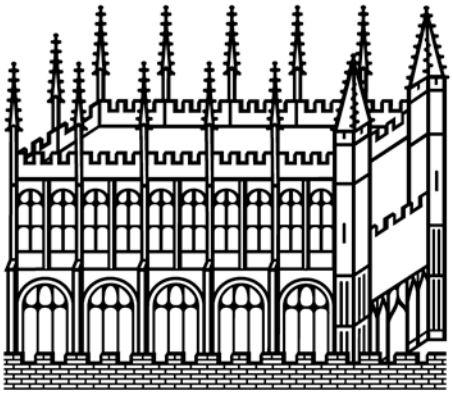

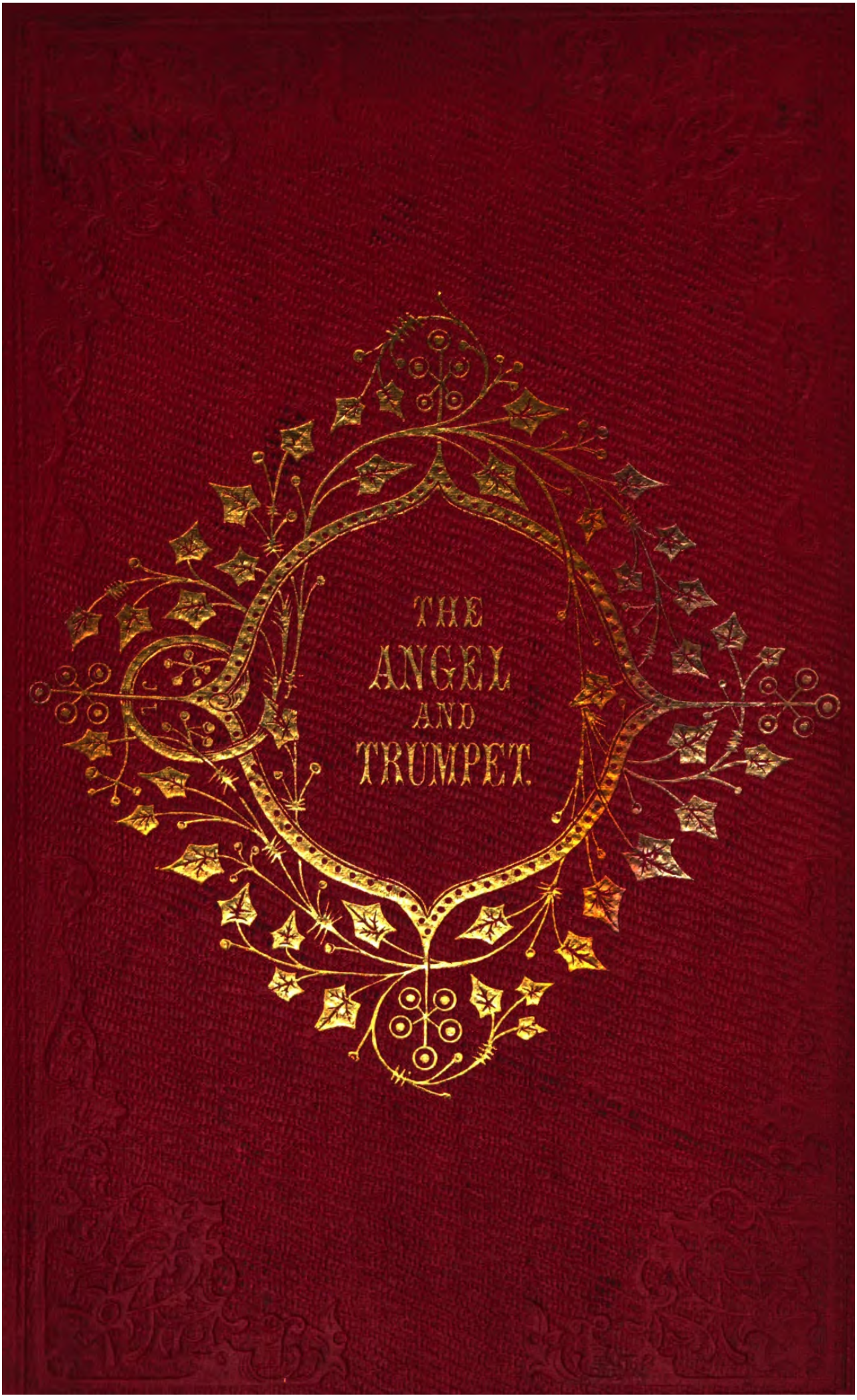
THE
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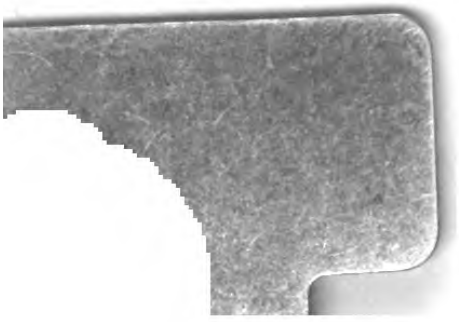


"He approached a stile—so did a young milkmaid, with a face as full of light as the sun above her."—*Page* 114.

THE

ANGEL AND TRUMPET.

BY

JOHN BENNETT.

"There is a destiny that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we may."

LONDON:
W. KENT AND CO.
1853.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. LEE, 19, CASTLE STREET, HOLBORN.

PREFACE.

I SCARCELY know what apology to offer for intruding this imperfect story upon the reader. It is my first offence, and I hope the boldness of the attempt will be ascribed more to inexperience in the difficulties of literature than to vanity.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

One little circumstance connected with its production may not be uninteresting:—the book was never *written*, but *mentally* and *mechanically* composed at the same time. I availed myself of my knowledge of the art of printing, and, as the thoughts occurred, I recorded them in type. I do not mention this as any extenuation for the imperfect performance of my task.

It has been urged by many kind friends who have exercised their patience so far as to read this trifle, that the mystery surrounding the heroine (if so evil a woman may be dignified by

such a name) should have been further developed. My reply has been, that in order to meet this objection, I should have had to resort to *invention*, and that I had merely written what I *knew* both of her and the other characters of the book, and drawn but little on the imagination.

The hero, too—"Why not *save* him?" I could have done so, had I determined not to meddle with the literal *truth* of the story. Like William Marshall, I believe many have perished in their secret crimes, for the want of some influential friend to appeal to; and nothing has more forcibly struck me, while writing his history, than the want of a Public Mediator, rather than a Public Prosecutor. Had there been one, no doubt the young jeweller *would* have been saved, and this book never written.

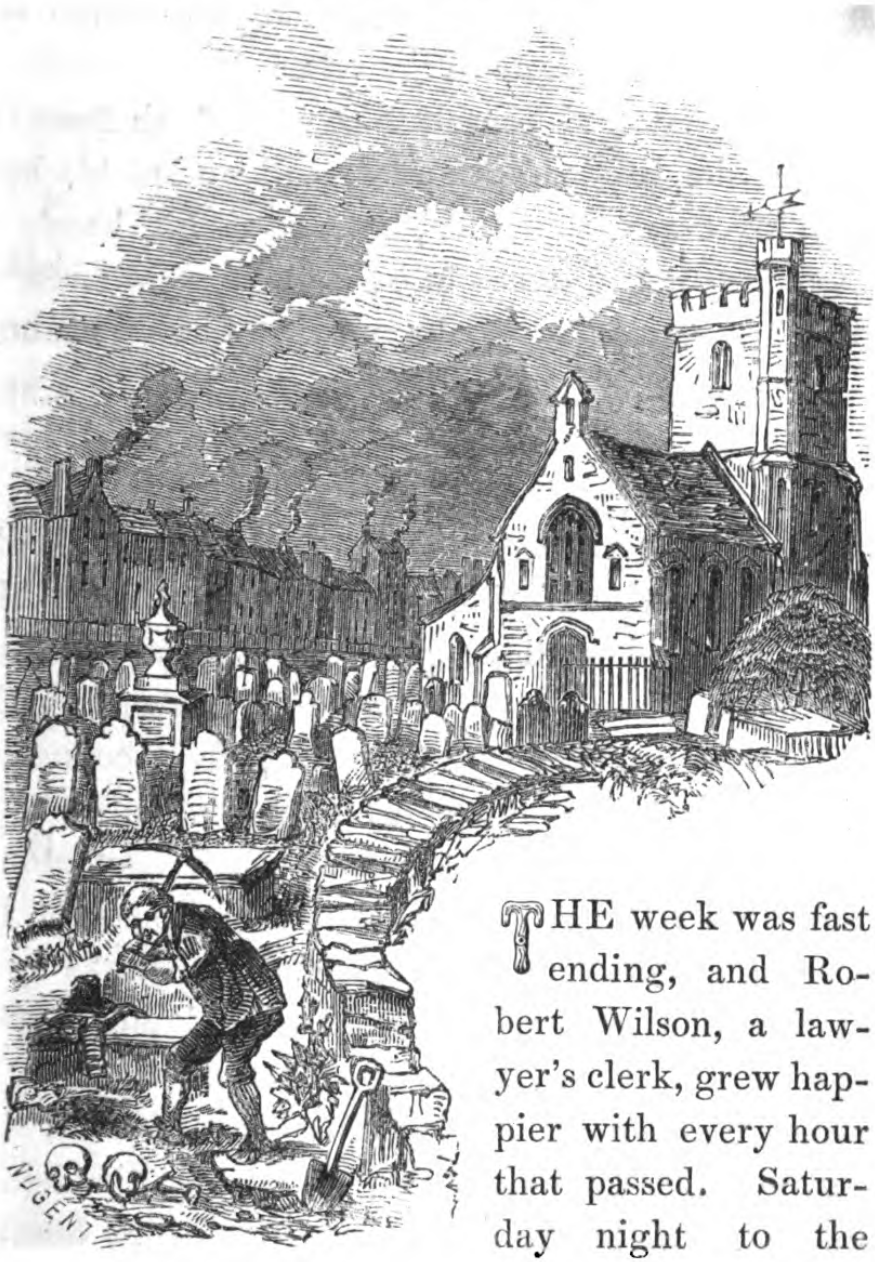
J. B.

29, HENRY-STREET, PENTONVILLE. JUNE, 1853.

THE

ANGEL AND TRUMPET.

CHAPTER I.



THE week was fast ending, and Robert Wilson, a lawyer's clerk, grew happier with every hour that passed. Saturday night to the

dandy Robert was a blissful time. He then had the pleasure of receiving his salary, and the pleasure of disbursing it—and no small portion was expended in satin stocks, new-shaped collars, kid gloves, high-heeled Wellingtons, Paris-napped hats, and best Havannahs. Besides all this, Sunday follows Saturday, and the anticipated delights of that day diminished the fatigue of the other six.

Robert flattered himself that, when fresh from the barber who had parted, oiled, and curled his hair, with his cream-coloured glove upon his hand, no single lady could refuse him; and he went so far as to believe that some of the married ones in his connexion looked enviously upon him. He was a very sociable being—but a very conceited one. He was always in smiles, from whence it might be inferred his feelings were none of the most sensitive. His own person was his idol, and all the good in him was obstructed in its progress by his great self-love.

This weakness was kept alive in Robert by the welcome he met from the numerous girls he coquetted with, each believing the swain meant matrimony; but all he meant was conquest. Poor simpletons! could they but have seen him on his knees at his large hair trunk, and have heard his remarks upon this affectionate letter cornered with Cupids—upon that brown silk watch-guard, intermixed with the giver's hair—upon this insinuating invitation "to make one of a party to the Nore," or upon that beautiful valentine breathing of "our own happy home,"

and sealed with "union is strength"—we doubt not all would have been inspired with the feelings of the Merry Wives of Windsor, and have tossed him in a blanket.

Jane Millington was his last conquest—a pretty tender-hearted girl, a milliner, and the daughter of a poor carpenter. There was some sentiment in Jane, and of the purest kind. Her father had been doing a little work at the lawyer's office, and, gossiping with Wilson, told him he expected to be arrested for a small debt, and begged his assistance to get him through the "Court." All that lay in Wilson's power he did for the carpenter. Millington expressed gratitude for his help, and his kindness to her father blinded Jane to the foppery of his character. She now admires and loves him; and if, Wilson, your insatiable vanity is not satisfied with her admiration and her love, and it leads you to the commission of new deceptions, why you will soon be able to place your polished boot upon her grave, and congratulate yourself upon the power of your charms.

He was now anticipating for the morrow (Sunday) his favourite trip to Richmond, with Jane, and had promised to meet her at Lambeth Palace, at seven o'clock. Fond of boating, he was anxious to appear in a new character to Jane—that of a "jolly young waterman."

How long that quarter to five seemed to the impatient clerk! He was just diverting himself with humming a snatch of a ballad, when in walked the

hump-backed postman of the district with a letter for him.

"Here, Mr. Wilson, here's another love-letter for you. I shall be glad when you settle."

"I was not aware, Tomkins, I owed you anything," said the smiling clerk.

"I mean, get settled in life—get married."

"Oh, bless your soul, Tomkins, time enough for that. It will take me a year or two to decide upon that important matter. I feel bewildered with so much choice, I can assure you."

"I should just lay my finger upon the one who has the most ha'pence," said Tomkins.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Wilson, "the ha'pence—yes, we must not forget the needful."

"A likely young gent like you"——

"Will you take a glass of ale, Tomkins?" interrupted the flattered clerk.

"Some other time—I'm busy with the delivery."

"You were saying something about 'a likely young gent like me,' Tomkins"——

"Why there's many a gal with two or three hundred would jump at such a match as you."

"They may rely upon it, Tomkins, smirk as they will, I shall do no matrimony under five hundred."

"I wish you may get it, Mr. Wilson, that's all the harm I wish you."

"You have now brought me a letter from one, Tomkins, who would give five thousand to be my wife, if she had it."

"But as she hasn't, I suppose she never will be Mrs. Wilson."

"Hardly likely, I think. God help me! I find my salary barely sufficient to keep me in boots and gloves, much less a wife. Jane is a pretty girl, mind ye, and would make a good wife, and if she had money I should think twice about her; but as it is, poor girl! she must not dream of it. To-morrow, I'm going to row her to Richmond. She writes a neat hand, don't she, Tomkins!" holding the directions of the letter down to the little postman.

"Yes; but too plain to be fashionable. Good day t'ye, Mr. Wilson."

"You postmen have pleasant lives, walking about all day in the fine weather."

"I had rather have your situation than mine, Mr. Wilson. How comfortable it must be, sitting on an easy stool all day!"

"Well, I suppose it is with us as with every other person, Tomkins—we like that which we have *not* got, better than that we have. It takes some interest, don't it, to get a postman's situation?"

"I know I paid pretty dear for it. It cost me my wife and daughter."

"Ha!" said Wilson, surprised, wheeling round on his high stool. "How was that now?"

"My girl Charlotte was only eighteen when she went to service at Lord Mayland's; and, while there, my lord took a fancy to Charlotte, being a fine-looking girl, and by way of amends, as he thought,

got me this berth. The girl felt her character was gone, and emigrated; and the old woman never looked the thing after, and soon died. Charlotte may be dead too, for what I know. I have not heard from her these four years, then she was in Quebec."

"I wish I were a lord"—

"I've got no more daughters," laughingly interrupted the insensible postman.

"Ha, ha, ha! No, Tomkins, I was going to say, if I were a lord, I should live a tolerably gay life—

eat the best—drink the best—smoke the best—and dress buckishly. Wouldn't I dress! I should not forget to frolic with the girls, too, I can assure you; but mind ye, I could not live if I thought I was the cause of breaking any woman's peace."

"That's good sentiment, Mr. Wilson," said the postman.

"Look here, Tomkins, here's sentiment for you," said the clerk, whose consummate vanity led him to the meanness of placing Jane Millington's open letter into the hands of the ignorant postman, who read aloud in squeaking feminine tones, greatly to Wilson's gratification, the subjoined unselfish, unpretending words:—

"DEAR ROBERT—

"I daresay you will be surprised to hear from me, after seeing me only last night. But when I went to my work this morning, we were informed that Lady Goodfornothing was dead, and that all hands would have to work early and late, for three days, to make the family mourning. Believe me, dear Robert, I was the more sorry for this, because I had flattered myself that I should spend a pleasant day with you at Richmond to-morrow. But be sure you go. I shall be so vexed if my not going keeps you back, for the trip will be beneficial to your health, after being confined to the desk for six days. I shall not be sorry though, if I hear you say, when I see you again, that Jane not being with you a *little* spoilt the pleasure of the day. And now, dear Robert, I have a favour to ask of you, and that is, will you for once burthen yourself with my father, who would be so delighted to go with you. Poor man! he has never been himself since they put him in prison for a debt. Depend upon it, I will make him look as respectable as I can, and he will be quite proud of your attention. I'll take care he shall be at Lambeth Palace by seven in the morning. I am afraid I shall not be able to see you until Thursday night

—but be sure you write, and give me a good account of your day.

"Be constant, dear Robert, for, believe me, when Jane Millington concludes with '*sincerely yours*,' she means it, and feels it."

"Very wheedling indeed," said the postman, giving Wilson the letter.

"D—n the letter!" exclaimed the clerk, flinging himself from the stool, and putting his hat on. "A likely thing, Tomkins, is it not, that I shall take the trouble to row a miserable old carpenter about the Thames all day? Why, the people standing on the bridges we passed under would laugh at me. I declare Jane thinks as much of her old-fashioned father as I do of Prince Albert! She must think less of him, or less of me! He shall not go with me! I'll not go at all! I'm vexed! I'm out of humour! If I take him, may the boat go down—that's all. Old Millington won't do at all to be in the boat with me. Devil take it! I gave her credit for more sense than to propose such a thing. To spend the only day in the week I can call my own in humdrumming with her father! I know all she can do won't bring him up to my style—and so I would write and tell her if there were time. I shall get somebody else to go, and if Jane don't like it, I can't help it. No, no, that was rather too much to ask. But I am certain now—as I have thought all along—she has made a precious mistake in me. She ought to have discerned by this time my gentlemanly style of dress, habits, and manners."

"Why the fact is," said Tomkins, "if I didn't like to go, I wouldn't, and that's all about it. There's five o'clock! and Lucy Emmett, No. 27, next door, would give me a sour look if she knew I had been gossiping with you, and keeping her letter."

"I say, Tomkins, where do you smoke your pipe to-night?"

"Why, will you come?"

"Yes, my boy, I will. I'm displeased at this letter, and don't care if I take a glass or two upon the strength of it."

"Well, Mr. Wilson, if you like to meet me, I shall be at the 'Angel and Trumpet,' by seven o'clock. And I can promise you, if you like a glass of good stout, there you will get it. Another thing, there's the handsomest woman I ever saw serves in the bar. I should like you to see her. She dresses as a young widow—gammon!—I don't believe she is a widow, and only dresses like one because she looks well in weeds. I have noticed, those who spend the most money get the most smiles."

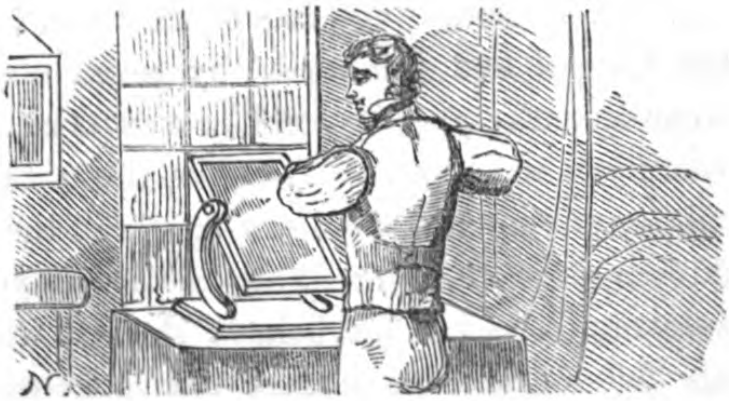
"I daresay, Tomkins, the sight of a few of these," showing three ten-pound notes, which he had received from a client on his master's account, "would make the young widow *very* gracious."

"You're right, Mr. Wilson. Why, there's one gentleman goes there—he is a solicitor out of Doctor's Commons—must be spending a fortune in the house. As 'Punch' would say, its 'drink—drink—drink,' from morning to night with him; and when

he is half gone, he orders beer and ale to be supplied in the taproom till all there are like himself. Will you come?"

"By seven I will be there."

Tomkins' rap-rap at No. 27 soon resounded through the house and the neighbourhood—more imperative than usual, to redeem his long stay at the clerk's office; and Wilson, after locking up, and giving puss a farewell stroke, was soon at his neat lodgings near Islington Green, preparing for the widow.



CHAPTER II.

In the middle of a narrow, steep, and stony hill, which led direct to a dirty but busy part of the Thames, stood the "Angel and Trumpet" public-house. Large livery-stables ran up by the side of it, and formed the only division between them and a dull-looking church, with a graveyard crammed so full of bodies sleeping till the last trumpet's sound, that hardly room could be spared for one sickly elm that had been planted to mark a rich man's vault, whose name and lineage time had obliterated from his pompous resting-place. Pah! not a mourner is ever seen wandering over its foul and dismal surface, and the Christian's hope of immortality wavers at such a sight as this, suggesting nothing but men's bones and rottenness! Oh! greedy spot, full as thou art, thou hast contrived to mingle bones and coffins closer still, to bare a little more of thy wormy bosom to the coarse sexton's spade. What a melancholy trade is that old man's who is now scooping out in this full yard a little place to rest his brother

in!—yet large enough, though, to the eye, a band of little emmets would scarce find room. No, no, it is a merry trade, for he at work, with one foot planted on his own child's grave, the other on a stranger's, is full of song and laughter. What a shovel of bones he now throws up!—and there another! Now he takes his axe, and, lost in the spirit of his song, strikes through a rotten coffin, and intrudes upon a dead man's dwelling.

"Halloo there!" he cries, "I'm deep enough. The parish must find another ground, or dig the graves themselves, for there's not room left here to bury a new-born baby. I can do no more to this. I've dug a better, it's true"—wiping the perspiration from his forehead—"but I daresay, when it comes to be covered in and rounded over a bit, it won't disgrace me." With this he takes his smock and hat from a mouldering vault, and finishes the few remaining hours of Saturday at the "Angel and Trumpet."

Of all London, we doubt not but the scene and neighbourhood of this chapter—although a huge church grew out of it, and the stables that divided the church from the low public-house could boast the honour of providing for the alderman of the ward's horses and carriage—might be deemed the most corrupt in its inhabitants, and most impure in its air. It was full of dirty narrow streets, unpaved courts, and long dark alleys. The atmosphere was vitiated by poisonous smells from the

churchyard, ill-kept stables, coal-wharfs, and drains. The people crowding about were ill-bred, ill-fed, vicious, and dirty.

The especial locality of the "Angel and Trumpet," as we have said, was a narrow, steep, stony hill; the houses about it were some high, some low, and all greatly out of repair and dingy: one of these rotten tenements sheltered ten families, and every house on the hill was crowded, and all the inhabitants paid large tribute to old Lumley, the landlord of the public-house, bearing the odd sign of the "Angel and Trumpet."

It was a hot night, and the heavens betokened heavy thunder. The heat was so intense that it drove the wretched dwellers on the hill from their wretched rooms, and men were now standing at the black doors of their houses, with their hands thrust idly in their pockets, and prophesying of the coming storm; and women, dressed in all colours, but ragged and dirty, stood, some with their arms folded on their bosoms, looking with delight at their shoeless children rioting with consummate joy in the running gutter.

The springy figure of Robert Wilson, who now came down the hill to meet his friend Tomkins, shed quite a light upon this benighted spot. He had just come from his lodgings in Islington, and how fresh he looked compared to all around him! With what superiority he now passed that miserable group! How narrowly that poor little boy escapes a pat on

the head for splashing the dirty water from the gutter he was dabbling in on the dandy's polished boot!

"I say, my man!" he called to an Irish labourer who was sitting on the stone step of his door, "where is the 'Angel and Trumpet?'"

"Right afore ye, lower down, yer honour," replied Paddy.

Wilson, apeing the gentleman, gracefully lifted his shining Paris hat to the man, and thanked him.

"That's a rale jintleman," said the labourer to a woman dressed in "unwomanly rags."

"That's thrue, Mike; and sure enough he's afther the widdy."

Wilson's eyes now rested on the large sign-board of the "Angel and Trumpet," conspicuous as the only clean-looking thing on the outside of the house, which, although the landlord Lumley was wealthy, was the dingiest one upon the dingy hill. Wilson seemed dubious to trust his carefully-attired figure within its walls, more especially as he had his master's three ten-pound notes in his pocket.

"God bless my soul!" he exclaimed to himself, and taking a view around him, "my friend Tomkins must be a tasteless man indeed to spend his leisure hours in such a place as this! Old Millington would not disgrace it. Well, Jane, in I go, and you may thank your stupid letter for my spending a night here. Row your old father up to Richmond! Ah!

you foolish girl. I feel quite indignant when I think of such a thoughtless request! On a Sunday too, of all days in the week! I dare say the old fool, will be quite vain enough to expect me at Lambeth to-morrow—and I wish he may get it. Jane would be sorry for her letter, if she could see where it had driven me. I wish she *could* see me now—it would be a lesson to her for the future. She has made a precious mistake in me—ha! ha!"

Little Tomkins' deformed figure now turned the angle of the church passage, and stopped the clerk's ungenerous reflections on poor Jane—a girl too pure for him to appreciate—too retired, for his flimsy notions—and endowed by nature with a mind too solid to be understood by a man whose soul took no higher flight than the cut of a coat.

"I call this punctuality, Mr. Wilson," said the postman, as the ancient church's crazy bell struck seven, the appointed hour for their meeting.

"But I much wonder, why my friend Tomkins holds his court in such a rookery as this!"

"Oh, what's the odds so long as you're happy. There's many a better man than us spends his evenings here."

"Think there is?" said Mr. Wilson, seeming to doubt the possibility of such a fact with regard to himself.

"I'm sure of it. Why, there's a solicitor comes here—a nice gentleman he is too—worth an amazing

deal of money! I should say I have seen him spend in this house in one night more than I can earn in a quarter! He keeps his horses up that yard—a regular sportsman, and 'tends all the races. But the reason why I choose this house is because its the nearest my lodgings; for, after the day's delivery, Mr. Wilson, I assure you I feel too tired to go further to smoke my pipe. Besides, there's plenty of life to be seen here—Lumley gives you a glass of good stout—and you may regale your eyes at the bar with a charming woman."

"Ah, well," said Wilson, "let's in—I love a charming woman. I wish Jane could hear that," he muttered to himself, "how it would annoy her!"

Pushing wide a dirty door, which creaked on its rusty hinges, and was held from closing by a broad black leathern strap, the postman and clerk were now at the bar of the "Angel and Trumpet." It was a small, dark, mean place, and was crowded with coal-men and stable-men, most of whom hailed Tomkins by name directly he entered, and a tall half-intoxicated man of the former profession held out his smutty hand, which our untutored postman grasped with a broad smile.

Behind the bar was Mrs. Lumley, the landlady, and an enchanting young widow, familiarly called, by the high and low frequenters at the house, by her Christian name, "Maria." Both ladies were very busy serving the motley crew at the bar, and the

noisy mass in the large tap-room. Mrs. Lumley had a face of the coarsest description—large cheek-bones, small flat nose, large mouth, small sunken grey eyes, and pale withal. She was fifty, but dressed in the gayest manner, wearing a bright green silk dress, bound with black velvet, and finished at the bosom with a large cameo; her expensive lace cap was trimmed with variegated ribbon; long black ringlets fell over her cheeks, but they had been furnished by the hair-dresser—nature having turned her own hair grey, which was carefully hid out of sight.

Maria, or, as she was sometimes called, Mrs. Trevor, was a far different creature from the landlady. Her face was beautiful—her figure graceful—and her manners winning, Her dark hair shone with a mirror's brightness, and contrasted well with her snow-white cap, made in widow's fashion. Her hand was surpassing fair, and each taper finger was ornamented with a glittering ring. Her head was circled by a velvet band, bound in the front with a diamond clasp. Little was known of her past history, and that little none but the Lumleys knew. Various were the conjectures concerning her,—some asserting that she was a frail relative of the landlord's, now disguised as a widow; others, that old Lumley himself had first betrayed her, and now used her as a bait to lure customers. But her free manners testified more than these reports to the evil of her nature. Without a blush, she would condescend to enter into the coarse conversation of the

tap-room customers, and drink wine in the little dim parlour with gentlemen who were drawn hither by her attractions.

Wilson's eyes alternated between the beautiful Maria and himself, which every now and then he viewed with great delight in an old-fashioned chimney-glass, fixed in the bar more for the purpose of giving light to the place than for its ordinary use.

"I have brought this gentleman, Mrs. Lumley," said Tomkins, introducing the clerk, "to taste your stout, which I always praise."

"I am sure, Mr. Tomkins," said the landlady, "I am much obliged to you. Lumley is very particular in serving his customers with the best he can get. Our stout all speak well of. Shall I have the pleasure of serving you and your friend in the parlour—no one is there."

"No," said little Tomkins, "I like to be where the ladies are—what say you, Mr. Wilson?"

"That's right, sir,—we can't do better than keep those in view who lend a charm to everything they say, and everything they touch," said the gallant clerk.

"Oh, you gentlemen," broke in Maria, with a most bewitching smile, "how you flatter!"

"I say, Maria," whispered Tomkins, over the bar, "how is Mr. Oakley?"

"He was here last night, and very well then—and very merry."

"Tipsy, I s'pose, as usual?"

"Ra—ther," said the widow. "Not much for him, though."

"Come, Mr. Tomkins," said the landlady, "why don't you take your friend in the parlour? He cannot possibly be comfortable, standing at a crowded bar."

"Don't you put yourself out of the way, Mrs. Lumley—we shall do very well where we are," said Tomkins. "I am come to spend a pleasant evening, and the only way to do that is with the ladies."

"What a beautiful flower that is in your friend's coat, Mr. Tomkins," said Maria.

"But not too beautiful for you," said the clerk, plucking it from his coat, and offering it to her.

"I am sure you are very good, sir," she said, placing it in her apron-string.

"Ah! there it goes," said the talkative postman,—"next her heart."

"Lumley!" cried the landlady to her husband, who was in the tap-room, "why don't you come and assist—the bar is full of customers."

"I can't!" he bellowed in return, "I'm a settling the score with the bargemen."

"Ah, well," replied the hostess, "so long as you are in business, I don't care. I was afraid you were smoking your pipe, and leaving all the work to me and Maria."

"Ugh! you," replied Lumley, "you are always afraid of something."

"Won't you walk into the parlour, sir?" asked Maria.

"Were you going to lead the way, I would soon follow," replied the clerk.

"You don't mean that—no, no," laughed the widow.

"Where's the man that wouldn't, I should like to know? My friend told me you were beautiful, but I never dreamt there was such beauty in the world. Oh! you don't know how proud I am to see that flower worn by you."

"I told you, Mr. Wilson," said the postman, "you would be smitten with her."

"Ah! Tomkins," said the clerk, with warmth, "but the thing is to make the lady smitten with me."

"Upon my word, Mrs. Lumley," said Maria, "you must insist that Mr. Tomkins and his friend go into the parlour, or we shall never get through our Saturday night's business."

"I declare, Maria," said the landlady, "they shall not have anything to drink until they do."

"Oh, you cruel woman!" said Tomkins. "Come, then, Mr. Wilson, if they won't let us have anything to drink here, why we *must* go into the parlour."

"Now, missus, I'm come," said old Lumley, waddling from the tap-room with a pen in his mouth, an inkstand in one hand, and a yellow bag of silver in the other, with a dirty book of scores under his arm.

Maria was now at liberty to wait upon the "gentle-

men" who had been induced to retire to the little parlour; and no sooner were they seated, than she entered from another door, and drawing a vulgarly-painted window-blind, with an unmistakeable challenge playing about her fascinating face, she sweetly asked—

"What shall I have the pleasure of serving you with?"

"Anything, you beauty!" said the enamoured clerk, "that you will condescend to share with us."

"Me!" exclaimed Maria, in affected horror. "Sir!"

"Bring me a pint of stout, and a pipe of tobacco," said Tomkins, "and when I come into my fortune, you shall be my wife."

"Surely, you would not so far forget yourself," said the clerk, "to offer this lady common stout, fit only for the people who are now at the bar."

"Pray, sir," said the modest Maria, "do not think of me—I never take anything."

"Oh, you little story-teller," said Tomkins. "I have seen you and Mr. Oakley drinking wine together very often."

"Mr. Oakley is an old friend of mine, and occasionally, rather than he should take too much, out of charity I have drank a glass for him."

"Then out of charity," pleaded Wilson, "do drink a glass with me! I'll pay for it!" and he drew from his pocket a purse which Jane Millington had knit for him.

"Shall I bring a bottle of wine, sir?"

"Hem!—how much will that be?—yes, yes, bring a bottle," stammered the clerk, reflecting upon the price.

"You clerks, Mr. Wilson, know the way to do it," said Tomkins, as Maria retired for the wine.

"Do it!" said Wilson, with warmth, "why I would spend a kingdom on such a captivating creature!"

"And I should say," remarked the shrewd postman, "that would only satisfy her till somebody came along with two kingdoms. I know her."

"I had rather spend money upon her than upon old Millington, eh? Oh! should I not like to row her up to Richmond—she would be some credit to a man."

"That she would," said Tomkins. "Such a spicy dresser! I have seen her go out in Mr. Oakley's chaise to the races. Green velvet bonnet and feather, my boy!"

"Glorious! glorious!" exclaimed Wilson.

"But it would make a hole in a five-pound note to take Maria to Richmond."

"Ah! there's the devil of it," sighed the clerk. "La! Tomkins, if I were as rich as my governor,"—his hand now resting on the three ten-pound notes "Maria should want for nothing that money could buy."

"In matters of love," said the deformed postman, "I am greedy; and had I the riches of a Jew, I

should not be fond of spending money upon a woman I could not have all to myself—you understand."

"Could I but once get a footing with her," said the clerk, adjusting his satin cravat, "I should not despair of keeping her."

"I say, Mr. Wilson," said the postman, with delight, "that Miss Millington I brought the letter from would be mightily pleased, if she was to know this."

"As to Jane Millington," replied Wilson, "I thought her once a very pretty girl; but after what I have seen to-night, she won't do for me."

"She may thank me for that."

"And I thank you for it!" warmly exclaimed the clerk. "Jane did very well in place of a better—that better, Tomkins, you have found me—and I thank you. Take a cigar," offering the postman his case—"let us be happy for once."

"Lumley," said the landlady to her husband, "don't you think Maria had better let Tomkins' friend have the best old port? it is strong, and will give him courage for another bottle."

"You're right," said old Lumley. "But I say, Maria, look after the"—and he jingled some money in his hands.

"When did I ever forget *that*, eh?" cunningly asked the amiable widow.

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—it wouldn't do, would it, girl, to supply the best wine, and not get the siller for it, as the Scotch say."

Maria and the wine were heralded in the little

parlour by a broad blue flash of lightning, and, feigning a terror which she did not feel, with a loud scream, she rushed towards Wilson, who, fearful she had been struck by the electric fluid, rose from his chair, and placed Maria in it. He then uncorked the bottle, and, glad she was not hurt, begged her to take a glass of wine to revive her.

"Oh! that frightful lightning," exclaimed the terrified lady. "Sir, you are very kind, but, believe me, I had no intention of taking any—yet, perhaps, a little would restore me."

"I am sure it would," said Wilson.

"I am not at all frightened of lightning!" said the magnanimous little postman.

"Oh, nor I," said the brave clerk. "Only for this lady's sake, I hope we shall have no more of it."

"It took me quite by surprise. Ah! this is reviving—very," she said, taking another lady-like sip of the bright port.

"Come, Tomkins, don't be backward with the wine."

"Never fear, Mr. Wilson, it won't grow older with me."

The clerk never felt so happy. He placed a chair for himself by the side of Maria, nor did old Millington or his daughter Jane once intrude themselves upon his gratified moments. By the time the wine had diminished to a fourth, he had insinuated one arm around the waist of the kind and unoffended

lady, and in the other hand held his cigar with the ease and grace of a Juan.

Flash, flash, came the lightning—flash, flash, it went; but the lady was now well sustained against its terrors—or rather, her victim was now in that happy state, that it needed not her feigned screams or swoons to bring herself more profitably into notice.

Wilson, more and more exhilirated by the port, and the enviable position of his left arm, began discoursing of the tender passion with Maria, when Tomkins said—

"That's a matter you can talk of best by yourselves —so I shall leave you, Mr. Wilson, and smoke my pipe in the tap-room," closing the little black door on the foolish clerk and the beautiful but vicious Maria.

Tomkins' chair was soon occupied by Mrs. Lumley, who, after reducing the business at the bar to her husband's capacity, thought she might employ her leisure with profit by helping the clerk with his wine. Wilson no sooner saw her vulgar face, in a vulgar head-dress, enter the parlour, than he filled a bumper for her, which, with half the ceremony of the widow by his side, she drank, and then sat down. Wilson now poured the last glass from the bottle, which he handed to Maria, but in doing so, he showed the effects of the strong wine, for his hand trembled, and he spilt a portion on the lady's expensive dress. She, ever alive to the inte-

rests of the "Angel and Trumpet," handed it to the hostess, saying, with seeming kindness, but only meant as a gentle hint to the clerk—

"Do you take this, Mrs. Lumley, it is the *last* glass. *I will go without.*"

"Not while I have a shilling in my purse, Maria!" exclaimed the animated clerk. "Another bottle"—

"Oh dear, no, sir!" exclaimed both ladies.

"Another bottle, I say," persisted the clerk, his manners not improving by the warmth of the wine—"another bottle—and take it out of that," throwing a half-sovereign on the table.

"Well, sir," said Maria, "if you so *much* want it, it would be a liberty on our parts to advise you. I will fetch it."

"And yet," said the enamoured youth, his arm still around her waist, with his chair balanced on its two front legs, and looking in the young widow's face with a fervent passion bursting from his eyes, "and yet I can hardly spare you for so short a time!"

"I will go, dear," said the good-natured landlady to Maria, taking the money from the table, and making her exit.

Flash, flash, came the lightning—flash, flash, it went. The second bottle was brought, and Wilson drew the cork and filled the glasses.

The faces of the three partakers were radiant with joy, but from different causes; the landlady's arose from the sale of the wine—the sweet Maria's from

a sense of how useful her charms were to the business of the house—and the victimised clerk's from the strength of the drink, and the conquest he flattered himself he had made of the lady by his side.

With the fresh bottle, he lit a fresh cigar, and unasked, he sang (in *his* fashion) a Scottish song, in the midst of which Mrs. Lumley was obliged to retire to vent her laughter. Maria, with difficulty, restrained herself, and when he had finished, thanked him, and hypocritically flattered him upon his exquisite singing. Mrs. Lumley again resumed her seat, expressing regret at being obliged to leave. Wilson, ever obliging to the ladies, and believing them sin-

cere, commenced the song again, but Maria interrupted him, and hoped he would favour them with a comic one; for she felt she could not again sit out Wilson's screaming "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," without committing herself by laughing loudly.

No, he did not know a comic song, but he would give them a toast, one his father gave at a party when he was articled to his profession. As he was rising, glass in hand, to render due honour to the sentiment he was going to express, a gold pin, which had shone very sparkling in the candle-light, fell from his cravat, and his attention being called to the same by the honest landlady, the clerk, forgetting what he had risen for, began to entertain the ladies with a history of the little gem.

"I wouldn't give that pin for any Prince Albert has got! Its a real diamond, and my father gave it me on the day I was ar-r-ticled."

"He! he!" tittered Maria, "I thought you were going to say on the day you were married."

"I like to see you mer-r-y, ladies," said the clerk, stammering, his head now falling on one shoulder, now on the other, and then right forwards. "Take wine—more—more wine. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy—what say you, Ma-ria?"

"As you seem to value that pin, you had better place it in your cravat, for you might lose it," suggested the widow. "Will you allow me to do so for you?"

"With all my heart, Ma-ria! Its a real diamond.

It cost fifty shillings. My father gave it me when I was a-a-rticled. Prince Albert hasn't got one like it. I shall keep it for my father's sake. He is dead, Ma-r-ria. Two years he has been dead. Highly r-r-espected man he was. A tr-r-ump of a father. Eggs and bacon every Saturday night for s-s-supper. I r-r-respect his memory, though he didn't leave me a shilling. Gave me a good educa-ca-tion. Fill the glasses, Ma-r-ria, and I will sing a song. Hic-cup! Are you fond of r-rowing, Ma-r-ria? Old M-m-millington be"——

The oath which would have filled our blank, was suppressed by the hand of the intoxicated clerk coming in contact with a glass of wine, which severely cut it.

"Never mind!" he cried, "a brave man is never fr-r-rightened, Maria! Hic-cup! hic-cup!"

Flash, flash, came the lightning—flash, flash, it went. The wine had fairly capsized the senses of the clerk, and his head fell between his arms upon the table.

"Surely we can get another bottle out of him," whispered Mrs. Lumley to Maria.

"No doubt of it," said the young widow. "My dear sir," pulling Wilson from the table, "you are not drinking your wine. Come, sing us another song."

The contrast in the dandy now, from when he entered the parlour, was great; then, every hair of his head fell in its right place, and his clothes looked

as clean and smart as if newly from the tailor's; now, he was a most deplorable-looking object—his hair, some flat upon his head, some standing erect, and all looking in different directions—his summer waistcoat smeared with the blood from his hand—his face marked with the same dye—and the sleeves of his coat wet with the wine spilt on the table, and the dust from his cigars adhering to it.

"A very r-r-respectable man," he stammered, and fell in the former position.

The kind-hearted ladies did not weep at the miserable picture he presented—they knew nothing of the melting mood—but laughed right merrily.

The business at the bar increased, and old Lumley called out to his "missus" and Maria to "lend him a hand." Mrs. Lumley sent a message to Tomkins by the potboy, "that he had better look after his friend, who was unable to look after himself."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! just what I expected," cried the postman, making way to the parlour with a pipe in his mouth as long as himself.

After some difficulty, and many loud calls upon his name, he roused the insensible clerk from the table, and he and the grinning potboy supported the staggering hiccupping Mr. Wilson into the large taproom.

Directly the company cast eyes on the pitiable figure of the intoxicated clerk, they hailed him with a shout of laughter.

"I like to see you me-r-r-y, ladies," said Wilson, falling on a long deal form that ran down by a long deal table, his eyes half shut, his white waistcoat unbuttoned and spotted with blood, his black cravat, adorned with the gold pin his deceased father had presented to him, flying about, his Paris hat crumpled, and placed by his friend Tomkins the wrong way on his head.

"There are no ladies here, Mr. Wilson," said the little postman, sitting down by him, and kindly puffing smoke in his friend's face.

"Tom-kins, my b-b-boy, will you have something to d-drink? Hic-cup!" The clerk's head fell upon the table, his hat rolling off on the other side.

The tap-room was full. The alderman of the ward's fat coachman sat there in his long claret coat, covered with large gold buttons stamped with his master's arms. By his side sat Rainbow Dick, so called from his wearing many colours in his dress. At the top of the table, with one arm resting on it supporting his pipe, was the keeper of the adjoining stables, Mr. Handiside, a very corpulent man, with a broad-brimmed hat shading large loose-hanging cheeks; he spoke little, but mingled many oaths with it. On his right was a low party playing at cards—on his left was another playing at dominoes. In the middle of the room, with a long brass tube in his hand, in which was placed a thick sharp needle, fringed with worsted, stood Harry Smith, Mr. Oakley's dissipated groom, playing at "puff the

dart," for beer, with a tall coalheaver. Looking on with great delight was little Joey the milkboy, afflicted with the same deformity as the postman, dressed in a fustian coat with deep side-pockets, and a round dog-skin cap upon his head; he had a fine healthy colour on his cheeks, which he had won from the breeze that played over the green fields, where he went early in the morning to milk his master's cows. He had his dumb brother by his side, who was apprenticed to a tinker on the hill, and nothing made the little milkboy so angry as any laughing or jesting with him. The room was cloudy with smoke.

Apart from the rest, and extremely sad, was a respectable-looking youth. His pale and intelligent face was resting on his bent hand, and his eye, expressing dismal thoughts, was vacantly fixed, regardless of the games, and jests, and oaths, and drunkenness around him, upon the table. His feet were gathered up on the form where he sat. His name was William Marshall. He was the son of a tradesman whose means were not large, but who was daily increasing his business by untiring industry. William's father travelled much in quest of trade, and left him the sole guardian of the business at home. Young William had passions known only to himself—they gained the mastery over him, and he supported them by robbing his father. Who would have suspected this genteel and delicate-looking youth was a thief! But he was. William

had a passion for riding—an expensive one—and this lured him to Mr. Handiside's stables, where he soon found that riding was only to be had in exchange for money. His father was a small wholesale jeweller, and William, from week to week, had robbed him of various property, which he had pledged with different pawnbrokers, and squandered the money in dissipation.

William Marshall was well known to all the frequenters of the "Angel and Trumpet," and he was supposed to be some young gentleman who had nothing to do but spend money and ride horses. Marshall's father had great confidence in his son, nor had he the shadow of a suspicion that he was dishonest.

It was not long after he had found his way to the stables before he was caught in the snare of the bewitching Maria, whose acquaintance soon made heavy demands on his purse, and a week since he robbed his father's warehouse of a gold watch, which he pledged for five pounds, and, one Sunday, spent the whole on the fair Maria, by driving her to Windsor, and ordering a champagne dinner at a first-rate hotel. This was his last robbery on his father. Had he been content —but what thief is?—with small pilferings, it might have passed his too confident father's notice some time longer. But a gold watch!—Mr. Marshall had not so many in stock that one could be taken without his missing it.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Marshall, run-

ning up-stairs to his wife and daughter, his son William being out on business, "you know, my dear, I had twelve flat gold watches in the drawer, and now there's one gone!"

"Are you sure, Marshall," said his wife, "it has not been sold?"

"If it has, my dear, I have not had the money for it."

Mrs. Marshall turned pale, and dropped her work upon her lap. That William was out all last Sunday night suddenly swept across her memory, and her heart turned sick with fear. She had kept her husband in ignorance of that circumstance, he being out of town at the time.

"Where is William gone, Marshall?" she asked.

"To the bank, to pay an acceptance of mine—I expect him in"—

"Here he comes!"

Directly William entered, he saw that something unpleasant had happened; and as soon as his father mentioned the watch, his mother perceived at once her son was guilty.

"You must have overlooked it, father—I will go to the warehouse, and find it," said William, quickly running down the stairs, and leaving his parents and sister anxiously waiting his return.

But William knew too well he should not find the watch in the drawer, and fled from his father's house, and hid himself at the "Angel and Trumpet," where he now sat coiled up with a tormenting conscience.

"There's to be grand doings at the church to-morrow," said Mr. Handiside to the alderman's coachman.

"Yes, worse luck," rejoined the fat coachman. "Here's a true, full, and pertikler account of it," pulling a large printed bill from his pocket, stating that a "Right Reverend Bishop would preach a Sermon before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs, and that a Subscription would be made after the Service in aid of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

"Humbug!" cried Mr. Handiside. "The church has got more work at home than she can get along with, without begging for money in this play-bill sort of a fashion to squander abroad. Take my word for it, we have no religion to spare, nor do the beggars abroad want it if we had. Humbug! let the church look to our parish, and many another in London, afore she can go with clean hands into foreign parts. There's that dirty old church round the corner, what's the good of it, say I?—not worth the ground its built upon, for the service it is to the poor. It buries more souls than it saves, take my word for that. There's hardly a child in the parish can read its letters. Its shut up six days out of seven, and the parson goes fishing, with his two thousand a-year for doing nothing; and the day its open its filled with the gentry, who have been knocking about to dinners, dances, and theatres most of the week, and finish it up with a prayer on a Sunday; and the

poor devils who ought to be there can't show a head for their rags. There's summat wrong there, take my word for that. And when they want to raise the wind, they get up an affair like this—send for my lord bishop in *his* lawn sleeves and big wig—the lord mayor in *his* gold coach—the sheriffs and the aldermen in *their* grand carriages—and, to gammon the rich how much good the church does for the poor, they train the charity boys and girls to squall out a psalm on the occasion; and when that's over, they care no more about 'em, and they go swearing and hungry about the streets till Sunday comes again. That very thing tells me there's summat wrong—when I see charity boys and girls no better than other boys and girls who don't go to church at all."

In Mr. Handiside's eloquent animadversion upon the church—roughly put as it was—lay matter for grave consideration. It *did* speak some deficient virtue in the establishment to look round upon the thousands of beings in the neighbourhood of many of our churches—ay, sitting about upon the very steps of the holy edifices—with less light shining in their souls than the untutored savages we are so anxious to enlighten. It *did* speak some deficient virtue in the establishment to see charity boys and girls—whom the church is especially supposed to instruct—no better than other boys and girls who grow up without its saintly care. Indeed, we have observed that the charity boys of London are more

depraved in their morals than others, and, except on a Sunday, are dirtier in their appearance. Their tastes are far inferior. We have seen groups of boys of all grades playing about in the green fields of London, miles from their homes, and at night returning laden with boughs and field-flowers—but in all those merry groups we never saw a charity boy—*they* only are to be found, in their ludicrous dresses, pale and dirty, hovering about the neighbourhood of their parish church. Poor boys! once in three hundred and sixty-five days, they are paraded through the parish, headed by a pert beadle with a gilt crown on the top of a long green pole, walking as if following a coffin, daring them to laugh, nor talk, nor pluck a flower in the fields they pass through, in peril of their tea, to Hampstead Heath.

But leaving charity boys, did not the bare existence of such a neighbourhood as that in which stood the "Angel and Trumpet," cast a volume of reflections on the church which is supported by the community at large to guard the morals of the people, and enlighten their understandings?—did not the existence of such profligacy—such darkness at home—make it almost a crime to solicit funds from the people to carry instruction abroad? Enlighten all if you can; but if your power is not great enough for that, remove the darkness at home first.

Flash, flash, came the lightning—flash, flash, it went. Eleven o'clock struck. The company in the tap-room were now in their glory. The gas was

flaring ceiling high. The parish beadle was there, and was proposing to a costermonger, with rusty crape about his rusty hat, "to make one of four at a game of cards."

"Why it won't look the thing jist yet," said the man, taking a short pipe from his mouth; "you know I only buried the old 'oman last week."

"Never fear her," persisted the beadle. "Besides, you may as well play as look on. Come along!"

"She was a very nice 'oman—but I don't mind one game, just to put her out of my mind."

"When she got lumpy, she was very good company," said the beadle.

"Was she not now!" and the affected husband drew the sleeve of his dirty fustian coat across his watery eyes. "How loving she used to be, to be sure, to the young uns, when she'd got about four glasses in her—more than that made her conspickshus."

"She went off suddenly?"

"Ay, like a hinnicent 'oman as she was. The transporting our Bet didn't do her no good. That touched her pride. After that, between me and you, she took rayther too much. 'Look to the babby, Joe,' she said to me, when she was a going, 'and when Bet's time's up, Joe, tell her she was the death of me.'"

"And serve her right too," said the beadle. "But come on, for we shall soon have shutting up time here. You'll make one, Tomkins?"

"You never knew me backward at a game of cards," said the little postman.

"Let's see," said the beadle, looking about the room, "who shall we get for a fourth? Mr. Marshall, we want you for a game."

William continued in his bitter musings, nor heard the beadle's challenge. It was repeated—and the youth, anxious to conceal everything from the beings around him that could compromise his respectability, suddenly changed his sad countenance to his usual gaiety, sprang from the form, and exclaimed in dashing tones, flinking a pretty riding-whip, which Maria had given him, on his tight-fitting trousers—

"A game at cards, my boy?—ay, all night if you like!"

The four sat down to the game. An old, clean-looking Jew came in, whose Sabbath had been concluded but a few hours, and pulled from a well-worn green bag an ancient fiddle, upon which he played some exquisite music.

Mr. Handiside, who had at last got in a merry humour, called on old Cohen to fiddle them an Irish jig, which the Jew commenced with great spirit. It at once infected an Irish labourer and a coalheaver, pot companions, with a desire for a dance, and to the glee of all present, they jumped about the room in their thickly-nailed boots until the noise aroused the intoxicated clerk, who, as well as he was able, staggered into the middle of the room, and joined them.

"I like to see you mer-r-ry!" he stammered, and

then, amidst noisy shouts and laughter, he fell on the floor, between his dancing companions. The Irishman picked him up, and resumed his jig.

Mr. Handiside and the alderman's coachman marched off to the same tune, which seemed the signal for the rising of the whole room, and the neat

shoe and clean white stocking of William Marshall shone conspicuously when tripping up and down the room with this motley gang. The clerk made many efforts to rise from his seat, but in vain, and called lustily on Tomkins.

"You had better sit where you are, Mr. Wilson," cried the little postman, who, at the highest pitch of his delight, with one arm extended, in which he held his pipe, was now flying up and down the room with a dustman.

William Marshall, to make the scene complete, took the clerk by the hand, and smiling, "led him forth to dance."

"You are a tr-r-ump," said Wilson, "and I will r-r-row you up to Rich—hic-cup—hic-cup."

The clerk was passed along from one to the other until he got outside the crowd, and then he rolled again in the sawdust. He was this time picked up by Rainbow Dick, who easily contrived to rob him of the pin his father gave him as a remembrance.

Young Marshall danced on with a light step but a heavy heart. His thoughts tormented him with the discovery at home—and his penniless condition. When the public-house closed he knew not where to go. He could face his home no more. True, his credit was good with old Lumley and Mr. Handiside; for often, when no opportunity offered for his making up a purse for Sunday, by converting his father's jewellery into money at the pawnbroker's, he would borrow a sovereign or two of one of those worthy gentlemen, and punctually repay him the following week. When the dance was finished, he determined on trying old Lumley for two sovereigns, which he thought would last him a week while he fled from his father's wrath, when he hoped, through the medium of the *Times*, to be entreated to return again to the father he had wronged. This thought brightened him up, and who "so merry, so merry as he?"

"Play away, Cohen!" he called to the Jew.

"Ve are doing very vell," rejoined the old man, his bony hand quickly moving the bow, and his green bag thrown across his fiddle-arm.

The dancers fell into more order, and each took a partner, young Marshall and Rainbow Dick leading off, followed by little Tomkins and the beadle, corpulent Mr. Handiside and the alderman's coachman, Mr. Oakley's groom and the heart-broken costermonger; and, after two tall coalheavers, the rear was brought up by little Joey and his dumb brother, the tinker. Two or three rounds of the room in this orderly fashion, the intoxicated clerk sitting with folded arms, his head nodding east, west, north, and south, and ever and anon hic-cupping and stammering "I like to see you mer-r-r-ry," the Jew struck the last note of the jig, and the dancers again formed themselves into groups around the table, and with a keen relish, after their boisterous exercise, took long draughts at their drink, and troubled old Lumley for a fresh supply.

Young William, draining off the glass of rum and water, which he had called for in an early part of the evening, and lighting a cigar, with a gaiety he did not feel, dashed through the tap-room, whip in hand, to the landlord at the bar.

"I say, old chap!" he said to Lumley, who was sitting behind the bar with his arm on a tin cash-box, and a glass of brandy and water before him, while Maria and Mrs. Lumley were supping at a small table off a plate of native oysters and bread

and butter—"I want you to lend me two sovereigns."

"Can you let me have 'em again on Tuesday, Mr. Marshall?—for I ixpect the brewer to call."

"Oh, to be sure I can—and lend you some too, if you want any."

"Come round the bar, Mr. Marshall," said Mrs. Lumley, "and take a native or two with us. Maria tells me you serve her very cruel—not spoken a word to her to-night."

"Maria's friend is in the tap-room," said William, accepting the invitation.

The allusion to the clerk set both ladies off in hearty laughter.

"Here's the money, young genelman," said the landlord, "and I should hope you mean to stand treat with glasses round."

"To be sure I do!" said William, throwing down one of the sovereigns, and clasping Maria round the waist and kissing her.

William was a timid thief, but a bold lover.

"But I say, Mr. Marshall," said Maria, in tones that partook of sincerity, "what *has* been the matter with you all the evening?"

"Nothing at all. What made you think of that?"

"Oh, I know better. It will puzzle you to deceive me. Young gentlemen don't go mumping up in corners"—

"When there are pretty young ladies in the way," interrupted William, laughing.

"Whew, whew, whew," said Maria, putting her pretty face up in William's, "I was not going to say that either."

"Well, darling," said William, "what *were* you going to say?"

"Why, that you have been looking as sad as a disappointed lover."

"How do you know how disappointed lovers look, eh?"

"None so well, I can tell you that, Mr. Marshall," said Mrs. Lumley.

"But do tell us!" said Maria, looking concerned.

"Upon my word, I have nothing to tell you—only what I have told you a thousand times, that I love you dearly."

The bar-door squeaked on its hinges, and William Marshall for a moment changed colour, for a young beggarwoman entered, much like his sister Lydia in the contour of her face.

"Ah! good people," she said, "pray assist a poor woman!"

"We can hardly assist ourselves," said the overfed landlord. "I make it a pint never to give, and then I shan't be taken in."

"Better I perish for want, sir, than you be taken in," sarcastically said the forlorn woman.

"Come, come," said the landlord, getting off his chair, and going outside the bar, "we don't want any of yer impidence. Get along with you!"

"Here's sixpence for you," said William.

"Do you begrudge it me?" said the woman, her hollow eye lit up with desperation.

"Not I," said William. "I never begrudge what I give, and always give when I have got it."

The poor woman took the sixpence, but seemed more rejoiced at William's words than his money.

"This sixpence, sir," said the woman, tears flowing from her eyes, "is dearer to me than a sovereign thrown as if I were a dog!"

"Rubbish!" growled the landlord.

"Dare you judge me by my rags!" she exclaimed, with startling dignity. "You will err if you do."

"Ugh! ugh!—why who are you?"

"A woman—a ragged woman if you will—more of my history than that will not be believed by you, nor will it give me any pleasure to relate. You saw that lightning run along your counter?"

"What of that? I've seen lots of it to night."

"And so have I—but every flash took back a prayer from me to heaven to send another to scorch me up! What prayer did you send back?"

"To send all the beggars out of the world, and more business. Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

Mrs. Lumley laughed—Maria laughed. William Marshall's humanity was of a finer stamp—his arm dropped from Maria's waist, and he felt grieved that so fair a woman should show so black a spirit. He knew her to be gay—he knew her to be frail—he knew she put away one lover to smile upon a richer; but he never knew till now her heart was steel. He

felt keenly for the poor woman whose ears had been outraged by the laughter—he gave her another sixpence—he begged her to depart—he wished her brighter days.

"Why you are charitable enough for all of us, Mr. Marshall," said Maria. "You should have been a parson."

"The devil! Maria," said the indignant William. "Let me be anything rather than stand with money in my purse sneering at a starving woman. Let me be anything, rather than my heart not respond to the cry of distress. I could not sleep—I could not eat—oh! I should loathe myself—did I not assist the poor as far as my means extended."

"My dear sir," said the cunning widow, putting her arm through his, and gently pulling him by her side, "do take a little brandy and water after that—I am sure you must be hoarse."

"No, my dear," said the philanthropic youth, soothed by Maria's blue eye, "but consider this poor woman has suddenly appeared before us—heavy lightning abroad—near twelve o'clock at night—we are feasting on luxuries—she asks for assistance; think you then it is decent to answer her with scorn and laughter? Let us give kind words and looks—to a beggar most welcome—if we give nothing more tangible."

"Ah, Mr. Marshall," said Mr. Lumley, "you wouldn't talk like that if you seed so much on 'em as we does."

"And because you see so much distress, you relieve none. A too common excuse, but rely upon it a fallacious one, and devised in our selfishness to stifle the better parts of our nature."

"Ugh! ugh! I know you'll excuse what I'm going to say, but I do think you must be Bamfylde More Carew."

"Never mind what I am, Lumley—relieve that distressed woman at your elbow."

"Thank you, sir, what you have given me will serve me to-night," said the woman. "And to-morrow, or now, if you will listen, I will prove to you that neither your money nor your kind words have been ill-bestowed."

"The truth is," said William, "I am quite satisfied of your distress, without hearing any more."

Lumley and the ladies were glad to be relieved of her presence.

Ding-dong! chimed the quarters of the hour until the clock replied by striking twelve! The pot-boy put up the shutters of the house, but left the little door fastened back by the strap. The gas still flared away in bar and tap-room, and none departed the place but the beadle, who considered the Sabbath had commenced at the twelfth stroke of the clock, and he put it out of the power of any man to say he was in a public-house after that hour on a Saturday night.

"Vare you pleased, ladies, vid de music?" asked the old Jew, soliciting contributions at the bar.

Maria found threepence for him—Mrs. Lumley

sixpence—old Lumley, ditto—young Marshall, wild in his liberality as in everything else, put a shilling in the little tin plate, and told him to go back in the tap-room and play them "O, Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me."

"Very vell, sir. A fine song it is too," muttered the thin old man, whose long beard was grey with age, and whose little eye twinkled above his Israelitish features like a star.

"Why you'll take more money than I shall to-night," said the landlord.

"Vant it—very much vant it."

"And so do I—but I can't tell how to get it."

"Your tap-room very full of good honesht people, too," remarked the Jew.

William Marshall doubted it. The thief! how often he is innocently reminded of what he is.

The little postman came to the bar, and told Maria, he should leave his friend Wilson in her care to-night, "for as he could not walk, he did not feel disposed to carry him."

"I think, Tomkins, you left him in my care quite long enough."

"Who is he?" asked William.

"Only a lawyer's clerk," said Tomkins, contemptuously.

"Well, I thought he was not used to drink wine. The idea of two bottles throwing him in that state! And I and Mrs. Lumley partook of it too!" said Maria.

"Quite ridiculous!" said the landlady, tossing her head. "Did you ever hear him sing, Tomkins?"

"Don't mention it, dear," laughed Maria.

"Ma-ria!" exclaimed Wilson from the tap-room, making an attempt to get to the bar, but again rolling in the sawdust.

"You have made quite an impression upon him," said Tomkins. "He has been bawling out 'Ma-ria' ever since he left the parlour."

"And he cannot utter a better name, can he, Maria?" said William, tickling her ear with the red silk fringe at the end of his riding-whip, which she construed into a challenge for a romp. She rose—William ran away—she ran after him—now they are laughing on the little dark stairs that led to the two bed-rooms—now he gets away, and she again catches him in the dark parlour.

"Now, Maria, where do you want me to drive you to-morrow?"

"Me! you do not mean to say that I shall be honoured any more after the conquest the beggar-woman has made of you?"

"Ah! you do not love me well enough to be jealous."

"The beggarwoman will. I expect, if she comes again, you will run away with her, and then farewell to Mr. William Marshall."

"And how many tears would you shed, if such were the case?"

"Not a shower—not one. Maria is a strange body, don't you think so?"

"Quite a riddle."

"Why so is Greek to a fool. 'How very strange!' we cry, or think, this is, that is—we do not understand. Now I—to you a riddle—am to myself quite readable."

"I wish you would read yourself audibly."

"Oh, I daresay! I must love you better than myself to do that."

"How so?"

"If I were to tell you 'how so,' it would be telling you all."

"Well—tell me all." And he took her on his knee, and placed his arm around her white neck.

"How soon you would put me from you, were I to do so."

"Oh, no. Come, tell me—then I shall believe you love me."

"What do you care about *my* love?"

"How sad you spoke those words, Maria."

"Then I have broken my vow—for I declared I never would be sad. When but a girl I had enough of that, and I resolved it should not grow with me—and successful was my resolution."

"You are mistaken—I discover sadness in your very merriment."

"Then it *will* cling to me!" she muttered to herself.

"What did you say, Maria?"

"What a prying young gentleman you are, Mr. Marshall!" she gaily rejoined.

"What a little tantaliser you are, Maria!" he echoed, imitating his companion's tones. "Speak out, and relieve me of my curiosity. I will be true to your trust."

"No. I would tell you rather than another; but it must not be told. Let us turn the tables. Have *you* no secrets?"

"First, what do you mean by a secret?"

"Why, something that we have either done, or desired to do, that would not bear the telling."

"Then I cannot deny I have. I believe the best of us have done, or desired to do, some guilty thing which the heart shrinks from sharing with another. But I will give secret for secret?"

William gaily gave this challenge (knowing it would not be accepted), to intimate that *his* secret was of a trifling nature. He would no more have told his mysterious charmer he was a thief, than she would have communicated what she was.

"No you would not. Nor would I trust you with mine."

"Cannot I guess yours?"

"You may think so—but it is past your ken. You know only what you see—that I am frail—or gay—or what you will. I take no pains to disguise *that*: how then can it be my secret?"

"But is it not connected with it?"

"Yes—about as much—let me see—about as much as a hair of the head with the body."

"No more than that?"

"No more. Is this a clue to yours?" she asked, holding up the duplicate of a watch.

"Why, where in the world did you get that?"

"Is this a clue to yours?" she repeated, still holding up the duplicate.

"Oh, no—of course not," William blushingly replied. "True—it is a secret so far, that there being no necessity to inform any person that on a certain day, wanting a certain sum for a certain purpose, I pledged my watch, and kept it to myself. There's no murder in that."

"Murder!—how do you mean?" exclaimed Maria, evidently surprised. "He! he!—murder! La! how quaint you are in your expressions."

Maria's sudden surprise was real, her sudden gaiety was assumed.

"Heavens! Mr. Marshall, let us talk no more about secrets"—and she walked into the bar, leaving William to himself.

"There's much more in Maria than meets the eye," he mused, in a corner of the parlour, whose only light was now and then a flash of lightning, which discovered William sitting on one chair, his legs stretched on another; his left hand in his pocket, his right supporting his handsome, grave, youthful face, the delicate fingers thrust through his light, almost white hair:—"and so there is in me—and so there is in all of us. What the devil I shall do, I do not know! I know what I *ought* to do—resolve at once and for ever to be honest; return to my

home—confess my doings—and with my whole heart say, 'Father! forgive me.' I was never made to be a thief—I am not callous enough. Some fellows now would think no more of what I have done, than they would of eating their dinners. But I do—and now it is discovered, I think terribly of it. I am glad it *is* discovered, else I should have ruined my father; but as the thing stands now, I think he may recover it. One way and another, I should say I have been a hundred out of his way. A *struggling* father too!—and struggling for me, and Lydia, and mother, more than himself! It is a d—d shame! and though this minute I had his forgiveness, never would I forgive myself. Will he go mad, I wonder, when he discovers all!—enough to make him. And mother—how will she bear the shock? why go mad too, or die! and Liddy will well hate me for it all! Oh! I wish I *could* do what I *ought* to do. I wonder whether any of us do? 'Where there's a will, there's a way,' they say; and I believe it. I *have* the will—but the *way* frightens me! No—I am not man enough, with all my sense of making reparation, to face my father with his troubled look—nor my broken-hearted mother—nor my sister with her tearful eyes, and her face shunning mine! I could easier hang myself!"

Flash, flash, came the lightning—flash, flash, it went. The first hour of the Sabbath had struck. The business of the house was exhausted, and Lumley's tumultuous host had one by one departed

to their habitations—some drunk—some merry—some sullen. Little Tomkins was the last to go, but before he left he gave the insensible clerk a hearty "good night," picked up his broken gossamer, and, in the most friendly manner, placed it on his head, and struck it on the crown till it lay on the bridge of his nose.

"Ha! ha! there's a nightcap for you, Mr. Wilson. Ha! ha! ha! you look gay now, and no mistake."

Old Lumley crawled into the tap-room, and lowered the flaring gas, after doing the same at the bar.

"Can hardly afford gas when the room's brimmed, leave alone now. Cohen shan't come here—moosic spiles the landlord's profits. Ugh! ugh! ugh!" casting his large yellow eyes on Wilson, "that's the best sight I've a seed to night. You're a credit to a landlord, you are."

What a contrast quiet is to uproar! The cat's purring among her kittens could now be heard far from the place she nestled in; and the tick-tick, tick-tick, of Maria's gold watch, by her side, sounded imperatively in the change the house had sustained.

"Get the cards, dear," said Mrs. Lumley to Maria, the two entering the parlour where William Marshall, deep in his pleasant musings, reclined on the chairs.

"What, still in the dark, Mr. Marshall!" exclaimed Maria.

"Not now you are come," said the gallant youth.

"I ran away from him because he would sit in the dark," said Maria to Mrs. Lumley.

"Are you *sure* that was the reason?" William significantly asked.

"Lumley," the landlady called to her husband, who was amusing himself in the tap-room at Wilson's expense, "bring a candle in the parlour."

"I'm tireder than you are, tend yourself," he replied.

"Oh, you ill-natured man," said Mrs. Lumley, lighting a tall wax-candle at a jet of the bar gas; then she flounced into the tap-room to her lord, and partook of the amusement Wilson's ludicrous plight afforded. She invited Maria to the exhibition. She came, and laughed the loudest of the three. Maria called upon Marshall; but he did not think it worth the trouble—he had seen him—he was tired. For ten minutes Maria and the Lumleys sat opposite Wilson in a high state of laughter. Every snore—every dip of the head with the hat Tomkins had set so gracefully on it—amazingly tickled the risibility of the abandoned trio. Maria took a cork from a bottle by her side, burnt it in the little flame of gas, and beautified the sleeping man's face with bushy whiskers and mustachios, and placed his hat gaily on one side. What capital fun! They laughed more than ever—they held their sides with laughter.

"Come along, Lumley, that's enough of *him*. I, you, Maria, and Marshall, are going to have a game at cards."

"Very well, missus; haven't turned much money to-night. Maria, keep your eye about in the game, and we shall do a little profitable trade. He hasn't much—I wish he had—but I think we can manage to"——

"Fleece him of it," said Mrs. Lumley, finishing her good man's sentence. "Come along."

"Better honest people have it than beggars," growled Lumley.

The door closed upon one victim, and they entered the parlour to try their skill at cards upon another.

William had no intention to play—he was weary.

Lumley, at his own expense, mixed for him a glass of strong brandy and water.

"Come, Mr. Marshall, drink with me," said the crafty old landlord, "and never say I'm stingy agen. There's a whole shilling's worth mixed there! Trade won't permit sich liberality *every* day in the week, I do assure you, sir—what say you, missus?"

"Why shuffle the cards, or give them to me!" snapped his wife, evidently displeased at the rude preface to his liberality.

"The truth is, Lumley," remarked William, "if you cannot afford it, I do not want it. I did not ask you to treat me."

"I thought you would offend Mr. Marshall! And if I were him, I would not drink with you. I will mix a glass, and he shall drink with me."

This put all to rights. The brandy was mixed—William drank, and was revived—the chairs were

drawn closer to the little table, and the game commenced with spirit. One game is over—and how happy Lumley looks, sweeping the stakes off the table with one flat horny hand into the palm of the other, which is scooped up and placed a little below the edge of the table.

"Didn't ixpict no way to win that game, Mr. Marshall," he said.

Yes, you did, Lumley—but you would not have won it, had not that sweet lady with a widow's cap on, sitting next you, slipped a counting card into your hand at a juncture of the game.

The glass was circulated—and William shuffled the cards for the next game. Those rings upon Maria's fingers marred William's pleasure! He gazed upon them as upon the ghost of his mother! Take them out of my sight!

There now!—that wicked Maria watches her partner's abstraction, and gives old Lumley another card—*that* wins the second game!

"Better luck next time, partner," said Maria.

"That was tremendous!" exclaimed William, as the lightning, red and broad, came with such power to jingle the glasses on the table.

"This will play Old Harry with the insicts in the gardens, and ripen the corn," remarked Lumley. "God is good."

Very! in sending His fire scatheless over your head, and not bringing you to judgment. Lumley—may He bear with you and your company till you repent!

William's heart was full of grief; on pretence of finding his handkerchief, he stole into the long dark tap-room, sat upon the corner of the form, and wept.

"What shall I do! what shall I do!" he bitterly exclaimed. "Oh! had I but known half the misery of being discovered a thief, they might have trusted me with uncounted sums, and tempted me with the luxuries my heart most panted for, but not a coin would I have touched—I would have starved first! I wonder if *he* is a thief!" gazing on Wilson, who, since last we noticed him, had changed his quarters from the form to the softer sawdust on the floor. "If he is one of *my* stamp, I pity him."

"Come, Mr. Marshall," called Maria, "we are waiting for you."

"And so is the devil!" he muttered to himself. "Shuffle the cards," he replied; "I will be with you in a jiffy."

The tears are driven back to their fountain—he is with them again—he leads off the first card of the third game.

The sky turned black—and the thunder roared like lions in their fury.

"Why, I'm jiggered if the storm hasn't brought your luck back," said Lumley, suffering William to win this game.

"Oh, that it had brought me back the peace of heart I enjoyed before I knew you," William thought to himself.

There's three o'clock! A lashing rain came on—and now the thunder, and the lightning, and the rain terrifically speak out together.

Before four, the spirit of the storm was subdued, and a streak of blue in the sky's black face spoke of a pleasant morrow. A blackbird on the hill, belonging to Rainbow Dick, began to whistle a welcome to the coming calm. Poor bird! thy master in his profligacy forgot thee, and left thee in thy narrow house to brave the storm. Didst thou not long in the pelting rain for the sheltering branch of a tree? But thy music tells us thou longest for nothing but "peace on earth and goodwill toward men." Sing small! twice Dick has turned in his bed, and if thou wakest him, he will growl and curse thee.

"Well, now you have won back all the money you lent me!" said William.

"Why, I declare," said Maria, looking at her watch, "it only wants five minutes to four!"

"Here's off for a snooze," said old Lumley. "What say you, missus?"

While Mrs. Lumley lit a candle, the old landlord went into the bar, and clutched his god—his cash-box—and locked the till, which was full of coppers—and scrutinised all the bolts and bars of the house.

"Mind the morning, Mariar," said Lumley, following his lady up the steep narrow stairs, which he ascended with difficulty, holding by the baluster, and pausing for breath on every stair. When he

arrived in his mean bed-room, he said to his "missus," chuckling—

"Card-playing is a good trade—when you win, its all profit. Two pounds! But that's nothing to him—nothing at all."

"I wonder what he is! He seems in a curious temper to-night. Did you notice, Lumley, how red his eyes looked when he came out of the tap-room with his handkerchief?"

"Not I—I had enough to do to look after the stakes and the game."

"*I* did; and I could swear he had been crying. I was going to joke him about it, but thought I had best not."

Lumley placed his money-box in a chest, which he double locked, put the key in his pocket, rolled up the garment that contained it, and placed it under his dirty pillow, went to bed, and slept as sound as an honest man.

The young widow and William were again alone. The stillness of the hour was only broken by the occasional crowing of a cock up the stable-yard, and the melody of Dick's blackbird on the hill.

"Directly morning breaks," said William, "I shall travel out."

"And what time will your lordship travel back?"

"Perhaps soon—perhaps late."

"It depends, I presume, whether you meet the beggarwoman."

"I think you have pretty well beggared me

between you," he rejoined, with an affected pleasantness.

"You are not dismal about that?"

"How you keep on, Maria! I tell you I am *not* dismal! I am weary."

"So weary as to cry about it?"

"Nothing passes you, I find. The truth is, Maria," said he, well knowing he was going to tell a lie, "my friends are rich and squeamish, and before I am of age I am dependent on them, which often makes me miserable. I am a proud fellow, you know, and hate dependence. Just now, I have but one sixpence."

"Don't you wish you had those two or three back you gave the beggarwoman?"

"Do I!—no! though one of them would buy the world. I say, Maria, give me that ticket you showed me."

"There it is—and as long as you know me, never do such a thing again; for my purse is never empty, and to *you* always open."

"That is the heartiest specimen of friendship I ever experienced. I know the heart is sincere, when the purse is offered. Come here, Maria. Kiss me, Maria! Your friendship has penetrated my heart, and endears you more than your beauty."

"Then did you never know before that all I had was yours, if you wanted it?"

"No—I thought till now your friendship was wholly influenced by the purse."

of the honest man's words. All the shame I am possessed of, is no good to myself nor any other person. Did it ever, that's the question, conquer me once in doing that which I ought not to have done? Not a bit of it! It kept on speaking—but never conquering. A thief with shame is the most miserable wretch on earth. And that's my doom! A shameless thief I feel I never could be. I have struggled hard to conquer Shame—and she has struggled hard to conquer me! The war within gives no rest to me! I fear neither will triumph—and so between them both I shall be a miserable thief!"

He placed the purse in his pocket, and sallied into the tap-room, where lay the clerk, his shoulders streaked by the daylight streaming in at the shutter-hole, still deep in his drunken slumber.

How pale Marshall turned at the slamming of the door behind him. He sat down under the little flame of gas, and pencilled on the back of one of his father's bill-heads the following catalogue of his debts:—

	£	s.	d.
Handiside, for last Sunday's turn-out	1	0	0
Borrowed of Handiside.....	0	15	0
Lumley's score (about)	1	10	0
Borrowed of Lumley	2	0	0
In Maria's purse	4	0	0
Total.....	9	5	0

"Nine pounds five!" he exclaimed, "and not a single resource to pay a fraction of it! Upon my

soul I know not what to do!" He cast his eye upon an old halter, left by one of the stablemen on Saturday night. "Why not take courage, and hang myself?—and there an end to it all. I will! I will!"

He rushes to the rope, and his desperate eye hovers round the room for something to fix it on. He has it—the long iron gas-pipe hanging over the table. He turns out the little flame, and swings upon the pipe to prove its strength. It will do—his light figure does not disturb it from its stronghold. He jumps off the table, and, ponderous as it is, he moves it aside to give room for his body's length. He is on the table again, and stretches forth to adjust the rope to the pipe. That is done—and done firmly. Now he makes the slip-knot for his youthful throat. That is done—and done well. Off with the neckerchief! Last preparation for eternity—the rope is around his neck!—the door slowly opens—in a moment he throws the noose from his throat, and the bubbles of sweat upon his forehead stand so big that they might be counted. Lumley's large black cat entered, and with her yellow eyes gave the youthful suicide stare for stare. A minute thus they stood, and William's courage cooled. Trembling, he wiped away the traces of his suicidal intention, by placing the table and the halter where he moved them from.

"I must flee this house instantly, that is certain," he said, tying on his neckerchief.

The clerk groaned, and turned.

"Ah! had it not been for the cat, by this time I should have slept sounder than you—no groanings, no turnings. Well, come now—what am I going to do? Here's the daylight getting broader and broader every minute—and every minute here am I."

The clerk groaned, and muttered something about "ten-pound notes." This attracted William's attention.

"Ten-pound notes!" he mused—"you play high. He is well-dressed; I wonder if he *has* any ten-pound notes about him? He is sound asleep—what is to hinder my searching him? Shame! not she—she could not save my father's property, much less a squandering stranger's. He may have *some* money, if not to the extent he dreams of."

With a stealthy pace he crept to Wilson, who was lying on his right side, with his face to the wall. His right arm was extended on the floor, and his left drawn over his eyes, terminating under his ragged head. The young jeweller knelt on one knee, and first attacked the side-pocket of the unconscious man's coat, but found there only a letter of some Betsy Walker's, which, by the few lines William glanced at, showed Betsy had some tenderness for the lawyer's clerk. He did not deprive him of the flattering epistle, but returned it to the pocket, and resumed his search.

Marshall's hand now slid into the right place, and,

like an angler who perceives a bite, he drew it back to see what he had caught. He looks displeased—it is only another letter! He hesitates about losing the time to open it, but resolves to make sure—uncrumples it—and discovers the notes!

The large sum frightens him—he wished it had not been so much. Had he not better put two of them back?—one of them back? But, like other thieves, William kept the whole.

The church clock struck five! William heard footsteps on the hill—directly they had passed, he determined to quit the house, and make for the suburbs.

He unbolts the front door of the "Angel and Trumpet," closes it after him, and encounters the fresh morning. He quickly ascends the steep hill, at the top of which little Joey the milkboy, who is on his way to the fields, to milk the cows, pulls off his dog-skin cap to greet him.

"Ha, Joe," said William, affecting his usual gaiety, "at work while others sleep! You will die a rich man yet."

"Don't care about that, please sir, so long as I die an honest one."

What an unexpected lash for William!

"You are right, Joe—nothing like it—honest, yes, you are right."

"Please, sir," smiled Joe, as Marshall was hurrying off—and he significantly looked the rest of what he would say.

"Well, Joe, what now?"

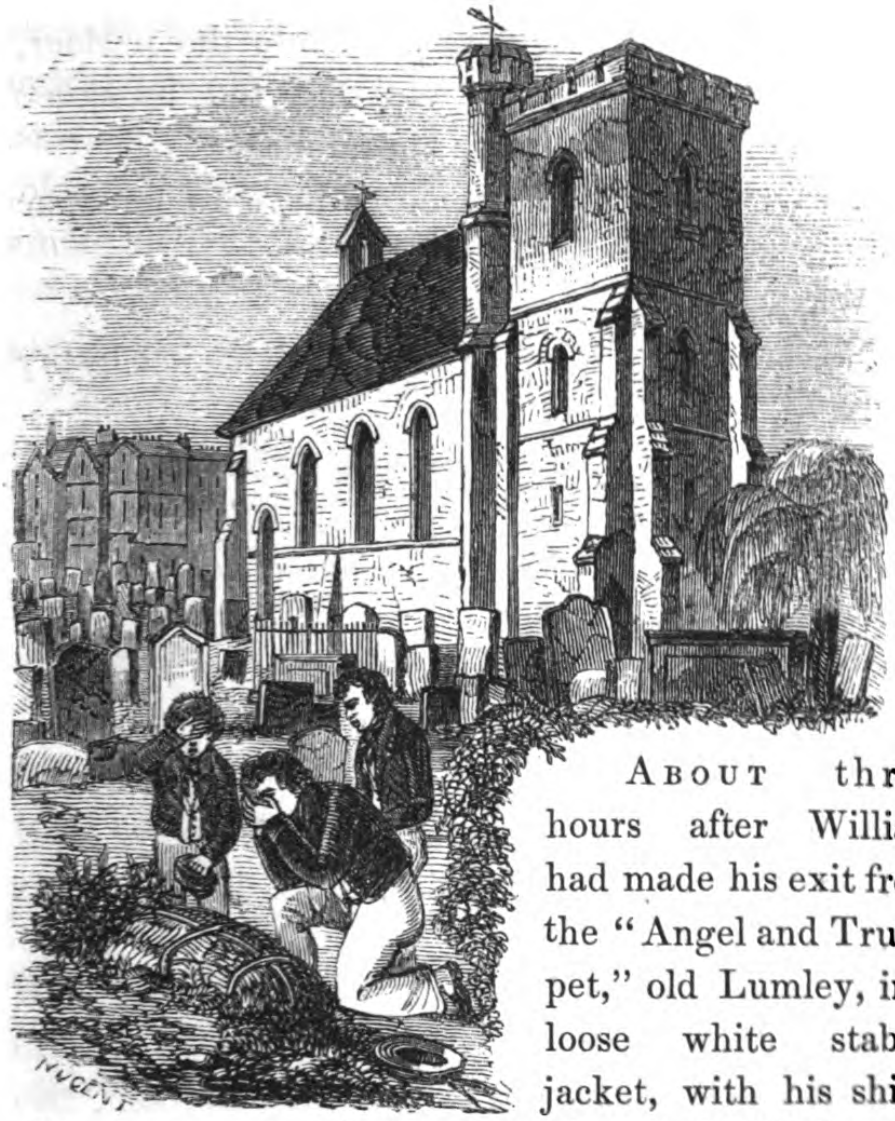
"Please, sir, doesn't you remember the last time you druv Maria out in Handiside's shay, you promised me a few ha'pence for minding the horse?"

"Very likely, Joe. I suppose a shilling will square us, eh?"

"If you please to be so liberal, sir," said Joe; and when William took a shilling from Maria's purse, and gave it to him, the milkboy could have worshipped him. But if the boy, poor as he was, had but known the history of the shilling he held, the honest youth would not have touched a penny of it.

William took the northern road, nor rested, nor slackened his pace, until far from London.

CHAPTER III.



ABOUT three hours after William had made his exit from the "Angel and Trumpet," old Lumley, in a loose white stable-jacket, with his shirt-collar open, unwashed and unshaved, hobbled down the stairs by easy stages.

"Jem," he bellowed to the potboy, as he saw him running from parlour to tap-room, "I hopes the kittle biles, for I'm precious dry."

"Near abouts, master," said Jem, rousing the large fire in the tap-room with the long poker, till he made a blaze issue from every coal under the two-gallon iron kettle.

The landlord at last descended into the parlour, and busied himself with preparing the breakfast before the ladies made their appearance.

"I say, master," said Jem, "what's to be done with the swell in the tap-room?"

"What, isn't he awake yet?"

"No, master, and he's sprawling about jist in my way."

"Take the broom, Jem, and poke him under the table."

"I've tried that afore you come down—but its no go—can't move him."

"I'll lend you a hand, Jem;" and the worthy landlord, followed by his worthy servant, led the way to the tap-room.

"Come, young genelman," cried Lumley, well shaking Wilson by his shoulder, "this is aginst the law."

The poor clerk did not dispute the point, and passively submitted to the coarse treatment of the landlord and his helper, who, one with a broom, the other with his foot, both enjoying the sport, thrust him under the table.

Rainbow Dick and the alderman's fat coachman tapped at the door, and the former gave a peculiar whistle, which was answered by Lumley, who stealthily admitted them.

"What, have you only just turned out, landlord?" said the coachman.

"I was jist a saying to my missus, I didn't see the use of turning out at all on a Sunday, for the beggars in parliament have shut up the publican's trade. I'll never wote for a Whig agin as long as I lives. Its a dead robbery upon the publicans! But we sarved 'em out for it. When they come bowing and scraping at the next giniral helection, we asked 'em 'Who spilt the landlord's Sunday trade?'"

"They couldn't very well shy out of that," said Dick.

"But the poor devils tried hard, though. They said, 'They done it for the good of the commoonity!' 'D—n the commoonity,' said the landlords, 'what have we to do with them? You've spilt our Sunday trade, and now yer may go to yer commoonity for yer wotes, for not one will you blarney us out of!' That's jist what we told 'em."

"They should have been as hard at it as me and my friend here, since five o'clock this morning," said Dick, "that would have told 'em about shutting up public-houses—what say you, coachee?"

"You are right, Dick. The alderman when he goes in state to a charity sermon is more pertikler than at any other time, and gives me more trouble than

I like. I wouldn't care if he'd pay for the help I'm obliged to get. I made bold to tell him once, that if he would go out so fine he must get more help in the stables, for I could not do it. And what d'ye think he says to me?—'Pooh, pooh! get up earlier in the mornings, and don't bother me!' Why he has more brass about his harness than any other alderman in London!"

"Jist one of those fellows, I should say," said Dick, "that wouldn't be no worse for a good ducking."

"Ugh, ugh! why I remimbers the alderman when he was a link-boy."

"And so do I, Lumley," said the coachman, drinking off his rum and milk. "Well, Dick, we shall have the beadle down on us, and the landlord fined, if we don't be off."

"Don't hurry, don't hurry, my friends. Plenty of time for another glass. The beadle and me jogs on wery well together."

"No, I shall call in when I've landed the alderman safe at church, and have a glass. Come along, Dick, and let us make a finish. Good morning, Master Lumley."

Mrs. Lumley and Maria took their seats at the breakfast table, and were immediately joined by the worthy host of the "Angel and Trumpet." A substantial breakfast it was! Eggs and bacon—tea and coffee—toast, cake, and bread and butter!

"Well, Mariar," said Lumley, with his large

mouth full of toast, "is Mr. Marshall gwang to take you out in the shay to-day?"

"He talked of it, and I daresay he will."

"Did he say anything about my two suvreigns and the score? I should hope things is right with him. Tuesday, you know, missus, he promised, for I told him the brewer was coming."

"I will be answerable for all you lose with Mr. Marshall," said Maria, rather piqued at Lumley's implied mistrust of the young gentleman.

"Oh, I'm noways afeard; I was only jist asking a civil question. That score of his must be mounting up." He rose from the table, went to the bar, and returned with a large slate, full of accounts, William's amongst the number. "Jist three pounds!" he exclaimed, after bungling over the score about twenty minutes, being double the amount that the debtor calculated on in the list of debts he pencilled down.

"He will pay all," said Maria.

"I hope so," said Lumley. "Did you ever get from him what he was, Mariar?"

"I never asked."

"Oh, I daresay you have," said Mrs. Lumley, pleasantly.

"Upon my word!" said Maria, laughing.

"He will be your second husband yet, Maria, for you seem as smitten with him as he with you."

"Take care that he is rich, Mariar," said old Lumley, in solemn fatherly tones, "and then never mind who he is, or what he is."

Little Joey the milkboy, and his dumb brother, got entrance. On Sunday mornings, after the former had served his milk, he was employed by the Lumleys to turn the spit before the fire, peel the potatoes, and help Jem to clean the pots, for which the brothers obtained a good dinner—good living being the order of the day at the "Angel and Trumpet." They had not arrived ten minutes, before a tall good-looking young man, dressed as a sailor, with a straw hat upon his head, and a large steel chain around his neck with two gold seals at the end, came impatiently knocking at the door for admittance.

Jem the potboy, thinking it could be nobody less than the beadle, on his Sunday morning rounds to the various public-houses of the district, to see that there was no trading going forward during divine service, opened the door, when the sailor rushed by him, calling out—"Where's my brother Joe? where's my brother Ned?"

He was soon with them, and oh! the affecting interview.

With a leap he crossed the long tap-room, flung his arms round the necks of the half-frightened boys, and, with dropping tears, exclaimed—

"Bless you! have you forgot your brother Ben?"

Down he sat upon the form, taking the milkboy and the tinker upon each knee, hugged them, kissed them, and raised his tearful eyes to heaven in grati-

tude for once again meeting with the brothers he had not seen for five years.

"Are you glad Ben's come, my little Britons? How have you fared? And the poor old mother?"

"Dead, Ben—mother is dead," said little Joe, drawing his fustian sleeve across his eyes.

The dumb brother made signs with his fingers to ascertain the cause of Joey's grief, and when he knew, he cast his eyes upon the floor, and the three simultaneously burst into tears.

This sad news choked the fond sailor's happiness.

"God bless her! Gone is she, Joe! There's always something in this world to capsize our happiness—some wrecking rock hidden in the calm. God bless her! Did she ever talk of Ben?"

"Every day—and every night prayed for your safe return to her and us. She was afraid you were drowned. She has left a letter for you if you should ever return."

"God bless her!" he again fervently ejaculated. "Where is the letter, Joe?"

"At home, in the large bible, Ben."

"Gone is she, Joe!"

"Six months ago the day before yesterday, she left us orphans."

"Don't cry, my boys," said the sailor, who could not control his own tears, "Ben shall be a father and a mother to you both! God bless her! I was afraid she would cast anchor afore I saw her again. D'ye

think she wanted for anything, Joe? I daresay she did."

"The twenty pounds you sent home twelve months ago, with what I and Ned could earn, just kept her above that."

"That's a comfort!" exclaimed the sailor. "Where is she buried, Joe?"

"At the church round the corner."

"It was her old complaint, I suppose, brought her to her moorings?"

"Yes, Ben, and she had a deal of pain before she died."

"Bless her! I'd have had the queen's doctors for her could I have got home in time. How did you manage about the funeral, Joe?"

"I took care the parish shouldn't bury her, so I sold off the things she left, and buried her decently."

"I love you for that, Joe!" exclaimed the affectionate sailor, hugging his brothers still closer to his bosom.

"I couldn't manage a head-stone for the grave, so I marked it with a bit of evergreen."

"She shall have a beauty, now I'm come, Joe! She has been a good mother to us, and had to weather many storms to save us from foundering. Lord love her! and now Ben's come home with lots of money to give her a lift, she's set sail for another port. I'm mate of the vessel, Joe, and doing well. The blessing of riches is to share it with those who want it. But I say, Joe, what are you and Ned

doing in a public-house on a Sunday morning?" he asked, suspiciously.

"Why, we help a little, and get our Sunday's dinner for it."

"So hard run as that, eh, Joe? You shall never want to break the Sabbath any more for a dinner, if your brother Ben can help it."

"We both goes to church at night."

"That's right, Joe; we mustn't forget God, then He won't forget us. Mother used to tell you that, my boy, didn't she?"

"It was about her last words to us, Ben."

"Ah! I thought as much. Come and show me her grave, Joe—I long to see it."

The sailor, with a brother in each brown hand, was soon in the dismal churchyard, and after tripping over many a last resting-place, Joe pointed to the evergreen. This was the signal for a renewal of the sailor's grief. He flung his hat from his head in honour to her beneath, knelt in the coarse soil by the grave, bowed his manly head, and wept audibly. Not a word upon the ground the brothers spoke. Their sorrow was too deep for utterance.

The tears of the sons, what a touching epitaph to the virtues of the mother!

After many a lingering look upon the spot, the sailor took his brothers by the hand, and quitted the ground. Before he went abroad again, he erected an expensive head-stone to his mother's memory, and on the day it adorned her grave, he

bought himself and brothers suits of deepest mourning, the sad colour of which was *truly* an index of their regret.

Ben was mate of a merchantman, and he trained his brothers to his own pursuit; and the three now plough the deep in the same vessel—a pattern to sailors for skill and temperance—to sons, for filial love.

The beadle and a churchwarden demanded entrance at the "Angel and Trumpet," and they were admitted by Lumley himself, and conducted by him over the house, to see there was no profanation of the Sabbath going forward. After politely bowing to the ladies, whom the parish authorities glanced upon in passing the breakfast-table, they entered the tap-room, and the keen eyes of the beadle, attracted thither by the snoring clerk, fell upon Wilson under the table, and he significantly called Lumley's attention to the same.

The landlord feigned surprise.

"How is this, Mr. Lumley?" asked the churchwarden, scrutinising the drunken man with a gold eye-glass.

"Its a miracle and a wonder to me!" said the innocent landlord. "Jem!" he called; and when the potboy came, with a wink he asked him if he knew anything about it.

"Never seed him afore, sir," said Jem, with the same lying readiness as his master.

The truth was, the avaricious landlord had tole-

rated the clerk in his house all night and morning, in the hope that when he recovered he would spend more money with him. Had he known all the money was gone, the clerk would have been carefully put outside the door, drunk or sober, storm or sunshine, rather than he would have risked the terrors of the law when all chance was gone of a remuneration for his hazard.

"You ought not to allow your customers to go such lengths as this," said the churchwarden.

"Can't make it out, no how," persisted Lumley.

"Get him up, beadle, and send him home," said the churchwarden.

Lumley, the beadle, and the potboy got the clerk upon his staggering legs.

"Who *are* you?" asked the churchwarden, frowningly.

"A gen-tle-m-man," stammered Wilson. "Who are *you*, my co-vey?"

"No impidence!" exclaimed Lumley.

"Do you know it is the Sabbath day, sir?" said the indignant churchwarden.

"I'll r-r-row"—

"Silence, sir!" exclaimed the beadle, "or I will lodge you in the Compter."

"Hic-cup! hic-cup! Beadle, my boy"—

"Where do you live, sir?" asked the churchwarden.

"In the m-mid-dle of the Thames."

"Don't be impident!" said old Lumley.

"Hic-cup! Ma-ria! Tom-kins!" Wilson called through the house, to the great amusement of the ladies, whose smothered tittering was distinctly heard.

"Get a policeman," said the churchwarden to the potboy.

"Get your g-gr-rand-mother! Hic-cup!"

"Don't be impident!" cried Lumley.

"Do you see this?" cried the beadle, bringing his long staff more into prominence.

"Ma-ria! beadle, go fetch her. He, he!—ha, ha, ha! Beadle—hic-cup!—beadle"—

"Come here!" exclaimed the man whom the clerk so ludicrously called upon, seizing him by the collar of his coat.

"Let him alone, beadle," said the churchwarden; "the policeman will be here directly, and shall take the young man"—

"I'm a r-r-re-spec-spectable man. I can show some ten-p-pound notes, old b-b-beadle."

"Ten-pound notes!" thought Lumley to himself. "He should have had another bottle had I known that. Don't you think," he whispered to the churchwarden, "now he *is* here, we had better put him up-stairs to bed, for thieves will git hold on him if we lits him out of the house, and it may be the ruin of the young genelman."

The churchwarden was obdurate, and would not listen to Lumley's humanity.

"Oh, jist as you please, sir," said the landlord, with a bow.

Wilson fumbled in his pockets for the notes, but without success.

"I have been robbed!" he exclaimed.

"What of?" asked the churchwarden.

"You have robbed me!"—and he suddenly sprang upon the church dignitary, and grasped him by his starched neckcloth, and told the beadle to get a policeman!

Lumley's mercy fled on seeing the clerk's empty pockets, and he struck him from his hold on the churchwarden.

"You should not have been so violent, Mr. Lumley," said the gentleman, adjusting his neckcloth.

"I was afeard he was a hurting you, sir. And he pulled my temper up, when he said he'd been robbed in my house. As if any but highly respectable people came to the 'Angel and Trumpet.' Sich language is calkilated to do me a hingery."

"My dear sir, you should consider the state of the man before you take offence at his words. He is virtually insane."

"I'll be bound, he knows a suvreign from a shilling, hinsane as he is."

"Assist him up, beadle."

The beadle did so, and as soon as he regained his footing he laid hold of the landlord, exclaiming—

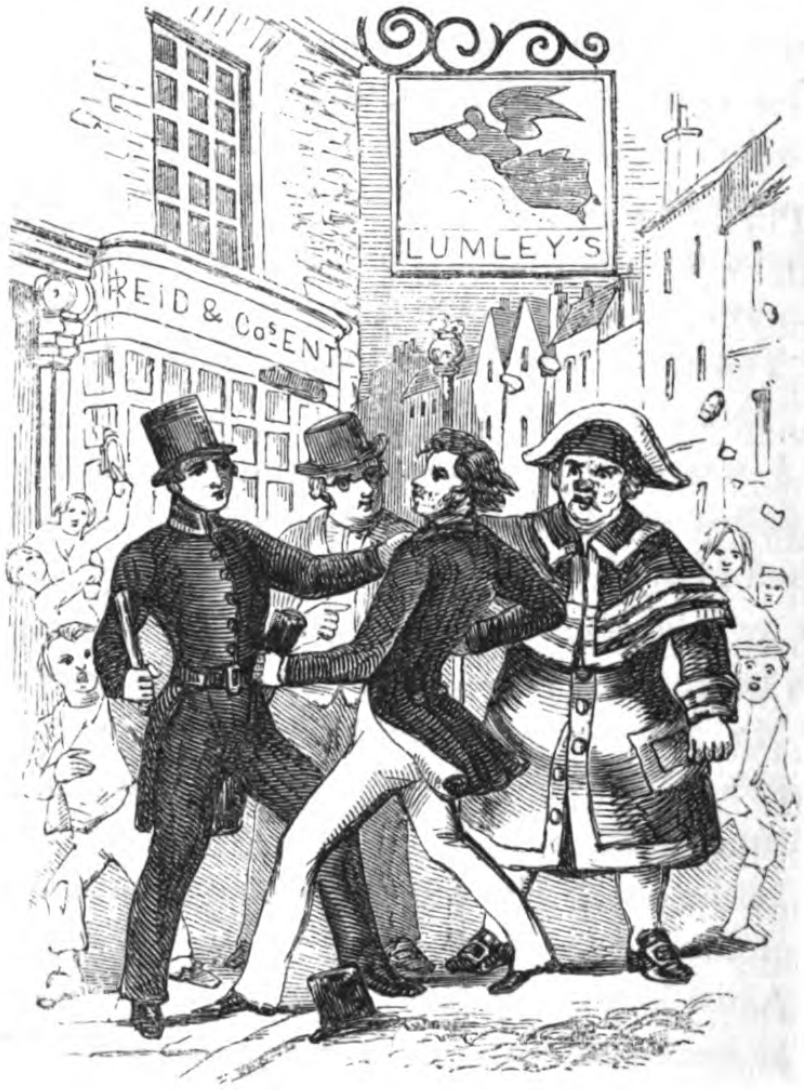
"You have robbed me, you villain!"

The beadle interfered, and Wilson then clutched *him* as the thief, and they both rolled on the floor.

The policeman came in, pulled the clerk up, and

dragged him from the corrupt house to the corrupt hill, where he was assailed by dirty yelling children.

"You have r-robbed me!" exclaimed the clerk, scuffling with the policeman, who, with his trun-



cheon, struck Wilson across the wrist, and then led him towards the City prison.

CHAPTER IV.

POLICEMEN and landlords generally live in unity with one another; and old Lumley knew well enough—no man better—the way to deal with the heart of a policeman; and as he did not care about having the respectable doings of his house made the subject of litigation before worthy magistrates at Guildhall (which would certainly have been the case had Wilson been taken to prison)—directly the churchwarden and beadle had travelled out of sight, he travelled after the man who had charge of the refractory clerk, and soon met with him.

He gave the policeman a very significant wink with his left eye, and a fawning smile with his large mouth; but more potent far than either, slipped a shilling into his hand, and told him to give "a look in when he was off duty, and take a little rum;" then nudged his elbow, which the acute constable unmistakeably construed.

Through the kind interposition of landlord Lumley, the clerk was saved from a night's lodgings in a prison, and the more unpleasant ordeal of being catechised by a magistrate in a public court, fined,

and the chance of having his disgrace reported in the newspapers. Yes, the policeman understood the knowing nudge of the landlord, and when the ready shilling was dropped into his hand, coupled with promised libations of rum at the festive board of that "right merrie house," the "Angel and Trumpet," then, oh! then, the heart of the constable melted into compassion for the poor clerk, and he released his grasp from his coat, in a friendly manner protected him through Smithfield, and coaxingly told him "to be advised, and make the best of his way home, and sleep it off."

The clerk staggered on toward his lodgings in ancient Islington, without heeding the impertinent remarks of little boys on his most ludicrous person, or observing the scornful looks cast upon him by the pious as they wended their way to church. Now he reels up against a newly whitewashed wall of a brewhouse, and while reposing against the wall, he made another search in his pockets for the three ten-pound notes William Marshall had taken from him. Vain was the search! and he renewed his scrambling journey homewards.

After many efforts to walk straight, and reeling in and out like the twistings of a serpent, he reached a neat little house, and commenced a loud attack on the door with the little round black knocker, surmounted by a lion's head—a dash of aristocracy that may frequently be observed on the knockers attached to humble dwellings.

"Goodness gracious! Mr. Wilson, is that you?" exclaimed Wilson's landlady—whose beauty, if she

ever had been beautiful, had fled with her youth. But she was the pink of cleanliness, and a glad smile

at the return of her lodger beamed through her surprise at the extraordinary plight he had returned in.

"And don't you think I look fresh?" said the clerk, almost falling in on the good lady, when unfortunately his foot came in contact with the dear creature's corn, which made her screw up her face in agony, and scream so loudly that her children came rushing from different parts of the house in a high state of alarm.

"Mrs. Sinnerton, I'm a gen-gentleman, and I beg your pardon for the damage done. I'm fresh and merry, mer-r-y and fresh. Is the tea ready? How much do I owe you, Mrs. Sinnerton?"

"Only one week, Mr. Wilson."

"Then that's a week more than I mean to pay you—ha! ha! ha!—hic-cup!—I love a joke!"

"Oh, I'll trust you for more than that, Mr. Wilson. Come in the parlour, we are just going to have a cup of tea."

"'Lead on, I'll follow,' as the Ghost said to Hamlet—hic-cup! Can anything in the wide world be nicer!" he exclaimed, on entering his landlady's neatly-furnished parlour. "This is just what I like above all the world to see—a blazing fire in the grate—a plate of muffins toasting in the front, hic-cup!—a jolly bright kettle singing on the hob, hic-cup!—cups and saucers in rank and file, like a regiment of soldiers, with a big bellied teapot full of gunpowder standing in the midst thereof, hic-cup!—and a lady, clean as a new-plucked lily, waiting to

do the honours of the table! No, I swear, Mrs. Sinnerton, I have travelled half over the world since I saw you—hic-cup!—and I have not seen a place I would barter this snug harbour for, nor have I seen a lady—hic-cup!—I would give Mrs. Sinnerton for. Ma-ria a very pretty girl though—yes, that's quite right, Ma-ria! If I were to describe Maria to you—hic-cup!—you would go mad with envy! Hair and eyes as black as a coal—and both so bright!—teeth—hic-cup!—never saw such teeth before! and a face—oh, Mrs. Sinnerton!" and in his ecstatic admiration of the young widow, he crossed his hands on his breast.

"I should like to see this beauty," said the good-tempered landlady, excusing much of her lodger's talk in her delight at his return.

"The best of it is she has fallen in love with me," said the clerk, throwing himself in an elbow chair opposite his landlady, with his battered gossamer cocked on one side his head, and his legs stretched out at length on a hearth-rug marked with a basket of bright flowers. "I'll take another muffin, Mrs. Sinnerton, and you can put it down to the account."

"Oh, we shall make no memorandum of this," said Mrs. Sinnerton.

"Then I'll take another cup of tea on the same terms—ha! ha! ha!—hic-cup!"

"So you shall, Mr. Wilson, and I hope it will do you good."

"Its a good old English tea, I call this, Mrs. Sinnerton; and I will buy you a new cap—something spicy."

"You are very kind, Mr. Wilson—do take another cup of tea."

"I will, Mrs. Sinnerton, and another muffin to relish it—hic-cup! Did you ever see me so merry before?" (Nor so dirty either, Mrs. Sinnerton could not help thinking.) "Where is Bill Brown gone?"

"Mr. Brown is gone to church, sir," replied the landlady.

"I'll bet a guinea he don't come home so merry as me! What's the good of going to church—hic-cup!—if you don't come home merry?"

"Mr. Brown is very particular about his church," said the landlady.

"He wouldn't be if he were to see that bewitching Maria—except she went with him."

"Is she prettier than Miss Millington?—because I think *her* a very pretty girl."

"Why, if she is not, then I'm no judge—that's all. Jane Millington mustn't be named the same day with Maria."

"Mr. Millington called about dinner-time to know the reason you never met him this morning at Lambeth Palace, to row him to Richmond."

"Eh! what, Mrs. Sinnerton! Row old Millington to Richmond! Catch a weasel asleep!—Row old Millington to Richmond! not while I can

spend a merry day with Maria. Would you, Mrs. Sinnerton, spoil a day with a rough-headed old carpenter, if you could have sported your figure instead with a young gentleman like myself? Come, that's putting the question to yourself."

"I always let the heart guide me in the choice of companions, and not the eye."

"Bravo! bravo! good sentiment!—hic-cup!"

"It was always mine," said the complacent landlady, cup in hand, "and I hope it ever may be. It was with my heart, and not my eye, I used to dwell on dear Mr. Sinnerton."

"He was a trump of a fellow, wasn't he?"

"He was a good man, Mr. Wilson."

"Is that a good likeness of him?—hic-cup!" asked the clerk, looking up to an oil-painting of a young mechanic in his Sunday clothes.

"Yes, it is, Mr. Wilson. He had it done a week before we were married, and made me a present of it—and next to my children, I now value it. Poor Sinnerton!" gazing on the picture with painful remembrance.

"Was he mer-r-ry?"

"Never sad, Mr. Wilson; though he had to work hard from the day we were married to the day he fell off a scaffolding and killed himself. Poor Sinnerton!—we wanted for nothing while he lived, and he always paid up his club, that we might have a few pounds when he was taken from us. Ah! me."

"Don't be downhearted, Mrs. Sinnerton; but

take another cup of tea, and hand me a muffin. Nothing like being merry!"

Mrs. Sinnerton secretly wished the clerk would find some less expensive article than buttered muffins to vent his merriment upon, and tried the effect of a gentle hint upon Wilson, which was, as she handed the plate to him—

"I expect that Mr. Brown will return to tea—he said as much."

"The more the merrier!" exclaimed Wilson, which was all the notice he took of the hint to spare the muffins.

One of the little Sinnertons—a clean little girl about fourteen, who had the especial care of Mr. Wilson's Wellingtons of a morning, opened the parlour door, and wanted to know if "mother would let them have their tea now."

"Oh, you bad-behaved girl, Susan!" exclaimed Mrs. Sinnerton. "One would really think you had had no dinner, to see you so impatient for your tea. Shut the door this instant, Miss, and come again when you are called."

"Here, my little bottle of Day and Martin," said the facetious clerk (which he thought was a witty name for Susan, because she was boot-cleaner to her mother's lodgers)—"here, I say"—pulling half a muffin in two parts with his fingers, and holding one part out to the little girl—"here's a treat for you!"

Little Susan made a movement towards the

muffin, but her eye falling on her mother, she read in her face decided disapprobation of her taking it, and so she retreated from the room with a—"No, thank you, Mr. Wilson."

"Susan is as shy as a fish," said the clerk.

"Bold as a lion, I'm a-thinking, Mr. Wilson. But she can be a well-behaved girl when she likes."

One sober knock was heard at the street-door, which Susan answered, and admitted "Bill Brown," Mr. Wilson's fellow-lodger. Mr. Brown was a Wesleyan in religion, and he yielded to none of that large body of Christians in piety, but he was far more tolerant of the evil he met in the world than most of them. By trade he was a saddler, and by his strict economy had contrived to save about seventy pounds since he had completed his apprenticeship. Yet did he always live and attire himself respectably, but superfluities he would not indulge in. If he was extravagant in anything, it was in books. We could have been certain Mr. Brown was a good and an enlightened man, had we seen nothing else but his well-chosen library. Two or three of the fine fictions of Scott graced the shelves—rare works to find in the library of the narrow-minded Methodist. And Brown himself has often been censured, and his religion doubted, by his brethren, for permitting the heaven-born emanations of the Wizard to mingle in his book-shelves. To such his reply ever was, "I prize all works that help to exalt my character. The writings of him you now condemn have done

so, and that materially. Those books were my stepping-stones to religion, for from them I imbibed a love of reading—from reading I became enlightened—and my enlightenment taught me that all was vanity but religion."

With a neat silk umbrella in his hand, a little flower in his olive coat with a black velvet collar, a white neck-tie, and a plainly bound Bible under his arm, he entered Mrs. Sinnerton's parlour, and his truly cheerful face became full of wonder and astonishment at the "mer-r-ry" condition of his friend Wilson.

"Bill Brown," said the clerk, holding out his hand, and making an effort to rise from his chair, "all the muffins are gone—hic-cup!"

"That is no grief to me, Mr. Wilson," said Brown. "But to see you thus is."

"Don't you like to see me merry?"

"Not if it is incompatible with soberness," rejoined Brown.

"I have only had a bottle or two with Ma-ria."

"Words would be wasted just now, Robert, but in the morning I shall not bury my respect for you under a bushel, but will show that I have a true friendship for you, by pointing out to the best of my ability the path to shun, and the path to walk in."

"That's right, my covey! Mrs. Sinnerton, be sure you come to hear Bill Brown's sermon—hic-cup! Let it be something spicy."

"This is the first time I have seen you in this degraded state, Robert; but I have often told you where your Sabbath-breaking habits would end."

"Mrs. Sinnerton," said the clerk, holding out his cup and saucer, "fill it again."

Another humble knock at the door!

"Depend upon it that is the father of the person you are engaged to, Robert; for if you remember, Mrs. Sinnerton, he said he would call again."

"Ay, to be sure, so he did, Mr. Brown. I think we had better say Mr. Wilson is not at home."

"No, no, no," said Mr. Brown, "for that would not be true. I am quite as anxious as you, Mrs. Sinnerton, to screen Robert from the eyes of his intended father-in-law in his present lost condition, but if that cannot be done without violating sacred truth, why for me Robert's indiscretion must be exposed to Mr. Millington. But that might be prevented by his going to bed."

"So it might, Mr. Brown," said the landlady. "Oh dear, yes, I quite agree with you that truth is best at all times."

"Now, Robert," said Mr. Brown, "let me persuade you to go to bed. Consider how it would alarm and grieve her you intend making your wife, to hear of you in this state."

"I'll not budge an inch for all the Millingtons in the world. I'm too comfortable, Billy, boy! Tea, muffins, and Mrs. Sinnerton!—hic-cup!"

"Come, now, and I will assist you up-stairs."

"Decidedly no. I'm too comfortable. Tea, muffins, and Mrs. Sinnerton!"

After patiently waiting some time at the door, Millington ventured another lowly knock, and Susan announced him by name in the parlour.

"Tell old hammer and nails to come in!" bawled the clerk, quite loud enough for the poor carpenter to hear.

Jane Millington's father was a tall man with a short neck, so that his large bald head, with long thin grey hair which grew on each side of it, seemed to be supported on his breast. He was not an intelligent man, but a man full of good feelings. His daughter was the only gold he worshipped—and her he *did* worship. Jane was left to his sole paternal care when only twelve months old, and her father was determined she should not experience the curse which his parents had left him to battle with—the want of education; so as soon as little Jane could lisp, to school she was sent. In her school days trade flourished with her father, and he enjoyed the means of being able to be liberal to his "lamb" as he called her—and he *was* liberal to her. Yes, until seventeen (during which period she had fortunately acquired the art of a clever milliner, or now she and her father might have been starving outcasts "on the world's wide stage"), Jane continued to share her father's prosperity, when, through becoming bond for another, her father was ruined; and he who brought him so very low as to live upon the

hard labour of his child, now, through a flash of fortune, revels in affluence—but knows not honest John Millington, or his pretty Jane.

The morning of this Sabbath day was the one Jane had appointed with her inconstant lover to meet her father at Lambeth Palace, and for the occasion she had done all in her power to make the old man's habiliments look as respectable as she could. His blue coat, with large brass buttons, had seen too many Sabbaths to look "spicy," as Wilson would say, and there were two evidences on the sleeves of Jane's skill with the needle; yet all that clothes-brush and darning could do to improve it had been done: it was full large for the carpenter, and a sadness came over Jane as she inspected it on his back, and gave it an extra touch or two with the brush, for she rememembered the time when it fitted him tightly. Inwardly she reflected to herself—"Ah, poor father, this old coat tells dismal tales of the havoc trouble and age are making on your health." Jane then came round to beautify the bow in which he had tied his blue cotton handkerchief, and while doing so she gave the old man a tender kiss. As with the coat, so also with the black-striped yellow vest—it sat loosely on him. His drab trousers were well worn at the knees, and were too short—which latter circumstance was not at all to be regretted, for it disclosed a new pair of white stockings which Jane had bought for him, and the neat bow with new broad riband she had adorned his decent

shoes with. His old hat was very mean, and turned up behind, and the over-curious eye might discern more of Jane's handiwork with needle and thread round the rim.

"I have no gloves for you, father," said Jane, with regret.

"Never mind, child," said her father. "I am sure you have trimmed me off very comfortably."

"But a pair of gloves upon your hands would much improve your appearance. I fear you could not get a pair of mine on."

"I daresay Mr. Robert will excuse it, Jane, for he knows we are poor. Things can't be worse—that's one comfort."

"But they shall be better yet, if I can make them so. Cheer up, father. I am haunted with the fancy that we shall yet see better days; and if I am disappointed, why we will not mourn about it."

"But it breaks my heart to know you toiling so hard to support me."

"But is it not right that I should do so? Then if it is, father, why break your heart because your daughter cheerfully does her duty? Come, come, I have much work to do to-day, and if you part from me in such low spirits, you will much unfit me for the task. I tell you the sun will shine yet; clouds will not for ever darken our prospects more than the rest of mankind. Why should they, father?"

"Honest people fare the worst."

"Oh no, father, I will not believe so: it is the gloomy doctrine of despairing men."

"Well, I daresay you are right, Jane. But it is hard to be so broken down as this, when the other day, as 't were, every Saturday night I paid twenty men their wages."

"I know you did. But where is the sense, father, of tormenting yourself with the past?"

"No, no, you are right, Jane. But I did use to cut up an amazing deal of timber!"

"So you did; but your fortune is reversed, and let me see you bear it like a man."

"Oh, I know, yes, to be sure, that's the best way. But it was all through serving a friend!"

"His present ungrateful conduct proves he never was a friend. But he has done his worst, and we will try to bear the effects of his doings cheerfully. I must go now—and so must you, father, for Robert will sure to be at the Palace by seven. Give my love to him, and tell him how disappointed I am that I could not come with you."

"Perhaps, now," said the carpenter, with a rusty gingham umbrella under his arm, "perhaps now, he won't like to go with me."

"What for, father?"

"See how well he dresses!"

"Why, surely, father, you do not think Robert is too proud to spend a day with you! Too proud to go with *my* father!—you forget him."

She never knew him.

"Don't be so warm, my dear. I said no harm of Mr. Robert. I am sure he is a very kind young gentleman."

"*We* ought to think so, father, though all the world thought differently; for was it not through him that you were released from a horrid debtor's prison? It shall never be forgotten by me, let who will forget it."

Grateful girl! thou wouldst have graced a higher destiny.

The shrill chiming of a church clock hurried the pair on their different roads, and, with a kiss, reluctantly they parted—Jane happy in the belief that her father and lover would spend a happy day together.

With the old umbrella under his arm, and the cold wind that had just risen blowing the skirts of his coat in all directions, and playing ludicrous pranks with the broad, limp brim of his hat, he arrived at Lambeth Palace on the stroke of the appointed hour. Every minute he expected to see the polished figure of Mr. Robert, and strained his eyes hither and thither; then he leant over a large wooden rail, and wondered what could have become of him! Then he beguiled the weary time with looking at the numerous pleasure boats that floated about on the disturbed river, as if eager to slip from their moorings. Now he is attracted from the boats, by the approach of a gay party of lads and lasses who here take water for Richmond. The youths are send-

ing volumes of blue smoke from their cigars to mingle with the bluer sky above, and gallantly cheering their timid sweethearts to brave the dangers of the mighty deep. The girls—each with a neat basket of provisions on one arm, the other encircling that of her young cavalier—are tittering at their own fears of venturing on the water in such a frightfully small boat as that which a waterman is preparing for their reception.

"Boat all right, yer honours!" bawled the waterman. Dreadful announcement for the fair of the party!

The boat was pushed off, and John Millington in his heart wished them a happy day and a safe return, for he took a peculiar interest in the enjoyments of the young.

Other pleasure-boats began taking in their cargoes of pleasure parties—other steamers flew by with their gay throngs and merry music; but the carpenter's interest began to flag—for where was Robert Wilson? He looked up to the dial of the ancient palace behind him, and lo! it was half-past eight. His arm was cramped with holding his umbrella so long, and his feet felt cold, for the damp had penetrated through his shoes. His hands, too, were cold, and he rested his umbrella on the ground while he rubbed them one against the other. Then he walked briskly to and fro by the long wooden rail on which he had been leaning, to impart warmth to his feet, and as he did so, he wondered and wondered

what had become of the clerk! He was the more concerned and alarmed at his absence, because he saw daily evidences of Jane's growing love for him. He shrunk with dread at the bare idea of her hopes being blighted.

"There goes nine!" he muttered. "Well, well, it is uncommon strange! I wish Jane had not asked for me to go. Depend upon it I haven't got trim enough for Mr. Robert. I had once though—but I won't think of that now. He is always very free and gentlemanly when I meet him, so I shouldn't think he could be proud enough to shun me now. But I don't know what to think—there goes another quarter! Its such a way to his lodgings; but never mind that—there I'll go, and see what's the matter."

Mrs. Sinnerton knew nothing about the clerk, only that he had not been home all night, and this had never happened before.

"Uncommon strange, isn't it, ma'am? He is courting my daughter, and it was agreed between them that we should go to Richmond to-day."

"Oh, indeed, sir," said Mrs. Sinnerton; "so you are the father of Miss Millington. I know her very well, and often say to Mr. Wilson what a nice young person she is."

"I have no fault to find with Jane; and the man who marries her will never regret it. I know she's been a good daughter, ma'am, if that says anything for making a good wife."

"I think it says everything, Mr. Millington. Is she your only one, sir?"

"Yes, poor thing!" sighed the carpenter.

"Ah, you are more fortunate than me, for my poor husband left me with five when I was little more than a child myself."

"Heaven send they may be a comfort to you, as mine has been to me."

"But so many children for a lone woman to bring up is a heavy trial."

"I can feel for you, ma'am, for I have known better times too. You may judge so, when I tell you that I have had as many as twenty men to pay on a Saturday. And the timber I used to cut up was amazing!"

"Yes, sir, I have heard your daughter say you had been better off. It is a chequered world, depend upon that, Mr. Millington; and, as poor Sinnerton used to say, 'we know what we are, but we don't know what we shall be.'"

"Very true, ma'am," said the carpenter. "I'm sure I never dreamt of such a break down as this two years back, when I actually had money in the bank. And this is all through doing a good action," he added, confidentially.

"Very galling, very galling indeed," sympathised widow Sinnerton.

"Worse than that," said the carpenter, in the same under tones as before, "much worse than that, ma'am—the person I served, and whose failure was

my ruin, is actually now well off—quite rich—and has not so much as offered me sixpence in my troubles. Well, never mind," continued honest John, "it can't be helped. But isn't it really enough to make one declare he will never do a good action again?"

"Yes, it is, sir; and honest people can get no help through there being so many deceivers in the world. Would you like to walk in, and sit down a bit—Mr. Wilson may be in directly; there's no knowing. I'm sure I was quite surprised when I went up to make his bed this morning, to find he had not been in, for he's a very steady lodger."

"I'm very glad to hear such a good account of Mr. Robert, for I know my child loves him."

"Well, for myself, I think Mr. Wilson is everything a woman could wish. He certainly is particular about his shirts and his boots, but its very seldom he has occasion to find fault, for I take a deal of pains with them."

"I was afraid, you know, he didn't like to go with me, and so was stopping at home."

"Why, he is fond of dress," said Mrs. Sinnerton, looking on the old man's hat.

"But not of mine, I should say, ma'am," rejoined the carpenter, with a smiling face, but a grieving heart.

"Why, dress is everything with some people," said Mrs. Sinnerton. "And its all very well, if fine clothes didn't make people proud, and look down

upon those who hadn't the luck to get them. To my thinking, pride spoils fine clothes. I don't like to see the face change with the clothes—nor the heart fluctuate with the purse. As poor Sinnerton used to say—'Let us be the same to one another, blow hot, blow cold.'"

"That's very good, ma'am. Now I wonder if Mr. Robert has been detained at his office. That never struck me before."

"It might be so—but I hardly think it likely."

"I'll go and see—although I feel very tired."

The old man limped off, and reached Wilson's office—tried the door—but no, no, he was not there: all was still, so still that quite a gloom was imparted to the little yellow court. Nothing could be heard but the clanking of the irons of the old man's shoes on the pavement. There were many houses in the court too—houses so high that it made one wonder they did not topple down on gusty nights and bury their inhabitants—but every person appeared to have deserted the place to roam in fairer scenes. The carpenter grew misanthropical, and longed for his daughter. He felt as if he were the only person in the world, nor could he get rid of the lonely idea. Clank! clank! did the heels of his shoes salute the pavement—clank! clank! did the echo answer—as he traversed out of the dreary court to go—he knew not whither. As if by instinct, he found himself at the door of his lodgings—two dark rooms over a little tobacconist's in a narrow turning in

Holborn. The light of the place was not there. It was hard he could not have his darling with him one day in the week—on a Sunday too! Well, there was no help for it.

His bare hat was laid on the table—so was his umbrella—and there also stood in a broken plate the latter end of a loaf. The table, which was indebted to many a hidden nail for support in its infirm state, stood in the middle of the room, and we will take a wooden chair and sit with the old man while we make an inventory of all he has. There is the cupboard open before us, which contains odd cups and saucers of all colours, plates ditto, and a brown baking-dish, relieved with white zig-zag lines; a metal tea-pot stood in the middle of the shelf, and with its significant spout, and shining corpulent body, looked as if surprised to find its mighty self amongst such a lot of odds and ends. The contents of the second shelf will not take long to catalogue—it was the shelf appropriated to the eatables; and when the carpenter took the loaf therefrom, all that remained was a little butter in a deep saucer. Shelf the third supported sundries—empty physic bottles, a very old bonnet of Jane's, and a corkscrew—ha! ha! the carpenter had no use for it now, so it was thrown with the lumber. The bottom of the cupboard held the coals. The high mantel-shelf was graced with an inferior print of the Redeemer having a crown of thorns upon his head, in a black oaken frame, and a cracked glass; by its side was the

Lord's Prayer, beautifully worked by Jane in silk—a relic of her school days—and stretched and framed by her father; at one end lay a short portion of a cigar that had been left there by "Mr. Robert" when last he honoured this humble abode. The fireplace was protected by a green wire fender, with brass legs and bindings. The carpenter's tent-bedstead was placed opposite the fireplace, and in a corner, close by, his basket of tools lay—almost as useless to him as the corkscrew, for he was too infirm for much work, and little jobs on his own account he could seldom attend to, for want of the means to buy the material. A tall chest of drawers—containing nothing—with two antique brass handles to each drawer, stood against the wall which divided Jane's bed-room from the sitting-room. The afternoon sun poured through the window, and did a little cheer the old man in his miserable moodiness—but he wanted somebody to talk with—he wanted his daughter or "Mr. Robert."

What a pity the carpenter had not a taste for reading! But then there was not a book in the place—no, they were in the custody of the pawnbroker; even the "big ha' Bible," was imprisoned for the sum of ten shillings. Jane was a reader, and often found solace in her books. But the want of more immediate necessaries made it imperative that they should for the present be parted with. Neither did the old man take any pleasure in a pipe, but there he sat by the table, miserably dwelling on the days that were gone.

He could sit like this no longer, so he took his hat and umbrella, locked the door of his room, travelled into the streets, and sauntered in the direction of Islington, in the hope of meeting Mr. Robert. He again arrived at Mrs. Sinnerton's, but it was some minutes before be could bring himself to trouble them by knocking. But his anxiety to see Mr. Robert overcame his reluctance, and he gave a timid knock—so timid that it was not heard by the "little bottle of Day and Martin" in the kitchen. He waited some time before he ventured another knock; this the little boot-cleaner heard—and, hurrah! she cheered the heart of the carpenter by ushering him into the presence of "Mr. Robert."

"Well, Doctor Sawdust," said the clerk to the astonished visitor; but he was too glad to find him at home, to take offence easily, and pleasantly replied—

"Anything you like, Mr. Robert."

"Then I'll take some brandy and water—hic-cup!"

"Ho! ho!" laughed the carpenter, "I meant anything you pleased to call me, Mr. Robert, for I don't know that it matters much what we are called."

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted the clerk, "I like good sentiment!—hic-cup!"

Mr. Brown politely rose, and placed a chair for the carpenter between himself and Mrs. Sinnerton, and the hostess pressed her lodger's friend to take tea.

"If I had known you had been going to return,

sir, we would have waited for you," said Mrs. Sinnerton; "but I am afraid now you will find the tea cold, so I will make some fresh, *if you like.*"

"By no manner of means, thank'ee, ma'am."

"But I say yes," said Wilson, "we will have some fresh, Mrs. Sinnerton, and I will pay all expenses."

"Ah! its very easy for young men without incumbrance to talk of expenses, aint it, Mr. Millington?"

"Very true, ma'am," said the carpenter, who began to suspect Mr. Robert had been in bad company, and thought of his daughter—thought what she would suffer were such a thing intimated to her. Mr. Brown, perceiving that the feelings of the old man were hurt, kindly tried to excuse his friend.

"I have lodged with Robert many years, and I will say, I never saw him in this state before."

"That's more than you can say of many young men," said the carpenter.

"'We'll make the boatie r-row!'" sang the clerk, swinging his arms about, to the endangerment of Mrs. Sinnerton's best china—ha! there goes a saucer—smash!

This accident brought out a little of the widow's temper, and she said, picking up the sherds from the carpet—

"Really, Mr. Wilson, you will be much better in bed. You have spoilt the whole set."

"Accidents will happen in the best regulated families, won't they, Mrs. Sin-nerton?"

"Ah, but you should consider, sir," said the landlady, gathering the tea-things together in the tray, to take into the kitchen, "that I shall never be able to get another."

"Don't cry about it, Mrs. Sinnerton—it was only an accident. There are worse misfortunes at sea —hic-cup! I'll marry you, my love, then I shall have you and the china too—ha! ha! I love a joke."

"You would find it above a joke, I should say, to have me and my five children to keep," said the landlady, with the tray in her hand ready to depart below, to feed her hungry family. Mr. Brown opened the door for her.

"She's an excellent woman, don't you think so, Bill? We'll buy her a new cap and bonnet, if you like—something spicy!"

"The less you say, Robert, the less you will commit yourself," said Mr. Brown.

"That's as much as to say I'm a fool!" exclaimed the clerk, staggering to his feet, and supporting himself by the table; "and do you know, Bill, I'd sooner knock a man down for that than anything—hic-cup!" He threw himself into a boxing attitude. "I say you have insulted a gen-gentleman, and I'll have satisfaction!"

"You shall to-morrow, Robert," pleasantly said Mr. Brown.

"That will do," said the clerk, attempting a bow, "for I know you are a gentleman of your word,

Bill. I make it a point never to pass an affront from any man, for if you give people an ell they take an inch—haven't you found it so, Mr. Millington?"

The clerk's blundering would have infinitely amused any other audience than the one he had—but the carpenter was too much astonished at the condition of the clerk, and too much feared for his daughter's happiness, to be amused; and the Methodist looked upon Robert with too friendly an eye for mirth at the degrading exhibition he was making of himself.

The carpenter too was much hurt that he had never once asked after Jane, and mortified with the fear that he had no love for her. When the clerk had staggered back to his chair, seemingly on excellent terms with himself, for having, in a brave and "gentlemanly" manner, disposed of the affront he fancied Mr. Brown had given him, the carpenter ventured to say—

"I suppose, Mr. Robert, you have been better engaged than in taking me to Richmond?"

"Ra-ther, I should say, my friend."

"Ho! ho! that's plain," laughed the carpenter; but laughter was quite at variance with his acute feelings.

How mortifying! The poor old man could have crept into a nutshell. His prominent cheek-bones reddened, and his small grey eyes turned pleasantly upon Mr. Brown, in hopes that he would say some-

thing which would soothe the rebuff he had received.

"Don't feel hurt, sir," said Mr. Brown aside to the carpenter—"he knows not what he says."

The clerk gave indications of sleep, for he threw his head on the back of his chair, and breathed thickly.

Mr. Brown went behind his chair, and tried to persuade him to go to bed.

"I'm wide awake, my boy," said the clerk, with his eyes fast shut. "I'll draw a parchment deed with anybody."

"Do come, and I'll go up with you."

"No necessity, my flower! I'm wide awake"—but his eyes were still closed.

In five minutes, sleep had quite overpowered him, and, passive as dead, he was supported between Brown and the carpenter to his chamber; there they undressed him, placed his striped and tasselled night-cap on his head, lifted him into bed, and then left him—where, for the present, *we* leave him, sound asleep, and loudly snoring.

Mr. Brown invited the carpenter to his chapel, and on their way he besought the old man not to lay to heart the folly of his intended son-in-law—and advised him not to grieve his daughter by telling her.

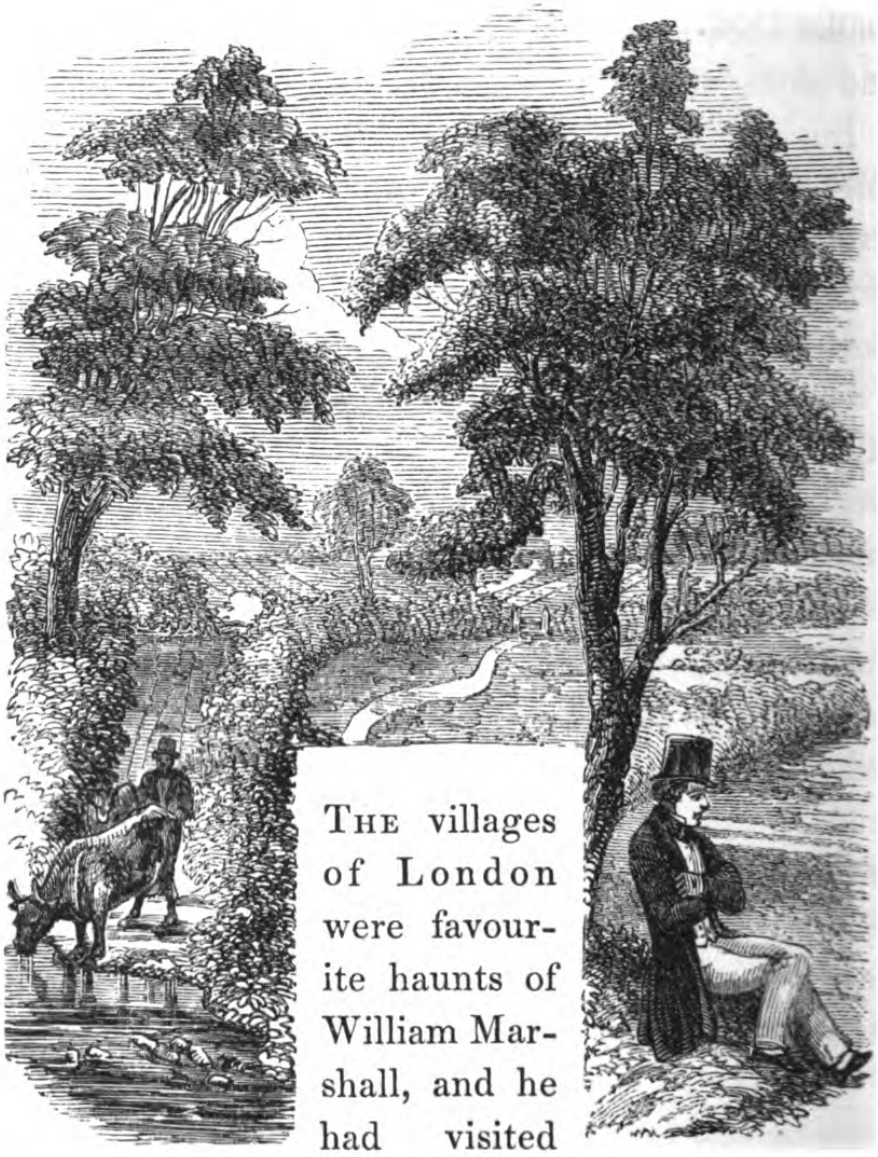
"It looked so odd, I thought, never to mention the poor girl," said the carpenter, sorrowfully.

"It would have done so," said Brown, "had he

known what he was about; but as he did not, do not make him answerable for what he said, or what he left unsaid."

They entered the chapel, but John Millington's thoughts could not be drawn from his daughter—while those of Brown were absorbed in the worship of his God.

CHAPTER V.



THE villages of London were favourite haunts of William Marshall, and he had visited most of them. Often, when the Sabbath had freed him from his father's warehouse, he would wander

far away to some lovely rural scene, where, throwing himself at length in some flowery meadow, or sitting on a briery hedge, he would listen for the blackbird's whistle, or the rare note of the shy cuckoo. He never cared for a companion to accompany him: his sister often begged in vain to go with him—so did his mother. It was half the charm to him to go alone—and alone he always went.

But he had other passions far less pure than this—passions that led him to Mr. Handiside's stables—passions that lured him to the "Angel and Trumpet"—passions that knitted him to Maria—passions that ultimately made him a thief!

From his first theft to now, when he traces a field with Wilson's ten-pound notes upon his person, he has been the most miserable thing in creation. He had known what it was to have a happy peaceful mind, too—but Mr. Handiside's horse and chaise, and the gay, charming, mysterious Maria, mastered his honour, and shame prevented him from retracing his steps. And now behold him! standing in the pathway of a meadow, envying the quiet of a cow grazing on the very grass he has just trod upon! Now he starts at the merry chirp of a little grasshopper; and trembles like a reed in the wind at the sudden bleating of a sheep in a distant field. True words, Shakspere—

"The thief doth fear each bush an officer."

"What business have *I* to be a thief?" he mused, walking slowly on, one hand in his pocket clutching

the notes; "what business have *I* to be a thief? who have not courage enough to listen to a bleating sheep—who am terrified at my own shadow! Mother, mother! if you knew my sufferings, oh! how you would pity me. I will turn back—I will! Why should I be ashamed to be an honest man?—why? Ay, I will turn back, and restore the notes to the poor fellow I stole them from. I can tell him I took them from him by way of a lark. But then, how am I to keep faith and respectability with Lumley and old Handiside? If there is no money forthcoming, they will be down on me like bloodhounds. Then, again, how can I face home more? No, it is not to be thought of. They may never trace the robbery to me—but they will though, if I make myself such a timid fool. I must cheer up! I must whistle off a tune or two. I feel so lonely, that's the worst of it. I wish Maria were here. What a merry soul she is!—she would soon put me in spirits. I'll call in somewhere in the village, and see what a good breakfast will do for me."

He quickened his pace—he whistled—he placed his hat in a more stylish position—he approached a stile—so did a young milkmaid, with a face as full of light as the sun above her.

"Now, rosebud," said William, "you see I am just come up in time to assist you and your pails over this awkward stile."

"Maybe, sir, you will come along over first, and never mind me."

"How have the cows yielded this morning?"

"I know my arms be aching enough with carrying all of it."

"Give me a pennyworth, and that will lighten your burden."

"I'll gi' thee a drink for nothing, if you like, sir."

"And a kiss too?"

"Noa, noa, no kees. What would my lad say?"

"Nothing, for he would know nothing."

"Tom is true to me, and I'll be true to him. Noa, noa, I'll gi' thee milk, but no kees."

"I will steal one," said William, jumping over the stile, and embracing the damsel.

"Tom! Tom!" she screamed, and her voice rang shrilly over the meadows, while she struggled with the passionate youth who was laying siege to her cherry lips. "You shan't, you shan't, if I die for it. Tom! Tom! Oh! my bonnet."

"You should not look so tempting, then you might keep your kisses."

"And I'll keep 'em now, take my word for that. I'm sure I took you for quite a honest young gentleman."

"Oh, no, blackberry eyes, there's no one honest now."

"Iss there be though," shortly rejoined the milkmaid.

William did not care to pursue the conversation upon honesty, and said abruptly, giving her her freedom—

"You think too much of your kisses, my lass! I will not ask again—there, there, go on with your milk. By the bye, did you observe the 'Red Lion' open as you passed along?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said the milkmaid, straightening her bent straw bonnet, "Mr. Piper's house is sure to be open this two hours past. My heavens! you've quite spoilt my bonnet."

"And after all, haven't had my kiss. That's too bad. But we prize that most which is the most difficult to obtain—and stolen kisses are sweeter than those given freely—so, there! there!" suddenly catching her round her plump and sun-dyed shoulders, and before she had time to prevent him, he had achieved the victory.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought!" she exclaimed, her sunny face frowning like a thunder-cloud. "You had best not do it again!"

"I am half tempted to try. But farewell! I envy Tom, whoever he is, who has won so true a heart, and fair a face. Do not pout so—Tom will not miss it—and this" (offering her a half-crown, which he took from the purse Maria gave him) "will put the bonnet to rights."

"I'd go without a bonnet rather than take it."

"Why there is no poison about it."

"Well, I won't have nothing to do with it. All the money I get, I'll get honestly, or go without."

William's face grew red. The girl's remark struck home.

"You do not mean to say but what *this* was honestly got? You surely do not take me for a thief?" he asked, but tremblingly.

"It's no business o' mine what you are—but had Tom been here, he should ha' gied you a good hiding, for mislesting me."

The inflexible virtue of the peasant-girl, coupled with the rising warmth of her temper, dashed William's gaiety more than a little, and glad he was to see her lift her milk-pails over the stile, and then ascend herself to follow them, for his conscience was again in the ascendant, and told him plainly what he was.

"I know I am a thief!" ran through his thoughts. "But because of that, am I to be wretched? What did I become a thief for, if not to be happier? But I am *not* happier—no, not even while the money lasts. Surely I must be the only thief in the world, for I never heard or read of such a miserable person as myself."

Sauntering by a hedge, his dismal-looking eye fell upon a tree he had often sat under when he was honest and happy. The song of the many birds congregating on its branches had no charms for William now, and the sight of the tree only made him weep. Irresistibly, however, he was drawn to the very spot which his feelings would have shunned, and he sat down on a small green eminence which the tree overgrew, contrasted the present with the past, and cursed himself.

"I wish I could see the end of my career. A

continuance in evil cannot end in good—and yet in evil will I continue. I may weep about it, but I cannot turn from it. Yet why, why am I so enchanted with evil? I cannot tell—who can? Since I have been a thief, I have not known sleep, and been full of fear; and all my merrymaking has been with a broken heart. Now, now—though my pocket is full of money—am I mad with fear, and miserable as a beggar. What an enemy to myself! Good God! what's that? It's gone—but I swear it was my mother. 'There again! Mother, I will be honest!" And the strong delusion of his brain actually induced him to rise from his seat, and he sprang a little from the hedge, fell on both his knees on the dewy grass, as if kneeling to an object standing before him, and hid his tearful eyes with his white hands, afraid to look upon what he knelt to.

"What! gone again from me, mother!" he exclaimed, looking up, and looking round. "Surely, I was not mistaken. Yet I must have been, for she is not here. Can she be dead? Can I have killed her? Oh! it might be so, for she had a soft and tender heart—a heart to sink under the vices of such a son as me. But where is the wisdom of thus upbraiding myself? Time enough for that when I am fettered in a gaol. A day or two I will merrily spend in London—and then I'll emigrate. Ay, ay, that's wise! I write a good hand, and am clever at figures, so I need not despair of getting a

good living amongst the merchants of America. They will never take such a pale-faced stripling as me for a thief. Yes, yes, it will be easier to travel abroad, than confess to the world I have been a thief, and resolve to be honest. There, I could rather hang myself, than ask forgiveness of any one. Now my course is settled, I will make for the 'Red Lion,' and order breakfast."

See now how happily and lightly he skips along the meadow, now he has "settled his course"—now he has for a little while cheated his troublesome conscience into a little quietude. There, with a leap he clears a three-barred gate, which brings him in view of a little white-washed church, surrounded with unostentatious graves and tall trees. An old man —a very old man—in black breeches, mended at the knees with leather, his shrunk shanks encased in black worsted stockings, was sweeping the dust from the pavement before the church-door. He had been clerk of the church, but was obliged to yield his long-held post to younger eyes; and the rector could not afford a small pittance to this old servant without in some shape or other he had value for it—so, when the clerk's sight grew so bad that he could not read one psalm from another, he was promoted to the office of duster extraordinary to the church—yes, he was; and to the liberal rector's honour be it told, he actually dismissed the clerk's predecessor (who had to mumble over his grievance in the workhouse) to make room

for the clerk! But what could the rector do? It was not likely he could spare the old clerk half a dozen shillings a-week out of his two thousand a-year, that the old gaffer might sun himself in an easy chair at his cottage door for the few days he had left him to live. Consider, what was two thousand a-year for a rector! And out of that he was actually obliged to allow his poor curate a whole seventy-five pounds a-year for—good gracious, for what?—why, *for doing all the work!* Rectors have nothing to do with preaching sermons—visiting the sick—Christianising the depraved—instructing the ignorant. Oh, no—those duties are beneath them; they have enough to do—quite—to take the money which is paid for those duties—to preside at parish-dinners—to influence the voters at election for a new member—to see that the tithes and rates do not run in arrears (for the rector is a strict man of business, and his motto is "short credit makes long friends")—to follow the hounds (when his corporation would admit of such exercise)—and to ride backwards and forwards from his wine-drinking club in London to the rectory house.

"Oh, what a merry, merry life does the rector lead."

The door of the little church was open, and William stopped and looked up the aisle, and his eye rested where the morning sun rested, which was on the altar, and he could read from where he stood lounging against the door, the words, "The Ten

Commandments" (which were largely flourished in the old English character). The Commandments themselves he could not read from the distance where he stood—nor did he want, for he knew them well enough; and the Eighth—"Thou shalt not steal"—fell upon his guilty soul with awful power. Had he not leant against the door, he must have fallen; never was his pale face so pale—never did his slim limbs tremble so; and his brain felt rattling in his dizzy head like dry bones. Still he could not draw his eye from the tablets—still would his thoughts rest upon the *eighth;* so vividly were they impressed with the Commandment he had broken, that his fancy painted in letters bigger than himself—"Thou shalt not steal!" and his eye was painfully stretched upon the words his fancy had written on the wall. But not there only did he read the precept: his frenzy covered the church—pulpit and altar-piece, ceiling and flooring, with—"Thou shalt not steal!" Oh! how he would esteem that man who could prove to him that the Eighth Commandment was a forgery—that God never spake it! So absorbed was he with the ancient Decalogue—so terrified with himself—that he did not hear the worn-out clerk's feeble and shuffling step making towards him; and he started and stared on the old man when, with brush in hand, he smiled in the youth's face, and asked him if he would like to walk in, and see the little church over.

"Oh, no, thank you, my friend," replied William, in a feeble voice, then averting his face from the

clerk, he again gazed straight upwards to the tablets.

"You may walk in, if you please, young gentleman," again said the humble old church duster, who

was somewhat deaf as well as feeble in sight, and did not hear Marshall's reply.

"Are you all such thieves here," said William, without replying to the old clerk's invitation, "that you find it necessary to placard the interior of your church with the Eighth Commandment?"

"Yes, sir, I am rather deaf in this ear," said the clerk, mistaking William's question, and placing his black-veined and skeleton-looking hand on his left ear. "You see, sir, I am an old man."

"Never mind about that," said William, speaking louder, while the old man turned round, and placed his right ear as near William's mouth as convenient —"never mind how old you are, so long as you are not an old thief!"

"An old thief!" exclaimed the clerk, looking half in tears up in William's face. "God bless your soul, sir, I never stole the value of a pin in my life! Thieves, I trow, seldom reach to my ears. I am eighty-two, and had a great-grandson born a month ago. Dear sir, did you take me for a thief, because my knees are patched, and my coat rusty? It is the best I can afford—*were* I a thief, I could get better perhaps—but I would rather wear my tatters, and be *taken* for a thief, than dress like the rector, and *be* one! No, no, no, young gentleman, I am honest as you are. Bless your soul, sir, I have been clerk of this church above fifty years, and should have been the clerk to this day, had my eyes not been so dim. I am eighty-two, and eyesight

won't last for ever, sir, will it? You do not take me for a thief now, sir?"

"No, no, old friend," said William, "nor did I before. You would not be quite so happy if you were a thief."

"No, sir, should I?" said the old grandfather, quite in childish tones.

"I *know* you would not," said William, emphatically. "But after all, father, do you really feel so happy as you look?—for I have read of men who were able to seem what they were not. Indeed, I know a young thief now, whom you would no more take for one than you would me. I have seen him downright merry outwardly, and yet I have *known* him inwardly to be downright sad."

"I feel all I look, sir."

"I am glad to hear it."

"There is but one thing frets me, and that is, a granddaughter of mine has married a very bad husband."

"Is he a thief?" said the tormented William.

"No, sir; but he is idle, and a drunkard." The clerk heaved a sigh.

"Oh, that is nothing, if he is not a thief. To my thinking, no man is very bad who is not a thief."

"Why, I suppose, sir, we esteem that the worst which we feel the most. It has been my good fortune to have suffered nothing from thieves, but I know what it is to have a drunkard in my family."

"A drunkard may reform, father. Bless your stars

your family is not stained with a thief, for he *never* reforms—once a thief, always a thief!"

"Would you not like to see the church over, sir? There are many curious monuments about the walls, with curious inscriptions."

"Yes, there is one *there*," said William, pointing significantly to the Communion-table.

"I can't see which one you mean."

"Another proof you are not a thief. Oh! I could see those tablets were I blind."

"Oh, yes, the tablets," said the old man, not at all comprehending William, "yes, yes, they are very pretty, and very ancient too. What excellent eyes you must have, sir, to see them from this distance—to be sure, I have just dusted them. But my eyes are so dim, that I can hardly see anything in the place but the pulpit."

"While I can see nothing but *them!*" again pointing to the tablets.

"Well! well! that is strange! I should like you to come up the aisle, and inspect them. The frames they are set in are very rich. They were presented to the church by an old antiquary, whose bones and monument lie a little to the left of them."

The old man tottered up the aisle, and William tottered after. He could see nothing in the place but—"Thou shalt not steal!" and the little historical description of this and that which the clerk gave him as they moved along, only sounded to William like—"Thou shalt not steal!" When they reached

the carved railings that inclosed the Communion-table, and over which hung the Commandments, William became quite overpowered as his eye fell upon the Eighth, and, unconscious of the clerk's presence, he fell on his knees, fastened his hands upon the rail, dropped his head low upon his breast, and groaned audibly—"God forgive a thief!"

The old clerk did not exactly catch the words which William uttered, but supposing, by his posture, he was deep in prayer, also knelt down, and gave his thoughts to God. There was something very touching in this scene—the honest slim old man, with his long thin hair resting on the rusty collar of his coat, kneeling at the same altar, and to the same God, with a youth who was torn to pieces with the thought of his transgressions, and yet had not moral strength sufficient to renounce at once and for ever the evil which brought him nothing but wretchedness. The sun streamed through the altar window, and enveloped both in brightness.

Ten minutes thus they knelt, during which young William found much relief and calmness in unburdening the guilt of his heart to God. He prayed for some miraculous interposition to save him "as a brand plucked from the burning." But heaven seemed to reply, "Youth, thou art sinning in light—and woe to him who does so sin." "I have not strength to walk in the light—help, God, or I perish!"

He abruptly rose from his devotions. The old

man followed, but his infirmities precluded the irreverential haste with which the youth rose, even had he been so disposed. William asked the clerk when the next stage left for London.

"I should say there is one about just now to start. But will you not see the little church over before you return?"

"No, thank you, I cannot wait—I will come again. Take this. From the 'Red Lion' the stages start, I believe?"

He waited not for an answer, and bounded out of the church before the old man had time to say "Good bye, sir."

"What a nice religious young gentleman," thought the clerk to himself, as he shuffled down the aisle, "and liberal too"—stopping, and holding a half-crown close to his dim eye, to be sure it was not a penny, and when he had assured himself it was worth thirty pence, he carefully put it in his empty watch-pocket, and felt it after he had put it there to be sure it had not escaped. The man had not a bit of the miser in his soul, but prized the trifle because he wanted it—or rather, there were certain members of his numerous family to whom he knew it would be welcome.

But we must take leave of him with the furrowed cheek, for we see our young hero (who had regaled himself with a glass of ale and a biscuit since he left the church) on the top of the coach, and we must follow him. Is it Mr. Piper's ale, or the resolution

to be an honest man, which has diffused over his face a happier expression?—which has banished the trouble from his eye? We cannot tell—but certain it is, the woe and fear which had so recently clouded his intellectual features have fled—and may they never return to deform his face again.

William was soon at the "Angel and Trumpet," which he entered with the resolution to return Wilson's money, and become honest. The first person his eyes encountered was Maria, who was sitting inside the bar, in her gay yellow shawl, white satin dress, green velvet bonnet and feather, looking very sulky. She had expected William hours before, for on the Saturday he had promised to drive her out in Mr. Handiside's tilbury. Lumley the landlord, and a few select friends, in spite of policemen and law (indeed, an officer off duty, and in private habiliments, makes one of the party), are playing at skittles, in a little shed which the landlord had run up at the back of his house, and bordering on the odoriferous stables of Mr. Handiside. The stable-keeper, in a clean shirt, a scarlet handkerchief round his bull-like throat, and tied in a sailor's knot, with his broad-brimmed hat on his head, was smoking a quiet pipe, by himself, at his stable-door up the yard which divided the "Angel and Trumpet" from the parish church. The solemn notes of the organ opening the morning's service could be distinctly heard where he sat, but it had no charms for him—indeed nothing annoyed Handiside more than the

church-organ, and now that his temper was out of tune at Marshall's delay, he inwardly called that man a fool who invented it.

"Let 'em feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and edicate the charity boys better—that's what I says and always shall say. That's what I calls religion—that's what I calls moosic," muttered Handiside, supplying his long clean pipe with fresh tobacco, which he took from a deep black box, with a race-horse vulgarly painted on the lid. "Who-o-o, mare," —to the sleek black animal which stood ready harnessed in the tilbury, waiting Mr. Marshall's pleasure, and which lifted a hind leg rather high, annoyed with the tickling flies—"who-o-o, Dandy!" patting her shining neck. "That's the worst of this universal world, people thinks of nobody but themselves. If Mister Marshall aint here quick upon, I'll take the hoss and shay back in the stable, and he may whistle for 'em when he comes. Humbug! and so I shall tell him—keeping a feller waiting about like this. Stand still, hoss!"

"What, all alone, Maria?" said William, going round the bar.

"I tell you what it is, sir, in future when you make appointments with me, I hope you will keep them." Maria averted her head, and the feather in her bonnet waved as gracefully as any coquette could wish—and she knew it.

"I have been in the fields, my dear."

"Do not tell me, Mr. Marshall"—

"On my soul"—

"It is false! and I shall not go with you. Mr. Oakley invited me out with him, and I was a fool I had not gone."

"And you would, only that you loved me better, eh, Maria?"

"Oh, I am out of temper at such neglect. It must be near dinner-time! and you were to have met me at an early breakfast. You have spoilt my day, and I am much obliged to you." So saying, Maria began taking her bonnet off.

"No, no, my dear, don't do that," said William, gently restraining her hands—"it is a pretty bonnet, and, la! how handsome you look in it! Now don't, Maria—there is time enough yet for a drive. I will seek Handiside, and then we will be off like a shot. Come, a kiss, and then all friends again!"

Where was William's resolution? It had vanished at sight of the bewitching Maria like a ghost at cockcrow. In his mind he had made a more lenient compact with himself, which was, that he would have another day in his sins, and begin the difficult work of reformation to-morrow. Well, well, we shall see. But it is dangerous putting on the shoulders of to-morrow burdens that should be borne on to-day. Reform to-morrow, will you, youth? Well, well, we shall see. Maria *always* looks charming—and if the bare sight of her overpowered your resolution *to-day*, what hope have you for *to-morrow?* It is a pleasant cheat—and that we shall see.

"By the bye," said William, as if suddenly remembering Wilson, who had not been out of his thoughts since he had robbed him, "what have you done with the young fellow who fell so much in love with you and Lumley's wine last night?"

The mention of Wilson was sure to set Maria tittering, and her clear-toned laughter might have been heard up and down the hill.

"Poor fool! do you know he says he has been r-r-robbed?"—cleverly imitating the drunken articulation of the clerk.

"It wasn't me!" said William.

"I did not say it was—did I?"

"No, Maria—but I thought you looked accusingly at me."

"How was it possible you could have thought of such a thing? What! take you for a thief?—he! he! you are dreaming. You stare!—why, you are *not* a thief, are you?"

"Ha! ha! ha!—I should think not. How much does the fellow say he has been robbed of?"

"Oh, burn him! I am not going to remain here all day talking about him."

"Well," said William, "if he *has* lost anything, I hope the thief will be discovered—for I hate a thief. Did he say how much he had lost?"

"You don't suppose I can remember all the nonsense the fool uttered, do you? You may depend upon it, if he *has* been robbed, he will summon us all to-morrow"—

"You don't think he will, do you?" interrupted William, in more consternation than Maria understood.

"I hope he may, for the fun of the thing."

"Ha! ha! ha!—but it will be no fun to the person who has robbed him!"

"Psha!" said Maria, "I don't believe he has been robbed at all. And if he has, its one of our taproom gentry, and so I think he will have to whistle long enough before he gets it again. Thieves are cunning fellows, and will swear black is white, if need be. God help his money, if Rainbow Dick has got hold of it—and I shouldn't wonder!"

Mr. Handiside tapped at the door, and Maria requested William to open it.

"Why you are the very genelman I cumd to look arter!" exclaimed the delighted stable-keeper, touching his broad-brimmed hat to William. "Me and the mare has been a-waiting for you these four hours."

"Have you got Dandy in the shafts, old friend?" gaily asked William.

"Yes, sir; and a pretty creetur she is too. I knew Mariar was a-going with you, so I gied the mare a hextera trimming. Her coat shines more than Mariar's gown—and she's quite fresh. Its the prettiest turn-out in London—quite a pictur'!"

"Have you put the snaffle on her?" asked William.

"You'll find things jist as you like 'em, Mr. Mar-

shall—I studied for that. And I aint forgot a new whip neither—its only for the look of the thing though—the mare has too much blood in her, pretty creetur, to bear the whip."

"I think, Maria, we must give our old friend a toss or two of brandy, since he has exerted himself so much to turn us out handsomely."

Maria, true to business, proposed that they should have a "thimbleful round."

"Health, Mariar!—health, Mr. Marshall!" said Handiside, ogling and nodding to each, as he gave them his blessing.

"Well, here's a pleasant ride to us, Maria! and to you, Handiside, plenty of trade!" and William tossed off his "thimbleful."

"Well, I don't know you can wish a man a better thing," said Handiside.

The meek Maria was going to drink the little she had allotted herself without a good wish for anybody, but William would not allow her, and he caught her by the hand that was conveying the spirit to her lips.

"I really won't pay for it, Maria," he said, "if you drink it without a toast."

"Well, I will give you Rainbow Dick's toast for want of a better—'Honour among thieves!'"—and she tossed off her "thimbleful."

"Ah, that Dick, he's a rum fellow," said Handiside.

William shrunk within him, not doubting that Maria really meant something.

"I think you might have thought of something better than that—something more appropriate."

"It would have done wery well if we had been a lot of parsons," said Handiside, whose enmity against the church was unbounded, and he took every opportunity, in his coarse way, of insulting it, and all connected with it.

"I really should like an explanation of your meaning, Maria, for I never will believe you would have ventured on such a toast without *some* meaning."

"Don't you wish I were a man, young turkey-cock, that you might call me out?" said Maria, looking up in William's face with a winning smile, that softened his indignation.

"Your fun is all very well, Maria, but I must resent such insinuations, as every honest man would."

"Whew! whew! whew!" prettily mocked Maria. "Are you a descendant of Jack Bunyan's 'Mr. Honesty?'"

William could not resist a smile.

"Well, well, I'm glad to see you friendly again," said Mr. Handiside; "and now I'll go and fetch round the hoss and shay. I'm blest," he talked to himself, as he hobbled up the yard, when his ears were again assailed with the notes of the organ, "if the church oughtn't to be indicted for a noosance —enough to frighten the hoss away, and the shay too. Now, my pretty creetur, you shall trot off, and I

hopes when you are away from your nat'ral home, you'll be well treated."

When Handiside had left the bar, William threw down the money for the brandy, but Maria refused to take it.

"Do you not think I can afford it?" said William, in his suspicion misconstruing Maria's refusal. "You seem so strange to me, Maria!"

"And so do you to me. And you *are* strange."

"Did you mean anything by the toast?"

"Were you to ask a million times, I would not answer you." She sat down, her back towards him, and proudly fixed her black eye upon the black ceiling. William became satisfied, from her disdain of his question, that nothing personal was intended by the toast, and that it was a fancy of his guilty mind.

"'Forgive—Forget!'" he said, quoting the motto from the ring he found in Maria's purse, at the same time leaning over her shoulder, and looking smilingly in her face.

Now it was Maria's turn to feel and look alarmed —she knew what about, and so did the Lumleys, but no one else. There was little doubt that at some period of her life her hands had engaged in some dark work, which may never be brought to light. William had tried many plans to inform himself of her history, but she baffled them all. Why she should wear a widow's cap, and yet be more than gay—why live in such obedience to the Lum-

leys, and secretly hate them—why abound in money, and yet publicly fill the humble post of barmaid to a low public-house?—all these things shed a mystery over her, which William would have given much to fathom. This ring, too, evidently mingled with her mysteries, or why should she change colour, and look confused, at the bare allusion to it? Yet she did, and abruptly told William "to give her back the ring—and never to repeat the device upon it again, except he meant to offend her."

"Anything rather than Maria should frown," he said, giving her the ring.

"For heaven's sake, Mr. Marshall, do not chide another for frowning. Why you have done nothing else since you returned." While Maria spoke, she took from her pocket a purse glittering with gold beads, and placed the ring in it.

"Do not make my ill-humour an excuse for yours, there's a good girl. Look, look, how brightly the sun shines out. Come along, Maria, and we will yet have a merry day."

With one arm round her waist, his eyes looking nothing but pleasure, he escorted the showily-dressed Maria to the tilbury at the door on the dirty hill, excitedly singing, as he wound round the little bar, two lines from a bacchanalian ditty of Tom Moore's—

"The wise are fools, with all their rules,
When joys they would control!"

"Well done, Handiside," said William, admiring

the horse and tilbury, "I call that a neat turn-out!"

"Aint her now a pretty creetur?" said Handiside, delighted with William's flattering observation.

"It does you great credit, governor," said William, assisting Maria into the tilbury.

"Stand still, hoss!" bellowed Handiside, as William ascended, reins in hand. "Hem! hem!—could I beg a suvreign of you on account, please sir?" he humbly asked, touching his hat with his finger.

"Two, if you like, Handiside."

"It will be all the better, if it is conwenient to yourself." William gave him two, and drove off, to the admiration of several loungers on the hill, up which he rapidly ascended, leaving Mr. Handiside absorbed in the high mettle of his "pretty creetur." William evinced much skill as a coachman—sitting perfectly upright—holding his reins at a proper height, to check the mare should she stumble—threading the throng of vehicles he had to encounter in the City without slackening his pace or coming in contact with them—and at the same time laughing and chatting to his fair companion as easily as if sitting by her side on a couch. Maria, too, seemed quite at home in the tilbury, lounging luxuriously back, her handsome rosy face animated with laughter, her rich lips at times so far apart, that both her glittering rows of teeth might be seen, and her eyes—eyes too bright to look upon—lighting on this,

and that, and everything which they passed in their rapid drive.

"Now, Maria," said William, as he turned into the turnpike road leading to the same village he had left in the morning, "here is fair ground, and I mean to try the mettle of Handiside's 'pretty creetur' in earnest." He sent the mare off trotting at her highest speed, and they were soon enveloped in a cloud of dust, and so quick the wheels went round that not a spoke was perceptible. When William reined up at the "Red Lion," Maria said—

"Ah, that's the speed I like!"

The public-house stood on the Green. A famous old tree grew up by its side—indeed the upper part of its trunk was supported by the house. The landlord's painted sign swung on a branch of the tree, and the head of the "Red Lion" was covered with foliage. A magpie was hung in a wicker-cage by the window, and such a chattering he commenced when the tilbury drew up, that it brought Mr. Piper, the landlord, napkin in hand, to the door: and before he saluted his gay customers, he shouted lustily for "Jo—siah," the ostler; and "Jo—siah," was soon at the mare's head. The little whitewashed parish-church was plainly seen from the public-house—the church in which William had but a few hours since sworn on his knees to sin no more. A clucking black hen and chickens strutted about by a hen-coop at the door; and as William

handed tbe gaily-dressed Maria from the tilbury, the peasant children playing on the Green exclaimed —"Here comes the Queen!—here comes the Queen!"

An expensive dinner was soon served up in style in a private room of the house, and after the cloth was cleared, various wines and various fruits were brought in. William made himself very happy, and successfully defied his conscience. Smoking a cigar, he luxuriated in an easy chair. Maria, too, was quite happy, occasionally tripping up and down the carpeted room, and glancing with admiration at her exquisite figure, charming face, and elegant flowing dress, which were reflected in a tall chimney-glass as she paced up and down before it, flinking in her hand by her side a perfumed handkerchief. The bell was rung: coffee was ordered, the fragrance of which filled the room. Now they were both at the window, Maria with her arm through William's, admiring the scene before them, the latter pointing out to the lady portions of the scene to be admired above the rest, and discoursing on them most poetically. Now the bell is rung again, and tea is ordered. Tea was brought, with every suitable concomitant; and Maria presided at the silver tea-pot, which was graced on each side by a bouquet of fresh-smelling flowers, whose stems were drinking water out of painted china vases. While Maria procrastinated over her last cup, William paced the room, smoking his cigar,

but not being a vain youth, he scarcely looked at himself in the glass.

"You will stop here to-night, Maria, and we will get up early in the morning, and have a fine drive about the country before breakfast."

"No, indeed, I cannot stop to-night. I promised Lumleys I would return, and return I *must*."

"What the devil are the Lumleys to you?"

"Ay, *what!* But never mind—return I must."

"Oh, well, then there is no more to be said. For when you say *must*, storms would not prevent you. You are a mystery, Maria; and although I am so intimate with you, I know not who you are, nor what you are."

"Nor ever will—be offended or pleased."

"Maria, I am quite aware of your independence, without such words as those. I wish you were as independent of the Lumleys as you are of me."

"I will not stay another minute, if you are drifting the conversation in that quarter. I would confide my heart to you, if any one—I have told you so often: but it is locked against all."

"Not all—the Lumleys, forsooth, are acquainted with its secrets."

"Ah, they are—and so am I with theirs, curse them!"

It was rare to hear a sigh escape Maria, but now she heaved one from the depths of her evil heart, and then, as if vexed with herself for doing so, snappishly said to William—

"If you say another word upon the subject, I will return by myself, and you shall call me fool when you catch me out with you again!"

"Oh, I will say no more, so don't look peevish. You are an invulnerable mystery."

"And so I shall remain—and there let the matter end."

Candles were brought, and William ordered supper, and by the time it was finished, with a little wine after it to restore Maria's good temper, eleven o'clock was announced from the steeple of the little church, which made the merrymakers think of returning. William called for the bill, and ordered the tilbury to be prepared. He discharged the bill with one of Wilson's ten-pound notes, received the change, lit a fresh cigar, and escorted his mysterious companion to the tilbury, and, at a rapid pace, with a clear moon above, they made for the "Angel and Trumpet." Along the road, remorse began to creep upon William, and he kept fancying his mother was running behind the tilbury. But those fancies he kept to himself, and drove faster in order to drown them. The morrow, too, was at his heels—and he became troubled as to what course he should pursue. They now turned upon the hill, which, like all the roads and streets they had passed through, was illuminated by the full moon, and not a soul was to be seen but old Handiside, who was hobbling up and down before the "Angel and Trumpet" like some old watchman on duty, with a lantern in his hand, wrapped in a

fleecy great coat, and a red flannel nightcap pulled over his ears, and rolled up in front on his wrinkled forehead. He was anxiously waiting the return of his "pretty creetur" and tilbury, and grumbling at young William for keeping "respectable people out of their nat'ral rest." But when he heard the wheels descending the hill, his discontent was changed to joy, and he hobbled to meet his "soul's treasure," and in spite of the bright moonlight, he held his dim lantern aloft. But the mare brought William and Maria to their destination before Handiside could crawl two yards, and as William assisted

Maria out, Handiside informed him that two gentlemen had been seeking him, and by the description of one of them, he knew it must be his father!

"One of the genelmen made most pertikler in-

quiries; but we never knows nothing here, sir," said Handiside, moving off with the tilbury.

To attempt a description of William's feelings at this intelligence would be vain. His strength vanished—a breath might blow him down. He was mute. He was sick. He trembled. He perspired. Maria observed the sudden change, and asked him if he was ill. His teeth chattered—"Y-e-s." The Lumleys had gone to bed, and left the potboy to wait up for Maria. When the door was opened, William staggered into the taproom like one drunk, and fell faint upon the form. Maria drew a little glass of brandy, he drank it, and revived. He flung his arms round Maria's neck, and sobbed aloud.

"Why, whatever is the matter with you, Marshall?"

He had half a mind to tell her all, but his proud heart would not let him. He asked her for more brandy, and when she brought it, he kissed her repeatedly.

"Bless us! how loving you are," said Maria.

"To-morrow, when I know nothing, you will know all. You cannot understand me now, but to-morrow you will. Good night, Maria," kissing her —"*you will be asleep before I come up.*" His eye wandered to the gas-pipe.

"Don't be long." He made her no reply, and she retired.

"I cannot face my father, and I have no friend to intercede for me. And if forgiven, it could never

be *forgotten*. No, no, there is but one way to end it, and it must be so." He heaved a terrible sigh. "I am resolved—there is no escape. In the house where I commenced my sins, there will I pay the penalty."

The penalty *hereafter* never occurred to him.

As on the Saturday night, before he robbed Wilson, and when he was interrupted in his self-murder by Lumley's black cat, he fastened an old halter to the long iron gas-pipe which ran along the ceiling, and in a minute hung himself!

So perished the thief! The potboy discovered him hanging in the morning, and alarmed the house. In haste, and half undresssed, down came Lumley and his wife, and down came Maria. But the spectacle made no impression on either, and Lumley cut him down with as little feeling as he would have done the smoked ham which hung over the mantelshelf, and stretched him on the large table. The potboy was ordered to fetch a surgeon, and in his absence, and before the ladies, the remorseless Lumley rifled the pockets of the corpse, and put all he found (amongst which were the two remaining notes he had stolen from Wilson, and duplicates of jewellery he had stolen from his father) in his own pocket, saying—

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! when thieves fall out, honest men get their own." Looking at the two notes, it suddenly struck him that they had been taken from Wilson; and after communicating his suspicions to

his wife and Maria, he added, "But hush! not a word to any one. It has come into the right hands at last. Precious lucky, wasn't it, dears! I daresay, if I had kept proper accounts, I should have found he owed me as much."

The news speedily spread about the neighbourhood, and the tap-room was soon full of the inhabitants of the hill, including Rainbow Dick and Mr. Handiside. Before the surgeon arrived, William's distracted father entered in search of him. He had (alas! too late) gained the clue to his son's evil haunt through a friend, who lived in the vicinity of the "Angel and Trumpet."

The father entered the house, and mingled with the tap-room throng, quite ignorant of the fate of his son. The room was so full that he could not get to the table, but he soon heard that a young gentleman of the name of Marshall had hung himself.

"Good God! it is my son!" he exclaimed. "Let me pass! let me pass!" The crowd was startled by his agony, and, as fast as they could, made a passage for him to the table and the corpse; and when his anxious eyes fell upon his son, he screamed as a woman, and fell, unconscious as the dead, first on the form, then on the ground. So the surgeon found him when he came.

A card was found upon his person, which told his residence, and he was carried from the melancholy scene, the surgeon accompanying him in a carriage to his home.

Lumley was examined at the inquest held on the remains of the unhappy suicide, but all he knew was that "Marshall was a lodger of his'n, and that he owed him money."

The examination of Handiside followed.—All he knew was "that when Mr. Marshall ordered the hoss and shay, the hoss and shay was always ready. He seed him last at eleven o'clock last night. Thought he was not werry well, and thought a little brandy would make him better. Brandy always cured him. Didn't take much pertikler notice—too much hoccupied with the mare."

Maria was then questioned by the Coroner.—"She had spent the day with the deceased out of town. He was very attentive to her, and on the road home proposed for her hand. He had often done so, and she had as often declined. She last saw him with Mr. Handiside. He was then ill, and strange. She should say his attachment to herself meeting with no return affected his mind."

This lying evidence was given with great *sang froid;* but not once did she look upon the ruin she had wrought—stretched before her in the solemn sleep of death.

The afflicted father, who had somewhat recovered the shock, when again led into the still presence of his son, swooned as before. Restoratives were applied, and partially reviving, he said—"His son had left his home for some time, and he had not seen him until now. He had used every means to find

him, but had failed. He knew nothing of any attachment to any lady. William was very young. He hoped God would forgive him."

With a burst of tears, he buried his head in the cold bosom of his son.

Why William left his home, the unhappy father hid in his distracted heart.

The coroner summed up, particularly calling the attention of the gentlemen of the jury to Maria's evidence, and they, with the Coroner, believing her statements (how could they do otherwise?), confirmed her conclusion, that the refusal of his offer induced temporary insanity—and such was their verdict.

The body was conveyed to his father's house, and we cannot trust ourselves to describe the scene of misery that ensued. Father, mother, and sister—each vented their grief in silence, and in floods of tears.

See! now the mutes are at the door—

> "To mimic sorrow when the heart's not sad;"

and slowly the gloomy hearse approaches. The door is opened, and the gaping space is soon filled up with the remains of the unhappy hero of our tale. The short but sad procession now moved slowly on, and the black proud horses tossed their plumed heads aloft, as they wended their way to the "house appointed for all living." The cemetery is reached, and, "last scene of all," the sexton throws

the clods upon the coffin. The dismal sound!—it rends the father's heart.

For some years after this sad history, the "Angel and Trumpet" flourished well. Maria's charms lured many a victim thither to his ruin. But at last punishment overtook them. Old Lumley fairly got fixed in the meshes of the law, nor could all his money, nor all his lies, aided by eloquent counsel, extricate him. It was clearly proved that he was connected with coiners of base money, and that he lost no opportunity of passing it off amongst his customers. He was convicted, and transported.

The *ladies*—Maria and Mrs. Lumley—after this occurrence, fled from the house, and were never afterwards heard of. Pursuing the courses in which we take our leave of them, there can be no doubt as to their unhappy end.

The end of Mr. Handiside was a pleasing one. While dressing his "pretty creetur" one day for Maria's service, the mare kicked him, from which he never recovered. For some weeks he writhed in pain, but he lived long enough to repent of his evil life, and voluntarily sent for the clergyman of the parish, from whom he received religious consolation and the sacrament, and died in the Christian's hope of a "glorious resurrection."

CHAPTER VI.

Robert Wilson awoke from a long and deep sleep on the Monday morning in a state of mind very different from his merry humour of the last thirty or forty hours—his ideas in shreds and patches —a melancholy chaos, that left him quite oblivious of how he had spent his time since Saturday, and only had reference to the "governor's notes." Under the stimulus of concern for the safety of the important sum he had in charge, Wilson arose, though as he did so, the sight of his jaded countenance in the square glass fastened on the wall over his dressing-table, combined with his wretched sensations of fever, giddiness, and nausea, made him almost incapable of supporting himself whilst he examined his clothes for the money—which was not to be found—nor will he ever see it again, for it has gone into the capacious coffers of the "Angel and Trumpet."

The red blood suddenly suffused his face—every nerve was in a moment braced with terror—as he went through the pockets a second time, and be-

came conscious of his loss. Another minute before he *would* credit it—then, in a shout that might have been taken for joy or triumph, he cried, as he wildly tossed his arms—

"That's capital! capital! All three gone! Not a shred of one left! I'm a made man now, that's certain!" Then, in the intensity of his terror, he burst into the adjoining room, in which his fellow-lodger Brown slept, and completely frightened that sober young man by his excited appearance, and frantic exclamations.

"I'm a lost man, Brown, unless you will help me!" groaned he, and forthwith began to pray and beseech with passionate earnestness, "that his old friend would help him out of this disgraceful predicament."

"Robert, my friend," said Brown, "I cannot understand you, you talk so confusedly."

"And so would you, Brown, if you had met with the misfortune I have. I have been robbed of thirty pounds, which belong to the governor."

"Thirty pounds, Robert! Your master's money, too. That is a misfortune indeed. What ever will you do?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell! I'm downright distracted! Oh! they will never catch me in bad company again. *Mister* Brown!" falling on his knees—"can you do nothing for me?"

"Get up, Robert—that is the posture we approach heaven in; man is too contemptible to kneel to."

"You are quite right, *Mister* Brown!" said Wilson, rising, and shivering on the edge of the French bedstead.

"Robert," said Brown, "what I can do for you I will do without any servility on your part."

"Don't be ill-tempered with a poor fellow, *Mister* Brown," said the clerk, not understanding what the Methodist meant by "servility."

"I would rather, Robert, you addressed me in a more frank, familiar, and friendly manner. '*Mister*' Brown has no charms for *my* ear. Judging me too much by yourself, Robert, you think it has, or you would not so address me, for it is not your customary mode. Depend upon it, Brown, under any circumstances, will help you as much as *Mister* Brown."

"Capital sentiment!" exclaimed Wilson. "There are few young men like you. I wish *I* had been, I know, then I should not have been in this woful mess, but have had money in the bank. But as it is, I am without a penny, all my clothes spoilt, and I shall be transported if I cannot get the governor's money back! Oh! he must have been a thief indeed to have robbed a poor fellow like me."

"Where is it you have been to?"

"I can hardly remember anything now, Brown. And if I could, I suspect it would be nothing to my credit. But I can swear I had three ten-pound notes in my pocket belonging to the governor when

I left the office on Saturday night, and now I haven't one! Oh! the greedy thief, to take them all!"

"Thirty pounds is a large sum," said Brown. "I cannot imagine what you will do. You see there is nothing less than the sum lost will save your character—and that is the main thing to be considered."

"Yes, it is my character I look at," said Wilson, almost crying. "Abuse me as you like about my folly, only for God's sake, Bill Brown, do save my character, for I have not another friend to ask. If you do not help me, I must do something desperate to escape Newgate! I will pay you every farthing again—interest and all. You know I am honest at heart."

"Yes, I do."

"I am, on my soul and honour!" whined Wilson.

"Hush! hush! you will alarm the house. Having erred, repent, and bear the consequences with fortitude."

"Go to Newgate with fortitude! Ah! Bill Brown, you know that is not possible."

The clerk urged his misfortune so vehemently and pathetically upon the tender mercies of Brown, that the latter jumped out of bed, and said he would see what could be done. His prime object was to save the *character* of the clerk with his master, therefore to give himself time for consideration (for thirty pounds was a large sum to advance), Brown went

straight to the office, and obtained a day's absence for Wilson, stating, with perfect truth, that he was too unwell for business. As his master was ignorant that the thirty pounds had been paid to his clerk, all was well thus far.

Brown next sought old Millington, and found his daughter Jane with him. The looks of both, and the traces of recent tears on Jane's meek face, told the visitor at once what they had been conversing about, when his entrance interrupted them.

Jane had seen Mr. Brown once or twice when she had been with Wilson, but did not like him particularly; she thought his manners very cold and distant; and—how surprised Brown would have been to hear it—she thought him proud! But Jane's heart was better than her judgment—she was, in fact, quite mistaken in her ideas of Mr. Brown.

"You see, sir," said Millington, when Brown had shaken hands with both, and sat down on one of the crazy cane chairs, "Jane was out of sorts this morning, and that has thrown her late for her work. We have been talking, Mr. Brown, of your friend. My daughter feels herself hurt about yesterday; but I say that's foolish of her, for it is very true, you see, that I was shabby, and young men like Mr. Wilson *will* be conceited of fine clothes."

"Father," said Jane, "I wish you would not try to hide anything from me. It only makes me suffer worse. I shall take care to resent as I ought the unkindness and disrespect that has been shown to

you, and if there be anything more to tell me, I hope I may know it."

"Miss Millington," said Brown, "I am here to speak of Wilson. I am the messenger of ill news to you, but I hope and believe"—he stopped, for the deadly paleness of her face alarmed him. He entreated her to be firm, and then quickly communicated the present hazardous position of Wilson.

"Ah!" said Millington, "I thought yesterday he had fallen into bad hands somewhere. My poor Jane!" and he wished Mr. Brown had not told her.

"Be Robert what he may, I and you, father," exclaimed Jane, energetically, "are much indebted to him. Father, go with me to see Robert."

"Will you? Well, if you must, to be sure I will go."

The three were presently in Holborn, and when they arrived at Wilson's lodgings, Mrs. Sinnerton was at the door of her neat house, and told them that Mr. Wilson in her opinion ought to have the doctor, for she verily thought the drink he had had was making him mad. "I have known them as have gone off that way in *delirimums tremums*," said the worthy widow. "He is locked in his room, and howling like a dog, for all the world. I never heard such outcries in my life."

"We'll see what can be done to quiet him," said Brown, leading the way to Wilson's bedroom-door, followed close by the carpenter, whilst Jane and Mrs. Sinnerton stood on the stairs listening. Brown

knocked at the door, and Wilson turned the key, opened it, and was persuaded by Brown to come down. The miserable clerk did not see Jane until he felt her cold hand on his, and heard her tender utterance of his name. He was instantly subdued, and burst into tears, then ran from her into Mrs. Sinnerton's little parlour below, and sat down and hid his face on his locked hands on the table. Jane gently drew away those hands, and fixed her eyes on his, and very plaintive were the words that she spoke to him—

"You forgot me, yesterday, dear Robert, but I think of you still, and I forgive you your slight of my father, though it pierced my heart at first. I know what has happened to you, Robert, and that has reconciled me to you."

"Reconciled!"

"Yes, dear, it has. I would never have seen you again but for this, for now you will need a friend, Robert—and who can be a friend to you like me?"

"I have ruined myself, Jane, and you had better not degrade yourself by thinking more of me."

"I will not leave you in your trouble, Robert."

"Now, Robert," said Brown, "forbear lamenting, and listen to me. And you listen, Mr. Millington, to what I have to say concerning your daughter. We have to-day for doing what can be done to save Wilson's honour, and preserve to him his situation. Now, supposing he could give us any clue for tracing

the missing notes (which he cannot), it is clear nothing could be done in time sufficient to sustain his integrity with his master. Another objection to the tracing those notes is, that we cannot do so without also tracing Robert's folly, which would give great pain to all of us. Under these circumstances, and on the faith in my friend's honour, I will myself furnish the money, *on conditions*."

Wilson was himself again. He could have shouted "Hurrah!" with all his heart. He did give vent to—

"Brown, Brown, you are a trump of a fellow!"

"Be calm," said Brown, "and hear me to the end. I will lend you the money, *on conditions*. I am a man of few words, and shall not go roundabout to express myself. If Miss Millington will marry you, I will lend you the thirty pounds, and lend *her* twenty pounds to start her in business, because I have the greatest confidence in her character, and in the character of her father."

Wilson, old Millington, and his daughter, were quite overpowered with such unexpected liberality. They simultaneously rose to take him by the hand who had made three hearts sing with joy, and Brown sat in the midst of them like a little king.

"I am not rich enough to *give* you the money, so the next thing to be settled is, how do you propose to return it? Make it easy to yourselves, but what you determine on, that I shall expect. Do you think five shillings a-week would be too much for you and Robert to return me, Miss Millington?"

"I think, sir," said Jane, "we might safely promise you that. I assure you, nothing shall be wanting on my part to return you more." She burst into tears. "I know not how to thank you—such kindness as this I never heard of before, and may I know no prosperity in my business, or happiness with my husband, if ever I am ungrateful for it."

"It is an out and out"—

"Say no more, Robert," interrupted Brown. "Nor you either, Mr. Millington"—who was just beginning to return *his* thanks. "I will at once go and pay the money, and prevent all injurious inquiries." And the twenty pounds I will advance on the wedding-day."

In a week Jane and Wilson were married, and the humble wedding-dinner was prepared by widow Sinnerton. Mrs. Wilson is now in a thriving way of business, and a twelvemonth after she commenced, she was enabled to pay Brown ten shillings a week off the debt, and continued this sum until the whole was paid off. The last instalment was recorded by a little dinner-party, and the christening of Wilson's first child, when he proposed the health of Mr. Brown, whom he designated as a "trump of a fellow," and gratefully acknowledged, on behalf of himself and his wife, that it was to his kindness they owed their present happiness. In honour to him, their child was christened Robert *Brown* Wilson.

The happy occasion passed off most merrily. Old Mr. Millington was so delighted with little Brown Wilson, that he forgot, in his ecstacy, the days when he "cut up so much timber."

Nothing could again seduce Wilson into intemperance, since his unlucky adventure at the "Angel and Trumpet;" and if "Ma-ria's" fascinating face ever passes in his thoughts, the beauty of the vision is marred by the remembrance of the ten-pound notes.