

out of his way, "seems determined to set the stack on fire as soon as we have put it out, the fool that he is!"

Mrs. Churton, not unnaturally, asked what "poor Mr. Bates" had done to unloose afresh the waters of strife. Ladies of her mental and bodily habits are apt to sympathise with those against whom mob-violence is directed, and can hardly comprehend the illogical manliness which makes such a one as the Rector despise the timorous bully who has goaded his subordinates into revolt, and then shrinks from the storm evoked by a long course of harsh maladministration.

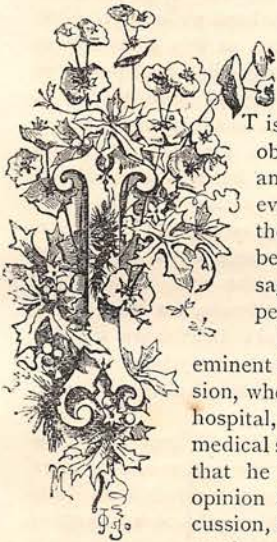
"What has he done?" reiterated the Rector; "why, just the very worst for us and himself that lay in his power. Takes this time, of all times in the year, to dismiss the Union hands working in Silverseam pit, and proclaims publicly that no member of the Colliers' Union shall ever be employed there again, and, as if to push meddling to the highest pitch, that it is "under consideration," as he words it—for the fellow talks like

an Under-Secretary of State replying to a deputation—whether clubmen shall be permitted any longer to work in the Marquis's pit, and draw the Marquis's pay. He'll have the Pinks and Blues on his shoulders for his pains. I said to him, 'Mr Bates, you are very much mistaken if you think Englishmen will submit to dictation of this sort. I don't like the Union one bit—think it a pestilent stumbling-block between masters and men, and that the clubs are good for little but ribbons and drink—but this is a free country, and the men have a right to live as they choose, so long as they let others live.' Some of the strikers heard me, for my voice isn't a very low one, and they set up a cheer. I bade them hold their tongues, and then I appealed to Bates again, but he was obdurate. Our parish will get a bad name."

"What do you mean, Robert dear?" asked Mrs. Churton, in some alarm.

"There'll be violence done, that's all!" replied the Rector tersely, and without further remark left the room.

END OF CHAPTER THE NINTH.



## THE ART OF PACKING UP.

It is sufficiently commonplace to observe that there is a right way and a wrong way of doing everything; nor will we dispute the accuracy of the sentiment, betraying as it does the singular sagacity and judgment of the person who first gave vent to it.

I heard some time ago of an eminent surgeon who, upon one occasion, when in the operating-room of a hospital, and in the presence of many medical students under his tuition, saw that he had fatally blundered in his opinion of some case then under discussion, but who had the candour and good sense to say at once to the young

men around him, "Gentlemen, sometimes we learn as much by our mistakes as by our successes."

Not, however, to inflict upon our readers a running fire of time-worn adages and old saws, we will, with their permission, only advert to one further, and gravely and solemnly assert that "Life is made up of little things." This we consider an admirable introduction to the subject on which we intend to have a chat over the fire, this bitter winter night; and, perhaps, one of the "little things" that are constantly occupying us in "life" is—to put it at once and abruptly—"packing up." More particularly so is it, too, with many of us just now; for here it is Christmas-time—old England's great feast—the time of happy re-unions that for the generality of us come "only once a year;" boys and girls have but just come home from school, and before long we have to pack them off again, and teach them—although they may think us unkind to send them back so soon—that life is not all

play, but a great struggle, and that they must prepare—the earlier the better for them—to face its duties and its trials, which is the only way to reap any of its joys.

And then, again, it is "quarter-day," and many more of us are moving by road, river, and rail, and those enormous red vans are at our door, destined so soon to "take all risk," and make off bodily with the entire effects of our house to the new residence right across country.

Lastly—and still more, we might almost say universally—we are just now perpetually despatching hampers, boxes, parcels of every imaginable shape to one another, with an affectionate card or note inside, "Wishing a merry Christmas and a happy New Year," or, "With Aunt Bessie's love to the dear chicks."

And all this business involves one thing, and that is, "packing up." A gentleman, starting somewhat hurriedly on a journey, had crammed all his things anyhow, higgledy-piggledy, into his carpet-bag, and amongst them a razor, with only a small piece of paper round it. Having occasion in the course of the day, in the waiting-room of a railway station, to get something out of his bag, he quickly plunged his arm in, but as instantly received such a desperate gash from the then opened razor, that he was presently found fainting on the floor of the room: the moral of which is tolerably apparent—never pack in your trunk anything dangerously sharp—as razors, scissors, stiletos, &c.—unless properly protected by some leather or other cases. They are, as we know, easily to be had at a trifling cost, yet how many of us are constantly running dangerous risks by neglect of this sort! On the other hand, as an example of the *right* way of doing a thing, Mary Ann was the other day sent down to the cellar with instructions to unpack



a three-dozen hamper of wine that jolly old Uncle Ben had sent as a Christmas present to his newly-married niece. The bottles had to be arranged in rather an empty-looking bin, and this Mary Ann achieved with only one smash and a "There!" but what was her astonishment to find that by no possibility could she afterwards get all the straw back again into the empty hamper, to take it out into the shed for the pigs! She actually made two journeys of it, wondering all the time how *ever* did those men at the wine-merchant's get six-and-thirty bottles in besides the straw, while she failed to get in even the straw by itself! The wine-merchant's was certainly the right way of packing a hamper, but not a few of us, I fancy, there are whose experience has occasionally been similar to that of Mary Ann.

The end of the holidays was drawing near, and it was once again time to pack Bertie and Bletsoe off to school. There had been a jolly merry-making of it; such plum-pudding! such droll costume-crackers! such a Christmas-tree and snap-dragon! and then "that *awfully* jolly pantomime at Drury Lane; oh! it was *stunning*, and no mistake!" But now here was old Phillis, the housekeeper, getting out boxes, port-manteaus, and bags; for, as she remarked, "it was high time to see to things a bit, and not put everything off to the last day." Phillis was a very methodical, shrewd, and careful sort of body, and how she laughed when the boys came home from school, for they had for the first time in their lives been thought competent by the school matron to pack their boxes themselves. "Why, bless me, Master Bertie!" she said, "did one ever see the like of this? Here are your black boots right against your clean shirt-front, and things that must go to the wash with them that has just come home, all of a wisp together; and lor, why, whatever's *this*? Why, it's a squashed apple! and"—as a *finale* to the whole, with extended hands, she concludes—"there's your ink-bottle come open all over your best jacket, which is a mass of wrinkles as well!"

But the boys didn't care one bit—not they. They were home; so they only shouted with laughter at the flat apple, in which Phillis joined, for she loved them dearly; but just for one second they looked a little frightened at the best jacket, for "what would papa say?" But Phillis kept it out of his way—good old soul!—though papa *did* find it out on Christmas Day, yet somehow he didn't much mind, for was it not Christmas, and all were home again together, and in good health, thank God.

Phillis, however, was particularly fond of holding forth; and as Cousins Alice and Lily had just come into the room, she took advantage of her increasing audience, and began—

"Well, my dears, we mustn't talk about going back yet, but some days before the end of the holidays [general chorus of groans of disapproval] I shall have all the boxes and trunks opened, and put for a few hours before the fire in the play-room to air, because in the damp weather they are liable to get mouldy after being put away for any length of time. I shall before this, too, have seen that all buttons, and strings, and boot-laces, &c., are securely in their places, and that everything is properly and clearly marked, and that a full list of the contents of each box is pasted inside on the lid, so that the school-matron [groans again] may have it immediately in front of her as she opens the lid. I shall put the boots and all large things—your desk, for instance—at the bottom of all; and I dare say I can manage to squeeze in a tin of biscuits as well, or else some French plums and chocolate-creams; and I shall be sure and wring out your sponges and nail-brushes before putting them into the little bag, and not do as you did, Master Bertie, let it come half-full of water, and oblige me to send no less than three clean night-shirts to be dried before they could be used. Perhaps we may get some apples in [renewed convulsions at this memento of the squashed one]; and then, over all, I shall put some old newspapers, and your linen and cloth clothes at the top. It is almost impossible to avoid *some* creases in your jackets and waistcoats, for instance, unless they are most carefully packed; but it is a good plan when your boxes are opened again to hang some things over a chair, or on pegs, or before the fire; or, still better, to wear them at once for a day, when the creases will very soon come out. I shall get Paige to cord and strap your boxes, for that nearly always requires a man's hand; but before I begin packing at all, I shall collect everything together that I have to put in; for, indeed, I should be in a pretty muddle if I did otherwise."

The homily of Phillis, which had begun to grow a little wearisome to the juvenile audience—for more than one good yawn had already escaped them—was suddenly cut short by a bell, the well-known clang of which summoned them all with a speedy scamper below-stairs. Dinner was coming up; but there in the hall stood the old familiar hamper from Aunt Bessie, before alluded to; and then there was the joy of unpacking it, each further discovery eliciting a fresh scream from the girls; while all who took part in the delightful process could not but express their admiration at the way in which it was packed. No room lost, nothing shaking about, and nothing broken. It was a lesson they did not easily forget, and it had come as a most opportune illustration of old Phillis's directions "how to pack up."