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—ab 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-blanche* 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

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

father was not in the room. He went to his study, and found him occupied with the carpenter, who was making a sort of a frame as the model of the platform or daïs, to be raised under the wonderful invention. Mr. Easy was so busy that he could not come to breakfast, so Jack took his alone. An hour after this, Dr. Middleton's carriage drove up to the door. The doctor heartily greeted our hero.

"My dear sir—for so I suppose I must now call you—I am heartily glad that you have returned. I can assure you that it is not a moment too soon."

"I have found out that already, doctor," replied Jack; "sit down. Have you breakfasted?"

"No, I have not; for I was so anxious to see you that I ordered my carriage at once."

"Then sit down, doctor, and we will talk over matters quietly."

"You of course perceive the state of your father. He has been some time quite unfit to manage his own affairs."

"So I am afraid."

"What do you intend to do, then—put them in the hands of trustees?"

"I will be trustee for myself, Dr. Middleton. I could not do the other without submitting my poor father to a process, and confinement, which I cannot think of."

"I can assure you that there are not many in Bedlam worse than he is; but I perfectly agree with you; that is, if he will consent to your taking charge of the property."

"A power of attorney will be all that is requisite," replied Jack; "that is, as soon as I have rid the house of the set of miscreants who are in it; and who are now in open mutiny."

"I think," replied the doctor, "that you will have some trouble. You know the character of the butler?"

"Yes, I have it from my father's own mouth. I really should take it as a great favour, Dr. Middleton, if you could stay here a day or two. I know that you have retired from practice."

"I would have made the same offer, my young friend. I will come here with two of my servants; for you must discharge these."

"I have one of my own who is worth his weight in gold—

that will be sufficient. I will dismiss every man you think I ought; and as for the women, we can give them warning and replace them at leisure."

"That is exactly what I should propose," replied the doctor. "I will now go, if you please, procure the assistance of a couple of constables, and also of your father's former legal adviser, who shall prepare a power of attorney."

"Yes," replied Jack, "and we must then find out the tenants who refuse to pay upon the principles of equality, and he shall serve them with notice immediately."

"I am rejoiced, my dear young friend, to perceive that your father's absurd notions have not taken root."

"They lasted some time, nevertheless, doctor," replied Jack, laughing.

"Well then, I will only quit you for an hour or two, and then, as you wish it, will take up my quarters here as long as you find me useful."

In the forenoon Dr. Middleton again made his appearance, accompanied by Mr. Hanson, the solicitor, bringing with him his portmanteau and his servants. Mr. Easy had come into the parlour, and was at breakfast when they entered. He received them very coolly; but a little judicious praise of the wonderful invention had its due effect; and after Jack had reminded him of his promise that, in future, he was to control the household, he was easily persuaded to sign the order for his so doing—that is, the power of attorney.

Mr. Easy also gave up to Jack the key of his escritoire, and Mr. Hanson possessed himself of the books, papers, and receipts necessary to ascertain the state of his affairs, and the rents which had not yet been paid up. In the meantime the constables arrived. The servants were all summoned; Mr. Hanson showed them the power of attorney, empowering Jack to act for his father, and in less than half-an-hour afterwards, all the men-servants, but two grooms, were dismissed; the presence of the constables and Mesty prevented any resistance, but not without various threats on the part of the butler, whose name was O'Rourke. Thus, in twenty-four hours, Jack had made a reformation in the household.

Mr. Easy took no notice of anything; he returned to his study and his wonderful invention. Mesty had received the keys of the cellar, and had now complete control over those

who remained. Dr. Middleton, Mr. Hanson, Mr. Easy, and Jack sat down to dinner, and everything wore the appearance of order and comfort. Mr. Easy ate very heartily, but said nothing till after dinner, when, as was his usual custom, he commenced arguing upon the truth and soundness of his philosophy.

"By-the-bye, my dear son, if I recollect right, you told me last night that you were no longer of my opinion. Now, if you please, we will argue this point."

"I'll argue the point with all my heart, sir," replied Jack, "will you begin?"

"Let's fill our glasses," cried Mr. Easy triumphantly; "let's fill our glasses, and then I will bring Jack back to the proper way of thinking. Now then, my son, I trust you will not deny that we are all born equal."

"I do deny it, sir," replied Jack; "I deny it *in toto*—I deny it from the evidence of our own senses, and from the authority of Scripture. To suppose all men were born equal is to suppose that they are equally endowed with the same strength, and with the same capacity of mind, which we know is not the case. I deny it from Scripture, from which I could quote many passages; but I will restrict myself to one—the parable of the talents: 'To one he gave five talents, to another but one,' holding them responsible for the trust reposed in them. We are all intended to fill various situations in society, and are provided by Heaven accordingly."

"That may be," replied Mr. Easy; "but that does not prove that the earth was not intended to be equally distributed among all alike."

"I beg your pardon; the proof that that was not the intention of Providence is, that that equality, allowing it to be put in practice, could never be maintained."

"Not maintained!—no, because the strong oppress the weak, tyrants rise up and conquer—men combine to do wrong."

"Not so, my dear father; I say it could not be maintained without the organisation of each individual had been equalised, and several other points established. For instance, allowing that every man had, *ab origine*, a certain portion of ground, he who was the strongest or the cleverest would soon cause his to yield more than others would, and thus the equality be destroyed. Again, if one couple had ten children, and another

had none, then again would equality be broken in upon, as the land that supports two in the one instance, would have to feed twelve in the other. You perceive, therefore, that without rapine or injustice, your equality could not be preserved."

"But, Jack, allowing that there might be some diversity from such causes, that would be a very different thing from the present monstrous state of society, in which we have kings, and lords, and people, rolling in wealth, while others are in a state of pauperism, and obliged to steal for their daily bread."

"My dear father, I consider that it is to this inequality that society owes its firmest cementation—that we are enabled to live in peace and happiness, protected by just laws, each doing his duty in that state of life to which he is called, rising above or sinking in the scale of society according as he has been entrusted with the five talents or the one. Equality can and does exist nowhere. We are told that it does not exist in heaven itself—how can it exist upon earth?"

"But that is only asserted, Jack, and it is not proof that it ought not to exist."

"Let us argue the point, father, coolly. Let us examine a little what would be the effect if all was equality. Were all equal in beauty there would be no beauty, for beauty is only by comparison; were all equal in strength, conflicts would be interminable; were all equal in rank, and power, and possessions, the greatest charms of existence would be destroyed—generosity, gratitude, and half the finer virtues would be unknown. The first principle of our religion, charity, could not be practised—pity would never be called forth—benevolence, your great organ, would be useless, and self-denial a blank letter. Were all equal in ability, there would be no instruction, no talent, no genius—nothing to admire, nothing to copy, to respect—nothing to rouse emulation, or stimulate to praiseworthy ambition. Why, my dear father, what an idle, unprofitable, weary world would this be if it were based on equality."

"But allowing all that, Jack," replied Mr. Easy, "and I will say you argue well in a bad cause, why should the inequality be carried so far—king and lords, for instance?"

"The most lasting and imperishable form of building is that of the pyramid, which defies ages, and to that may the most

perfect form of society be compared. It is based upon the many, and rising by degrees, it becomes less as wealth, talent, and rank increase in the individual, until it ends at the apex or monarch, above all. Yet each several stone from the apex to the base is necessary for the preservation of the structure, and fulfils its duty in its allotted place. Could you prove that those at the summit possess the greatest share of happiness in this world, then, indeed, you have a position to argue on; but it is well known that such is not the case; and provided he is of a contented mind, the peasant is more happy than the king, surrounded as the latter is by cares and anxiety."

"Very well argued, indeed, my dear sir," observed Dr. Middleton.

"But, my dear boy, there are other states of society than monarchy; we have republics and despotisms."

"We have, but how long do they last compared to the first? There is a cycle in the changes which never varies. A monarchy may be overthrown by a revolution, and republicanism succeed, but that is shortly followed by despotism, till, after a time, monarchy succeeds again by unanimous consent, as the most legitimate and equitable form of government; but in none of these do you find a single advance to equality. In a republic, those who govern are more powerful than the rulers in a restricted monarchy—a president is greater than a king, and next to a despot, whose will is law. Even in small societies you find that some will naturally take the lead and assume domination. We commence the system at school, when we are first thrown into society, and there we are taught systems of petty tyranny. There are some few points in which we obtain equality in this world, and that equality can only be obtained under a well-regulated form of society, and consists in an equal administration of justice and of laws, to which we have agreed to submit for the benefit of the whole—the equal right to live and not be permitted to starve, which has been obtained in this country. And when we are called to account, we shall have equal justice. Now, my dear father, you have my opinion."

"Yes, my dear, this is all very well in the abstract; but how does it work?"

"It works well. The luxury, the pampered state, the idleness—if you please, the wickedness—of the rich, all contribute

to the support, the comfort, and employment of the poor. You may behold extravagance—it is a vice; but that very extravagance circulates money, and the vice of one contributes to the happiness of many. The only vice which is not redeemed by producing commensurate good, is avarice. If all were equal, there would be no arts, no manufactures, no industry, no employment. As it is, the inequality of the distribution of wealth may be compared to the heart, pouring forth the blood like a steam-engine through the human frame, the same blood returning from the extremities by the veins, to be again propelled, and keep up a healthy and vigorous circulation."

"Bravo, Jack!" said Dr. Middleton. "Have you anything to reply, sir?" continued he, addressing Mr. Easy.

"To reply, sir?" replied Mr. Easy with scorn; "why, he has not given me half an argument yet; why, that black servant even laughs at him—look at him there showing his teeth. Can he forget the horrors of slavery? can he forget the base unfeeling lash? No, sir, he has suffered, and he can estimate the divine right of equality. Ask him now, ask him, if you dare, Jack, whether he will admit the truth of your argument."

"Well, I'll ask him," replied Jack, "and I tell you candidly that he was once one of your disciples. Mesty, what's your opinion of equality?"

"Equality, Massa Easy?" replied Mesty, pulling up his cravat; "I say d—n equality, now I major-domo."

"The rascal deserves to be a slave all his life."

"True, I ab been slave—but I a prince in my own country. Massa Easy tell how many skulls I have."

"Skulls—skulls—do you know anything of the sublime science? Are you a phrenologist?"

"I know man's skull very well in Ashantee country, anyhow."

"Then if you know that, you must be one. I had no idea that the science had extended so far—maybe it was brought from thence. I will have some talk with you to-morrow This is very curious. Dr. Middleton, is it not?"

"Very, indeed, Mr. Easy."

"I shall feel his head to-morrow after breakfast, and if there is anything wrong, I shall correct it with my machine. By-the-bye, I have quite forgot, gentlemen; you will excuse me, but I wish to see what the carpenter has done for me,

and after that I shall attend the meeting of the society. Jack, my boy, won't you come and hear my speech?"

"Thank you, sir, but I cannot well leave your friends."

Mr. Easy quitted the room.

"Are you aware, my dear sir, that your father has opened his preserves to all the poachers?" said Mr. Hanson.

"The devil he has!"

"Yes, he has allowed several gangs of gipsies to locate themselves in his woods, much to the annoyance of the neighbourhood, who suffer from their depredations," continued Dr. Middleton.

"I find, by the receipts and books, that there is nearly two years' rental of the estate due; some tenants have paid up in full, others not for four years. I reckon fourteen thousand pounds still in arrear."

"You will oblige me by taking immediate steps, Mr. Hanson, for the recovery of the sums due."

"Most certainly, Mr. John. I trust your father will not commit himself to-night as he has done lately."

When they rose to retire Dr. Middleton took our hero by the hand. "You do not know, my dear fellow, what pleasure it gives me to find that, in spite of the doting of your mother and the madness of your father, you have turned out so well. It is very fortunate that you have come home; I trust you will now give up the profession."

"I have given it up, sir; which, by-the-bye, reminds me that I have not applied for either my discharge or that of my servant; but I cannot spare time yet, so I shall not report myself."

CHAPTER XXXVII

In which our hero finds himself an orphan, and resolves to go to sea again, without the smallest idea of equality.

THE next morning, when they met at breakfast, Mr. Easy did not make his appearance, and Jack inquired of Mesty where he was.

"They say down below that the old gentleman not come home last night."

"Did not come home?" said Dr. Middleton; "this must be looked to."

"He great rascal, dat butler man," said Mesty to Jack; "but de old gentleman not sleep in his bed, dat for sure."

"Make inquiries when he went out," said Jack.

"I hope no accident has happened," observed Mr. Hanson; "but his company has lately been very strange."

"Nobody see him go out, sar, last night," reported Mesty.

"Very likely he is in his study," observed Dr. Middleton; "he may have remained all night, fast asleep, by his wonderful invention."

"I'll go and see," replied Jack.

Dr. Middleton accompanied him, and Mesty followed. They opened the door, and beheld a spectacle which made them recoil with horror. There was Mr. Easy, with his head in the machine, the platform below fallen from under him, hanging, with his toes just touching the ground. Dr. Middleton hastened to him, and assisted by Mesty and our hero took him out of the steel collar which was round his neck; but life had been extinct for many hours, and on examination it was found that the poor old gentleman's neck was dislocated.

It was surmised that the accident must have taken place the evening before, and it was easy to account for it. Mr. Easy, who had had the machine raised four feet higher, for the platform and steps to be placed underneath, must have mounted on the frame modelled by the carpenter for his work, and have fixed his head in, for the knob was pressed on his bump of benevolence. The framework, hastily put together with a few short nails, had given way with his weight, and the sudden fall had dislocated his neck.

Mr. Hanson led away our hero, who was much shocked at this unfortunate and tragical end of his poor father, while Dr. Middleton ordered the body to be taken up into a bedroom, and immediately despatched a messenger to the coroner of the county. Poor Mr. Easy had told his son but the day before, that he felt convinced that this wonderful invention would immortalise him, and so it had, although not exactly in the sense that he anticipated.

We must pass over the few days of sorrow, and closed shutters, which always are given to these scenes. The coroner's inquest and the funeral over, daylight was again admitted, our