Mrs. Pontifex had no sense of humour; at least I can call to mind no signs of this; but her husband had plenty of fun in him; though few would have guessed from his appearance. I remember my father once sent me down to his workshop to get some glue; and I happened to come when old Pontifex was in the act of scolding his boy. He had got the lad - a pudding-headed fellow - by the ear and was saying, "What? Lost again - smothered o' wit." (I believe it was the boy who was himself supposed to be a wandering soul; and who was thus addressed as lost.) "Now, look here, my lad," he continued, "some boys are born stupid; and thou art one of them; some achieve stupidity - that's thee again, Jim - thou wast both born stupid and hast greatly increased thy birthright - and some" (and here came a climax during which the boy's head and ear were swayed from side to side) "have stupidity thrust upon thee, which, if it please the Lord, shall not be thy case; my lad, for I will thrust stupidity from thee; though I have to box thine ears in doing so." But I did not see that the old man really did box Jim's ears; or do more than pretend to frighten him; for the two understood one another perfectly well.