

Chapter III - The New Schoolfellow

It was a cold, wet January day on which Tom went back to school; a day quite in keeping with this severe phase of his destiny. If he had not carried in his pocket a parcel of sugar-candy and a small Dutch doll for little Laura, there would have been no ray of expected pleasure to enliven the general gloom. But he liked to think how Laura would put out her lips and her tiny hands for the bits of sugarcandy; and to give the greater keenness to these pleasures of imagination, he took out the parcel, made a small hole in the paper, and bit off a crystal or two, which had so solacing an effect under the confined prospect and damp odors of the gig-umbrella, that he repeated the process more than once on his way.

'Well, Tulliver, we're glad to see you again,' said Mr Stelling, heartily. 'Take off your wrappings and come into the study till dinner. You'll find a bright fire there, and a new companion.'

Tom felt in an uncomfortable flutter as he took off his woollen comforter and other wrappings. He had seen Philip Wakem at St. Ogg's, but had always turned his eyes away from him as quickly as possible. He would have disliked having a deformed boy for his companion, even if Philip had not been the son of a bad man. And Tom did not see how a bad man's son could be very good. His own father was a good man, and he would readily have fought any one who said the contrary. He was in a state of mingled embarrassment and defiance as he followed Mr Stelling to the study.

'Here is a new companion for you to shake hands with, Tulliver,' said that gentleman on entering the study, - 'Master Philip Wakem. I shall leave you to make acquaintance by yourselves. You already know something of each other, I imagine; for you are neighbors at home.'

Tom looked confused and awkward, while Philip rose and glanced at him timidly. Tom did not like to go up and put out his hand, and he was not prepared to say, 'How do you do?' on so short a notice.

Mr Stelling wisely turned away, and closed the door behind him; boys' shyness only wears off in the absence of their elders.

Philip was at once too proud and too timid to walk toward Tom. He thought, or rather felt, that Tom had an aversion to looking at him; every one, almost, disliked looking at him; and his deformity was more conspicuous when he walked. So they remained without shaking hands or even speaking, while Tom went to the fire and warmed himself, every now and then casting furtive glances at Philip, who seemed to be drawing absently first one object and then another on a piece of paper he had before him. He had seated himself again, and as

he drew, was thinking what he could say to Tom, and trying to overcome his own repugnance to making the first advances.

Tom began to look oftener and longer at Philip's face, for he could see it without noticing the hump, and it was really not a disagreeable face, - very old-looking, Tom thought. He wondered how much older Philip was than himself. An anatomist - even a mere physiognomist - would have seen that the deformity of Philip's spine was not a congenital hump, but the result of an accident in infancy; but you do not expect from Tom any acquaintance with such distinctions; to him, Philip was simply a humpback. He had a vague notion that the deformity of Wakem's son had some relation to the lawyer's rascality, of which he had so often heard his father talk with hot emphasis; and he felt, too, a half-admitted fear of him as probably a spiteful fellow, who, not being able to fight you, had cunning ways of doing you a mischief by the sly. There was a humpbacked tailor in the neighborhood of Mr Jacobs's academy, who was considered a very unamiable character, and was much hooted after by public-spirited boys solely on the ground of his unsatisfactory moral qualities; so that Tom was not without a basis of fact to go upon. Still, no face could be more unlike that ugly tailor's than this melancholy boy's face, - the brown hair round it waved and curled at the ends like a girl's; Tom thought that truly pitiable. This Wakem was a pale, puny fellow, and it was quite clear he would not be able to play at anything worth speaking of; but he handled his pencil in an enviable manner, and was apparently making one thing after another without any trouble. What was he drawing? Tom was quite warm now, and wanted something new to be going forward. It was certainly more agreeable to have an ill-natured humpback as a companion than to stand looking out of the study window at the rain, and kicking his foot against the washboard in solitude; something would happen every day, - 'a quarrel or something'; and Tom thought he should rather like to show Philip that he had better not try his spiteful tricks on *him*. He suddenly walked across the hearth and looked over Philip's paper.

'Why, that's a donkey with panniers, and a spaniel, and partridges in the corn!' he exclaimed, his tongue being completely loosed by surprise and admiration. 'Oh my buttons! I wish I could draw like that. I'm to learn drawing this half; I wonder if I shall learn to make dogs and donkeys!'

'Oh, you can do them without learning,' said Philip; 'I never learned drawing.'

'Never learned?' said Tom, in amazement. 'Why, when I make dogs and horses, and those things, the heads and the legs won't come right; though I can see how they ought to be very well. I can make houses, and all sorts of chimneys, - chimneys going all down the wall,

- and windows in the roof, and all that. But I dare say I could do dogs and horses if I was to try more,' he added, reflecting that Philip might falsely suppose that he was going to 'knock under,' if he were too frank about the imperfection of his accomplishments.

'Oh, yes,' said Philip, 'it's very easy. You've only to look well at things, and draw them over and over again. What you do wrong once, you can alter the next time.'

'But haven't you been taught *anything*?' said Tom, beginning to have a puzzled suspicion that Philip's crooked back might be the source of remarkable faculties. 'I thought you'd been to school a long while.'

'Yes,' said Philip, smiling; 'I've been taught Latin and Greek and mathematics, and writing and such things.'

'Oh, but I say, you don't like Latin, though, do you?' said Tom, lowering his voice confidentially.

'Pretty well; I don't care much about it,' said Philip.

'Ah, but perhaps you haven't got into the *Propria quae maribus*,' said Tom, nodding his head sideways, as much as to say, 'that was the test; it was easy talking till you came to *that*.'

Philip felt some bitter complacency in the promising stupidity of this well-made, active-looking boy; but made polite by his own extreme sensitiveness, as well as by his desire to conciliate, he checked his inclination to laugh, and said quietly, -

'I've done with the grammar; I don't learn that any more.'

'Then you won't have the same lessons as I shall?' said Tom, with a sense of disappointment.

'No; but I dare say I can help you. I shall be very glad to help you if I can.'

Tom did not say 'Thank you,' for he was quite absorbed in the thought that Wakem's son did not seem so spiteful a fellow as might have been expected.

'I say,' he said presently, 'do you love your father?'

'Yes,' said Philip, coloring deeply; 'don't you love yours?'

'Oh yes - I only wanted to know,' said Tom, rather ashamed of himself, now he saw Philip coloring and looking uncomfortable. He found

much difficulty in adjusting his attitude of mind toward the son of Lawyer Wakem, and it had occurred to him that if Philip disliked his father, that fact might go some way toward clearing up his perplexity.

'Shall you learn drawing now?' he said, by way of changing the subject.

'No,' said Philip. 'My father wishes me to give all my time to other things now.'

'What! Latin and Euclid, and those things?' said Tom.

'Yes,' said Philip, who had left off using his pencil, and was resting his head on one hand, while Tom was leaning forward on both elbows, and looking with increasing admiration at the dog and the donkey.

'And you don't mind that?' said Tom, with strong curiosity.

'No; I like to know what everybody else knows. I can study what I like by-and-by.'

'I can't think why anybody should learn Latin,' said Tom. 'It's no good.'

'It's part of the education of a gentleman,' said Philip. 'All gentlemen learn the same things.'

'What! do you think Sir John Crake, the master of the harriers, knows Latin?' said Tom, who had often thought he should like to resemble Sir John Crake.

'He learned it when he was a boy, of course,' said Philip. 'But I dare say he's forgotten it.'

'Oh, well, I can do that, then,' said Tom, not with any epigrammatic intention, but with serious satisfaction at the idea that, as far as Latin was concerned, there was no hindrance to his resembling Sir John Crake. 'Only you're obliged to remember it while you're at school, else you've got to learn ever so many lines of 'Speaker.' Mr Stelling's very particular - did you know? He'll have you up ten times if you say 'nam' for 'jam,' - he won't let you go a letter wrong, *I* can tell you.'

'Oh, I don't mind,' said Philip, unable to choke a laugh; 'I can remember things easily. And there are some lessons I'm very fond of. I'm very fond of Greek history, and everything about the Greeks. I should like to have been a Greek and fought the Persians, and then have come home and have written tragedies, or else have been listened to by everybody for my wisdom, like Socrates, and have died a

grand death.' (Philip, you perceive, was not without a wish to impress the well-made barbarian with a sense of his mental superiority.)

'Why, were the Greeks great fighters?' said Tom, who saw a vista in this direction. 'Is there anything like David and Goliath and Samson in the Greek history? Those are the only bits I like in the history of the Jews.'

'Oh, there are very fine stories of that sort about the Greeks, - about the heroes of early times who killed the wild beasts, as Samson did. And in the Odyssey - that's a beautiful poem - there's a more wonderful giant than Goliath, - Polypheme, who had only one eye in the middle of his forehead; and Ulysses, a little fellow, but very wise and cunning, got a red-hot pine-tree and stuck it into this one eye, and made him roar like a thousand bulls.'

'Oh, what fun!' said Tom, jumping away from the table, and stamping first with one leg and then the other. 'I say, can you tell me all about those stories? Because I sha'n't learn Greek, you know. Shall I?' he added, pausing in his stamping with a sudden alarm, lest the contrary might be possible. 'Does every gentleman learn Greek? Will Mr Stelling make me begin with it, do you think?'

'No, I should think not, very likely not,' said Philip. 'But you may read those stories without knowing Greek. I've got them in English.'

'Oh, but I don't like reading; I'd sooner have you tell them me. But only the fighting ones, you know. My sister Maggie is always wanting to tell me stories, but they're stupid things. Girls' stories always are. Can you tell a good many fighting stories?'

'Oh yes,' said Philip; 'lots of them, besides the Greek stories. I can tell you about Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Saladin, and about William Wallace and Robert Bruce and James Douglas, - I know no end.'

'You're older than I am, aren't you?' said Tom.

'Why, how old are *you*? I'm fifteen.'

'I'm only going in fourteen,' said Tom. 'But I thrashed all the fellows at Jacob's - that's where I was before I came here. And I beat 'em all at bandy and climbing. And I wish Mr Stelling would let us go fishing. *I* could show you how to fish. You *could* fish, couldn't you? It's only standing, and sitting still, you know.'

Tom, in his turn, wished to make the balance dip in his favor. This hunchback must not suppose that his acquaintance with fighting stories put him on a par with an actual fighting hero, like Tom

Tulliver. Philip winced under this allusion to his unfitness for active sports, and he answered almost peevishly, -

'I can't bear fishing. I think people look like fools sitting watching a line hour after hour, or else throwing and throwing, and catching nothing.'

'Ah, but you wouldn't say they looked like fools when they landed a big pike, I can tell you,' said Tom, who had never caught anything that was 'big' in his life, but whose imagination was on the stretch with indignant zeal for the honor of sport. Wakem's son, it was plain, had his disagreeable points, and must be kept in due check. Happily for the harmony of this first interview, they were now called to dinner, and Philip was not allowed to develop farther his unsound views on the subject of fishing. But Tom said to himself, that was just what he should have expected from a hunchback.