

"There is a certain limited number born to be rich, Jack," said my new companion, "and I just don't happen to be among them; but I have one stool for myself, you see, and, now that I have unshipped my desk, another for a visitor, and so get on well enough."

I related briefly the story of my intimacy with his brother, and we were soon on such terms as to be in a fair way of emptying a bottle of rum together.

"You remind me of old times," said my new acquaintance. "I am weary of these illiterate, boisterous, long-sided Americans, who talk only of politics and dollars. And yet there are first-rate men among them too. I met, some years since, with a Philadelphia printer, whom I cannot help regarding as one of the ablest, best-informed men I ever conversed with. But there is nothing like general knowledge among the average class,—a mighty privilege of conceit, however."

"They are just in that stage," I remarked, "in which it needs all the vigor of an able man to bring his mind into anything like cultivation. There must be many more facilities of improvement ere the mediocritist can develop himself. He is in the egg still in America, and must sleep there till the next age.—But when last heard you of your brother?"

"Why," he replied, "when all the world heard of him,—with the last number of 'Ruddiman's Magazine.' Where can you have been bottled up from literature of late? Why, man, Robert stands first among our Scotch poets."

"Ah! 'tis long since I have anticipated something like that for him," I said; "but for the last two years I have seen only two books,—Shakspeare and the 'Spectator.' Pray, do show me some of the magazines."