

## CHAPTER XXXV

*Mr. Easy's wonderful invention fully explained by himself, much to the satisfaction of our hero, and it is to be presumed to that also of the reader.*

AT last the packet anchored in Falmouth Roads. Jack, accompanied by Mesty, was soon on shore with his luggage, threw himself into the mail, arrived in London, and waiting there two or three days, to obtain what he considered necessary from a fashionable tailor, ordered a chaise to Forest Hill. He had not written to his father to announce his arrival, and it was late in the morning when the chaise drew up at his father's door.

Jack stepped out and rang the bell. The servants who opened the door did not know him; they were not the same as those he left.

"Where is Mr. Easy?" demanded Jack.

"Who are you?" replied one of the men, in a gruff tone.

"By de powers, you very soon find out who he is," observed Mesty.

"Stay here, and I'll see if he is at home."

"Stay here? stay in the hall like a footman? What do you mean, you rascal?" cried Jack, attempting to push by the man.

"Oh, that won't do here, master; this is Equality Hall; one man's as good as another."

"Not always," replied Jack, knocking him down. "Take that for your insolence, pack up your traps, and walk out of the house to-morrow morning."

Mesty, in the meantime, had seized the other by the throat.

"What I do with this fellow, Massa Easy?"

"Leave him now, Mesty: we'll settle their account to-morrow morning. I presume I shall find my father in the library."

"His father!" said one of the men to the other; "he's not exactly a chip of the old block."

"We shall have a change, I expect," replied the other, as they walked away.

"Mesty," cried Jack, in an authoritative tone, "bring those two rascals back to take the luggage out of the chaise; pay the postillion, and tell the housekeeper to show you my room and yours. Come to me for orders as soon as you have done this."

"Yes, sir," replied Mesty. "Now come here, you d—n blackguard, and take tings out of chaise, or by de holy poker I choak your luff, both of you."

The filed teeth, the savage look, and determination of Mesty, had the due effect. The men sullenly returned, and unloaded the chaise. In the meantime, Jack walked into his father's study; his father was there—the study was lighted up with argand lamps, and Jack looked with astonishment. Mr. Easy was busy with a plaster cast of a human head, which he pored over, so that he did not perceive the entrance of his son. The cast of the skull was divided into many compartments, with writing on each; but what most astonished our hero was the alteration in the apartment. The book-cases and books had all been removed, and in the centre, suspended from the ceiling, was an apparatus which would have puzzled any one, composed of rods in every direction, with screws at the end of them, and also tubes in equal number, one of which communicated with a large air-pump, which stood on a table. Jack took a short survey, and then walked up to his father and accosted him.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Easy, "is it possible?—yes, it is my son John! I'm glad to see you, John,—very glad, indeed," continued the old gentleman, shaking him by both hands—"very glad that you have come home; I wanted you—wanted your assistance in my great and glorious project, which, I thank Heaven, is now advancing rapidly. Very soon shall equality and the rights of man be proclaimed everywhere. The pressure from without is enormous, and the bulwarks of our ridiculous and tyrannical constitution must give way. King, lords, and aristocrats; landholders, tithe-collectors, church and state, thank God, will soon be overthrown, and the golden age revived—the millennium, the true millennium—not what your poor mother talked about. I am at the head of twenty-nine societies, and if my health lasts, you will see what I will accomplish now that I have your assistance, Jack;" and Mr. Easy's eyes sparkled and flashed in all the brilliancy of incipient insanity.



MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

Jack sighed, and to turn the conversation he observed, "You have made a great change in this room, sir. What may all this be for? Is it a machine to improve equality and the rights of man?"

"My dear son," replied Mr. Easy, sitting down and crossing his legs complacently, with his two hands under his right thigh, according to his usual custom, when much pleased with himself,—“why, my dear son, that is not exactly the case, and yet you have shown some degree of perception even in your guess; for if my invention succeeds (and I have no doubt of it), I shall have discovered the great art of rectifying the mistakes of nature, and giving an equality of organisation to the whole species, of introducing all the finer organs of humanity, and of destroying the baser. It is a splendid invention, Jack, very splendid. They may talk of Gall and Spurzheim, and all those; but what have they done? Nothing but divided the brain into sections, classed the organs, and discovered where they reside. But what good result has been gained from that? the murderer by nature remained a murderer—the benevolent man a benevolent man—he could not alter his organisation. I have found out how to change all that.”

“Surely, sir, you would not interfere with the organ of benevolence?”

“But indeed I must, Jack. I myself am suffering from my organ of benevolence being too large; I must reduce it, and then I shall be capable of greater things, shall not be so terrified by difficulties, shall overlook trifles, and only carry on great schemes for universal equality and the supreme rights of man. I have put myself into that machine every morning for two hours, for these last three months, and I feel now that I am daily losing a great portion.”

“Will you do me the favour to explain an invention so extraordinary, sir?” said our hero.

“Most willingly, my boy. You observe that in the centre there is a frame to confine the human head, somewhat larger than the head itself, and that the head rests upon the iron collar beneath. When the head is thus firmly fixed, suppose I want to reduce the size of any particular organ, I take the boss corresponding to where that organ is situated in the cranium, and fix it on it. For you will observe that all the bosses inside of the top of the frame correspond to the organs

MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

as described in this plaster cast on the table. I then screw down pretty tight, and increase the pressure daily, until the organ disappears altogether, or is reduced to the size required.”

“I comprehend that part perfectly, sir,” replied Jack; “but now explain to me by what method you contrive to raise an organ which does not previously exist.”

“That,” replied Mr. Easy, “is the greatest perfection of the whole invention, for without I could do that, I could have done little. I feel convinced that this invention of mine will immortalise me. Observe all these little bell-glasses which communicate with the air-pump; I shave my patient’s head, grease it a little, and fix on the bell-glass, which is exactly shaped to fit the organ in length and breadth. I work the air-pump, and raise the organ by an exhausted receiver. It cannot fail. There is my butler, now; a man who escaped hanging last spring assizes on an undoubted charge of murder. I selected him on purpose; I have flattened down murder to nothing, and I have raised benevolence till it’s like a wen.”

“I am afraid my poor father’s head is an exhausted receiver,” thought Jack, who then replied, “Well, sir, if it succeeds it will be a good invention.”

“If it succeeds!—why, it has succeeded—it cannot fail. It has cost me near two thousand pounds. By-the-bye, Jack, you have drawn very liberally lately, and I had some trouble, with my own expenses, to meet your bills; not that I complain—but what with societies, and my machine, and tenants refusing to pay their rents, on the principle that the farms are no more mine than theirs, which I admit to be true, I have had some difficulty in meeting all demands.”

“The governor was right,” thought Jack, who now inquired after Dr. Middleton.

“Ah, poor silly man! he’s alive yet—I believe doing well. He is one who will interfere with the business of others, complains of my servants—very silly man indeed—but I let him have his own way. So I did your poor mother. Silly woman, Mrs. Easy—but never mind that.”

“If you please, sir, I have also a complaint to make of the servants for their insolence to me—but we will adjourn, if you please, as I wish to have some refreshment.”

“Certainly, Jack, if you are hungry; I will go with you. Complain of my servants, say you?—there must be some



MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

mistake—they are all shaved, and wear wigs, and I put them in the machine every other morning; but I mean to make an alteration in one respect. You observe, Jack, it requires more dignity; we must raise the whole machinery some feet, ascend it with state as a throne, for it is the throne of reason, the victory of mind over nature."

"As you please, sir; but I am really hungry just now."

Jack and his father went into the drawing-room and rang the bell; not being answered, Jack rose and rang again.

"My dear sir," observed Mr. Easy, "you must not be in a hurry; every man naturally provides for his own wants first, and afterwards for those of others. Now my servants——"

"Are a set of insolent scoundrels, sir, and insolence I never permit. I knocked one down as I entered your house, and, with your permission, I will discharge two, at least, to-morrow."

"My dear son," exclaimed Mr. Easy, "you knocked my servant down!—are you not aware, by the laws of equality——"

"I am aware of this, my dear father," replied Jack, "that by all the laws of society we have a right to expect civility and obedience from those we pay and feed."

"Pay and feed! Why, my dear son,—my dear Jack,—you must recollect——"

"I recollect, sir, very well; but if your servants do not come to their recollection in a very short time, either I or they must quit the house."

"But, my dear boy, have you forgotten the principles I instilled into you? Did you not go to sea to obtain that equality foiled by tyranny and despotism here on shore? Do you not acknowledge and support my philosophy?"

"We'll argue that point to-morrow, sir—at present I want to obtain my supper;" and Jack rang the bell furiously.

The butler made his appearance at this last summons, and he was followed by Mesty, who looked like a demon with anger.

"Mercy on me, whom have we here?"

"My servant, father," exclaimed Jack, starting up; "one that I can trust to, and who will obey me. Mesty, I wish some supper and wine to be brought immediately—see that scoundrel gets it ready in a moment. If he does not, throw him out of the door, and lock him out. You understand me."

MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

"Yes, massa," grinned Mesty; "now you hab supper very quick, or Mesty know the reason why. Follow me, sar," cried Mesty in an imperative tone to the butler; "quick, sar, or by de holy poker, I show you what Mesty can do;" and Mesty grinned in his wrath.

"Bring supper and wine immediately," said Mr. Easy, giving an order such as the butler had never heard since he had been in the house.

The butler quitted the room, followed by the Ashantee.

"My dear boy—my Jack—I can make every allowance for hunger, it is often the cause of theft and crime in the present unnatural state of society—but really you are too violent. The principles——"

"Your principles are all confounded nonsense, father," cried Jack, in a rage.

"What, Jack!—my son—what do I hear? This from you—nonsense! Why, Jack, what has Captain Wilson been doing with you?"

"Bringing me to my senses, sir."

"Oh dear! oh dear! my dear Jack, you will certainly make me lose mine."

"Gone already," thought Jack.

"That you, my child, so carefully brought up in the great and glorious school of philosophy, should behave this way—should be so violent—forget your sublime philosophy, and all—just like Esau, selling your birthright for a mess of pottage. Oh, Jack, you'll kill me! and yet I love you, Jack—whom else have I to love in this world? Never mind, we'll argue the point, my boy—I'll convince you—in a week all will be right again."

"It shall, sir, if I can manage it," replied Jack.

"That's right, I love to hear you say so—that's consoling, very consoling—but I think now, I was wrong to let you go to sea, Jack."

"Indeed you were not, father."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so; I thought they had ruined you, destroyed all your philosophy—but it will be all right again—you shall come to our societies, Jack—I am president—you shall hear me speak, Jack—you shall hear me thunder like Demosthenes—but here comes the tray."

The butler, followed by Mesty, who attended him as if he



MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

was his prisoner, now made his appearance with the tray, laid it down in a sulky manner, and retired. Jack desired Mesty to remain.

"Well, Mesty, how are they getting on in the servants' hall?"

"Regular mutiny, sar—ah swear dat they no stand our nonsense, and dat we both leave the house to-morrow."

"Do you hear, sir? your servants declare that I shall leave your house to-morrow."

"You leave my house, Jack, after four years' absence!—no, no. I'll reason with them—I'll make them a speech. You don't know how I can speak, Jack."

"Look you, father, I cannot stand this; either give me a *carte-blanc* to arrange this household as I please, or I shall quit it myself to-morrow morning."

"Quit my house, Jack! no, no—shake hands and make friends with them; be civil, and they will serve you—but you know, upon the principles——"

"Principles of the devil!" cried Jack, in a rage.

"Of the devil, Jack; dear me! I wish you had never gone to sea."

"In one word, sir, do you consent, or am I to leave the house?"

"Leave the house! Oh no; not leave the house, Jack. I have no son but you. Then do as you please—but you must not send away my murderer, for I must have him cured, and shown as a proof of my wonderful invention."

"Mesty, get my pistols ready for to-morrow morning, and your own too—do ye hear?"

"All ready, massa," replied Mesty; "I tink dat right."

"Right!—pistols, Jack! What do you mean?"

"It is possible, father, that you may not have yet quite cured your murderer, and therefore it is as well to be prepared. I will now wish you good-night; but, before I go, you will be pleased to summon one of the servants, that he may inform the others that the household is under my control for the future."

The bell was again rung, and was this time answered with more expedition. Jack told the servant, in presence of his father, that, with the consent of the latter, he should hereafter take the whole control of the establishment, and that

MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

Mesty would be the major-domo from whom they would receive their orders. The man stared, and cast an appealing look to Mr. Easy, who hesitated, and at last said—

"Yes, William; you'll apologise to all, and say that I have made the arrangement."

"You apologise to none, sir," cried Jack; "but tell them that I will arrange the whole business to-morrow morning. Tell the woman to come here and show me my bed-room. Mesty, get your supper and then come up to me; if they dare to refuse you, recollect who does, and point them out to-morrow morning. That will do, sir; away with you, and bring flat candlesticks."

CHAPTER XXXVI

*In which Jack takes up the other side of the argument, and proves that he can argue as well on one side as the other.*

THIS scene may give some idea of the state of Mr. Easy's household upon our hero's arrival. The poor lunatic, for such we must call him, was at the mercy of his servants, who robbed, laughed at, and neglected him. The waste and expense were enormous. Our hero, who found how matters stood, went to bed, and lay the best part of the night revolving what to do. He determined to send for Dr. Middleton, and consult him.

The next morning Jack rose early; Mesty was in the room, with warm water, as soon as he rang.

"By de power, Massa Easy, your fader very silly old man."

"I'm afraid so," replied Jack.

"He not right here," observed Mesty, putting his fingers to his head.

Jack sighed, and desired Mesty to send one of the grooms up to the door. When the man knocked he desired him to mount a horse and ride over to Dr. Middleton, and request his immediate attendance.

The man, who was really a good servant, replied, "Yes, sir," very respectfully, and hastened away.

Jack went down to breakfast, and found it all ready, but his