"That's a good boy; now you see, by getting up as you were bid, you have not been beaten. Now, Johnny, you must go and bring the book from where you threw it down. Do you hear, sir? bring it directly!"

Johnny looked at Mr. Bonnycastle and the cane. With every intention to refuse Johnny picked up the book and laid it on the table.

"That's a good boy; now we will find the letter B. Here it is; now, Johnny, tell me what that letter is?"

Johnny made no answer.

"Tell me directly, sir," said Mr. Bonnycastle, raising his cane up in the air. The appeal was too powerful. Johnny eyed the cane; it moved, it was coming. Breathlessly he shrieked out, "B!"

"Very well indeed, Johnny—very well. Now your first lesson is over, and you shall go to bed. You have learnt more than you think of. To-morrow we will begin again. Now we'll put the cane by."

Mr. Bonnycastle rang the bell, and desired Master Johnny to be put to bed, in a room by himself, and not to give him any supper, as hunger would, the next morning, much facilitate his studies. Pain and hunger alone will tame brutes, and the same remedy must be applied to conquer those passions in man which assimilate him with brutes. Johnny was conducted to bed, although it was but six o'clock. He was not only in pain, but his ideas were confused; and no wonder, after all his life having been humoured and indulged—never punished until the day before. After all the caresses of his mother and Sarah, which he never knew the value of; after stuffing himself all day long, and being tempted to eat till he turned away in satiety, to find himself without his mother, without Sarah, without supper—covered with wheals, and, what was worse than all, without his own way. No wonder Johnny was confused, at the same time that he was subdued; and, as Mr. Bonnycastle had truly told him, he had learnt more than he had any idea of. And what would Mrs. Easy have said, had she known all this—and Sarah too? And Mr. Easy, with his rights of man? At the very time that Johnny was having the devil driven out of him, they were consoling themselves with the idea, that, at all events, there was no birch used at Mr. Bonnycastle's, quite losing sight of the fact, that as there are more ways of killing

a dog besides hanging him, so there are more ways of teaching than *à posteriori*. Happy in their ignorance they all went fast asleep, little dreaming that Johnny was already so far advanced in knowledge, as to have a tolerable comprehension of the mystery of cane. As for Johnny, he had cried himself to sleep, at least six hours before them.

CHAPTER VI

In which Jack makes essay of his father's sublime philosophy, and arrives very near to truth at last.

THE next morning Master Jack Easy was not only very sore but very hungry, and as Mr. Bonnycastle informed him that he would not only have plenty of cane, but also no breakfast, if he did not learn his letters, Johnny had wisdom enough to say the whole alphabet, for which he received a great deal of praise, the which, if he did not duly appreciate, he at all events infinitely preferred to beating. Mr. Bonnycastle perceived that he had conquered the boy by one hour's well-timed severity. He therefore handed him over to the ushers in the school, and as they were equally empowered to administer the needful impulse, Johnny very soon became a very tractable boy.

It may be imagined that the absence of Johnny was severely felt at home, but such was not the case. In the first place, Dr. Middleton had pointed out to Mrs. Easy that there was no flogging at the school, and that the punishment received by Johnny from his father would very likely be repeated; and in the next, although Mrs. Easy thought that she never could have survived the parting with her own son, she soon found out that she was much happier without him. A spoilt child is always a source of anxiety and worry, and after Johnny's departure Mrs. Easy found a quiet and repose much more suited to her disposition. Gradually she weaned herself from him, and satisfied with seeing him occasionally, and hearing the reports of Dr. Middleton, she at last was quite reconciled to his being at school, and not coming back except during the holidays. John Easy made great progress; he had good natural abilities, and Mr. Easy rubbed his hands when he saw the

doctor, saying, "Yes, let them have him for a year or two longer, and then I'll finish him myself." Each vacation he had attempted to instil into Johnny's mind the equal rights of man. Johnny appeared to pay but little attention to his father's discourses, but evidently showed that they were not altogether thrown away, as he helped himself to everything he wanted, without asking leave. And thus was our hero educated until he arrived at the age of sixteen, when he was a stout, good-looking boy, with plenty to say for himself—indeed, when it suited his purpose, he could out-talk his father.

Nothing pleased Mr. Easy so much as Jack's loquacity. "That's right; argue the point, Jack—argue the point, boy," would he say, as Jack disputed with his mother. And then he would turn to the doctor, rubbing his hands, and observe, "Depend upon it, Jack will be a great, a very great man." And then he would call Jack and give him a guinea for his cleverness; and at last Jack thought it a very clever thing to argue. He never would attempt to argue with Mr. Bonnycastle, because he was aware that Mr. Bonnycastle's arguments were too strong for him, but he argued with all the boys until it ended in a fight, which decided the point; and he sometimes argued with the ushers. In short, at the time we now speak of, which was at the breaking up for the midsummer holidays, Jack was as full of argument as he was fond of it. He would argue the point to the point of a needle, and he would divide that point into as many as there were days of the year, and argue upon each. In short, there was no end to Jack's arguing the point, although there seldom was point to his argument.

Jack had been fishing in the river, without any success, for a whole morning, and observing a large pond which had the appearance of being well stocked—he cleared the park palings, and threw in his line. He had pulled up several fine fish, when he was accosted by the proprietor, accompanied by a couple of keepers.

"May I request the pleasure of your name, young gentleman?" said the proprietor to Jack.

Now Jack was always urbane and polite.

"Certainly, sir; my name is Easy, very much at your service."

"And you appear to me to be taking it very easy," replied

the gentleman. "Pray, sir, may I inquire whether you are aware that you are trespassing?"

"The word trespass, my dear sir," replied Jack, "will admit of much argument, and I will divide it into three heads. It implies, according to the conventional meaning, coming without permission upon the land or property of another. Now, sir, the question may all be resolved in the following. Was not the world made for all? and has any one, or any portion of its inhabitants, an exclusive right to claim any part of it, as his property? If you please, I have laid down the proposition, and we will now argue the point."

The gentleman who accosted Jack had heard of Mr. Easy, and his arguments; he was a humorist, and more inclined to laugh than to be angry; at the same time he considered it necessary to show Jack that under existing circumstances they were not tenable.

"But, Mr. Easy, allowing the trespass on the property to be venial, surely you do not mean to say that you are justified in taking my fish; I bought the fish, and stocked the pond, and have fed them ever since. You cannot deny but that they are private property, and that to take them is a theft?"

"That will again admit of much ratiocination, my dear sir," replied Jack; "but—I beg your pardon, I have a fish." Jack pulled up a large carp, much to the indignation of the keepers, and to the amusement of their master, unhooked it, placed it in his basket, renewed his bait with the greatest *sang-froid*, and then throwing in his line resumed his discourse. "As I was observing, my dear sir," continued Jack, "that will admit of much ratiocination. All the creatures of the earth were given to man for his use—man means mankind—they were never intended to be made a monopoly of. Water is also the gift of heaven, and meant for the use of all. We now come to the question how far the fish are your property. If the fish only bred on purpose to please you, and make you a present of their stock, it might then require a different line of argument; but as in breeding they only acted in obedience to an instinct with which they are endowed on purpose that they may supply man, I submit to you that you cannot prove these fish to be yours more than mine. As for feeding with the idea that they were your own, that is not an unusual case in this world, even when a man is giving bread and butter to

his children. Further—but I have another bite—I beg your pardon, my dear sir—ah! he's off again——"

"Then, Mr. Easy, you mean to say that the world and its contents are made for all."

"Exactly, sir; that is my father's opinion, who is a very great philosopher."

"How then does your father account for some possessing property and others being without it?"

"Because those who are the strongest have deprived those who are weaker."

"But would not that be always the case even if we were in that state of general inheritance which you have supposed? For instance, allowing two men to chase the same animal, and both to come up to it at the same time, would not the strongest bear it off?"

"I grant that, sir."

"Well then, where is your equality?"

"That does not disprove that men were not intended to be equal; it only proves that they are not so. Neither does it disprove that everything was not made for the benefit of all; it only proves that the strong will take advantage of the weak, which is very natural."

"Oh! you grant that to be very natural. Well, Mr. Easy, I am glad to perceive that we are of one mind, and I trust we shall continue so. You'll observe that I and my keepers being three, we are the strong party in this instance, and admitting your argument, that the fish are as much yours as mine, still I take advantage of my strength to repossess myself of them, which is, as you say, very natural—James, take those fish."

"If you please," interrupted Jack, "we will argue that point——"

"Not at all; I will act according to your own arguments—I have the fish, but I now mean to have more—that fishing-rod is as much mine as yours, and being the stronger party I will take possession of it. James, William, take that fishing-rod, it is ours."

"I presume you will first allow me to observe," replied Jack, "that although I have expressed my opinion that the earth and the animals on it were made for us all, that I never yet have asserted, that what a man creates by himself, or

has created for him for a consideration, is not his own property."

"I beg your pardon; the trees that that rod was made from were made for us all, and if you, or any one for you, have thought proper to make it into a rod, it is no more my fault than it is that I have been feeding the fish, with the supposition that they were my own. Everything being common, and it being but natural that the strong should take advantage of the weak, I must take that rod as my property, until I am dispossessed by one more powerful. Moreover, being the stronger party, and having possession of this land, which you say does not belong to me more than to you—I also shall direct my keepers to see you off this property. James, take the rod—see Mr. Easy over the park palings. Mr. Easy, I wish you a good morning."

"Sir, I beg your pardon, you have not yet heard all my arguments," replied Jack, who did not approve of the conclusions drawn.

"I have no time to hear more, Mr. Easy; I wish you a good morning." And the proprietor departed, leaving Jack in company with the keepers.

"I'll trouble you for that rod, master," said William. James was very busy stringing the fish through the gills upon a piece of osier.

"At all events you will hear reason," said Jack; "I have arguments——"

"I never heard no good arguments in favour of poaching," interrupted the keeper.

"You're an insolent fellow," replied Jack. "It is by paying such vagabonds as you that people are able to be guilty of injustice."

"It's by paying us that the land an't poached—and if there be some excuse for a poor devil who is out of work, there be none for you, who call yourself a gentleman."

"According to his 'count, as we be all equal, he be no more a gentleman than we be."

"Silence, you blackguard, I shall not condescend to argue with such as you; if I did I could prove that you are a set of base slaves, who have just as much right to this property as your master or I have."

"As you have, I dare say, master."

"As I have, you scoundrel? this pond is as much my property, and so are the fish in it, as they are of your master, who has usurped the right."

"I say, James, what do you say, shall we put the young gentleman in possession of his property?" said William, winking to the other.

James took the hint, they seized Jack by the arms and legs, and soused him into the pond. Jack arose after a deep submersion, and floundered on shore blowing and spluttering. But in the meantime the keepers had walked away, carrying with them the rod and line, fish, and tin can of bait, laughing loudly at the practical joke which they had played our hero.

"Well," thought Jack, "either there must be some mistake in my father's philosophy, or else this is a very wicked world. I shall submit this case to my father."

And Jack received this reply: "I have told you before, Jack, that these important truths will not at present be admitted—but it does not the less follow that they are true. This is the age of iron, in which might has become right—but the time will come when these truths will be admitted, and your father's name will be more celebrated than that of any philosopher of ancient days. Recollect, Jack, that although in preaching against wrong and advocating the rights of man, you will be treated as a martyr, it is still your duty to persevere; and if you are dragged through all the horse-ponds in the kingdom, never give up your argument."

"That I never will, sir," replied Jack; "but the next time I argue it shall be, if possible, with power on my side, and at all events not quite so near a pond."

"I think," said Mrs. Easy, who had been a silent listener, "that Jack had better fish in the river, and then, if he catches no fish, at all events he will not be soused in the water, and spoil his clothes."

But Mrs. Easy was no philosopher.

A few days afterwards Jack discovered, one fine morning, on the other side of a hedge, a summer apple-tree bearing tempting fruit, and he immediately broke through the hedge, and climbing the tree, as our first mother did before him he culled the fairest and did eat.

"I say, you sir, what are you doing there?" cried a rough voice.