"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.

"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.

Jack looked down, and perceived a stout, thickset personage in grey coat and red waistcoat, standing underneath him.

"Don't you see what I'm about," replied Jack, "I'm eating apples—shall I throw you down a few?"

"Thank you kindly—the fewer that are pulled the better; perhaps, as you are so free to give them to others as well as to help yourself, you may think that they are your own property!"

"Not a bit more my property than they are yours, my good man."

"I guess that's something like the truth, but you are not quite at the truth yet, my lad; those apples are mine, and I'll trouble you to come down as fast as you please. When you're down we can then settle our accounts; and," continued the man, shaking his cudgel, "depend upon it you shall have your receipt in full."

Jack did not much like the appearance of things.

"My good man," said he, "it is quite a prejudice on your part to imagine that apples were not given, as well as all other fruit, for the benefit of us all—they are common property, believe me."

"That's a matter of opinion, my lad, and I may be allowed to have my own."

"You'll find it in the Bible," says Jack.

"I never did yet, and I've read it through and through all, bating the 'Pocryfar."

"Then," said Jack, "go home and fetch the Bible, and I'll prove it to you."

"I suspect you'll not wait till I come back again. No, no; I have lost plenty of apples, and have long wanted to find the robbers out; now I've caught one I'll take care that he don't 'scape without apple sauce, at all events—so come down, you young thief, come down directly—or it will be all the worse for you."

"Thank you," said Jack, "but I am very well here. I will, if you please, argue the point from where I am."

"I've no time to argue the point, my lad; I've plenty to do, but do not think I'll let you off. If you don't choose to come down, why then you must stay there, and I'll answer for it, as soon as work is done I shall find you safe enough."

"What can be done," thought Jack, "with a man who will

not listen to argument? What a world is this!—however, he'll not find me here when he comes back, I've a notion."

But in this Jack was mistaken. The farmer walked to the hedge and called a boy, who took his orders and ran to the farmhouse. In a minute or two a large bull-dog was seen bounding along the orchard to his master. "Mark him, Cæsar," said the farmer to the dog, "mark him." The dog crouched down on the grass, with his head up, and eyes glaring at Jack, showing a range of teeth, that drove all our hero's philosophy out of his head.

"I can't wait here, but Cæsar can, and I will tell you, as a friend, that if he gets hold of you he'll not leave a limb of you together—when work's done I'll come back;" so saying, the farmer walked off, leaving Jack and the dog to argue the point, if so inclined. What a sad jade must philosophy be, to put her votaries in such predicaments!

After a while the dog laid his head down and closed his eyes, as if asleep, but Jack observed that at the least movement on his part one eye was seen partially to unclose; so Jack, like a prudent man, resolved to remain where he was. He picked a few more apples, for it was his dinner-time, and as he chewed he ruminated.

Jack had been but a few minutes ruminating before he was interrupted by another ruminating animal, no less a personage than a bull, who had been turned out with full possession of the orchard, and who now advanced, bellowing occasionally, and tossing his head at the sight of Cæsar, whom he considered as much a trespasser as his master had our hero. Cæsar started on his legs and faced the bull, who advanced pawing, with his tail up in the air. When within a few yards the bull made a rush at the dog, who evaded him and attacked him in return, and thus did the warfare continue until the opponents were already at some distance from the apple-tree. Jack prepared for immediate flight, but unfortunately the combat was carried on by the side of the hedge at which Jack had gained admission. Never mind, thought Jack, there are two sides to every field, and although the other hedge joined on to the garden near to the farmhouse, there was no option. "At all events," said Jack, "I'll try it." Jack was slipping down the trunk, when he heard a tremendous roar—the bull-dog had been tossed by the bull; he was then high in the air, and Jack saw him fall on

the other side of the hedge, and the bull was thus celebrating his victory with a flourish of trumpets. Upon which Jack, perceiving that he was relieved from his sentry, slipped down the rest of the tree and took to his heels. Unfortunately for Jack, the bull saw him, and, flushed with victory, he immediately set up another roar and bounded after Jack. Jack perceived his danger, and fear gave him wings; he not only flew over the orchard, but he flew over the hedge, which was about five feet high, just as the bull drove his head into it. Look before you leap, is an old proverb. Had Jack done so, he would have done better; but as there were cogent reasons to be offered in extenuation of our philosopher, we shall say no more, but merely state that Jack, when he got to the other side of the hedge, found that he had pitched into a small apiary, and had upset two hives of bees who resented the intrusion; and Jack had hardly time to get upon his legs before he found them very busy stinging him in all quarters. All that Jack could do was to run for it, but the bees flew faster than he could run, and Jack was mad with pain, when he stumbled, half-blinded, over the brick-work of a well. Jack could not stop his pitching into the well, but he seized the iron chain as it struck him across the face. Down went Jack, and round went the windlass, and after a rapid descent of forty feet our hero found himself under water, and no longer troubled with the bees, who, whether they had lost scent of their prey from his rapid descent, or being notoriously clever insects, acknowledged the truth of the adage, "leave well alone," had certainly left Jack with no other companion than Truth. Jack rose from his immersion, and seized the rope to which the chain of the bucket was made fast—it had all of it been unwound from the windlass, and therefore it enabled Jack to keep his head above water. After a few seconds Jack felt something against his legs, it was the bucket, about two feet under the water; Jack put his feet into it, and found himself pretty comfortable, for the water, after the sting of the bees and the heat he had been put into by the race with the bull, was quite cool and refreshing.

"At all events," thought Jack, "if it had not been for the bull, I should have been watched by the dog, and then thrashed by the farmer; but then again, if it had not been for the bull, I should not have tumbled among the bees; and if it had not been for the bees, I should not have tumbled

into the well; and if it had not been for the chain, I should have been drowned. Such has been the chain of events, all because I wanted to eat an apple.

"However, I have got rid of the farmer, and the dog, and the bull, and the bees—all's well that ends well; but how the devil am I to get out of the well? All creation appear to have conspired against the rights of man. As my father said, this is an iron age, and here I am swinging to an iron chain."

We have given the whole of Jack's soliloquy, as it will prove that Jack was no fool, although he was a bit of a philosopher; and a man who could reason so well upon cause and effect, at the bottom of a well, up to his neck in water, showed a good deal of presence of mind. But if Jack's mind had been a little twisted by his father's philosophy, it had still sufficient strength and elasticity to recover itself in due time. Had Jack been a common personage, we should never have selected him for our hero.

CHAPTER VII

In which Jack makes some very sage reflections, and comes to a very unwise decision.

AFTER all, it must be acknowledged that although there are cases of distress in which a well may become a place of refuge, a well is not at all calculated for a prolonged residence—so thought Jack. After he had been there some fifteen minutes his teeth chattered, and his lips trembled; he felt a numbness all over, and he thought it high time to call for assistance, which at first he would not, as he was afraid he should be pulled up to encounter the indignation of the farmer and his family. Jack was arranging his jaws for a halloo when he felt the chain pulled up, and he slowly emerged from the water. At first he heard complaints of the weight of the bucket, at which Jack was not surprised; then he heard a tittering and laughing between two parties, and soon afterwards he mounted up gaily. At last his head appeared above the low wall, and he was about to extend his arms so as to secure a position on it, when those who were working at the windlass beheld him. It was a heavy farming man and a maid-servant.

"Thank you," said Jack.

One never should be too quick in returning thanks; the girl screamed and let go the winch, the man, frightened, did not hold it fast; it slipped from his grasp, whirled round, struck him under the chin, and threw him over it headlong, and before the "Thank you" was fairly out of Jack's lips, down he went again like lightning to the bottom. Fortunately for Jack, he had not yet let go the chain, or he might have struck the sides and been killed; as it was, he was merely soused a second time, and in a minute or two regained his former position.

"This is mighty pleasant," thought Jack, as he clapped his wet hat once more on his head; "at all events, they can't now plead ignorance, they must know that I'm here."

In the meantime the girl ran into the kitchen, threw herself down on a stool, from which she reeled off in a fit upon sundry heaps of dough waiting to be baked in the oven, which were laid to rise on the floor before the fire.

"Mercy on me, what is the matter with Susan?" exclaimed the farmer's wife. "Here—where's Mary—where's John. Deary me, if the bread won't all be turned to pancakes."

John soon followed, holding his under-jaw in his hand, looking very dismal and very frightened, for two reasons; one, because he thought that his jaw was broken, and the other, because he thought he had seen the devil.

"Mercy on us, what is the matter?" exclaimed the farmer's wife again. "Mary, Mary, Mary!" screamed she, beginning to be frightened herself, for with all her efforts she could not remove Susan from the bed of dough, where she lay senseless and heavy as lead. Mary answered to her mistress's loud appeal, and with her assistance they raised up Susan; but as for the bread, there was no hopes of it ever rising again. "Why don't you come here and help Susan, John?" cried Mary.

"Aw-yaw-aw!" was all the reply of John, who had had enough quite of helping Susan, and who continued to hold his head, as it were, in his hand.

"What's the matter here, missus?" exclaimed the farmer, coming in. "Highty-tighty, what ails Susan? and what ails you?" continued the farmer, turning to John. "Dang it, but everything seems to go wrong, this blessed day First, there be all the apples stolen; then there be all the hives turned