calculated to be effected by the defeat of Mr. Titmouse at the show of hands. As for that gentleman, by the way, he became very insolent towards Gammon on reaching the committee-room, and protested, with fury in his face, that it had all been brought about by Mr. Gammon's "cursed officious meddling with Mr. Titmouse's

name before the mob after the stone had been thrown;" on hearing which, "Go on to the Hall, sir, dine, and get drunk if you choose," said Gammon, bitterly and peremptorily; "I shall remain here all night. Powerful as are your energies, they require relaxation after the fatigues of the day!" and with a very *decisive*, but not violent degree of force, Titmouse was urged, in a twinkling, into the outer committee-room. Mr. Gammon had, indeed, as much serious work before him that night as Mr. Crafty, and prepared for secret and decisive action every whit as calmly and effectively as he. Mr. Crafty's arrangements were admirable. During the day he had parcelled out the borough into a number of small departments, each of which he committed to some steady and resolute friend of Mr. Delamere, who was to look after every elector in his division about whom there was any ground for fear, in respect either of apprehended abduction, or of treachery. These gentlemen were to be relieved at intervals; and from one to the other of them, perpetually, were the personal agents of Crafty to go their rounds, in order to see that all was right, and carry intelligence to headquarters. Then others were intrusted with the ticklish and tiresome duty of watching the movements of the enemy in quarters where Crafty had sure information of intended operations during the night. Complete arrangements had been made, also, for bringing up voters to the poll at the exact times, and in the numbers, and in the manner, which might on the morrow be determined on by Mr. Crafty. Names were noted down of those to whom the bribery oath was

to be administered. Prudent as were these precautions, they did not entirely prevent the mischief against which they had been levelled. As the night wore on, evidence was, from time to time, brought in to Mr. Crafty that the enemy were at work at, their expected tricks; *e.g.*—

"Jacob Joliffe is missing. Wife *says* she knows nothing about him. *Inquire.*"

"Send *at least a couple* of men to watch Peter Jiggins, or he'll be out of the way when he's wanted."

"Haste—haste. G. Atkins and Adam Hutton, both safe ten minutes ago, are off; enticed out into a postchaise—gone towards York—(Half-past eleven.)"

"Send some one to the Jolly Snobs to watch the treating going on. *Most important.* Mr. Titmouse has been there, and drunk a glass of rum with them."

Then more mysterious missives made their appearance from Mr. Crafty's own familiars.

"Q.C.S.H.O.—12."—(*i.e.* "The Quaint Club still holds out.—Twelve o'clock.")

"Q.C.G.W.—½ past 1."—(*i.e.* "The Quaint Club are *going wrong.*—Half-past one o'clock.")

"S.B.; G.O. ☛☛ + ☛☛ H. ¼ to 2."—(*i.e.* "I have seen Bran. Gammon offers ten pounds, in addition to the ten pounds already given.—They hesitate.—A quarter to two o'clock.")

"3/heard & S. B. & M. w. B. O. Q. C.—12—3."—(*i.e.* "Three of our people have just overheard *and seen* Bloodsuck and

Mudflint, with Bran, offering the Quaint Club *twelve* pounds.—Three o'clock.")

"Q. C. G. R. w. Y. & C. T. T. Y. M.S. I.—4."—(*i.e.* "The Quaint Club are getting restive with *you*, and coming to terms with Titmouse. You must stir instantly.—Four o'clock.")

"△△ ◀ ; 10 m. 4."—These last mysterious symbols caused Mr. Crafty instantly to bestir himself, He changed color a *little*, and went into the adjoining room. The meaning of the communication was—"Great danger to both parties."

In the adjoining room, where two candles were burning down in their very sockets, and the fire nearly out, were some four or five trusty friends of Mr. Delamere—gentlemen who had placed themselves entirely at Mr. Crafty's disposal throughout the night. When he entered, they were all nearly asleep, or at least dozing. Beckoning two of them into his own room, he instructed one to go and plant himself openly—nay, as conspicuously as possible—near the door of Mr. Titmouse's committee-room, so as not to fail of being recognized, by any one leaving or entering it, as a well-known friend of Mr. Delamere's; in fact, Mr. Titmouse's friends were to discover that their motions were watched. The other he instructed to act similarly opposite the door of a small house in a narrow court—the residence, in fact, of Ben Bran, where all the night's negotiations with the Quaint Club had been carried on. Immediately afterwards, Mr. Crafty felt it his duty, as between man and man, to warn his opponent of the mortal peril in which he was placed; and, in his anxiety for fair play,

found means to convey the following note into the committee-room where Mr. Gammon and one or two others were sitting:—

"Take care!! You are deceived! betrayed! Q. C. is sold out and out to the *Blues*!! And part of the bargain, that B. B. shall betray you into bribery in the presence of witnesses—*not one man* of the club safe; this have *just learned* from the wife of one of them. From a well-wishing friend, but *obligated* to vote (against his conscience) for the Blues.

"P.S.—Lord D. in the town (quite private) with lots of *the needful*, and doing business sharply."

While Mr. Gammon and his companions were canvassing this letter, in came the two gentlemen who had been watched, in the way I have stated, from Ben Bran's house to Mr. Titmouse's committee-room, pale and agitated, with intelligence of that fact. Though hereat Gammon's color deserted his cheek, he affected to treat the matter very lightly, and laughed at the idea of being deluded by such boy's play. If Lord De la Zouch—said he—had hired Crafty only to play tricks like *these*, he might as well have saved the trouble and expense. Here a slight bustle was heard at the door; and the hostler made his appearance, saying that a man had just given him a document which he produced to Mr. Gammon; who, taking from the hostler a dirty and ill-folded paper, read as follows:—

"To Squire Titmous. you Are All Wrong. the Blues is *wide Awake All Night* and nos all, Lord Dillysoush about with One hundred Spies; And look Out for traiters in the

Camp. A friend or Enemy as you Will, but loving Fair Play."

"Poh!" exclaimed Gammon, flinging it on the table contemptuously.

Now, I may as well mention here, that about nine o'clock in the evening, Mr. Parkinson had brought to Crafty *sure* intelligence that a very zealous and influential person, who was entirely in the confidence of the enemy, had come to him a little while before, and candidly disclosed the very melancholy position of his—the aforesaid communicant's—financial affairs; and Mr. Parkinson happened to be in a condition to verify the truth of the man's statement, that there was a writ out against him for £250; and that, unless he could meet it, he would have to quit the county before daybreak, and his very promising prospects in business would be utterly ruined. Mr. Parkinson knew these matters professionally; and, in short, Crafty was given to understand, that so disgusted was Mr. M'Do'em—the gentleman in question—with Whig principles (his inexorable creditor being a Whig) and practices, such as the bribery, treating, and corruption at that moment going on, that—his conscience pricked him—and—ahem!—the poor penitent was ready to make all the amends in his power by discovering villany to its intended victims. Crafty, having felt the ground pretty safe underneath him, took upon himself to say, that Mr. M'Do'em need be under no further apprehension as to his pecuniary liabilities; but, in the mean while, he would certainly wish for a little *evidence* of the *bona fides* of his present conduct.

"Come," quoth M'Do'em, after receiving a pregnant wink from Mr. Crafty—"send some one whom you can rely upon with me *immediately*, to do as I bid him—and let him report to you what he shall actually see."

No sooner said than done. A trusty managing clerk of Mr. Parkinson's forthwith accompanied M'Do'em on a secret expedition....

They stood at a window with a broken pane. 'T was a small ill-furnished kitchen, and in the corner, close to the fire, sat smoking a middle-aged man, wearing a dirty brown paper cap. Opposite to him sat two persons, in very earnest conversation with him. They were Mr. Mudflint and Mr. Bloodsuck, junior.

"Come, come, *that's* decidedly unreasonable," quoth the former.

"No, sir, it *a'n't*. I'm an independent man!—It quite cut me to the heart, I 'sure you, sir, to see Mr. Delamere so dreadfully used—my good missus, that's in bed, says to me—says she"—

"But what had Mr. Titmouse to do with it, you know?" said Mudflint, taking out of his pocket a bit of crumpled paper, at which the man he addressed gazed listlessly, shook his head, and exclaimed, "*No, it won't do*—He didn't deserve such treatment, poor young gentleman." (Here Bloodsuck and Mudflint whispered—and the latter, with a very bad grace, produced a second bit of crumpled paper.)

"*That's* something like"—said the man, rather more good-humoredly. "Is't *sertain* Mr. Titmouse had nothing to do with it?"

"To be sure not!—Now, mind, by a quarter past eight—eh?" inquired Mudflint, very anxiously, and somewhat sullenly.

"I'm a man of my word—no one can say I ever broke it in earnest; and as for a straightforward bit o' business like this, I say, I'm your man—so here's my hand." ...

"Don't *that* look rather like business?" inquired M'Do'em, in a whisper, after they had lightly stepped away.—"But come along!" ...

After another similar scene, the two returned to the Hare and Hounds, and the matter was satisfactorily settled between Crafty and M'Do'em—one hundred down, and the rest on the morning after the election. He was to *poll for Titmouse*, and that, too, early in the day; and be as conspicuous and active as possible in his exertions in behalf of that gentleman—to appear, in short, one of his most stanch and confidential supporters. Whether Lord De la Zouch or his son would have sanctioned such conduct as this, had they had an inkling of it, I leave to the reader to conjecture: but Crafty was easy about the matter—'t was only, in *his* opinion, "manœuvring;" and all weapons are fair against a burglar or highwayman; all devices against a swindler. M'Do'em gave Crafty a list of nine voters at Grilston who had received five pounds a-piece; and enabled him to discover a case of wholesale *treating*, brought home to one of the leading members of Mr. Titmouse's committee. Well, this worthy capped all his honorable services by hurrying in to Gammon, some quarter of an hour after he had received the second anonymous letter,

and with a perfect appearance of consternation, after carefully shutting the door and eying the window, faltered that all was going wrong—that traitors were in the camp; that Lord De la Zouch had *bought every man of the Quaint Club two days before at thirty pounds a-head!* half already paid down, the rest to be paid on the morning of the *fifteenth day after Parliament should have met*—(M'Do'em said he did not know what that meant, but Gammon was more influenced and alarmed by it than by anything else that had happened;) that *Ben Bran was playing false*, having received a large sum—though how much M'Do'em had not yet learned—as head-money from Lord De la Zouch; and that, if one single farthing were after that moment paid or promised to any single member of the club, either by Mr. Titmouse, or any one on his behalf, they were all delivered, bound hand and foot, into the power of Lord De la Zouch, and at his mercy. That so daring and yet artful was Lord De la Zouch, that his agents had attempted to tamper with even HIM, M'Do'em! but so as to afford him not the least hold of them. Moreover, he knew a fellow-townsmen who would, despite all his promises to the Liberal candidate, poll for Delamere; but nothing should induce him, M'Do'em, to disclose the name of that person, on account of the peculiar way in which he, M'Do'em, had come to know the fact. On hearing all this, Gammon calmly made up his mind for the worst; and immediately resolved to close all further negotiations with the Quaint Club. To have acted otherwise would have been mere madness, and courting

destruction. The more he reflected on the exorbitant demand of the Quaint Club—and so *suddenly* exorbitant, and enforced by such an impudent sort of quiet pertinacity—the more he saw to corroborate—had that occurred to him as necessary—the alarming intelligence of M'Do'em. Mr. Gammon concealed much of his emotion; but he ground his teeth together with the effort. Towards six o'clock, there was a room full of the friends and agents of Titmouse; to whom Gammon, despite all that had happened, and which was known only to four or five of those present, gave a highly encouraging account of the day's prospects, but impressed upon them all, with infinite energy, the necessity for caution and activity. A great effort was to be made to head the poll from the first, in order at once to do away with the *prestige* of the show of hands; "and the friends of Mr. Titmouse" (*i. e.* the ten pounds' worth of mob) were to be in attendance round the polling-booth at seven o'clock, and remain there the rest of the day, in order, by their presence; to encourage and protect (!) the voters of Mr. Titmouse. This and one or two other matters having been thus arranged, Mr. Gammon, who was completely exhausted with his long labor, retired to a bedroom, and directed that he should without fail be called in one hour's time. As he threw himself on the bed, with his clothes on, and extinguished his candle, he had at least the consolation of reflecting, that nine of the enemy's stanchest voters were safely stowed away, (as he imagined,) and that seven or eight of the *accessibles*, pledged to Mr. Delamere, had promised to

reconsider the matter.

If Gammon had taken the precaution of packing the front of the polling-booth in the way I have mentioned, Mr. Crafty had not overlooked the necessity of securing efficient protection for his voters; and between seven and eight o'clock no fewer than between four and five hundred stout yeomen, tenants of Lord De la Zouch and others of the surrounding nobility and gentry, made their appearance in the town, and insinuated themselves into the rapidly accumulating crowd: many of them, however, remaining at large, at the command of Mr. Delamere's committee, in order, when necessary, to secure safe access to the poll for those who might require such assistance. It was strongly urged upon Mr. Crafty to bring up a strong body of voters at the commencement, in order to head the polling at the end of the first hour. "Not the least occasion for it," said Crafty, quietly—"I don't care a straw for it: in a small borough no end can be gained, where the voters are so few in number that every man's vote is secured long beforehand to a dead certainty. There's no *prestige* to be gained or supported. No. Bring up *first* all the distant and most uncertain voters—the timid, the feeble, the wavering; secure *them* early while you have time and opportunity. Again, for the first few hours poll languidly; it *may* render the enemy over-easy. You may perhaps make a sham *rush* of about twenty or thirty between twelve and one o'clock, to give them the idea that you are doing your very best. Then fall off, poll a man now and then only, and see what *they* will do, how *they* are playing off their men. If you

can hang back till late in the day, then direct, very secretly and cautiously, the bribery oath and the questions to be put to each of the enemy's men as they come up; and, while you are thus picking them off, pour in your own voters before the opposite party is aware of your game, and the hour for closing the poll *may* perhaps arrive while some dozen or so of their men are unpolled. But above all, gentlemen," said Crafty, "every one to his own work only. One thing, at a time, throughout the day; which is quite long enough for all you have to do. Don't hang back in order to bring up several voters at once; if you have *one* ready, take him up instanter, and have done with him. Don't give yourselves the least concern about ascertaining the numbers that *have* polled, but only those that have *yet to be* polled; the returns I will look after. Let those stand behind the check-clerks, who are best acquainted with the names, persons, and circumstances of the voters who come up, and can detect imposture of any sort before the vote is recorded, *and the mischief done*. The scoundrel may be thus easily *kept off* the poll-books, whom it may cost you a thousand pounds hereafter to attempt to remove, in vain."

The day was bright and frosty; and long before eight o'clock the little town was all alive with music, flags, cheering, and crowds passing to and fro. The polling-booth was exceedingly commodious and well constructed, with a view to the most rapid access and departure of the voters. By eight o'clock there were more than a couple of thousand persons collected before the booth; and—significant evidence of the transient nature of

yesterday's excitement!—the yellow colors appeared as five to one. Just before eight o'clock, up drove Mr. Titmouse, in a dog-cart, from which he jumped out amid the cheers of almost all present, and skipped on to the bench behind his own check-clerk, with the intention of remaining there all day to acknowledge the votes given for him! But Mr. Delamere, with a just delicacy and pride, avoided making his appearance either at or near the booth, at all events till the voting was over. The first vote given was that of Obadiah Holt, the gigantic landlord of the Hare and Hounds, and for Mr. Delamere; the event being announced by a tremendous groan; but no one ventured any personal incivility to the laughing giant that passed through them. A loud cheer, as well as a sudden bobbing of the head on the part of Titmouse, announced that the second vote had been recorded for him; and, indeed, during the next twenty minutes he polled fifteen for Delamere's eight. At *nine* o'clock the poll stood thus—

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Titmouse | 31 |
| Delamere | 18 |
| | — |
| Majority | 13 |

Steadily adhering to Mr. Crafty's system, at *ten* o'clock the poll stood—

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Titmouse | 53 |
| Delamere | 29 |
| | — |
| Majority | 24 |

At *eleven* o'clock—

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Titmouse | 89 |
| Delamere | 41 |
| | — |
| Majority | 48 |

At *twelve* o'clock—

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Titmouse | 94 |
| Delamere | 60 |
| | — |
| Majority | 34 |

At *one* o'clock—

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Titmouse | 129 |
| Delamere | 84 |
| | — |
| Majority | 45 |

At this point they remained stationary for some time; but Delamere had polled all his *worst* votes, Titmouse almost all his *best*. The latter had, indeed, only *seventeen* more in reserve, independently of the Quaint Club, and the still neutral *twenty* accessibles; while Delamere had yet, provided his promises stood

firm, and none of his men were hocused or kidnapped, forty-five good men and true—and some faint hopes, also, of the aforesaid twenty accessibles. For a quarter of an hour not one man came up for either party; but at length two of Delamere's leading friends came up, with faces full of anxiety, and recorded their votes for Delamere, amid loud laughter. About half-past one o'clock a prodigious—and I protest that it was both to Lord De la Zouch and his son a totally unexpected—rush was made on behalf of Delamere, consisting of *the twenty accessibles*; who in the midst of yelling, and hissing, and violent abuse, voted, one after another, for Delamere. Whether or not a strong pressure had been resorted to by some zealous and powerful gentlemen in the neighborhood, but entirely independent of Mr. Delamere, I know not; but the fact was as I have stated. At *two* o'clock the poll stood thus—

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Titmouse | 145 |
| Delamere | 134 |
| | — |
| Majority | 11 |

Thus Titmouse had then polled within one of his positive reserve, and yet was only eleven above Delamere, who had still *fifteen* men to come up!

"Where is the Quaint Club?" began to be more and more frequently and earnestly asked among the crowd: but no one could give a satisfactory answer; and more than one conjecture

was hazarded, as to the possibility of their coming up under *blue* colors. But—*where were they?* Were they watching the state of the poll, and under marching orders for the moment when the enemy should be at his extremity? 'T was indeed a matter of exquisite anxiety!—Between two o'clock and a quarter past, not one voter was polled on either side; and the crowd, wearied with their long labors of hissing and shouting, looked dispirited, listless, and exhausted. By-and-by Mr. Gammon, and Messrs. Bloodsuck, (senior and junior,) Mudflint, Woodlouse, Centipede, Gimblossom, Going Gone, Hic Hæc Hoc, and others, made their appearance in the booth, around Titmouse. They all looked sour, depressed, and fatigued. Their faces were indeed enough to sadden and silence the crowd. Were Mr. Titmouse's forces exhausted?—"Where's the Quaint Club?" roared out a man in the crowd, addressing Mr. Gammon, who smiled wretchedly in silence. The reason of his then appearing at the polling-booth was certainly to ascertain the fate of the Quaint Club; but he had also another; for he had received information that within a short time Dr. Tatham, and also fourteen of the Yatton tenantry, were coming up to the poll. Mr. Gammon, accordingly, had not stood there more than five minutes, before a sudden hissing and groaning announced the approach of a Blue—in fact, it proved to be little Dr. Tatham, who had been prevented from earlier coming up, through attendance on one or two sick parishioners, in different parts of the neighborhood, to whom he had been summoned unexpectedly. It cost the quiet

stout-hearted old man no little effort, and occasioned him a little discomposure, elbowed, and jolted, and insulted as he was; but at length there he stood before the poll-clerks—who did not require to ask him his name or residence. Gammon gazed at him with folded arms, and a stern and sad countenance. Presently, inclining slightly towards Mudflint, he seemed to whisper in that gentleman's ear; and—"Administer the bribery oath," said the latter to the returning officer, eagerly.

"Sir," exclaimed that functionary, in a low tone, with amazement—"the bribery oath—! To Dr. Tatham? Are you in earnest?"

"Do your duty, sir!" replied Mudflint, in a bitter, insulting tone.

"I regret to inform you, sir, that I am required to administer the bribery oath to you," said the returning officer to Dr. Tatham, bowing very low.

"What? What? The bribery oath? To *me*?" inquired Dr. Tatham, giving a sudden start, and flushing violently: at which stringent evidence of his guilt—

"Aha!" cried those of the crowd nearest to him—"Come, old gentleman! Thou mun bolt it now!"

"Is it pretended to be believed," faltered Dr. Tatham, with visible emotion—"that *I am bribed*?" But at that moment his eye happened to light upon the exulting countenance of "the Reverend" Mr. Mudflint. It calmed him. Removing his hat, he took the Testament into his hand, while the crowd ceased hooting

for a moment, in order to hear the oath read; and with dignity he endured the indignity. He then recorded his vote for Mr. Delamere; and after fixing a sorrowful and surprised eye on Mr. Gammon, who stood with his hat slouched a good deal over his face, and looking in another direction, withdrew; and as he turned his mild and venerable face towards the crowd, the hissing subsided. Shortly afterwards made their appearance amid great uproar, several of the tenantry of Mr. Titmouse—all of them looking as if they had come up, poor souls! rather to receive punishment for a crime, than to exercise their elective franchise in a free country!—Gammon colored a little; took out his pocket-book and pencil; and fixing on the first of the tenantry, Mark Hackett, the eye, as it were, of a suddenly revived serpent, wrote down his name in silence—but what an expression was on his face! Thus he acted towards every one of those unhappy and doomed persons; replacing his pocket-book whence he had taken it, as soon as the last of the little body had polled. It was now a quarter to three o'clock, (the poll closing finally at *four*,) and thus stood the numbers:—

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Titmouse | 149 |
| Delamere | 146 |
| | — |
| Majority | 3 |

On these figures being exhibited by an eager member of Mr. Delamere's committee, there arose a tremendous uproar among

the crowd, and cries of "Tear it down! Tear it down! Ah! Bribery and corruption! Three groans for Delamere! O—h! o—h! o—h!" Matters seemed, indeed, getting desperate with the crowd; yet they seemed to feel a sort of comfort in gazing at the stern, determined, but chagrined countenance of the ruling spirit of the day, Mr. Gammon. He was a "deep hand,"—thought they—he knew his game; and, depend upon it, he was only waiting till the enemy was clean done, and then he would pour in the Quaint Club and crush them forever. Thus thought hundreds before the hustings. Not a vote was offered for a quarter of an hour; and the poll-clerks, with their pens behind their ears, employed the interval in munching sandwiches, and drinking sherry out of a black bottle—the onlookers cutting many jokes upon them while thus pleasantly engaged. Symptoms were soon visible, in the increasing proportion of blue rosettes becoming visible in and about the crowd, that this promising state of things was reviving the hopes of Mr. Delamere's party, while it as plainly depressed those in the yellow interest. Not for one moment, during the whole of that close and exciting contest, had Mr. Crafty quitted his little inner apartment, where he had planned the battle, and conducted it to its present point of success. Nor had his phlegmatic temperament suffered the least excitement or disturbance: cold as ice though his heart might be, his head was ever clear as crystal. Certainly his strategy had been admirable. Vigilant, circumspect, equal to every emergency, he had brought up his forces in perfect order throughout the day; the enemy had

not caught the least inkling of his real game. By his incessant, ingenious, and *safe* manœuvring, he had kept that dreaded body, the Quaint Club, in play up to this advanced period of the day—in a state of exquisite embarrassment and irresolution, balancing between hopes and fears; and he had, moreover, rendered a temporary reverse on the field upon which he then fought, of little real importance, by reason of the measures he had taken to cut off the enemy entirely in their very next move. He was now left entirely alone in his little room, standing quietly before the fire with his hands behind him, with real composure, feeling that he had done his duty, and awaiting the issue patiently. The hustings, all this while, exhibited an exciting spectacle. Nearly another quarter of an hour had elapsed, without a single vote being added to the poll. The crowd was very great, and evidently sharing no little of the agitation and suspense experienced by those within the booth—(except Mr. Titmouse, whose frequent potations of brandy and water during the day had composed him at length to sleep; and he leaned—absolutely snoring!—against the corner of the booth, out of sight of the crowd). The poll-clerks were laughing and talking unconcernedly together. The leading Blues mustered strongly on their part of the booth; elated undoubtedly, but with the feelings of men who have desperately fought their way, inch by inch, sword to sword, bayonet to bayonet, up to a point where they expect, nevertheless, momentarily to be blown into the air. What *could* have become of the Quaint Club? thought *they* also, with inward astonishment

and apprehension. Gammon continued standing, motionless and silent, with folded arms—his dark surtout buttoned carelessly at the top, and his hat slouched over his eyes, as if he sought to conceal their restlessness and agitation. Excitement, intense anxiety, and physical exhaustion, were visible in his countenance. He seemed indisposed to speak, even in answer to any one who addressed him.

"O cursed Quaint Club!"—said he to himself—"O cursed Crafty! I am beaten—beaten hollow—ridiculously! How the miscreants have bubbled me! Crafty can now do without them, and won't endanger the election by polling them! We are ruined! And what will be said at headquarters, after what I have led them to believe—bah!" He almost stamped with the vehemence of his emotions. "There's certainly yet a resource; nay, but that also is too late—a *riot*—a nod, a breath of mine—those fine fellows there—would *down* with hustings, and all the poll-books be destroyed!—No, no; it is not to be thought of—the time's gone by."

It was now nearly a quarter past three o'clock. "It's passing strange!" thought Gammon, as he looked at his watch; "what can be in the wind? Not a single man of them been up for either party! Perhaps, after all, Lord De la Zouch may not have come up to their mark, and may now be merely standing on the chance of *our* being unable to come to terms with them. But what can I do, without certain destruction, after what I have heard? It will be simply jumping down into the pit."—A thought suddenly

struck him; and with forced calmness he slipped away from the polling-booth, and, with an affectation of indifference, made his way to a house where a trusty emissary awaited his orders. 'T was a Grilston man, a Yellow voter, as much at Gammon's beck and call as Ben Bran was represented to be at the command of Lord De la Zouch. Gammon despatched him on the following enterprise—viz. to rush alarmedly among the club, who knew *him*, but *not his devotion to Gammon*—to tell them that he had just discovered, by mere accident, the frightful danger in which they were placed, owing to Mr. Gammon's being enraged against them on account of their last proposal—that he had now made up his mind to the loss of the election, and also to commence prosecutions for bribery against every single member of the club; for that, having early suspected foul play, he was in a position "to *nail* every man of them," without fixing himself on Mr. Titmouse. If he succeeded thus far—viz. in alarming them—then, after apparently dire perplexity, he was suddenly to suggest one mode of at once securing themselves, and foiling their bitter enemy, Mr. Gammon; viz. hastening up to the polling-booth, without a word to any one, and, by placing Titmouse at the top of the poll, *destroy Gammon's motive for commencing his vindictive proceedings*, and so take him in his own trap. Gammon then returned to the polling-booth, (having named the signal by which he was to be apprised of success,) and resumed his former position, without giving to any one near him the slightest intimation of what he had been doing. If he imagined, however,

that any movement of *his*, at so critical a moment, had not been watched, he was grievously mistaken. There were three persons whose sole business it had been, during the whole of that day, to keep a lynx eye upon his every motion, especially as connected with the Quaint Club. But his cunning emissary was equal to the exigency; and having (unseen) reconnoitred the streets for a few moments, he imagined that he detected one, if not two spies, lurking about. He therefore slipped out of a low back window, got down four or five back yards, and so across a small hidden alley, which enabled him to enter, unperceivedly, into the back room of the house he wished.

"Ben! Ben!" he gasped with an air of consternation.

"Hallo, man! what is 't?" quoth Ben.

"Done! every man of you sold! Mr. Gammon turned tail on you!—Just happened to overhear him swear a solemn oath to Mr. Mudflint, that before four-and-twenty hours"

"Lord!—you did!—did you really?"

"So help me—!" exclaimed the man, aghast.

"What's to be done?" quoth Ben, the perspiration bursting out all over his forehead. "We've been made the cursedest fools of by *some* one!—Hang me if I think the old beast at Fotheringham, or the young cub either, has ever meant"—

"What signifies it? It's all too late now."

"Isn't there *any* way—eh? To be sure, I own I thought we were pitched a *leetle* too high with Mr. Gam"—

"But he has you *now*, though; and you'll find he's a devil

incarnate!—But stop, I see"—he seemed, as if a thought had suddenly glanced across his puzzled and alarmed mind—"I'll tell you how to do him, and save yourselves yet."

"O Lord!—eh?" exclaimed Ben, breathlessly.

"But are your men all together?"

"Oh ay! in five minutes' time we could all be on our way to the booth."

"Then don't lose a minute—or all's up forever!—Don't explain to them the fix they're in till it's all over—and if *ever* you tell 'em, or any one, the bit o' service I've"—

"Never, Thomas, so help me—!" quoth Ben, grasping his companion's hand, as in a vice.

"Off all of you to the booth, and poll for life and death, for *Titmouse*."

"What? Come—come, Master Thomas!"

"Ay, ay—you fool! Don't you see? Make him win the election, and then, *in course*, Gammon's no cause to be at you—he'll have got all he wants."

"My eyes!" exclaimed Ben, as he suddenly perceived the stroke of policy. He snapped his finger, buttoned his coat, popped out of the house—within a few moments he was in the midst of the club, who were all in a back yard, behind a small tavern which they frequented. "Now, lads!" he exclaimed with a wink of his eye. He took the yellow and the blue colors out of his bosom: returned the blue, and mounted the yellow: so in a trice did every one present, not one single question having been asked

at Ben, in whom they had perfect confidence.

But, to return to Mr. Gammon. It was now a moment or two past the half hour—there was scarcely half an hour more before the election must close. The mob were getting sullen. The Quaint Club were being asked for—now with hisses, then with cheers. All eyes were on Gammon, who felt that they were. His face bore witness to the intensity of his emotions; he did not any longer even attempt to disguise his desperate disappointment. His nerves were strung to their highest pitch of tension; and his eye glanced incessantly, but half-closed, towards a corner house at a little distance; ah! that eye was suddenly lit up, as it were, with fire—never had been such an instantaneous change seen in a man's face before. He had at length caught the appointed signal; a man appeared at a window, and appeared accidentally to drop a little stick into the street. A mighty sigh escaped from the pent-up bosom of Gammon, and relieved him from a sense of suffocation. His feelings might have been compared to those excited in our great commander, when the Prussians made their appearance at Waterloo. The battle was won; defeat converted into triumph; but suddenly recollecting himself—aware that every muscle of his face was watched—he relapsed into his former gloom. Presently were heard the approaching sounds of music—nearer and nearer came the clash of cymbals, the clangor of trombone and trumpet, the roll of the drum;—all the crowd turned their faces towards the quarter whence the sounds came, and within a few seconds' time was

seen turning the corner, full on its way to the booth, the banner of the Quaint Club, with yellow rosettes streaming from the top of each pole—yellow ribbons on every one's breast. The People's cause had triumphed! Their oppressors were prostrate! A wild and deafening shout of triumph burst from the crowd, as if they had been one man; and continued for several minutes intermingled with the inspiring sounds of the noble air—"Rule Britannia!" played by the two bands, (that of Mr. Titmouse having instantly joined them.) On marched the club, two and two, arm in arm, with rapid step; their faces flushed with excitement and exultation—their hands vehemently shaken by the shouting crowd, who opened a broad lane for them up to the polling-booth. Oh, the contrast exhibited in the faces of those standing *there!* What gloom, what vexation, what despair, on the one hand—what signs of frantic excitement, joy, and triumph, on the other! "Titmouse!" cried the first member of the club, as he gave his vote; "Titmouse!" cried the second; "Titmouse!" cried the third; "Titmouse!" cried the fourth. The battle was won. Mr. Titmouse was in a majority, which went on increasing every minute, amid tremendous cheering. Mr. Gammon's face and figure would at that moment have afforded a study for a picture; the strongly repressed feeling of triumph yet indicating its swelling influence upon his marked and expressive countenance, where an accurate eye might have detected also the presence of deep anxiety. Again and again were his hands shaken by those near him—Mudflint, Bloodsuck, Woodlouse, Centipede, Going Gone, Ginblossom—

as they enthusiastically gave him credit for the transcendent skill he had exhibited, and the glorious result it had secured. As the church clock struck four, the books were closed, and the election was declared at an end, with eighteen of Mr. Titmouse's voters yet unpolled! Within a few minutes afterwards, Mr. Going Gone hastily chalked upon the board, and held it up exultingly to the crowd,—

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Titmouse | 237 |
| Delamere | 149 |
| | — |
| Majority | 88 |

"Hurrah!—hurrah!—hip, hip, hip, hurrah!" burst from the crowd, while hands were upraised and whirled round, hats flung into the air, and every other mark of popular excitement exhibited. "Titmouse!—Titmouse!—Nine Times nine for Mr. Titmouse!" was called for, and responded to with thrilling and overpowering effect. The newly elected member, however, could not be pinched, or shaken, or roused, out of the drunken stupor into which, from the combined influence of liquor and excitement, he had sunk. To enable him to go through the responsible duties of the day—viz. bobbing his head every now and then to the worthy and independent electors who came to invest him with the proud character of their representative in the House of Commons—he had brought in his pocket a flask of brandy, which had been thrice replenished: in a word, the popular

idol was decidedly not presentable: and under the impulse of strong emotion, Mr. Gammon, infinitely to the disgust of the Reverend Smirk Mudflint, who was charged up to his throat with combustible matter, and ready to go off at an instant's notice, stepped forward, and on removing his hat, was received with several distinct and long-continued rounds of applause. Silence having been at length partially restored—

"Yes, gentlemen," he commenced in an energetic tone, and with an excited and determined air and manner, "well may you utter those shouts of joy, for you have fought a noble fight, and won a glorious victory, (*great cheering.*) Your cause, the cause of freedom and good government, is triumphant over all opposition, (*immense cheering.*) The hideous forms of bigotry and tyranny are at this moment lying crushed and writhing, (vehement cheering rendered the rest of the sentence inaudible.) Gentlemen, truth and independence have this day met and overthrown falsehood and slavery, (*cheers,*) in spite of the monstrous weapons with which they came into the field, (*groans*)—bribery, (*groans,*) corruption, (*groans,*) intimidation, (*hisses,*) coercion, and treachery, (*mingled groans and hisses.*) But, gentlemen, thank God, all was in vain! (*enthusiastic cheering.*) I will not say that a defeated despot is at this moment sitting with sullen scowl in a neighboring castle, (*tremendous shouts of applause;*) all his schemes frustrated, all his gold scattered in vain, and trampled under foot by the virtuous electors whom he sought first to corrupt, and then degrade into slaves, (*great*

cheering.) Gentlemen, let us laugh at his despair, (*loud and prolonged laughter;*) but let us rejoice like men, like freemen, that the degraded and execrable *faction* to which he belongs, is defeated, (*cheering.*) Gentlemen, if ever there was a contest in which public spirit and principle triumphed over public and private profligacy, this has been it; and by this time to-morrow, hundreds of constituencies will be told, as their own struggles are approaching, to—*look at Yatton*—to emulate her proud and noble example; and England will soon be enabled to throw off the hateful incubus that has so long oppressed her, (*immense cheering.*) But, gentlemen, you are all exhausted, (*No! no! and vehement cheers;*) Mr. Titmouse's friends are *all* exhausted after the great labor and excitement of this glorious day, and need repose, in order that on the morrow we may meet refreshed, to enjoy the full measure of our triumph, (*cheering.*) In particular, your distinguished representative, Mr. Titmouse, worn out with the excitement of the day, long depressed by the adverse aspect of the poll, was so overpowered with the sudden and glorious change effected by that band of patriots who—(the rest of the sentence was drowned in cheering.) Gentlemen, he is young, and unaccustomed to such extraordinary and exciting scenes, (*hear, hear, hear!*) but by the morrow he will have recovered sufficiently to present himself before you, and thank you with enthusiasm and gratitude, (*cheers.*) In his name, gentlemen, I do, from my soul, thank you for the honor which you have conferred upon him, and assure you that he considers any past success with

which Providence may have blessed him, (*hear, hear, hear!*) as nothing, when compared with the issue of this day's struggle, (*cheering.*) Rely upon it, that his conduct in Parliament will not disgrace you, (*no, no, no!*) And now, gentlemen, I must conclude, trusting that with victory will cease animosity, and that there will be an immediate declaration of those feelings of frank and manly cordiality, and good feeling, which ought to distinguish free fellow-citizens, and which, above all, are signally characteristic of Englishmen, (*cheering.*) Shake hands, gentlemen, with a fallen enemy, (*we will, we will!*) and forget, having conquered, that you ever fought."

With these words, uttered with the fervor and eloquence which had indeed distinguished the whole of his brief address, he resumed his hat, amid tremendous shouts of "three times three for Mr. Titmouse!"—"three times three for Mr. Gammon!"—"nine times nine groans for Mr. Delamere!"—all of which were given with tumultuous energy. The two bands approached; the procession formed; the nearly insensible Titmouse, his face deadly pale, and his hat awry, was partly supported and partly dragged along between Mr. Gammon and Mr. Going Gone; and to the inspiring air of "See the Conquering Hero comes," and accompanied by the cheering crowd, they all marched in procession to Mr. Titmouse's committee-room. He was hurried up-stairs; then led into a bedroom; and there soon, alas! experienced the overmastering power of sickness; which instantly obliterated all recollection of his triumph, and made

him utterly unconscious of the brilliant position to which he had just been elevated—equally to the honor of himself and his constituency, who justly and proudly regarded

"Tittlebat Titmouse, Esq., M. P."

as the glorious first-fruits to them of the glorious "*Bill for giving Everybody Everything.*"

At a late hour, that night, an interview took place between Ben Bran and Mr. Gammon, of which all that I shall say at present is, that it was equally confidential and satisfactory. There can be no harm, however, in intimating that Mr. Gammon made no allusion to the arrival of the Greek kalends; but he *did* to—the fifteenth day after the meeting of Parliament.² He

² The time within which a petition against the return of a member of Parliament must be presented, has, for the last two centuries, been a fortnight after the meeting of Parliament, or the return of the member. This still continues the limited period. See stat. 2 and 3 Vict. c. 31, § 2. The allusion in the text, therefore, is to the day *after* that, beyond which a petition could not be presented; and if Gammon, on or after that fifteenth day, had paid money for their votes to the members of the Quaint Club, he might have done it with impunity, as far as concerned the perilling Mr. Titmouse's seat. The legislature has lately, however, made great exertions to put down the system of bribing; and by statute 5 and 6 Vict. c. 102, passed on the 19th August 1842, has invested the House of Commons with very formidable powers for that purpose. If petitioners on the score of bribery, fearful of the strength of the case which may be brought against themselves on the same ground, agree with their opponents to abandon the charge of bribery, and compromise the matter, the committee may nevertheless inquire into the whole matter, and report the result to the House. And by the fourth and fifth section of that act, a petition complaining of bribery may be presented at any time

satisfied Ben—and through him the Quaint Club—that Lord De la Zouch's agents had been only deluding them, and had laid a deep plan for ensnaring the club—which Gammon had early seen through, and endeavored to defeat. A little circumstance which happened some two or three days afterwards, seemed to corroborate the truth of at least a portion of his statements—viz. eight prosecutions for bribery were brought against so many members of the Quaint Club: and on their hastily assembling to consult upon so startling an incident, one still more so came to light;—*five leading members were not to be found!!* Writs in actions for penalties of £500 each, were on the same day served upon—Barnabas Bloodsuck, Smirk Mudflint, (otherwise called *the Reverend Smirk Mudflint,*) Cephas Woodlouse, and—woe is me that I should have it to record!—"Oily Gammon, gentleman, one of the attorneys of our lord the king, before the king himself, at Westminster." The amount claimed from him was £4,000; from Bloodsuck £3,000; and from Mudflint £2,500, which would, alas! have alone absorbed all the pew-rents of his little establishment for one hundred years to come, if his system of moral teaching should so long live. What was the consternation of these gentlemen to discover, when in their turn they called a

after the first fourteen days of the meeting of Parliament, and within three calendar months next after some one or more of the alleged acts of bribery shall have been committed; and the inquiries of the committee are limited to acts of bribery committed within three months before presenting the petition. The entire system of election law has been also remodelled by several very recent statutes, as will be explained in the next note.

private meeting of their leading friends, that one of them also was missing—viz. *Judas M'Do'em!* Moreover, it was palpable that amid an ominous silence and calmness on the other side—even on the part of the *True Blue*—the most guarded and systematic and persevering search for evidence was going on, and with all Gammon's self-possession, the sudden sight of Mr. Crafty stealthily quitting the house of an humble Yellow voter, a week after the election, occasioned him somewhat sickening sensations. Gammon was not unaccustomed to wade in deep waters; but these were *very* deep! However, a great point had been gained. Mr. Titmouse was M. P. for Yatton; and Mr. Gammon had maintained his credit in high quarters, where he had stood pledged as to the result of the election; having been long before assured that every member returned into the new Parliament was worth his weight in gold. Such were the thoughts passing through the acute and powerful mind of Gammon, as he sat late one night, shortly afterwards, alone at Yatton, Mr. Titmouse having retired to his bedroom half stupefied with liquor, and anxious to complete matters by smoking himself to sleep. The wind whistled cheerlessly round the angle of the Hall in which was situated the room where he sat, his feet resting on the fender, his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the fire. Then he took up the newspaper recently arrived from town, which contained a report of his speech to the electors at the close of the poll; it was the organ of the Whig party—the *Morning Growl*; and its leading article commented in very

encomiastic terms upon his address, "given in another part of the paper." His soul heaved with disgust at the thoughts of his own dissimulation;—"Independence!" "Purity of Election!" "Public Principle!" "*Triumph of Principle!*" "Popular enthusiasm!" "Man of the people!"—"Look," thought he—"eugh—at *Titmouse!* Is *representation* an utter farce—a mere *imaginary* privilege of the people? If not, what but public swindlers are we who procure the return of such idiots as—faugh! Would I had been on the other"—He rose, sighed, lit his chamber candle, and retired to bed, but not to rest; for he spent several hours in endeavoring to retrace every step which he had taken in the election—with a view to ascertain how far it could be proved that he had legally implicated himself. The position in which, indeed, he and those associated with him in the proceedings, were placed, was one which required his most anxious consideration, with a view, not merely to the retention of Mr. Titmouse's seat, so hardly won, but to the tremendous personal liabilities with which it was sought to fix himself, Gammon. The inquiries which he instituted into the practices which he had been led to believe prevailed openly upon the other side, led to no satisfactory results. If the enemy had bribed, they had done so with consummate skill and caution. Yet he chose to assume the *air* of one who thought otherwise; and gave directions for writs for penalties to be forthwith served upon Mr. Parkinson, Mr. Gold, Mr. St. Aubyn, and Mr. Milnthorpe—all of whom, as indeed he had expected, only laughed at him. But it was wofully different as regarded himself and his friends;

for, before Mr. Crafty took his departure from Yatton, he had collected a body of evidence, against all of them, of the most fearful stringency and completeness. In fact, Lord De la Zouch had determined that, if it cost him ten thousand pounds more, he would spare no effort, as well to secure the seat for his son, as to punish those who had been guilty of the atrocious practices which had been revealed to him.

Need I say with what intense interest, with what absorbing anxiety, the progress of this contest had been watched by the Aubreys? From Lady De la Zouch and other friends, but more especially from Dr. Tatham, who had regularly forwarded the *True Blue*, and also written frequent and full letters, they had learned, from time to time, all that was going on. Mr. Aubrey had prepared them for the adverse issue of the affair; he had never looked for anything else; but could he or any of them feel otherwise than a painful and indignant sympathy with the little doctor, on reading his account of the gross insult which had been offered to him at the hustings? Kate, before she had read half of it, sprang from her chair, threw down the letter, cried bitterly, then kissed the venerable doctor's handwriting, and walked to and fro, flashing lightning from her eyes, as her vivid fancy painted to her with painful distinctness that scene of wanton and brutal outrage on one of the most gentle, benevolent, and spotless of God's creatures, whose name was associated in all their minds with everything that was pious, pure, and good—indeed they were all powerfully affected. As for *the Reverend Smirk Mudflint*

—"Presumptuous wretch!" quoth Kate, as her flashing eye met that of her brother: and he felt that his feelings, like her own, could not be expressed. The first account she received of the outrage perpetrated on Delamere was in the columns of the *True Blue*, which, being published on the evening of the nomination, had been instantly forwarded to town by Dr. Tatham. It blanched her cheek; she then felt a mist coming over her eyes—a numbness—a faintness ensued, and she sank upon the sofa, and swooned. It was a long while, after she had recovered, before a flood of tears relieved her excitement. 'T was no use disguising matters, even had she felt so disposed, before those who felt so exquisite and vivid a sympathy with her; and who did not restrain their ardent and enthusiastic expressions of admiration at the spirited and noble manner in which Delamere had commenced and carried on his adventure. At whose instance, and to please whom, had it been really undertaken? Kate's heart fluttered intensely at the bare notion of seeing him again in Vivian Street. He would come—she felt—with a sort of *claim* upon her!—And he made his at once desired and dreaded appearance some days afterwards, quite unexpectedly. Kate was playing on the piano, and had not heard his knock; so that he was actually in the drawing-room before she was aware of his being in London, or had formed the slightest expectation of such an event.

"Heavens, Mr. Delamere!—Is it you?" she stammered, rising from the piano, her face having suddenly become pale.

"Ay, sweet Kate—unless I am become some one else, as—*the*

rejected of Yatton"—he replied fondly, as he grasped her hands fervently in his own, and led her to the sofa.

"Don't—don't—Mr. Delamere"—said she, faintly, striving to disengage one of her hands, which she instantly placed before her eyes to conceal her rising emotion. Her brother and Mrs. Aubrey considerably came to her relief, by engaging Delamere in conversation. He saw their object; and releasing Miss Aubrey, for the present, from his attentions, soon had entered into a long and very animated account of all his Yatton doings. In spite of herself, as it were, Kate drew near the table, and, engrossed with interest, listened, and joined in the conversation, as if it had not been actually Delamere who was sitting beside her. He made very light of the little accident of the wounded lip—but as he went on, Kate looked another way, her eyes obstructed with tears, and her very heart yearning towards him. "Oh, Mr. Delamere!"—she suddenly and vehemently exclaimed—"what *wretches* they were to use you so!" and then blushed scarlet.

"Well—see if I'm not M.P. for Yatton, yet"—said Delamere, with a confident air, just before he rose to go—"and that within a few weeks, too, and *then*"—

"Don't be too sure of *that*," said Aubrey, gravely.

"Sure? I've no more doubt of it," replied Delamere, briskly, "than I have of our now being in Vivian Street—if there be the slightest pretence to fairness in a committee of the House of Commons. Why, upon my honor, we've got no fewer than eleven distinct, unequivocal, well-supported"—

"If election committees are to be framed of such people as appear to have been returned"—....

Did, however, the gaudy flower of Titmouse's victory at Yatton contain the seeds of inevitable defeat at St. Stephen's? 'T was surely a grave question; and had to be decided by a tribunal, the constitution of which, however, the legislature hath since, in its wisdom, seen fit altogether to alter. With matters, therefore, as they then were—but now are not—I deal freely, as with history.

The first glance which John Bull caught of his new House of Commons, under the *Bill for giving Everybody Everything*, almost turned his stomach, strong as it was, inside out; and he stood for some time staring with feelings of alternate disgust and dismay. Really, as far at least as outward appearance and behavior went, there seemed scarcely fifty gentlemen among them; and those appeared ashamed and afraid of their position. 'T was, indeed, as though the scum that had risen to the simmering surface of the caldron placed over the fierce fires of revolutionary ardor, had been ladled off and flung upon the floor of the House of Commons. The shock and mortification produced such an effect upon John, that he took for some time to his bed, and required a good deal of severe treatment, before he in any degree recovered himself. It was, indeed, a long while before he got quite right in his head!—As the new House anticipated a good deal of embarrassment from the presidency of the experienced and dignified person who had for many years filled the office of Speaker, they chose a new one; and then,

breathing freely, started fair for the session.

Some fifty seats were contested; and one of the very earliest duties of the new Speaker, was to announce the receipt of "a petition from certain electors of the borough of Yatton, complaining of an undue return; and praying the House to appoint a time for taking the same into its consideration." Mr. Titmouse, at that moment, was modestly sitting immediately behind the Treasury bench, next to a respectable pork-butcher, who had been returned for an Irish county, and with whom Mr. Titmouse had been dining at a neighboring tavern; where he had drunk whiskey and water enough to elevate him to the point of rising to present several petitions from his constituents—*first*, from Smirk Mudflint, and others, for opening the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to Dissenters of every denomination, and abolishing the subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles; *secondly*, from Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc, praying for a commission to inquire into the propriety of translating the Eton Latin and Greek grammars into English; *thirdly*, from several electors, praying the House to pass an act for exempting members of that House from the operation of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Laws, as well as from arrest on mesne and final process; and *lastly*, from certain other electors, praying the House to issue a commission to inquire into the cause of the *Tick* in sheep. I say this was the auspicious commencement of his senatorial career, meditated by Mr. Titmouse, when his ear caught the above startling words uttered by the Speaker; which so disconcerted him—prepared

though he was for some such move on the part of his enemies, that he resolved to postpone the presentation of the petitions of his enlightened constituents, till the ensuing day. After sitting in a dreadful fright for some twenty minutes or so, he felt it necessary to go out and calm his flurried spirits with a glass of brandy and soda-water. As he was leaving the House, a little incident happened to him, which was attended with very memorable consequences.

"A word with you, sir," whispered a commanding voice, in his ear, as he felt himself caught hold of by some one sitting at the corner of the Treasury Bench—"I'll follow you out—*quietly*, mind."

The speaker was a Mr. Swindle O'Gibbet, a tall, elderly, and somewhat corpulent person, with a broad-brimmed hat, a slovenly surtout, and vulgar swaggering carriage; a ruddy shining face, that constantly wore a sort of greasy smile; and an unctuous eye, with a combined expression of cunning, cowardice, and ferocity. He spoke in a rich brogue, and with a sort of confidential and cringing familiarity; yet, withal, 't was with the air and the tone of a man conscious of possessing great direct influence out of doors, and indirect influence within doors. 'T was, in a word, at once insinuating and peremptory—submissive and truculent. Several things had concurred to give Titmouse a very exalted notion of Mr. O'Gibbet. First, a noble speech of his, in which he showed infinite "*pluck*" in persevering against shouts of "order" from all parts of the House for an hour together;

secondly, his sitting on the front bench, often close beside little Lord Bulfinch, the leader of the House. His Lordship was a Whig; and though, as surely I need hardly say, there are thousands of Whigs every whit as pure and high-minded as their Tory rivals, his Lordship was a very *bitter* Whig. The bloom of original Whiggism, however, ripening fast into the rottenness of Radicalism, gave out at length an odor which was so offensive to many of his own early friends, that they were forced to withdraw from him. Personally, however, he was of respectable character, and a man of considerable literary pretensions, and enjoyed that Parliamentary influence generally secured to the possessor of talent, tact, experience, and temper. Now, it certainly argued some resolution in Mr. O'Gibbet to preserve an air of swaggering assurance and familiarity beside his aristocratic little neighbor, whose freezing demeanor towards him—for his Lordship evinced even a sort of shudder of disgust when addressed by him—Mr. O'Gibbet felt to be visible to all around. Misery makes strange bed-fellows, but surely politics stranger still; and there could not have been a more striking instance of it, than in Lord Bulfinch and Mr. O'Gibbet sitting side by side—as great a contrast in their persons as in their characters. But the third and chief ground of Titmouse's admiration of Mr. O'Gibbet, was a conversation—private and unheard the parties had imagined it, in the lobby of the House; but every word whereof had our inquisitive, but not excessively scrupulous, little friend contrived to overhear—between Mr. O'Gibbet and Mr.

Flummery, a smiling supple Lord of the Treasury, and whipper-in of the Ministry. Though generally confident enough, on this occasion he trembled, frowned, and looked infinitely distressed. Mr. O'Gibbet chucked him under the chin, familiarly and good-humoredly, and said—"Oh, murther and Irish! what's easier?—But it lies in a nut-shell. If you won't do it, I can't swim; and if I can't swim, you sink—every mother's son of you. Oh, come, come—give me a bit of a push at this pinch."

"That's what you've said so often"—

"Fait, an' what if I have? And look at the *shoves* that I've given you," said Mr. O'Gibbet, with sufficient sternness.

"But a—a—really we shall be found out! The House suspects already that you and we"—

"Bah! bother! hubbabo! Propose you it; I get up and oppose it—*vehemently*, do you mind—an' the blackguards opposite will carry it for you, out of love for me, ah, ha!—Aisy, aisy—softly say I! Isn't that the way to get along?" and Mr. O'Gibbet winked his eye.

Mr. Flummery, however, looked unhappy, and remained silent and irresolute.

"Oh, my dear sir—*exporrige frontem!* Get along wid you, you know it's for your own good," said Mr. O'Gibbet; and shoving him on good-humoredly, left the lobby, while Mr. Flummery passed on, with a forced smile, to his seat. He continued comparatively silent, and very wretched, the whole night.

Two hours before the House broke up, but not till after Lord

Bulfinch had withdrawn, Mr. Flummery, seizing his opportunity, got up to do the bidding, and eventually fulfilled the prophecy, of Mr. O'Gibbet, amid bitter and incessant jeers and laughter from the opposition.

"Another such victory and we're undone," said Mr. Flummery, with a furious whisper, soon afterwards to Mr. O'Gibbet.

"Och, go to the ould divil wid ye!" replied Mr. O'Gibbet, thrusting his tongue into his cheek, and moving off.

Now Titmouse had contrived to overhear almost every word of the above curious colloquy, and had naturally formed a prodigious estimate of Mr. O'Gibbet, and his influence in the highest quarters.—But to proceed.—Within a few minutes' time might have been seen Titmouse and O'Gibbet earnestly conversing together, remote from observation, in one of the passages leading from the lobby. Mr. O'Gibbet spoke all the while in a tone which at once solicited and commanded attention. "Sir, of course you know you've not a ghost of a chance of keeping your seat? I've heard all about it. You'll be beat, sir,—dead beat; will never be able to sit in this *Parlimint*, sir, for your own borough, and be liable to no end o' penalties for bribery, besides. Oh, *my dear sir*, how I wish I had been at your elbow! This would never have happened!"

"Oh, sir! 'pon my soul—I—I"—stammered Titmouse, quite thunderstruck at Mr. O'Gibbet's words.

"Hush—st—*hush*, wid your chattering tongue, sir, or we'll

be overheard, and you'll be ruined," interrupted Mr. O'Gibbet, looking suspiciously around.

"I—I—beg your pardon, sir, but I'll give up my seat. I'm most uncommon sorry that ever—curse me if I care about being a mem"—

"Oh! and is *that* the way you spake of being a mimber o' Parlimint? For shame, for shame, not to feel the glory of your position, sir! There's *millions* o' gintlemen envying you, just now!—Sir, I see that you're likely to cut a figure in the House."

"But, begging your pardon, sir, if it *costs* such a precious long figure—why, I've come down some four or five thousand pounds already," quoth Titmouse, twisting his hand into his hair.

"An' what if ye have? What's that to a gintleman o' your consequence in the country? It's, moreover, only once and for all; only stick in *now*—and you stay in for seven years, and come in for nothing next general election; and now—d'ye hear me, sir? for time presses—retire, and give the seat to a Tory if you will—(what's the name o' the blackguard? Oh, it's young Delamere)—and have your own borough stink under your nose all your days! But can you keep a secret like a gintleman? Judging from your appearance, I should say yes—sir—is it so?" Titmouse placed his hand over his beating heart, and with a great oath solemnly declared that he would be "mum as death;" on which Mr. O'Gibbet lowered his tone to a faint whisper—"You'll distinctly understand I've nothing to do with it personally, but it's impossible, sir—d'ye hear?—to fight the divil except with

his own weapons—and there are too many o' the enemies o' the people in the House—a little *money*, sir—eh? Aisy, aisy—softly say I! Isn't that the way to get along?" added Mr. O'Gibbet, with a rich leer, and poking Titmouse in the ribs.

"Pon my life that'll do—and—and—what's the figure, sir?"

"Sir, as you're a young mumber, and of Liberal principles," continued Mr. O'Gibbet, dropping his tone still lower, "*three thousand pounds*"—Titmouse started as if he had been shot. "Mind, that *clears* you, sir, d'ye understand? Everything! Out and out, no reservation at all at all—divil a bit!"

"Pon my precious soul, I shall be ruined between you all!" gasped Titmouse, faintly.

"Sir, you're not the man I took you for," replied Mr. O'Gibbet, impatiently and contemptuously. "Don't you see a barleycorn before your nose? You'll be *beat* after spending three times the money I name, and be liable to ten thousand pounds' penalties besides for bribery"—

"Oh, 'pon my life, sir, as for *that*," said Titmouse, briskly, but feeling sick at heart, "I've no more to do with it than—my tiger"—

"Bah! you're a babby, I see!" quoth O'Gibbet, testily. "What's the name o' your man o' business?—there's not a minute to lose—it's your greatest friend I mane to be, I assure ye—tut, what's his name?"

"Mr. Gammon," replied Titmouse, anxiously.

"Let him, sir, be with me at my house in Ruffian Row by nine to-morrow morning to a minute—and alone," said Mr. O'Gibbet,

with his lip close to Titmouse's ear—"and once more, d'ye hear, sir?—a breath about this to any one, an' you're a ruined man—you're in my power most completely!"—With this Mr. O'Gibbet and Mr. Titmouse parted—the former having much other similar business on hand, and the latter determined to hurry off to Mr. Gammon forthwith: and in fact he was within the next five minutes in his cab, on his way to Thavies' Inn.

Mr. Gammon was at Mr. O'Gibbet's (of whom he spoke to Titmouse in the most earnest and unqualified terms of admiration) at the appointed time: and after an hour's private conference with him, they both went off to Mr. Flummery's official residence in Pillory Place; but what passed there I never have been able to ascertain with sufficient accuracy to warrant me in laying it before the reader.

When the day for taking into consideration the Yatton Petition had arrived—on a voice calling out at the door of the House, "Counsel in the Yatton petition!" in walked forthwith eight learned gentlemen, four being of counsel for the petitioner, and four for the sitting member—attended by their respective agents, who stood behind, while the counsel took their seats at the bar of a very crowded and excited House; for there were several election committees to be balloted for on that day. The door was then locked; and the order of the day was read. Titmouse might have been seen popping up and down about the back ministerial benches, like a parched pea. On the front Treasury bench sat Mr. O'Gibbet, his hat slouched over his fat face, his arms folded. On

the table stood several glasses, containing little rolls of paper, each about two or three inches long, and with the name of every member of the House severally inscribed on them. These glasses being placed before the Speaker, the clerk rose, and taking out one or two of the rolls of paper at a time, presented them to the Speaker; who, opening each, read out aloud the name inscribed, to the House. Now, the object was, on such occasions, to draw out the names of *thirty-three* members then present; which were afterwards to be reduced, by each party alternately striking off eleven names, to ELEVEN—who constituted the committee charged with the trial of the petition. Now the astute reader will see that, imagining the House to be divided into two great classes, viz. those *favorable* and those *opposed* to the petitioner—according to whose success or failure a vote was retained, lost, or gained to the *party*—and as the number of thirty-three cannot be more nearly divided than into seventeen and sixteen, 't is said by those experienced in such matters, that in cases where it ran so close—that side invariably and necessarily won who drew the *seventeenth* name; seeing that each party having eleven names of those in his opponent's interest, to expunge out of the thirty-three, he who luckily drew this prize of the SEVENTEENTH MAN, was sure to have SIX good men and true on the committee against the other's FIVE. And thus of course it was, in the case of a greater or less proportion of favorable or adverse persons answering to their names. So keenly was all this felt and appreciated by the whole House on these interesting—these

solemn, these *deliberative*, and JUDICIAL occasions—that on every name being called, there were sounds heard, and symptoms witnessed, indicative of eager delight or intense vexation. Now, on the present occasion, it would at first have appeared as if some unfair advantage had been secured by the opposition; since five of *their* names were called, to two of those of their opponents; but then only one of the five *answered*, (it so happening that the other four were absent, disqualified as being petitioned against, or exempt,) while both of the *two* answered!—You should have seen the chagrined faces, and heard the loud acclamations of "Ts!—ts!—ts!" on either side of the House, when their own men's names were thus abortively called over!—the delight visible on the other side!—The issue long hung in suspense; and at length the scales were evenly poised, and the House was in a state of exquisite anxiety; for the next eligible name answered to, would really determine which side was to gain or lose a seat.

"*Sir Ezekiel Tuddington*"—cried the Speaker, amid profound and agitated silence. He was one of the opposition—but answered not; he was absent. "Ts! ts! ts!" cried the opposition.

"*Gabriel Grubb*"—This was a ministerial man, who rose, and said he was serving on another committee. "Ts! ts! ts!" cried the ministerial side.

"*Bennet Barleycorn*"—(opposition)—petitioned against. "Ts! ts! ts!" vehemently cried out the opposition.

"Phelim O'Doodle"—

"Here!" exclaimed that honorable member, spreading triumph

over the ministerial, and dismay over the opposition side of the House; and the thirty-three names having been thus called and answered to, a loud buzz arose on all sides—of congratulation or despondency.

The fate of the petition, it was said, was already as good as decided.—The parties having retired to "strike"³ the committee, returned in about an hour's time, and the following members were then sworn in, and ordered to meet the next morning at eleven o'clock:—

Ministerial.

- (1.) Sir Simper Silly.
- (2.) Noah No-land.
- (3.) Pheilm O'Doodle.
- (4.) Micah M'Squash.
- (5.) Sir Caleb Calf.
- (6.) Och Hubbaboo.

Opposition.

- (1.) Castleton Plume.
- (2.) Charles D'Eresby.
- (3.) Merton Mortimer.
- (4.) Sir Simon Alkmond, Bart.
- (5.) Lord Frederick Brackenbury.

And the six, of course, on their meeting, chose the *chairman*, who was a sure card—to wit, Sir Caleb Calf, Bart.⁴

³ For this purpose each party, attended by their counsel, agents, and political friends, immediately withdrew to separate rooms, to fix upon the eleven names which they would strike off. Having done this, they met in a third room, before an officer of the House; and struck off name by name alternately, till the thirty-three were reduced to eleven.—This process was called "*Knocking out the brains of the Committee*:" for as each party's object was to get rid of a decided and known political opponent, the abler and more eminent he was, the greater the necessity for getting rid of him. Those left were the more obscure members of the House.

⁴ The process of forming an election committee, as described in the text, fell several times under the author's personal observation—in his professional capacity—as late

Mr. Delamere's counsel and agents, together with Mr.

as till within the last five years, [this note being written in 1845.] It was prescribed by a statute, which since its enactment has been repeatedly amended and re-enacted, known by the name of "The Grenville Act," (stat. 10 Geo. III. c. 16.) It was long regarded as a very masterly and successful mode of securing an impartial committee. Thus speaks of it, for instance, Mr. Justice Coleridge, in a note to his edition of *Blackstone's Commentaries*, (Vol. i. p. 187, note 31:)—"This statute is justly celebrated for the wisdom and utility of its provisions. One of its principal *objects* is, to secure a fair election of petition committees." This eulogy was penned in the year 1825; but even admitting it to have been *then* justified by the working of the system, its defects became subsequently the object of universal regret and reprobation. For some years subsequently to the passing of the Reform Bill, this constitution of election committees—depicted in the text with rigorous fidelity—led to intolerable abuse, and merited scandal and reproach. In the year 1844, after a previous ineffectual remodelling of the system, was passed statute 7 and 8 Vict. c. 103, entitled "An Act to amend the law for the trial of controverted elections of members to serve in Parliament," (passed 9th August 1844,)—which created an entirely new system for the selection of these committees—of which the following is an outline.—At the beginning of every session, the Speaker appoints a "*general Committee of Elections*," consisting of six members, who must be approved of by the House—and then their appointment continues to the end of the session. A list is then made of all the members of the House, liable to serve on election committees, which is referred to this general committee; and they select from it a certain number, not exceeding twelve, whom they deem qualified to act as *chairmen* of election committees; and who are thereupon neither liable, nor eligible, to serve as *private* members of such committees. This body is called "the *Chairmen's Panel*." The remaining members of the House, liable to serve, are then divided into *five* panels, of equal numbers; and the order in which these five panels are to serve, is decided by lot, openly, by the clerk of the House, at the table.—All election petitions are then referred to the *general committee*, whose duty it is to select from the five panels, according to the order in which they may have been drawn, FOUR members, who are to serve as a select committee to try the petition referred to them, in the order in which that petition may happen to stand in the list of petitions—which is to be framed according to the provisions of the Act in question. On the same day on which the general committee thus choose the private members of the committee, but without

Delamere himself, met at consultation that evening, all with the depressed air of men who are proceeding with any undertaking *contra spem*. "Well, what think you of our committee?" inquired, with a significant smile, Mr. Berrington, the eloquent, acute, and experienced leading counsel. All present shrugged their shoulders, but at length agreed that even with *such* a committee, their case was an overpowering one; that *no* committee could dare to shut their eyes to such an array of facts as were here collected; the clearest case of *agency* made out—Mr. Berrington declared—that he had ever known in all his practice; and eleven distinct cases of BRIBERY, supported each by at least three unexceptionable witnesses; together with half-a-dozen cases of TREATING; in fact, the whole affair, it was admitted, had been most admirably got up, under the management of Mr. Crafty, (who was present,) and they *must* succeed.

knowing who have been so chosen, the members of the *chairmen's panel* select one of their number to act as *chairman* of the select committee; returning his name to the general committee, as soon as the latter shall have informed the chairmen's panel that the *four* members have been chosen. When all these arrangements have been completed, the parties in attendance are called into the House, and the names of the chairman and the four members read over to them; whereupon they withdraw, and this committee of FIVE then proceed, in due course, to try the petition. If, through illness, or other allowed excuse, the number should be reduced from five to less than three, the committee is dissolved—unless the parties choose to go on with *two* members, or even ONE, who in such case will lawfully constitute the committee.—Such is the scheme, devised with anxious ingenuity, which has recently been adopted by the legislature, for the all-important purpose of securing impartial election committees. That it is a vast improvement on the system described in the text, seems certain; but what will be its practical working, time alone can show.

"Of course, they'll call for proof of AGENCY first," quoth Mr. Berrington, carelessly glancing over his enormous brief; "and we'll at once fix this—what's his name—the Unitarian parson, Muff—Muffin—eh?"

"Mudflint—Smirk Mudflint"—

"Aha!—Well!—we'll begin with him, and—then trot out Bloodsuck and Centipede. Fix *them*—the rest all follow, and they'll strike, in spite of their committee—or—egad—we'll have a shot at the sitting member himself."

By eleven o'clock the next morning the committee and the parties were in attendance—the room quite crowded—such a quantity of Yatton faces!—There, near the chairman, with his hat perched as usual on his bushy hair, and dressed in his ordinarily extravagant and absurd style—his glass screwed into his eye, and his hands stuck into his hinder coat-pockets, and resting on his hips, stood Mr. Titmouse; and after the usual preliminaries had been gone through, up rose Mr. Berrington with the calm confident air of a man going to open a winning case—and an overwhelming one he *did* open—the chairman glancing gloomily at the five ministerials on his right, and then inquisitively at the five opposition members on his left. The statement of Mr. Berrington was luminous and powerful. As he went on, he disclosed almost as minute and accurate a knowledge of the movements of the Yellows at Yatton, as Mr. Gammon himself could have supplied him with. That gentleman shared in the dismay felt around him. 'T was clear that there had been

infernal treachery; that they were all ruined. "By Jove! there's no standing up against *this*—in spite of our committee—unless we break them down at the agency—for Berrington don't overstate his cases," whispered Mr. Granville, the leading counsel for the sitting member, to one of his juniors, and to Gammon; who sighed and said nothing. With all his experience in the general business of his profession, he knew, when he said this, little or nothing of what might be expected from a *favorable election committee*. Stronger and stronger, blacker and blacker, closer and closer, came out the petitioner's case. The five opposition members paid profound attention to Mr. Berrington, and took notes; while, as for the ministerials, one was engaged with his betting book, another writing out franks, (in which he dealt,) a third conning over an attorney's letter, and two were quietly playing together at "*Tit-tat-to*." As was expected, the committee called peremptorily for proof of Agency; and I will say only, that if *Smirk Mudflint*, *Barnabas Bloodsuck*, and *Seth Centipede*, were not fixed as the "Agents" of the sitting member—then there is no such relation as that of principal and agent *in rerum naturâ*; there never was in this world an agent who had a principal, or a principal who had an agent.—Take only, for instance, the case of Mudflint. He was proved to have been from first to last an active member of Mr. Titmouse's committee; attending daily, hourly, and on hundreds of occasions, in the presence of Mr. Titmouse—canvassing with him—consulting him—making appointments with him for calling on voters, which appointments

he invariably kept; letters in his handwriting relating to the election, signed some by Mr. Titmouse, some by Mr. Gammon; circulars similarly signed, and distributed by Mudflint, and the addresses in his handwriting; several election bills paid by him on account of Mr. Titmouse; directions given by him and observed, as to the bringing up voters to the poll; publicans' bills paid at the committee-room, in the presence of Mr. Titmouse—and, in short, many other such acts as these were established against all three of the above persons. Such a dreadful effect did all this have upon Mr. Bloodsuck and Mr. Centipede, that they were obliged to go out, in order to get a little gin and water; for they were indeed in a sort of death-sweat. As for Mudflint, he seemed to get sallower and sallower every minute; and felt almost disposed to utter an inward prayer, had he thought it would have been of the slightest use. Mr. Berrington's witnesses were fiercely cross-examined, but no material impression was produced upon them; and when Mr. Granville, on behalf of the sitting member, confident and voluble, rose to prove to the committee that his learned friend's case was one of the most trumpery that had ever come before a committee—a mere bottle of smoke;—that the three gentlemen in question had been no more the agents of the sitting member than was he—the counsel then on his legs—the agent of the Speaker of the House of Commons, and that every one of the petitioner's witnesses was unworthy of belief—in fact *perjured*—how suddenly awake to the importance of the investigation became the ministerialist members! They never

removed their eyes from Mr. Granville, except to take notes of his pointed, cogent, unanswerable observations! *He called no witnesses.* At length he sat down; and strangers were ordered to withdraw—and 'twas well they did: for such an amazing uproar ensued among the committee, as soon as the five opposition members discovered, to their astonishment and disgust, that there was the least doubt among their opponents as to the establishment of agency, as would not, possibly, have tended to raise that committee, as a judicial body, in public estimation. After an hour and a half's absence, strangers were readmitted. Great was the rush—for the fate of the petition hung on the decision to be immediately pronounced. As soon as the counsel had taken their seats, and the eager, excited crowd been subdued into something like silence, the chairman, Sir Caleb Calf, with a flushed face, and a very uneasy expression, read from a sheet of foolscap paper, which he held in his hand, as follows:—

"Resolved—That the Petitioner's Counsel be directed to *proceed* with evidence of AGENCY," [*i. e.* the committee were of opinion that no sufficient evidence had yet been given, to establish Messrs. Mudflint, Bloodsuck, and Centipede, as the agents of Mr. Titmouse, in the election for Yatton!!!] The five opposition members sat with stern indignant faces, all with their backs turned towards the chairman; and nothing but a very high tone of feeling, and chivalrous sense of their position, as members of a public committee of the House of Commons, prevented their repeating in public their fierce protest against the

monstrous decision at which the committee, through the casting voice of the redoubtable chairman, had arrived.

Their decision was not immediately understood or appreciated by the majority of those present. After a pause of some moments, and amid profound silence—

"Have I rightly understood the resolution of the committee, sir," inquired Mr. Berrington, with an amazed air, "that the evidence already adduced *is not sufficient* to satisfy them as to the *agency* of Messrs. Mudflint, Bloodsuck, and Centipede?"

"The committee *meant*, sir, to express as much," replied the chairman, dryly, and he sealed a letter with affected indifference: *affected*, indeed! the letter being one addressed to a friend, to desire him forthwith to take a hostile message on his—the chairman's—behalf to Colonel D'Eresby, one of the committee, who had, during the discussion with closed doors, spoken his mind pretty freely concerning the conduct of the aforesaid chairman!

"Good God!" exclaimed Mr. Berrington, (on receiving the chairman's answer to his inquiry,) in a tone of voice loud enough to be heard all over the room, "*neither would they believe though one rose from the dead.*"

"We'd better strike," said his juniors.

"I think so, too," said Mr. Berrington; adding, as he turned towards the committee with an air of undisguised disgust, "I protest, sir, that never in the whole course of my experience have I been so astounded as I am at the decision to which the

committee has just come. Probably, under these circumstances, the committee will be pleased to adjourn till the morning, to give us an opportunity of considering the course we shall pursue." (This produced a great sensation.)

"Certainly, let it be so," replied the chairman, blandly, yet anxiously; and the committee broke up. Before they met again, three shots a-piece had been exchanged between the chairman and Colonel D'Eresby—"happily without effect," and the parties left the ground in as hostile a spirit as they had reached it. I will say for the colonel, that he was a plain, straightforward soldier, who did not understand nonsense, nor could tolerate coquetting with an oath.

"Of course the petition is dropped?" said Mr. Berrington, bitterly, as soon as all were assembled in the evening, in consultation at his chambers.

"Of course," was the answer, in a sufficiently melancholy tone.

"So help me heaven!" said Mr. Berrington, "I feel disposed to say I will never again appear before a committee. This sort of thing cannot go on much longer! To think that every man of that committee is sworn before God to do his duty! I'll take care to strike every one of those six men off from any future list that I may have to do with!"

"I can say only," remarked the second counsel, a calm and experienced lawyer, "that, in my opinion, had all of us sat down to frame, beforehand, a perfect case of agency—with facts at will—we could never have framed one stronger than the one to-day

declared insufficient."

"I have been in seven other petitions," said Mr. Berrington, "this very week; but there the sitting members were Tories: Gracious Heaven! what facts have been *there* held sufficient proof of agency!—The *Barnard Castle* committee yesterday held that to have been seen once shaking hands in a pastry-cook's shop with the sitting member, was sufficient evidence of *agency*—and we've lost the seat! In the *Cucumber* committee, a man who by chance stood once under a doorway with the sitting member, in a sudden shower of rain—was held thereby to have become his agent; and we *there* also lost the seat!—Faugh! what would foreigners say if they heard such things?"

"It's perhaps hardly worth mentioning," said Mr. Parkinson; "but this afternoon I happened to see Mr. O'Gibbet dining with Mr. O'Doodle, Mr. Hubbaboo, and Mr. M'Squash, off pork and greens, at the Jolly Thieves' Tavern, in Dodge Street—I—I—they were talking together very eagerly"—

"The less we say about *that* the better," replied Mr. Berrington; "I have not had my eyes shut, I can tell you! It's a hard case, Mr. Crafty; but after all your pains, and the dreadful expense incurred, it's nevertheless quite farcical to think of going on with a committee like this"—

"Of course the petition is abandoned," replied Crafty.

The next morning they again appeared before the committee.

"I have to inform the committee," commenced Mr. Berrington, with sufficient sternness, "that my learned friends

and I, who had, in our ignorance and inexperience, imagined, till yesterday, that the evidence we then opened was ten times more than sufficient to establish agency before any *legal* tribunal"—

"Counsel will be pleased to moderate their excitement, and to treat the committee with due respect," interrupted the chairman, warmly, and reddening as he spoke; while the ministerial members looked very fiercely at Mr. Berrington, and one or two placed their arms a-kimbo.

—"Have come to the determination to withdraw the petitioner's case from before the committee; as, under existing circumstances, it would be utterly absurd to attempt"—

"Fait, sir, an' you're mighty indacent—ye are—an' you'd better keep a civil tongue in your head," said Mr. O'Doodle, fiercely, and with an insolent look at Mr. Berrington.

"Sir," said the latter, addressing Mr. O'Doodle with a bitter smile—"as it is possible to stand where I do without ceasing to be a gentleman, so it is possible to sit *there*—without becoming one."

"Sir—Misther Chairman—I'll only just ask you, sir—isn't *that* a brache of privelege"—

"Oh, be aisy—aisy wid ye—and isn't he *hired* to say all this?" whispered Mr. Hubbaboo; and the indignant senator sat down.

"The petition is withdrawn, sir," said Mr. Berrington, calmly.

"Then," subjoined his opponent, as quietly rising as his learned friend had sat down, "I respectfully apply to the committee to vote it *Frivolous and vexatious*."

"Possibly the committee will pause before going *that* length," said Mr. Berrington, very gravely; but he was mistaken. Strangers were ordered to withdraw; and, on their readmission, the chairman read the resolution of the committee, that "Tittlebat Titmouse, Esq., had been and was duly elected to serve for the borough of Yatton; and that the petition against his return was Frivolous and Vexatious:" by which decision, all the costs and expenses incurred by Mr. Titmouse were thrown upon his opponent, Mr. Delamere—a just penalty for his wanton and presumptuous attempt. This decision was welcomed by the crowd in the committee-room with clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and cheering.—Such was the fate of the Yatton Petition. Mr. Titmouse, on entering the House that evening, was received with loud cheers from the ministerial benches: and within a few minutes afterwards, Lord Frederick Brackenbury, to give the House and the public an idea of the important service performed by the committee, rose and moved that the *evidence should be printed*—which was ordered.

The next day a very distinguished patriot gathered some of the blooming fruit of the *Bill for giving Everybody Everything*—(not for himself personally, however, but *as a trustee for the public*;) so, at least, I should infer from the following fact, that whereas in the morning his balance at the banker's was exactly £3, 10s. 7½d.—by the afternoon, it was suddenly augmented to £3,003, 10s. 7½d.—shortly expressed thus:—

"£3: 10: 7½ + £3,000 = £3,003: 10: 7½."

Thus might my friend Titmouse exclaim, "Out of this nettle *danger* I have plucked the flower *safety*!" 'T was, indeed, fortunate for the country, that such, and so early, had been the termination of the contest for the representation of Yatton; for it enabled Mr. Titmouse at once to enter, with all the energy belonging to his character, upon the discharge of his legislative functions. The very next day after his own seat had been secured to him by the decision of the committee, he was balloted for, and chosen one of the members of a committee of which *Swindle O'Gibbet, Esquire*, was chairman, for trying the validity of the return of two Tory impostors for an Irish county. So marvellously quick an insight into the merits of the case did he and his brethren in the committee obtain, that they intimated, on the conclusion of the petitioner's counsel's opening address, that it would be quite superfluous for him to call witnesses in support of a statement of facts, which it was presumed the sitting members could not think of seriously contesting. Against this, the sitting members' counsel remonstrated with indignant energy; on which the committee thought it best to let him take his own course, which would entail its own consequences; viz. that the opposition to the petition would be voted frivolous and vexatious. A vast deal of evidence was then adduced, after which, as might have been expected, the committee reported to the House, that Lord Beverly de Wynston (who owned half the county for which he had presumed to stand) and Sir Harry Eddington, (who owned pretty near the other half,) both being resident in the county, had been unduly returned;

that two most respectable gentlemen, Mr. O'Shirtless and Mr. O'Toddy (the one a discarded attorney's clerk, and the other an insolvent publican, neither of whom had ever been in the county till the time of the election) ought to have been returned; and the clerk of the House was to amend the return accordingly; and that the opposition to the petition had been frivolous and vexatious: which last was an ingenious and happy device for making the peer and baronet pay the expense of Messrs. O'Shirtless and O'Toddy's election! Mr. Titmouse after this formed an intimate acquaintance with the two gentlemen, whom, infinitely to their own astonishment, he had helped to seat for the county, and who had many qualities kindred to his own, principally in the matter of dress and drink. Very shortly afterwards he was elected one of a committee to inquire into the operation of the Usury Laws, and another of a still more important character—viz. to inquire into the state of our relations with foreign powers, with reference to free trade and the permanent preservation of peace. They continued sitting for a month, and the latter thus stated the luminous result of their inquiry and deliberation, in their report to the House: "That the only effectual mode of securing permanently the good-will of foreign powers, was by removing all restrictions upon their imports into this country, and imposing prohibitory duties upon our exports into theirs; at the same time reducing our naval and military establishments to a point which should never thereafter occasion uneasiness to any foreign power. And that any loss of revenue occasioned by the adoption

of the former suggestion, would be compensated for by the saving of expenditure effected by carrying into effect the latter." He also served on one or two private committees, attended by counsel. In the course of their inquiries many very difficult and complicated questions arose, which called forth great ability on the part of counsel. On one occasion, in particular, I recollect that Mr. Depth, one of the most dexterous and subtile reasoners to be found at the English bar, having started the great question really at issue between the parties, addressed a long and most masterly argument to the committee. He found himself, after some time, making rapid way with them; and in particular, there were indications that he had at length powerfully arrested the attention of Mr. Titmouse, who, with his chin resting on his open hand, and his elbow on the table, leaned forward towards Mr. Depth, on whom he fixed his eye apparently with deep attention. How mistaken, however, was Depth! Titmouse was thinking all the while of two very different matters; viz. whether he could possibly sit it out without a bottle of soda-water, laboring as he was, under the sickening effects of excessive potations overnight; and also whether his favorite little terrier, Titty, would win or lose in her encounter on the morrow with fifty rats—that being the number which Mr. Titmouse had betted three to one she would kill in three minutes' time. The decision to which that committee might come, would affect interests to the amount of nearly a million sterling, and might or might not occasion a monstrous invasion of vested rights!

He still continued to occupy his very handsome apartments at the Albany. You might generally have seen him, about ten o'clock in the morning, (or say *twelve*, when his attendance was not required upon committees,) reclining on his sofa, enveloped in a yellow figured satin dressing-gown, smoking an enormous hookah; with a little table before him, with a decanter of gin, cold water, and a tumbler or two upon it. On a large round table near him lay a great number of dinner and evening cards, notes, letters, public and private, vote-papers, and Parliamentary reports. Beside him, on the sofa, lay the last number of the *Sunday Flash*—to which, and to the *Newgate Calendar*, his reading was, in fact, almost entirely confined. Over his mantelpiece was a large hideous oil-painting of two brawny and half-naked ruffians, in boxing attitude; opposite was a very large picture (for which he had given seventy guineas) of Lord Scaramouch's dog Nestor, in his famous encounter with two hundred rats, which he killed in the astonishingly short space of seven minutes and fifteen seconds. Opposite to the door, however, was the great point of attraction; viz. a full-length portrait of Titmouse himself. His neck was bare, his ample shirt-collar being thrown down over his shoulders, and his face looking upwards. The artist had labored hard to give it that fine indignant expression with which, in pictures of men of genius, they are generally represented as looking up towards the moon; but nature was too strong for him—his eye too accurate, and his brush too obedient to his eye; so that the only expression he could bring

out was one of sensuality and stupid wonder. A rich green mantle enveloped Titmouse's figure; and amid its picturesque folds, was visible his left hand, holding them together, and with a glittering ring on the first and last fingers. In one corner of the room, on a table, were a pair of foils; and on the ground near them, three or four pairs of boxing-gloves. On another table lay a guitar—on another a violin; on both of which delightful instruments he was taking almost daily lessons. Though the room was both elegantly and expensively furnished, (according to the taste of its former occupant,) it was now redolent—as were Mr. Titmouse's clothes—of the odors of tobacco-smoke and gin and water. Here it was that Mr. Titmouse would often spend hour after hour boxing with Billy Bully, the celebrated prize-fighter and pickpocket; or, when somewhat far gone in liquor, playing cribbage or put with his valet—an artful, impudent fellow, who had gained great influence over him.

As for the House—Modesty (the twin-sister of Merit) kept Mr. Titmouse for a long time very quiet there. He saw the necessity of attentively watching everything which passed around him, in order to become practically familiar with the routine of business, before he ventured to step forward into action, and distinguish himself. He had not been long, however, thus prudently occupied, when an occasion presented itself, of which he availed himself with all the bold felicitous promptitude of genius—whose prime distinguishing characteristic is the successful seizure of opportunity. He suddenly saw that he should

be able to bring into play an early accomplishment of his—one of which, when acquiring it, how little he dreamed of the signal uses to which it might be afterwards turned! The great Coke hath somewhere said to the legal student, that there is no kind or degree of knowledge whatsoever, so apparently vain and useless that it shall not, if remembered, at one time or other serve his purpose. Thus it seemed about to be with Mr. Titmouse, to whom it chanced in this wise. In early life, while following the humble calling in which he was occupied when first presented to the reader, he used to amuse himself, in his long journeys about the streets, with bundle and yard-measure under his arm, by imitating the cries of cats, the crowing of cocks, the squeaking of pigs, the braying of donkeys, and the yelping of curs; in which matters he became at length so great a proficient, as to attract the admiring attention of passers-by, and to afford great entertainment to the circles in which he visited. There is probably no man living, though ever so great a fool, who cannot do *something* or other well; and Titmouse became a surprising proficient in the arts I have alluded to. He could imitate a *bluebottle fly* buzzing about the window, and, lighting upon it, abruptly cease its little noise, and anon flying off again, as suddenly resume it;—a *chicken*, peering and picking its way cautiously among the growing cabbages;—a *cat*, at midnight on the moonlit tiles, pouring forth the sorrows of her heart on account of the absence of her inconstant mate;—a *cock*, suddenly waking out of some horrid dream—it might be the nightmare—

and in the ecstasy of its fright, crowing as though it would split at once its throat and heart, alarming all mankind;—a little *cur*, yelping with mingled fear and rage, at the same time, as it were, advancing backwards, in view of a fiendish tomcat, with high-curved back, flaming eyes, and spitting fury. I only wish you had heard Mr. Titmouse on these occasions; it might, perhaps, even have reminded you of the observation of Dr. Johnson, that genius, is, "great natural powers accidentally directed."

Now there was, on a certain night, about three months after Titmouse had been in the House, a kind of pitched battle between the ministry and their formidable opponents; in which the speakers on each side did their best to prove (and in the opinion of many, *successfully*) that their opponents were apostates; utterly worthless; destitute alike of public and private virtue; unfit to govern; and unworthy of the confidence of the country, which aforesaid country was indeed in happy plight in possessing a Parliament unanimous in one thing at least—viz. its own worthlessness. My Lord Bulfinch rose late on the third evening of the debate—never had been seen so full a House during the session—and in a long and able speech contended, (first,) that the opposite side were selfish, ignorant, and dishonest; and (secondly,) that Ministers had only imitated their example. He was vehemently cheered from time to time, and sat down amid a tempest of applause. Up then rose the ex-minister and leaders of the opposition, and in a very few moments there was scarce a sound to be heard except that

of the delicious voice—at once clear, harmonious, distinct in utterance, and varied in intonation—of incomparably the finest Parliamentary orator of the day, Mr. Vivid. The hearts of those around him, who centred all their hopes in him, beat with anxious pride. He had a noble cast of countenance—a brilliant eye—strongly marked and most expressive features—a commanding figure—a graceful and winning address. His language, accurate, refined, copious, and vigorous, every word he uttered, *told*. His illustrations were as rich and apt as his reasonings were close and cogent; and his powers of ridicule were unrivalled. On the present occasion he was thoroughly roused, and put forth all his powers: he and Lord Bulfinch had been waiting for each other during the whole debate; but Mr. Vivid had at length secured the reply, and truly regarded himself as the mouthpiece of a great and grievously slandered party in the state, whom he had risen to vindicate from the elaborate and envenomed aspersions of Lord Bulfinch, who sat, speedily pierced through and through with the arrows of poignant sarcasm, amid the loud laughter of even his own side, so irresistible was the humor of the speaker. Even Mr. O'Gibbet, who had been from time to time exclaiming half aloud to those around—"Och, the pitiful fellow! The stupid baste!—Nivir mind him—Divil a word, my Lord!"—was at length subdued into silence. In fact, the whole House was rushing along with the rapid, brilliant, and impassioned speaker. Every now and then, vehement and tumultuous cheering would burst forth from the opposition, as from one man, answered by as vehement and

determined cheering from the ministerial benches; but you could not fail to observe an anxious and alarmed expression stealing over the faces of Lord Bulfinch's supporters. His Lordship sat immovably, with his arms folded, and eyes fixed on his opponent, and a bitter smile on his face, glancing frequently, however, with increasing anxiety towards Mr. O'Squeal, the only "great gun" he had left—that gentleman having undertaken (*infelix puer, atque impar congressus Achilli!*) to reply to Mr. Vivid. Poor Mr. O'Squeal himself looked pale and dispirited, and would probably have given up all his little prospects to be able to sneak away from the post he had so eagerly occupied, and devolve upon others the responsibility of replying to a speech looming more and more dreadfully upon his trembling faculties every moment, as infinitely more formidable in all points of view than anything he had anticipated. The speech must electrify the public, even as it was then electrifying the House. He held a sheet of paper in one hand resting on his knee, and a pen in the other, with which he incessantly took notes—only to disguise his fright; for his mind went not with his pen—all he heard was above and beyond him; he might as well have thought of whistling down a whirlwind; yet there was no escape for him. Was the uneasy eye of Lord Bulfinch, more and more frequently directed towards him, calculated to calm or encourage him? or the sight of the adroit, sarcastic, and brilliant debater sitting opposite, who had his eye on Mr. O'Squeal, and was evidently to rise and reply to him? Mr. O'Squeal began to feel cold as death, and at length

burst into a chilly perspiration. After a two hours' speech, of uncommon power and brilliance, Mr. Vivid wound up with a rapid and striking recapitulation of the leading points of his policy when in power, which, he contended, were in triumphant contrast with those of his successors, which were wavering, inconsistent, perilous to every national interest, and in despicable subservience to the vilest and lowest impulses. "And now, sir," said Mr. Vivid, turning to the Speaker, and then directing a bold and indignant glance of defiance at Lord Bulfinch—"does the noble Lord opposite talk of *impeachment*! I ask him in the face of this House, and of the whole country, whose eyes are fixed upon it with anxiety and agitation—will he presume to repeat his threat? or will any one on his behalf?"—(turning a glance of withering scorn towards Mr. O'Squeal)—"Sir, I pause for a reply!"—And he *did* pause—several seconds elapsing in dead silence, which was presently, however, broken in a manner that was perfectly unprecedented, and most astounding. 'T was a reply to his question; but such as, had he anticipated it, he would never have put that question, or paused for its answer.

"*Cock-a-doodle-do-o-o-o!*" issued, with inimitable fidelity of tone and manner, from immediately behind Lord Bulfinch, who sprang from his seat as if he had been shot. Every one started; Mr. Vivid recoiled a pace or two from the table—and then a universal peal of laughter echoed from all quarters of the House, not excepting even the strangers' gallery. The Speaker was convulsed, and could not rise to call "order." Lord Bulfinch

laughed himself almost into fits; even those immediately behind Mr. Vivid were giving way to uncontrollable laughter, at so comical and monstrous an issue. He himself tried for a moment to join in the laugh, but in vain; he was terribly disconcerted and confounded. This frightful and disgusting incident had done away with the effect of his whole speech; and in twenty-four hours' time, the occurrence would be exciting merriment and derision in every corner of the kingdom!

"Order! order! order!" cried the Speaker, his face red and swollen with scarce subdued laughter. Several times Mr. Vivid attempted to resume, only, however, occasioning renewed peals of laughter. Still he persevered; and, with much presence of mind, made a pointed and witty allusion to Rome, saved by the cackling of a goose, in which manner he said the ministers hoped that night to be saved! 'T was, however, plainly useless; and after a moment or two's pause of irresolution, he yielded to his miserable fate, with visible vexation abruptly concluded his observations, gathered hastily together his papers, and resumed his seat and his hat—a signal for renewed laughter and triumphant cheering from the ministerial side of the House. Up *then* started Mr. O'Squeal—(as it were under cover of the cock)—and dashed boldly off at one or two of the weakest points which had been made by his discomfited adversary, which he dealt with very dexterously; and then threw up a vast number of rhetorical fireworks, amid the glitter and blaze of which he sat down, and was enthusiastically cheered. 'T was my friend

Mr. Titmouse that had worked this wonder, and entirely changed the fate of the day! Up rose Mr. O'Squeal's dreaded opponent—but in vain; he was quite crestfallen; evidently in momentary apprehension of receiving an interruption similar to that which Mr. Vivid had experienced. He was nervous and fidgety—as well he might be; and would most assuredly have shared the fate of Mr. Vivid, but that Titmouse was (not without very great difficulty) restrained by Lord Bulfinch, on the ground that the desired effect had been produced, and would be only impaired by a repetition. The debate came somewhat abruptly to a close; and the opposition were beaten by a majority of a *hundred and thirty*—which really looked something like a working majority.

This happy occurrence at once brought Mr. Titmouse into notice, and very great favor with his party;—well, indeed, it might, for he had become a most powerful auxiliary, and need it be added how dreaded and detested he was by their opponents? How could it be otherwise, with even their leading speakers, who could scarcely ever afterwards venture on anything a little out of the common way—a little higher flight than usual—being in momentary apprehension of being suddenly brought down by some such disgusting and ludicrous interruption as the one I have mentioned, indicating the effect which the ambitious speaker was producing upon—a cat, a donkey, a cock, or a puppy? Ah, me! what a sheep's eye each of them cast, as he went on, towards Titmouse! And if ever he was observed to be absent, there was a sensible improvement in the tone and spirit of the opposition

speakers. The ministerial journals all over the country worked the joke well; and in their leading articles against any of Mr. Vivid's speeches, would "sum up all, in one memorable word—'*cock-a-doodle-do!*'"

As is generally the case, the signal success of Mr. Titmouse brought into the field a host of imitators in the House; and their performances, inferior though they were, becoming more and more frequent, gave quite a new character to the proceedings of that dignified deliberative assembly. At length, however, it was found necessary to pass a resolution of the House against such practices; and it was entered on the journals, that thenceforth no honorable member should interrupt business by whistling, singing, or imitating the sounds of animals, or making any other disgusting noise whatsoever.

The political importance thus acquired by Mr. Titmouse—and which he enjoyed till the passing of the above resolution, by which it was cut up root and branch—had naturally a very elevating effect upon him; as you might have perceived, had you only once seen him swaggering along the House to his seat behind the front Treasury bench, dressed in his usual style of fashion, and with his quizzing-glass stuck into his eye. Mr. O'Gibbet invariably greeted him with the utmost cordiality, and would often, at a pinching part of an opposition speech, turn round and invoke his powers, by the exclamation—"Now, now, Titty!" He dined, in due course, with the Speaker—as usual, in full court-dress; and, having got a little champagne in his head,

insisted on going through his leading "imitations," infinitely to the amusement of some half dozen of the guests, and *all* the servants. His circle of acquaintance was extending every day; he became a very welcome guest, as an object of real curiosity. He was not a man, however, to be always enjoying the hospitality of others, without at least offering a return; and, at the suggestion of an experienced friend in the House, he commenced a series of "Parliamentary dinners," (presumptuous little puppy!) at the Gliddington Hotel. They went off with much *éclat*, and were duly chronicled in the daily journals, as thus:—

"On Saturday, Mr. Titmouse, M. P., entertained (his third dinner given this session) at the Gliddington Hotel, the following (among others) distinguished members of the House of Commons: Lord Nothing Nowhere, Sir Simper Silly, Mr. Flummery, Mr. O'Gibbet, Mr. Outlaw, Lord Beetle, Colonel Quod, and several others."

Mr. Titmouse, at length, thought himself warranted in inviting Lord Bulfinch!—and the Speaker!!—and Lord Firebrand, (the Foreign Secretary;) all of whom, however, very politely declined, pleading previous engagements. I can hardly, in fairness, give Mr. Titmouse the credit of these latter proceedings; which were, in fact, suggested to him, in the first instance, by two or three young wags in the House; who, barring a little difference in the way of bringing up, were every whit as great fools and coxcombs as himself, and equally entitled to the confidence of their favored constituencies, and of the country, as so calculated

for the purpose of practical legislation, and that remodelling of the national institutions of the country, upon which the new House of Commons seemed bent.

Have YOU, reader, ever given your vote and interest to return a Titmouse to Parliament?

'T was truly delightful to see the tables of these young gentlemen groaning under daily accumulations of Parliamentary documents, containing all sorts of political and statistical information, collected and published with vast labor and expense, for the purpose of informing their powerful intellects upon the business of the country, so that they might come duly prepared to the important discussions in the House, on all questions of domestic and foreign policy. As for Mr. Titmouse, he never relished the idea of perusing and studying these troublesome and repulsive documents—page after page, filled with long rows of figures, tables of prices, of exchanges, &c., reports of the evidence, *verbatim et literatim*, taken in question and answer before every committee that sat; all sorts of expensive and troublesome "returns," moved for by any one that chose; he rather contented himself with attending to what went on in the House; and at the close of the session, all the documents in question became the perquisite of his valet, who got a good round sum for them (uncut) as waste paper.

It is not difficult to understand the pleasure which my little friend experienced, in dispensing such favors and courtesies, as those of orders for the gallery, and franks, to applicants for them;

for all his show of feeling it a "*bore*" to be asked. 'T was these small matters which, as it were, brought home to him a sense of his dignity, and made him *feel* the possession of station and authority. I know not but that the following application was more gratifying to him than any which he received:—

"T. Tag-rag's best respects to T. Titmouse, Esq. M. P., and begs to say how *greatly* he will account y^e favor of obtaining an order to be Admitted to the Gallery of the House of Commons for to-morrow night, to hear the debate on the Bill for Doing away with the *Nuisance* of Dustmen's cries of a morning.

"With Mrs. T.'s and daughter's respectful comp^{ts}.

"T. Titmouse, Esq. M. P."

On receiving this, Titmouse looked out for the finest sheet of glossy extra-superfine gilt Bath post, scented, and in a fine flourishing hand wrote as follows:—

"Please To Admit y^e Barer To The Galery of The House of Commons.—T. Titmouse. Wednesday, March 6th. 18 —."

But the reader, who must have been highly gratified by the unexpectedly rapid progress of Mr. Titmouse in Parliamentary life, will be, doubtless, as much interested by hearing that corresponding distinction awaited him in the regions of science and literature; his pioneer thither being one who had long enjoyed a very distinguishing eminence; successfully combining

the character and pursuits of scholar and philosopher with those of a man of fashion—I mean a Doctor Diabolus Gander. Though upwards of sixty, he found means so effectually to disguise his age, that he would have passed for barely forty. He had himself so strong a predilection for dress, that the moment he saw Titmouse he conceived a certain secret respect for that gentleman; and, in fact, the two dressed pretty nearly in the same style. The doctor passed for a philosopher in society. He had spent most of his days in drilling youth in the elements of the mathematics; of which he had the same kind and degree of knowledge that is possessed of English literature by an old governess who has spent her life in going over the first part of Lindley Murray's English Grammar with children. Just so much did the doctor know of the scope, the object, the application of the mathematics. His great distinguishing talent was, that of rendering the most abstruse science, "*popular*;"—*i.e.* utterly unintelligible to those who did understand science, and very exciting and entertaining to those who did *not*. He had a knack of getting hold of obscure and starving men of genius and science, and secretly availing himself of their labors. He would pay them with comparative liberality to write, in an elegant style, on subjects of pure and mixed science; but when published, the name of *Diabolus Gander* would appear upon the title-page; and, to enable the doctor to do this with *some* comfort to his conscience, he would actually copy out the whole of the manuscript, and make a few alterations in it. But, alas! *omne quod tetigit fœdavit*; and

it invariably happened that these were the very *maculae* pitched upon, exposed, and ridiculed by reviewers. No man could spread his small stock over a larger surface than Dr. Gander; no man be more successful in ingratiating himself with those persons so useful to an enterprising empiric—viz. wealthy fools. He paid constant court to Titmouse, from the first moment he saw him; and took the liberty of calling—unasked—the very next day, at his rooms in the Albany. He soon satisfied Titmouse that his glib visitor was a great philosopher, whom it was an advantage and a distinction to be acquainted with. He took my little admiring friend, for instance, to hear him deliver a lecture at the Hanover Square Rooms, to a crowd of fine ladies and old gentlemen, who greatly applauded all he said, upon a subject equally abstruse, interesting, and instructive; viz. the occult qualities of *Triangles*. In short, he was indefatigable in his attentions to Titmouse, and was a very frequent guest at his dinner-table. He gave Titmouse, on one of these occasions, an amazing account of the distinction accruing to a member of any of the great learned societies; and, in fact, quite inflamed his little imagination upon the subject—sounding him as to his wish to become a member of some great society, in common with half the dukes, marquises, earls, and barons in the kingdom—in particular his own august kinsman, the Earl of Dreddlington himself.

"Why—a—'pon my soul—" quoth Titmouse, grinning, as he tossed off his tenth glass of champagne with the bland and voluble doctor—"I—I—shouldn't much dislike a thingumbob or

two at the end of my name—but what's the figure?"

"Certainly, I myself, as a zealous lover of science, my dear sir, consider her honors always well bestowed on those eminent in rank and station; though they may not have gone through the drudgery of scientific details, sir, their countenance *irradiates* the pale cheek of unobtrusive science"—

"Ya—a—s, 'pon honor, it certainly does," quoth Titmouse, not exactly, however, comprehending the doctor's fine figure of speech.

"Now, look you, Mr. Titmouse," continued the doctor, "the greatest society in all England, out and out, is the Credulous Society. I happen to have some *leetle* influence there, through which I have been able, I am happy to say, to introduce several noblemen."

"Have you, by Jove?" cried Titmouse; "but what the devil do they *do* there?"

"Do, my dear sir! They meet for the purpose of—consider the distinguished men that are Fellows of that society! It was only the other day that the Duke of Tadcaster told me, (the very day after I had succeeded in getting his Grace elected,) that he was as proud of the letters 'F. C. S,' added to his name, as he was of his dukedom!"

"By Jove!—No—but—'pon honor bright—did he? Can you get *me* into it?" inquired Titmouse, eagerly.

"I—oh—why—you see, my very dear sir, you're certainly rather young," quoth the doctor, gravely, pausing and rubbing his

chin; "if it could be managed, it would be a splendid thing for you—eh?"

"By jingo, I should think so!" replied Titmouse.

"I think I've been asked by at least a dozen noblemen for my influence, but I've not felt myself warranted"—

"Oh, well! then *in course* there's an end of it," interrupted Titmouse, with an air of disappointment; "and cuss me if ever I cared a pin about it—I see I've not the ghost of a chance."

"I don't know *that* either," replied the doctor, musingly. His design had been all along to confer sufficient obligation on Titmouse, to induce him to lend the doctor a sum of four or five hundred pounds to embark in some wild scheme or other, and also to make Titmouse useful to him for other purposes, from time to time.—"As you are so young," continued the doctor, "I am afraid it will be necessary in some sort of way to give you a kind of scientific pretension—ah, by Archimedes! but I have it!—I have it!—You see, I've a treatise in the press, and nearly ready for publication, upon a particularly profound subject—but, you'll understand me, explained in a perfectly popular manner—in fact, my dear sir, it is a grand discovery of my own, which will in future ages be placed side by side of that of Sir Isaac Newton"—

"Is *he* a member of it too?" inquired Titmouse.

"No, my dear sir!" quoth the doctor, slightly staggered: "not bodily; but his *spirit* is with us! We feel it influencing all our deliberations; though he died a quarter of a century before we were established! But to return to the *discovery*

I was mentioning; as Sir Isaac discovered the principle of GRAVITATION, (otherwise weight, or heaviness,) so, Mr. Titmouse, I have discovered the principle of LIGHTNESS!"

"You don't say so! 'Pon my life, amazing!" exclaimed Mr. Titmouse.

"And equally true, as amazing. As soon as I shall have indicated its tendencies and results, my discovery will effect a revolution in the existing system of physical science."

"Ah! that's what they talked about in the House last night—*Revolution*. 'Pon my soul, I don't like revolutions though—Folks *fight* then—eh?" exclaimed Titmouse, uneasily.

"I am speaking of something quite different, my dear Titmouse," said Dr. Gander, with a slight appearance of pique; "but to proceed with what I had intended. Since I have been sitting here, my dear sir, it has occurred to me that I have an excellent opportunity of evincing my sense of your kindness towards me, and my appreciation of your distinguished position—Sir, I intend to dedicate my work to you!"

"Sir, you're amazing kind—most uncommon polite!" quoth Titmouse, who had not the slightest notion of what a "dedication" meant.—Within a week or two's time, sure enough, appeared a handsome octavo volume, beautifully printed and splendidly bound, entitled,

"Researches into *Physical Science*, with a view to the
Establishment of a New Principle—

LIGHTNESS

by

Diabolus Gander, Esquire,

LL.D.; F. C. S.; Q. U. A. K.; G. Ö. S.; Secretary of the *Empirical Society*; Corresponding Member of the *Leipzig Longitude Society*; Vice-President of the *Peripatetic Gastronomic Association*; and Member of Seventeen Philosophical and Literary Societies in Kamschatka, Madagascar, Tartary, and Little Britain; &c. &c. &c."

And it bore the following "Dedication"—

"To Tittlebat Titmouse, Esquire, M. P.,
&c. &c. &c.,
This volume is respectfully inscribed,
by his obedient, obliged,
faithful, humble servant,
Diabolus Gander."

The work being vigorously pushed, and systematically puffed in all directions, of course brought the honored name of Mr. Titmouse a good deal before the scientific public; and about

three weeks afterwards might have been seen the following "Testimonial," suspended against the screen of the public room of the Credulous Society, in support of Mr. Titmouse's pretensions to be elected into it:—

"Testimonial.—We, the undersigned, Fellows of the Credulous Society, hereby certify that, from our personal knowledge of Tittlebat Titmouse, Esquire, M. P., we believe him to be a gentleman greatly attached to credulous science, and equally capable and desirous of promoting its interests; and, as such, deserving of being elected Fellow of the Credulous Society.

DREDDLINGTON.
TANTALLAN.
WOODEN SPOON.

FLIMSY CROCHET.
DIABOLUS GANDER.
PERIWINKLE PARALLELOGRAM.
PLACID NOODLE.

The above distinguished names were procured by Dr. Gander, and thereupon the election of Mr. Titmouse became almost a matter of certainty—especially as, on the appointed day, Dr. Gander procured the attendance of some amiable old gentlemen, Fellows of the Society, who believed the doctor to be all he pretended to be. The above testimonial having been read from the chair, Mr. Titmouse was balloted for, and declared elected unanimously a Fellow of the Credulous Society. He was prevented from attending on the ensuing meeting by a great debate, and an expected early division: then, (I regret to say,) by sheer intoxication; and again by his being unable to return in time

from Croydon, where he had been attending a grand prize-fight, being the backer of one of the principal ruffians, Billy Bully, his boxing-master. On the fourth evening, however, having dined with the Earl of Dreddlington, he drove with his Lordship to the Society's apartments, was formally introduced, and solemnly admitted; from which time—the proudest moment of his life—he was entitled to have his name stand thus:—

"Tittlebat Titmouse, Esq., M. P., F. C. S."

—And Heaven knows how much higher he might not have immediately mounted, in the scale of social distinction, but that he came to a very sudden rupture with his "guide, philosopher, and friend," Dr. Gander; who, on at length venturing to make his long-meditated application to Titmouse for a temporary loan, to enable him, Dr. Gander, to prosecute some extensive philosophical experiments—[*i. e., inter nos*, on public credulity]—was unhesitatingly refused by Titmouse; who, on being pressed by the doctor, abused him in no very choice terms—and finally ordered him out of the room! He quitted the presence of his ungrateful *protégé* with disgust, and in despair—nor without reason; for that very night he received a propulsion towards the Fleet Prison, which suggested to his philosophical mind several ingenious reflections concerning the *attraction of repulsion*. There he lay for three months, till he sent for the tyrant who had deposited him there, and who had been his bookseller

and publisher; and the doctor so dazzled him by the outline of a certain literary speculation—to be called The Gander Gallery—that his credulous creditor relented, and set his ingenious and enterprising debtor once more at large.

But to return to Mr. Titmouse. It was not long after his election into the Credulous Society, that a deputation from the committee of the Society for the *Promotion of Civil and Religious Discord* waited upon him at his apartments in the Albany, to solicit him, in terms the most flattering and complimentary, to preside at their next annual meeting at the Stonemasons' Hall: and, after some modest expressions of distrust as to his fitness for so distinguished a post, he yielded to their anxious entreaties. He ordered in, while they were with him, a very substantial lunch, of which they partook with infinite relish; and having done ample justice to his wines and spirits, the worthy gentlemen withdrew, charmed with the intelligence and affability of their distinguished host, and anticipating that they should have in Mr. Titmouse, "one of the most rising young men in the Liberal line," a very effective chairman, and who would make their meeting go off with great *éclat*. How Titmouse would have got through the task he had undertaken, the reader must be left to conjecture; seeing that, in point of fact, "circumstances, over which he had no control," prevented him from fulfilling his promise. The meeting waited for him at least three-quarters of an hour; when, finding that neither he nor any tidings of him came, they elected some one else into the chair, and got on

as well as they could. I dare say the reader is rather curious to know how all this came to pass; and I feel it my duty to state the reason frankly. On the evening of the day before that on which he had promised to preside at Stonemasons' Hall, he dined out with one or two choice spirits; and, about two o'clock in the morning, they all sallied forth, not a bit the *better* for wine, in quest of adventures. Mr. Titmouse gave some excellent imitations of donkeys, cats, and pigs, as they walked along arm in arm; and very nearly succeeded in tripping up an old watchman, who had crawled out to announce the hour. Then they rang every bell they passed; and, encouraged by impunity, proceeded to sport of a still more interesting and exciting description—viz. twisting knockers off doors. Titmouse was by far the most drunk of the party, and wrenched off several knockers in a very resolute and reckless manner, placing them successively in his pocket—where, also, his companions contrived, unknown to him, to deposit *their* spoils—till the weight was such as seriously to increase the difficulty of keeping his balance. When tired of this sport, it was agreed that they should extinguish every lamp they passed. No sooner said than done; and Titmouse volunteered to commence. Assisted by his companions, he clambered up a lamp-post at the corner of St. James's Street; and holding with one hand by the bar, while his legs clung round the iron post, with the other hand he opened the window of the lamp; and while in the act of blowing it out, "Watch! watch!" cried the voices of several people rushing round the corner; a rattle was sprung;

away scampered his companions in different directions; and after holding on where he was for a moment or two, in confusion and alarm, down slid poor Titmouse, and dropped into the arms of three accursed watchmen, around whom was gathered a little crowd of persons, all of whom had been roused from sleep by the pulling of their bells, and the noise made in wrenching off their knockers. A pretty passion they all were in, shaking their fists in the face of the captured delinquent, and accompanying him, with menacing gestures, to the watch-house. There having been safely lodged, he was put into a dark cell, where he presently fell asleep; nor did he wake till he was summoned to go off to the police-office. There he found a host of victims of his over-night's exploits. He stoutly denied having been concerned in despoiling a single door of its knocker—on which a breeches-maker near him furiously lifted up the prisoner's heavy coat-tails, and exclaimed eagerly—"Your Worship, your Worship! see, he's got his knocket full of pockers! he's got his knocket full of pockers—see here, your Worship"—"What *do* you mean, sir, by such gibberish?" inquired the magistrate, in so stern a tone as drew the speaker's attention to the little transposition of letters which he had made in his headlong haste to detect the falsehood of the delinquent; who, finding the dismal strait to which he was driven, and feeling really very ill, begged for mercy—which, after a very severe rebuke, the pallid culprit being confronted by seven knockers lying before him in a row, all of them having been taken out of his own pockets, he obtained, on condition of his

making compensation to the injured parties, who compounded with him for twelve pounds.⁵ After paying a couple of pounds to the poor-box, he was discharged; crawled into a coach, and, in a very sad condition, reached his rooms about one o'clock, and got into bed in a truly deplorable state—never once recollecting that, at that precise hour, he ought to have been taking the chair of the meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Civil and Religious Discord. As, however, his misfortunes were, in the newspapers, assigned, not to "Tittlebat Titmouse," but to one "*John Smith*," the exact state of the case never transpired to the worthy gentlemen who had been so unaccountably deprived of his services; and who, on inquiry, were told by his fluent valet, that Mr. Titmouse's late hours at the House had brought on a slight and sudden attack of—jaundice; on hearing which, they begged he might be assured of their respectful sympathy, and hearty wishes for his restoration; and tried very hard to sound the valet on the subject of his master's compensating for his absence by some donation or subscription; but the fellow was very obtuse, and they were compelled to depart disappointed.

I should have thought that the foregoing would have proved a lesson to Mr. Titmouse, and restrained him for some time from yielding to his cursed propensity to drink. Yet was it otherwise—and I shall tell the matter exactly as it happened. Within a

⁵ These offences are now dealt with much more seriously; several late statutes empowering the police magistrates to fine the offenders, and even commit them to the tread-mill. The effect has been to interfere seriously with this species of nocturnal amusement.

fortnight after the mischance which I have above described, Titmouse dined with the members of a sort of pugilistic club, which met every fortnight, for the purpose of settling matters connected with the "ring." On the present occasion there had been a full muster, for they had to settle the preliminaries for a grand contest for the championship of England—to which Titmouse's master, Mr. Billy Bully, aspired. Titmouse had scarcely ever enjoyed himself more than on that exciting occasion; and, confident of his man, had backed his favorite pretty freely. Towards eleven o'clock, he found the room very close—and it was not to be wondered at, when you considered the dreadful quantity of hard ale, harder port-wine, and poisonous gin and water, which the little wretch had swallowed since sitting down to dinner. About the hour I have named, however, he, Sir Pumpkin Puppy, and one or two others, all with cigars in their mouths, sallied forth to walk about town, in search of sport. I have hardly patience to write it—but positively they had not proceeded half-way down the Haymarket when they got into a downright "*row*;" and, egged on by his companions, and especially inwardly impelled by the devil himself, the miserable Titmouse, after grossly insulting a little one-eyed, one-legged, bald-headed old waterman attached to the coach-stand there, challenged him to fight, and forthwith flung away his cigar, and threw himself into boxing attitude, amid the jeers and laughter of the spectators—who, however, formed a sort of ring in a trice. At it they went, *instanter*. Titmouse squared about with a

sort of disdainful showiness—in the midst of which he suddenly received a nasty teaser on his nose and shoulder, from his active, hardy, and experienced antagonist, which brought him to the ground, the blood gushing from his nose in a copious stream. Sir Pumpkin quickly picked him up, shook him, and set him fairly at his man again. Nearer and nearer stumped the old fellow to the devoted "swell," who, evidently groggy, squared in the most absurd way imaginable for a moment or two, when he received his enemy's *one two* in his eye, and on his mouth, and again dropped down.

"He's drunk—he can't fight no more than a baby; I won't stand against him any more," quoth the fair and stout-hearted old waterman. "It warn't any o' my seeking; but if he thought to come it over an old cripple like me"—

"Bravo! bravo!" cried his companions. "Come along, old chap—come along," said one; "if I don't give you a jolly quartern, may I stick here without a fare all this blessed night;" and the speaker led off the victor to the public-house opposite, while Titmouse's friends led him away, nearly insensible, to a tavern a few doors off. Having given directions that he should be forthwith taken to a bedroom and washed, they ordered broiled bones and mulled claret for themselves. After about an hour and a half's nap, Titmouse, who probably had benefited rather than suffered from his blood-letting, rejoined his friends, and called for a cigar and a glass of cold brandy and water; having had which, they set off homeward: he reaching his rooms about one o'clock, with a very

black eye, a swollen nose and mouth, a very thick and indistinct speech, and unsteady step; in fact, in a much worse pickle than he had as yet exhibited to his valet, who told him, while preparing for him a glass of brandy and soda-water, that no fewer than five messengers had been at his rooms. While he was yet speaking, a thundering knock was heard at the outer-door, and on its being opened, in rushed, breathlessly, Mr. Phelim O'Doodle.

"Titmouse!—Titmouse! Och, murther and thunder, where are ye? Where have ye been, wid ye?" he gasped—

"When—a—hen—on—water—swims—
Too-ra-laddy—
Too-ra-lad-lad-lad"—

drowsily sung Titmouse—it being part of a song he had heard thrice encored that evening after dinner—at the same time staggering towards O'Doodle.

"Och, botheration take your too-ra-lady! Come, fait—by Jasus! clap your hat on, and button your coat, and off to the House—immediately—or it's all up with us, an' out we go every mother's son of us—an' the bastely Tories'll be in. Come! come!—off wid ye, I say! I've a coach at the door"—

"I—(hiccup)—I sha'n't—can't—'pon my life"—

"Och, off wid ye!—isn't it mad that Mr. O'Gibbet is wid ye?"—

"He's one eye—aha! and one leg—Too-ra-laddy," hiccuped the young senator.

"Devil burn me if I don't tie ye hand an' foot together!" cried

O'Doodle, impetuously. "What the devil have ye been about wid that black eye o' yours, and—but I'll spake about it in the coach. Off wid ye! Isn't time worth a hundred pounds a minute?"—

Within a minute or two's time O'Doodle had got him safely into the coach, and down to St. Stephen's they rattled at top speed. *There* was going on, indeed, a desperate fight—a final trial of strength between Ministers and the Opposition, on a vote of want of confidence; and a division expected every minute. Prodigious had been the efforts of both parties—the whip unprecedented. Lord Bulfinch had, early in the evening, explicitly stated that Ministers would resign unless they gained a *majority*: and, to their infinite vexation and astonishment, three of their stanch adherents—Titmouse being one—were missing just at the critical moment. The Opposition had been more fortunate; every man of theirs had come up—and they were shouting tremendously, "Divide! divide! divide!"—while, on the other hand, Ministers were putting up men, one after another, to speak against time, (though not one syllable they said could be heard,) in order to get a chance of their three missing men coming up. If none of them came, Ministers would be exactly even with their opponents; in which case they were very much afraid that they ought to resign. Up the stairs and into the lobby came O'Doodle, breathlessly, with his prize.

"Och, my *dear* O'Doodle!—Titmouse, ye little drunken divil, where have ye been?" commenced Mr. O'Gibbet, on whom O'Doodle stumbled suddenly.

"Thank Heaven! Good God, how fortunate!" exclaimed Mr. Flummery, both he and O'Gibbet being in a state of intense anxiety and great excitement.

"In with him!—in with him!—by Jove, they're clearing the gallery!" gasped Mr. Flummery, while he rushed into the House, to make the way clear for O'Doodle and O'Gibbet, who were literally carrying in Titmouse between them.

"Sir!—Mr. Flummery!" gasped O'Doodle—"ye won't forget what I have done to-night, will ye?"

"No, no—honor! In with you! In with you! A moment and all's lost."

They reached, however, the House in safety, Mr. O'Gibbet waving his hand in triumph.

"Oh, ye droll little divil! where have you been hiding?" he hastily whispered, as he deposited the insensible Titmouse on the nearest bench, and sat beside him. Mr. O'Gibbet took off his hat, and wiped his reeking head and face. Merciful powers! what a triumph!—and in the very nick of time.—Titmouse had saved the Ministry! Tremendous was now the uproar in the House, almost every one present shouting, "Divide!—divide!"

"Strangers, withdraw," cried the Speaker.

Then, *at it* they went, with an air of tumultuous and irrepressible excitement; but, through Titmouse, the Ministers triumphed. The numbers were announced—

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Ayes | 301 |
| Noes | 300 |
| | — |
| Majority for Ministers | 1 |

On which glorious and decisive result, there burst forth immense cheering on the ministerial side of the House, and vehement counter-cheering on the opposition side, which lasted for several minutes. The noise, indeed, was so prodigious, that it almost roused Titmouse from the sort of stupor into which he had sunk. Mr. O'Doodle accompanied him home; and, after drinking a couple of tumblers of whiskey and water with him, took his departure—caring nothing that he had left Titmouse on the floor, in a state of dangerous insensibility; from which, however, in due time he recovered, but was confined to his bed, by a violent bilious attack, for nearly a week. Mr. O'Doodle's services to the Government were not forgotten. A few days afterwards he vacated his seat, having received the appointment of sub-inspector of political caricatures in Ireland, with a salary of six hundred pounds a-year for life. His place in the House was immediately filled up by his brother, Mr. Trigger O'Doodle, who kept a shooting-gallery in Dublin. Profuse were Phelim's thanks to Mr. O'Gibbet, when that gentleman announced to him his good fortune, exclaiming, at the same time, with a sly wink and smile—"Ye see what it is to rinder service to the state—aha! Aisy, aisy!—softly, say I. Isn't *that* the way to get along?"

CHAPTER III

The injuries which Titmouse had received in his encounter with the waterman—I mean principally his black eye—prevented him from making his appearance in public, or at Lord Dreddlington's, or in the House, for several days after he had recovered from the bilious attack of which I have spoken. His non-attendance at the House, however, signified little, since both parties had been so thoroughly exhausted by their late trial of strength, as to require for some time rest and quietness, to enable them to resume the public business of the country. As soon as his eye was fairly convalescent, the first place to which he ventured out was his new residence in Park Lane, which having been taken for him, under the superintendence of the Earl of Dreddlington and Mr. Gammon, some month or two before, was now rapidly being furnished, in order to be in readiness to receive his lady and himself, immediately after his marriage—his Parliamentary duties not admitting of a prolonged absence from town. The former event had, as usual, been already prematurely announced in the newspapers several times as on the eve of taking place. The courtship went on very easily and smoothly. Neither of them seemed *anxious* for the other's society, though they contrived to evince, in the presence of others, a decent degree of gratification at meeting each other. He did all which he was instructed it was necessary for a man of fashion to do.

He attended her and the earl to the opera repeatedly, as also to other places of fashionable resort: he had danced with her occasionally; but, to tell the truth, it was only at the vehement instance of the earl her father, that she ever consented to stand up with one whose person, whose carriage, whose motions were so unutterably vulgar and ridiculous as those of Mr. Titmouse, who was yet her affianced husband. He had made her several times rather expensive presents of jewelry, and would have purchased for her a great stock of clothing, (of which he justly considered himself an excellent judge,) if she would have permitted it. He had, moreover, been a constant guest at the earl's table, where he was under greater restraint than anywhere else. Of such indiscretions and eccentricities as I have just been recording, they knew, or were properly *supposed* to know, nothing. 'T was not for them to have their eyes upon him while sowing his wild oats—so thought the earl; who, however, had frequent occasion for congratulating himself in respect of Mr. Titmouse's political celebrity, and also of the marks of distinction conferred upon him in the literary and scientific world, of which the earl was himself so distinguished an ornament. Titmouse had presented copies, gorgeously bound, of Dr. Gander's Treatise on Lightness, both to the earl and the Lady Cecilia; and the very flattering *dedication* to Titmouse, by Dr. Gander, really operated not a little in his favor with his future lady. What effect might have been produced upon her Ladyship, had she been apprised of the fact, that the aforesaid dedication had appeared in only

a hundred copies, having been cancelled directly Dr. Gander had ascertained the futility of his expectations from Titmouse, I do not know; but I believe she never was informed of that circumstance. As far as his dress went, she had contrived, through the interference of the earl and of Mr. Gammon, (for whom she had conceived a singular respect,) to abate a *little* of its fantastic absurdity, its execrable vulgarity. Nothing, however, seemed capable of effecting any material change in *the man*, although his continued intercourse with refined society could hardly fail to produce *some* advantageous alteration in his *manners*. As for anything further, Tittlebat Titmouse remained the same vulgar, heartless, presumptuous, ignorant creature he had ever been. Though I perceive in the Lady Cecilia no qualities to excite our respect or affection, I pity her from my very soul when I contemplate her coming union with Titmouse. One thing I know, that as soon as ever she had bound herself irrevocably to him, she began to think of at least fifty men whom she had ever spurned, but whom *now* she would have welcomed with all the ardor and affection of which her cold nature was susceptible. As she had never been *conspicuous* for animation, vivacity, or energy, the gloom which more and more frequently overshadowed her, whenever her thoughts turned towards Titmouse, attracted scarce any one's attention. There *were* those, however, who could have spoken of her mental disquietude at the approach of her cheerless nuptials—I mean her maid Annette and Miss Macspleuchan. To say that she *loathed* the bare idea of her union with Titmouse

—of his person, manners, and character—would not perhaps be exactly correct, since she had not the requisite strength of character; but she contemplated her future lord with mingled feelings of apprehension, dislike, and disgust. She generally fled for support to the comfortable notion of "*fate*," which had assigned her such a husband. Heaven had denied poor Lady Cecilia all power of contemplating the future; of anticipating consequences; of *reflecting* upon the step she was about to take. Miss Macspleuchan, however, did so for her; but, being placed in a situation of great delicacy and difficulty, acted with cautious reserve whenever the subject was mentioned. Lady Cecilia had not vouchsafed to consult her before her Ladyship had finally committed herself to Titmouse; and, after that, interference was useless and unwarrantable.

Lady Cecilia late one afternoon entered her dressing-room pale and dispirited, as had been latterly her wont; and, with a deep sigh, sank into her easy-chair. Annette, on her Ladyship's entrance, was leaning against the window frame, reading a book, which she immediately closed and laid down. "What are you reading there?" inquired Lady Cecilia, languidly.

"Oh, nothing particular, my Lady!" replied Annette, coloring a little; "it was only the prayer-book. I was looking at the marriage-service, my Lady. I wanted to see what it was that your Ladyship has to say"—

"It's not very amusing, Annette. *I* think it very dull and stupid—and you might have been better employed!"

"La, my Lady—now *I* should have thought it quite interesting, if *I* had been in your La'ship's situation!"

"Well, what is it that they expect me to repeat?"

"Oh! I'll read it, my Lady—here it is," replied Annette, and read as follows:—

"Then shall the priest say unto the woman, 'N, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together, after God's ordinance, in the holy state of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, serve him, love, honor, and keep him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?"

"The woman shall answer, 'I will.'"

"Well—it's only a form, you know, Annette—and I dare say no one ever gives it a thought," said Lady Cecilia, struggling to suppress a sigh.

"Then," continued Annette, "your La'ship will have to say a good deal after the parson—but I beg your La'ship's pardon—it's (in your case) the bishop. Here it is:

"I, N, take thee, M, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish"—

"Yes, yes—I hear," interrupted Lady Cecilia, faintly, turning pale; "I know it all; that will do, Annette" —

"There's only a word more, my Lady:—

"And obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy

ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.'

"All this your La'ship says, with your right hand holding Mr. Titmouse's."

Here a visible tremor passed through Lady Cecilia. "You may leave me alone, Annette, a little while," said she; "I don't feel quite well."

"La, my Lady, a'n't your La'ship *late*, already? Your La'ship knows how early her Grace dines ever since her illness."

"There's plenty of time; I'll ring for you when I want you. And—stay—you may as well leave your prayer-book with me for a moment—it will amuse me to look in it." Annette did as she was bid; and the next moment her melancholy mistress was alone. She did not, however, open the book she had asked for, but fell into a revery, which was disturbed some time afterwards, only by her maid tapping at the door; and who, on entering, told her that she had not one moment to lose; that his Lordship had been dressed for some time. On this her Ladyship rose, and commenced her toilet with a very deep sigh.

"Your La'ship, I suppose, wears your gold-colored satin? it matches so well with the pearls," said Annette, going to the jewel-case.

"I sha'n't wear any pearls to-day."

"Oh! my Lady! not that beautiful spray of Mr. Titmouse's? Your La'ship does look so well in it!"

"I sha'n't wear anything of Mr. Tit—I mean," she added, coloring, "I sha'n't wear *anything* in my hair to-day!"

Many and anxious, it may be easily believed, had been the conferences and negotiations between the earl, Mr. Gammon, and Mr. Titmouse, with reference to the state of his property, and the settlement to be made on Lady Cecilia. It appeared that the extent of the encumbrances on the Yatton property was £35,000, and which Gammon had many ways of accounting for, without disclosing the amount of plunder which had fallen to the share of the firm—or rather to the senior partner. The interest on this sum (*viz.* £1,750) would reduce Mr. Titmouse's present income to £8,250 per annum; but Gammon pledged himself that the rental of the estates could, with the greatest ease, be raised to £12,000, and that measures, in fact, were already in progress to effect so desirable a result. Then there was a sum of £20,000 due to Mr. Titmouse from Mr. Aubrey, on account of the *mesne* profits, £10,000 of which was guaranteed by Lord De la Zouch, and would very shortly become payable with interest; and the remaining £10,000 could be at any time called in. The sum finally determined upon, as a settlement upon Lady Cecilia, was £3,000 a-year—surely a very substantial "*consideration*" for the "*faithful promise*" to be, by-and-by, made by her at the altar—and which, moreover, she conceived she had a prospect of having entirely to herself—really "for her *separate* use, exempt from the control, debts, and engagements of her said intended husband." I am sorry to say that Lady Cecilia clung to the prospect of an almost immediate *separation*; which, she learned from several confidential friends, some of whom were qualified, by personal

experience, to offer an opinion, was a very easy matter, becoming daily more frequent on the ground of incompatibility of temper. A faint hint of the kind which she had once dropped to Miss Macspleuchan, was received in such a manner as prevented Lady Cecilia from ever repeating it. As for the earl, her father, I cannot say that he did not observe a depression of spirits in his daughter, increasing with the increasing proximity of her marriage. Since, however, *he* had entirely reconciled *himself* to it—and was delighted at the approaching long-coveted reunion of the family interests—he did not think of *her* having any real objection to the arrangements. As for her lowness of spirits, and nervousness, doubtless—his Lordship considered—every woman on the point of being married, experienced similar feelings. She herself, indeed, seldom if ever named the matter to her father in such a way as to occasion him uneasiness. In short, the affair seemed to be going on just as it ought to do; and even had it assumed an untoward aspect, circumstances had arisen which would have prevented the earl from giving his wonted attention to what in any degree concerned his daughter. In the first place, on his Lordship's party coming into power, to his infinite amazement his old post of Lord High Steward was filled up by some one else! So also was the office of Lord President of the Council; and so, moreover, was every other official post; and that, too, without any apology to the offended peer, or explanation of such a phenomenon as his entire exclusion from office. The Premier had, in fact, never once thought of his Lordship while forming

his administration; and on being subsequently remonstrated with by a venerable peer, a common friend of the Premier and Lord Dreddlington, the Premier very calmly and blandly expressed his regret that Lord Dreddlington had not given him notice of his being still—"even in his advanced years"—disposed to hold office; and trusted that he should yet be able, and before any long time should have elapsed, to avail himself of the very valuable services "of my Lord Dreddlington." This was all that he could get from the courteous but marble-hearted Premier; and, for a long while, the earl could think of only one mode of soothing his wounded feelings—viz. going about to his friends, and demonstrating that the new Lord Steward and the new Lord President were every day displaying their unfitness for office; and that the only error committed by the Premier, in the difficult and responsible task of forming a government, was that of selecting two such individuals as he had appointed to those distinguished posts. He was also greatly comforted and supported, at this period of vexation and disappointment, by the manly and indignant sympathy of—Mr. Gammon, who had succeeded in gaining a prodigious ascendancy over the earl, who, on the sudden death of his own solicitor, old Mr. Pounce, adopted Gammon in his stead; and infinitely rejoiced his Lordship was, to have thus secured the services of one who possessed an intellect at once so practical, masterly, and energetic; who had formed so high an estimate of his Lordship's powers; and whom his Lordship's condescending familiarity never for one moment

caused to lose sight of the vast distance and difference between them. He appeared, moreover, to act between Titmouse and the earl with the scrupulous candor and fidelity of a high-minded person, consciously placed in a situation of peculiar delicacy and responsibility. At the least, he seemed exceedingly anxious to secure Lady Cecilia's interests; and varied—or *appeared* to vary—the arrangements, according to every suggestion of his Lordship. The earl was satisfied that Gammon was disposed to make Titmouse go much farther than of his own accord he would have felt disposed to go, towards meeting the earl's wishes in the matter of the settlements;—in fact, Gammon evinced, in the earl's opinion, great anxiety to place her Ladyship in that position to which her high pretensions so justly entitled her.

But this was not the only mode by which he augmented and secured his influence over the weak old peer. Not only had Gammon, in the manner pointed out in a previous portion of this history, diminished the drain upon his Lordship's income, which had so long existed in the shape of interest upon money lent him on mortgage, (and which embarrassments, by the way, had all arisen from his foolish state and extravagance when Lord High Steward;) not only, I say, had Gammon done all this, but infinitely more;—he had enabled his Lordship, as it were, "to strike a blow in a new hemisphere," and at once evince his fitness for the conduct of important and complicated affairs of business, acquire an indefinite augmentation of fortune, and also great influence and popularity.

England, about the time I am speaking of, was smitten with a sort of mercantile madness—which showed itself in the shape of a monstrous passion for Joint-stock Companies. John Bull all of a sudden took it into his head, that no commercial undertaking of the least importance could any longer be carried on by means of *individual* energy, capital, and enterprise. A glimmering of this great truth he discovered that he had had, from the first moment that a private *partnership* had been adopted; and it was only to follow out the principle—to convert a private into a public partnership, and call it a "Joint-stock Company." This bright idea of John's produced prompt and prodigious results—a hundred *joint stock companies*

"Rose like an exhalation,"

in the metropolis alone, within one twelvemonth's time. But then came the question, *upon what* were these grand combined forces to operate? Undertakings of commensurate magnitude must be projected—and so it was. It really mattered not a straw how wild and ludicrously impracticable was a project—it had but to be started, and announced, to call forth moneyed people among all classes, all *making haste to be rich*—and ready to back the speculation, even to the last penny they had in the world; pouring out their capital with a recklessness, of which the lamentable *results* may prevent their recurrence. Any voluble visionary who was unluckily able to reach the ear of one or two

persons in the city, could expand his crotchet into a "company" with as little effort as an idiot could blow out a soap-bubble. For instance: one wiseacre (who surely ought never to have been at large) conceived a plan for creating ARTIFICIAL RAIN at an hour's notice, over any extent of country short of a circle of three miles in diameter; a second, for conveying MILK to every house in the metropolis in the same way as water is at present conveyed—viz. by pipes, supplied by an immense reservoir of milk to be established at Islington, and into which a million of cows were to be milked night and morning; a third, for converting *saw-dust into solid wood*; and a fourth, for surrounding the metropolis with a wall twenty feet in thickness, and fifty in height. Within three days of each of these hopeful speculations being announced, there were as many completely organized joint-stock companies established to carry them into effect. Superb offices were engaged in the city; Patrons, Presidents, Vice-Presidents; Trustees, Chairmen, Directors; Secretaries, Actuaries, Architects, Auditors; Bankers, Standing Counsel, Engineers, Surveyors, and Solicitors, appointed: and the names of all these functionaries forthwith blazed in dazzling array at the head of a "Prospectus," which set forth the advantages of the undertaking with such seductive eloquence as no man could resist; and within a week's time there was not a share to be had in the market. Into affairs of this description, Mr. Gammon, who soon saw the profit to be made out of them, if skilfully worked, plunged with the energy and excitement of a gamester.

He drew in Mr. Quirk after him; and, as they could together command the ears of several enterprising capitalists in the city, they soon had their hands full of business, and launched two or three very brilliant speculations. Mr. Gammon himself drew up their "*Prospectuses*," and in a style which must have tempted the very devil himself (had he seen them) into venturing half his capital in the undertaking!—One was a scheme for providing the metropolis with a constant supply of salt water by means of a canal cut from the vicinity of the Nore, and carried nearly all round London, so as to afford the citizens throughout the year the luxury of sea-bathing. Another was of a still more extraordinary and interesting description—for carrying into effect a discovery, by means of which, ships of all kinds and sizes could be furnished with the means, by one and the same process—and that remarkably simple, cheap, and convenient—of obtaining *pure fresh water* from the SEA, and converting the salt or brine thrown off in the operation, *instanter* into *gunpowder*! The reality of this amazing discovery was decisively ascertained by three of the greatest chemists in England; a patent was taken out, and a company formed for immediately working the patent. This undertaking was the first that Gammon brought under the notice of the Earl of Dreddlington, whom he so completely dazzled by his description, both of the signal service to be conferred upon the country, and the princely revenue to be derived from it to those early entering into the speculation, that his Lordship intimated rather an anxious wish to be connected with it.

"Good gracious, sir!" said his Lordship, with an air of wonder—"to what a pitch is science advancing! When will human ingenuity end? Sir, I doubt not that one of these days *everything*

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