

and, I suspect, a wag. It would take a great deal of believing to believe a'll that. In the days of my poor old neighbor the infidel weaver, who died of *delirium tremens* thirty years ago, I used to read Tom Paine; and, as I was a little wild at the time, I was, I am afraid, a bit of a sceptic. It wasn't easy work always to be as unbelieving as Tom, especially when the conscience within got queasy; but it would be a vast deal easier, Master, to *doubt* with Tom than to *believe* with you. I am a plain man, but not quite a fool; and as I have now been looking about me in this neighborhood for the last forty years, I have come to know that it gives no assurance that any one thing grew out of any other thing because it chances to be found atop of it, Master. See, yonder is Dobbin lying lazily atop of his bundle of hay; and yonder little Jack, with bridle in hand, and he in a few minutes will be atop of Dobbin. And all I see in that ditch, Master, from top to bottom, is neither more nor less than a certain top-upon-bottom order of things. I see sets of bones and dead plants lying on the top of other sets of bones and dead plants,—things lying atop of things, as I say, like Dobbin on the hay and Jack upon Dobbin. I doubt not the sea was once here, Master, just as it was once where you see the low-lying field yonder, which I won from it ten years ago. I have carted tangle and kelp-weed where I now cut clover and rye-grass, and have gathered periwinkles where I now see snails. But it is *clean against experience*, as my poor old neighbor the weaver used to say,—against *my* experience, Master,—that it was the kelp-weed that became the rye-grass, or that the periwinkles freshened into snails. The kelp-weed and periwinkles belong to those plants and animals of the sea that we find growing in *only* the sea; the rye-grass and snails, to those plants and animals of the land