TWO SHILLINGS.

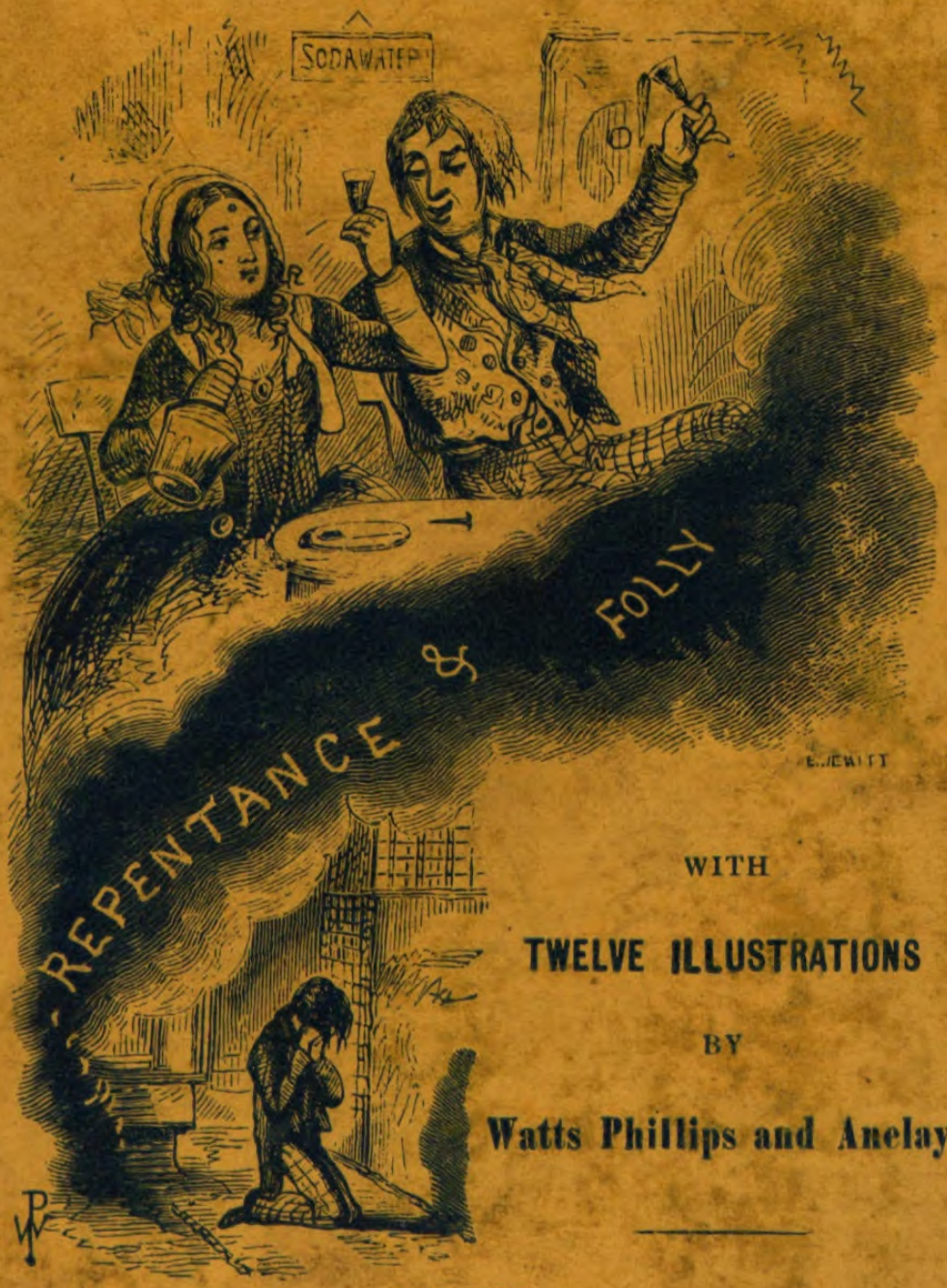
THE

# WORST IN THE WORLD:

OR,

## Night and Day.

BY JOHN BENNETT.




WITH

TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

Watts Phillips and Anelay.

LONDON:

GEORGE VICKERS, ANGEL COURT, STRAND.

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"Under thy mantle black ther hidden lye
Light-shonning theffe and traiterous intent,
Abhorred bloodshed, and vile felony,
Shameful deceipt and daunger imminent,
Fowle honor, and 'eke hellish dreriment."
—*Spenser.*

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# PREFACE.

If the author of these stories claims any merit, it is for fidelity to common life and nature. Leaving "high art" excellence, and ideal disguises, to those whom they concern, he has simply contented himself with sketching things as he found them.

The "Night" piece here is sketched almost literally from life. The characters—almost to the very names—lived as here set down. The scenes are faithful transcripts—and the fearful position of the "ower" tried and tempted hero by no means exaggerates the reality.

The dangers of pride and passion are equally depicted in Night and Day; but the moral Night

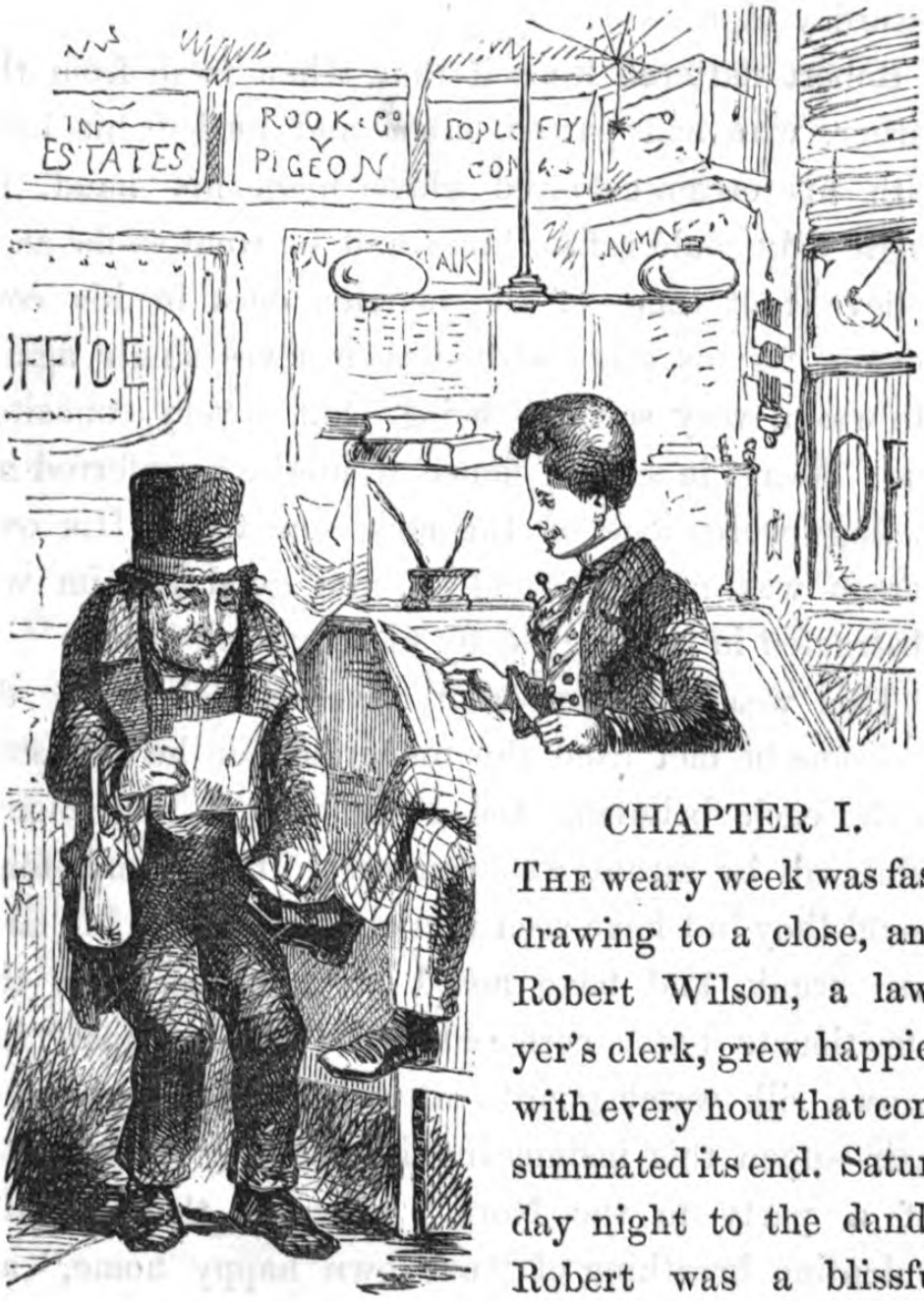
deepens in the first to the darkest pitch of midnight, and the erring one sinks unaided; while, in the second, Night yields to the dawning light of heaven, and the criminal is saved by the hallowed influences of love and kindness.

J. B.

# PART I.

# NIGHT.

# NIGHT AND DAY.




## CHAPTER I.

THE weary week was fast drawing to a close, and Robert Wilson, a lawyer's clerk, grew happier with every hour that consummated its end. Saturday night to the dandy Robert was a blissful time. He then had the pleasure of receiving his guinea,

and the pleasure of disbursing it—and no small portion was expended on the adornment of his person, and the luxury of a cigar. Moreover, Sunday follows Saturday, and the delights of that day eclipsed even the joys of Saturday night.

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, for his sake, wished themselves single again. He was a very sociable being—but a very conceited one; always in smiles, hence 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 fair he coquetted with, each believing the swain meant matrimony; while 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 that 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 the clerk's generous assistance, 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 with Jane, to Richmond, and had promised to meet her at seven o'clock, at Lambeth Palace. Fond of boating, he was anxious to appear before her in a new character—that of a "jolly young waterman."

How slow and laggard moves time to the impatient mind! It wanted but a little quarter of an hour ere

Wilson suspended his labours for the week; yet the hand of the office dial travelled marvellously slow to five. To beguile the time, he diverted himself by whistling a polka, 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 s'pose she never will be Mrs. Wilson."

"Hardly likely, I think. Lord 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, you will 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 discovered 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."

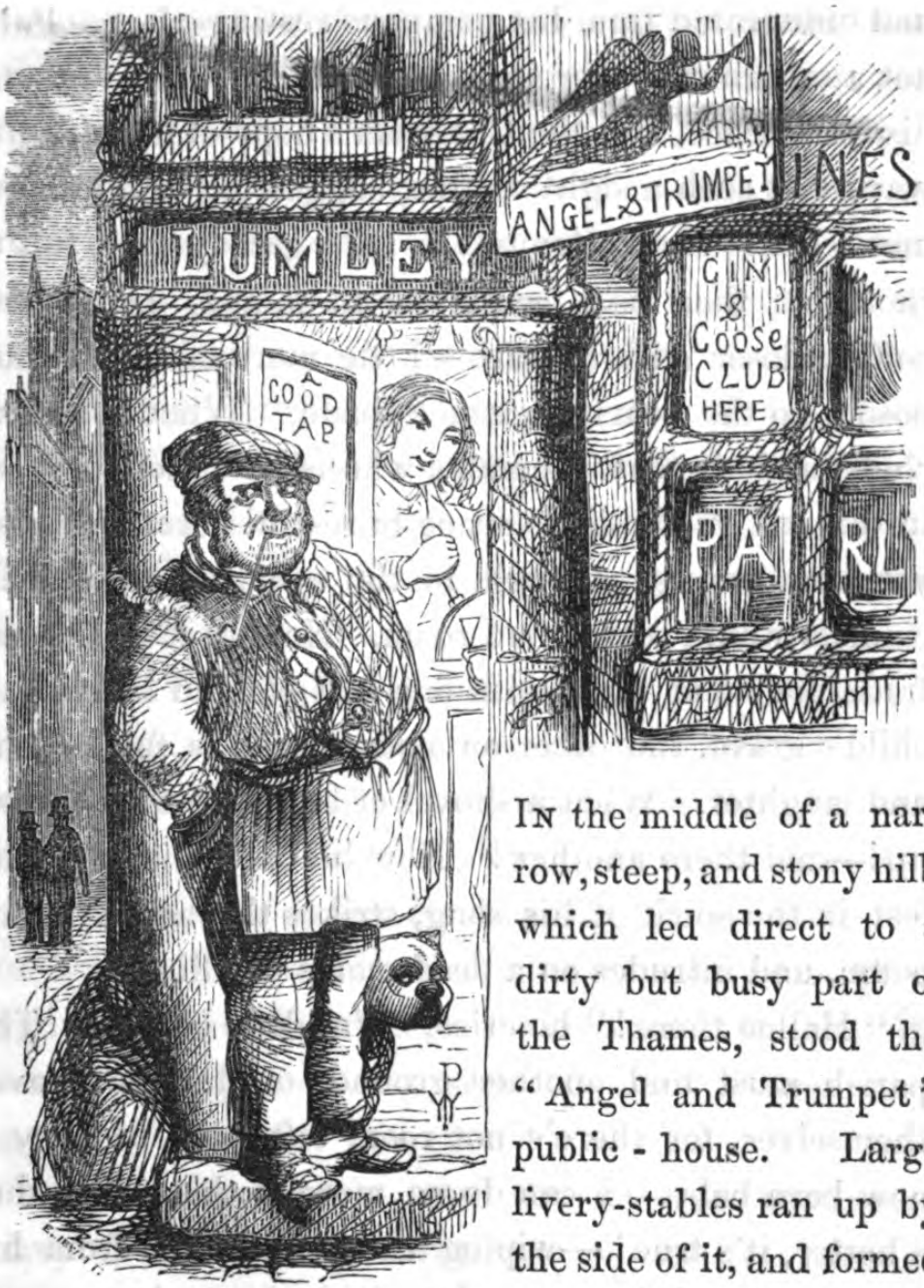
"I daresay, Tomkins, the sight of a few of these," showing three ten-pound notes, which he had received from a client of his master, "would make the young widow *very* gracious."

"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. It's drink—drink—drink, with him, from morning to night; and when he is half gone, he orders beer and ale to be supplied in the tap-room till all there are like himself. Will you come?"

"By seven I will be there."

Tomkin's 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 that 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 space 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 in 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 on 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 brow—"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 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, 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 passes 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 on 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, while 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 daresay 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.

"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. I've told you before this, there's a solicitor comes here—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 it's 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 smart lace cap was trimmed with variegated ribbon; long black ringlets fell over her cheeks, but they had been furnished by the hair-dresser—age having turned her own hair grey, it was carefully hid out of sight.

Maria, or, as she was sometimes called, Mrs Trevor, was a far different person 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 surpassingly fair, and each taper finger was ornamented with a glittering ring. Her head was circled by a velvet band, closed 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, and 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 condemned her more than these reports. Without a blush, she could 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 to spend it 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 cherished 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 "gentlemen" 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 occcasionally, 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 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 exhilarated 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 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 interests 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 sincere, 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! It's 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, Maria! It's 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-espectable 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 did'nt 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 frightened, 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 besmeared 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 his 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 tap-room.

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 coal-heaver. 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 on which he sat. His name was William Marshall. He was the son of a jeweller 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 vices known only to himself—they gained the mastery over him, and he supported them by robbing his father. Who would have suspected that this genteel and delicate-looking youth was a thief! But he was. The evil that beset him was a passion for riding—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 be-

witching 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, running 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 I can find but eleven!"

"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 that 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 others 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 it's 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. It's shut up six days out of seven, and the parson goes fishing, with two thousand a-year for doing nothing; and the day it's open it's 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 savage 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 as that—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, jist 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. A'ter 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 is 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-y!" 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 conspicu-

ously 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 father 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 pawnbrokers, he would borrow a sovereign or two of one of those worthy gentlemen, and

punctually repay it 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 Marshall, "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.

"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 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."

"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, nothing—young Marshall, wild in his liberality as in everything else, put a shilling in the little tin plate, and told him to go back to 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 Israeliti-h 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 have 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 'Maria' 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 under-

stand. 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 that 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 sat 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 lanlord, 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, he 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 as 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 branches 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."

William's demands were satisfied.

"Yet stay," he said, his ardour for a moment waning, "perhaps now I over estimate your goodness. It may be you are kind because you fancy my expectations great. Oh! if it is so, it is not worth a name."

His whole soul waited in his eyes for her answer.

"Apart from all circumstances, I feel kind to you."

"Not from *all?*"

"Yea, as the Quaker's say."

"Not if I were a poor thief—ha! ha!—for instance?—ha! ha!" he jocosely, but chokingly surmised.

"Ay, if you were the devil!"

"And the Lumleys?"

"If you speak of them," she quickly interrupted, "I shall go up stairs and leave you. Will you have any money?"

William hesitated.

"Come, do not think twice about it, but say you will."

"A tempting question to one who wants money, and has got none. But why may I not speak of the Lumleys, Maria?"

"Again!" she exclaimed, somewhat displeased. "There's my purse," throwing it on the table. "Good night!—good night!"

He quickly followed her, and as they stood together in the passage, Maria having one foot on the stairs, the Sabbath's earliest light streamed through the shutter holes of this little hell, and lay like moonlight on the floor.

Many fond words were spoken—they kissed, and parted.

William returned to the parlour and the purse. It was a pretty article, with gold tassels, and it contained four sovereigns. But tell us, William, what that is in the paper you are now unfolding?—a broad gold ring, lettered with the words "Forbear—Forget—Forgive."

"She forgets this ring was in her purse, I know," he said, reading the words over again. "Not that it explains anything of her history—and I am pleased it does not, for I should not like to learn by accident a

secret concerning her which would trouble her, curious as I am to acquaint myself with that which she so tenaciously keeps hidden. How wary we ought to be in judging one another! I never thought Maria had half the heart for liberality like this. Like the rest of the world, I knew her bad in one thing, and therefore believed there was no good in her. So I must now expect to be judged in the same uncharitable manner. There is a strange tale wrapped up in her—no doubt a tale that would reflect more guilt upon others than herself. It is a shame of me to use her money, well knowing I have no prospect of returning it. But it is too late in the day for *me* to talk about shame. Shame, indeed!—what about the watches? Come, come, no more 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. 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?"

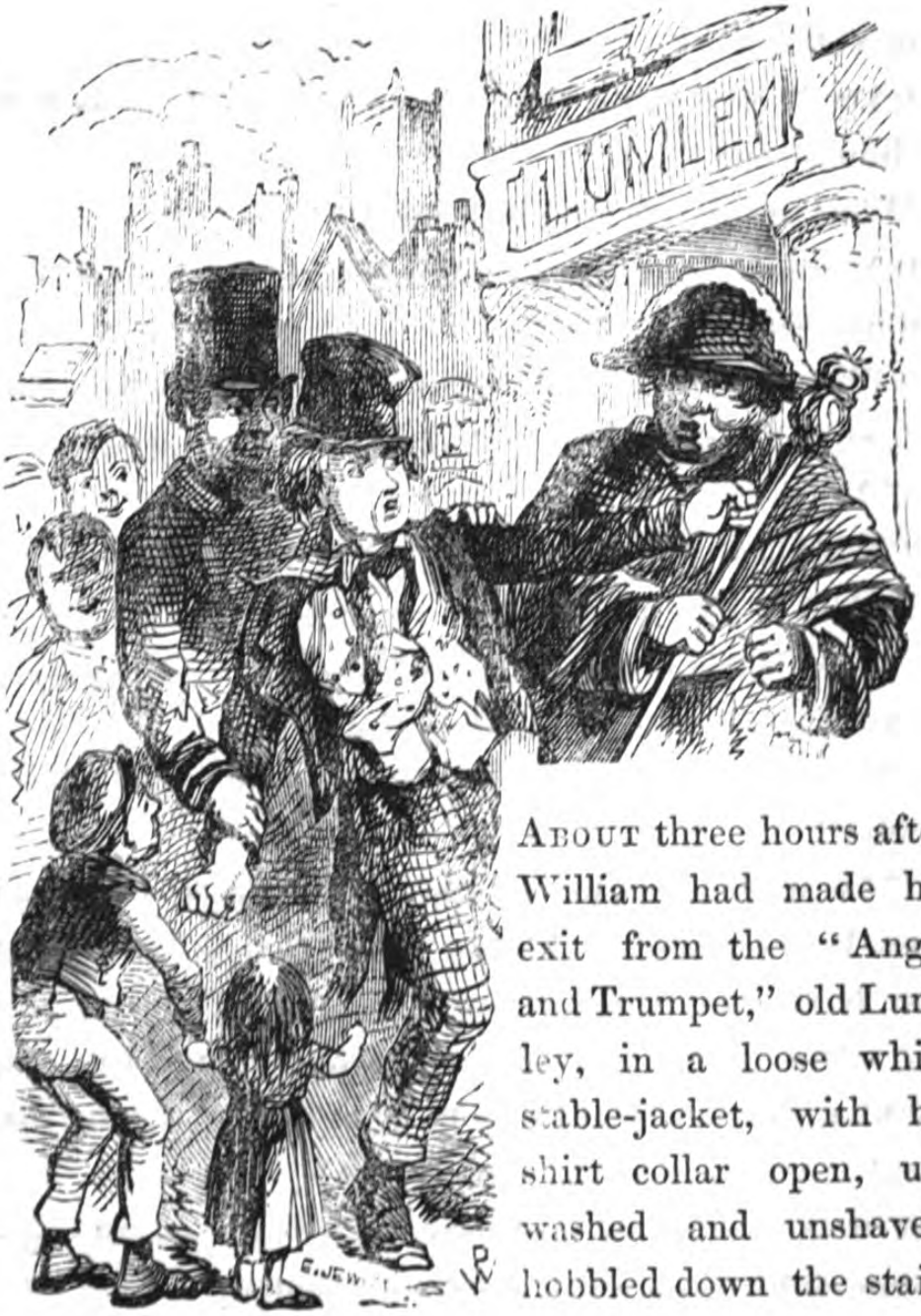
"Please, sir, doesn't you remember the last time you druv Maria out in Handiside's shay, you promised me a few ha'pence for minding the horse?"

"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 it's 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 against 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. It's a dead robbery upon the publicans! But we sarved 'em out for it. When they came 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 dare say 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 going 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 forget 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 gratitude 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 a signal for a renewal of the sailor's grief. He flung his hat from his head in honour to her beneath, and 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 his 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, scrutinizing the drunken man with a gold eye-glass.

"It's 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 tolerated 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 station-house."

"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 get 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 strnck 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 truncheon, struck Wilson across the wrist, and then led him towards a neighbouring station-house.

## 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 did not fail to understand.

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 catechized 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 o 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, hiccup!—a jolly bright kettle singing on the hob, hiccup—cups and saucers in rank and file, like a regiment of soldiers, with a big bellied tea-pot 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."

"It's 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 as 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 would'nt 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 me-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 a 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 for 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 old 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 remembered 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 it: 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 would'st 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 sending 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 railing 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 shrank 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 free and very 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! It's 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, is'nt 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 it's 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 it's 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 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 fire-place, and in a corner, close by, lay his basket of tools—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 pawn-broker; 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 he 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 liked 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 so 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! it is 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. Sin-nerton—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 land-

lady, 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, Millington 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 nut-shell. His prominent cheek-bones reddened, and his small grey eyes turned pleasantly upon Mr. Brown, in hopes that he would say something 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 on

some flowery meadow, or sitting on a briery hedge, he would listen for the blackbird's whistle, or the rare note of the 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 being 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 has not courage enough to listen to a bleating sheep—who is terrified at his 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 found them on the tap-room floor. 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 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 thundercloud. "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.

"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 do 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—these 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 old 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 years. 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, 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's idle, and a drunkard." The clerk heaved a sigh.

"Oh, that is nothing, if he's 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. A thief *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 railing that enclosed 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 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* organ was out of tune at Marshall's delay, he called the 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 at the annoyance she received from the flies—"who-o-o, Dandy!" patting her neck. "That's the worst of this universal world, people thinks of nobody but themselves. If Mr. Marshall aint here quick upon, I'll take the hoss and shay back to the stable, and he may whistle for 'em when he comes. Humbug! and so I shall tell him—keeping a feller waiting 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 accepted the invitation.

"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's 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 cock-crow. 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 those of 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-obbed?"—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, it's by one of our tap-room 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. It's 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. Marshall—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 very 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 agin," 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 the 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 been 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 Lumleys, 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 her glittering 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 the 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 teapot, 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 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. To-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 night-cap 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 inquiries; but we never knows nothing here, sir," said Handiside, moving off with the tilbnry.

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 tap-room 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 there is 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 undressed, 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 mantel-shelf, and stretched him on the large table. The pot-boy 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 had 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, 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 pertickler notice—too much hoccipied 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 statement (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.

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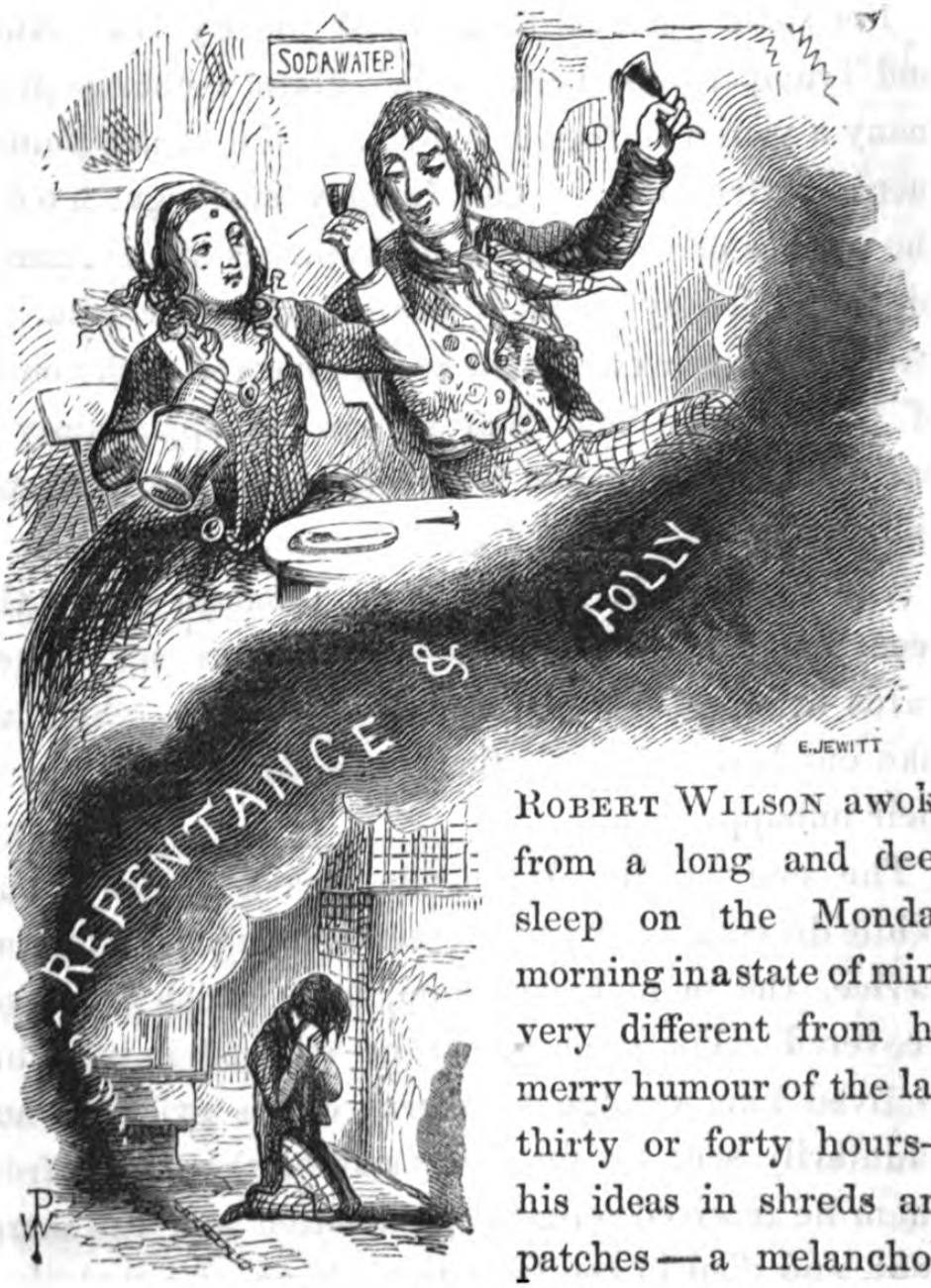
For some years after this sad history, the "Angel and Trumpet" flourished well. Maria's charms lured many a victim thither to his ruin. But at last punishment overtook them. Old Lumley fairly got fixed in the meshes of the law, nor could all his money, nor all his lies, aided by eloquent counsel, extricate 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 became 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!" he exclaimed, 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 bed-room 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 in 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 any 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 conld be done in time sufficient to sustain his integrity with his master. Another objection to the tracing the 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 of

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 a roundabout way 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."

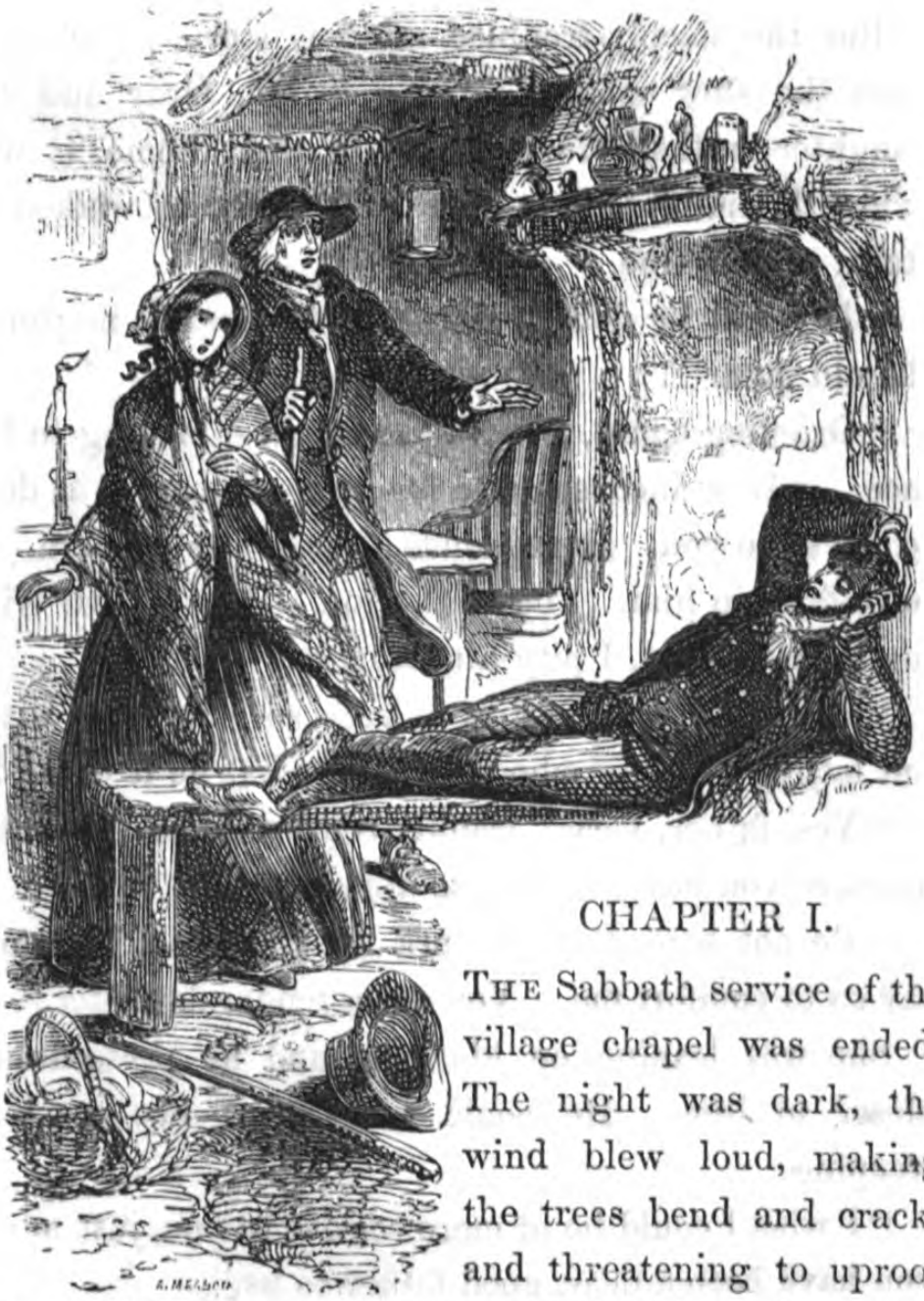
In a week Jane and Wilson were married, and the humble wedding-dinner was prepared by widow Sinnerton. Mrs. Wilson is now in a thriving way of business, and a twelvemonth after she commenced she was enabled to pay Brown ten shillings a week off the debt, and continued this sum until the whole was paid 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 occurs to him, the beauty of the vision is marred by the remembrance of the ten-pound notes.

# PART II.

# DAY.



## CHAPTER I.

The Sabbath service of the village chapel was ended. The night was dark, the wind blew loud, making the trees bend and crack, and threatening to uproot them. The horse-patrol was slowly going his rounds.

Disturbed by the noisy wind, echoes of watchful dogs came from surrounding farms; and to complete the dismal features of the night, a heavy rain began to fall.

But the deeply-troubled mind is storm-proof; and from the slow manner in which Mr. Gray and his daughter walked from chapel to their home, it was evidently indifferent to them whether they walked in storm or sunshine.

"Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" muttered the old man.

"Grieving again, father!" said Alice, looking in his face. "How inconsiderate for me! Robert is as dear to me as to you. His absence gives *me* no concern. I have faith in him. You ought, too. Poor fellow! with his temperament, I pity him from my heart."

"Is it not wrong of him to keep so long away without letting us know where he is, or what he is doing?"

"Yes, father, very," frankly replied Alice. "But I am sure you have nothing to apprehend."

"Be not sure, in such dark uncertainty. You only say so to comfort me. You are a tender daughter."

She was leaning on his arm, and he pressed her closer to him. He could not see it—but she was weeping.

"I wish I could be of more service to you, just now; you have been a dear, good father to us."

"I know, Alice, I have done the best I could for you

and your brother while I had the means. But I cannot control the ups and downs of life. I have endeavoured to lead you in the fear of the Lord, and kept you both at a good school. I can hardly make it out, for when I was master of plenty, Robert was as good a son as a father could wish to have; but now it has pleased Heaven to take the plenty from me, Bob has turned perverse, and deserted me."

"You must confess he has some cause for resentment. His home and our home was destroyed by your imprudence, father. It was an excess of friendship to hazard *all* you possessed for Mr. Johnson. Had you consulted us—"

"You would have objected," interrupted the old man, "and I should not have had the satisfaction of helping a neighbour."

"We will not dwell upon it, father; but it certainly was imprudent."

"Perhaps it was; but am I to be deserted by my children because, in the endeavour to save a friend's home, I have lost my own? Because a shadow slumbers on my prospects, are my children to shrink from it, and leave their father groping in the dark? Bitter, bitter thought! I believed children sent to sweeten life—to smile when all else were frowning—to protect us from calumny—shelter us from storms. Sad disappointment! Children are the weather-glasses to read men's fortunes by—attentive and loving when all

is calm, but indifferent and presuming when a wreck is in view."

"It is now six months since Robert left, and I never saw you like this before, father;—and on the Sabbath-day, too!"

"I have not felt the less, child, because it has passed your observation; but to-night, while the wind was howling, my attention wandered from the minister's discourse to Robert. At one moment he came before me dressed like a lord, and scorned his father for not joining him in his reckless wanderings; at another, he stood before me shivering and hungry, and told me he had to thank his 'tender' father for it! at a third, I thought I saw him in a felons' prison, braving the judge, and I could have shrieked when the judge asked him, 'What have you to say, Robert Gray, why the sentence of the law should not be carried into effect upon you?'"

"You thrill me, father," said Alice. "How can you so torment yourself! Robert is proud, I know—but I know, also, he is honest."

"A poor guarantee for it, to desert his father in his trouble. And does he better his condition by leaving me?"

"Perhaps not, father; but Robert can endure abroad what he could not at home. He cannot, unfortunately, bear to labour where he has been in the habit of directing."

"And you call that pride! I call it ignorance. Had your brother a worthy pride, he would have ploughed harder for a year or two to extricate us from this calamity. I speak not for myself, having food and raiment, I am content; but I am *not* content to know my children unhappy, and wandering from their father. Robert is too impatient—too reckless. He would reap without sowing—gather without planting."

"No, no, father—only he does not gather and plant in your way. All this time he may be living a life that you could not object to."

"Tell not me, Alice," said the old man, peevishly: "there are no indications for what you say. I want to see things as they are."

"Yes, father, that is right; but as we cannot see things as they really exist, let us hope they are as we could wish them."

"Why does he not come home? It is true I have not now a horse for him to ride—servants to superintend—barns breaking down with stores; but he knows all I have got he is welcome to. There is nothing to prevent our getting on again. We have health and strength. Although my house and cattle are gone, I have a good name in the village, and owe no man anything. When first I married your mother, Alice, I had not so much to begin with as I have got now; but by frugality and industry, I contrived to increase that

little too much, till at last I was rich enough to buy the house and farm you and your brother were born in."

"We shall get on again," said Alice, cheeringly; "I will help you all I can, won't I, father? But do not depress me by such fearful fancies. I have lost something, too, in the ruin."

"What! what have *you* lost more than me? what *had* you to lose? I cannot think what you can mean; tell me."

"Have you not lately missed Tom of an evening, father?"

"To be sure I have, and mentioned it to you. Well, what of it? what of it, Alice?" he added, before she could answer.

"You shall see his letter to-morrow."

"Have you had a letter from him? Don't torment me, Alice. Tell me what he said."

"You bear trouble so ill, father, that perhaps it would be wrong of me to tell you. Yet it is a thing you must be told; but for the world do not speak of it to any one. For my sake, promise me this."

"Trust to my prudence in the matter. Do not bind me with promises, there's a dear child. No more preface, but tell me."

"Well, then, father—Tom loved me because my father lived in his own house. When my father lost his home, I lost Tom."

"Does he say so, my dear?"

"Of course not, father. I have told you my solution of it. He makes a more graceful excuse. He says he is embarrassed, and that it would not be prudent for himself or me to continue his engagement."

With considerable emotion, but in tones of tender sympathy, Mr. Gray ejaculated—

"Deserted you, has he, my dear? Indeed! indeed! Really! really!"

"So I have *my* trial, too, have I not, father?"

"Yes, indeed you have, my dear. And all through me. I ought to have been more cautious. Mr. Johnson, Mr. Johnson, you have brought heavy troubles on my family! So much evil to come from one act of kindness!"

"The evil was there before," said Alice. "The ruin of our prospects has but developed it. He only loved me for my position—not for myself."

"But is it right to bear all this patiently?"

"Indeed it is; and every other ill that comes upon us."

"How calmly you talk, Alice. Don't disguise your feelings."

"My feelings have had their day, father; but they are as you see them now—they are not disguised—nor destroyed—but as you say, calm. Let us get home, I am getting cold."

"Home, Alice! say, deserted Home! where fire

can't warm, nor light illuminate. Oh, my child, there's not a wreck of Home left! It had a wintry cheerlessness from the hour in which we lost your mother—it became dark when my son deserted it—and it is blighted now by that detested man!"

"No, no, father," said Alice.

"Why *will* you plead for him, Alice? It is very wrong of you. Some fathers would slay him."

"But not mine," sweetly rejoined Alice; "he has too much wisdom even to hate him."

"But he must be told of his meanness. I cannot rest until that be done. To-night I shall tell him that, or he will think I am a weak old man, and regardless of my daughter."

"*I* shall think so, father, if you do not consult her more than this. Let this be *my* trouble. If I could have helped it, you should not have known it. Come, father, forget yourself for once, and think of me. Speak consolingly to me. Tell me to never mind Tom's want of honour—tell me to forget him. Tell me it is all for the best, and hope you may live to hear me say so. Tell me in this world we shall have tribulation, and that I must not hope to escape it. Tell me that happier days are coming, and that we must patiently wait their coming. Talk thus to me, and to yourself, father."

They were now upon the rough stone steps of their new home, a little house near by a mill, whose stream

of water ran babbling across the road, over which was a picturesque old wooden bridge. Alice opened a gate, and they descended to a court. In the middle stood the house, with its four latticed windows, and thatched angular roof. A deep well was on the left, covered over with a slate roof; buckets, with long ropes attached, which were attached again to a rusty pulley above, lay about the rotten boards that covered the well. On the right of the house was a little flower garden, with several bee-hives at the end. A low, red door, with a little antique black knocker, led to a long uneven stone passage, in which was the dairy with its trellis-worked doors, and two stone-paved rooms; a narrow corkscrew staircase conducted to two small rooms above, which were darkened by the thick ivy that grew around the windows. In one of the apartments below was a large fire-place, but no grate, the fire being made upon the hearth. A tall blue clock, with diminutive face, and brass hands, stood beside the whitest of dressers. A deal table, reaching from end to end of the kitchen, with low forms fixed around, stood beside a window that looked on the garden, and a large hilly meadow on the other side of the road.

Alice and her father stood in mute astonishment to see a candle lighted upon the table, and near the fire-place, stretched on the form, a young man fast asleep. The candle which burnt by the sleeper, told one fact concerning him—that he had been there some time—

for the tall fiery wick was spluttering around little excrescences, till at last, overpowered by the weight of the top, it bowed its head in the tallow, and left the room in darkness.

Mr. Gray's dog Shepherd here found his way into the kitchen, and when he descried the face of the sleeper, he was up on the form, and up on the table, and planted his fond but dirty paws on the young man's shoulders, and licked in joy the face of Robert Gray!

This rough affection, and the noise Alice made while striking with flint and steel another light, disturbed the sleeper, and he opened his eyes upon an almost broken-hearted father, and young and anxious sister.

Old Mr. Gray sat down upon the extreme end of the form, looking with a stern face upon the gold buttons of his son's coat, and entertaining the gravest suspicions how they were paid for. Nor was old Mr. Gray better pleased to hear the sound of Robert's creaking boots as he came across the kitchen to embrace his sister. Nor did he like the newness of his clothes, nor the style of them.

"See, father," said the hopeful Alice, "happier days begin to dawn already. Poor father has been so wretched about you, Robert."

"And now I am come, Alice, he won't speak to me! Come, give me your hand, father," he affectionately said, going to him. "I have walked a long way to see you

and Alice, and I have never forgotten you, although I left you."

"But you sadly forgot us when you left us," said Alice.

"Oh, my dear, I could do you no good by remaining. I have been to London, Alice, and got on well. London's the place! Oh, you would be so pleased to go to London! I only had five-and-twenty shillings when I left you, and now I have in my purse more than a hundred pounds! And look at my clothes! and look at my watch! This is London, Alice, where men make their fortunes—"

"And hang themselves," interrupted Mr. Gray.

"And that's your first word to me, is it, father, after so long an absence?"

"And my second shall be a question:—How much have you laboured to make yourself a gentleman?"

"Laboured! not at all. Good luck has done it! Men of spirit—men of brain—do not labour in London! That's the beauty of it!" he gaily added.

Alice looked somewhat alarmed at Robert's reckless reply, aud his contempt of labour.

"And my third shall be a question:—What will Robert Gray do in the hour of his ill-luck—beg or steal?"

This question deeply stung him, and with the utmost contempt for his father's suspicions, he replied—

"Perhaps I shall meet with a benevolent Mr

Gray, who will send his children beggars on the world to assist me."

This keen reproach wounded like an arrow, and with considerable indignation at this satire upon his kindness, in his sternest manner he exclaimed—

"Oh, thou gambler! Some minutes since I wept to see you, hoping you would dispel the dreadful fancies I have had about you. And you have dispelled them—by confirming them realities!"

"This warfare is creditable to neither," interposed Alice. "Relieve father's fears, Robert; and give him a frank account of yourself."

"He cannot do it!" exclaimed the old man.

"You would not understand it if I did. Be satisfied with the result of my doings, never mind the details. Is fifty pounds any use to you?"

"No, not a penny of your 'good luck' money for me. I would rather starve."

"Are *you* so independent, Alice?" offering her a ten-pound note, at the same time drawing her to his knee.

"I dare her!" said her father.

"Well then, my dear, a trifling keep-sake from your brother before he is hanged," he added, smiling, giving her an elegant brooch filled with his hair. "Now then, Alice, a little supper—if you have any—and I'll be off."

"Do not leave us again, Robert!" importuned his sister.

"Yes, my dear, I did not mean to stop. I have a couple of friends waiting for me at the Market Inn."

"Go and fetch them—shall he, father?"

"That is not at all likely. After the reception I have met with, I would not like to risk the comfort of my friends."

"Oh, don't take offence at poor father, Robert: he is all love and all care for you. Both of us have much to thank and love you for."

"I know we have, and I *do* love him. Do you hear me, father?"

"Yes, I hear," responded Mr. Gray.—"Come me, then I'll believe."

"The home that Johnson ruined, I loved. That home I would and did labour night and day to support. I passed just now the pretty spot upon the hill, and as I gazed upon it, I cursed the man that drove us from it. Alice and I were born there—mother died there—and we were all happy there. We laboured hard, and suffered much to get it; and one imprudent act of yours, father, deprived us of it, and sent me a little better than penniless upon a world I knew nothing of, and reduced you and Alice to a dark humdrum place like this. But I will not be content until I get the old home again."

First homes, like first loves, are never forgotten. Both Alice and her father deeply felt all Robert said and both were pleased at his laudable ambition.

"Labour will do it," suggested Mr. Gray.

"I know a quicker method, and a far pleasanter one."

"I may not live to see it, Robert—God grant I may not!—but as sure as you are my son, your contempt for labour will be your ruin. I have no more to say."

They had just sat down to the remains of a meat pie, when a little country boy came to the door with a message from Robert Gray's friends at the Market Inn, telling him they were in a hurry to go.

"Run back, my lad, and tell them I will be there in a minute."

He hurriedly ate his supper, and rose to depart. The clock struck ten. The wind grew louder, and roared like thunder in the great chimney. The dog was at his heels, and barking in his face for a little notice. Father and sister gazed on him as if for the last time. Their eyes were filled with tears. So were his own, nor did he attempt to disguise them.

"By the bye, Alice, how is Tom?" he asked, as he drew on his gloves.

"We will talk of nobody but yourself now," she evasively replied. "Do, brother, think of what father says. We cannot get on without labour."

"True, true, Alice. But there are many kinds of labour. There is *hand* labour, and *head* labour. I have chosen the latter, and mean to abide by my choice."

"The first time I ever heard gambling dignified by the name of head labour," said Mr. Gray.

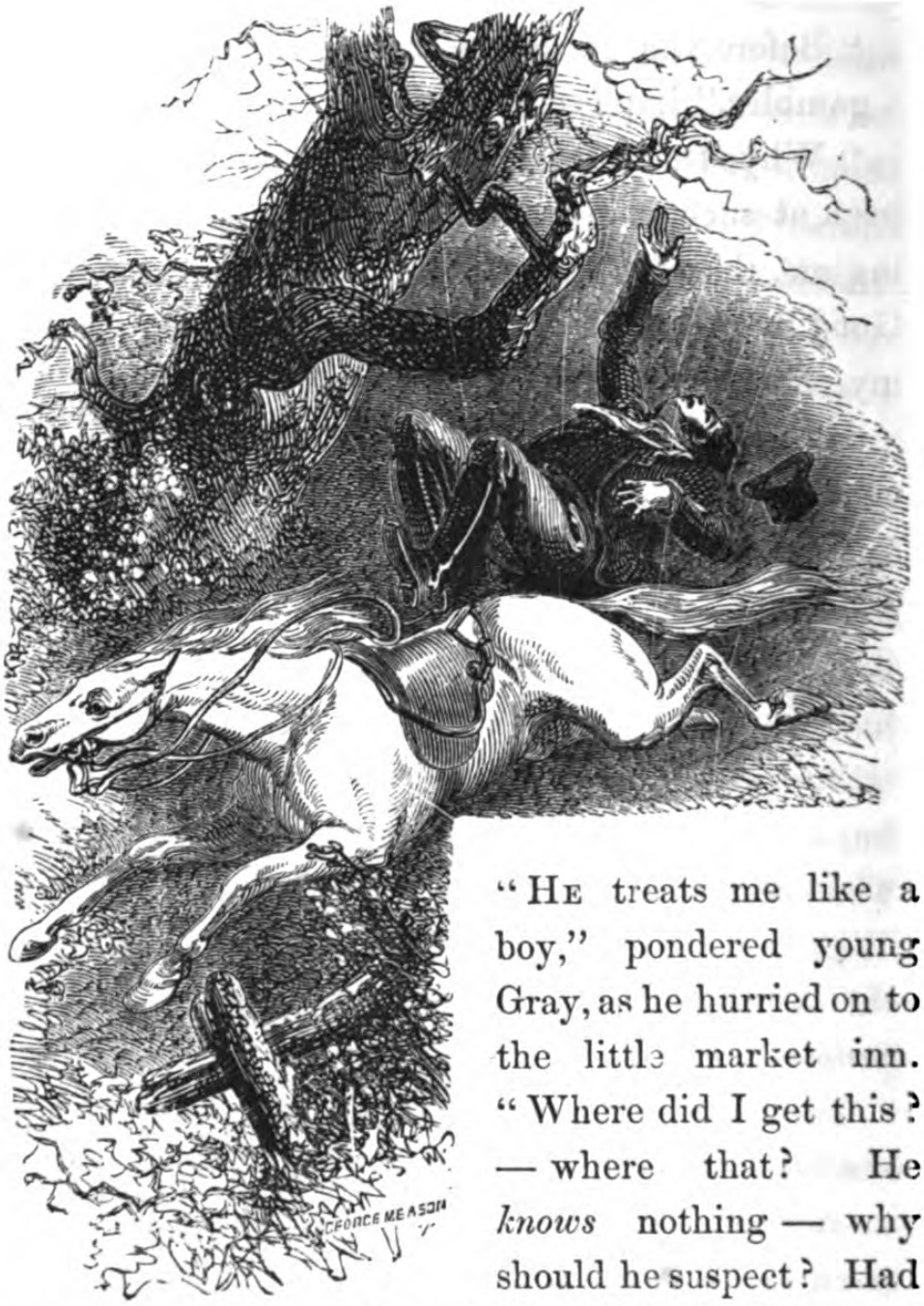
"I have chosen my course, and mean to abide by it," reiterated Robert,"

"Before you go, let me hear you deny that you are a gambler," implored Alice.

"Why, the truth is, my dear, you and father have been at such pains to build up your opinions concerning me, that I shall not condescend to destroy them. Good bye to both. I must go from you to carry out my effort of re-establishing us in our old home."

He was soon on the dark road, and hurried to his companions.

## CHAPTER II.




"He treats me like a boy," pondered young Gray, as he hurried on to the little market inn. "Where did I get this? — where that? He *knows* nothing — why should he suspect? Had he been a jot less dear to me, I'd not have en-

dured it. Pray let men be esteemed honest until they are proved the reverse. I came to give pleasure—I have given nothing but pain. I was a fool to consider him so much. Let him dig his turnips, if he will—and rear his pigs—and kill his cackling geese, and send poor Alice to the market with them. Let him, if he will;—and, at night, recline his limbs by a *kitchen's* fireside,—above his head an old thatched roof, and beneath his feet cold stone. He has reduced himself to this, and his only misery is, that I am not content to join him in his cottage joys! Indeed, I am not. I know a trick worth two of it, as they say in London. His good nature has pulled me down—I mean to struggle to get up again: not struggle long, either,—for it will soon be done. Already I have had a good earnest of success—and *discovery* is all I have to guard against. *I* have been robbed—why not others? Gracious me! what would father say, did he but know what I have done—and what I design to do? The twelve judges I would rather face than him. Well, 'tis for him and Alice, as much as for myself, that I make the risk. I *will* restore them to their proper home."

This, and much more to the same effect, did he resolve in his morbid mind, as he picked his well-known way along the winding rutty road, Even as boys are sometimes known to whistle aloud to keep their courage up, so did he, in the dreariness of his

conscience, endeavour to cheer it by dwelling on the *end* he had in view, and keeping in the dark the darker *means*.

Robert Gray, in the days of his ease, was a young man respected by all who knew him. His sister was devoted to him, and to his father he was precious. His irregularities at chapel were all the old man had to complain of in him, and this he would do in the tenderest manner: "No chapel to-day, boy—that's bad, bad." Indeed, to the outward eye, there was nothing else to reprove him for. He never gave any indications of dishonour or dissipation. The poor had no better friend,—his equals no better counsellor. He was everybody's confidant, and a welcome guest wherever he was known, even at the house of the neighbouring magistrate, whose daughter Margaret, gossips whispered, "did like young Gray."

But the test that Satan had Job tried by—"Put forth thine hand, and take all that he has,"—developed the sandy foundation of his virtues, and proved him nothing but "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal."

The Market Inn was but a short distance from his father's present home, on a dreary road. Through a narrow lane, well known to many an enthusiastic naturalist and botanist for the rare riches of flower and insect tribes which its two high hedges contained—a gigantic tree, the summer home of many a songster, growing right in the middle, led to a broad, steep hill,

on the brow of which was Hill Farm. But a short time since this was the property of Mr. Gray. Both his children were born there, and the old man himself had hoped there to have finished his earthly pilgrimage. But once too often he became bond for Mr. Johnson to the value of this property. This Mr. Johnson had been a large landed proprietor in the county—this Mr. Johnson was a speculator, and extravagant; and this Mr. Johnson's speculations and extravagance ultimately entailed ruin on himself, Mr. Gray, and others.

When old Mr. Gray was young Mr. Gray, Mr. Johnson's father (an admirable man) entertained a great respect for him, and often proffered his assistance. Though he never availed himself of the offer, the kindness kept green in Mr. Gray's memory, and no doubt was the impulse under which he acted in hazarding so much for Mr. Johnson's son.

It would be uninteresting to enter into further explanation concerning this sad event in the life of Mr. Gray, and we leave it, to pursue the history of the sadder consequences; adding only, that Mr. Johnson and family had emigrated to the far west, leaving Mr. Gray to sell his house, cattle, and fields of yellow corn, to release himself from his liabilities. Hill Farm was brought to the hammer, and purchased by its present occupant, Farmer Jacobs.

As if a magnetic influence existed between Robert Gray and Hill Farm, the nearer he approached the spot,

the more eager he seemed to arrive there. At the bottom of the hill he fixed his hat firmer on his head, and swung his arms swiftly to and fro, battling with the torrent of wind and the steepness of the hill. Wind and hill were conquered—his darling spot was reached, and he paused.

The farm receded a little to the left of the hill, and was entered by a five-barred gate, green with age, and fastened between two spreading oaks, whose foliage in the summer time veiled the house from view. But the sun had deserted them for other lands; and winter, with its nipping cold and raging winds, came, stripped them of their myriad leaves, and cast them to the earth for ever.

Still as a statue, and fastened by his bridle to the gate, stood a saddled horse, white as a sheet. In apparent reverie he stood, his broad chest against the top bar of the gate, his large black eyes immoveably fixed on the ground, while the wind played fantastically with his flowing mane and tail. Now and then a solitary leaf from the branches above would fall upon him, startled at which, he would prick his sensitive ears, and then again fall to ruminations never to be divulged. At the approach of Robert Gray, he began to snort and winnie—he champed his bit, and tossed aloft his noble head.

This horse he recognised as belonging to Tom Gladdish, the suitor to his sister, and master of the mill

on the borders of the stream within view from the hill. By the side of the horse he leaned upon the gate, tormented at his father's folly, and the duplicity of Mr. Johnson. In the large enclosed space before the yellow frontage of the house, cattle and sheep had gathered together under a shelter, and fowls roosted on perches above their heads. The shadows of a goodly fire sported on the window blinds, and Tom's hearty "Ha! ha! ha!" disclosed the happiness of the inmates.

Robert Gray knew nothing of the miller's faithlessness to Alice, and he would have been very glad to have shaken hands with him before he departed for London. But his pride, which entered into all he said, and all he did, forbade his seeking him. He was not suspicious, or he certainly would have been displeased to have found his old friend Gladdish away from the side of Alice; for just before the downfall of his house, their marriage was talked about. This marriage he relied on for the happiness of his sister—at the same time, his pride often trembled lest she should be taunted with her poverty.

"But I don't think he would do that either. There is nothing mean or mercenary about him, I know."

You are deceived, young Gray. Money is the god of Gladdish, as it is yours; and to that god has he sacrificed your loving sister. He is mean, too, for even now, while you stand fretting at the gate, is he

within traducing *her* memory to delight another. Nor does he spare you or your father.

A comfortless night without doors imparts a keen relish to the enjoyments within. Fires burn brighter, and human beings are drawn closer together in sympathy. Thus the goodness of God is apparent through every season. Would that the gratitude of man were also!

> "Shall man who is master of all,
> The only insensible prove?
> Forbid it, fair gratitude's call;
> Forbid it, devotion and love."

When Mr. Gray was master at Hill Farm, the Sabbath evenings were spent in reading and prayer. Farm-servants and house servants, children and visitors, were expected to make the "outward and visible sign," even if they had not "the inward and spiritual grace." How different the sacred day was passed with Mr. Gray's successor! Few men had more reason to be grateful, yet God was wholly shut out from his thoughts. A man of the world, he was wholly engrossed with its perishing things. See him now, fat and burly, sitting at consummate ease in the best parlour's easy chair, in his top-boots and knee-breeches, his big head denuded of hair, his nose almost buried in his red plump cheeks, small grey eyes and beetling brows, with his pipe in his mouth, and his glass of grog at his elbow, discours-

ing and thinking of nothing else but seed-time and harvest, his cattle, market-days, and the coming fair. He had thrown a gaudy silk handkerchief over his head to shelter it from the draught which he fancied came from the window at his back.

Facing this jolly yeoman, sat Tom Gladdish, also furnished with a pipe, and by special invitation, drinking home-made wine with Mrs. Jacobs, and her daughter Catherine. But twenty-four, yet he was thoroughly tired of a bachelor's life, and, since the blighted prospects of poor Alice, he was wooing Catherine to help him out of his difficulty. The expression of his face denoted anything but a deceitful heart. He was tall and handsome. Attired in a dark shooting jacket, buttoned close up to his throat, the ends of a red silk neckerchief resting on the outside, yellow gaiters, with pearl buttons, protecting his legs, he sat quite free from all restraint; his black hair brushed back from his sunburnt brow, his left hand thrust into the large side-pocket of his coat, his right reclining on the elbow of his chair, supporting his pipe, and his white hat on the ground beside him.

This evening Farmer Jacobs was also favoured with the company of a Mr. Yewdale, steward to Squire Shimmington, the magistrate, of Shimmington Hall. Latterly, an evening visit from him was no unusual thing, for Catherine's sweet face had also fired *his* bosom with the tender passion. When he himself

could not make a visit, he came before her in a dish of delicious fruit from the hall, or a bouquet of choice flowers, accompanied with compliments prettily written on tinted paper. This evening he came prepared to propose for her hand, and brought with him, for her acceptance, the Bible and Church-service bound together, in rich blue velvet, with a gold clasp, on which was engraved her name. On a blank leaf within was also written her name, coupled with his own, and a tender word or two beside. He was a man who prided himself on his manners, and his taste in dress. Not for the world would ever be seen Mr. Yewdale's hat upon the ground—*he* would not smoke a pipe where ladies were—*his* hand should not be indecorously thrust into his pocket. Oh, no; and he smiled complacently within himself at these and other free-and-easy manners of his rival, the miller, and cast sundry furtive glances at Catherine and her mother in hope of sympathy. He extorted none, for Tom's manners were more in unison with their own. Always elegantly dressed, the steward, on the night he came to declare his passion for the youthful Catherine was surpassingly so. A diamond glittered beside the carefully crimped frill of his shirt—a broad black riband bow ornamented his neat shoe—of the richest dye was his black coat, fitting his small figure without a wrinkle, and admirably contrasting with the pure white wrists and bosom of his shirt—his red thin hair parted in the middle,

and combed over each narrow temple. Silent he sat, absorbed in his errand, which was of too delicate a nature to speak of before others than those it concerned. He wished Mr. Gladdish would go—he was there first, and he esteemed it anything but good manners in the miller remaining so long. At length he said—

"Would Mr. Gladdish pardon his reminding him that his horse was at the gate, and might take harm in the bleak tempestous night?"

The gentle hint did not move the miller, and he answered,—

"Oh, bless you! no, Mr. Yewdale. No horse has such a constitution as my Snowball." And to the steward's exquisite annoyance, he refilled his pipe, and inflicted on him Snowball's pedigree, concluding "that he was a horse you could do anything with—that his own father rode him—and that he wouldn't take thirty guineas for him, money down."

As the steward's humanity met with no better response from the miller, he tried what proclaiming the time would do.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, in feigned surprise, returning his watch to his pocket, "it is near eleven!"

"Hang me! but I thought it was much later," coolly rejoined the miller, and begged of Mrs. Jacobs another glass of her excellent wine.

The disconcerted steward now saw his case was hopeless for that night; and feeling satisfied that the

rude miller was as loath to leave the charming Catherine as himself, he determined to keep his proposition in his bosom, and his present in his pocket.

Mrs. Jacobs and her daughter completed the evening circle. Side by side they sat—and so like each other, that it was often remarked, "Mrs. Jacobs would never be dead while Catherine lived" Now Catherine was a beautiful girl—but had not the spiritual and intellectual expression which pre-eminently distinguished Alice Gray. And if Catherine was a beautiful girl, it would only be a fair inference, that her mother was a handsome woman: and so she was. It is said, that "beauty unadorned, is adorned the most;" yet none would be found who did not think that the rich lace cap, trimmed with blue riband, did not contribute somewhat to the fascinations of Mrs. Jacobs, or that the scarlet dress of Catherine did not contribute to *her* charms. She was but eighteen, and the expression of her round face was cheerful as the sun, while her blue eye glistened like a river. The pure air she breathed, combined with early rising, and other healthy country habits, imprinted on her cheeks the beautiful colour of the rose, and gave a boundless vivacity to her spirits. Look at her now,—coquetting with her mother—tickling her hand with a sprig of holly—pressing her chin between her fair fingers—then looking in her face, exclaiming—

"Bless us! how handsome we are! What a smart

cap we've got on! Father, father, how proud you ought to be to have such a wife, and me such a mother."

"It is an old saying, and a true one, Kate," said the farmer, "that fine feathers make fine birds;" and as he thought he had said a clever thing, he laughed most heartily.

"I'll tell yon what it is, Jacobs," rejoined his wife, "when I was the age of our Catherine—"

"Ho! ho! but that was a long time ago, missus." interrupted the farmer, delighted at the hard rubs he was inflicting on his wife's vanity.

"You naughty man, you," said Catherine, springing to his chair, "if I don't punish you for that!" playfully pulling the handkerchief on his head over his face, and holding it behind, until he lustily sang out,—

"Don't, Kate, you'll suffocate me!"

Determined to have a little satisfaction Mrs. Jacobs said, "Now I declare—and Mr. Yewdale and Mr. Gladdish are here to hear me—If Jacobs didn't actually cry in the hall where I was servant, when I told him I wouldn't marry him."

Miller and steward here rushed to the assistance of Mrs. Jacobs.

"I confess I should have done the same thing as my friend Jacobs," said the former; while the latter followed on with—

"I know I should like a flower from the same

garden," casting his eye smost pleadingly on Catherine; but alas! *hers* rested on the miller. This the steward was annoyed to perceive; and his jealousy ill-naturedly prompted him to turn the discourse to Alice Gray, hoping thereby to injure his rival in the esteem of Miss Jacobs.

"By-the-bye, Mr. Gladdish, I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Gray in the village yesterday, and sorry I was to see her look so poorly, and, as I thought, so sad."

Mr. Yewdale's insinuation answered well its evil purpose. *He* cared nothing whether poor Miss Gray looked ill or well, sad or merry. But he *did* care that Mr. Gladdish's engagement to her should be known to Catherine.

How vain the endeavour of guilt to assume the guise of honour! No delusion so absurd! Tom Gladdish tried it, but failed. The very name of Alice Gray drove the colour from his cheek, and dispelled the sunny expression of his face. Alas! that this change was wrought by anger—not by contrition.

Determined that the ungracious work he had begun should be fully finished, Mr. Yewdale "begged to assure Mr. Gladdish, for his comfort, that it was only his *impression* what he had stated regarding Miss Gray—not that she said she was either ill or sad. Not for the world would he have mentioned it at all could he have thought it would have so depressed him. What a thing love is, Miss Catherine!"

The miller's eyes flashed on the steward, and thrusting his hand between the large buttons of his coat, with a most dignified air, he exclaimed—

"Mr. Yewdale, you are a meddler!"

"Mr. Gladdish!" softly remonstrated the steward.

"You are a meddler, Mr Yewdale!" repeated Tom; and then, loud enough to startle his horse at the gate, he added, "a notorious meddler!"

"Come, lads," said the conciliating Mr. Jacobs, "be friendly one to another."

"Take a glass of wine with me, Mr. Gladdish," said Mrs. Jacobs, innocently adding, to Mr. Yewdale's exquisite delight, "and let us hope Miss Gray will soon be better. Tell her to come and see us—we should be very glad to see her."

"Indeed we should," said Catherine, with the same innocence as her mother as to how matters really stood between the miller and Alice. "Do bring her! She is very religious, is she not, Mr. Gladdish?"

"I had hoped never to have taken her name upon my lips again," began the miller; "but as this meddler—you are nothing better, Mr Yewdale—has thought proper to make you understand that I have an attachment for Miss Gray, I now tell you all—what he knows already—that it is false! At one time, I confess, I had a kind of friendship both for her and her family; but the more I knew them the less I liked them. When they lived here, we were neighbours, you see, Mr.

of them, the reeling rider struck against the projecting branches, and was hurled from the saddle. The horse flew on—while the air was rent with the thrilling groans of the dying reprobate. The patrol came up, dismounted, placed him across the saddle of his horse, and conveyed him to the abode of Mr. Gray, which was close at hand. To his care he left him, while he sought the village doctor, a mile beyond. In all haste he came—but not to save. In delirium, pain, and darkness of spirit, the sufferer lingered but an hour. Alice and her father clearly saw the stranger's end was near. The former sweetly prayed for mercy on his soul. But his last words were, "It is dark!"

The horse, during the night, trembling and fatigued, found his way back to the mill.

While the miller made a fruitless effort to overtake the man on his horse, young Gray and his remaining associate fled in an opposite direction, and tramped all night, to reach the coach-town, from whence they departed for London. But how true is it that

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

Young Gray's rested on papers that were found on the man whose soul had so recently departed

> "To that bourne from whence no traveller returns!"

friends, who had accompanied him from London, were tired waiting for his return; so after drinking freely, and paying freely, they reeled forth to meet him, hiring a peasant boy to guide them on the dark way with a lantern. It was fortunate for old Mr. Gray that they met his son on the road, or what would he have said to his son's *friends*?—drunk both;—one with a woman's bonnet on his head, the other beating the air with a large branch of a tree he had picked up in the road, and both loudly singing a coarse song, which awoke many a villager from his peaceful slumber. They were expensively dressed in new clothes, and singularly dissipated looking men.

Laughter, song, and jest, brought them to young Gray; and, as the boy's lantern fell upon his face, they hailed him with a loud "Hurrah! hurrah!" This noise at the gate of Hill Farm brought out its alarmed residents—Mr. Jacobs leading the way with a fowling-piece.

The miller came to the gate only in time to see one of the intoxicated men spring on his horse, which, its spirit roused by repeated thrusts from the rider's heels, wildly bounded down the steep hill. It rushed on and on, heedless of danger to itself or its tormentor. In its rapid flight it passed the mounted patrol, who turned and galloped after. Before he could overtake the excited animal, it had dashed into the narrow lane that was peopled with trees; as the horse bounded by one

cabin, where he threw himself at length upon a cushioned seat, and soon sought rest in sleep. Deep and protracted was his slumber, but melancholy's shadow sat upon his expressive face.

Dead to all sounds:—he was undisturbed by the steamer's noisy engine—the restless waves—the steward's clattering preparation for breakfast—the tramping to and fro of passengers above his head—or the sweet tones elicited by a fair passenger from the piano in the cabin where he slept. Dead to all thoughts:—his soul upbraided him not with his shame, nor did his passions torment him for support.

The companion of Robert Gray, Mr. Jarrold, was a very different character; he was older in years, and in crime. His conscience had fled with his youth. He laughed,—yes, heartily—at the occasional depression of young Gray, and called it "sentimental." Anything without the pale of theatres, race-courses, saloons, and taverns, he deemed dull and stupid. As far as this world went, he was once well off—that is, for a time he had money of his own to squander. That gone, he distressed his friends for more. They failing him, he made his cunning serve him.

It was at a London tavern he first met with Robert Gray, and before they parted, he fathomed his history, and suggested to him the evil way to restore his lost fortunes—of course, not forgetting himself if his scheme succeeded, or if it failed.

Pulling off his cravat, coat, and waistcoat, he exclaimed—

"Now, steward, just show me where I can have a good wash, while you prepare a good breakfast. I say, steward, these are the customers you like,"—casting a satirical glance on his sleeping companion—"who pay for breakfasts, and sleep instead of eating them."

"Oh, I don't know, sir. You see we are obliged to take one with another. Some eat nothing—some little—some a great deal."

"I'm one of the latter tribe, steward, so I don't deceive you! and I hope you won't deceive me by having a scant supply. Have you got any kidneys? Sorry for that—very fond of them—wouldn't mind a shilling a piece for them just now."

"I happen to have a fine rump-steak," said the steward.

"Have you now!" exclaimed the epicure. "Oh, that's capital! Get yourself a bottle of porter. I shall be with you directly."

His ablutions performed, he combed his bushy black whiskers fiercely forward, sat down to breakfast, and ate as though he had never broken his fast before. The steak vanished as fast as the ghost in Hamlet at cock-crow; then egg followed egg in quick succession; and in order that there should be no standing still, he

A little time restored him to dread realities, and he looked for Jarrold—but he did not soon recognise his evil genius, although sitting almost opposite him, his lost locks, which had given place to a yellow handkerchief, had so metamorphosed him. After partaking of a slight refreshment, he joined the card party, but was much oppressed with the fear that the drunken companion they had left behind would lead, in some way or other, to the discovery of their guilt. At every opportunity he would whisper to Jarrold—

"What do you think about Matthews?"

"Oh, never mind Matthews; play your game," was the unsympathising answer.

Again he intruded his fears on Jarrold, and all he got was—

"Hold up your cards—mind your game—and never mind Matthews."

An unfavourable wind obstructed the steamer's progress, and she was twelve hours later in making her destination. At length the Tower of London was reached, where she disembarked her passengers. The two travellers hailed a cab and soon found themselves at young Gray's apartments—a superb suite—at the West-end, where the door was opened by a page in green livery.

"Any one called, boy, or any letters, since I have been away?"

"Nobody, sir—nor no letters."

"Ah, very well; prepare tea," said his master.

"Do you hear, boy—get the tea," reiterated the voracious Mr. Jarrold.

"You see Matthews has not been, Jarrold," said Robert Gray, in considerable disappointment.

"Confound the fellow! But mind you, Gray, it was a stupid trick of yours taking us there. I told you so, before we started."

"I know you did, Jarrold. But I felt a great desire to assist my father and sister."

"But that you could have done through the post or the bank."

"Yes—but you see—Jarrold," stammered young Gray, almost ashamed to own his better feelings, "it was the first time I had been away from them, and —silly enough, I dare say,—I wanted to see them. But I wish I had not gone now. It has been a painful visit throughout—and the result I dare not think upon."

"Now, Gray, don't be a child—don't be a coward—don't meet trouble half-way—don't spoil a good tea for fancies. Sit down—sit down. Matthews is safe enough, and the papers too. Every knock I hear, I expect Matthews."

"I expect nothing but discovery and arrest."

"Upon my word, Gray, you make me laugh."

"You may laugh, if you like, Jarrold—and I would laugh, too, if you could persuade me there was no danger."

"Why, as to danger, there is danger in every thing. Look here—this toast *may* choke me. I *may* live to be married. But the coffee is all out, and I *may* get no more—but, by your leave, I'll ring and try." Before he obtained leave, however, the bell was tinkling in the kitchen, and was immediately answered by the little page, with "buttons all a-down his jacket green," who was much amused to see worthy Mr. Jarrold, with his head fantastically bound in his yellow handkerchief, with a knotty end pertly sticking out over each ear,

Jarrold took his betting-book from his pocket, and bent his bushy brows in calculation.

Robert Gray, who was pacing the room backwards and forwards in misery, grew quite ill-tempered at Jarrold's coldness and indifference to his fears—nor did he attempt to disguise it.

"In earnest, I tell you, Jarrold, however wrong I may be in my anticipations, I do not think it is friendly of you to treat my state of mind with such contempt. Remember, it was your folly at the Market Inn exposed us to discovery."

"It was no such thing, begging your pardon, Mr. Gray. It was your folly in taking us to such a place —next door to the man you had robbed! That was bearding the lion in his den, with a vengeance! That *was* innocent!"

"You might have said *we* had robbed, if you are for speaking so very plain, Jarrold."

"Oh, dear no; I and Matthews knew nothing about it. Ours was quite a commercial transaction. We got the check cashed for you on certain terms. But *you* signed it—*you* forged the name of Shimmington; and to tell you the truth, it is the only thing since I have had the pleasure of knowing you, that you have done well, for we got the money without question or suspicion."

"Your remarkable ease about Matthews, is now quite accounted for. But I hardly think the quibble will serve you before the judge. Did you not suggest the plan? Did you not participate in the result?"

"What if I allow it?—that is only what my old aunt Tabitha calls *moral* evil—and that is nothing."

"The judges' law and yours would surely differ on that point."

"The judge must be a particular friend of yours, you seem to know his mind so well. He is none of mine—ha! ha!—we only met once, then we didn't agree—ha! ha! He would enforce his opinion of the matter in opposition to mine. He would be glad to see me again, but I am always otherwise engaged. That's a good bet, isn't it?" leaning back in his chair, and pointing to a page in his betting book. "A safe hundred there. And that's not a bad one."

"My interest, just now, Jarrold, has fled from races, and all other things. I am full of fear, and really wish myself out of life."

"Ha! ha! why don't you go?"

"Fear!" unhesitatingly answered the tortured man.

"Oh, dear me," said his tormentor, "yours is a hopeless case, indeed. You fear to live, and fear to die. I suppose you are aware you must do one or the other. Did you ever ask your friend the judge if there was any alternative?"

"I wish I had known you half so well before, Jarrold, as I do this night. You should have had no power over me. With all my heart I despise you! I had rather die a beggar in the streets, than work in anything with you again. What you know of me, you can make what use you please. The only favour I ask of you is to leave my apartments."

"Go! Then what will become of you? What will become of Hill Farm? Who will get the other checks cashed? No, no, Master Gray, you are not bold enough to do without me; and I love you too well to mind your temper. You are young, and will improve. The plan chalked out is profitable, and void of danger, if you will but sink this fear of yours, which every now and then comes over you, and makes you jump and start like a nervous woman at a postman's knock. Sit down—sit down 'I implore you,' as they say in the play, and drink to the success of our next campaign. Give us over the check drawn by Gladdish —which, methinks, when he finds himself debited with the amount at his bankers, will make him *Saddish!*

Ha! ha! That's a good joke, Gray, is it not? Ha! ha!"

"Matthews has got the check," said young Gray, sulkily.

"Oh, that's murder!" exclaimed Jerrold. "Matthews, eh? Then, I'll bet a guinea he has gone into business on his own account. Well—well—I never thought Bill Jarrold would live to be done by Jack Matthews. We are *check*-mated now, sure enough."

After a little consideration he continued—

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Gray; if you like to frank the expenses, I'll go and seek him."

"I shall be delighted if you will. Do go now—*now*, by to-night's mail! I will pay anything if you will."

"Give me ten pounds, and I'm off as quick as a bullet from a gun."

"There is the money; and I'll give you ten more if you bring back Matthews and the papers. I won't venture to stop here—but you can meet me in Liverpool at the house we stopped at when we went to the races, where, if you bring bad news, I shall be ready to sail for America."

"To Liverpool!" exclaimed Jarrold. "In the danger you apprehend, you could not go to a more likely place to be caught. *If* the thing is blown, you might as well give yourself up at once as go to Liverpool. My advice to you is, to keep in London, and

disguise your person as much as possible, so as to baffle the description which will be forwarded from one police office to another. You will be hit off in print as true as a daguerreotype;—the length of your nose—the colour of your hair—your height—the sweet expression of your face—and 'when last seen, had on—'"

"Don't, don't Jarrold—you'll make me mad!" interrupted young Gray.

"There," finishing the last drop of coffee, "now I'm off, Gray. I shall endeavour to be back not later than Sunday, and will meet you at the G. & D.," (meaning George and Dragon)—"you know where."

"Agreed," said Gray. "But it will seem an age before you return."

Jarrold rose to depart, when a most urgent and imperative knocking was heard at the street door. Pale as a shrouded corpse, young Grey flew to the window, where he held the sash in his hand—his eyes staring on the sitting-room door—ready, should it be the arrest he feared, to leap into the street, and so escape.

The lively page opened the door, and escorted to the apartment of Robert Gray a young maiden, whose spirituality of face was enhanced by the deepest sorrow. It was evidently some time since she had made her toilet, for her cottage bonnet was slightly awry, and a tress of her dark-brown hair had escaped its fastening, and stole down her fair cheek. The long lashes

of her eyes were matted with tears, her bearing betokened fatigue, and

"She drooped like a lily broke down by the hail."

Simply clad, on her arm she bore a small basket of refreshments; but the grief that preyed on her heart consumed her appetite, and they remained untasted.

When Jarrold cast his eye on her coming up the stairs, in disappointment he withdrew his head, and turned to Robert Gray at the window, saying—

"What a couple of fools—it's only a woman!"

The "woman" entered the room, and young Gray stood in the presence of his own dear sister Alice!

With a sister's dearest fervour—and who shall fathom it? or what love approaches it?—she flew to him—kissed him—bathed his face with a flood of tears and piteously cried—

"Oh! my dear, dear Robert! Thank God I have found you! They say—but no, I don't believe it now—it is a scandal, because we are poor."

Again and again, his sister kissed him—again and again, her tears flowed.

The heart-condemned brother exchanged a gloomy glance with Jarrold, who sat at consummate ease on a couch by the fire. After Robert dared to speak, he said, with an averted face—

"Why, Alice, you cling to me as if you had not seen me for a long time."

"Indeed, brother, I was afraid I should never see you any more, for they told me you would be trans—who is that gentleman, Robert?"

"Oh, I'm nobody, nobody at all," said Jarrold, with *nonchalance*, answering for young Gray. "Don't mind me. I'm off directly. I'm glad you have found your brother. What a striking likeness between you I see, now the blaze shines on you,"—poking the fire.

Young Gray's proud heart began to soften, and he longed for a likeness in spirit, as in face, to his sister.

"I am come to fetch you home, Robert," resumed Alice, as fast as her tears would let her. "You must come home—you must, indeed, or you will lose your character—and character is the only thing left us in this world. Oh, we must keep our characters, Robert, and God will bless us for it—and the blessing of God is the only thing worth living for. So you will come back with me, won't you, Robert? and defend yours before Squire Shimmington. What makes you tremble so!

"Your unexpected appearance, I suppose, has made me nervous. But tell me, Alice, what the report is, and how it originated."

"I hardly can, Robert, it is so dreadful! But on the night you left father and me, a dying man was brought to our cottage, and he died there—"

"That's Matthews! Do you hear that, Jarrold?" inadvertently interrupted her brother.

"Yes, Matthews, that was his name," said Alice. "But how did *you* know, Robert? How came you to be associated with *such* a man? Oh! I begin to fear."

Mr. Jarrold had heard quite enough, and considered it unsafe for him to remain longer, so without a word he quietly stole away, not having the slightest ambition to defend *his* character before Squire Shimmington, feeling assured "they would never agree."

"Do you hear me, Robert?—I begin to fear. Do tell your sister what wrong it is you have done. Don't deceive her—but tell her all. Poor father! I have often blamed him for his suspicions. Oh! that *I* had suspected sooner—then I might have saved you! My heart has been weak with love, and would not let my eyes see truth. And now, even now that I know, my heart is inclined to cheat me with the hope that it is not true."

After the villain Jarrold had left, young Gray seemed relieved of an odious presence, and he felt freer to unburden his guilt to his disconsolate sister.

"Did you but know how your tears torture me, Alice, you would not shed another."

"My heart would burst, did it not find vent in tears. Bear with them, Robert; they are not meant to punish you, but to relieve me. Poor father's heart will break at this affliction—you will be far away—and I shall be left wretched and alone.'

Robert buried his face in his hands, and the tears oozed through his fingers.

"Oh! this is dreadful! dreadful!" she chokingly exclaimed.

"Aye, it is, Alice. But do forgive me! and beseech father to forgive me,—and if you can, I shall be so glad to be forgotten. Do try now, Alice, and not burden your heart and memory with such a wretch as I am."

"Our forgiveness, Robert, is hardly worth the asking for;—it is from God you should implore forgiveness. Ah! my poor Robert, it was the forsaking Him—and His word—and His sabbaths, that brought this ruin on you! Do believe it! Let this momentous lesson teach you for the future. I beseech you, put off no longer seeking God. I am glad to see those tears you are weeping—they fill me with the hope that you repent."

Smoothing his hair from his eyes, and placing his head on her bosom—she resumed with surpassing tenderness—

"The cold world will forsake you for this—but I will not, nor will your father, nor—more than all—your Father in Heaven, if you repent. Robert, it is said, 'he that sows to the wind, shall reap the whirlwind;' but it is promised—and you have especial need for gratitude, 'when the wicked man turneth from his evil, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall

save his soul alive.' I ever deplored your wishing to be rich, but never thought you would peril your character for it. None are rich, until they are prepared for poverty, nor happy until they are prepared to die. When seas divide us, Robert—"

She was here interrupted by a violent burst of sobs from the contrite man, and overcome with compassion for her brother, fell on his neck, and gave tear for tear.

Thus they were found by the stealthy officer of justice. Both stared him as at a spectre. The battle had now fairly commenced. The cruel summons—

"You must go with me, sir, on the serious charge of forgery," struck both almost dumb.

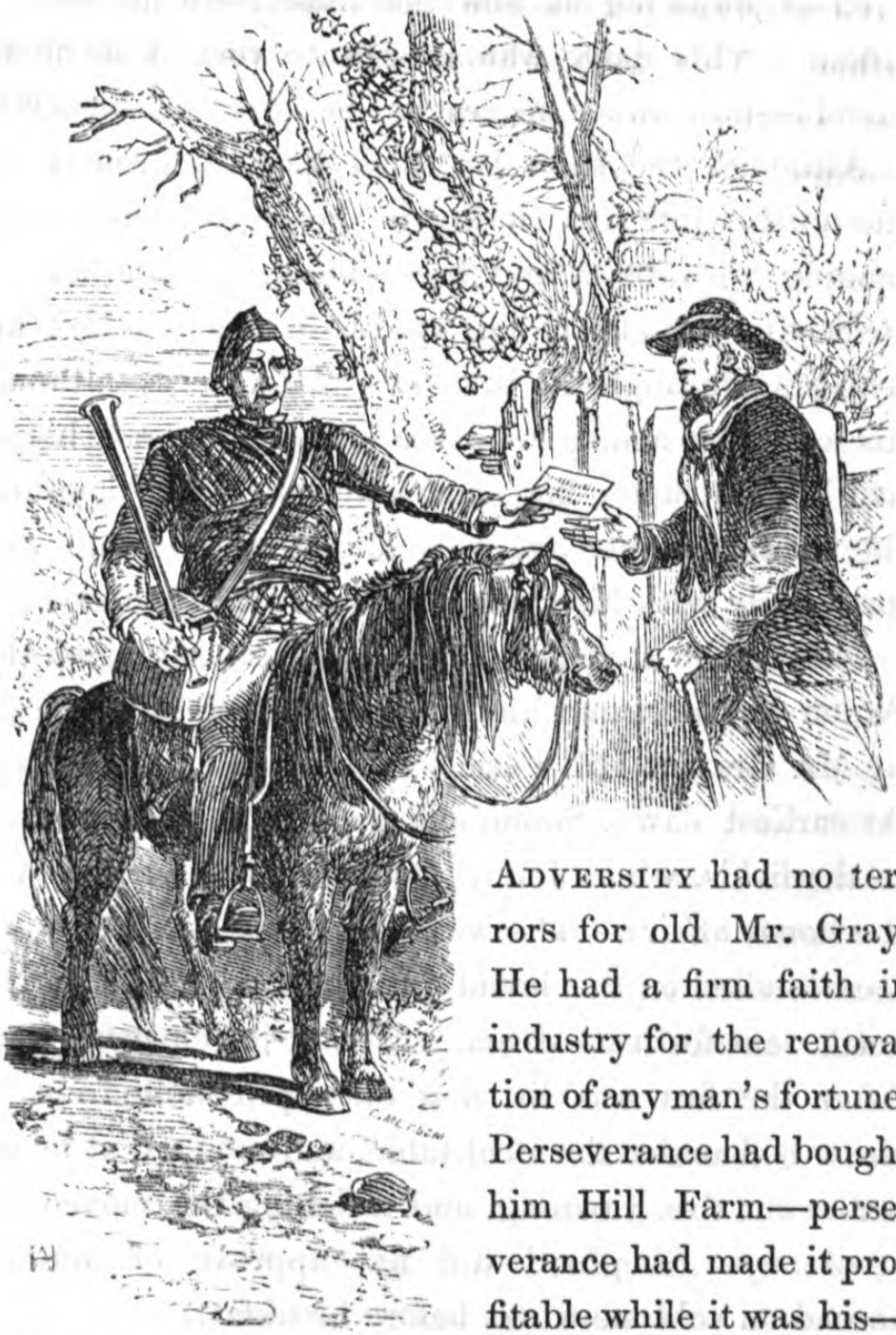
Alice, seeing the deep emotion of her brother, struggled with her grief, and succoured him. Words of comfort she poured into his ear—but when the officer grasped his arm, his blood congealed, and, insensible, he was carried from the room to a cab at the door, whither he was conveyed to Bow-street, from whence, on his own confession, he was committed to the prison of Newgate for trial.

Poor Alice, her brain bewildered, her heart loudly throbbing—her eye all mist—threaded the squares and streets of London, in quest of one Manning, who dwelt in one of the city's narrow lanes, and to whose house she knew she would be welcome.

Arriving there, she spent the night in weeping

and writing a letter of the dreadful fact,—but dwelling particularly on her brother's repentance—to her anxious father. This done, she retired to rest, and closed her swollen eyes in prayer for her prison-bound brother.

## CHAPTER IV.



ADVERSITY had no terrors for old Mr. Gray. He had a firm faith in industry for the renovation of any man's fortune. Perseverance had bought him Hill Farm—perseverance had made it profitable while it was his—and perseverance would restore his losses. He doubted

that man's love of God, who had no love of labour. The Creator had shown His benevolence to man, even in imposing on him the imperative necessity to labour for his daily wants. How sweet it made his bread!—how sweet his rest!

Although the snow lay thick upon the ground, and the north wind was rioting in the big chimney—contending with bolts and bars—clinking together the steel stirrups of an old saddle in the passage, and whistling through the branches of the trees—although his heart was aching with the life-long disgrace his son had brought upon his name—although his daughter, the comfort of his age, was far away—still he went forth early with his spade to till his little grounds.

During the absence of Alice, it was arranged that Simon Goodacre and his wife (who had been employed by Mr. Gray at Hill Farm), should live at the cottage. At earliest dawn, Simon and his master were working in the fields, while Jenny Goodacre was as busy with the house affairs. The sweet-smelling wood fire was soon kindled on the broad hearth, and the large iron kettle sent forth its steam, and sang its cheerful song. After the fire was lit, dog Shepherd stole from his straw bed under the deal table, and reclined at length before the fire, yawning, and watching the movements of Jenny. Shepherd did not approve of walking abroad on cold mornings before breakfast.

The tall blue clock struck six, and Jenny spread the

white cloth on the table—brought from the cupboard the large loaf and cold bacon, and placed two basons for Simon and herself, while for the master was placed a china breakfast cup and saucer—relics of other days!

The hour appointed for the meal had arrived, and with it Mr. Gray and Simon from the fields. Shepherd condescended to rise and meet his master, whom he conducted to his accustomed seat by the fire, and sat himself down by his side, and really looked quite sad. Indeed, since the departure of his young mistress, the old dog had quite lost his spirit, and become ill-tempered. Poor thing! he could not understand why Alice should be away, and Jenny there—it was never very clear to him why Robert should be away so long—nor where all the sheep had gone—and if his memory served him right, (it was a long time ago) but there was an old lady who used to be at Hill Farm—he did not know her name, but he was certain he should know her again if he was to see her—he never heard the reason why *she* went away and never came back again. True, the source of all these bitter changes the poor dog could not comprehend—yet he painfully felt them, and could he have accomplished his speechless will, Robert and Alice, his master and old mistress who was waiting the last trumpet's sound in yonder churchyard, should all be brought together again in peace, and live for ever at Hill Farm.

This was the happy morning when Mr. Gray expected a letter from Alice, and by ten o'clock he ought to have had the one she had sent. But it was quite impossible to say when it would come to the old man's anxious hands, for the letters of the village were entrusted to the care of a gossipping young Scotchman, Willie Ramsay, or better known in the district as Scotch Ramsay. Willie was tall and broad-shouldered; his twinkling grey eyes were buried between two high cheek-bones; his swarthy face could boast no whiskers, and his head but a few wiry curls. After the fashion of his country, a green plaid scarf was doubled over and over his back and chest, with a Glengarry cap on his head; and when on duty he rode a small Shetland pony, and carried in his hand a long tin horn, while the letters were deposited in a deep leathern wallet slung by his side. He was the letter-reader, letter-writer, and letter-carrier to the illiterate villagers. His profession made him welcome to all, though he kept the secrets of none. Wherever he carried a letter he never refused the hospitality of the receiver. Regardless of the undelivered letters in his wallet, he has been frequently known to tie up his pony and accept an invitation to dinner, and smoke his pipe in the chimney-corner after it. A mug of cider and a gossip generally followed the delivery of a letter.

Willie's gossipping propensities at last became so well known, that, at the sound of his horn, those who expected letters would run after him, and not wait for

his coming to them. Those who did not, must take their chance, and wait patiently. Squire Shimmington being a magistrate, Ramsay was acute enough to make him an exception to his general rule.

The breakfast over, Mr. Gray and his servants returned to their avocations. Now, Jenny Goodacre's besetting sin was curiosity, and the absence of Alice afforded her a rich opportunity of gratifying it. She rummaged trunks and drawers—examined dresses, tried them on, but could not fasten them. The dress that fitted the gentle figure of Alice was far too small for portly Jenny. Deep in the trunk, and tied in a small bundle, she espied such a feast of pleasure—the love-letters of Tom Gladdish. With the eagerness of an angler who feels a nibble at his bait, and draws up his line with his prey, Jenny brought forth the dishonoured epistles—dropped the broom from her hand, and the duster from her arm—sat on the edge of the bed—untied the bundle in her lap—and then, letter by letter, read every insincere word.

Jenny, who was devotedly attached to her young mistress, was indignant at the sources of her trouble.

"Ah! the good-for-nothing villain, he never deserved such a woman! Well, to be sure! the deceiver, he may live to be deceived! And he will—I know he will! If I was Miss Gray, I'd take and throw his trumpery letters in his face! As sure as my name is Jenny Goodacre, he'll never prosper! Fiddle-de-dee!

what's that doll of a Miss Jacobs, I should like to know? She may have money—but she knows how to spend it."

The climax of Jenny's good wishes for Gladdish—and who will deny that he deserved them—was, that "he might never get a wife at all—but live and die a miserable bachelor!"

As she rose to replace the letters, a little label that had escaped her notice flew off her lap. It had been tied over the letters. She picked it up, and to her utter astonishment, read, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Poor Jenny did not understand the sublimity of forgiveness for evil, and she was excessively annoyed at Alice for thinking of such a thing, and renewed her attack upon the miller.

"If he's forgiven," she said, "I should like to know who would be punished!"

The letters returned, Jenny discovered another prize—the miniature that Robert had given his sister. On the back of it, and in the full belief of her brother's innocence, Alice had newly writted the Saviour's divine rebuke—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."

The words that were meant to awe us from condemning one another, fell powerfully on Jenny. After calling Robert a villain, she said, holding the miniature before her—

"There, if I could have my way, I would have you,

Tom Gladdish, and runaway Johnson, tied up to the apple-tree in our garden and well flogged—and I should like to have the doing of it. Oh, I dare say," continuing her address to the picture, "you look very grand with other people's money. So would my Simon, too. Ah, young chap! but I'd rather have Simon in his old smock—I'd rather have him in rags and tatters—than in that dandy coat bought with another man's money! You've broke your poor sister's heart—you have! You've broke your father's heart—you have! Depend upon it, if you had been a brother of mine, I should have found no room in *my* trunk for your picture—Not I. As you made your bed, so you might lie upon it, for me."

With this homely Devonshire proverb, Jenny closed the trunk, and commenced dusting the room. But her attention was again diverted from her duties, by the sight of Mr. Gray and Simon standing at the gate of the cottage court.

In burning suspense, the old man, with spectacles on nose, and screening his eyes from the rays of the sun, was looking up the road, and down the road, for Scotch Ramsey.

"Shall I rin down to the village, zur, and see if Ramzay be there? Then we shall know the worst o't once. Ramzay, you know, isn't half pertic'ler enough with the letters."

"Ramsay," said Mr. Gray, "sacrifices duty to his

'wee draps,' as he calls it; and, Simon, you are too much like Ramsay. I have reasons for not going myself into the village, and the little service you have proposed to do, I would have accepted—but really, Simon, I dare not trust you."

"Doant say anither word, zur. 'Pon my life, I'll rin all round the village, as fast as my legs will let me, and not stop for the best pint of zider that was ever drawd. Noa, noa—not me, when a measter's in trouble ——"

"Hark!" said Mr. Gray, interrupting Simon's sentiment, "I thought I heard Ramsay's horn."

"I heard it too," said Simon, "and I'll go and hurry un on."

"I think the sound came this way, Simon—I am not certain. You shall go the village way, and I will go up the road. Get my stick, and tell your wife where we are going."

The anxious father would have sought the dilatory postman before, but he dreaded stirring from his cottage, fearing he should be overpowered with poignant questions from curious villagers concerning his son. So he trod the more lonely path in pursuit of Ramsay, while Simon, with his somewhat crooked legs, in bright blue stockings, walked quickly towards the village.

Alas! for Simon's resolutions. When he got as far as the smithy, the smith and his spouse were holding

a carousal, in joy at the receipt of a letter from a son in America. The bellows had ceased to blow, the heavy hammer to ring upon the anvil. It was but twelve o'clock, but it was evident business was suspended at the smithy for that day. The smoke-dyed place was full of villagers. There sat the very man poor Mr. Gray was so anxious to find. His pony leaning over the hatch, with the tin horn sticking out under the saddle, Ramsay was sitting in his glory on an old cart-wheel between two stout dames, as unconcerned as if he had not a letter left to deliver, when he had more than half a dozen—one of which was for Mr. Gray. Willing or unwilling, (and Simon was not one of the latter) every villager that passed the smithy was dragged in by the brawny arms of the smith to hear of the good fortune of his son. He had collected half the village; some were smoking—all were drinking cider from white mugs. Two or three labourers rested against the dingy walls, while women and children sat in a circle on two cart-wheels placed one on the other. A tall cart-horse waiting to be shod was fastened to a staple by the black chimney, and by his side stood a poor ass, brought thither for the same purpose. The proud eyes of the horse followed every movement of the group, while the humble creature by his side fixed his immoveably on the ground. Wilkie alone could do justice to the picture.

The smith drew Simon a full pint, and the easily-

persuaded man actually sat down side by side with the postman!

"Haven't you got a letter for measter, Ramsay?" asked Simon.

"Weel, mon, what then?" coolly asked Ramsay, smoking a cloud in Simon's face.

"Why measter wants un, that's all," said Simon, "and I'm come for un."

"I'm awa just now," said Willie, "an' I'll deliver the letter mysel, so dinna ye trouble anent it."

His pipe finished (not before), he had made a move towards his pony, but the smith interposed, and would not let him depart until he had promised to come in the evening and dance one of his country reels.

Nearly at his own gate, Ramsay met with Mr. Gray, and delivered to the grateful man the letter. In his excessive joy at beholding once more his dear daughter's writing, he said nothing to the postman concerning the delay; the latter blew his horn, and trotted off to Hill Farm with a letter for Farmer Jacobs—where he arrived in time for dinner, and to save himself from a heavy snow storm.

After the letter carrier had left the smithy, Simon was entertained over his pipe with the smith's letter, which, amid glowing accounts of America, announced the death of Mr. Johnson, and the departure of his daughter Jane for England. Also, that just before his death, he had been officially apprised that a relation of

his had died, and willed him all his property, which was large. This property now belonged to his daughter, who was returning to enjoy it. It was the hope of all present that the heiress would not forget her father's creditors, amongst whom Mr. Gray's name was specially mentioned.

America! America! the company were loud in their praises of America, All who had heard the exciting letter about cheap living, small taxes, and high wages, would have gone out; but each had some *if* to prevent them. One was too old—another had too many children—a third would like to see the last of an aged parent first—and a fourth would have gone if he could have had his passage paid. So of all present, the smith and his wife were the only two that ventured across the Atlantic.

## CHAPTER V.

THE slender hope Mr. Gray entertained for his son's innocence, was crushed for ever by his daughter's letter. Mournfully he shook his head, and the tear stole down his hale old cheek. For a moment his Christian faith was obscured. His hoary head sank despairingly on his breast—and Robert a thief was his only thought—and Robert in chains was his only vision. Was it a dark dream? No; real as the broad daylight that enveloped him, and the hot tears that fell upon his hands. Thus he mused:—

"To serve *me* thus! I, that have so joyed in him from the first lisping of his lips to the hour he deserted me. Oh! my dishonest boy, I cannot bear to think of thee. Instead of my staff, thou art a dreadful burden. The gewgaws of the world were more precious to thee than father, sister, home, or honour. I warned thee, but you despised the warning. It is now too late—you have gone far beyond my reach. Nothing on earth can wash the stain away. It is indelible. Now, I am weary of my life."

The more he dwelt upon his son's crime, the less reconciled he became to it. His honourable pride was

roused at the thought, and with considerable indignation he exclaimed—

"Thou art not worth these tears! Rather weep thou for me! Oh! that I had mingled more wisdom with my love, then I should have trained thee for adversity, not for ease. Many a day I have sat on one stone, and ate my meal from another,—worked in a quarry from sunrise to its going down, and drank water from the brook. This wholesome lesson you have missed, and I blame myself for it. But it is now too late to blame, too late to weep."

Woman is easily moved to tears. With tears they love, with tears they hate, with tears they plead, with tears they defy, with tears they show gratitude, and with tears they mark unkindness; at painful partings, or joyous meetings, the tear is present; even at the altar, the tear is in her eye. But the sterner heart of man seldom gives way to the melting mood: not that he feels the less, but that he endures more. He locks his sorrow up—hides it—makes a secret of it. His pride forbids the exposure of his grief. In great trouble he isolates himself, and mourns in secret.

In great trouble was Mr. Gray, and unseen, unheard, the tears fell like an April shower.

In this condition of sorrow he was found by Jonathan Roper, parish clerk, undertaker, and constable. It was a professional visit in his latter capacity. Shepherd espied him on the threshold of the kitchen before his

woe-begone master, and his three significant barks might have been construed into the question of "Who are you?"

"Oh, you know me well enough, Shepherd," said Roper; "we have met before to-day."

Mr. Gray, whose back was to the door, wiped for shame his swollen red eyes, and turned round.

"Well, friend Gray, and how do you do?"

"Thank you, Jonathan, considering all things, I am thankful I am so well. Pray come in, and take a seat. I am all alone, you see."

"Alice is gone to London, I believe? I hope she may find matters better than she expected."

Old Mr. Gray shook his head.

"Far worse, poor girl! But you are a father and a Christian, Jonathan, and you will feel for me when I tell you, that though I expected no less terrible a result, now it has come, I am not prepared for it."

"Upon my word, friend Gray," said Roper, "I do feel very much for you, and so does everybody I fall in with, and for your daughter too. But I am not sorry just now to find you alone, for I have a most painful duty to perform."

In surprise, exclaimed Mr. Gray—

"What! is my cup not full yet?"

"Squire Shimmington, you see, friend Gray, has lately lost some property—some plate—"

"And does he think *I* have stolen it—eh?" interrupted the sensitive man.

"Well," said Roper, "I suppose it is something like it, for he has given me a warrant, as constable, to search your premises. I remonstrated with him, and asked him to send some one else. But all I got from his grumbling worship, was, 'Do your duty Mr. Roper.'"

"And so say I, Jonathan," proudly said Mr. Gray. "There are my keys; you will do me a service if you perform this duty well, utterly regardless of my feelings or our old friendship. Leave no place unexamined."

"God bless you, friend Gray," said the sympathising constable, "there is no need; I am quite satisfied."

"I believe you are, Jonathan, but the Squire is not; and considering the wrong my son has done him, he is fairly entitled to his suspicion. Make the minutest search, then you can faithfully report."

"As clerk, undertaker, and constable, I have often a painful duty to perform, but none that I have done with so much reluctance as this."

The constable commenced his search, but would have been very lax in his duty had not the honourable man suspected attended him, and kept him well to his work. He placed a chair for him to scrutinise the high shelves of the cupboard—pulled wide the blue door of the clock—drew out the table-drawer, which made the knives and forks jingle—and invited his inspection every cranny of the room. Then the constable was

conducted up-stairs, and drowsy Shepherd followed. The antique drawers were one by one opened for inspection, and one stubborn lock that would not answer to the key, was excitedly torn open by Mr. Gray. The search was then continued, and completed in his daughter's bed-room.

"Come, Mr. Gray, I am perfectly satisfied. There is no need to search this room."

"I thank you for your friendliness, Jonathan," sternly said Mr. Gray, "but had Alice been lying in her coffin there, I would insist that you should search the room. Squire Shimmington ought to know me better—but never mind, as he suspects, let him prove. Come, to your work, Jonathan,"—pointing to the trunk which the curious Jenny Goodacre had but so recently rummaged.

With feelings known only to himself, Mr. Gray sat on the edge of his daughter's bed, while the reluctant officer went on his knees to investigate the contents of the brass-nailed trunk. Unfortunately for the already overwrought feelings of Mr. Gray, the officer unwittingly remarked, as he stumbled over the miniature which had been so severely animadverted on by Jenny:—

"Ah! friend Gray, you and your daughter will value this now."

"What is it, Jonathan?"

Roper held up the miniature.

An apparition could not more have terrified Mr. Gray than the sight of his son's likeness. He trembled from head to foot, and his face turned pale as ashes.

"Do men detest the sight, Jonathan, of what they value? Oh! my dear sir, tell me how to forget him, and I will bless you.—Value it! there," snatching it from his friend's hand, and with passion dashing it to his feet, "that's how I value it! We shall remember him too well, without his picture."

"Really, Mr. Gray—"

"Do not say another word, Jonathan. *Your* children are *honest*, and you can scarcely feel for me."

"But what is our faith worth, friend Gray, if it shrinks from Heaven's dispensations? Have you and I not often sang together—

'God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform?'

You ought to see God in it all; do submit to the darkness like a Christian. See what a comfort you have got in your amiable daughter!"

"Ah! dear girl," sighed the unhappy man, "*her* hopes, too, are frustrated in this world."

"This world! that's nothing at all. It is the world to come we should all live for. You know that well enough, friend Gray.

'Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.'

And you know that too."

In a more subdued tone than he had used since he had received the letter, Mr. Gray said—

"I am glad you called, Jonathan. I needed a friend to lead me back to God. Without succour, I should have gone mad. Your errand, which at first added to my despair, has been made a blessing to me. Oh! I will still trust in God."

"That's all I want to hear you say, friend Gray," rejoined Roper. "And now walk back with me and take a cup of tea; my dame will be glad to see you."

"Thank you, Jonathan, but I think I am now man enough to call on the Squire, and see how far he is inclined to have mercy on my son. Alice wishes me to see him."

"Go, by all means," said the constable. "It is your duty. But I beg of you do not depend on any mercy from the Squire. You know he is a turbulent man at the best. If you could make good the money—"

"I wish I could, Jonathan!—but I have hardly as many pence."

"No," said the constable. "But I was going to say, if you could go to him with the money in hand, he might then talk to you. But as it is, make up your mind for rough usage. Indeed, I happen to know he is very bitter about it—although the loss is no more to him than a sixpenny piece to me. Ah! friend Gray, if he loved his God half so well as he loves his money, I should have hope for you. But try him, and I will

walk so far with you, and make my report concerning my unpleasant errand to your cottage."

"You are quite satisfied, Jonathan, that I have nothing belonging to the Squire?"

"A thousand times! I should have doubted myself rather than you."

"That picture—"

"There, now," interrupted the constable, "don't be dwelling on that. I will take charge of it until it grows less obnoxious to you. In the course of time—time works wonders, you know—when your feelings are more mellowed, you will beg it from me. Ha! ha! I am sure you will."

Arm-in-arm those Christian friends travelled on their way to Squire Shimmington's, the constable consoling Mr. Gray to the utmost of his power.

Fronting the village church was a large plain mansion embosomed in trees, whose branches were bowed down with the snow that rested on them. On one side of the house a melancholy willow had taken root by a pond. Attached to the mansion were roomy stables—but no horses; kennels—but no dogs; coach-house—but *that* served only as a lumber-room, where the spider spun his endless web, and was never intruded on. This was the mansion of Squire Shimmington, who was very rich, for all the nakedness displayed within—rich, but penurious.

As to the Squire himself, he was a thin little man,

with a thin little face, freckled all over; an eye full of suspicion, and decidedly grey, surmounted with a dark-brown bristly brow; his bald pate was shrouded in a yellow wiry wig; and the settled expression of his face was that of one who, by accident, had crushed an unripe gooseberry between his teeth. A suit of snuff-coloured brown was his daily wear; brown breeches, black stockings, with a pair of white gaiters was the fashion for his "shrunk shanks:" and a brown coat, with an antique-cut collar, and long narrow skirts, hung loosely on his narrow back. From this mode of dressing he never departed; but in cold weather he buttoned a loose *brown* spencer around him.

To all who knew this peevish money-hoarder, it was a wonder, indeed, however he came to think of matrimony. But more unaccountable still how he came to marry a *poor* girl—his own maid-servant, Lucy *Brown!* Had he an infatuation for the name, only? A pretty life he led poor Lucy. He was jealous of her—watched her—put her away—took her back—told her he was rich and she was poor—wished her dead, and when she died, lamented her!

To his tender mercies was left a young, intelligent daughter, who, at the desire of a maiden aunt, was christened Margaret. Fortunately for the little orphan she was not dependent on her father, for the relative whose Christian name she bore left her a fortune in her own right. Margaret was as much beloved as her

griping sire was detested; and the melancholy which had lately stolen upon her, was a source of deep regret to all who knew her.

> "She never told her love:
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek."

No; hardly to herself dared she confess her affection for young Gray. Yet it was true; and in vain she struggled to tear her heart from him. He never knew —never suspected—the wealthy Margaret Shimmington loved him! He had never sought her love—indeed, but seldom seen her.

The rent-day of the Squire's numerous tenantry had just come round, and in a room magnificent for its size more than its furniture, was seated the Squire and Mr. Yewdale at a large table, both busy counting silver and gold. Woe to the poor tenant who let the sun of this day go down and his rent unpaid! Distraint and ejectment were sure to follow if he did; for it was a maxim of the Squire, that if a tenant could not pay one quarter he could not two. Another favourite maxim with him was, that a landlord who dealt in pity was sure to be ruined. In these maxims Mr. Yewdale heart and soul concurred.

Margaret, richly dressed in black velvet and lace, sat reading by the fire. Her attention was but little disturbed by the tenants coming in and out of the spacious apartment. Her dark eye every now and then would

leave her book, and intently fix itself now on the fire, now on the floor; then, musingly, she would pace the room.

"The defaulters are few this quarter, sir," remarked Mr. Yewdale.

"Quite enough, steward," sourly rejoined the Squire; "and let them be strictly dealt with. For Merryweather's money, I will not wait another hour—do you hear, Yewdale?"

"It shall be attended to, sir. His large family—"

"Aye, aye, aye,—I am not going to keep his large family," interrupted the Squire, adding his invariable interrogation—"Do you hear, Yewdale?"

"Hedges, also, I see, has not paid," said the steward. "He had better be dealt peremptorily with."

"Decidedly!" exclaimed the Squire, "Rout him up—do you hear, Yewdale? Look after, too, the father of the rogue who has robbed me, for he has not called to-day."

"The day is not over yet, sir," ventured Margaret, ever alive to the interests of Mr. Gray and his family. Indeed, she had secretly furnished Alice with the means for her journey to London.

"We know it, Miss Shimmington," angrily replied her father. "But when it is, the weak feelings you have inherited from your mother shall not govern us—do you hear, Margaret?"

"Gladdish is late," suggested the steward.

"I have little fear of him," said the Squire. "The rent of the mill was never behind."

"Really, sir," again ventured Margaret, "judging men by their actions—which is the best test we can apply one to another—I must say, there is more reason to doubt the miller, than Mr. Gray, for he has broken his word of honour, which the other never did."

The steward was much gratified at anything that tended to the disadvantage of his rival, and he made bold to state that he cordially acquiesced with his young mistress, adding, as he perceived the Squire's rising ire—

"I do assure you, sir, that everybody I fall in with, speaks in very strong terms concerning Mr. Gladdish's treatment of Miss Gray."

"You care more for Miss Jacobs than Miss Gray—do you hear, Yewdale?—so does Gladdish, and you are jealous—do you hear, Yewdale?"

The Squire probed his steward to the quick, his face flushed, and he said no more.

"But as for *you*, Margaret," continued her father, "I cannot conceive why *you* are so displeased with Gladdish. I think he has reason to congratulate himself he was not united to such a family."

"I am displeased with him," said Margaret, "because he has forfeited his sacred word to a trusting girl—than which nothing on earth is more basely mean!"

"What of that?" asked the Squire. "Surely he had a right to change his mind."

"Not where his word was given;—not when, on the honourable fulfilment of that word, rested the peace of another being. Poor Alice! I truly pity her, and despise the man who could serve her so."

"Pooh! pooh!" said the Squire. "I think we are meddling with affairs that do not concern us. Read your book, and grow wiser—do you hear, Margaret?"

"The highest wisdom I can learn, sir, is to feel for others. It has often pained me to see you take every opportunity to visit the error of the son upon his poor old father. Had he not enough trouble to contend with, that you should insult him so much as to send an officer to search his cottage? Consider—"

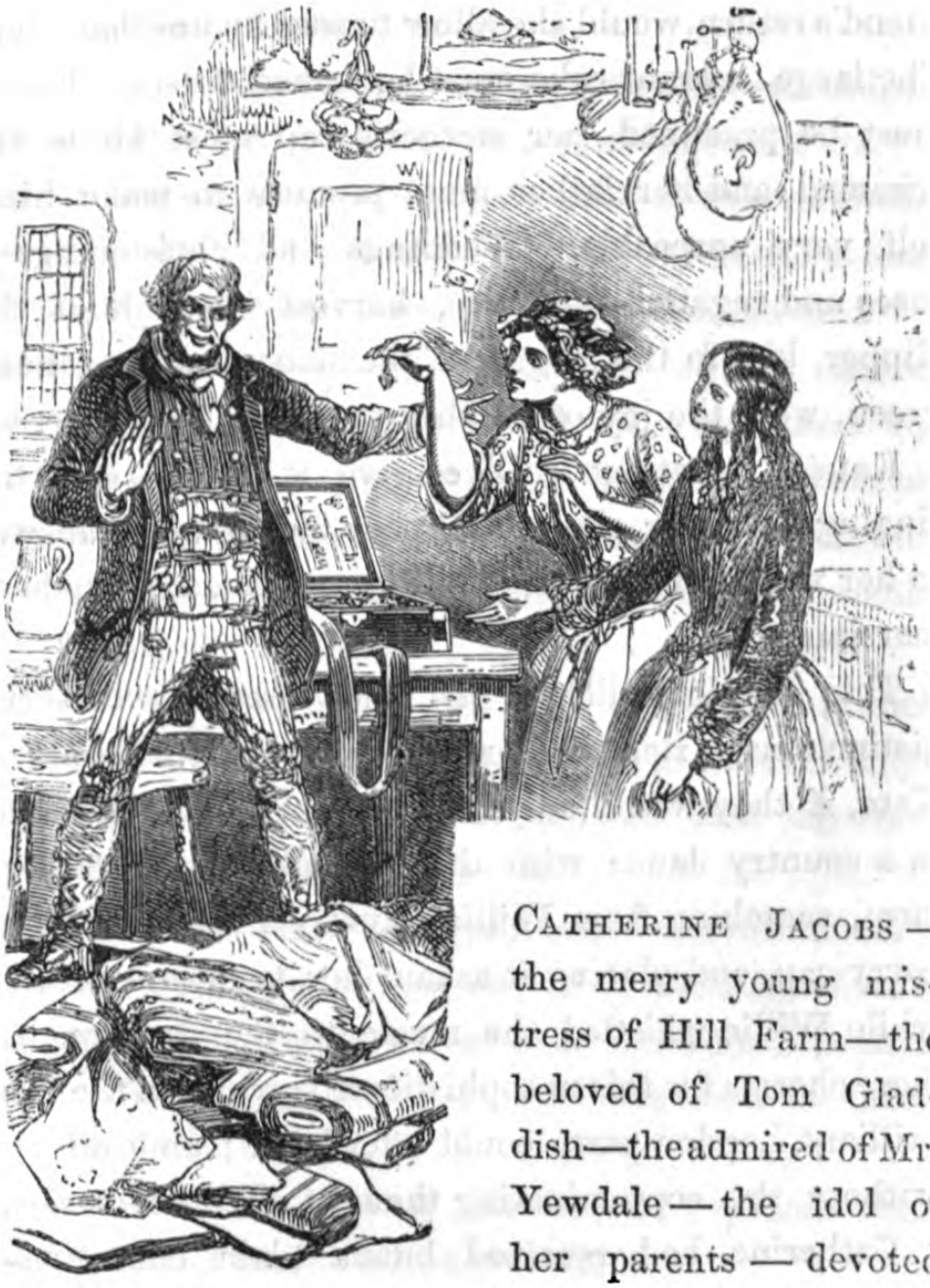
"Forbear!—do you hear, Margaret!" exclaimed the Squire.

"I have done, sir," said his daughter, and retired.

At the door she met Gladdish, who made a bow to the lady, but she passed by in silent scorn.

As she was descending the wide staircase, Mr. Gray caught her eye. She was much pleased to meet him, and beckoned him to the library, and closed the door.

## CHAPTER VI.



CATHERINE JACOBS — the merry young mistress of Hill Farm—the beloved of Tom Gladdish—the admired of Mr. Yewdale — the idol of her parents — devoted herself to pleasure. The hour that brought upon

its wings no mirth to Kate was insufferable. She had quite a passion for merry meetings, and a genius for forming them. No friend's birthday, no friend's wedding anniversary, no friend's farewell, no friend's return, would she allow to pass by uncelebrated. The large currant cake must be baked, the new ballad must be practiced, her mother's cap must be newly trimmed, and her father must promise to make himself very agreeable. Weddings and christenings—races and regattas—pic-nics, harvest-feasts, hunt the slipper, kiss in the ring, and the dance on the village green, were the joy of her heart.

Kate's impatient "D'ye give it up?" and the ringing laughter she would pour out with the answer to her wonderful riddle, would provoke a multitude to merriment.

This simple guileless girl knew nothing of social distinctions; rich or poor might win the heart of Kate, if they would only be merry. To take the lead in a country dance with the servants of her father's farm, snatching from Willie Ramsay's head his Glengarry cap, and placing it askant her luxuriant tresses, while Willie whistled the music to the dancers, had more charms for this unsophisticated girl, than the most brilliant London party could afford her; and all this without the contaminating thought of *condescension.*

Catherine had received but a plain education—reading, writing, and arithmetic—neither she or her

schoolmistress could get her father to pay for one accomplishment beyond. "That was enough for all honest purposes," Farmer Jacob thought, and his dame acquiesced. But her happy temper made amends for her deficient education.

It was the market-day of the distant town, and all was bustle at an early hour to prepare Farmer Jacobs and his industrious spouse with their merchandise for market. Their black, jog-trot horses were waiting inside the gate, their panniers filled with innumerable pounds of rich butter. The farmer, with his coat of many capes, sat busy with his breakfast and his accounts; while Mrs. Jacobs was taking an inventory of groceries and other matters to bring back with her, with Catherine at her elbow, coaxing for the promise of a new dress.

"It's no use talking, Kate, for I will not do no such thing. It's quite extravagant, and I will not encourage it. I declare—and Jacobs is there to hear me—you have had three dresses to my one."

"Ha!" exclaimed Kate, disclosing her beautiful teeth, "but then your satin turque cost as much as my three."

"What!" rejoined the mother. "Why the girl's mad! Jacobs, how much did that dress cost the minx has got on?"

"A fine lot!" rejoined the farmer. "More than thirty-five shillings, making and all."

"Of course it did!" said Mrs. Jacobs, with triumph.

"And that my lady calls her *morning* dress. Then, Jacobs, there's her black one, and brown one, and scarlet one! No, I say, I won't do it. It's quite impossible! I wonder who you think you are! There's your father, nothing but a plain old farmer, and you want to be supported like a dook's daughter."

The cunning Kate, finding she could not turn the corner of her mother's heart, asked her father if she should help him with his accounts.

"I always find your help costs too much," said the farmer.

"I am sure my daddy does not like to see his daughter shabby," said Kate, encircling her father's fat neck with her arm, and patting his rusty cheek.

"Drat the maid! get away, I say. I shan't get to market to-day. I'm flogged if her hasn't upset the ink over the papers! Another such a child as you would ruin us. Get away, I say!"

"Promise me, then," persevered Kate. "It's only two shillings a yard. Do look at the pattern, father! You will be quite proud to see your daughter in such a beautiful dress."

"I'd buy thee a dress to be married in, with pleasure," said the farmer.

"Married!" rejoined Mrs. Jacobs, "who would have such a madcap?"

"You never had so many lovers as I have got, mother. Mr. Gladdish would give his eyes for me—

and Mr. Yewdale too. But do promise me, father, and I will knit you some stockings, and a beautiful comforter! And I'll trim up all mother's caps, and finish the patchwork quilt! Oh, you don't know what a good girl I will be!"

This last appeal won Kate her dress. She was satisfied of this, because no reply was made to it; but the old farmer and his wife smiled at each other, evidently proud of their child, and not the less so for her lively animation. Kate would not venture another word upon the subject, but to make her cause still more sure, applied herself to the accounts.

"This bill is not added up right, daddy," said Kate.

Farmer Jacobs, unlike Michael Cassio, was no arithmetician, and for him to add a few figures together, was more a work of labour than of love. He was aware of his deficiency, but sensitive at its discovery. With some confusion, and a little anger in his eyes, he replied—

"I should wonder if *he* was casted up right, when you have been pestering me all the time I was doing it. How much is *he* wrong?"

"Oh," said Kate, fearing she had endangered her dress, "you have only mistaken a seven for a nine—it's easily altered. It was my fault in talking so much."

"Of course it was! and I hope for the future you will not misbehave yourself when I am—"

"No, father, I won't," said Kate, casting a roguish glance at her mother, who with laughter called out to her husband—

"Why, Jacobs, Jacobs—Ha! ha! ha!—the minx is laughing in your face, and you don't see it."

The farmer suddenly turned his eyes upon his daughter, and verified the truth of what his wife said. This was irresistible to Kate, and she made the farm resound with laughter that would have made merry the heart of a misanthrope. The farmer himself, although dreadfully annoyed that his sevens and nines should be made the subject of ridicule, could not help joining.

"I'll bet a guinea, my lady, you will laugh the other side of your mouth, if I come home without your dress," said Mr. Jacobs.

"Oh, daddy," said Kate, "don't talk that way—mother made me laugh."

"Oh, Kate, Kate, you ought to be well whipped," jocularly said Mrs. Jacobs. "Do you mean to tell us you were not laughing at your father not knowing his own seven from his nine?"

"Why father's figures are as plain as—"

"You are, you little flatterer," interrupted Mrs. Jacobs. "Look at his eights—they always put me in mind of two apple dumplings, one tumbling on the other. Ha! ha!"

"You are a very ignorant woman, Mrs. Jacobs,"

said the farmer. "I don't purtend to say I'm a first-rate scholard—but this I say, Mrs. Jacobs, that I'll read, write, and spell with you any day in the week; and only give me time, I'll cast up a bill as long as my arm. Only the other day you made three mistakes in spelling zizzars!"

At this reproof, Kate (who had detected her mother's blunders in the matter referred to,) laughed heartily, while Mrs. Jacobs, waxing warm, took high ground, and persisted that her's was the right way to spell the word; nor would she be otherwise convinced until she had consulted her oracle, Mr. Yewdale.

"Why, mother, I should be quite ashamed to ask Mr. Yewdale such a question."

"I am ashamed," retorted Mrs. Jacobs, "that you don't treat Mr. Yewdale with more respect. He is a perfect gentleman, and worth a hundred Gladdishes."

"Come, come, dame," interfered the farmer, "you are meddling with a dangerous thing. Let our girl have the man she likes the best—never mind about his being a gentleman. I only wish she would make up her mind, for the men are beginning to hate one another; and I don't like to see that—it leads to mischief."

"I *have* made up my mind," said Kate. "I wouldn't marry Mr. Yewdale if he had as much gold as there are drops in the sea."

"Well, but would you Mr. Gladdish?"

"I like you best, daddy," evasively replied Kate.

"Iss, iss, Kate, but I can't be your husband. Gladdish wants you, and Yewdale wants you—which is it to be?"

"La! father, haven't I told you I wouldn't marry Yewdale—"

"But would you Gladdish?"

"I am ower young to marry yet," she sang, still avoiding the question.

"Drat the maid! I don't ask thee whether thee be young or old. I only want to know if you like Gladdish better than Yewdale!"

"A great deal better, father," she coolly replied.

"Then my advice to you is, as your father, don't make so free with Mr. Yewdale, for it misguides him, and angers Gladdish. I never did like to see two men after the same girl—never any good cum'd of it yet. It quite troubles me."

"Then all I can say is, Jacobs, you are troubled about small matters. Come, let us get on, and sell our butter."

They departed, making the long journey pleasant by feats of scholarship.

No sooner had they jogged out of sight, by turning the angle of a quiet lane, than an old pedlar, who travelled from town to town, and village to village, called at the farm, to "know if there was anything wanting in his way this cold morning?"

Catherine, ever fond of excitement, was delighted to see the little snow-covered pedlar.

"Why, Boland," she exclaimed, "you look like a ghost! Come in, come in, and let us have a peep at what you have got to sell."

"Aye, Miss Kate, I could tell directly you opened the door that I should have a customer in you," said the coaxing merchant, following Catherine into the warm kitchen. "I can always tell my customers. Upon my word and honour, Miss Kate, I would sell my valuable goods to you cheaper—as cheap again—than to any other customer, you are so civil, aud so pleasant."

"It's worth a shilling or two to hear you talk," said Catherine. "Now unpack, and let me see what you have got."

"Something that will please everybody, and offend nobody," said the talkative pedlar, unlocking a brass-bound mahogany case, which was slung round his neck with a broad leather strap. "There is a host of pretty things!" he exclaimed, lifting up the lid, and extending his arms in admiration. "All the world ought to be here to see such an assortment! Wedding-rings and keepers! gold chains and diamond pins! silver thimbles and bodkins! tapes, stay-laces and cottons! pins and needles! pens, ink, and paper! gold seals, with love-mottoes on them! ribbons of every colour! and in my pack I've got linen, calico, and flannel! and every

article to be sold under cost price! Here's an assortment! Oh, Miss Kate, do let the servants come and see these astonishing bargains!"

"Kitty!" exclaimed Catherine.

"I'm a-coming, Miss!" screamed the servant from the dairy in the passage, and no sooner had she screamed, than the door squeaked back on its hinges, and she entered. Kitty was a strapper, stout and tall; rough black hair, that would have taken a shower of Macassar to put a polish on it; hands, arms, and face of the same complexion as a tile or a chimney-pot. Her features were good, and many a London belle would have bidden a high price for her jet black eyes, and have given her own into the bargain, could they have been transplanted. Kitty wore a light cotton gown, printed with large strawberries, and her fly-about cap was trimmed with black, in respect for her deceased grandmother.

"There's another customer for me, by her looks, I am certain," chuckled the pedlar. "Here's an assortment, Mrs. Kitty!" again extending his arms in admiration, and recapitulating his varieties, adding, "Windsor soap and tooth-brushes! spectacles and razors! pomatums and family pills! corn salve and blisters! tooth-powder, and every other powder! Here is now everything to be had that ever was manufactured—and all new from London—and all to be sold cheap! cheap! cheap! And look here, my customers

—here's an assortment of elegant books!"—untying a brown paper parcel on the long deal table. "Here's every book that was ever printed, from Jack the Giant Killer up to a Family Bible!—dream-books, letter-writers, and fortune-tellers! Here's an assortment! Now, my customers, here you are again, directly I've untied this pack of astonishing bargains!—and he threw a large green baize packet into the middle of the kitchen, and bent on his knees to unfasten it. "Here they are! Irish linens, Welsh flannels, English calicoes, and Russia towelling! Here's an assortment! goods from every country and every clime that's ever yet been discovered! Now, Mrs. Kitty, let me cut you enough flannel to make you a nice warm petticoat this cold weather."

"No, no, thankee, Mister Boland, I doesn't happen to want one. What's the price of that Cornelian heart I see in your case?"

"Aye, isn't it a beauty, Mrs. Kitty?" exclaimed the pedlar, scrambling to his feet, and rushing to the table where the case stood containing Kitty's fancy gem. "Here it is—and what a taste you've got, Mrs. Kitty!—the handsomest thing in my case, and only eighteenpence! It's real imitation cornelian, and a gold ring with it, to fasten a riband for your neck. Don't hesitate, Mrs. Kitty!"

"I'll ask Joe, first, what he thinks of it; maybe he won't like it, and then I sha'nt."

Joe was summoned, and Joe entered—with a head of hair that rivalled Kitty's in roughness, and the fire in colour. He had been at work in the straw-yard, and a few straws mingled here and there in his red hair, as if some bird had singled out Joe's poll to build in. His lace-up boots were so thickly studded with nails, that any person with a tender corn would have trembled to look upon them. But Joe was all to Kitty, and Kitty all to Joe.

"Ha! ha! Mister Joseph," laughed the little pedlar, "Mrs. Kitty has fixed her mind upon this beautiful ornament, and wants you to treat her with it. Only eighteen pence, Mister Joseph!"

"Kitty knows well enough, I will, or anything elze. There's the money."

"Treat me with this fortune-telling Book, Joe, will you?" said Catharine.

"I shall be quite proud, Miss Kate; or anything elze you like to make choice of."

"Upon my word, Mister Joseph, you are very liberal. Now, what do you think of this little valuable as a present for Miss Kate?" said the pedlar, holding up a gaudy chain.

"Oh, iss," said Joe, "very purty—very purty, indeed. How much is he?"

"Why, I'm almost ashamed to tell you, for I know you'll think I stole it. Two-and-sixpence!"

Joe's bag was ready in his hand, but Kate interposed—

"No, no, Joe, it was only my fun. Buy it for Kitty," said Catharine.

"I wouldn't wear it for the world!" exclaimed Kitty. "It would be so unbecoming!"

"You are too modest," said the flattering pedlar. "Is there anything in the world that would not become Mrs. Kitty, Mister Joseph?"

"Let her please herself, then she'll please me,—I can't zay vairer," said Joe. "Have you got a razor?"

"There's the identical article, Mister Joseph, and it's one of that sort that the longer you use it the better it will be. The edge—in fact it's all edge. I am no Jew, and wouldn't sell it to you if it wasn't a real good article."

Before Joe could complete the purchase, Mr. Yewdale made his appearance.

"Good morning to you all," said he, lightly making his way to Catharine, for the pleasure of her hand.

The recent lecture by her father had not quite been forgotten by Kate, and there was some reluctance as she held out her hand. This he observed, and whisperingly remarked—

"What have I done, Miss Jacobs, that you use me

so coldly? Walk with me into the parlour, I have a few words to say to you."

"Father has got the key," said Kate.

"Is it too cold to walk into the garden?"

"It makes me freeze to think of such a thing," said Kate.

"Send your servants to their business—do!—that I may speak here with you."

"Oh, Mr. Yewdale, see how that would look!"

"Cruel, unkind Miss Jacobs," said the steward, mournfully.

"Oh, you changeable man!" exclaimed Kate. "Only last night you told me I was everybody's friend."

"And you *are* everybody's friend—but mine. I have sought for more than friendship, and you have given me less."

This corner conference was disturbed by the pedlar acquainting Kate, that if she had no objection, and Mr. Yewdale had no objection, they would have a dance. Followed by the steward, the delighted Kate ran into the middle of the kitchen, and formed the party. It was very distasteful to Mr. Yewdale to join in a dance with humble Kitty and Joe, and he only did so out of courtesy to Catherine. Before they commenced, the tin horn of Willie Ramsay was heard, and the Scotch postman was soon with the group, and Betsy was called in as his partner. Kate and Mr. Yewdale led off, and

prettily she danced—and so did Willie—and so did Mr. Yewdale.

In the midst of this little festivity, and to the horror of the steward, the footsteps of Tom Gladdish were heard along the stone passage, and he soon stood upon the threshold of the large kitchen, affecting astonishment at what he saw. His jealousy was quickly wrought on, and he felt more angry with Kate than with the steward. On his shoulders snow had rested, and on his old white hat and coat. He held carelessly by the muzzle a fowling-piece, and in the bend of his left arm was slung a brace or two of birds, which he had shot for his dinner.

"Hallo, here!" he exclaimed. "When the cat's away, the mice will play. Why, Boland, I always find you amongst the women—how is it?"

"My trade lies a good deal with the soft sex, Mr. Gladdish."

"Ha! ha! ha! so I should imagine, Boland. The *soft* sex, indeed—ha! ha! that's a good joke of yours."

Catharine, regardless of the feelings of her old partner, bounded to Tom, and invited him to dance with her. But he received her churlishly, and said—

"Not I, indeed! You are false, Kate! Before all, I tell you so! And once for all, I am not to be played with! As for Mr. Yewdale, I thought he had had his answer here."

"Not so, Mr. Gladdish, if you *must* speak of such private matters so publicly."

"Oh, Mr. Yewdale, I do all my business publicly, as every honest man should."

"Come, Tom, put down your gun, and dance with me."

"Never, Kate, until this matter be settled. Mr. Yewdale says you have never told him he was not welcome to you: I always understood differently. But, however, I will rightly understand it *now*—before all. Which is to be your husband, Kate—me, or Yewdale?"

"You know, Tom."

"I hope I do, Kate. But let Mr. Yewdale know; and *when* he knows, if I catch him sneaking about this farm in my absence, though he were the lord of the manor, I'd punish him!"

"You are a violent man, Mr. Gladdish," said the steward.

"Ah, you only *see* my violence as yet, if you come in my way, you shall *feel* it. Now for your choice, Kate?"

"You, Tom, with all my heart," said Kate, warmly.

"Ah, Miss Kate," said the pedlar, "did I not always prophesy that you would be mistress of the mill?"

"You silly little man," retorted Kate, "you care nothing whose wife I am, so that you supply the wedding-ring."

"I hope I shall have that pleasure. Mr. Gladdish, give me the order—I'll serve you well."

"Well, Boland, when we have fixed the day, you shall buy the ring," said Gladdish.

"I hope Miss Jacobs will not share the fate of poor Miss Gray," said the humiliated steward.

"You have so much compassion for *poor* Miss Gray, that I wonder you don't marry her. For me, I do assure you she is quite at your service. Now, Kate, my dear, I'll have a dance with you, with all my heart."

They formed themselves, and the disconcerted steward, with thoughts known only to himself, stalked away without a word to any one.

The dance and feasting were kept up until the return of Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs, who, when they heard of the match between the miller and their daughter, were as merry as any of them; and the birds that Tom had shot for his dinner furnished forth a portion of the supper. The late evening terminated with a Highland reel by Willie Ramsay.

## CHAPTER VII.

If it be true that young Whittington heard Bow Bells from Highgate Hill, how different must have been the highways of London then, from what they are now! when Alice Gray, who lodged in their neighbourhood, awaiting her brother's trial and sentence, hardly ever heard them, the continued traffic of vehicles was so deafening. So glad would she be when her most painful mission was ended, that she might return again to her father, and her peaceful village. But she checked the impatience of her heart, and devoted herself entirely to her brother's temporal and spiritual comfort.

Had the authorities allowed, she would have gladly shared his dreary cell. Morning by morning was she pacing the broad pavement before the prison, awaiting the hour of admission; and when the evening brought the parting, the heavily-ironed door admitted her into the street, all bathed in tears. Thus unobserved and unobserving, would she pass through the crowded thoroughfares to her humble, but kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Manning.

Every night since their separation, Alice and her

father wrote a consolatory epistle, one to the other, so that every day they had the gratification of hearing from each other. There were no Willie Ramsays amongst the London postmen, and Alice always received her letter just before she started out for the prison.

Old Mr. Gray had not, as yet, been able to subdue his indignation sufficiently to write to his misguided son, and he felt that he could never again feel the same affection for him. The spell was broken. Time might do something for the restoration of his love, but it could never, never, make it what it was. Time might modify the intensity of his sufferings, but it could not "raze from his memory the rooted sorrow."

Occasionally, Alice might find a tender word or two, mingled amongst reproaches, for her brother, in her father's letters, which her more loving and yielding nature would, for his comfort multiply; and the reproaches, if she ever made them known, would almost be softened into love.

London this morning was enveloped in fog and darkness, and its inhabitants breakfasted by candlelight. To the amusement of the Mannings, Alice slightly betokened alarm.

"Do you think the world is at an end, Miss Gray?" asked the courageous Mr. Manning.

"Why it's getting worse and worse!" remarked Alice.

"Oh, this is daylight to some fogs that I remember!" And he related stories of such wonderful fogs that would have charmed the ear of a Gulliver.

"It's a wicked, dirty place, Miss Alice," said Mrs. Manning, taking all for granted her husband had said, "If we could have got our living in the country, we would never have set foot in it. Your brother would never have been where he is, had he not come here."

"I cannot ascribe my brother's ruin to his coming hither," said Alice. "When we forsake God, we lose the pillar that keeps us from falling, be we dwellers in town or country. Comparatively speaking, there is as much depravity in our villages as in London. The evil is within us, not around us, Mrs. Manning."

"Oh yes, I believe that," said the latter.

Anxious for her accustomed letter, Alice stood at the window, making a vain endeavour to descry the bright scarlet coat of the postman; but the fog was no respecter of persons or colours, and his ugly shadow rested on all things. The lamps that twinkled here and there in the streets, and the more feeble candles in the houses, only served to show the intense darkness of this dismal visitor. But though the eye was made powerless, the ear was left free; and to the joy of Alice, she heard the two imperative knocks of the postman close by. Down the stairs she flew, and waited at the door for him; but, alas! he passed her by—he had nothing for her. Hope suggested that

she should call to him; she did, and the quick reply was, "Nothing to-day."

Poor Alice felt her strength depart; the earth seemed sliding from her foot, and all things moving round. She closed the door, and for a few minutes sat upon the stairs. He was dead or dying—she was sure of it. She should never see the dear old face of her father again. She became so firmly impressed with the dread idea, so overpowered by it, that her brain almost wandered. Oh! she would have given worlds to see him, or to know that he was well. But no, her stubborn fancy would cling to the conclusion that he was dead! With the determination of bidding farewell to Robert, and immediately returning home, she feebly ascended the stairs.

Even while she was writhing under the bitter dread of her father's death, he himself was close at hand, full of the best news. The mail that should have brought his letter brought himself instead!

The meeting—the entirely unexpected meeting—between father and daughter was overpowering. Mrs. Manning's apron soon found its way to her eyes. Not a word was spoken; but they remained firmly locked in each other's arms, and tears of excessive joy streamed down each other's face. But why dwell on this affecting scene? words, indeed, are puerile instruments to tell of hearts gushing o'er with love.

He sat down and drew her to his knee; then sweetly smiling in her face, he said—

"God has delivered us, Alice!"

She, glad to see him with the expression of peace once more upon his brow, smiled too, and said—

"In bringing yourself, dear father, to me, you have brought the best of news—the best of treasures!"

Mr. Gray now found time to shake hands heartily with the Mannings, and to thank them for their kindness to his daughter.

"But we will pay you," he added, "as well as thank you."

"Why, father, what *has* happened to put you into such good spirits?"

"A most extraordinary providence! I have hopes that we shall all be happy yet; at least, I mean that there is much probability that we shall all be together again."

"Impossible to be happy, father, and Robert away!" observed Alice; and had she given expression to her heart, she would have coupled the miller with her brother's name.

"But I do not know that Robert *will* be away."

"My dear father, foster no such hope, for it is impossible."

"Alice, Alice, have you got no further in Christian faith than that! Nothing is impossible. My bread has been upon the waters a long time, but I have found it at last!"

"Do explain your parable—I long to know its meaning!"

"Miss Jane Johnson has returned, and paid me her father's debt!"

Alice had no words for her surprise.

"And more than that," continued her father, "she has paid Squire Shimmington every penny of the money that Robert has defrauded him of."

"Bless her! bless her!" gratefully ejaculated Alice.

"And more than that," again went on Mr. Gray, "she has extorted a promise from the Squire, that he will, through his solicitor, recommend your brother to the merciful consideration of the judge!"

"This is joyful news indeed! I feel so happy! so relieved!"

"Well," said Mr. Gray, with the excitement of a poor man who has suddenly come into large possessions, "we must lose no time, you know: two days only, Alice, before the trial! we have the means, thank God, and we must now work for the end, which is his deliverance from gaol! But who shall wipe out the stain? Gladly this hour would I be poor again—poor again! I would gladly die to efface it!"

"And so would I, father; but I am sure he is sensible of his error; all I fear is, the disgrace will prey so heavily on his mind, that he will lose his senses, or become so morbid and melancholy as to unfit him for the duties of life. I plainly see this tendency in him;

often I cannot get a word from him, and often he will moan, and utter words I cannot understand. Do, I pray you, father, cheer him all in your power, when you see him. Hoping all of us to be forgiven, let us forgive one another! You remember that beautiful text, 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.'"

The old man sighed, and Alice, careful of his feelings, changed the bitter topic by asking if Mr. Johnson had returned with Miss Jane?

"No!" was the reply, "the poor young lady has returned fatherless."

"What!" exclaimed Alice, "Mr. Johnson dead?"

"And died a fearful death—died in a brawling fight, and buried in a Canadian churchyard. Dissipated as he was, I can tell you she much feels his loss. It appears his uncle Henry's death made him heir to the Cornish estates; which, by *his* death, Miss Jane inherits. One thing I was affected to hear, and so will you; she told me he often spoke of 'old Mr. Gray,' and how pleased he should be to make reparation for the trouble he had been the means of giving me! Poor man! it would have given me much pleasure to have heard a better account of him. All his debts are to be paid, and mine was paid first, It was very handsome of her, was it not, to pay Squire Shimmington?"

"Very, indeed!"

"If ever we had the opportunity, she said, it would make her quite happy to see us back on the old farm again. She called me 'Father Gray.'"

"I should so like to see her."

"Well, my dear, so you will, when you return. She is very familiar, and seems quite to look to me as her adviser and protector. But I must lose no more time. I have the names and addresses here of several eminent counsel, whom I am to engage to plead for mercy for my boy. I'll take another cup of coffee, friend Manning, and then, Alice, we will go and see what *can* be done."

"You must go with me to see Robert first, father. It would be cruel to keep the good news from him."

"Oh what a place to meet my son in! It will wring my heart to see him—yet I suppose I must go."

The sickening fog gave way to the sun. Alice and her father sallied out for the prison. They had never seen London together before, and they were mightily amazed at the crowds of people jostling to and fro, thick as midges in a sunbeam—at the height of the houses—the splendour of the shops—at the tumult of the vehicles, and the fine horses—at the lady in silk walking side by side with the beggar in rags. Now they would stand delighted in a crowd, listening to a poor Italian playing a psalm on his organ; anon they would depart in disappointment when he made the same instrument breathe forth a flimsy ballad.

Now they were driven from their course by a coffin—and now by a baker's basket. Now was their attention arrested by London's great cathedral, and now by a famished family wailing on its steps.

Thus they passed through some of the great thoroughfares of the vast city, until at length—poor father! poor sister!—they came to the large flinty prison of Newgate! The sun strove in vain to conceal its gloom. Oh! those chains—how they disdained to associate with the fairy lights that tipped their edges, and now nestled in the broad circles of their links! How great the power of association! It was the *uses* to which these chains were applied, that made the flesh crawl! Even the soft heart of Mr. Gray would have passed them with a pang less had not his son been so closely connected with them. Inanimate things in themselves are nothing—it is the poetry of association that makes them significant.

Mr. Gray, overcome by the contemplation of the exterior of this notorious prison, turned loathingly from it, and walked slowly with his daughter towards Cripplegate Church, whose sweet bells were playing their merry chimes. Droves of cattle, dotted round with timid sheep, were being rudely driven from Smithfield to their final destinies.

The Church doors being open, they went in, and sat upon a seat allotted for the poor, while he recovered himself. A little refreshed, he ventured forth again—

but there was the prison in its eternal gloom! and there were the horrid chains hanging over a rusty nail-bound door, through which the unhappy malefactor passed, whose

> "Life had dwindled to the shortest span!"

and who, prepared or unprepared, was doomed, in the "twinkling of an eye," to pass from earth to judgment!

Mr. Gray, by slow degrees, went on and on, until he reached the stone steps that flanked the entrance door, which was guarded by iron spikes, and on which the turnkey carelessly leaned. The old man tottered up the steps, and gained admission, but when the heavy door closed on him, the echoes that went and came from the cold passages completely overpowered him.

Alice advised him not to proceed, confident that he could not bear to see his son in his cell. To this advice he yielded, and they retraced their steps into the air, hailed a vehicle, and returned back to the Mannings. As her father did not immediately rally, a doctor was sent for, and after the cause of his illness was explained, he forbade his patient from again visiting the prison.

All now devolved on Alice. She hastened back to her brother, and told him the good things that had been done for them by Miss Johnson. But to her great surprise and grief, he heard as though he heard not. He evinced no joy—he expressed no gratitude. She told him of his father's being in

London. *Then* was he moved—*then* did he speak, and begged her not to bring him there. His cell had become endurable to him—but the presence of his father, in such a place, could never be. He became frantic at the bare idea. Alice promised he should not come; and then he relapsed again into mournful silence.

Aided by Mr. Manning, Alice procured the most distinguished counsel.

The day of trial came round,—and before the learned judge stood Robert Gray! He was far from being unconscious of his position, for, with excruciating feelings of shame, he buried his face in his hands.

When asked the piercing question, what he had to say, why sentence should not be pronounced against him for the crime he had confessed to, he maintained silence; but his counsel had already eloquently pleaded for the judge's mercy. Every circumstance that could be urged in extenuation of the offence was said, and powerfully said. Squire Shimmington's counsel was empowered also to appeal to the judge for a favourable consideration of the prisoner's case. Happily the money had been returned to the squire, which wrought this change in him.

The judge had listened to the pleadings with calm attention; and he addressed the prisoner in a most earnest and pathetic manner. Indeed, although preserving his dignity, his summing up was characterized

by much tenderness. He concluded a somewhat long appeal to Robert's better nature by saying—

"Remember, young man, but a little time since, the crime of forgery was subject to the extreme penalty of the law. Hundreds have gone from the place you now stand on, doomed to die for the offence you have confessed to. I beseech you, be warned in time. You are strongly recommended to mercy by the prosecutor —this is your first offence against the laws of your country—you seem to feel your shame, which to me is always a good earnest of future reformation—and the money which your evil passions led you to rob another of, has been restored by your friends. Now, although the court is bound to recognise your offence by punishment, and as you have already been confined a long time, I think the ends of justice will be answered by making that punishment as light as possible. The sentence of the court is, that you be imprisoned in Newgate for three days."

Poor Alice sat in the crowded court during the trial, and was much affected by the judge's address; and when he had finished, out of the fulness of her heart, she audibly thanked his lordship for his leniency.

Exhausted with the harassing suspense she had endured, she returned to her father, and they both thanked God for young Gray's escape from transportation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE days of his punishment passed, and Robert Gray was again released upon the world, free to choose between the paths of honour and the temptations that lead to infamy. Alice, his untiring friend, his guardian angel, led forth her erring brother from the prison, and cheered him on in the paths of pleasantness and peace. To her great joy, he freely admitted his former course had been a dreadful mistake, and that from the moment he had sacrificed his honour, he had known nothing but unutterable wretchedness.

"I care not, Alice, how short my life," he moodily said, "for I shall be wretched, wretched to the end! I am free from prison, but not from my accusing mind. Oh! Alice, I have betrayed my soul, and I can get no rest. What shall I do?"

"What did the Prodigal of Scripture when he repented? Imitate him, Robert, and it shall yet be well with you."

"I have not the courage, Alice."

"Courage to do wrong, and no courage to do right! Robert!" Never did Alice look and feel so indignant. "I have been to you a sister, do be to me a

brother! You have a father, worthy of the name—be to him a son! Too many days of trouble you have already given him—do, for the remainder of his time, devote yourself to his peace!"

"Shall I not be doing that best by going abroad, and never seeing him more?"

"You must be jesting, Robert!"

"Not jesting, Alice—jests have passed with me. You have been a dear true sister to me—but in asking me to return home, where I am known to every villager, and to give every one an opportunity to say—'there goes Robert Gray, who robbed Squire Shimmington'—in asking this from me, I must say you are inconsiderate."

"For myself, Robert, dearly as I should like you home again, I would say, with all my heart, go where you could be happiest. It is for father I plead, not for myself. He is growing old, Robert; and you must sacrifice your feelings to his. Trouble has already brought him near the grave. His once firm step now totters, and his clothes hang loosely on him. His eyes sink back in their sockets, and furrows may be traced upon the cheeks that you and I have often admired for their smoothness."

"And all this *I* have done! How then can I meet him? Do not ask me again, Alice, do not. Father must be sacrificed to me for ever. We can never assemble together again. This is a portion of my

punishment—the greatest portion. It is not the prison, it is not the judge, that bears severest on a criminal—it is the impassable gulf his crime throws between him and his dearest ties. Even *you*, the noblest sister ever brother had, still I am happier when you are from me."

"There is *no* gulf between us, Robert. We love you as ourselves, and but return with us, and you shall find we do. We will treat you with peculiar care. Father has money now, and he will buy a farm again if you will come home, and you shall be master of it."

"Why cannot we all go abroad?"

"It is dangerous to transplant old trees, Robert. Father was born in our village—married there—there rests our mother—and there, you know as well as I, he has marked *his* resting-place. Often we have sat under the tree that shades our family grave, and wondered 'whose turn next?' Now would it not be cruel, would it not be selfish, to ask father to sacrifice for you the home to which he is bound by so many dear associations? Come, Robert, cultivate a nobler sentiment than that. You have brought the sorrow, now bring the antidote."

"I wish I could find such a spirit as yours to plead for me!"

"It would be an evil spirit to plead other than I do," rejoined Alice.

"You overpower me!" exclaimed Robert. "To end

all, I won't return! Say no more, for my brain aches."

"I have more pity than anger for your determination. Peace be with you, my dear, dear brother! It is late, and I must now return to father, and reconcile him, if possible, to his loss. With this kiss receive my last words. Last words are akin to dying words, and seldom pass from the memory. Mine to you are——'Fear God, and keep his commandments.'"

For hours thus they talked, wandering through the thickly-peopled streets, until night came, clear and cold. They now stood on Waterloo Bridge, where many a poor suicide, impatient of his troubles, had dared to end the life God gave him. The stars twinkled above their heads, and the moon made the river below seem like molten silver. Barges of lime and coal, fastened to green slimy posts, by the low dark arches of Somerset House, were lulled to and fro by the restless river. St. Paul's bell slowly and solemnly tolled out the hour of night, and the same tale, in shriller tones, was proclaimed from the innumerable steeples that towered around. Alice could not fail to be struck with a scene so new to her, but her mind was too much absorbed in things nearer the heart than fluttered in her bosom, like her dress in the breeze, to dwell on them. Loth to separate, in silence they lingered, leaning on the parapet of the bridge. The clocks

warned Alice to tarry no longer. Followed by her brother, she turned in the direction of the Mannings.

To the pain and confusion of Alice, the silence was broken as they walked along, by her brother tremulously asking what Gladdish said of him? She knew not what to answer, and she remained silent. He asked again, and again she was silent.

"Don't be afraid to tell me, Alice; for he cannot think worse of me than I do of myself. Come, tell me."

He closely pressed her, and Alice had no escape from the torturing subject. She would have given worlds could the deceit of the miller have been hidden in her own heart. To avoid the subject she might have prevaricated, but that she could not condescend to do; and most reluctantly, and without comment, she told her brother the broad truth.

This was the first time young Gray had heard of the cruel disappointment of his sister, and bitterly he exclaimed—

"And have I done this, too?"

"No, no, Robert," said Alice, conciliatingly, "it could not be, for he revealed himself before you did."

"I thought he loved the very ground you trod on; I have heard him say as much. Why you must be miserable, indeed, Alice!"

"I have learnt to govern circumstances, and not to be governed by them," she nobly said; "I want you

to learn the same lesson. It is not an easy one, I admit, but one that well repays its cultivation. Do not misunderstand, and think I do not feel the disappointment. I feel it acutely, and shall do so for ever. But then I must not be governed by it—that is, I must not give myself up like a person that is without hope. I am well assured that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. When shall I have the happiness of hearing *you* say so, Robert?"

"If I am not the cause, what is?"

"Something like your own, Robert. We became poor, and you both forsook us. Say no more of it; but if you have any love or pity left for us, show it by returning."

"It would be dangerous now, for as sure as I live, there would be mischief," he significantly said.

"What do you mean, Robert?" asked Alice, in alarm.

"I mean, Alice, that Gladdish should not escape without punishment; and if I were to meet him, I would do it. He shall not deceive you with impunity. The law has reached *me*, and I will reach *him*!"

He spoke with considerable passion.

"Oh, Robert, if that is your spirit, I implore you to remain here, or anywhere, rather than return! What *does* possess you?"

"Love for you. I have gained my freedom, and it shall be given to your protection."

"It is a Christian's protection I need," said Alice, "not a madman's."

"Enough to make one mad. Indeed, I feel this madness, if you call it so, will never pass away until that man has been taught to treat you with more honour."

They had now arrived at Mr. Manning's door, and Alice pointed to a little window where twinkled a light.

"There lies our father. Do come in and see him, if it be for the last time."

"Not to-night."

"To-morrow we leave for home.—Do come in!"

"Father is too weak to bear my presence, and I am too sensitive—you call it madness—to bear his."

"I'll not urge it any more. It is too humiliating, both to me and to him. I part from you with the most fearful misgivings. God grant that they may never be realised! Good bye, then, Robert! When you can persuade yourself to return and be happy, nothing on this earth will give father or myself so much joy. Or if you are determined to go abroad, you know now where to apply for the means."

"I think you'll see me soon, Alice."

"To make us happier, or to bring fresh troubles?"

"Has father seen Gladdish?"

"I am far too weary to talk more. Good bye, good bye, my dear! Pray for a happier spirit. You shall be remembered in our prayers."

They kissed—they embraced—they parted.

Alice was soon in her father's arms; for the old man, in his delight to see her again, weak as he was, rose in the bed, and embraced her.

"Where is my son? He is free, is he not?"

"Yes, father, he is free, but I could not overcome his dislike to see you."

"Not from fear of me, I hope?"

"I can hardly understand him, father, but we must journey on without him. Don't grieve, father; we have done all in our power for him. I have spent many hours with him, entreating him to return, and in giving him good counsel. But I confess, to my sorrow, I made but small impression on him. Now he is melancholy—now all rage. At times I thought I was making some inroad on his heart—then again I had nothing but despair for him, and have parted from him at the door with more fear, more misery, than I ever had before for him. Bear the trouble like a Christian, father, for my sake. I'll be son and daughter to you, if love and kindness can do it. We have gained his freedom, and let us return and prepare a home for him; and if ever he likes to avail himself of it, he shall be welcome. We can do no more. We have devoted much time to him, but since he persists in separating himself from us, we must leave him to his God, and devote ourselves to the good of others."

"And must I lose him after all! Cruel, ungrateful

boy! What will be the end of him! Ah, my child, you have spoken excellently, and, with God's help, I too will rise above the trouble, and bear the burden like a Christian. Sit down by me, Alice, a little while, and advise with me as to our future course when we return to where I now long to be."

"I will when we get home; I am too much worn to-night, father."

"I dare say you are, my child. Go you to bed, and may the Lord be with you."

"And with you, too, father," said Alice, pillowing his head, covered with short thick white hair, on her bosom.

The following day they left London by the mail for their dear native village, where they arrived as the bells of the dilapidated, but picturesque old parish church were merrily ringing in honour of the marriage that had that day been celebrated between the miller and Catherine Jacobs. This they learnt from one of the miller's men, whom they met on the road at a short distance from the cottage, driving his master's team. The horse's heads were decked with evergreens, and the miller's waggoner had decorated his old slouched hat all round with the red Christmas rose, the snowdrop, catkins of the hazel, and the red dead-nettle. He knew nothing of the sentiment of flowers:—

"A primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

The waggoner and his team passed by, but the old bells of the church, "out of tune and harsh," continued to pierce the ear and heart of Alice and her father.

Poor old Mr. Gray was much moved, and with moistened eyes he endearingly and significantly looked upon the weeping face of his child.

"Oh, father," said his heroic daughter, "I know you feel for me. But let them ring on, and if it would ensure the happiness of those who have just been married, with all my heart, if I rightly know it, they might ring on for ever!"

They were now at home, and faithful Jenny Goodacre was delighted at the return of her master and mistress, which she testified by placing another log on the fire, and speedily making a comfortable tea.

"You will be sorry to hear, master," she said, as she trotted to and fro from dresser to cupboard, and cupboard to dairy, "you will be sorry to hear that poor old Shepherd is dead!"

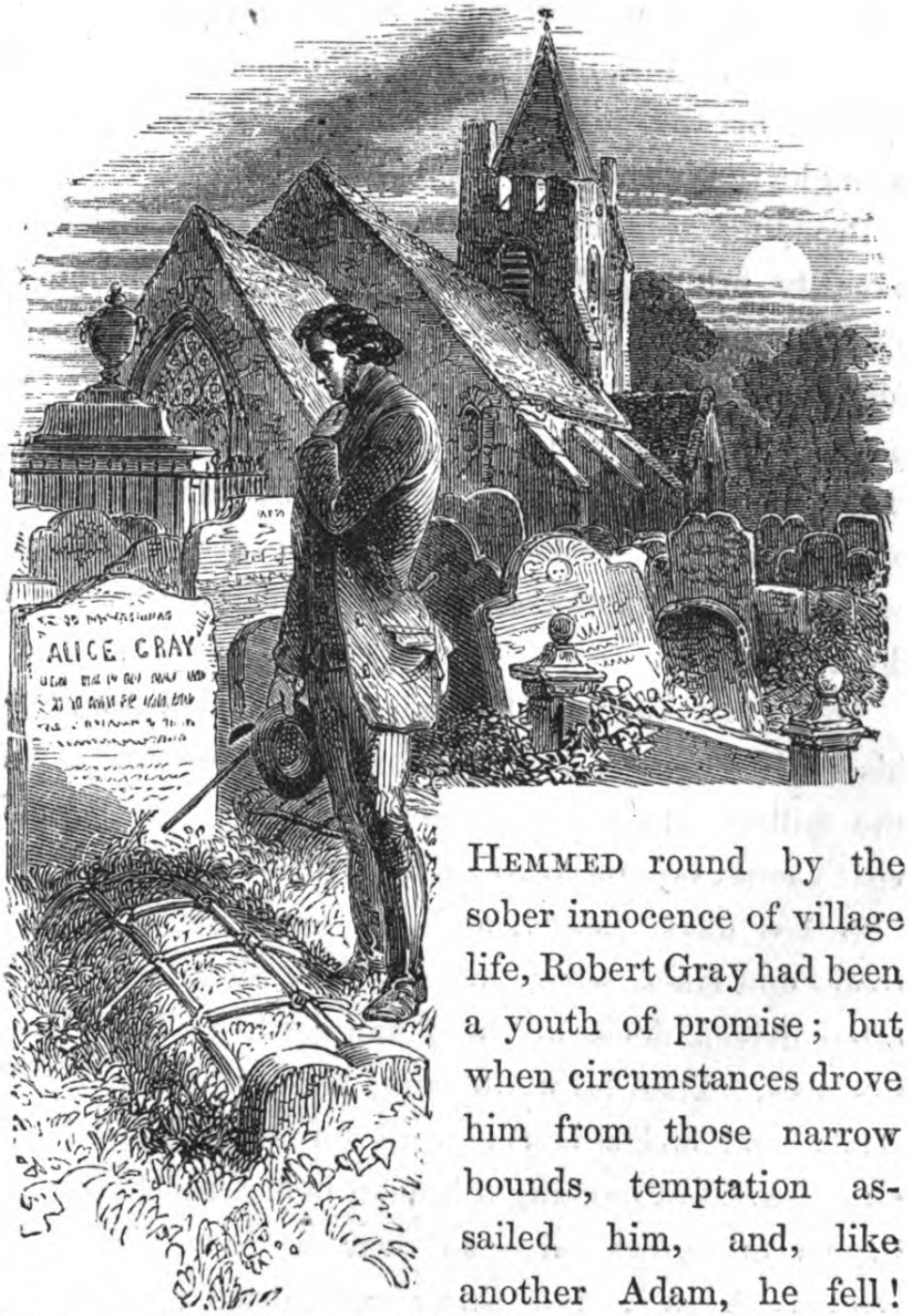
"Shepherd dead, Jenny!" exclaimed both Alice and her father.

"Yes, and it was all through master's going away. I never saw a Christian grieve more. He ran about the house like wild. I was quite frightened of him. If you offered him food, he would snap at you. At last he curled himself up, master, in the very chair you are now sitting in, and with a howl that I shall never forget to the day of my death, he died."

Much pity for the poor dog was expressed, and after tea, Mr. Gray took a lantern, and went to the potato barn, to see where Simon had buried his old and faithful servant.

After Robert Gray had parted from his sister, he entered a neighbouring coffee-house, where he passed the night—not in gratitude for his deliverance from gaol—not in hope for the future—but in disquietude and evil thoughts.

## CHAPTER IX.




HEMMED round by the sober innocence of village life, Robert Gray had been a youth of promise; but when circumstances drove him from those narrow bounds, temptation assailed him, and, like another Adam, he fell! Nor had the time of his repentance yet arrived.

When his loving sister left him, then departed an influence by which he had often been restrained, and to which, had he yielded more, he might have become a better man. But neither her counsels, or prison discipline, or the terrors of a deep disgrace, had yet wrought the wished-for change in him.

Brooding over the wrong endured by his sister, his haughty pride galled by Gladdish's broken honour, and magnifying the faults of others, in utter forgetfulness of his own, a strong desire for revenge took possession of his impulsive heart. He knew not that the miller already called another by the fond name of "wife," and he hoped, though with a vague idea of the means to the end, that justice might yet be done to Alice.

With this view he formed a resolution to revisit his native village, and to obtain an interview with the miller—but until the issue of their meeting, his visit should be unknown to Alice and his father.

A few days passed, and he once more trod the roads and lanes, where he, aided by Shepherd, had so often driven flocks of sheep and cattle to his father's pastures. Then he would sing and whistle along the roads, and had a merry word for a passer-by;—but now, fearful of meeting a human being, he chose night to revisit scenes once so dear to him. He need scarcely have feared being recognised, he was so altered! The rich colour of his face guilt had washed

away. His open countenance now wore a sullen frown. Guilt, too, had stripped him of his strength and vigour, and left him lean and dejected. With his head bent on the moonlit road, he walked on—and stopped and receded, like one pondering some undefined purpose, or agitated by doubts and fears.

He now turned into the lane, and sat himself down on the knotty trunk of the very tree where his companion in crime had met with his death. He felt weak and weary, but the restless spirit within him had no compassion. Everything was still; not even could his own footsteps be heard in the velvet-feeling dust.

> "'Twas such a night as this
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise."

The changing luminary of the night never was fairer; not a cloud rolled over her face. She reigned supreme —and all she gazed on, became supremely fair. Where Robert Gray stood was a seeming paradise on earth; and a rightly-constituted mind could not gaze upon those magnificent works of our Father by which he was surrounded, without the holiest emotions. But his heart, yielding to other influences, had long been a stranger to pious meditation. It was now Spring-time; the upturned furrows smelt wholesome; the rooks, as if disturbed by the wanderer's footsteps, cawed momentarily in their nests, and then were hushed again;

the hare bounded from him in affright, and sought the coppice by the lane; the toad sported in the moonlight; the violet scented the hedge-bank, and the daisies, fresh from their winter's sleep, sparkled like scattered gems.

Occupied with his wicked thoughts, young Gray moved among those beautiful creations as regardless as if he traversed a barren heath. He heaved no sigh, he uttered no regret, at having made himself so unworthy his delightful birthplace. Insensible to beauty, aud fearing man rather than God, he reached the village church, which stood in the middle of a spacious yard, studded with graves. For a time he paused, looking toward the church over the stone stile, upon which, in happy days, himself and little Alice had often played, unconscious of the troubles which lay in the path of life before them. The quick tramp of a horse advancing toward him on the road, filled his breast with fear, and he crossed the stile to escape observation. Once within the precincts of the sacred spot, his heart sunk down beneath a terrible oppression. It was not fear—for he had a heart proof against the superstition of ghosts; were he weak enough to shrink from these, the tall stones standing before him, with rude carvings, which the moon's rays shadowed into a thousand mystic images had terrified him beyond the expression of words. The chimes of the old clock had just struck out their crazy notes—sounds rude, but

mysteriously musical when associated with the memory of happier days, of ties severed, of hopes fled! These had rivetted him to the spot—and no tongue may tell the feelings of anguish which crossed his mind, as listening to the irregular beating of the bells, visions of the past burst upon his fancy. They reminded him of happy days long past, when, under the fostering care of a cheerful but pious mother, himself and Alice were led to this very spot. It was here their mother had often sat, and read to them inscriptions from the humble tombs, warning them from the temptations of life, and encouraging them to look beyond the grave for joys which the earth may not afford. And now where was she? Not far from the spot where Robert Gray then stood lay his mother's grave. And with a low and noiseless tread—while not a breath of air stirred, or a tuft of grass moved, to break the awful silence of the moment—Robert Gray, as if by some mysterious power (and is not the power mysterious which thus binds the living to the dead, draws down the tears of the still sparkling eye upon the mouldering dust?) was drawn toward the sacred spot, where all that remained of his mother's earthly nature lay mingling with the dust. He stood awhile motionless as a statue; an intense agony agitated his breast, but he spoke not; his grief was too heavy for the utterance of words. With his face pale as the

sleeping dead, but with a heart now beating more rapidly than it had ever done before, he seemed chained to the spot. A modest head-stone marked the grave; it bore this simple inscription:—

In Memory of

ALICE GRAY,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE

ON FEBRUARY 22, 1782,

HOPING A BLESSED RESURRECTION, THROUGH THE REDEMPTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

---

"Earth's a garden, life's a flower,
It dies, alas! how soon it dies;
Catch, then, oh catch the transient hour;
Improve each moment as it flies!"

At length he wept, and overcome by bitter emotions, sank down upon his mother's grave; and ever and anon, as he dried his tears, and strove to quell the bursting tide of grief, the words "In memory of ALICE GRAY" again burst upon his view, and again he was overcome with emotion.

Robert Gray recognised the work of his sister Alice near the hallowed spot, for the spring flowers, sown by her ever dutiful hand, were already blooming, and,

throwing out their small arms, seemed tenderly to embrace and kiss the stone which spoke the memory of a departed mother.

Oh sacred were the tears that fell from Robert Gray! Were his mother's spirit conscious of the repentance then going on within him, how she must have rejoiced as the great drops fell warm upon the sod, and again and again succeeded each other, faster even than the sins which they burst forth to pray forgiveness for.

Let the reader profit by this passage in the history of Robert Gray! When temptations arise, and the world seems to allure by its gaudy snares, in the quiet of evening seek out a mother's, a father's, a brother's or a sister's grave! An hour there in solemn meditation, will work a happy change upon the vilest heart. and deter from the most resolute purpose to do wrong!

It was so with Robert Gray: he sought his father's home—his repentance had begun.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE morning opened with all the peculiar beauty and freshness of spring. The robin warbled its melodious notes from the branches of the tall poplar; the skylark carolled away in the high air its matin song of praise; sparrows loudly chirped upon the straw thatched roofs, and seemed as busy as mountebanks before a coming fair—instinct told them that the time of warmth, light, and feasting was at hand, and they fluttered their feathers, and whirled around each other in unbounded ecstacy; the swallow darted about windows and chimneys, as if to reconnoitre places of old acquaintance. Feathers and bits of straw were being borne about, tiny architects were at work, new dwellings were being planned and constructed; in the rookery the cawing was loud and incessant, and many a petty feud arose over some envied bit of stick, which the stronger bird bore off in triumph, and was compelled afterwards to watch with closest care; cocks crowed loudly, and hens cackled as they emerged from their nests. The waggoner whistled as he raised his team; and the drover shouted to his flocks as they lingered by the way-side

brook, slaking their morning thirst. Such is the merry carousal of a spring morning in a country village.

At the "little house by the mill" the duties of the day always commenced at sun-rise—sometimes before. Mr. Gray, though now in years, forgot not the habits of his well-regulated early life; he was full of maxims about early rising and industry, and these he enforced by example. He had already been out looking after a cow which had knocked down a fence, strayed into a neighbouring field, and commenced serious depredations upon a crop of young turnips. As he returned to the kitchen, Jenny Goodacre exclaimed, "Dear me, measter, something 'll surely happen to-day, for many a long year I havn't had such trouble to catch the fire; seeming to me the sticks weant burn anyhow; and I've always noticed that how true it is—

> 'When wood disputes wi' fire,
> Comes a something we desire!'"

"Well, Jenny, so that it *be* something we desire, no matter how soon it comes. But as yet your proverb stands contradicted, for Peggy has forced the wicker fence, and devoured more young turnips than her two days' milk will pay for, I take it."

"Aye, aye, measter, but her did that before I set a light to the sticks, you know, so let us have faith yet. Depend on't my words will come true, for I dreamt last night—oh dear! there's Miss Alice calling for her

gown which I was to air for her, and not a bit of warmth has it yet had."

Soon, however, the sticks crackled merrily, assisted no doubt by a sharp stir which Jenny in her excitement gave them, and with dry furze and peat there was rapidly a glowing fire, before which sundry broad slices of bacon spluttered, and over which was placed a large saucepan of milk that Simon Goodacre had just brought in from the dairy.

The humble table was spread, and Mr. Gray, Alice, and Miss Johnson (now a dweller beneath this humble roof) sat down thereto, while Jenny and Simon Goodacre alternately "waited table," and satisfied their own appetites, perched upon blocks of wood, beneath the broad chimney.

Jane Johnson was somewhat younger in years than Alice Gray. Before Mr. Johnson's fall, they had been playmates together. Jane's mother, a woman of high moral principle, and of keen sensibilities, died, leaving her daughter of a tender age, but already impressed with many important sentiments, the germs of future excellence. Her mother's death was, it is said, hastened by a sense of the extravagancies into which her husband was plunging, and the inevitable ruin and disgrace which she clearly foresaw. Thus sink many wives—thus become many children motherless! Long before the world discovers a husband's moral defalcations, the wife has marked with tearful eye each down-

ward step; and when at last the dreaded tide of dishonour rises, the slender thread which bound her to life is snapped—she has passed a brief and melancholy journey from the altar to the grave. Born to trouble, but strengthened by early responsibilities, Jane Johnson became a girl of superior excellence. In her person she was beautiful; the changes of her life had set upon her a soft expression of care; but in the momentary intervals of forgetfulness it was easy to discover that she possessed a joyous, active, and energetic spirit. She had travelled much; and even in her brief time, in following her father through his changeful career, had mixed with various society: this imparted an easy gracefulness to her manners, and a becoming confidence to her general demeanour. It is no matter for surprise that when left an orphan, upon returning to the home of her early childhood, the sight of sweet scenes, which dwelt upon her memory as a dream of the happy past, should inflame her heart with a fervent love for the family of Mr. Gray, now the only persons she could look upon as old-established friends. Besides which, she knew that it was her father who had ruined Mr. Gray, and brought sorrow and discredit upon him; and therefore she felt united to him by honour and love, and she would warmly clasp his neck and beg to be called his child.

"Father," she said, "you have endured many sorrows, brought upon you by no error of your own,

but by an overflowing kindness towards another—and that other, my unhappy father. Bless you a thousand times for all you have suffered! and now let me assure you, that so far as money can accomplish it, you shall be restored to the comforts you have lost. I have already instructed my solicitor to make the necessary investigation, and in a few days your losses shall be compensated."

"Heaven bless you!" at once exclaimed Alice and Mr. Gray; "I always had a faith," continued the latter, "that my Father in heaven would not abandon me to utter adversity in my old age. I feel the weakness of advancing years creeping upon me, and often in solitude tears have stolen down my cheek when I have thought that my dear Alice, the image in features and in moral worth of her departed mother—my only comfort in hours of bitter tribulation—might be brought to poverty, and I be even a burden upon her helpless hands: and now, just as my hopes began to fade, the goodness of Providence is made manifest—you came as a ministering angel to heal my wounds!"

"And who can tell how sweet it is to be such an angel?" said Miss Johnson. "To me, the joy of healing the wounded heart is so rich, that I wonder those who have the means are not more ready to become physicians to the souls of others. I can well understand how and why it was you hazarded your all to help my father. One thing remains for the completion of

your happiness—it is the restoration of your son; and let us cherish the hope that when he hears of your restored position he will return, and be as dutiful as ever!"

"Alas! I have no such hope, dear girl. Nor would it solace me to find him again beneath my roof, attracted by the comforts I could afford him. He would love me for my purse, and be dutiful for daily wages: that is not the affection which can cheer a father's heart, or do honour to his son. No, the world must teach him a severer lesson yet; and when its pomps and vanities shall set their frown upon him, as they have already begun to do; then—when I am beneath the green turf—he will think of his father, and know how to estimate the treasure he has lost."

"Let us hope for a better issue," said Alice, comforting her father. "He has already had a severe lesson, and shown some signs of repentance. Have we no hope, that the same God who restores you to worldly comfort, will also give you that inward rest, which depends upon the restoration of your son?"

"Right, Alice," replied Mr. Gray; "I do wrong to doubt, when all things are possible, and good results are ever probable."

"It is many years," said Miss Johnson, turning to Alice, "since I saw Robert,—but I remember him a fine spirited boy, full of good temper, and as expert as a fawn in his gambols in the fields. I cannot forget

how he ran with us over the green slopes of the meadows, adjoining Hill Farm; and how he loved to fantastically trim our hair with wild flowers, and then, presenting me to his mother, called me his 'May Queen!' you remember?—"

Alice spoke not, for she saw the tears rapidly trickling over her father's face, called forth by this pleasing vision of the past.

"I said so, measter—didn't I say so, now!" exclaimed Jenny Goodacre, as she looked out of the latticed window, and rubbed away the moisture of her breath with her folded apron.

"Said what, Jenny?" exclaimed Mr. Gray.

"Why, didn't I say—

> 'When wood disputes wi' fire,
> Comes a something we desire!'"

"You said so, Jenny, and we've often heard it from you, but what of it?"

"What of it? Why here comes—yes, I do believe it—if my eyes don't deceive me—yes, sure enough, 'tis he—"

"Whom, Jenny?"

"Why, as I do live, Mister Robert is coming to the cottage!"

"Robert!" they all exclaimed. Miss Johnson and Alice flew to the window; but old Mr. Gray covered his face with his hands, overcome by emotion. Jenny

had told him either too much or too little—if right, he could hardly bear the sudden shock; if mistaken, the disappointment would torment him.

True it was—and in a moment a father again fell upon the neck of a prodigal son, and kissed him. There were gushes of tears—then fitful smiles—then tears and embraces again. Connected with their restoration to lost wealth of which they had been but that morning assured, there seemed to Alice and her father, in the sudden and unexpected arrival of Robert, a full promise that all should be well in the future.

"Father, I am unworthy of this tenderness," exclaimed Robert. "I come to you penitent—to ask from you—as I have already prayed from God—forgiveness of my many sins. I have tasted of the cup of wickedness, and found it bitter. I come now to be your son again. To toil for you night and morning. I will up with the sun, and labour cheerfully through the day, and your old age shall be sustained in comfort of body and mind. I cannot tell you how this change has come; but it *has* come, and God be praised for it. I know that the good teachings of my sister Alice found a way to my heart, though my stony nature yielded not at once. But last night, dear father, returning to the village with a purpose I may explain hereafter, I turned to cross the churchyard; there it was I felt by some mystic power drawn to my mother's grave—there it was that the chain which had bound

me burst asunder—there it was that I first felt the spirit of repentance, and prayed God to sustain me under it. I should have sought you last night, but on my way hither I met your old friend Jonathan Roper, to whom I confessed my story; the hour being late, he begged me sojourn with him through the night, lest my disturbing your rest in such an unexpected way might do you harm. And now I am here, dear father, ready and eager to work for you, to wipe out my own disgrace, and to comfort the hearts I have so long tormented."

Again there were tears, embraces, and smiles; and when Robert Gray recognised in Jane Johnson the sweet playmate of his early youth, the pure feelings of his early boyhood came back, and even before he heard of her noble conduct towards his father, his heart had revived within it the tender sympathies of first love.

Time passed on, and there came some remarkable changes. But happily, Robert's resolution continued unaltered—he gave a fine example of the honourable career which lies open, even to those who have deeply fallen, if they will but take heart and persevere. Among the events which occurred, were the death of Thomas Gladdish, leaving his widow barely provided for; the removal of Farmer Jacobs from Hill Farm, which was advertised to be sold; and the gradual adaptation of the feelings of all persons engaged in

these events to the new and permanent circumstances which the will of Providence had ordained.

But the greatest—the happiest change—was that which put old Mr. Gray and his son once more in possession of Hill Farm, bought for and presented to them by Jane Johnson, the Emigrant's Daughter, to whom Robert Gray was subsequently united in matrimony. Miss Johnson had, indeed, found a father in Mr. Gray; and he, in her, had found a child of whose goodness we need not further speak; Alice had obtained a loving sister. Even Simon and Jenny Goodacre derived comfort from their restoration to Hill Farm, the scene of their early servitude: and the hearts of all were filled with gratitude to God.