

sion, that the day of the festival, from morning till night, used to be spent in fighting out the battle. For weeks after it had passed, the school-floor would continue to retain its deeply-stained blotches of blood, and the boys would be full of exciting narratives regarding the glories of gallant birds, who had continued to fight until both their eyes had been picked out, or who, in the moment of victory, had dropped dead in the middle of the cock-pit. The yearly fight was the relic of a barbarous age; and, in at least one of its provisions, there seemed evidence that it was that of an intolerant age also; every pupil at school, without exception, had his name entered on the subscription-list as a cock-fighter, and was obliged to pay the master at the rate of twopence per head, ostensibly for leave to bring his birds to the pit; but, amid the growing humanities of a better time, though the twopence continued to be exacted, it was no longer imperative to bring the birds; and, availing myself of the liberty, I never brought any. Nor, save for a few minutes, on two several occasions, did I ever attend the fight. Had the combat been one among the boys themselves, I would readily enough have done my part, by meeting with any opponent of my years and standing; but I could not bear to look at the bleeding birds. And so I continued to pay my yearly sixpence, as a holder of three cocks,—the lowest sum deemed in any degree genteel,—but remained simply a fictitious or paper cock-fighter, and contributed in no degree to the success of the *head-stock* or leader, to whose party, in the general division of the school, it was my lot to fall. Neither, I must add, did I learn to take an interest in the sacrificial orgies of the adjoining slaughter-house. A few of the chosen schoolboys were permitted by the killers to exercise at times the privilege of knocking down a pig, and even, on rare occasions, to essay the sticking; but I turned with horror from both processes; and if I drew near at all, it was only when some animal, scraped and cleaned, and suspended from the beam, was in the course of being laid open by the butcher's knife, that I might mark the forms of the viscera, and the positions which they occupied. To my dislike of the