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h, to realise what property he had remaining returned to us and purchased a fine estate s to my own. The marriage took place a few terwards, and we have lived almost as one ee. Finding I could now leave my affairs the hands of one I could rely on, I deter- ting in practice a wish I had frequently fore—that of visiting Europe. I was the osed to take the voyage from the constantly desire of my son-in-law to hear some tidings ents, for whom he appears to have entertained affection, especially for his mother. They lived in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, and y arrival in England I have been employed in o discover their abode, but without success. On the matter over with my friend, Mr. Mortimer me that he was acquainted with a medi- ner who possessed a great knowledge of family of probably would be able to give formerly n the subject; so, following up his kindly introduced me to you."

name of the family?" inquired the

; singularly enough, I know a family of d it is not a common one. They formerly eat respectability, but latterly have been mate. I remember, too, they had a son I heard, went to America when quite a lad."

have no doubt it is the same family," said Mr. urtney. "My son-in-law's christian name is George, at his father's is I know not. His mother's christian ne is Catherine."

'They are the same, evidently. I remember it was wife's name, perfectly well. A more worthy, able creature than she is, if she be still alive, never ted."

Alive! Do you not know where she is now?"

THE

WEAVER'S FAMILY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"DIVES AND LAZARUS," "A TALE FOR THE PHARISEES," &c., &c.

LONDON;
JUDD AND GLASS, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
AND GRAY'S INN ROAD.

JUDD AND GLASS, PRINTERS, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
AND GRAY'S INN ROAD.

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THE WEAVER'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is frequently remarked that, from the vast extent of our Metropolis, the inhabitants of one district will often differ as much in dress, manners, and appearance, from those of another, as if they belonged to different and distant cities. If this remark hold good in the present day, with all our means for easy communication, how much more apparent must the difference have been half a century since, before the street-cab and omnibus were invented? At that time the portion of London extending from the extremity of Bishopsgate-street Without, in a north-easterly direction, and known as the Spitalfields, offered a remarkable proof of the fact. It was inhabited by a class whose method of living and employment were as unlike those of the rest of the community, as if they had been natives of another country. In personal appearance, also, they had many distinctive attributes. The clear brown complexion and dark intelligent eye of the French were still common among them, and predominated considerably over the Saxon characteristics, generally found among the inhabitants of the other parts of the capital. The very streets and their names, as well as those of their occupiers, were hardly English. Everywhere the eye met some word or object which told of their foreign

origin. All is now changed; and few of our readers who can remember the locality even twenty years ago, would now recognise it as the same, unless, perchance, he may occasionally pass, on his way to the Eastern Counties Railway Station, some gaunt row of tall old houses, with their double tiers of well-lighted workshops at the top, which were erected in its more palmy days; or notice the name of some old French family, formerly perhaps noble, inscribed over the door or window of some small tradesman of the poorer order of shopkeepers.

The gradual separation of wealth from poverty, of the employer from the employed, and which taught the manufacturer to quit the district inhabited by the weaver, had been telling for some years with most pernicious effect upon the industrious classes in the neighbourhood. Poverty and distress had already made deep inroads among them, which the removal of the prohibition on French silks during the Canning administration brought to a climax. From that time misery seemed to have made Spitalfields her favourite dwelling-place. The voice of the poor and sorrowful, which had long since reached Heaven, was at last heard by the British Government, and means were devised for their relief. Their complaints were fully and carefully investigated. It was adjudged that their dwellings were too confined, and their inhabitants too crowded together. More than two thousand of their houses were destroyed, but not twenty were rebuilt. Their inhabitants were driven away, and the broad expanse of road cleared for the formation of Commercial-street, and the spacious station and arches of the railway, now mark the ground on which so many thousands of the children of toil once lived.

But the change in appearance which has fallen on the locality in latter years is perhaps less astonishing than its rapid growth to wealth and importance, when, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the crowd

of French refugees established themselves upon it. Since the suppression of the convent of St. Mary in the Spittle, the district had remained comparatively desolate, with the exception of the periodical preachings at the Cross, which remained erect till the time of the civil wars, when that last vestige of the original ecclesiastical establishment was destroyed. Afterwards, it appears to have subsided into a suburban solitude. How different must have been its aspect at the commencement of the eighteenth century, when long streets of houses had been built and were inhabited by a foreign race; when the loom and the shuttle were at full work, and an industrial activity prevailed at least equal to that existing in any other part of the Metropolis, to that of its quietude fifty years earlier. Who would have believed it to be the same spot on which the charitable Dame Beatrice Aubrey formerly resided, and who by will dated 6th January, 1552, left her house and large gardens, situated in the centre of the parish, to Wm. Warley and his heirs for ever, on condition of their paying to the poor of the Parish of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, the sum of five pounds annually, to be distributed in bread on certain Saturdays, and threescore sacks of charcoal to the poor of an adjoining parish, to be given them every Michaelmas.

Never did an act of despotic cruelty fall more severely upon a nation than did the revocation of that Edict by Louis the Fourteenth, on France. Never did a nation profit more by hospitality and sympathy with the unfortunate, than did England and the English, in offering an asylum and protection to their persecuted co-religionists. Little did the tyrant imagine what would be the result, when setting at naught the advice of many of his ablest councillors, and even the supplications and remonstrances of many of the Catholic bishops, he yielded to the advice of his Jesuit confessors, and the adulations of a profligate and insatiable court; and drove from the homes of their fathers so

many thousands of the most intelligent and industrious of his subjects into the territory of his most formidable rival. In the year 1687 alone, no fewer than 15,500 Huguenots arrived in this country. Among that number were one hundred and forty noble families; one hundred and eighty-three Protestant ministers and their wives and children; one hundred and forty-four lawyers and physicians, also with their families; the remainder was comprised of agricultural labourers and artizans. 13,500 of these expatriated Protestants settled in London, the remainder were drafted off into the country towns. Of the mechanical portion, the greater part applied themselves to silk weaving and throwing, and with so much success, that many of the nobles and professional men among them also adopted it as a means of obtaining a livelihood. Never was the axiom, enunciated many years later by Adam Smith, that "labour is wealth," more completely proved than by the subsequent history of these refugees. Wealth, enterprize, and intelligence came with them, and increased abundantly. Although the majority were content with a respectable position, many among their descendants rose to great eminence in the country, and now rank with the most honoured of its inhabitants, as the names Bouverie, Ligoniers, Labouchere, Romilly, Houblon, and many others, fully testify.

The adventures of a family descended from one of these emigrés will occupy the pages of this work. Our story dates from the month of December, 1812. One foggy evening, a tall, thin, middle-aged man was seen wending his way through the labyrinth of streets which was then between Spitalfields Church and the spot where the Eastern Counties Railway now stands. He was evidently well acquainted with the locality, for he threaded the dark narrow lanes with great rapidity and certainty, nor did he slacken his pace till he arrived at a respectable-looking house in Wilkes-street, opposite the present brewery of Messrs. Hanbury. The

door was ajar, and he entered without knocking. In the front room on the ground floor was a lad between sixteen and seventeen years of age; he was, at that moment, standing at a desk near the window, and was occupied in making some entries in an account-book. The candle by his side lighted up a very intelligent, handsome countenance, which was seen to great advantage as he raised his head to greet the new comer. He, like his visitor, was dressed in deep mourning, and its freshness told too well the misfortune which they mourned was but of recent date. The room in which the lad was occupied, though not large, was fitted up for carrying on the business of a silk manufacturer on a small scale. Besides the desk near the window, there was a counter the whole length of the room, and shelves containing rolls of manufactured silk were fixed against the walls. Three or four large wicker baskets were on the floor, two containing bobbins with coloured silk wound on them ready for the loom, the other held only the empty bobbins. At one extremity of the counter was piled a heap of skeins of silk, evidently fresh from the dye-house, and in a large half-open drawer beneath the counter were seen several bundles of organzines and trams, ready for use when wanted. The whole place had an air of business about it, although the labours of the day had evidently ended.

"I'm glad you are come home, uncle," said the boy; "mother has been so low spirited this afternoon we could not raise her, all we could do."

"Naturally enough, George," said the man; "a woman does not lose so excellent a husband as she has done without feeling it severely, but you must try and amuse her as much as you can. Where is she now?"

"Up-stairs waiting supper for you. Don't let her think I have spoken to you about it, but I thought it better to do so, although she did not wish it; the least mention of anything about father's affairs makes her unhappy. Shall we go up now?"

"Wait a few minutes, I've an entry or two to make, and then we'll go together." So saying he seated himself at the desk.

"Have you done much to-day, uncle?"

"I have sold a piece of velvet to Jones and Price, and a piece of satin to Wilson's." In a few minutes the entries were made, and, after carefully locking the door, the uncle and nephew proceeded up stairs. In the sitting-room on the first floor was seated an amiable looking middle-aged woman in deep widow's weeds, in company with her other son, a lad perhaps a year or eighteen months younger than his brother. The room itself, if not handsomely, was certainly comfortably furnished, and there was an appearance of easy circumstances about the whole place, which showed that if the owners were not in an affluent position, they were certainly far removed from poverty.

The widow received her brother—for the new comer stood in that close relationship to her—with much pleasure, and after he had relieved himself from his mud-covered shoes, and drawn his chair near the fire, their one servant girl brought in their supper and they were soon occupied with their meal. As little conversation took place between them while thus engaged, we may as well profit by their silence and introduce the party more particularly to the reader.

The poor woman had been a widow only three weeks. Her husband, Mr. Beuzeville, was descended from one of the emigrés already mentioned. His family had formerly been noble, and was so at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but with the versatility of a Frenchman, his ancestor, casting aside his family pride, industriously applied himself to the loom, honestly and laboriously earning his bread, without the slightest feeling of degradation, in the house of one of his former dependents, to whom he was also indebted for his instruction in the art of weaving. He succeeded not only in keeping himself from indigence, but, by his

exertions and strict economy, left behind him at his death a small sum of money as well as a respectable business, as affairs were carried on in those days; the weaver selling directly to the mercer the produce of his loom. Although after the two next generations the trace of their foreign origin had been considerably effaced, still the business was, in the French style, handed down from father to son till it reached the present family; none possessing more ambition than honourably and industriously to preserve the means of support their predecessors had left them. At present the only direct symbol of their foreign ancestry which remained was a coarsely-painted coat of arms which, framed and glazed, hung over the chimneypiece, and which Mrs. Beuzeville was wont to tell her visitors belonged to her husband's family, when they were wealthy and grand in their own country; but in what part of France their estates were situated, was a point of geography it had never entered that worthy lady's head to inquire. She held the armorial bearings in great respect, second indeed only to a portrait of her husband himself, which hung on the wall opposite to them. If the coat of arms showed indifferently the talent of the artist, it was perfectly painted when compared with the picture; yet the effect produced by memory and imagination was such as to render it a master-piece in the eyes of the widow. She would look at the miserable caricature with an expression of intense affection, and her eyes would fill with tears at the perfect resemblance her fancy would paint over the wretched daub before her.

The two lads were her sons, and she had had no other children. They were fine-grown, sprightly fellows, and both behaved with great affection to their remaining parent. They had received the modest education then considered sufficient, or necessary, for a mercantile man; and their father had obliged them both to work at the loom, so that they might under-

stand their business thoroughly. The uncle, Mr. Lesoeuf, was a kind, good-natured man, of about fifty years of age, but of somewhat delicate appearance. He had formerly been in business on his own account; but affairs did not succeed according to his wishes or anticipation, and he left it almost penniless, but without a stain on his character. His brother-in-law then took him into his own house to superintend the looms; and, as he was a skilful weaver, he conducted his department most efficiently. Mr. Beuzeville, for the last two years of his life, had been very infirm; and Mr. Lesoeuf had, during that period, almost the entire management of the business. At the time of the death, the family were in considerable anxiety. A system of centralisation had, for some time past, been adopted by the larger and wealthier firms in the trade, and these were taking gradually from the connexions of the smaller manufacturers. Although the family had not yet experienced any diminution in their receipts, still they feared that Mr. Beuzeville's death might loosen the hold they possessed on their customers, as he had been much respected by all who knew him. Their fears, however, appeared ill-founded. A certain degree of sympathy is invariably felt towards a widow; and Mrs. Beuzeville experienced it in common with others. Her brother, also, had exerted himself in keeping the feeling alive and interesting her connexion in her favour.

"What success have you had to-day?" inquired the widow, after her brother had finished his supper, and the family had collected round the fire.

"Well, we've nothing to complain of. Jones and Price have given us an order for a piece of velvet, and Wilson for another of satin. Two or three others have promised, when they have taken stock, to give us orders for what they may want in our way. I have also received Cooling's money, which I have already entered, as well as the orders. I must say every one

speaks of you most kindly, and appears to take great interest in your welfare."

"I'm sure I'm very grateful for it," said the widow; "but what I should do without you I don't know."

"Oh, we shall get on well enough, I have no doubt; but you must not be low-spirited. The boys, also, will be a great help to you, and I will keep at the helm, if it pleases God to spare my life, till they are old enough to take the management of affairs. What have you been doing to-day, George?"

"I have been below all day. I gave out some work to the Bakers. Thompson brought home the black silk. I don't like that man's work at all. I examined it carefully with the glass, and it's not as regular as it ought to be. Beyond that it's barely weight. I wish you would examine it to-morrow. Oh! by-the-bye, that satin has been sent home from the dresser's. It's a beautiful piece of goods, certainly."

"I am not particularly well pleased with Thompson myself," said the uncle; "but I will look into the matter to-morrow. What have you been about, Edward?"

"I have been at the loom all day," replied the younger son, "at the purple shot silk."

"You must not keep at it too hard. Although you are a strapping fellow, too close work at the loom at your age is not over and above good for the health."

"I have spoken to him several times about it myself," said Mrs. Beuzeville; "but he pays me no attention. Twice to-day I went up to the workshop to persuade him to go out and take some exercise, but he refused to move. I shall really be very angry with him if he is not more obedient."

"Come, come, mother," said Edward, "you must not be angry with me. If people won't work, they ought not to eat. Scold me when I'm lazy, if you like," said he, kindly taking her hand, "but not when I work well—that don't encourage a fellow, you know."

The mother, by way of answer, kissed him.

"I can't think how Ned can stick so hard to those looms," said George. "For my part, I've always had enough of it after the first half-hour. How anybody can keep regularly at it I can't imagine. It's not like some sorts of work, where you can go on mechanically and think of something else. Your attention must always be on the shuttle and the stuff, and to be obliged to fix your mind on that, when you're wanting to think of something else, is about the most stupid thing on earth. I believe," he continued, in a very off-hand manner, "that if a business is to succeed, the less a master troubles himself about the drudgery the better —his time is too valuable for that. I think Ned would do much better if he made himself acquainted with the customers, and looked out for orders. We should get on well enough then."

"Softly, young gentleman," said his uncle. "Remember that before silk can be worn it must be woven; and looking out for customers is not all that is required. Edward is quite right in making himself master of his work, only he must not keep at it too long, or make himself ill. Have you seen anything of the Duchesnes to-day?" he inquired of his sister.

"Mrs. Duchesne was here this morning, and was very kind. She says their business is increasing wonderfully. Her husband talks of removing into the City. He says he is too far off from his customers here."

"If he would take my advice, he'd stay where he is. One swallow don't make a summer, and one lucky year, rarely, a man's fortune for life. I'm afraid its that wife of his that's putting the idea into his head. In this part of the world the inhabitants are hardly genteel enough for her acquaintance."

"I'm sure," said George, "I can't think what anybody can have to find fault with in her. She's quite the lady, and very superior to most of the women about here."

"I don't know whether that superiority will do much good to her husband's business," said Mr. Lesoeuf; "I can't say I like her, she's far too flighty to please me, and she's bringing up that girl of hers to be as giddy as herself."

"Well, I think that very unfair," said George; "I'm sure she's been as kind to us as possible, and she sends her husband or her daughter every day to ask after us; don't she, mother?"

"Yes, my dear, but I must say I have not seen much of Mrs. Duchesne herself. I don't much like her daughter Ellen, I must confess, but whether its the fault of her mother or herself, I don't know."

"Duchesne himself is a very good fellow," said Lesoeuf, "but I don't like the women, I must admit."

"Take care, uncle," said Edward, smiling, "George don't like Ellen to be spoken against." George immediately fired up at this, and Mr. Lesoeuf was obliged to interpose between the brothers, as angry words were rising rapidly between them. He remarked that the evening was getting late, and that it was time for them to retire, and then summoning Mary, their diminutive maid of all work, from her comfortable nap on her chair in the kitchen, he took from her a candle, and after assuring himself that the house was properly fastened up, the family separated for the night.

The next morning the duties of the house were carried on as usual. Mr. Lesoeuf was seated at his desk, in the room on the ground floor; George, after selecting some silk for the dyers, occupied himself in blocking some ribbons at a small wheel, the only mechanical employment in the house which was not absolutely irksome to him. The servant had quitted her kitchen for the purpose of arranging the bedrooms, in which duty she was assisted by the widow; and Edward was at his loom in the workshop, at the top of the house. Things progressed in their ordinary manner till it was nearly twelve o'clock, when a busi-

ness-looking man, about thirty-five years of age, accompanied by a somewhat showily dressed woman and a tall, fine girl, perhaps sixteen years old, entered the room on the ground floor. The new comers were Mr. Duchesne, his wife, and daughter; the latter was certainly a very pretty girl, and she as certainly knew it; George was also of her opinion on the subject, and showed it in his eyes when she entered the room. He somewhat sheepishly removed the wheel aside, and rose to receive them. Mrs. Duchesne inquired of him whether his mother were at home, as she had brought her husband and daughter to see her. Being answered in the affirmative she went with her daughter at once up stairs, and George accompanied them, while her husband remained below with Lesoeuf. Their conversation naturally turned on subjects connected with their business, Mr. Duchesne talking with great enthusiasm of a bargain he had been offered; and he now proposed to Mr. Lesoeuf a portion of it, if he were disposed to accept it. It was to purchase, for £30, a small parcel he held in his hand. It belonged to a friend of his who was at that moment waiting at his, Duchesne's, house, as they could talk over the matter more easily without him. The parcel was perhaps six or eight inches long by six broad, was hardly thicker than a quire of paper, and tied round with a piece of pack-thread. It was opened carefully by Mr. Duchesne, and disclosed forty or fifty small pieces of silk of two or three inches square. They were of various patterns and qualities, and had been collected from the latest productions of the Lyons' looms and smuggled into England, our Gallic neighbours being then even more superior to us in design than at present. Mr. Lesoeuf was so delighted at the sight that he thought the lesson should not be lost for improving George's knowledge of the business, and, much to that young gentleman's annoyance, he was called from the sitting-room to inspect the patterns

before them. Lesoeuf having agreed to take half the patterns, they then proceeded up-stairs to the workshop to fix on which looms they could most conveniently commence two of their new samples. There they found, as usual, Edward fully occupied with his work. The patterns were shown him, he quite appreciated their beauty, and entered eagerly into the discussion. They were soon joined by another visitor, Miss Duchesne had found some excuse for leaving her mother and Mrs. Beuzeville. She pretended to take an interest in the question, but it was not difficult to perceive that Master George was the principal attraction there, and she remained in conversation with him till her father and Mr. Lesoeuf descended into the sitting-room.

As a nascent affection evidently existed between the young people it may be excusable if we describe them. George was really a very handsome lad, tall and well made, fair complexion, blue eyes and light hair. He was of a very determined character, self-willed and imperious; very speculative in his ideas, with considerable ambition and withal very vain. He already held the idea that his position in a small house of business was inferior to his ability, and he hoped that more speculation, which he mistook for energy, would, when he should be older, place him in a more lucrative business. At present he admitted he was too young to entertain the idea, but he promised himself full sway when he should be older. The uncle, who well understood his nephew's character, did all in his power to keep down the boy's aspirations to their proper level, but without effect. With that intent he had taken every opportunity for objecting to the theory of the Duchesnes, especially the wife's, who asserted that it was impossible for a man to take a good position in the business, or conduct it with energy, while remaining in the vulgar quarter of the town in which they resided.

Ellen Duchesne was perhaps a year younger than George; she was pretty, froward, and proud; not without ability, but intensely conceited. She adopted the opinions of her mother, a silly vain woman, as her model, and omitted no opportunity for speaking with contempt and dislike of the society and neighbourhood surrounding them.

When Mr. Duchesne and his friends entered the sitting-room, they found the conversation between the ladies had somewhat flagged, and both seemed pleased at their presence. To say the truth there was little sympathy between them. Mrs. Beuzeville was a very domestic woman, Mrs. Duchesne was the reverse. Her husband was a kind-hearted, but somewhat speculative man. He had been most thoughtful and attentive to his neighbour during the last sickness of her husband, and the widow had a great respect for him, but her liking for the family ended there. After the ordinary questions and answers on meeting, Mr. Duchesne addressed her with—

"I congratulate you, neighbour, on your boys. Two better lads I don't know, and you are very fortunate in having them. I wish Edward had a little more of the energy of my friend George; but all that will come in good time. George will get on in the world, be sure of that—he has plenty of enterprise in him."

The widow's heart was too full when she received the compliment on her sons' behaviour to speak, but her eyes told her pleasure.

"Don't form a wrong estimate of Edward," said Mr. Lesoeuf, patting his favourite on the head, for he also had followed them down stairs; "he's no more wanting in energy than his brother—a better-conducted or harder-working lad I don't know."

"Oh! don't mistake me; no one knows better than I do that he's an excellent fellow; but, to get on in the world in the present day, a man must push forward with all his might. How do those houses which are

making such strides a-head of ours manage? Do you think the partners spend the whole or greater part of their time, as we and our fathers have been accustomed to do, in their workshops? I intend to alter my system altogether. I know when work is well done, and a good piece of silk or velvet when I see it; and that, in my opinion, is enough for a master. I am already in treaty for a warehouse in the city. For the future, I shall transact my business there, and I am very much mistaken if I do not some day find my friend George follow my example. One thing is certain, to conduct a business as our predecessors have been accustomed to do for some generations past, with anything like success, is an impossibility. When has one among them made a fortune, or died rich, in the present acceptation of the term?"

"If few have made large fortunes," said Mr. Lesoeuf, "perhaps still fewer have died absolutely poor. Indeed, during the whole of the last century, no trade has had occasion to complain of heavy losses less than ours, and I am one of those who, from experience, have learnt to leave well alone."

"Still I maintain that we should change our system with the times; all men of business will admit that, and in my opinion those who, with tact and caution, first bend to the force of public opinion, are those who succeed the best."

"Or," said Mr. Lesoeuf, "soonest succumb; but that is not the question before us. We, as you know perfectly well, have not the capital, even if we had the ability, for conducting a large business, and it would be idle for us to dream of it. To attempt it with small means is very like a determination to be honest if we have luck, and to claim ill-fortune, if we do not succeed, as an excuse for dishonesty. I have myself tried the experiment of large trading on a small capital, and if I have maintained my reputation as an honest man—which I trust I have done—it was at the cost, at the end

of one year, of sixteen years' hard labour and anxiety. As long as I remain at the head of this business, fair and softly shall be my motto; when I am gone, others can do as they please. While I am here, I shall inculcate moderation and caution; and I trust if Edward is more plodding than his brother, it will be an advantage. Each will be an excellent stimulous or check upon the other."

Mr. Duchesne now saw that the conversation had better be changed, and good-humouredly discussed the ordinary topics of the day. The friends then separated. George went to the business-room, Edward to the workshop, Mrs. Duchesne and her daughter to their home, while Mr. Duchesne remained with Mr. Lesoeuf to complete the transaction for the patterns.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.

YEARS passed on, and Mr. Lesoeuf maintained his theory perseveringly; but the effects of the larger houses, with their heavy capitals, were occasionally severely felt by him. If, however, the profits of the business were shown to be small when the annual balance-sheet was struck, still they were sufficient to maintain the family in respectability and comfort. The lads had grown apace, and were changed from the active, well-grown boys into fine young men. The distinguishing characteristics of each had developed themselves more distinctly as time had rolled on. George was hazardous and speculative; Edward, on the contrary, industrious and plodding, although without any lack of natural ability. Both were much respected by all, not only for their integrity and industry, but for the great and affectionate attention they

showed their widowed mother, who was now fast declining into the vale of years. The Duchesnes had removed into the City. Affairs had apparently prospered with them; for, in the year 1820, they had taken a country house at Dulwich, and lived in considerable style. Whether he was really a man of property might very reasonably have been doubted; for though he was industrious and honourable, and his speculations were conducted with considerable caution, still the expensive habits and tastes of his wife must have consumed a very large portion of his profits. The daughter, then about twenty-two years of age, was a beautiful young woman, clever and high-spirited; and, with the exception of a somewhat vindictive temper, might have made a good wife had she been brought up under a careful and intelligent mother; but, while her abilities were her own, she had inherited and adopted the extravagance and intense love of dress of her parent. George Beuzeville was a frequent visitor at the house, and was generally considered as the admitted suitor of the daughter. He had certainly proposed for her; but Mr. Duchesne, although he entertained a great respect for the young man, postponed the consideration of the question, until Ellen's admirer could show more satisfactory means of maintaining her than he was able to do at the time he made the offer.

Edward had also formed an attachment; but it was for a girl of a very different character. Catherine Baker was the daughter of a journeyman weaver, and had herself been brought up to work at the loom —an employment at which she had acquired considerable dexterity. Her father was still alive, though somewhat infirm; yet not sufficiently so as to preclude his working on plain silks, although his eyesight was now too defective, for the more complicated and delicate stuffs he had formerly been accustomed to weave. His daughter lived with him, and was in every respect an excellent, attentive, and industrious girl. She was

a member of what, in the opinion of many, may be considered the noblest order of womanhood—the good, virtuous daughter of industrious, honourable parents, in the more intelligent portion of the working classes. In person she was fully as handsome as Ellen Duchesne; but of a different style of beauty. Ellen preserved something of her French extraction in her person. Her brunette complexion, dark eyes and hair, all told of ancestry of a warmer climate than our own; while Catherine Baker, on the contrary, was of the pure English style of loveliness. She had auburn hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. She was tall and well made; but her principal charm was an exquisite expression of mildness and amiability in her countenance—and that of a description which, without wishing to do an injustice to the women of other countries, can be found only in perfection in our own. Edward loved her sincerely, and her affection for him was, in her quiet way, scarcely less powerful than her lover's. The attachments formed by her sons were but of little interest to Mrs. Beuzeville beyond the fact that both the young women promised to make them good and affectionate wives; but to Mr. Lesoeuf they were subjects of great uneasiness. He dreaded lest George should be drawn into a system of extravagance and speculation by a closer connexion with the Duchesnes; and Edward's acquaintance with Catherine Baker was, in his eyes, scarcely less objectionable, as likely to increase the apathy he showed to mix in a more elevated circle of acquaintance—a danger, in his opinion, scarcely less to be dreaded than the brother's. The attachment of the young men appearing irrevocable, as well as some innovations on the part of George in the method of carrying on the business, and submitted to by Edward, had at last so worked on Mr. Lesoeuf's temper that he determined on withdrawing from the concern; and, having received the offer to superintend the English business of a large silk house in the north of Italy, he left

England; and the management of that which he had conducted so many years with probity and success remained in the hands of the brothers.

The first care of the young men, on the departure of the uncle, was to have a fresh deed of partnership drawn up, and the business was managed between them. They were each to receive an equal share of the profits—a small annuity being first paid out of these to the mother.

A few months only had elapsed after Mr. Lesoeuf's departure for Italy when Mr. Duchesne gave his consent to his daughter's marriage with George Beuzeville. A house was taken. The wedding took place in due time, and the young couple resided in the apartments over the warehouse. Edward remained at their old home in Wilkes-street, and there superintended the whole of the manufacturing department—his mother residing with him. It was now his turn to think of marrying; but many more impediments were in the way than had fallen to the lot of his brother. Mrs. Beuzeville had lately become exceedingly suspicious and avaricious. She imagined she was unjustly treated with respect to her interests in the business; although the annuity she received, if not large, was quite as liberal as the profits of the concern would admit. She thought that if Catherine Baker came to reside in her house it would be to her prejudice. She also suspected, and perhaps not without reason, that her intended daughter-in-law would endeavour to get her old father, to whom the girl was much attached, to reside in the house with them. Great discontent arose on all sides in consequence of Edward's contemplated marriage. George strongly disapproved of it. Since his union with Ellen Duchesne he had acquired still more the notions of the false gentility he had contracted before it; and the marriage of his brother with a young woman who obtained her daily bread by her labour was, in his opinion, most derogatory. Both he

and his wife had also an intense aversion to Catherine's father, who was a coarse, uneducated man, who could hardly contrive, from age and infirmity, to earn the means of his own existence by his handicraft. His manners and habits, apart from his industry and integrity, were of a very common description. The couple also contrived to keep alive the aversion of old Mrs. Beuzeville to the match if ever it appeared to flag. Old Baker had sufficient shrewdness to perceive that his daughter was disliked by her lover's family, and sufficient pride and affection for his child to spurn the idea of her residing in a home where she was not welcome. He therefore assisted, on his side, as much as possible to break off the match. All, however, was useless, till one day a circumstance occurred which succeeded in causing a separation, if not a coolness, between the lovers.

The family had been spending the evening at the elder Mrs. Beuzeville's, and Catherine had been invited by Edward to join them. None in the company paid her any attention except Edward, who attempted to compensate for their coolness by being more than ordinarily attentive to her. His behaviour only served to make still more apparent to Catherine the unkindness of the others, and to pique his family by the preference he showed to her society. Their spite at last developed itself in little ill-natured remarks, evidently intended to annoy the girl. Catherine submitted to them for some time in her quiet, gentle manner, till at last an expression of Mrs. George Beuzeville's was so offensive that her patience gave way under it, and she burst into tears. At that moment her father called, for the purpose of taking his daughter home. He had been spending the evening with some friends at a public-house; and, without being absolutely tipsy, had certainly drunk more than was prudent, though habitually he was a remarkably sober man.

Seeing his daughter in tears, he inquired the cause;

and, not receiving a satisfactory reply, he immediately guessed the truth, and expressed himself on the subject in terms somewhat more forcible than elegant. This was immediately resented by the others; and Mrs. George took the opportunity of criticising his behaviour in such cutting language, that the spirit of the true-hearted girl was roused by the insult offered to her father, and she requested him to leave the house immediately with her, saying it was the last time she would ever enter it after receiving such unkind behaviour. The father, who, like many others when partially inebriated was exceedingly quarrelsome, attempted to resent the behaviour to his daughter, and, his language becoming extremely offensive and personal, he was informed that if he did not leave immediately he would be turned out. Edward certainly interposed in his behalf, but in so weak and ineffectual a manner as to have no effect. He undoubtedly loved Catherine; but, if the truth must be told, he was thoroughly ashamed of the conduct of her father.

Poor Catherine passed a wretched night. Her father was loved by her with that respectful affection which rendered an affront offered to him as something very like an attack upon a sacred subject. It was, in her, a sentiment in which worship, love, and duty were blended together. The fault he had committed was, in the society of those she was accustomed to mix with, easily expiated, and she considered the somewhat natural anger of the Beuzeville family as insolent and cruel. "He was an old man, and they ought not to have thought anything of it. He had been a kind and good father to her, and she wouldn't go into any house where he was likely to be insulted." She then thought over the behaviour of Edward, or rather attempted to think of it, for the remembrance of his apparent apathy brought on a flood of tears, in which she drowned it. She loved him dearly; but she loved her father scarcely less. Before the morning broke, her grief and

agitation were considerably calmed; and she had resolved upon a plan of action. Plastic as is generally the mind of a thorough English girl in the hands of the man she loves, there are no women in the world who hold more resolutely to a determination when once fixed on.

Her father had a brother residing in Coventry; he was, like themselves, a weaver. They occasionally heard from each other, less by letter than by messages conveyed by friends and acquaintances passing from one town to the other. To him she wrote, inquiring if he could not find her and her father some occupation; that city, as now, being celebrated for its ribbon weaving. Her father had been accustomed to it in his younger days, and she with her ability could easily acquire it. In a few days a letter arrived informing them they could procure work immediately on their arrival. Without any communication with Edward on the subject, she readily obtained her father's consent, and then quietly, without informing any one of her ultimate intentions, sold off the greater portion of the heavy furniture of their rooms, and forwarded the remainder by waggon. The whole arrangement had hardly occupied a week, and during that time Catherine had seen Edward but once, and then only for a few minutes. He appeared under some uneasiness, probably from the remembrance of his lukewarm exertions in her's and her father's behalf the previous Sunday evening, while she thought of his conduct as much as possible, so as to render her parting the less painful when all should be prepared for them to leave. He evidently wished to prolong the conversation with Catherine, but a longer stay with him might perhaps have made her waver in her determination; so, with true womanly philosophy, she resolved that it was no bad virtue to avoid temptation, and hurried away from him as quickly as she could. On the evening before she left London she called on Edward to inform him of her resolution, and bid him

farewell. The business of the day was over, and she saw him alone in the front warehouse. He was thunderstruck when he heard of her proceedings, and after a moment's consideration he believed it to be only a threat. He was soon, however, undeceived; for the calm, resolute manner of the girl fully proved she would keep to her determination.

"You know, Edward, well enough that I love you; but I am sure we shall never be happy together. Your mother, I am certain, don't like me now. She was very kind to me at first, but why she should have changed so I can't tell. I don't much like your brother, and his wife hates me, I know, because I am a poor girl. For matter of that, I am not very fond of her either. Besides that, I won't go anywhere where father's looked down upon, and I would never sit still and see him insulted. I don't like quarrelling, but I couldn't put up with that."

"But, Catherine, now do have a little patience, and let me see if I can't arrange all satisfactorily. I'm sure I could get mother over, and as for the rest, you need not care anything about them."

"It's too late now, Edward; all the things we couldn't take with us are sold, and the rest are already gone, and we go ourselves to-morrow; so let's say good-bye at once."

Edward used all his lover's eloquence to make her change her determination, but in vain. It must not be imagined that Catherine was unmoved under the appeal, but her determination was proof against Edward's tears, and they fell abundantly. The only terms she would consent to were, that she would never marry any man while Edward remained single; at the same time she promised to let him know where they were settled in Coventry, perhaps not altogether unflattered at the possibility of keeping up the affection of her admirer; and to these somewhat unsatisfactory conditions he was obliged to submit. The next morn-

ing Catherine and her father left London, where Edward remained half broken-hearted. Time, however, that great mediciner, at last came to his relief; and, without forgetting or ceasing to love Catherine, he became at last so mixed up in the vortex of business, that the affair ceased to cause him any great regret.

Business continued to be as successful as they, with their limited capital, could expect, till Canning admitted French manufactured silks at such a duty as would allow the foreign houses to compete with the English in their own market. Both Duchesne and the Beuzevilles, in common with other manufacturers, struggled hard against the prejudicial effect this movement had upon their exertions, but the worst, as usual, fell the most severely on the poor they employed. The price of labour fell considerably, and even then it was difficult to find work for the superior class of weavers, and great misery among them was the result; those engaged in the working of plain silks feeling the shock less than the others. The masters, also, found a great diminution in their profits, and many were the applications to the Minister for a return to the old system, but always without success.

Duchesne, whose mind was seldom at rest, proposed to the Beuzevilles to enter into partnership with him in a factory he intended to erect in the suburbs. He considered that by inducing some Lyons weavers to come to England, and work in it, it would be possible to compete with the French silks, not only in beauty and quality, but economy as well. He considered that six or eight would be sufficient, as the English weavers would soon be able to adopt their manner of working; and thus by keeping the factory closed against the admission of strangers, and employing only their own looms, in a short time they would sufficiently get so much the start of other manufacturers, as to allow them to take a position among the first firms in the trade. George Beuzeville immediately expressed his willing-

ness to join his father-in-law in the speculation, but Edward, always cautious even to a fault, refused to entertain the idea. The subject was a source of great ill-feeling between the brothers, but as Edward had an equal share in the business with George, it was impossible for one to enter into the arrangement proposed, without the other. A sort of compromise was at last effected between them. They drew out of their business a portion of their capital, and advanced it to Duchesne by way of mortgage upon the factory and machinery, upon certain understood conditions, among others that a given number of looms should be reserved for the weaving of their own firm. The factory was erected, the machinery placed in it, and Duchesne proceeded to Lyons for the purpose of engaging the weavers to work at it. He selected six, but, as they were all married, the expense of the journey was very considerable. When they arrived in England, they had lodgings found for them in the immediate vicinity of the factory; and as soon as they were ready to work, English weavers were sought for to be employed with them. Here, however, Duchesne had a tremendous difficulty to overcome. He had not calculated on the innate obstinacy and prejudice of the English weaver's character. Some refused altogether to work with foreigners. "What were they brought here for? Was it to be supposed the British workman could be taught anything by a Frenchman? Had we not always proved our superiority over them, both by sea and land, and it was somewhat late in the day to be taught by them now?" These and other arguments, all of a similar description, were thrown out against him, and it required all his energy and determination to overcome them. The last difficulty was conquered to a certain degree by Edward. He agreed to superintend the factory for some hours every day, but he was to return home to the society of his mother in the evening. With all Duchesne's enterprise and

industry, the factory was not a lucrative concern. It paid its expenses certainly, but hardly anything more; and both Edward and George Beuzeville regretted they had in any way engaged in it.

About three years after the departure of the Bakers for Coventry, the elder Mrs. Beuzeville died. She was one night, when in bed, seized with apoplexy, and, when they discovered it the next morning, she had been for some hours a corpse. Her decease was somewhat unexpected, although she had been very infirm for several years, and had hardly ever quitted the house. At her death she was possessed of some few hundred pounds, which were divided between her sons, and the annuity she received from the business contributed also to increase their incomes.

After the death of his mother, Edward found himself exceedingly lonely. His brother he rarely visited, for although a considerable amount of affectionate feeling existed between them, he had a great dislike to his sister-in-law. He held her responsible, in great part, for the extravagant and almost reckless expenditure of George, by persuading him to imitate the habits and manner of living of those whose incomes were vastly superior to their own. "They had no family," she said, "to provide for, and why should they save? If they had a good income, they might as well enjoy it as economise it for those who would never thank him for it." The aversion Edward felt for her was fully reciprocated. She considered the mediocre success of her husband in trade, when compared with many of their neighbours, was due to want of enterprise in his partner. Although Edward was on very friendly terms with Duchesne, he by no means had an equal respect for his wife. She was by far too fine a lady for his taste, and she in return thought him little better than a boor—so there was little sympathy between them.

One portion of Edward's duties was to purchase the

ribbons they wanted, as they did not manufacture them themselves, and they had lately extended their business with the Coventry manufacturers considerably. One day, when in that town, he met a decrepid elderly man, evidently a weaver, going into one of the manufacturer's houses. The face was well known to him, and he remembered him after a moment's reflection—it was Catherine's father. He had not heard from her for the last two years, and his love had appeared to have died a natural death; but the sight of the old man proved to him that it was not extinct. Baker remembered him immediately. At first he was considerably confused, not knowing in what manner to take Edward's salutation. Their last meeting had never been either forgotten or forgiven by him; for he naturally considered that his daughter had not been well treated. Edward's manner, however, was so cordial that he was soon put at his ease, and he unhesitatingly gave him the name of the street he lived in, and the number of the house. Edward promised to call, and the old man left him. The promise was kept without delay, for no sooner was the father's back turned, than Edward immediately proceeded on his search for the daughter. He found the house with little difficulty. As he reached it a woman was leaving it, and before she closed the door he asked her if Miss Baker lived there? He was answered in the affirmative, and was moreover told that she was at that moment at home. While putting the question, he for the first time reflected on the possibility that she might be married; for, with something closely resembling vanity, he had not till then doubted the possibility of her not being single. The woman's answer took a weight off his mind, and after inquiring which was her room, he, with feelings closely resembling a palpitation of the heart, ran up stairs and tapped at the door.

"Come in," was the reply, and Edward entered.

He found Catherine at her loom, with her back to

the door. She turned round to see who her visitor might be, and was not a little surprised to find her old admirer standing before her. She rose to meet him, and put out her hand to take the one he offered. Before she reached him a sentiment of female vanity caused her great annoyance. Not having expected any visitor, certainly not Edward Beuzeville, her dress was by no means in such a condition as she would have wished to have received him in. To say the truth, it consisted of a very shabby gown of coarse cotton, such, in fact, as she might have been expected to wear while weaving. Her hair, also, which was very beautiful, was by no means in the neat order she was accustomed to keep it. She cast a momentary glance at the little looking-glass, and coloured deeply when it proved to her the fact. The next moment she attempted to address Edward, but she was so confused she could not utter a word. He noticed it, and thought it made her look very lovely; in truth she was so. If the last few years had left their mark, it was only to change her from the handsome girl into the mature and loveable woman. Edward also thought so, and told her his opinion.

"You can't mean it now, I'm sure; I'm such a figure." Here took place another instantaneous glance at the mirror, and a rapid attempt with her hand to put her hair smooth.

"Come, Catherine," said he, "sit down, and let us talk."

Catherine demurely seated herself at a proper distance.

"And so, Catherine, you're not married yet?"

"No; have you forgotten my promise? I told you I would never marry unless you did."

"How did you know I was not married?"

"Oh," said Catherine, "I heard sometimes from a friend of mine that lives near you."

"Then you have inquired about me, I see."

"No, no, I did not, she always told me quite accidentally." Here she made a desperate attempt to conceal a smile, but her lips got mutinous, and she broke into a laugh which showed her beautiful teeth to great advantage. "But," she continued, as if in extenuation, "I have not heard of you for some months." Then, looking at him seriously, she inquired why he was dressed in black?

"My mother has now been dead more than two months, and I am all alone." Catherine appeared to reflect—in fact, she appeared some minutes lost in thought. She then looked at Edward inquiringly for a moment, and afterwards attempted to say something consolatory, but decidedly failed. Both parties seemed to understand each other.

"Catherine," said Edward, "you are very poorly lodged here; don't you find it very inconvenient? You must be very much crampt for space." As he spoke, he looked round the room. It was not large certainly, but it contained two looms, a bedstead closed up to look as much like a chest of drawers as possible, a deal table, and three or four chairs, as well as their cooking utensils and crockery. The walls were decorated with gaudy prints of battles and heroes, as well as songs describing the glorious achievements of the British arms; for during the wars there was not a more patriotic subject in the realm, or one fonder of tales of blood and slaughter, than your weaver. Behind this room was another, or rather closet, dedicated to her father; in it he slept; the turn-up bedstead in the front room being for Catherine. Everything was scrupulously neat and clean; and if Catherine was somewhat unprepared in her dress for the reception of visitors, the fault was absolved by the tidiness of her apartment.

"We are, indeed," said Catherine, "but the rooms are as good as we can afford. Wages are very bad here, very different from what they used to be.

Father's eyes get very weak, and he can't work long together, so he doesn't earn much; besides, he is not a young man now, and his health ain't very good."

"How old is he?"

"Well, he's only fifty-four; but he looks more."

"Should you like to try London again?" said Edward. "I think you might do better there."

Catherine evidently understood him, but she pretended that she did not.

"I don't think so," she said; "my friend tells me work is not much better paid there than here."

"Shall I make inquiries about it and let you know?"

Catherine stopped a smile. She remembered that no one knew the price of wages better than Edward, without making any inquiries.

"Yes, do," she answered, demurely, "if it will not give you too much trouble; I should like to see London again, I must own. When do you go back?"

"Not for a week, perhaps." He had changed his mind since the morning, for he then intended leaving the next day. Their conversation continued for some time longer, for Edward had many things to talk about, and Catherine did full justice to her share of it. At last her father returned, and shortly afterwards Edward left, promising to call again before he quitted Coventry. He faithfully kept his word; in fact, he called several times.

About six months after the death of the elder Mrs. Beuzeville, George, having occasion to see his brother on some affair of business, called at the house with his wife. When they arrived, they found, to their great surprise, Catherine and her father seated in the parlour. The tea-things were laid for three persons; and the pair were evidently waiting for Edward; and that, too, with an *aplomb* and ease of manner which showed they were perfectly at home. Both of them, however, appeared greatly confused at the sight of the new

comers. Catherine rose to receive them. George, in a tone of anger and surprise, asked for his brother.

"Edward is not at home, but I expect him every minute; would you like to wait?"

"Yes! I thought you were living in Coventry?"

"We were," said Catherine; "but since I have been married, I have been living with my father here."

"You married! and to whom, may I ask?"

"To Edward; we have been married now about six weeks."

George was silent from excessive indignation—not so his wife.

"He married, and to such a person as you are," she said, or rather screamed. "Upon my word, he has a gentlemanly taste, certainly. And we are, I suppose, to associate with you; don't think it, or you will deceive yourself, I can tell you. For the future, I never set my foot in this house—he's nicely degraded himself."

"Don't talk to me in that manner," said Catherine, with spirit; "my conduct has always been as respectable as your own, and I won't put up with it. Your husband may be angry if he likes, and I won't answer him; besides, he's Edward's brother. I am his wife, though, and you are only George's; so I'm your equal!"

"Oh, ma'am!" said Ellen, bridling up, "don't be afraid, I'm not going to lose my temper with such as you are. I'm only sorry Edward has made such a simpleton of himself; but I suppose it's too late now. Are you going to wait?" she asked her husband; "if so, let me go—I will never enter this house again."

Old Baker, who was naturally very irascible, here attempted to interfere; but his daughter, whom he always obeyed with the docility of a child, prevented him.

"I am sure," said Catherine, addressing George, "I don't wish you to stay if you wish to go, and your

wife may go if she likes, and come back when she pleases. I don't want to bear malice to any one, it ain't my disposition; but I am married to your brother, and will be treated as his wife if you come here."

Ellen, without taking any notice of Catherine or her father, left the room, and George followed her, greatly annoyed at the match his brother had made.

When Edward returned and heard a statement of all that had taken place in his absence, he was naturally greatly annoyed. He resolved not again to visit at his brother's house until Ellen had apologised for her conduct. That lady, however, had no intention of admitting she had been in error; and, in consequence of her obstinacy, a certain degree of coolness arose between the brothers, and the result was that Edward interfered less than ever with the mercantile part of the business of the firm, and occupied himself solely with the manufacturing.

CHAPTER III.

MISFORTUNES.

About two years after Edward's wedding, Duchesne experienced a very severe loss in his business, so much so, in fact, that his credit was at stake for some time. He, however, re-established it, but with some difficulty. Perhaps it would have been impossible for him to have saved himself had it not been for a system of accommodation bills which then commenced between him and George Beuzeville. Although they were drawn out and accepted in the name of the firm, still the transactions were kept carefully secret from Edward. The same year Catherine gave birth to a son; she had already been a mother the year after her wedding, but the child survived only a few days. Edward was delighted

with his boy, but a circumstance soon after occurred which fell upon him with such cruel severity, that his happiness was of but short duration.

George continued his system of accommodation bills, but, unfortunately, the credit of Duchesne diminished rapidly, and ruin threatened both, so mixed up was he in business transactions with his father-in-law. The Beuzevilles had also received more than one heavy loss, and their capital was not more than sufficient to re-establish themselves, without the additional liabilities which George had incurred in their joint names. Edward had called one morning at the counting-house in the City, for the purpose of going carefully through the accounts with his brother. To his surprise George was not there, and this appeared the more extraordinary as the appointment had been purposely made some days before, to give George the option of choosing a time when they would not be likely to be disturbed. He waited nearly the whole day, but without success. He went again the next morning, and determined in his own mind if he did not see his brother, to question his sister-in-law on the matter. He did not like the idea, but there was something mysterious in George's behaviour that he could not understand. He, however, at first seated himself in the counting-house, waiting for the return of their assistant, who had left the place, while he went on some errand, in the charge of the porter. Soon afterwards a banker's clerk came in with a bill due. Edward was greatly surprised at the circumstance, and took it from the clerk. It was for £200, and made payable there. Edward, who had no knowledge of George's bill transactions, said: "This is a forgery; we have no bill for that amount out."

"I cannot help that," said the clerk; "I must leave a notice."

He did so, and was replacing the bill in his pocket-book, when Edward again asked to look at it. It was

drawn by Duchesne upon Beuzeville Brothers, and accepted in George's handwriting. He returned it to the clerk, who, having placed the notice on the desk, left him.

Edward immediately ran up-stairs to see his sister-in-law. The servant told him that her mistress had left town about two days since, and that her master had gone out early yesterday morning, saying that probably he should not be back to dinner, and that if he did not, he should not return till the next evening. Edward was completely thunderstruck at the information; it was utterly incomprehensible to him. He descended into the warehouse, and questioned the assistant, who had now returned: he, however, could give him but little satisfactory information, and he was obliged to content himself with the little he knew till the evening. Night came, but neither his brother nor his wife returned, and Edward determined to remain patiently, if possible, till the next morning. Catherine noticed that he looked haggard and fatigued; but he gave her no information beyond that he had had a very hard day's work.

The next morning Edward repaired to the counting-house at a very early hour. He found the house just opened. He went up-stairs, and again inquired of the servant for his brother. Neither he nor his wife had returned. Edward waited for the arrival of the general post, but there were no letters. He then questioned the assistant they employed as to his knowledge of George's movements; he knew but little, and that of a very unsatisfactory description. Edward was now thoroughly bewildered; but, after a few moment's reflection, he determined on calling on Duchesne. He found him at his counting-house.

"Can you tell me anything about George," he said? "A bill for £200, of which I know nothing whatever, has been accepted by him, and is now not only due but has been noted."

"Unfortunately," said Duchesne, "it is too true; but I know nothing of George. I am as much astonished as you are. He promised me to meet the bill when due, and I paid £150 into your bankers not three days since to assist him. I cannot understand his behaviour at all. Even if I had not done so, it would have been most unkind on his part not to have paid it; for I know you have a balance exceeding £400 in hand. I suspect, Edward, you have had something to do with the refusal."

"I know nothing of the matter whatever," said Edward; "I had no knowledge the bill was out, or that it had ever been drawn, or it would never have had my sanction." So saying he left Duchesne, and proceeded immediately to his bankers. He asked the cashier for his book. As he gave it to Edward, he said softly to him: "I am afraid you will find it somewhat overdrawn. I wrote to your brother about it, but he has not taken any notice of the circumstance. Perhaps you will kindly look to it." Edward hardly heard him, his anxiety to examine the state of his accounts was so great. He opened the book, and cast his eyes down the columns. He was so astonished and terrified that the book almost dropt from his hands. The £150 mentioned by Duchesne had been paid in, and a cheque had been drawn by George for £600 the next day, which had overdrawn the amount by about £40. Edward hurried back to Duchesne. "What is the meaning, Sir, of this," he said. "George can nowhere be found. He has drawn a cheque for £600, and thereby overdrawn his account. You must know something about it, as intimate as you are with him." It was now Duchesne's turn to be astonished. He turned deadly pale, and after a few moments' reflection stammered out: "He surely cannot have absconded; if he has, I am a ruined man. There will be another bill due in a fortnight, and I am totally unable to meet it."

"Has that bill also been accepted by George in the name of our firm?"

"I am sorry to say it has."

"Mr. Duchesne," said Edward, indignantly, "this behaviour is infamous on your part. From your relative position with my brother, you have evidently induced him to accept bills in our joint names, and that unknown to me, his partner. I don't know where to look for the money. I certainly have not got it; and to raise one shilling which I am not able to pay is not my way of transacting business. As far as I can see, nothing but ruin awaits us both." Edward then left him, and went back to the warehouse. He proceeded immediately to take stock. Here fresh misfortunes met him. Piece after piece of silk was missing; and reference to the books showed they had not been invoiced to any one. He required of the assistant some information on the subject. He received for answer that one day, during the last week, his brother had sent for a hackney coach, and placed in it at least twenty pieces of satin, silk, and velvet; that on being asked to whose account they should be entered, he only received for answer, "that it was for a shipping order, and that he would himself keep a memorandum of the transaction." A great portion of the goods, he said, were not yet definitively purchased, but were for approval, and when all was finished, they could be correctly entered. "I thought it singular," concluded the young man, "but of course I had no right to make a remark." A noise in the passage of the private door here caught Edward's attention; it was occasioned by some brokers' men removing the furniture. On being asked under what authority they were acting, they replied by a bill of sale. It appeared George had raised money on that also. The servant girl was in tears; her wages, she said, had not been paid; but she trusted Edward would not see her wronged. Duchesne shortly afterwards entered; he had evidently been weeping bitterly.

"I have just now," he said, "received a letter from George; he yesterday sailed from Liverpool for New York. He upbraids me in a most shameful manner; accuses me of being his ruin; and says we shall never hear from him again. I could bear it all, perhaps," he continued, bursting into tears, "but it will certainly break my poor wife's heart to lose her child. One comfort is, I am sure she will write to us as soon as she has an opportunity, whatever her husband may say."

Edward remained for some minutes silent, completely absorbed in thought.

"What is to be done?" said he, at last; "I cannot go on."

"I cannot help you," said Duchesne, "I am utterly ruined. Perhaps you had better put your affairs into the hands of my solicitors. I shall do so to-day. It's no use my attempting to go on; I shall only make things worse than they are—and they're bad enough, God knows!"

Edward, naturally most indignant with Duchesne, refused to take his advice or mix up his affairs with him in any way. He had occasionally employed, in the way of business, a solicitor of his own, and to him he should apply for advice.

"Just as you please," said Duchesne; and he walked angrily away.

From the few pounds of ready money which remained, Edward paid some trifling outstanding debts for housekeeping, the servant girl's wages, and the fortnight's salary owing to the assistant; and then, with his own hands, closed up the warehouse, determined on reserving all further action till the morrow.

It was now evening; but the most difficult part of the day's duties remained to be performed—to lay before Catherine the state of affairs, and explain to her the ruin which, during the last forty-eight hours, had overwhelmed them. Arrived in Wilkes-street, he walked up and down before the house for some time,

summoning up the necessary courage to enter, and turning over in his mind in what phraseology he should frame the sad story, so as to make it as little terrible to her as possible. At last he entered, and proceeded to the sitting-room. He there found Catherine. She looked really beautiful as she turned her head to greet him as he entered, and beckoning to him at the same time not to wake the baby, who was asleep upon her knee. Edward seated himself at the tea-table; and his wife cautiously placed the child in its cot. During the time the servant was preparing their supper, Catherine asked her husband where he had dined. He told her that he had had no dinner. She proposed making an addition to their meal; but he replied that he had no appetite. They sat down to the table, and she pressed him to eat; but, after a few mouthfuls, he gave up the attempt. Catherine watched him attentively, and noticed his pallid, distressed look.

"Are you not well, Edward?" she asked.

"Yes, dear, I am very well, but a little tired."

"You should not over-fatigue yourself so much. I often think you work too hard."

He made no answer for a few minutes, during which time Catherine did not take her eyes off him.

"What am I to do?" he burst out at last; "it's no use hiding it longer, Catherine—I am a ruined man."

He then related to her and her father the adventures of the last two days. It will easily be believed that they listened with astonishment.

"I am sure it has been the fault of George's wife," put in Catherine; "her proud airs have done it. I don't believe your brother would ever have had the heart to behave in the manner he has, if it had not been for her."

Edward told her he had but one course open—the bankrupt's court. The only consolation he had, he said, was to know that it was no fault of his, and that he had done nothing dishonourable.

Catherine and her father, who knew but little of business, suggested that they should go on as well as ever afterwards.

"No," said Edward; "that is impossible. I shall have nothing left to begin with; for I will not defraud my creditors of a shilling."

The baby here woke up, and clamoured for his supper. He had been aroused by the torrent of invectives old Baker had been pouring on George's wife. Catherine hastened to take up her son, whose voice was soon hushed by her. When the child was occupied with its meal, she watched it mechanically, her thoughts evidently absorbed on some other subject. Suddenly she raised her head, and found Edward leaning back in his chair, shading his eyes with his hand; presently she saw the big tears falling beneath it. Terrified, she rose from her chair; and, after placing the baby in her father's hands, crossed over to her husband.

"My dear Edward, what is the matter? Why are you crying so?"

"I have ruined you, and your father, and my boy. I shall never hold up my head again."

"What have you done, then?" said Catherine, with great anxiety.

"Nothing I have any right to be ashamed of, thank God; but Kate, we don't possess a shilling of our own. To know that you are destitute is more than I can bear."

"Come, come, Ned," said the old man, "if you've done nothing wrong, there's no need to cry."

"But we are beggars; we've nothing in the world."

"Yes, we have," said old Baker, "we've our hands, and the will to work with them, hav'nt we? They've stood by us many a day, and well too; havn't they, Catherine?"

Edward's grief continuing, Catherine took up one of his hands in one of hers, and placing the other arm

round his neck, weighed his head down upon her breast, and then with her mild, kind voice, that peculiar tone to be found in English women above all others, when addressing those they sympathize with and love—that voice which Britons should have been proud of from the days of Lear downwards—said,

"Edward, my dear Edward, if you don't mind for yourself, why should you mind for us? Father and I know what it is to be poor; don't we, father? I can work as well as ever; I have been used to it, and don't mind it. I never should have made a fine lady, and I don't want to be one. You're not afraid of work yourself, that I know—not many men work harder than you do, and it is only another sort of work you will have, and that you will be able to do better than most. Now don't be down-hearted about it, there's a dear. If you are now only a weaver, I'm a working man's wife, and that God made me for after all."

"But my poor child," said Edward; "what will be his lot? I hoped to have brought him up in every comfort, and now I have not the means."

"His lot, Edward, will be the same as his father's and mother's; he is a working woman's son, and will be taught to work by her as soon as he is able, as his mother did before him, and you've nothing to be ashamed of in her now, dear, if you were not when you were rich. Ain't that true?" she said, smiling and pressing his head closer to her.

"God knows, Kate, if ever a man had right to be proud of his wife, I have."

"Well, then, I won't let you talk any more about it," she said, seating herself upon his knee.

Her old father, who had that morning congratulated himself upon having a man of property for his son-in-law, received the intelligence that he would now have to toil for the remainder of his days with the most perfect philosophy. Catherine, after proving herself

the bright specimen of womanhood she was—the kind affectionate wife of a husband in distress—took the baby from the old man's arms. Edward found his grief had fled, and now looked calmly upon the future, if not hopefully, at least without dread; and that night he slept as soundly on his pillow as the richest manufacturer in the three kingdoms. The next morning, Edward called on his solicitor, and explained to him the state of his affairs. A long conversation ensued as to the possibility of avoiding the bankruptcy; and they visited together Mr. Duchesne, for the purpose of ascertaining in what state his accounts were, and whether the dividend he was likely to pay would be sufficient to allow Edward to avoid the disgrace of an application to the court. The more, however, they inquired into the affair the worse it appeared; and Edward had no other alternative than to accept the protection the law afforded him. At last all was completed. The worst enemies of his brother were obliged to admit that Edward was guiltless of any dishonesty or acquaintance with the system of accommodation bills which had been carried on. At last he received his certificate, and started afresh upon the world with an empty pocket, but an unblemished reputation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

ALTHOUGH a period of fourteen years elapses between the conclusion of the last chapter and our fully resuming the thread of our story, we must trace a few of the leading events which took place in the interval. At the termination of Edward's bankruptcy, he was nearly destitute. His furniture had been sold for the benefit of his creditors, and he had nothing left but

the clothes of his family and a few presents (a watch and some jewellery) he had made his wife on their marriage. These last they immediately turned into cash; and this, with the framework of a few looms, were all they possessed to begin with. Edward first proposed to his landlord to continue as his tenant, and his offer being accepted, he immediately commenced arranging the rooms, so as to make them as profitable as possible. A communication which had formerly existed between the workshops of his house and those of the next, which they had rented many years, had been bricked up when Duchesne opened his factory. He kept one of the two tiers at the top of the house for himself, and let off the other to a weaver who had become his lodger, and who lived on the second floor. His first floor he let to an under-clerk in the Tower and his wife; and thus economising his space, he lived nearly rent free. The ground-floor he reserved for himself and wife, a bed being made up in the workshop for her father. His next care was to seek for employment. To commence again as a silk manufacturer was impossible—he had no capital. He was a most skilful workman—few could equal him—and he had no difficulty in getting full work, both for himself and wife. Although her father would willingly assist, if he had had the power, his eyesight was so defective occasionally, they were afraid to trust him at a loom. Neither Edward nor his wife had for a moment thought of parting from him. It must not be imagined that the father was useless in the establishment. Their maidservant, of course, had been dismissed, and Catherine, beyond the care of her baby, had to arrange the domestic affairs of the house, as well as to continue her labour at the loom. In the two first she was greatly assisted by her father. Not only did he run on almost all the errands, but a considerable portion of the marketing was performed by him as well. He was also entrusted with collecting

the rents of the different lodgers in the house, which he did with great regularity. But the favourite employment of Old Baker (everybody called him by that name, and we shall therefore continue it) was nursing his infant grandchild. Nothing could exceed his patience, tenderness, and affection for it. His great delight was to take it out in the air on sunny afternoons. To have watched him would have proved that nurserymaids are not alone guilty of chattering. Every person with whom he was acquainted, and they were many, he stopped and expatiated to them on the beauties of his grandchild. Every one with a baby in their arms he accosted, whether friends or strangers, and entered immediately into a comparison as to the respective merits of their charges. It need hardly be said that in that quarter of the metropolis he was never in want of occupation. Weavers' wives are proverbially prolific, and their love of conversation is equally well established. The old man's love for children was a fortunate circumstance for him, for Catherine gave him plenty of occupation; scarcely eighteen months ever passed without adding to his duties; but to do him justice if, instead of an increase of labour, it had been an accession of emolument, he could not more readily have accepted it than he did each new charge.

Duchesne had likewise been a bankrupt, but his certificate was not obtained with so much facility as Edward had experienced. Not only were his creditors most indignant at his conduct, but the court spoke of him with a most just severity of manner; not for any direct act of dishonesty, but for his reckless trading, and his continuation in his business after he had discovered that his liabilities were heavier than by any possibility he could meet. At last he obtained his certificate, and then retired with his wife into an obscure lodging, where they lived in great poverty upon some little money they had been able to conceal from their creditors.

Twelve months after the flight of George, and at a moment when the old couple were reduced to absolute want, they received a letter from their daughter. The effect upon her parents was really distressing. They had fallen into that state of mental apathy common to those who have lost all hope. By a tacit agreement between themselves, they rarely spoke of their child and her husband, although each had expected for some time the fulfilment of Duchesne's prophecy respecting their daughter's writing to them, but the delay had been so long that even hope had at last deserted them. As week after week, and month after month passed without intelligence of her, they tried to banish the subject from their minds. They had not succeeded; their love for her was latent, but it was as boundless as ever, and the receipt of her letter proved it. Several were their attempts to read it before their tears allowed them to accomplish it. When they succeeded, they found that the dishonesty George and his wife had perpetrated had not passed without its punishment, or, at any rate, it had been of no advantage to them.

When the couple arrived in New York, they determined to open a store, and George (true to the Duchesne theory that speculation was enterprise, an idea by no means eradicated by his first impressions in that city), laid out by far the greater portion of his capital in decorating it. With the remainder, he purchased goods as far as it would go, and obtained credit for more; and added these to those he had so fraudulently brought with him from England. In a very few months he found the concern was a failure, and only got out of it in time to save a few hundred dollars from the wreck. He travelled farther west, and then established himself in a newly-settled locality. His present store was of a far more moderate description than the last, and he attended to it assiduously and honourably. At the time of the writing of the letter, he was succeeding in a manner which proved

that industry and integrity were far more useful commodities than he had calculated on. The reason Ellen gave for not having written earlier was, that they wished to be in a position to send sufficient funds for the payment of the passage of her parents, should they be willing to join them in the New World. George, she said, was always much attached to them, and her love and respect continued unabated. They need not, she wrote with great good taste, consider they would be put under any obligation by accepting the invitation, as her father could be of great use to her husband in managing the business, which was increasing every day. She requested them to write by return of post, informing her of their determination; and, if they resolved on leaving for America, she would immediately send the money for their passage, and directions for their journey. She concluded with an earnest hope they would accept the offer George had made them, and an expression of warm and sincere affection on her own part. The letter would have been in every respect unexceptionable, had it not been for the postscript, evidently, from its wording, written without her husband's knowledge. It requested her father to send her all the information he could respecting Edward Beuzeville and his vulgar wife, but not to let it be known she had made any inquiry on the subject, and especially to guard against the possibility of their knowing they were established in America.

George's invitation was readily accepted by his father-in-law, and a letter to that effect was immediately despatched. The information respecting Edward was likewise given. It contained also a remark showing how far more easy it is to forgive our own faults than forget those of our neighbours. It severely animadverted on the selfishness and ingratitude of Edward in not sympathising with them in their misfortunes; forgetting at the same time that the ruin of the poor young man and his family, were caused by the inexcusable behaviour of Duchesne himself.

The rapid increase of Catherine's family has been already noticed. When the first-born, Edward, was fourteen years of age, he had no fewer than three brothers and two sisters, the youngest child being little more than a twelvemonth old: there also appeared every probability that there would shortly be another still younger. The eldest was an intelligent, obedient lad, but of somewhat delicate constitution. They had intended to bring him up as a weaver; but, from his narrow chest and predisposition to diseases of the lungs, they were obliged to give up the idea. They had contrived to keep him at a small day-school in the neighbourhood, till he was ten years of age. Since that, he had been an errand-boy at a little bookseller's shop in the neighbourhood, and was then earning one shilling and sixpence a week, as well as his dinner. He did not take kindly to his duties. They were of a too fatiguing character for a boy of his build; and Edward, at that period of our narrative, was engaged in finding him another situation. The lad's natural abilities inclined him towards machine-making. His knowledge of mechanics, if crude, was certainly remarkable in so young a boy, and every moment he could spare was dedicated to it. Catherine was accustomed to show with great pride, to her friends, the model of a loom he had cut out of some wood with an old pocket-knife, when only eleven years of age; and would listen with fresh zest to the stereotyped prophecy of the beholder, every time pronounced, that so clever a boy could not fail to get on in the world.

The eldest daughter was between twelve and thirteen years of age. She was tall and well made; not particularly pretty, but with a considerable portion of her mother's amiable expression of countenance. She was of a class little noticed by the novelist, and as little appreciated by the public at large, yet one deserving admiration and respect from all—the obedient, affectionate young daughter of the good, industrious working woman.

There is, perhaps, no mortal more pure than a good specimen of her class; there is, perhaps, none, in relation to her worth, treated with greater injustice or neglect. Activity and shrewdness she acquires from necessity. Early piety and the first principles of her duty to God and man she learns from her mother. If afterwards she is fortunate enough to fall under the instruction of a good minister of her creed, a purer woman than she will make can hardly be imagined. Should, however, the reader be interested in the question of the religious and moral training of the poor, and will make inquiry what provision has been made for it by our Government, he will perhaps only be surprised that bad as the morals of a poor district may be, it is still more astonishing that so many of its inhabitants remain good.

It was a treat to watch young Kate at her duties. Nothing could exceed her kindness, patience, and good humour. One moment she was washing in the most dexterous manner the face of her youngest brother, a robust little urchin of between two and three years of age, who was kicking and screaming with all his might, and who by his noise woke up the baby. With the celerity of a *prestigeateur* the towel would pass over the young gentleman's face, stopping his roar for the moment, but leaving his countenance dry and polished; and the next the baby would be in her arms before her mother's cry, who had heard him while working at her loom, to bring him to her, had fully escaped her lips. Little Kate had an eye to everything. A portion of the marketing had fallen on her, as well as a considerable portion of the errands, her grandfather being then too infirm to take much exercise. Washing, darning, cleaning knives, scrubbing, nursing the baby, combing, washing, and dressing her younger brothers, formed but a portion of her duties. She had, however, two assistants—her grandfather, as far as his strength would allow him, and a sister about

fifteen months younger than herself. To do the latter justice, she promised in a short time to be as useful as little Kate. The others were all healthy fine children; but as they are not required at present to appear upon the scene, the stage will be kept clear of them for the moment, and they will be brought forward when wanted.

The labours of the day were over, the younger children in bed, and Edward, Catherine, the eldest boy and girl, with old Baker, were seated at their supper table. The whole party were silent and serious, and the cause was a letter they had that morning received from America. It was from George; the first that had come to hand, but the second he had written. The former, whether from the neglect of the Post-office, or more likely the intervention of George's wife, whose animosity against her relatives in England was unceasing, had never reached its destination. It had been written about five years earlier. It had contained an apology or rather excuse to Edward for the conduct he had been guilty of; he hoped that it would be overlooked, and their brotherly feeling again renewed. No answer arriving, George came to the conclusion that Edward was unforgiving; and Ellen did not neglect the opportunity of impressing this erroneous conclusion on her husband. The remembrance of the injustice he had committed, however, still continued to haunt George, and he determined again to write to Edward, and this time he placed the letter in the post-office himself. Its contents expressed much the same sentiments as the former, but contained an offer the other did not. It proposed if Edward had several children, to take one of them and adopt him, as George had no children of his own. He stated that his business though not large, was good, but its profits were in great part consumed in the expenses incurred by his father-in-law and wife, the former being a martyr to the gout, and therefore useless to him in the

store, and his mother-in-law was by far too fine a lady to assist in its management, and thus they were heavy incumbrances on his and Ellen's hands. He also mentioned that America offered many advantages to the industrious young man not found in England, but that a certain amount of training was necessary to ensure success, and that the younger the individual was who emigrated, the greater were his probabilities of obtaining ultimate prosperity."

It was the difficulty of deciding on George's offer, which caused the serious aspect of Edward's family. When their frugal meal was finished, the conversation on the subject began. Catherine opened it by asking her son how he should like to live with his uncle? The boy, who, like all others of his age, was delighted at the prospect of adventure, expressed himself much pleased with the idea. A pang passed through poor Catherine's breast at hearing his willingness to leave her, but she said nothing. Edward spoke kindly to his boy, and advised him to think well over the matter.

"He would be many thousand miles from them, and if he did not like his situation when he got there, it would be difficult to come home again. He had no doubt his uncle would be kind to him, but it was by no means certain his aunt would be equally so. The expense of providing his outfit would be great, and he knew his father and mother to be very poor, and could with difficulty earn more than sufficient to live on. Still if it would contribute to their son's welfare, they would make every effort to fit him out respectably. But once in America, it would be impossible for them to raise money enough to bring him back again, and there he must remain, if his uncle did not pay the expenses of his passage home."

"But, father, my uncle will give me some wages, and I could soon earn enough to return again. Besides, I should do all in my power to please my aunt and uncle. You know I can work well, if I am not strong."

"I'm not afraid of your uncle, my dear," said his mother; "I always believed him to be good at heart, although he has not behaved very well to us; but I don't like his wife, that I must say. If I thought she did not treat you well, it would make me very unhappy."

"Come, come, Kate," said Edward, "don't make him low-spirited. If he goes, we should cheer him up as much as possible. You shall make up your mind yourself, my boy, and if you determine on going, in God's name let it be so. Remember, wherever you are, your happiness and welfare are greatly in your own hands. An honest and good man may be unfortunate in this world, but he is compensated for it in the next. The bad man, though, is frequently more unsuccessful here, and is sure of punishment hereafter."

"Father, I'm sure you know I'll be honest and industrious. I will never disgrace you nor mother; you may be sure of that. I think, after all, I should like to go."

"Well," said Edward, "you shall have your wish. I will write to your uncle to-morrow, and I hope when we receive his answer, to have all ready for you to start."

Edward the next day despatched his letter to America. It contained the sincere acceptance of the offer to recommence their former brotherly feeling. The news of the family, comprising a short sketch of their adventures since George left England, and an account of their struggles and poverty occasioned by their large and increasing family. He concluded by thanking his brother for his kind offer of taking charge of one of his children, and informing him that on the receipt of his answer, his nephew would be ready to start on his journey to join his uncle in America.

The preparations for the outfit commenced immediately. They were modest enough in all conscience. The means of a weaver with a large family precluded

the possibility of much expense, and the integrity of the man made him tremble at the possibility of incurring a debt. It was, however, difficult to avoid it. Although Edward and Catherine worked night and day for the first week, there remained but a trifling balance after the necessary expenditure was paid. This was invested in the most economical manner by Catherine, in calico. Little as had been her rest during the last week it was considerably less the next. The mother and eldest daughter stole upon the few hours they had allotted to themselves for sleep, and with a dim candle placed between them worked hard at his shirts. When they were finished it took two weeks' severe labour to find his shoes. The next fortnight's receipts gave no dividend; Catherine had over-fatigued herself, and was thrown on a bed of sickness for several days. Economy prohibited her from seeking the assistance of a medical man, and the druggist's shopman had not clearly understood her case when he sold her the medicine. The result was, that her strength returned somewhat slowly.

As soon as she was strong enough to work she commenced again, and in three weeks more, nearly half the amount necessary for his clothes was obtained, when the letter arrived from George telling them by what ship his nephew had better leave London, and that he would meet him in New York on his arrival. The letter contained also a terrible disappointment for Edward and his wife. They had, upon most uncertain data, calculated on George sending them the money for the journey; but not a word respecting it was mentioned in the letter. To do George justice, he would willingly have given it, but his wife's opposition was too great for him to withstand. Edward at first proposed writing to his brother on the subject, but Catherine's womanly pride would not permit it. To let that proud woman, George's wife, think they were not able to pay for the passage of their son was too

derogatory an idea for her to entertain. They had gone so far, and now they would complete it themselves.

Edward, on hearing Catherine's determination, went down to the docks for the purpose of visiting the ship, and choosing a berth. He was informed that most probably the ship might not sail for a week after the time appointed, but that if he intended his son to sail in her, he had better decide at once, as the agents were receiving daily applications for berths, and, no doubt, in the course of a few days, there would be no room left. This assertion seemed borne out by the number of intending emigrants that were at the moment on board. Having inquired the terms, he found the passage money was six pounds, one-half to be paid immediately, the other before the ship quitted the docks. As there appeared no alternative, Edward paid the three pounds in advance, and chose a berth. This left him for the moment almost penniless. The most severe economy had now to be practised by the family —so severe, in fact, that any one not well acquainted with the habits and manners of the London poor, and the intense family affection existing between them, would hardly have believed it. Bread, potatoes, and occasionally a little tea, with some milk for the baby, constituted their diet, till the day before the boy's departure, when the parable was reversed, and the fatted calf was killed. Not a murmur, not a discontented word escaped one of them, with one exception, and that was on the part of Edward himself. It was when one day Catherine proposed to purchase a mackerel for his dinner; they were cheap, and she was afraid lest, from his incessant labour, his health might give way.

In spite of all their industry it was impossible for them to raise the money they required, and application had to be made to that curse of a poor neighbourhood, the tally-shop, and the assistance of the pawnbroker, who advanced money on the few articles of dress and

furniture they could spare. With the funds raised by these means, and the sum they had earned during the week before the departure of the ship, all could have been accomplished; and the Saturday night arrived when the work was to be taken home, as the ship was to drop down the river by the morning's tide on the Monday following. Edward had worked as long as he possibly could on that day in order to cover the little extra expenditure Catherine had made, by purchasing some homely delicacies for the Sunday's dinner, for she had determined on giving her boy a treat before his departure. It would, she thought, leave a pleasing impression of his home, justly arguing, with the tact of a woman, that a last impression remains on the mind more fixedly than any other—the first, perhaps, excepted. Edward had at last finished, and he started for the warehouse. Catherine remained at home, occupying herself and her two daughters in making preparations for the next day's feast. In about an hour afterwards, Edward returned home with the silk still with him, and evident disappointment on his countenance. He had arrived too late at the warehouse, and it would be impossible for him to get the money for his work till the next Saturday, without the firm for which he worked deviating greatly from their general rules in his favour; and, even in the latter case, it would be useless to him, as the ship would sail before the house of business opened, and the deposit for the passage money would be lost if the balance were not paid before she left the dock. It would be difficult to describe poor Catherine's look of sorrow when she heard Edward's story. Suddenly her eyes fell upon the silk as it lay on the table, and she then looked up inquiringly in her husband's face. He appeared slightly confused, but without reason, for the same idea occupied the minds of both. Would it be possible to raise the money by pawning the silk? "It was illegal, certainly; but what was to be done? Besides, after

all, there was no dishonesty in it. They would merely borrow the money on it which was their due; they wanted no more than what they were entitled to. The next week a piece of satinet would be finished. They would get the money for that first, and so be able to redeem the silk in time." Neither liked to propose it verbally to the other; but they had a still greater dislike to mention it before the children; so Edward sent them out of the room. When the couple were by themselves, Catherine, to spare her husband, proposed that they should pledge the silk for the money owing to them—not a farthing more. Edward agreed to it; and, having put the silk under his arm, was on the point of leaving the house when Catherine called to him. Without saying a word, she took the silk from him; and, putting on her bonnet and shawl, left the house with it. The impression was on her mind that, notwithstanding all the sophistry she had mentally made use of, the transaction was, to a certain degree, dishonourable, and she determined to perpetrate it herself. Her husband's integrity had always been unimpeached, and she wished it to remain so. At any rate, appearance—that frequent favourite of a woman's Penates—would not be against him. The blame might fall upon her, but his reputation would be unblemished.

The dinner next day was but a sad affair; the gaiety was constrained and artificial. The skeleton guest of the Egyptian feasts was there for the first time, and his presence spoilt all. The boy was sad, for he was parting from those he loved, and whom he had never quitted for a day. The excitement of adventure, generally so strong in the English lad, had subsided for the moment, and he was dull and melancholy. His sisters could hardly conceal their tears. The younger children looked at him earnestly without speaking; they could hardly understand it; that after another day they would see no longer him whom they had been accustomed to see every day of their lives.

Catherine was undisguisedly wretched; occasionally she made a miserable attempt to smile, but it only made her misery still more apparent. Edward attempted to keep up a reckless sort of *bonhommie*, with the intent of rousing the spirits of his son, but he succeeded scarcely better than his wife. He had intended taking that opportunity to give his son some good advice with respect to his conduct, and the necessity of always maintaining the strictest integrity, but the remembrance of the piece of silk in pledge stopped him. The only person who acted as he thought was old Baker; he had taken a dislike to the boy the moment he found he was willing to leave them. That dislike had settled now into an indifference he did not attempt to conceal, but not wishing to offend his daughter, he left the table the moment his dinner was finished, and did not return till the evening.

That night Catherine could not sleep; her tears prevented her. The ship was to leave the dock on Monday morning at eight o'clock, and it was necessary her son should be on board before seven. She rose at four so quietly that her husband did not awake. She knelt by her bedside, and silently and fervently prayed for the happiness and success of her boy. A more humble, heartfelt petition than hers, hardly ever ascended to the throne of mercy. When dressed, she called her husband, and then made preparations for breakfast. By half-past five the two eldest girls had joined them (it was thought advisable not to awaken the younger children), and they sat down to their meal. It was sad, silent, and tasteless, unlike the dinner, no attempt at cheerfulness was made. Catherine pressed her boy to eat heartily; but he had no appetite. A cruel oppression seemed to be on all; and when the clock struck six, the hour decided on for leaving the house, it appeared almost a relief to them all. Catherine embraced her boy, as a fond mother would when her first-born leaves her for the first time, and that for

years, if not for ever. His sisters kissed him affectionately. So long did their adieus last, that Edward was obliged to take him by the hand, and hurry off to the ship to be in time. Before nine o'clock he had returned, after having left his son safely on board. The parting had been very painful to him; how much more so would it have been could he have anticipated that it was for ever. That when on leaving the ship he turned round to catch one more glance at his son, who stood at the gangway, the tears pouring down his face, it was the last time they would see each other in this world.

A sort of tacit understanding seemed to exist between Catherine and her husband to avoid each other all day. He had his dinner in the workshop, and Catherine occupied herself below. The next morning things began to get more in working order; but it was some time before they accustomed themselves to their boy's absence. Time and labour both came to their relief, and in the end, to a certain extent, succeeded. The piece of silk was redeemed as proposed, and a weight was taken off both their consciences when it left the pawnbroker's. By great industry and considerable privation, they continued to liquidate the debt at the tally-shop, as well as redeem their clothes and goods they had pledged; and the account of their disbursements for their son's journey was at last balanced.

Another source of expenditure for them was now imminent, for Catherine's accouchement was hourly expected; and, with all the economy they could practice, it fell heavily upon the family exchequer. Already for some weeks the amount of labour she had been able to accomplish was trifling, and, of course, during her confinement she was not only helpless, but the assistance of another person was requisite, and she had to be fed and paid. When Catherine left her room she had much to attend to which had been left undone while she was prostrate; and as their poverty prevented her taking the nourishment requisite to regain

and maintain her strength, her perfect recovery was tardy.

A few months after the birth of the child a report was rife in the neighbourhood that several cases of small-pox had occurred, and Catherine determined on having her child vaccinated. Poverty obliged her to apply to the parish for an order on the doctor, and she attended at the surgery of that gentleman on the day appointed. He was not the parish surgeon, but an agent in the district. He lived in a small house in a very poor street, since destroyed to make way for the metropolitan improvements. Every appointment about his dwelling was of the humblest description, and bore on it the impress of the poverty of the district. Catherine took her turn with several others who were waiting. It at last arrived, and she found herself in presence of the Doctor. As this gentleman, who was rather a singular character, will frequently appear in these pages, we will introduce him somewhat particularly to the reader.

Dr. Bodmer was a short, wiry-built man, about forty-five years of age, ungainly in person, and ugly in the extreme. In his youth he had suffered severely from small-pox, and the effects of the disease fearfully disfigured his face. His complexion it would be impossible perfectly to describe. He had formerly been a surgeon in the merchant service, and in that capacity had visited every quarter of the globe. Every climate he had resided in, appeared to have left an indelible mark on him. The tint of the yellow fever of the West Indies remained, and was mixed with the dark bronze of the Straits of Malacca and the Indian seas. The skin of his face had at last acquired something of the appearance of imperfectly stained wood. In Greenland, while serving in a whaler, he had suffered severely from rheumatism, and through it had nearly lost the use of his left arm and shoulder. From the constant habit of protecting the partially-disabled limb, he had been in the practice of

putting the right side of his body forward in walking, and had thus obtained a method of locomotion more nearly resembling that of a crab than is usually met with in the human race. His eyebrows were shaggy, his eyes, deeply set in his head, were dark and piercing. Notwithstanding the ugliness of his face, it possessed an expression of intelligence and benevolence that concealed its anatomical defects. Although very slightly made, and still occasionally suffering from his rheumatism, he appeared insensible to fatigue. No one appeared to pity or sympathise with him for the amount of labour, both mental and bodily, he had to perform; not from any want of kind feeling towards him, for he was generally much liked, but that he never seemed to be tired. Those of his patients who were able to attend at his house, commenced their visits about eight o'clock in the morning, consequently before that hour he had to be shaved and dressed. He considered himself fortunate if, during his breakfast, he was called into his surgery less than four or five times to see, perhaps, some poor creature, most frequently a sickly, squalid, dirty child with its equally squalid, dirty mother. He generally started on his visits about eleven o'clock, after receiving his instructions from his superior, or the relieving officer, and continued them till nine or ten o'clock at night, with the exception of two hours in the afternoon, which were dedicated to making up the medicines he had prescribed. He got his dinner as opportunity offered; he had no fixed hour for the meal, but eat it at any time between one o'clock and half-past seven which was most convenient. At his supper he generally enjoyed himself; and afterwards, with slippers on his feet, a pipe of bird's-eye in his mouth, and a glass of something very like gin and water by his side, he remained for half an hour in perfect contentment. It would be untrue to say that his nights were passed as peaceably as his industry deserved. The mothers in the neighbourhood were many and prolific, and perhaps

out of a mistaken sympathy for their doctor, knowing that every hour in the day he was fully occupied, generally sent for him on occasions of the kind in the night. One consolation the Doctor had in these nocturnal calls was, that he had no wife to be disturbed by them. He had been married, but was then a widower. He had lost his wife and young daughter before he came into the neighbourhood; the latter might have been about twelve years of age at the time of her death. What his wife was like, or what sort of woman she was, it is impossible to devise. It is imagined that his daughter was of a fair complexion, with blue eyes and auburn hair, and tall of her age. This conclusion was not arrived at from any statement of his own, for on all subjects connected with himself he was exceedingly taciturn, but from the fact, that although in his visits he generally left his patient the moment his duty allowed him, he stopped sometimes a quarter of an hour at the house of a woman who had a child in a consumption, whose appearance corresponded with that description. He would sit by her bed, and talk to her with a gentleness of tone and a kindness of manner and look, which rendered his ugly countenance almost handsome. Occasionally, too, he would bring her little presents, but of trifling value, for he was both poor and economical.

He was in his way exceedingly religious, but his religion was acquired in his own eccentric manner. He had, when young, been a pupil to an eminent surgeon, who was a confirmed Deist; and Bodmer, whose early education on pious subjects had been neglected, soon acquired his way of thinking. He had, it is true, when very young, been entered as a pupil at St. Paul's School, but he had left it about six months afterwards. From that time no one appeared to have troubled themselves on the subject. His conversion he brought about himself. He seemed to have studied Christianity backwards. He ignored the Bible and

Testament as proofs of the truth of the creed, but he worked them out to his own satisfaction in his own peculiar manner. From being continually thrown into the society of foreigners in all parts of the world, both civilised and savage, and being almost as frequently called upon to assist them with his medical knowledge and skill, he became sensibly alive to the necessity of members of his profession being good modern linguists. He had frequently much difficulty in making his directions understood, even when assisted by countrymen of his own, who had often lived years in the country, and who offered to translate for him. In savage or half-civilised places this was particularly the case. Once, while annoyed at his incapacity in making his instructions understood by the natives of one of the islands near Sumatra, where he had been requested to see a chief suffering from fever, he remembered the extraordinary manner the Christian religion had been promulgated during the two or three first centuries of the Church. If he found so much difficulty in making his simple medical directions understood, how much more difficult, how perfectly impossible, in fact, without supernatural agency, was it to preach and make plain the Gospel in the thousand dialects which must have existed in those days? when the means of travelling were of the most imperfect description, and, with the exception of the great Roman roads, through countries often little better than a continuous forest, swamp, or desert. He also reflected that this new religion was first taught, not by educated men in the modern acceptation of the term, but by the descendants of a community of poor illiterate men, inhabitants of a distant Roman colony. Of these truths he was convinced, for history proved them facts; and, like many other Deists, although he doubted the Scriptures, he had unlimited faith in history. Here was to him an extraordinary corroboration of the gift of tongues, and at that point he commenced the study of the Scriptures. History

again came to his aid. He remembered that the world at that time was governed by physical force. That rightful authority was invariably in the strongest, and all intellect and administrative science was used in behalf of the powerful; yet a weak unknown society of poor men promulgated, fearlessly and irresistibly, a religion which was to overthrow every principle of the then existing policy, as well as the strength of an all-powerful idolatrous priesthood. The whole working of the system began to appear to him supernatural. Weakness had overcome strength—meekness had conquered oppression. The part was greater than the whole. The less was more than the greater. His mind was now more prepared, but an obstacle still presented itself. How to prove that the character of the Saviour had not been invented by man? No contemporary historical proof remained of his existence. This doubt was at last resolved. He was then engaged as surgeon on board a free trading Indiaman, the East India Company's Charter then existing. One night during the middle watch he was on deck, and leaning against one of the gangways. It was a dead calm, and the sails flapped listlessly against the masts to the slow lazy roll of the vessel. The moon was at its full, and shining as it does shine in the tropics. The little Doctor was keenly sensitive to the beauties of nature; and the scene before him was one to call up all his enthusiasm. He remained motionless for some time, perfectly absorbed in the beauty which surrounded him. He had that night been thinking deeply on the subject of Christianity, but his reflections were lost in the loveliness of the night. Taking his eyes from the moon, they wandered over the expanse of the heavens till they rested on the Southern Cross; then fully discernible through the bright beams of the moon. His first impression was one of astonishment that it could be seen in the strong, bright flood of light which was then spread over the heavens. The apparent pheno-

menon his imagination had created, seemed intended purposely for him. So strong was the impression that for the moment it almost startled him; but the absurdity of the comparison between his case and the Emperor Constantine came before him; the solemn feeling vanished, and a vivid sensation of the ridiculous supplied its place. But an absurd comparison will frequently remain on the memory, when a serious reason would soon fade; it was so in the doctor's case, and he could not relieve himself from the impression the night scene had caused him. For several nights afterwards, about the same hour, he was seen pacing the deck absorbed in thought. The exquisite beauty of the scene he had witnessed proved to him how impossible it would be for man to imitate it, and how insignificant was his power in comparison with that of the Creator's. He then thought whether the same reasoning might not be used to prove the Divine origin of the Saviour—whether the beauty of the character was not too great for it to have emanated from the imagination of man. He first determined, if possible, to invent one like it; but, after a few attempts, he gave up the task. He had been a great reader, and no work of ability, on whatever subject it might be, was passed by him unregarded. He had also had abundant leisure for reflection; and, moreover, possessed a most retentive memory. He next tried to remember some character from works he had read which might equal the Saviour's in beauty. Every author he could remember was appealed to, but without success, and at last he took refuge in Shakespeare, who, in his opinion, went far beyond all other mortals in his invention of character. One by one the whole of the bard's creations were brought before him, and immediately dismissed. All were poor, miserably poor, even in their greatest beauty, when compared to the character of the Messiah. He at last determined that, from its exquisite beauty, it was as impossible to have been the creation of man's

brain, as the beautiful moonlight night had been that of his hand.

He had now a basis for his Christianity, and he worked out the remainder in his own fashion. He adopted it conscientiously as his religion, and followed up its precepts to the best of his ability. He called himself a Protestant, but of what sect it would have been impossible to determine. He would attend the Church of England service in preference to any other; but he would, without the slightest hesitation, worship in the chapel of the Baptist, Wesleyan, or any other Dissenting persuasion. His respect for the ministers of every Christian creed, without distinction, whether Catholic, Dissenter, or Church of England, was singular. He had in some manner identified his own profession as an inferior branch of the same service, and a member of any class of the clergy he considered as a superior officer, and invariably showed them marked politeness if thrown into their society, without regard to the difference of creed. In politics he was, without knowing it almost, a republican, not from any prejudice against the aristocracy, but, from his immense experience with men, he began to believe there was as much natural nobility frequently to be found in the poorest, as in any other class of society. He had an absurd feeling of dislike in being near, or in the presence of, illustrious or noble personages, and always appeared to feel it as a sort of degradation to take off his hat when meeting them. If, in his rare journeys to the West-end, he met one of them, he would dart rapidly up the first street he could, to avoid him. There was, however, one exception, and that was to the person of the Queen! He would invariably bow to her with a most ungraceful courtesy, not from the slightest respect for the dignity of the throne, but simply from the admiration he bore her as a woman. He held, in fact, a most chivalrous feeling towards the whole of the sex, no matter whether high or low—and his practice had

certainly introduced him to the lowest—and he was held by all womankind who knew him with great good feeling in return. Her Majesty he looked upon as an illustrious specimen of the order. She had been proved to possess the triune quality he so much respected—the good daughter, wife, and mother, and the reputation she had so justly acquired for these qualifications he considered entitled her to be held as the first woman in the realm. In conclusion, he was in his private life a most amiable, kind, and benevolent man; but these qualifications were dimmed, to a certain extent, by a bitter cynicism, which seemed to increase in proportion as the class of society he might for the moment be in was the higher. With the sick, however, this habit of expression was never used; he was to them invariably kind, patient, and gentle.

Catherine went into the little surgery, and presented her order to the Doctor. He requested her to be seated; and she began to unloosen the dress of her child. While so occupied, Bodmer regarded her for a few seconds attentively. Short as the time had been, it was more than sufficient to tell the whole history of her case. There was something exceedingly beautiful at that moment in Catherine's countenance; an expression which told that much suffering and want had been met by a gentle patience and resignation. Her face was pale and thin, and her cheeks hollow; but her mild blue eye appeared milder and larger than usual. When the arm was ready, Bodmer looked at the child, and examined it carefully.

"Your baby," he said, "is very much out of condition; has it been in good health lately?"

"Yes, Sir; but it ain't a very large child, it never was."

"How is it so thin, then; do you live well enough? Remember a child cannot thrive if its mother don't take care of herself."

"Oh yes, Sir, I live very well," said Catherine, a

slight blush flying across her honest face, and telling the falsehood she had uttered. Bodmer again examined the child.

"I think," said he, "you had better defer having it vaccinated, it is by no means in health; any other morning you can bring it, I will do it for you."

Catherine having fastened the child's dress, prepared to leave the surgery. Bodmer stopped her, and after again looking at the infant's face, said to her,

"Are you sure you've milk enough for your baby?"

Catherine prepared herself to reply affirmatively. The word "Yes" reached her lips, but refused to leave them. She turned her head aside; her lower lip quivered, and her eyes filled with tears, which she earnestly endeavoured to restrain. It was useless. She looked at her baby, and then poising it on her left arm, she released her right, and with her head still bent she placed her hand across her eyes, and gave full way to her tears.

Few things are at first more wounding to the matronly pride of the respectable English woman of the working classes than the detection of her inability, through want, to fully nourish her child; and Catherine was too perfect a specimen of that class not to be pained at the discovery being made. Bodmer, who well understood the feeling, made no remark. From his manner, he did not even appear to be aware that she was crying.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"At No. 4 Wilkes Street."

"You must take great care of that baby, or you wil not rear it; perhaps you had better not bring it here again for a week or two. I have to visit a patient in your street to-morrow, and I will call and see your child." So saying, he opened the door of the surgery, and Catherine left. Before she arrived at home, the painful feeling had quitted her, and she had become more reconciled. She felt the sensation that a Catholic

penitent might feel after a painful confession. From the kind tone and manner of Bodmer, she already looked upon him as a friend. He had, it was true, laid bare the secret sorrow she had wished to conceal, but she knew she was pitied and sympathised with, and she felt, after all, grateful to him for it.

The next day Dr. Bodmer called on her, and brought with him a little arrowroot, which he had procured from some dispensary, for the baby. He well understood women. To have brought any nourishment for the mother would have been most painful to her feelings; but no woman considers herself under any restraint when a present is offered to her baby; so Catherine thanked him sincerely for his kindness. Bodmer had now the opportunity of making the acquaintance of the family, for Edward himself was below, and was as much pleased with him as the rest.

A glance round the room in a moment told the Doctor the respectability of his new acquaintance. There was order and cleanliness where order and cleanliness were most difficult to be maintained. But if respectability were proved by their domestic arrangements, poverty and privation were no less so by their personal appearance. The pale, yet clean faces of the children, told how rarely meat or sufficient food was provided for them, and the tall, gaunt look of Edward himself showed that he suffered equally with the rest. Old Baker was absent at the time, but his appearance had undergone less change than the others. He was thin and emaciated in the extreme, but he had been so for some years, long before want had made its appearance among them. He was of little or no expense to the family. He rarely took his meals at home, and his appetite was of the smallest; where he obtained the remainder of his food it would be impossible to say. He still made himself useful in the household, and was as much loved and respected by his daughter as ever.

Dr. Bodmer soon discovered that Edward had not always been so poor as the state he was then in, and, with little difficulty, he learnt his history. He sympathised with him, and determined in his mind to assist him if ever he had it in his power. This, however honourable to the worthy Doctor's heart, did but little good to his protegé, for he had no patients in so aristocratic a position in society as a silk manufacturer, and those alone could benefit Edward. Bodmer, however, nothing daunted, conceived that something might be done for the children. He knew that Beuzeville was remotely descended from a French Huguenot family, and he also remembered that more than one charity and school had been founded by that intelligent body of men, for the relief and instruction of the poor of their race; but, upon inquiry, he soon found that their schools and charities had undergone the fate of most others of the same description in London, and the original intentions of the benevolent founders utterly departed from—so it would be useless to seek assistance from their endowments. Still undaunted he determined to search farther. He now heard that the Mercers' Company possessed more than one presentation to Christ's Hospital, and that these presentations were rarely filled up; but, how to get at that dignified body of citizens, was more than the poor sub-parish doctor could discover. At last he heard that at the next Apposition Dinner of the St. Paul's School, he, as an old pupil, would be invited. He had accidentally been thrown in the way of one of the trustees, who had promised that a ticket should be sent him. He now remembered that the school was under the management of the Mercers' Company, and he determined to make further inquiries when the dinner should take place. He was aware that many grandees would be there, and that little attention would be shown him; but his object was a good one, and he determined to do all in his power to gain his end. As the dinner,

however, would not take place for some months, he resolved not to neglect any other opportunity which might occur in the meantime.

About a month after their introduction to Dr. Bodmer, Catherine and Edward received their first letter from their son in America. It shortly sketched the adventures of his voyage across the Atlantic—which, however, would offer nothing of interest to the reader—his meeting with his uncle in New York, and his journey with him into the west. He described the place and its prospects in very glowing colours, and appeared already to have acquired a considerable amount of that energetic method of speaking and thinking, which characterises the children of that great Republic. He spoke with much respect of his uncle, who, he said, behaved most kindly to him. Of his aunt he said but little, yet nothing to lead his parents to suspect he had reason to complain of her conduct. He also wrote with great affection of those he had left behind him in England, and inquired after them individually. He requested that he might receive in his answer a notice of each separate member of the family, and an assurance that he was still remembered by them all. "He hoped," he said, "to open a way for some of his younger brothers and sisters, and as soon as he had saved money enough for the passage of Charles (a younger brother, to whom he was much attached), he should forward it to England, and he trusted his father and mother would allow him to leave them. He stated, however, that, beyond a little pocket money, his uncle had not spoken of wages; but, as he felt he was daily becoming more useful to him, he hoped soon to hear something on the subject." As may easily be imagined, this letter caused great satisfaction and delight to Edward Beuzeville and his wife, as well as the rest of the family. It was answered by return of post, and their son's request implicitly followed. Nothing, however, was said in it respecting their altered

circumstances. They considered it would be cruel to mention anything that might pain him, so all allusion to their poverty was carefully omitted.

Although Catherine, as soon as she had recovered her strength sufficiently, again commenced working at her trade, the diminished rate of wages and the increase of expenditure occasioned by her growing family kept them always extremely poor. It may here be remarked that another source of poverty was opened on them. The respectability and solvency of their lodgers had of late considerably deteriorated. Although they nominally continued to let their rooms at the same prices they had charged from the commencement, they had now frequent defaulters. Poverty was encroaching rapidly on the district. The city improvements had driven thousands of the working classes into their neighbourhood. The formation of St Catherine's Docks had destroyed many hundred dwellings of the poor, but not one had been rebuilt for them. The tenants who were ejected were in consequence driven to augment the already overburdened haunts of Spitalfields, and the increased demand for labour occasioned by the increase of wealth in the metropolis, tempted multitudes from the country, many of whom, finding no room in other parts, again increased the numbers of the inhabitants. This parish, which, in the year 1801, mustered perhaps less than 30,000 inhabitants, fifty years later, when the census was taken, contained nearly 100,000. But as the poor flocked into it the wealthy gradually left it. Terrible have been the effects of this conspiracy of wealth against poverty, of the rich against the poor. There might have been seen the infamous effects of our parochial system, which authorises the rich man to drive the working classes out of his parish, that he may increase the value of his own house, and yet be able to retain their labours for his benefit ;—thus to be relieved from the necessity of assisting those in the hour of distress whose services

have made the wealth their employer enjoys. A system which engenders and encourages an oppression, which, to the honour of humanity, disgraces no other capital in Europe, that of driving the poor into separate localities, inhabited almost solely by themselves, where they are obliged to comfort and support each other in a time of distress, while the merchant, manufacturer, and consumer are absolved by this iniquitous law from contributing to relieve a misery too frequently occasioned by their own extravagance or overtrading. Nothing is more common than for the dock labourer, if in work, to be called upon to assist the weaver in distress, and the weaver as frequently obliged to economise from the miserable pittance of his children's meals, to feed those of the dock labourer when their parents are out of employ.

But the demoralisation occasioned by this law is not less than its positive cruelty. Driven to reside in habitations so crowded that the commonest decencies of life are necessitously disregarded, the morals of the youth of both sexes must naturally be at the lowest ebb, while the parents try to forget their misery in the gaudy gin palaces which seem to rise in the greater splendour, as the poverty of the district is the more abject. Intoxication must be paid for, and their means of finding food for their children decrease after each drinking bout. Gaunt hunger in the meantime stalks abroad and tells the half-starved boy to steal, teaching him the first step to the crank or the chain gang, while it leads the girl into misery still more deplorable. In the neighbouring parish of Whitechapel, perhaps, the most perfect example of the working of this infernal system may be found. In twenty years no fewer than 2,000 houses of the working classes were destroyed, not twenty were rebuilt; but the population, notwithstanding this wholesale destruction of their dwellings, increased in amount by 12,000. Houses formerly inhabited by the respectable merchant and manufac-

turer are now let out in lodgings to the better class of operatives; while the poor are crowded to an extent which only an inspector of police or medical officer of health could believe. A few years since it would have been difficult to have made the public believe the fearful misery and demoralisation caused by this system. At the present day, perhaps, some hopes exist that it may be at last taken into the consideration of the Legislature, notwithstanding the opposition of the Poor Law Board. Many of the clergy in the district, among whom may be specially found the names of the Rev. Canon Champnes, McGill, and McCall, have, with an indefatigable energy, worthy of their profession, succeeded in bringing to light much of the injustice inflicted on the poor of their district. May their noble efforts never cease till justice shall be measured out to those on whom so much of the welfare and comfort of the community depend.

Among the many inconveniences which arose from the overcrowding of the neighbourhood there was one which caused Catherine the greatest uneasiness—the difficulty of restraining her children from associating with those of bad character. The influx of population into a neighbourhood is invariably from the poorest of the district from which they have been driven; those in easier circumstances being better able to continue in the locality where they had been accustomed to reside. Unfortunately the children of the poorest are generally those on whom the smallest amount of moral training has been expended, and those from the vicinity of the docks and the river side, less than all others. Their language was of the coarsest and occasionally the rudest description, and Catherine had more than once heard her children using expressions which caused her the greatest sorrow. She had always been most careful in making them avoid the conversation of those who were likely by their bad language to contaminate them, but it now appeared to be almost an impossibility to restrain them from mixing together.

The next five months passed without anything occurring particularly worthy of notice. Beuzeville and his wife continued to strive on, their eldest girl assisting them, and John, the second son, occasionally picking up a few shillings as an errand boy in the neighbourhood, when a slight accident occurred which may tend to prove how frequently is an industrious, honest working man, removed only by a very trifling barrier, from intense and unavoidable misery.

Their last quarter's rent had not been paid, and they were working assiduously to make up the amount, when Beuzeville one evening, while making some trifling repairs to the woodwork of his loom, ran a splinter under the nail of the index finger of the right hand. Both he and Catherine attempted to remove it, but they only partially succeeded. The next day he worked as usual. His finger gave him some uneasiness, but not sufficient to hinder him in his work. He was then occupied upon a piece of green figured satin, and whether from the occasional contact of the metallic salts used in the dyeing, or whether from the effects of an unhealthy state of body, brought on from hard labour, or privation, or from both causes combined, the finger became inflamed and swollen. He applied, of course, to a druggist for relief, and a lad in the shop told him it was festering, and that it ought to be brought to a head as quickly as possible. He also gave him some ointment which he was to apply immediately. The intended remedy, however, only inflamed the hand the more, and Beuzeville was at last so completely crippled that he was obliged to quit his work for some time. There was now only one way of making up the balance of the rent, and that was by pledging some of their clothes and furniture. This was done, and further anxiety for the moment removed.

The reader may possibly consider that more foresight ought to have been possessed by Beuzeville and his wife, or may imagine they were unfortunate or rare

specimens of their class. Such an opinion would be most erroneous; there are unhappily too many in the same predicament. In the eastern districts of the metropolis, it has been reckoned, and without any apparent exaggeration, that not less than three hundred thousand individuals do not possess, with a clear title, more than a week's means of existence without labour.

"Misfortunes seldom come alone" is perhaps one of the truest of our household proverbs, and the Beuzeville family were now experiencing it. One of their lodgers, owing more than a fortnight's rent, decamped in the night, and the others were so poor that not only were they a month in arrears of rent, but were positively in the act of receiving parochial relief. Their family was comprised of husband, wife, and three children. The poor woman had lately had a very severe confinement, and was unable to leave her bed. The man was a weaver—at that time out of employ—and, like most others of his craft, totally unfit for any other occupation. There are no landlords more lenient than the poor working man, and there are few individuals more charitable than those on the brink of poverty themselves, and inconvenient as the non-payment of the rent was to Catherine, she had not the heart to eject them. Their own rent had been paid, and they were safe to have a roof to cover them for the moment; and they hoped for better times before the next payment would be due. That future was, however, far distant. They were still in arrears for parochial taxes—that for the poor especially. They had received frequent applications from the collector, and nearly as many threats to distrain in case it was not paid; but, as these threats had never yet been put into execution, they wrongly imagined proceedings would not be taken against them. They found themselves at last terribly deceived. A summons had been issued, and as duly served; but no notice had been

taken of it. It was allowed to stand over, and the collector called again, and Catherine promised it should be paid in a fortnight; but two fortnights passed without his receiving the money. About four o'clock one afternoon, when Edward Beuzeville was from home, a little shabby old man called and requested to see him. Catherine told him that her husband was out.

"Are you Mrs. Beuzeville?" he inquired.

"Yes; what do you want?"

"Well, ma'am, I'm very sorry, but I'm obliged to do my duty, you know. You've no cause to be frightened because I'm put in, as they'll give you plenty of time to find the money; but, at the same time, there's the warrant."

Catherine could hardly credit her ears, and took the document from the old man's hand. There was no mistake about the matter—a distress had been levied upon their goods for the payment of the poor's-rate.

"Why," said Catherine, "you don't mean to say you're going to take our goods for that?"

"Not if you pay the money; or if you only pay a part it will do, I suspect; but that you must speak to the collector about, as it's his business and not mine."

Catherine was so overwhelmed with astonishment that she was, for the moment, unable to offer a remark. In the meantime, her father came into the room.

"I'm very sorry for it, you know," said the stranger, addressing him, as if he had been aware of the circumstance.

"About what?"

"Why, about this affair. I'm ordered to distrain for the poor's-rate."

Old Baker appeared to be hardly able to comprehend it, and turned inquiringly from the man to his daughter.

"It's shameful," said Catherine, finding tears and words at the same moment—"shameful to seize our

things. Why don't they go to those who have got money, instead of persecuting a poor broken-down family like us? We've hardly a crust of bread to eat ourselves, and my poor children haven't had a good meal for the last fortnight." From poor Catherine's attenuated appearance it was probable she had fared even worse than her children.

"Well, the fact is, that your having been better off once, is one reason that they couldn't excuse you; for you see there's so many as bad off as you are that have distresses in their houses now, that if they had not put one in your's the others would have grumbled, and said you'd been let off because you'd been gentlefolks once. You can't think how jealous they are if they think that favour has been shown to anybody. It always calms 'em if they think that all have been treated alike. But don't take on so," he said kindly to Catherine; "summonses have been sent out in hundreds, and you're no worse off than your neighbours. If you'll only raise a part of the money they'll give you time for the rest, you may be sure of that. Lor' bless you! I know them guardians—they're not a bad lot after all—they must have money, you know, where there's such a precious sight of poor as there are about here. Why, ever so many of those houses as have got summonses issued on 'em has got people living with them as is receiving parish relief at this time."

"And so have we," said old Baker; "that poor fellow in the second floor is having 1s. 6d. a-week and two loaves of bread now. Why, the reason my son-in-law can't pay this is, that they can't pay him; and in consequence of his right hand being bad he can't finish that piece of satin that's on the loom."

"Well, it's very hard, certainly," said the broker's man; "but you know it's law, and I'm a sort of officer of the law, so I musn't speak against it."

"I'm sure I wonder you can have the heart to do it. I shouldn't be able to sleep in my bed if I thought my husband was capable of it," said Catherine.

"Well, it's all use, after all; but it was bad at first, I must say. I wasn't always a broker's man, and I wouldn't be so now if I could get anything better to do. It don't pay so well as to tempt any one to stop in it longer than they can help; but it's better than starving, as I was like to do before I began it. Look at me now," said he, "I look poor enough, don't I? Well, I wasn't half as well off before I took to it. I was a weaver, and rented a small house close by: but my lodgers couldn't pay me—they were out of work, and so was I—and at last I got two executions put in at the same time—one for rent and the other for taxes. They sold off all my things, and me and my old woman was pretty nigh starving. I thought there was nothing but the workhouse for me, but, fortunately, the broker having plenty to do, offered me a place and I took it. But all this ain't business. Where am I to sleep? I don't want to inconvenience you: anywhere is good enough for me. I'm not particularly good company at any time, and worse when I'm on a job of this kind than at any other."

"Would you mind the workshop?" said old Baker. "I sleep there."

"Not at all, not at all; don't put yourselves out. But I must first make an inventory of what's down here. I'm sorry to say," said he, casting a professional glance round the room, and noticing the scanty furniture, "that it won't take long."

Catherine could offer no objection, although her matronly pride was considerably hurt at his noticing how little they possessed, but it soon passed; for the sharper sorrow caused by the certainty of their destitute condition soon obliterated it, and she paid but little attention to the man as he proceeded with his duty.

When Edward Beuzeville returned home in the evening, and heard from his wife that a distress had been levied on his goods, his courage almost sunk under it. He had that morning been to the manufac-

turers to request they would advance him some money on the piece of satin which was now nearly completed; but the partner who had the power to permit it, was sick at his house at Wimbledon, and had not been to town for several days. He was a strict man of business, and the foreman, who was no friend of Beuzeville's, refused to take the responsibility on himself. The poor fellow's sorrow at the misery of his family, he had thought in the morning, was almost insupportable; but in the evening he found he was called upon to support still more. When he clearly understood it, he seated himself, for the intelligence had such an effect on him that he thought he should have fainted. Catherine attempted to comfort him, but in vain; his second daughter, Martha, tried her power on him, and partially succeeded. Between this child and her father that sympathy existed which is so frequently to be found in families, and which appear so difficult to account for. Beuzeville loved all his children equally. He would have revolted at the idea of showing greater affection to one than to another; but this girl seemed to have acquired an ascendancy over him the others had not obtained. It was by no artifice on her part, for she was as ingenuous as it was possible for a human being to be. She loved her father tenderly; but the others were equally affectionate. She was then a fine grown girl of nearly fifteen years of age, somewhat thin, perhaps, from privation. She was exceedingly pretty, and had a peculiarly mild, gentle, and confiding expression of countenance. She greatly resembled what her mother had been at her age; and perhaps her father's greater sympathy for her was, without his knowing it, greater on that account. She was, moreover, an affectionate and obedient daughter, and as industrious as her parents could wish her to be.

As soon as Edward Beuzeville was sufficiently recovered, he clearly saw that some step must be

decided on immediately, and he and Catherine talked over the matter together anxiously and earnestly. At last it was decided that he should go the next morning to the manufacturer's country house at Wimbledon, and attempt to persuade him, personally, to make him a little advance of money. His hopes were somewhat raised by the fact that that gentleman had known him when in different circumstances, and that he had now been many years in his employ.

CHAPTER V.

A LITTLE DINNER IN THE CITY—A SUPPER IN SHOREDITCH.

THE celebrated St. Paul's School "Apposition Dinner," to which Dr. Bodmer had been invited, took place the day after the distress had been levied on the goods of Edward Beuzeville for the payment of his proportion of tax ordered to be raised for the relief of the poor. Though all Englishmen are proud of their time-hallowed customs and institutions, there are few of those now remaining, whose elementary rules have not undergone a radical change since their foundation; and St. Paul's School might justly be quoted in proof of the statement. The youths attending it at the present day would hardly be recognised as those belonging to "every class, country, and degree," and it would be in vain to look for the poor scholars who swept out the school-room, and who received fourpence from each new boy when he signed his name on entrance. With respect to the dinner, the subject immediately under our notice, it bore, perhaps, still less resemblance to the "littel dinner, the cost thereof not to exceed fowre nobles," which was to be held "as near Candlemas as possible, the time not to exceed three days after or before," as the scholars of our day differ from those

for whom the benevolent Dean Colet endowed the institution. Even the Charity Commissioners seem by their report to be of the same opinion, and call the attention of the governors and trustees appointed by the Mercers' Company, under whose management the school is placed, to the subject. They especially notice, though in that bland and unctuous phraseology proper to be used when addressing the givers of good dinners, that the yearly sum of £229 might be considered something more in excess of "fowre nobles" than might be altogether justifiable, even after taking into consideration the difference in the value of money in the present day, and that of the reign of Henry the Eighth. The same report also remarks on several other items of expenditure which appeared somewhat too liberal, and further suggested that, as the school was endowed for the benefit of the poor as well as the rich, the poor ought, perhaps, to receive some portion of the benefits arising from it.

The dinner was held in the Mercers' Hall, and the Doctor, for the first time in his life, found himself at a City feast. He was fortunate in the occasion—no City company priding themselves more, and with perfect justice, on their magnificence. The room itself was vast and richly decorated. For the dinner, everything that wealth could purchase to please the appetite or charm the sight was there. To give a list of the dishes would occupy too much space. Suffice it to say that the most exquisite productions of the French *cuisine* were mingled with the more substantial fare of the English gastronome, while the coarser attributes of the latter were relieved by the more scientific delicacies of our imaginative neighbours. The sweets, however, which were placed before the guests, at a later hour, showed that the skill of the Italian in confectionery had contributed likewise to their enjoyment. Wines, of every name, flavour, and country, were there in the greatest profusion—in fact, every corner of the globe

seemed to have contributed towards the entertainment. The magnificence of the table service and plate was in perfect keeping with the viands. To such perfection were even the smallest details carried out, that a list of the dishes composing the dinner, placed in each guest's plate, was printed on white satin. It must not be imagined that these preparations were made without proper provision for the solemnity which the occasion required. Six public singers, chosen for their skill in sacred dinner music, attended for the purpose of chaunting "Non nobis Domine" in such a manner as should raise the grateful hearts and minds of the guests to the Giver of all good things, and produce by their harmony a feeling more perfect and devout than would be obtained by means of a simple prayer.

On dinner being served the guests placed themselves at the table, and a blessing was asked on their meal in a solemn and impressive manner. There was something imposing and dignified in the sight as they stood up on each side of the table, with their eyes piously fixed upon their plates, while the waiters, with scarcely less piety, stood in two rows behind them, their napkins in their hands and their looks reverently bent upon the floor. The guests, who numbered between sixty and seventy, were in every respect worthy the magnificent dinner provided for them. Among them were four bishops, a general, and two judges; there were also several leading members of the bar. At the further end of the table were some of the senior boys, who were invited in consequence of their high standing at the school. Our Doctor found himself in the centre of the élite of the society. On one side of him he had a barrister, on the other a reverend dean, and a judge sat but a little distance from him on the same side. Exactly opposite him was a stout middle-aged mercantile gentleman. He was a dignitary of the Mercer's Company, and evidently a wealthy man. His manner though pompous was frequently condescending. To

say the truth, he appeared at first to be ill at ease with his company. By his reserved manner he evidently attempted to conceal his natural pride, as it would have been ridiculous in the society he was then in, and condescension seemed absurd, when offered to those, many of whom were above him in station, and perhaps all in ability. As the dinner proceeded he was, however, far more at home, and appeared to enjoy himself immensely, eating of everything, and saying little. Two or three times Dr. Bodmer looked at him with a somewhat envious glance. He thought, how fortunate was that man's medical adviser. On one side of this gentleman sat another barrister, exactly opposite his learned brother seated by Bodmer. On the other side was a clergyman of the Church of England, a man much celebrated for his learning and piety.

As the dinner progressed, Bodmer began to make acquaintance with his neighbours. The little Doctor was perfectly delighted with the society he was in. With the exception of his opposite neighbour, all were evidently men of ability, and few relished society of the kind better than he did. Even the stout gentleman came out considerably towards the end of the repast, and spoke of finance and statistics with great good sense and fluency. Several compliments were paid to the Mercers' Company through him, as their representative, and he naturally considered himself flattered by them. As he had apparently great influence in the direction of the company, Bodmer determined to attack him on the subject of the presentation to Christ's Hospital, for one of Edward Beuzeville's children. He had, however, sufficient tact not to begin it until the dinner was finished; for he was too good a physiologist not to be aware of the pleasureable and charitable state of mind, which a sumptuous repast generally produces while the *gourmet* is immediately under its effects, although the stimulus it occasions to benevolent feelings the overnight, is apt to leave a

somewhat selfish reaction the next morning. Like all other things, however, the dinner at last came to an end, and "Non nobis Domine" having been sung in the usual reverential manner, Bodmer summoned up sufficient courage, and opened the subject by asking the stout gentleman, if the Mercers' Company did not possess several presentations to the Blue Coat School?

"We have two or three, I believe; have you anybody for whom you feel interested in the matter? If so, pray inform us."

Bodmer's eyes brightened at the answer he had received.

"I have, indeed," he said; "do you think there will soon be a vacancy?"

"We have one now; and we should like to fill it up; for whom do you inquire?"

"For the son of a poor man who was formerly a highly respectable manufacturer; he is now in great poverty, and has a large family of children dependent on him for support."

"A very proper case for the charity. I wish we always had such applications. What is his name?"

"Edward Beuzeville."

"I don't remember it."

"You would hardly be likely to have heard of it; he has been living for many years in an obscure street in the neighbourhood of Spitalfields."

"Is he a mercer?"

"I hardly think he would come under that designation now, although he might have done so formerly. He is at present only a weaver, but he has been a silk manufacturer in a considerable way of business."

"But he is not one of the Mercers' Company, I mean?"

"Oh no."

"Then I'm sorry to say we can do nothing for him, for we are restricted to members of our own company. We are rather unfortunate in this respect. Although

we have these presentations, the Mercers' Company is composed of men of such affluence, that they do not consider it worth their while applying for them, so that we have seldom our presentations completely filled up."

The conversation was here interrupted by Her Majesty's health being drunk. Afterwards the various toasts were given usual on occasions of the kind, and were all properly responded to. The Church, by a bishop; the Army, by the general; and the Bar, by a judge.

The Bishop mildly thanked them for mentioning the Church, a subject particularly pleasing on all occasions, but especially so when they were met as they then were, to do honour to a school of such vast reputation for learning and piety. He complimented the Mercers' Company on the truly Christian spirit shown in its management, and the pure principles of religion and charity inculcated by their teachers, without which no institution can ever hope to succeed or obtain those blessings which Heaven has, in so bountiful a manner, poured down upon our favoured country.

The General expressed his pride at the honour done him, but regretted his inability to do justice to the subject. The British army, he was happy to say, had always done its duty in whatever part of the world it had been ordered to, and he was certain it would never be found wanting whenever the country should require its services.

The Judge remarked that it was from institutions such as the St. Paul's School, that the most eminent members of the British bar had received their preliminary education; those men who contributed so much to raise the proud reputation the country has acquired for the strict administration of justice.

We will not inflict a more detailed report of the speeches on the reader, as it is more than probable he has already read them many times. They are generally kept stereotyped, or at any rate set up in type by

the newspaper, to be used as occasion may require, in their notices of City dinners.

In the pauses between the toasts, the conversation of the party we are particularly interested in, proceeded with great animation and friendly spirit, although the Doctor was somewhat crestfallen at the bad result of his application. After the judge had concluded his speech, the barrister opposite Bodmer remarked, that he perfectly agreed with the compliments passed upon the excellent management of our public schools, and quoted that of St. Paul's, as particularly offering an example in proof. His learned brother on the contrary, although, perhaps, in his heart he held the same opinion, could not, after the fashion of barristers in society, help differing in opinion. A conversation of the most animated description was in consequence kept up between them on the subject.

"I can hardly agree with you," said Bodmer's neighbour, "in your appreciation of the praises, those of the judge especially, made on the management of this school. I consider for the enormous endowments it possesses, as well as the increase of income which will accrue to it, when the present leases shall fall in, that a far greater number of scholars should be educated than are at present under tuition. I find the estate it possesses in Buckinghamshire alone, which at Dean Colet's death only produced £55 annually, now realises nearly £2,000; and the estate at Stepney is still more profitable. These, with their other estates at present in hand or in reversion, would educate in an excellent manner more than a thousand children."

"But you forget the clause in the endowment limiting the number to 153, that being the number of fish caught by St. Peter."

"I do not forget it; but I hold that such an absurd regulation is beneath the civilisation of the present day. When the school was established, the funds would not cover a greater expenditure than would teach that

number of pupils; but though the income of the charity (for I persist it is a charity) has increased in far greater proportion than the cost of education, there is no reason to imagine that so learned a man as Dean Colet would have limited the number to 153 if he could have known the same endowment could have extended the benefits of education to a far greater amount."

"But still you don't get over the difficulty of the fish."

"Pardon me, but I think that difficulty is very easily overcome. The Mercers' Company, by the last clause in the Dean's book of directions for the management of the school, distinctly gives the governors and wardens of the Mercers' Company the power to alter the rules."

"Granted, in respect to the description of education, and general management, but it does not give them the power to alter the number of pupils. The fish is a very difficult obstacle to get over."

"But I maintain it is a perfect absurdity to keep rigidly to that clause, when every other is departed from. Take the spirit of his meaning, and the Mercers' Company would no longer be its managers. They were established simply as a benefit society, for affording relief and assistance in poverty to those employed in the 'mystery of mercerie.' As late as the year 1701, Sir William Gore, when chosen Lord Mayor of London, complimented them, in his speech, for having kept the members of the company strictly to the mercer's trade. There was not a freeman of the company, who was not employed in that way of business; and, while other companies had permitted those of different occupations to join them, the mercers had kept themselves select. At the present time there is not a freeman who is really a mercer. The enormous funds of the company, as well as the distribution of their charities, are left in the hands of a self-elected

body of men, having no connexion with the trade whose interests they are supposed to represent, while all trading in that description of merchandise, are exempted from the benefits of the company."

"That does not do away with the objection of the fish, you must allow me to remark. Besides, by your own pleading, you appear to forget that when the company received their charter, the word 'mercerie' possessed a different signification from what it does in the present day."

"The farther you go back, the grosser appears the present injustice. The word mercer then signified a general shopkeeper; or, if we went more strictly into the meaning of the word, the trade of a pedlar would also be included. What benefit, may I ask, do they receive from the enormous funds placed in the hands of the company? That for the purpose of education alone, is sufficient for the gratuitous instruction of the children of every mercer and general shopkeeper in the City."

"Still, Sir, you do not get over my objection as to the fish. Till that number can be disputed, the pupils cannot be increased. They are limited—distinctly limited—to 153, and the correctness of that figure is corroborated by the number of the fish. As long as that remains untouched, I insist the managers cannot, without a gross act of injustice to the founder of the school, increase the number of pupils."

"But you forget that many other intentions of the founder, equally imperative, have been set aside without the slightest compunction. In the first place, Dean Colet was a Catholic."

The clergyman on the other side of Bodmer here interposed.

"The Mercers' Company," he said, "were perfectly justified in deviating from the superstitious provisions contained in the book of instructions. When Dean Colet lived, the Reformation had not fully been

carried out, and he died before it was effectually established. I consider the Mercers are only acting in accordance with what would have been the wish of that pious man had he lived a little longer. It was not to be imagined that the friend of Erasmus would have continued in the errors of the Romish faith. Had he died later, there was no doubt but that he would have become a zealous Protestant."

"But allow me to remark," said the barrister, "that if 'of those to whom much is given, much will be required,' the Mercers' Company, both in a moral and religious point of view, are not justified in limiting the scholars to their present number, when the enormous increase of their funds is taken into consideration."

"But, my dear Sir," said his opponent, "the number of scholars is imperatively fixed, and the number of the fish is merely a collateral proof of the fact. Colet specifically mentions it as a fundamental law. Believe me, you cannot get over the fish."

"You state that the number of scholars is proved to be correct by that fact, but at the same time I must observe that I have never been able to find any mention of it, in any document Colet left behind him. Even Stowe, who was educated at the school, does not give it as certain. With respect to the assertion that Colet would have become a Protestant had he lived a few years longer, and therefore it was justifiable to alter his laws, so as to meet the views of those holding the reformed creed, which has been urged by our reverend friend; I must beg leave totally to object. Colet was a liberal Catholic, it is true, but between a liberal Catholic and a follower of Luther, a wide difference may exist. Colet, it must be remembered, was most imperative and explicit in his rules, and one of them appears to me to prove there was no probability, on his part, of changing his religion; and I am by no means certain it would have been for the benefit of the poor had he done so, for, in candour it must be admitted, they have

gained but little by the Reformation. He wrote a catechism in English, and insisted that no scholar should be admitted till he had learnt it. It contained the articles of the Christian faith, the seven sacraments, the Apostles' creed, the Ave Maria, and two prayers to the Virgin Mary. This catechism appears to have been admirably composed. Stowe, himself a Protestant, mentions it with great respect, and regrets it was laid aside, so excellent were the principles it inculcated. The superstitious portions, he remarks, might have been omitted. Now, if the specific directions on the part of the founder were set aside in this case, the doubtful reason you have given for the limitation in the number of pupils might easily have shared the same fate."

"But still I maintain you have not overcome the difficulty of the fish."

The judge, who had been listening attentively to the conversation, here gravely remarked, "I perfectly agree with you, the objection appears insuperable."

The younger barrister of course bowed to the decision of the bench, and dropped the conversation.

During the argument the stout gentleman opposite the Doctor had been eating, listening, and drinking alternately. He appeared somewhat indignant at the attacks which had been made upon the Mercers' Company, and had more than once evidently intended making a remark in answer or explanation, but he had partaken so freely of the good things which had been set before him, that he had considerable difficulty in filling his lungs sufficiently with atmospheric air to allow him to complete a sentence, and thus before he had acquired the power of reply, the more moderate barristers were again speaking. As their dispute had now ended, he determined to profit by the opportunity afforded him by the momentary silence; and, after taking a deep breath, began :—

"I think you have judged us rather harshly. We

do all we can to conduct the affairs of the company and the funds of the school with proper and just economy, regard being had to civic hospitality, for which the City of London is so justly celebrated." Here his eye wandered with great complacency the whole length of the table. "We have, I think, without going out of this room, the clearest proof that our management is unexceptionable. Would it be possible or probable, that, if we had been guilty of any injustice, our table would this day have been graced by the presence of two of the judges of the land? and if we had been wanting in charity towards our poorer fellow-creatures, would our repast have received the blessing and sanction of four of the bench of bishops? We have, I should also state, determined on extending the benefits of this school, and that, too, considerably, as soon as we can do so, consistently with the laws of our time-hallowed institution, and justice to all parties."

The exertion requisite for making these observations had so exhausted the pulmonary powers of the stout gentleman that he was obliged to stop for some moments, for the purpose of recovering his breath. The clergyman being about to make some observation, the last speaker raised his hand in a deprecating manner to inform him he had not yet finished. He then took a deep gasp and again proceeded:—

"Justice, let it be remembered, should be considered as well as charity. Admirable as the latter virtue is, it ought not to be used in such a manner, as to deteriorate its own excellence, nor to the destruction of any other virtue." (*Here he paused for breath.*)

"It has frequently," he continued, "been stated that many endowments, originally for charitable purposes, are now applied to other objects. I perfectly agree with the remark, and maintain, for the interests of morality and religion, that it should be so. Remember the immensity of wealth in the Metropolis left for purposes of the kind. Assume for a moment they were returned to their

original uses—the welfare of the poor—would not their enormous riches, in the first place, destroy the very virtues you wish particularly to inculcate, by abolishing the necessity for the practice of charity among the affluent classes of society, and eradicating that truly British feeling, gratitude, from the breasts of the poor? as they would then want but little from the hands of their more fortunate fellow-creatures. You should also remember that if a larger portion of the funds of this charity reached the indigent in the days of superstition and Romish error, they have not been wanting in a full equivalent for its loss. If we have in any manner infringed upon the patrimony of the poor (*here he took a deep gasp*), we have given them the truths of the blessed Gospel in return."

Bodmer first looked at the bishop. Although that dignitary had been paying great attention to the previous conversation, he had either not heard the stout gentleman's remarks, or pretended he did not, for he was at that moment looking towards another part of the table. The clergyman, however, had not the excuse of distance. He made no observation, but an expression so painful, of so much annoyance, was upon his countenance, that it would have been cruel to have called his attention to the argument. All near him appeared to entertain the same opinion, for, actuated by a feeling of respect, they turned their eyes from him.

"You stated, Sir," said the Doctor, addressing the last speaker, "that it was the intention of the managers of the school to extend its benefits; when is it likely that will take place?"

"As soon as the Warden, Managers, and Trustees can agree among themselves."

(It may, perhaps, be excusable here to remark that that blessed result had not been arrived at, as lately as the month of June, 1859.)

Bodmer remarked that he hoped they would soon be agreed. The necessity of education and religious

teaching was most apparent in his own neighbourhood, and when their new scheme was decided on, he trusted that district would not be forgotten.

"But," said the Bishop, mildly, "may it not appear somewhat ungracious, if, while profiting by the hospitality of our kind friends, we choose that time as the fitting one for criticising their management?"

"The very magnificence of the entertainment occasioned my remark," said Bodmer; "accustomed as I am to squalid misery, its grandeur and luxury are more astonishing to me than perhaps any other person at the table, and the comparisons they suggest are the stronger. No one, in fact, not acquainted with the poverty and wretchedness of the eastern districts, could appreciate how forcibly the difference presents itself to me, and it ought to plead my excuse if I appear somewhat wanting in good taste. I have no wish to offend, I assure you, but it is impossible for one not accustomed to mix among the poor in that part of London, to understand the misery and demoralisation which exists there. It should also be remembered that both crime and sin are too frequently the effects of destitution. The amount of profligacy occasioned by it would be a curious and interesting study for the philanthropist."

"But," said the Bishop, "are you not somewhat hastily arriving at a conclusion? Pardon me if I say your theory appears to be a most dangerous one. Nothing can be more prejudicial or objectionable to the morals of a community, than continually searching for an excuse for the improvidence and dissipation existing among the poor, in the want of attention and charitable feeling of the governing and wealthier classes. It would, indeed, be a most fearful precedent if we admitted for a moment that you could absolve the terrible amount of wickedness you speak of, by placing it upon the supposed neglect of those who are certainly taking every care to ameliorate the condition of the working

classes. Believe me, sin is not so easily got rid of. I have taken great interest in the question myself, and I am fully persuaded that by far the greater portion of the misery and wretchedness of the lower orders, is occasioned by their own want of providence, combined with their profligate habits. Place what amount of good instruction and means of improvement you may before them, the temptations of the gin-shop will still be most powerful. I am informed, and upon excellent authority, that the thief is rarely, if ever, driven to his crime by hunger; and that drink is far more frequently the first step to immorality than is generally imagined."

"Permit me to assure your lordship that you are in error. Integrity, and innate religious feeling, are as natural to the poor as to the rich. If a comparison were fairly made, perhaps the balance might be in favour of the former. Statistics inform us that where one working man offends against the law by theft, there are at least ninety-five who remain honest. Among the twelve Apostles, one was a thief. To estimate the value of their integrity properly, it should be borne in mind the fearful privations to which they are occasionally exposed, the pinching hunger they are frequently obliged to endure, and the miseries their children are often subjected to. Among the sober working men, it is very difficult to find a dishonest character; and none retain and inherit their integrity more perfectly than their children. The swarms of young thieves in the eastern districts are composed almost entirely of half-starved children or undergrown, sickly youths, physically incapable of hard labour, and destitute of instruction. The immorality I speak of is, in great part, the consequence of the crowded manner in which they are obliged to live. The amount of this vice is perfectly startling, and ought to be more generally known; but from, perhaps, a false feeling of delicacy, all try to avoid the inquiry."

"Is not the statement you now make," said the

Bishop, "something very like a harsh censure on the parochial clergy of the district? I assure you such is by no means the received opinions of their exertions. They are generally looked upon as a most meritorious body of men, and the bishop of their diocese holds the same opinion; and few know his clergy better than he does."

"Their bishop, my lord, has only formed a correct opinion of them; it would be difficult to respect them too highly; and I maintain I know them far better than their bishop himself. Never in this world were there braver or more meritorious Soldiers of the Cross than most of them. Great as their zeal is, the energy they use to back it is equally so. It would be impossible for me to express my admiration of the patience, courage, and charity they exhibit. I assure you it would be difficult to find one whose admiration of them is greater than mine. I know them well; I know them in the pulpit; I know them at the bedside of the sick and dying, and I know them at their own homes. Incessant labour appears to be their lot, and privation their reward. It is singular to notice the self-denial practised by not a few of their number. When ordained, they take no vow of poverty, but tacitly accept it as their portion; and when they marry, they renew the obligation with additional severity, while every child born to them still increases it. It is not of them I would complain. It is of those dignitaries of the church who sanctify by their presence such feasts as these, who quietly sit by and see Christ's legatees robbed of their inheritance. It is not solely of this charity (for I maintain it to be a charity) I would speak. It is to nearly all the wealthy City endowments my remarks would apply. The greater part of them were instituted for the benefit of the poor of the City of London, and where are the poor? For years past every improvement which has taken place in the City has had the effect of driving out the poor. They

have been ejected by thousands at a time, and as they were driven away the charitable funds they were entitled to, increased in proportion. Every contemplated improvement is intended to destroy more of their dwellings. Carry on the system for the next thirty years, and no poor man will be left within the City limits. Why should not the benefit of these charities be extended? Their original trusts are gone, at least the greater part of them. In the Mercers' Company, as you hear, there are no mercers. Surely the weaver is more nearly allied by his craft to the mercer, than is the soldier, lawyer, or brewer. I would not ask for all, but let the working man have some of the benefits. The dogs feed of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table; and the weaver might occasionally be relieved by the surplus funds of the Mercers' Company. I asked a favour for a poor man of the gentleman opposite, but it was not in his power to oblige me. This bill of fare," continued the Doctor, now highly excited, and holding up the printed satin in his hand, "must have cost as much as would have given that poor fellow's family a supper, and it is more than probable this night they are without one. Medicine and not theology is my profession; but I trust I am a Christian, at least I try to be one. How, to my poor understanding, the blessing of Heaven can be on such a meal as this, is incomprehensible. It may appear ungrateful on my part to make such a remark, but I do not hesitate to say, I feel a weight on my conscience for having partaken of it."

The bishop was preparing to reply, but there was a look of honest indignation on the ugly countenance of the little Doctor at the moment, which showed he had spoken from his heart, and on conviction. The reverend lord, who thought it would be better to avoid all further argument, mildly submitted to the attack, and bowing his head with gentle resignation, was silent. Fortunately at that moment, a general rise took place

among the guests, and the Doctor having obtained his hat, was on the point of leaving, when his passage was for the moment stopped by two gentlemen taking leave of each other—one a mercantile member of the company, the other a barrister. The former asked his legal friend whether he did not think they would do well to imitate the hospitality of the Skinners and some others of the City companies, and send some confectionary to the ladies of the families of their guests ?

"I should like," said the Lawyer, "to see your kind suggestion carried out, as far as I am concerned ; but it must be borne in mind that this institution bears somewhat the appearance of a charitable endowment, and it might give occasion for scandal to those who find evil in everything. At present, no one can justly complain of us, and it is better perhaps to continue in our own quiet modest way."

Early on the morning of the same day, Edward Beuzeville had started on his journey to Wimbledon. He was much out of health, suffering from fever and burning thirst. His arm was supported in a sling, and occasionally was extremely painful. When at last he had arrived at his employer's house, he seated himself on a green bank in front of it for some time to recover his strength and collect his thoughts. He turned over in his mind the phraseology it would be best to employ, to ensure the success of his mission ; and when he had arranged it to his own satisfaction, he rang at the bell, and asked if his employer were at home. The footman told him that he was, but feared that he was too ill to see any one ; however, he would take any message to his mistress. Beuzeville reflected for a moment, and then concluded that it would be more prudent not to entrust what he had to say to another, who could not have the same interest in the matter as himself ; so he merely answered that he called about business, and mentioned his name. The footman left him ; and, a few minutes afterwards, a stout middle-

aged lady, with a good-natured, common-place expression of countenance, came from one of the sitting-rooms. She was handsomely dressed, and evidently the mistress of the house. She wore, at the moment, a somewhat supercilious air, probably wondering, from the shabby appearance of her visitor, what might be his business. He told her that he was a weaver in the employ of the master of the house. That he had nearly completed a piece of figured satin when he received the wound in his hand; and he now had the misfortune to have a distress in his house for the money he owed for poor's-rates, and he wished for an advance of his wages for the work he had already done. He also said that he had worked for the house for many years, and that he had formerly been a manufacturer himself in a respectable way of business. He received for reply that she would take the message to her husband, but that she feared he was far too unwell at the present time to interfere in any way in business matters. In a short time she returned with an answer. She said "that her husband was willing to see him, but that she did not think it prudent. His nerves were in a very bad way, and the doctor had said he was not on any account to be disturbed. If he (Beuzeville) chose to wait till after the doctor's visit, he could; and if then no objection were made, her husband would grant him the interview; but, at the same time, it was not the custom to call on matters connected with the business at a gentleman's country house. The doctor," she continued, "might be there in half-an-hour, or it might be two or three hours. It was impossible for her to say with any certainty."

Beuzeville thanked her for her kindness, and said he would wait till after the doctor's visit. He seated himself on a chair in the hall, and remained their patiently till three o'clock in the afternoon, when the doctor arrived. With due and proper solemnity that gentleman was ushered into the parlour, and remained with

his patient for nearly half-an-hour. After he had left the house the mistress informed Beuzeville that the doctor had strictly prohibited her husband from seeing any one, or occupying himself in any way in business matters. She also said she had given Beuzeville's message to her husband, who told her he had no objection to his calling at the house of business, and informing the foreman from him that the money might be advanced.

When Beuzeville started on his road to London it was nearly four o'clock, and he considered that by walking rapidly he should be able to reach the City before the house of business closed for the day. His pace at first was good, and he would have accomplished his task had he been able to continue it, but being ill as well as faint from want of nourishment, he was unable to keep it up, and in a short time began to slacken his speed. He had no money with him to purchase food, even if he had had the appetite to eat it. The few pence he possessed he had left with his wife in the morning. Weary, thirsty, and sore-footed, he at last reached London, but too late for his purpose—the house was closed. When he arrived at home there was no occasion for his wife to question him on the subject, the expression of his face told his disappointment—even more than it really was.

Catherine had watched with great anxiety the return of her husband. The little money she had possessed in the morning had nearly all been expended in furnishing a most scanty meal for her hungry family, and a little meat for her husband's supper when he should return in the evening, naturally calculating he would be greatly fatigued, and in much need of refreshment. After he had rested himself for a short time, his supper was placed upon the table, and he seated himself before it. He carefully removed his arm from the sling, and attempted to use the knife; but the pain was so great, and his hand was so swollen, he was obliged to give up the attempt. His dear daughter,

Martha, was soon by his side, and, taking the knife and fork from his hands, proceeded to cut the supper into small pieces for him, while he replaced his arm in the sling. Catherine knowing how great the temptation, the sight of the food would be to her hungry children, warned them, before their father had returned, not to look at him while eating; and if he asked them to partake of his supper, they were to say they were not hungry, and not to look as if they wanted anything.

As Catherine had anticipated, no sooner had her husband commenced his supper than he invited them to partake of it with him; and all with one accord declined it, stating they were not hungry. The children kept courageously from the table, with two exceptions. Martha, who stood by her father's side, and Tommy, a sprightly little boy of about four years of age, the pet of the family, who persisted on standing at the table opposite to his father. Catherine continued to make signs to him to come to her, but without avail. Martha at last, fearing lest her father should notice the expression of hunger in the child's countenance, ran round the table, and carried him away. She placed him by the side of his mother, who took his hand, intending to lead him out of the room, and Martha again took her station by her father's chair; but her young brother was not so easily disposed of; he immediately conceived the idea that he was suffering from an act of tyranny and injustice on the part of his sister. In his opinion, she had ejected him merely for the purpose of getting a portion of his father's supper without offering him a part. A struggle in consequence ensued between him and his mother on the subject. The young gentleman finding his parent the stronger of the two, and having already learnt how powerful are the arguments contained in the scream of a lively little boy with a sound pair of lungs, he exerted himself to his utmost, and Catherine was soon glad to release him from her grasp. He again posted himself at

the foot of the table, and continued to gaze on his father as before, who, however, at first paid him little attention; but when, on raising his eyes, he noticed the child looking so fixedly at him, he was struck by the anxiety expressed upon his countenance. No sooner did Tommy find he had attracted his father's notice, than he put on one of those winning smiles which children appear to be aware are irresistible. His father looked at him kindly, and Willy's face became brighter and brighter. The smile for a moment rested at its full. The next, the expression of pleasure appeared forced; then, gradually and imperceptibly, as yielding to an uncontrollable impulse, the smile became fainter and fainter, and then vanished, leaving as it went, a look of keen hunger in its place, which each succeeding moment became stronger. The gaunt, half-famished features of the father were mirrored in miniature in the child, as faithfully as Ugolino's were, in the Hunger Tower of Pisa, when he saw his own look stamped on the features of his children. The boy, too, gazed on Edward's face with the expression of little Gaddo's, when he addressed his father before he fell with "*Padre mio, perche non m'aiuti.*"

Beuzeville felt the child's appeal. He turned to Martha to ask for an explanation, but in words, he received none. The poor girl had been watching the boy's countenance, and marking its changes, understanding too well their cause. She also understood her father's look of inquiry, and attempted to answer his mute question. She first tried the delusive smile, but it was useless. It passed away even before it could claim its name, and her streaming eyes and pallid face told him too clearly the whole truth—the boy was starving.

He beckoned the child towards him, and, seating him on his knee, gave him some food. The eager manner of the boy as he swallowed it, told how much it was needed; he took no heed of Martha's signs to

refuse it, but with his eyes eloquently, though mutely, pleaded for more. As usual, when one commits a breach of discipline with impunity, others too frequently follow the example. In a few moments the other children collected round their father, waiting for their shares, when Catherine interfered.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," she said; "don't you see how tired and hungry your father is? Why can't you let him have his supper in peace?"

"Catherine," said Beuzeville, "have the children had theirs?"

"No, father," said one child, "nor dinner either. We have had nothing but a piece of bread all day."

"My dear," said Catherine, "I did not know how you would get on to-day, so I thought it better not to spend all I had, and I put by enough for to-morrow. You go on with your supper, and don't mind them."

"I think," said Beuzeville, "I am almost certain of getting the money for the silk on the loom to-morrow, so you had better go at once, and get them something to eat."

Catherine put on her bonnet, and in a few minutes returned with two loaves of bread and some cheese. The children seated themselves round the table, and enjoyed, for the first time for many days, a full meal. Old Baker likewise partook of it; and the broker's man, who had scarcely made his appearance all day, stood at the door conversing with them. The spirit of generosity and hospitality appears to increase with poverty; and the hungry family offered a portion of their meal to the needy old man who had been placed over them by an infamous law. But the feeling of independence and good taste is as rife among the poor as the wealthy; and the miserable broker's follower civilly declined the invitation, offering a palpable falsehood as an excuse—that he was not hungry.

The next day, Beuzeville called at the warehouse, and saw the foreman. He told his tale, but the man

would not pay the money without a positive order from his employer. He did not wish to doubt Beuzeville's word, but he hardly considered it a sufficient authority; and as he was obliged to send to Wimbledon that afternoon, he would make the inquiry; if he found it correct, he would pay the money the next morning. Beuzeville was obliged to submit to these terms. He called the next day, and received the amount, and, having pledged some more of his scanty furniture with the consent of the broker, he called upon the poor-rate collector, and offered to pay two pounds on account if time were given for the remainder. The proposition was accepted, and the distress removed from the premises.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD BAKER PASSES A SOCIAL EVENING WITH THE BROKER'S MAN; THEY DISCOURSE ON THE POOR LAWS.—THE STORY OF MARY JOHNSON.

ALTHOUGH the broker's man had no legitimate right to remain on the premises after the distress had been removed, yet, as he was unprovided with another lodging, and as he would be required to put in a similar distress in a house in the neighbourhood the next day, he asked permission to remain where he was for another night. As his manner during his stay had been most retiring and inoffensive, the request was readily granted. Beyond that, he had formed an intimacy with old Baker, which had ripened almost into a friendship. It has been already stated that both had been weavers, and were in their prime during that happy era, before French silks were admitted. It is perfectly true that complaints among them of the hardness of the times were not wanting even in those days, but they were

now apparently forgotten. The same forgetfulness is to be observed in others besides Spitalfields weavers. To hear certain inhabitants of the Emerald Isle talk of the happiness which existed in their country before the repeal of the Union, or certain West India proprietors talk of the flourishing state of those islands before the abolition of slavery, hearers, ignorant of the subject, would imagine those events had been the ruin of both parties, while others better acquainted with it are aware that all was not prosperity, even in those days.

Although the permission to remain was a great convenience to the broker's man, it cost the Beuzeville family but little. He had, after the first day, established himself in the empty workshop, where a small thin mattress was spread for him upon the floor. The furniture of his bed consisted of but one article; its texture would be difficult to describe, even by a weaver. It was neither blanket nor quilt, but partook of the peculiarities of both. It consisted of pieces of both tissues sewed together. He was rather proud of it than otherwise, and was in the habit of calling the attention of his intimates to its warm appearance, and the number of years it had served him. His night toilet was simple in the extreme. He merely laid himself, dressed as he was, on the bed, and drew the coverlid over him. He boasted that whenever he was on duty, he, like a soldier, always slept in his clothes; and to the truth of which statement, those garments bore most honourable testimony. Old Baker's bed was in the same room; but was scarcely more comfortable than that of his friend.

In return for the civility offered him, the broker's man determined to invite old Baker to partake of his hospitality. It would be difficult to describe it by its genuine name; it was neither a dinner, nor supper, and, even with more certainty, not a banquet. Another feeling besides gratitude entered into his offer. It

was to show his friend that it was solely to avoid personal inconvenience, that he had requested to remain another night on the premises, and not for the purpose of saving money. Before the friends retired for the night, the broker's man changed a sixpence for the purpose of investing a considerable portion of it in a pint of porter, two pipes, and a screw of tobacco. The few halfpence which were over he considered himself justified in keeping for his own private use. The mattresses were then placed near each other, and the pewter pot placed equidistant between them. They then seated themselves on their beds, their pipes were lighted, and each having taken a sip at the beer, the conversation began.

"It was very kind of your son-in-law to let me stay here to-night. I sha'n't forget it in a hurry, more especially as it's not often we get much civility. Naturally enough, though, after all," he continued, reflectively, "for ours ain't a sort of work as people are fond of having done in their houses."

"Where are you going to-morrow?"

"It's another job of the same kind. A poor's-rate distress. It's at a poor woman's, the widow of the captain of a trader. She had a small pension, and she sold it to go to America; but the brother she went after was dead, and she returned to England, where she started as a dressmaker. She thought she'd get on very well, as she'd got two daughters grown up, and clever, good girls they are. But one of them fell down stairs and hurt her back; so she's now a cripple, and the other's pretty well as much as she can do to wait on her. Well, they've got behindhand, and if we don't put in the distress, the landlord will, when he hears how poor they are. We want it more than he does, for I suspect the poor woman herself will be on the parish books before long, if we can't find out her settlement. It seems hard; but I suppose, as it's law, it's all right, after all."

"You must see some strange sights, I should think."

"Well, we do; and it ain't at all pleasant at first, but you get used to it in time. Still there are things like this widow's, that a fellow never gets altogether over. It's all lawful; but it seems cruel, don't it?"

"They must be a precious hard-hearted set, them guardians. I look upon them as a disgrace to the name of Englishmen."

"There you're wrong. Lord! how little do people know of the law; everybody's pitching into them guardians, calling 'em all sorts of names; but they're not a bad lot, after all. It's the law that's hard, not them. What are they to do, when half of the rate-payers, as they are obliged to get their money from, is as bad off as you are? And if they let off one, they must let off another. Why, where would it stop if that was the case? Why, the poor would starve."

"Well, but what's the reason everybody speaks against them. I believe they'd starve the poor outright, if it wasn't for the magistrates giving it to them in the manner they do sometimes."

"There, again," said the broker's man, "how little do people know the truth! I consider them magistrates the greatest humbugs going. If they are not that, they're worse. They're always trying to put people on the wrong scent, so as they and their friends may get off quietly. It was only yesterday, that Mr. Beatem, the magistrate over the water, was giving it to the guardians of Bermondsey. The master of the workhouse wouldn't let some boys in for the night, so they broke the windows, and got took up by the police.

"'Well,' said his worship, 'Why did not you take those boys in?'

"'Because we hadn't room, Sir; the casual ward was full.'

"'Then you ought to have more room. It's shameful

in a Christian country to hear of poor destitute creatures not being able to get shelter for the night.'

"'But these were wandering poor, Sir,' said the master; 'they belonged no more to our parish than any other.'

"'You ought to be ashamed of yourself,' said the magistrate, 'to offer such an excuse. Good God! is it necessary that a poor creature, cold and starving, should be obliged to show a legal title before he can obtain temporary relief? If they were in your parish you were bound, both by law and the commonest principles of humanity, to relieve them.'

"'But, Sir, our parish is very poor, and we pay very heavy rates, and those rates have often to be taken from persons who are little better than paupers themselves.'

"'That is no matter; I consider your behaviour cruel and disgraceful.' The next morning it all goes into the newspapers. What a hard-hearted set of ruffians those guardians are, says one as he reads it. What a benevolent magistrate, says another! But what's the real fact? As soon as his worship's duty is over, he goes to his home. He lives in the largest and richest parish in London. How do you think they manage for the casual poor there? Of course you'd think it would be a treat to be wandering and sore-footed in the night, in a parish where such a benevolent magistrate lives. Well, there is put up on each side of their workhouse door, a notice, saying that for the future, their casual wards would be closed, and no more tramps, as they call them, would be relieved there at all. You never hear a magistrate abuse the guardians of that parish. No, his own friends and acquaintances live there; and he considers he's done his duty to society by abusing them who's ten times as charitable as he is himself. Take my word for it, whenever you find a police magistrate pitching into a board of guardians, the more he abuses them the more charitable they are in proportion to their means. Now the parish of St. Pancras is always in for

it, and yet it relieves three times as many wandering poor, as all the rich West-end parishes put together, where the police magistrates generally reside. I often think if one of these relieving officers or masters of workhouses said to the magistrates:—'If you will let us know what you do for the wandering poor in your parish, Sir, we will do the same to the best of our abilities!' how soon his worship would shut up."

"Don't you think it's a great shame the manufacturers ain't obliged to help the weavers, when they're out of work? They get off easy enough now."

"Its all a part of the same system: the manufacturer gets off because he don't live here in the parish, so the law don't oblige him to pay. But it ain't the master that's to blame alone in this matter. Whose to wear that piece of satin that's on the loom? Not a weaver's wife, nor a bargeman's wife, nor a dock-labourer's wife. No, it's your fine ladies that ride about in carriages; why shouldn't they pay their share? They say they do in the wages that is paid the weavers for weaving the silk. Just see what those wages are, and then say when a man's found bread for his wife and family, how much is left him to give for charity? When a dock-labourer gets up a cask of wine out of a ship's hold, whose to drink it? he don't. Why shouldn't the gentleman who does, pay his share to the poor man when he's in distress? It's the system that's bad altogether."

"But I suppose these fine people who live at the West-end of the town have a good lot of their own poor to maintain?"

"Not a bit of it; they are not as green as all that comes to. Almost all the handicraft men they've turned out of their parishes, and the working classes as remain are their own house-servants; and a precious number there is of them. I have heard say as many as sixty thousand; I don't know myself if it's true. Well, whenever their servants got sick, or out of place, or

used up, they used to come naturally on the parish for relief, and the rates was very high; as high, in fact, as they are here, or any other part of London. At last one fellow says: 'I say it's a great nuisance maintaining these poor servants of ours when we can't get anything more out of them; can't we get off of it.' (He was a member of Parliament, and so was the chap he was talking to.) 'Well, I wish we could,' said the other. 'Suppose,' said the first, 'we introduce a bill into the House, letting us get off altogether, so as when these servants fall sick or lame, we can send 'em away. We make the laws, so we can make some one else take care of 'em. It would save our pockets and be very charitable to the poor things besides.' 'Indeed, it would,' said the other; 'it would reduce the rate to almost nothing, as we've pretty well got rid of all the other workpeople out of these genteel parishes. Suppose we try it. It's a capital thought of yours.' Well, they got the law passed and rates fell directly; and now they haven't more than threepence to pay, when some poor parishes have to pay five or six shillings. They say these genteel people make it up in charity, but I don't understand how. Take two women, one a genteel one, and the other a poor one in this neighbourhood, like that poor widow I've got to call on to-morrow, and compare what they do for the poor, and the thanks they get for it. The rich lady, perhaps, puts half-a-crown into the plate at a charity sermon. 'My sister,' says the parson, 'you're laying up treasures in heaven.' Now look at the poor widow living here; she has to pay as many pounds as the other gave shillings; and if she's got any of the money ready, she has been obliged to save it from her daughter's meals. It's the collector who talks to her. 'Now you must pay the money at once, and a shilling for the summons, or you'll have a distress put in, and your goods sold.' That's the way they talk to her. They say money don't lead to heaven, but it

looks precious like as if it did in the rich lady's case, don't it?"

After this long explanation, the broker's man took a sip at the porter, and old Baker followed his example. As the beer got lower in the pot, the two friends, actuated by a feeling of delicacy, made their draughts smaller and smaller each succeeding time, both wishing to leave the last draught for his friend. They carried on the system with so much nicety, that at last it promised to determine that difficult point in natural philosophy—the divisibility of matter *ad infinitum*. As old Baker was refilling his pipe, he said to his friend:

"You seem to be pretty well up to the law on the subject."

"Well, perhaps I am," said the broker's man modestly; "but, at any rate, I've had a good deal of experience. I know a good deal more about it than people, perhaps, think for, and I will say this: I am always willing to give any advice on the subject to those in trouble, if they want me. I know people's thoughts very often before they speak them. Now, I'm sure I know your's, and your son-in-law's, and your daughter's. You're all thinking the same thing, but not one among you likes to say it to the other."

"What is it you mean?"

"Why, you none of you like to see those poor children hungry, and you all want to apply to the parish for relief, and you don't like."

"I should think not," said old Baker, somewhat haughtily; "my son-in-law ain't very fond of asking for parish relief, after having paid taxes as long as he has."

"Very likely; but pride must have a fall. But it's always the case. I remark that them as have paid most to the poor are always those who like the least to come upon the rates; but you must come to it, and the sooner the better, so you may as well, all of you, take the bull by the horns at once."

"But only think how hard it will be to ask those guardians for relief. It would break my poor daughter's heart if they spoke sharp to her husband."

"Don't you be afraid of that. You're wrong. You're taking a humbugging police-magistrate view of the case. I tell you they're naturally a very kind-hearted set of men. When they know any one's in trouble, and they're respectable and honest, they're always kind to them. You'll have no workhouse test to offend you—that is, if you don't carry it on too far, and that you're not likely to do. But they don't like being done, you know. A fellow that's been respectable don't like asking them; that feeling's honourable enough, but if the parish bread is bitter it's wholesome, and the sooner you try it the better."

"But perhaps they'll say I've no settlement."

"Where do you come from, then?"

"Norfolk."

"Well, then, I'm afraid you haven't, if you've only been a lodger; but you need not appear in the matter. Let your son-in-law get as much as he can, and that won't be a great deal."

"It's a great shame they won't do anything for me, as long as I've lived here."

"But it's law, and whatever is law of course is right; but this law of settlement does act cruel sometimes. One of the hardest things I remember was a poor girl whose father was a weaver, and died a few years ago. I'll tell you about it, if you're not tired."

"No, I ain't tired; you can go on."

"Well, her name was Mary Johnson; and a very nice girl she was. She'd lived all her life with her old father here, till he died. After he was buried, she sold off the few things he had—he hadn't many, for they were very poor—and she went into service. She was never very handy at the loom. They said her chest wasn't strong, and she'd die if she kept at it. She got a situation, and behaved in it remarkably well; how-

ever, as she thought she could better herself, she left it; and, as she had a good character, she hadn't any difficulty in getting into a better family—there's more places than parish churches. She was housemaid in a nobleman's family in St. James's-square. After she'd been there about eighteen months, another servant came to live in the same house; and this girl was going to be married—or only said she was, it don't matter which—to a soldier in the Guards. Now, you know, all girls, if they've a handsome lover, like to boast of it to their friends; and this girl was always boasting about hers to Mary Johnson, and bragging what a good-looking fellow he was. At last, Mary began to have a great curiosity to see this soldier, and her friend promised her, that as soon as the family went out of town for a short time, they would both try to get a holiday the same day from the housekeeper, and she would then introduce her to him. This was agreed upon; and, at last, the day arrived. They had made themselves as smart as they could, and went out together. The soldier determined to do the thing handsome, and they were all to go to Cremorne at night. Mary not only found the Guardsman a very handsome fellow, but he'd got a friend with him, a private in the artillery, who was much handsomer than he; and this man paid poor Mary a great deal of attention. She was very much struck with him, the more so as she wasn't very good-looking herself. She had a very mild and amiable-looking face; but certainly wasn't handsome, or anything like it. Well, they parted that night very affectionate friends; and the next day the soldier wrote to her from Woolwich, saying how much he was in love with her, and he'd never seen such a nice girl before, and all that, and she was fool enough to believe him. Whenever he got out on leave, he used to come up and see her regular; and this went on so long, that at last people began to think that her appearance wasn't over respect-

able, and so she was obliged to leave her situation. Now, Mary was in everything else a very careful girl, and she'd never spent the money her father's things sold for, but had left it in the savings'-bank; and, besides that, she'd always saved a good bit of her wages. The first thing she does now is to draw the money from the bank, and then goes down with her box to Woolwich, and takes a small room there, intending to stop till after her confinement. She also thought she'd be able to persuade the soldier to marry her—but she didn't. He used to come and see her often enough, and she did all she could to please him in her quiet, mild way; but it was no use. He'd always got some excuse; he couldn't get permission, or something of that sort; but he'd be sure to do it as soon as he was made a corporal.

"One day, he called on her, and pretended to be very low spirited. She asked him about it, and, for some time, he would not tell her; but at last he said he was so unhappy, he had a good mind to shoot himself. Now, this regularly frightened her; and she went down on her knees to him, and begged him to tell her all.

"'Well, then,' said he, 'the long and short of it is this. I have had some money belonging to a comrade placed in my hands, and I've been and spent it. He's coming back to-morrow, and he'll want it; and I haven't got it; and he'll lay a complaint against me, and I shall be put in prison; and if it had not been for that, next week I should have got my promotion. I did not mean anything dishonest. I expected last week some money from my mother, and it hasn't come, so I'm done for, and you too, my poor Mary.' And here he pretended to cry. Now, all this was a lie; he hadn't lost the money, nor spent it. The vagabond hadn't the pluck to be a thief. Mary, when she heard his story, asked him how much it was he owed? and he told her ten pounds. She hadn't above fourteen altogether; but she told him not to worry himself any more, for she'd find him the money. Of course, he

was delighted; at any rate, he said so when he took the money. He said she was one of the best souls living, and he wouldn't stop till he got permission, but marry her at once. She was, as you may believe, very pleased to hear this, and made all sorts of plans for the future, all of which he agreed too; and he left her that night the happiest woman in England.

"Two or three days afterwards, he borrowed the remainder of her money, saying he couldn't be married without a licence, because, if the banns were put up, his commanding officer would hear of it, and he should get into prison, and lose his promotion. He told her they would be married that day week if possible; but, in the meantime, she'd better not come near the barracks, as he wished to disarm suspicion. Mary obeyed him exactly; but she wanted the week to end, for more reasons than one—she had no money, every farthing she'd possessed her lover had taken with him, and she was obliged to pawn some of her things to live. The week ended, but the soldier did not make his appearance. One, two, three days more passed over, but still she saw nothing of him. At last, she could stand it no longer, but went to the barracks to ask after him, thinking that perhaps he might be ill; but there she heard that six days ago he had left Woolwich for Portsmouth, there to embark for India; and the ship had already sailed, and he was then on his voyage. The poor girl almost fainted when she heard it, and one of the men kindly let her lean on his arm to get home to her lodgings. Of course, she cried till she got quieter—every woman does—and then she began to think what had best to be done. She'd got no money, not a penny. She'd pawned half her things, and she owed a week's rent for her room. Get work she couldn't; her appearance wasn't such as she could get into a respectable house, and she was soon expecting her confinement.

"But another thing added to her misery. The

house she lived in was kept by a very poor woman, who, when she found her lodger had no money, was naturally afraid that, if the child was born in her house, she'd have to sustain a loss. So she told her clearly, but not unkindly, that she must leave. Poor Mary begged her to let her remain a few days longer; but she had to pawn everything she had, to pay the rent she owed, so as to pacify the old woman. At the end of the time, Mary, who had reason to think that the child might be born very soon, did not know what to do. She begged the old woman to let her stop a week longer. At first she refused; but at last agreed to it, but only on condition the money should be paid in advance. Mary agreed to this, without at the moment thinking how she could do it. Afterwards, unfortunately, she made up her mind. She waited till evening, and then, I am sorry to say, she attempted to get the money, by taking what did not belong to her, out of a shop, while pretending she wanted to buy something. But she was not used to thieving; she'd never done a dishonest action before; and she did the first so clumsily, that she got caught in the fact, and was handed over to the police. It was very wrong of her, no doubt; but she was very much to be pitied, after all. Well, she was taken before a magistrate and committed for trial, and then she was convicted and sentenced to six months' hard labour. Unfortunately for her, she wasn't a lady, and she was in distress, or otherwise no doubt she would have got off on account of her interesting situation.

"Mary's baby was born during her imprisonment. It was a fine healthy child; she was very fond of it, and made a very good mother. They did not behave unkindly to her while she was there. She was one of those who could always make herself friends, with her quiet submissive manner, and all about her liked her, and pitied her. At last her imprisonment ended, and she left with her baby. She had half-a-crown when

she went out. I don't know who gave it to her, but I think it was the chaplain. It wasn't much, but it was enough to take her to London, where they advised her to go, and when she was there, to apply to her parish for relief. She went up to town by the boat, and all the passage up she was turning over in her mind what to do when she arrived. It would be too late, she thought, to apply to the parish that night, so she determined to go to the relieving officer the next morning. But where to sleep that night was the thing. To go to St. James's she knew would be nonsense; there was no place there where a poor creature could get a night's lodging, unless they had stolen something, or done something wrong, and these she wasn't inclined to do. She had tried both, and didn't like either, and she'd determined in her own mind not to do one or the other again.

"While Mary was considering, she noticed a poor-looking woman on board the boat who, like herself, was nursing a baby. Of course the two women at last began talking. The stranger first asked Mary about her baby, and then about her husband, which last Mary couldn't very easily answer, but shuffled the question, and twisted her left hand up in her shawl, for she hadn't any gloves on, so as the other couldn't see it. However, it was no use hiding it, for the woman soon understood her. She, however, was wider awake herself, and said that her husband had run away. However, they kept talking on, and Mary asked her if she could tell her where she could get a night's lodging. The woman told her she was going to sleep at a house at Clerkenwell, where she'd been before. It was a very poor place, she said, but was very cheap, and was better than the street at any rate; and if Mary liked she'd take her to it. Mary willingly agreed, although she didn't much like the looks of her new friend, nor altogether her manner of talk; but she had got a baby,

and so after all, there couldn't be much harm in her, although she did seem a very common sort of woman. Soon afterwards the boat arrived at London Bridge, and they went on shore together. The night was dark, and it had begun to rain, so they hurried on as fast as they could, and at last arrived at the lodging-house. When they entered, they were told it was the custom there to pay in advance. Mary did not at all like the look of the place; but there she was, and there she must remain. It was only for one night, she thought, after all. Her friend had some difficulty in making up the fourpence for the bed, and asked Mary, who had already paid for hers, to lend her a penny. Mary put her hand in her pocket to take out the money, and the woman saw she had got some more left. After a little time, Mary was obliged to have her supper, and sent out for some bread and cheese and porter. Before it was brought back, her new friend told her, with tears in her eyes, that she had eaten nothing all day, and had then no milk for her baby. This, of course, went to Mary's heart, and she lent the woman sixpence out of the little money she had. She promised to return it to her the next day without fail. When the things came in, the two had their supper together in a wretched little room, belonging to the landlady.

"After they had finished their meal, they went up to their bedroom, thoroughly tired. If Mary had been discontented with what she had seen of the house below, she was completely disgusted now. The room, though small, had in it five dirty shake-down beds on the floor. One of these was already occupied. A poor sickly-looking woman was stretched on it, with a baby by her side suffering from small-pox. The room was filthily dirty, and the only furniture besides the beds consisted of a ricketty table, two or three chairs, and a cracked wash-hand basin. The windows were broken, and stuffed up with rags, and would not open; so the

place was close and suffocating. Mary took the bed farthest from the poor woman, for she was afraid for her own baby; and her friend took the one next to her. They laid down in their damp clothes just as they were, and tried to get to sleep; but they couldn't manage it—the sick child moaned so. Bad as all this was, worse was to follow. About ten o'clock, a costermonger and his wife came in and took one of the other beds. They were both three parts drunk, and quarrelling together. Their language was as bad as a costermonger's language could be—and that's saying a great deal. Well, they went on at one another for some time, till Mary's friend could stand it no longer. So she sits up in her bed, and calls out:—

"'You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, that you ought, both of you.'

"'Hold your tongue,' said the costermonger's wife; 'what is it to you? Nobody spoke to you. We've paid for our beds as well as you have, and we'll do as we like.'

"'You call yourself a woman,' said the other, in a towering passion, 'and go on in that way when that poor little creature's suffering in the manner it is. You ought to be flogged at the cart's-tail, and all such as you are, that you ought.'

"The costermonger's wife turned round to look at the sick child, and, seeing its state, was immediately silent, and looked ashamed of herself. Almost all these women, bad as they are, are kind to children. Her husband, however, was not content with being quiet; he would make a speech asking all sorts of pardon, because he said he was not a fellow to hurt any poor woman, and it went against his feeling that it should be thought so. Well, then, he was quiet, but every now and then he began his speech again till he was almost as big a nuisance as when he was quarrelling. About twelve o'clock two blackguard-looking ruffians came in, and took the other two beds. They had four friends,

three men and a woman, who took the back-room between them, and they kept on talking and laughing with those in the front-room till nearly four o'clock in the morning.

"About that time a knocking was heard at the front-door, which was opened by the mistress of the house, and immediately afterwards the woman who had arrived with the last comers, rushed into the room; and, shaking the men by the shoulders, said, 'Get up and cut it, here's the police.' At that moment the policeman's footsteps were heard upon the stairs. On hearing it, the men whispered softly to the woman, who immediately crossed over to the side where Mary was asleep, and put something into her bed. She did it very quickly, but not so quickly as not to be seen both by Mary's friend and the policeman, who that moment entered the room. Mary's friend caught the woman's hand as she took it from the bed, and the policeman asked Mary, who was now awake, what the woman had placed there? Mary, on feeling, found two watches, which the other woman denied ever having seen; but it was no use, for the policeman had seen all. He stopped there till he had obtained assistance, and then two of the men and the woman were all marched off to the station, having been concerned together in the robbery. The day soon after broke, and Mary rose from her bed hot and thirsty, and not at all rested. She got some water and washed her baby as well as she could in such a dirty place, and, by seven o'clock, had left the house, thoroughly happy to get out of it.

"Her money had now got so low that she didn't like to get any breakfast, so she only bought a penny loaf and a little milk, which she gave to her baby, for she hadn't much for it herself. She now waited about the streets, strolling quietly towards the West-end, trying to pass the time away till she could see the relieving officer. At last she got to his house, and made her

application. He listened to her patiently, and when she had finished, she, in reply to a question he had asked her as to her claim on that parish for relief, told him she had been there in service for more than eighteen months, and as she had done nothing wrong, she thought they would assist her. 'But you can get no right to relief by being in service, my poor girl; no matter how long you've been in it; whoever told you to the contrary deceived you. If you are in the distress you say you are, why don't you apply to his lordship; he is a very charitable man, and if you have behaved yourself well—and you tell me you have—I think it very probable he may do something for you. How long have you left him?' Poor Mary coloured and looked at her baby, then bit her lip, and turned her head on one side.

"The relieving officer had seen too many things of the kind to be astonished, so here merely said, 'Where did you sleep last night? because it's there you ought to apply for relief.'

"Mary was upon the point of saying in Clerkenwell, but then she remembered what had taken place at the lodging-house, and what sort of a house it was; and then she thought if they asked them about her, she should feel ashamed of having been there, for she was really a very decent girl, so after a few moment's thinking, she said Woolwich.

"'Well, then, if you'd take my advice, you'd go there at once; and remember this, they must relieve you, so don't let them send you away.'

"Mary had still sixteenpence left, so she went down to Hungerford Market, and there took the boat to Woolwich. When she got there, she found out the house of the relieving officer, and told him her tale. She told him a lie as well, for when he asked her where she'd slept last night, she named the house she had lived in before her imprisonment. Well, when she said this, she coloured up, for she'd an honest face of her

own, but it raised the suspicion of the relieving officer, who had noticed it, so he told her to come again in an hour and he would give her an answer. In the meantime he inquired at the house, and found out, not only the lie she had told him, but also that she had been in jail as a thief; so when she came again he gave it her soundly for attempting to deceive him; but at the same time he told her, if she would tell him the truth, he would advise her what to do. She then acknowledged that she had been one night in a lodging-house in Clerkenwell.

"'If that is really the case, there is no doubt on the matter, they must relieve you, and the best thing you can do, is to get there as fast as you can.'

"When Mary left him she began to calculate what she had better do, for her money was getting very low, if anything occurred which would hinder her receiving relief that evening; she would be left penniless if she went up by boat, so she determined to walk up to London. She strolled quietly on till she got to Greenwich, where she expended twopence for food, and then started again upon her journey. She now began to suffer terribly from fatigue, and her mouth was parched from dust and heat—one of her shoes was so bad that her foot was on the ground. Still she kept on her way bravely enough. Her baby began to get very fractious and hungry, and, as she had nothing to give it, it made the way seem still longer. She wouldn't give in though, and kept resolutely on, but at the end of every half mile she was obliged to sit down for some minutes to rest herself. Never did the long and dusty Kent-road seem, to a sore-footed wanderer, as endless as it did that day. When near the Bricklayers' Arms, she was so overcome with thirst and fatigue that it was impossible for her to go on farther, so she seated herself down on a door-step near the public-house, and after a little time placed her head upon her hand and had a good cry. It wasn't likely that a thing of the

kind would take place there, and not be noticed by some of the working men who are always hanging about. When they saw her, they went up to her and spoke very kindly to her, and that made her cry the more. Then a policeman, seeing the crowd, came up and asked her what was the matter? She told him she wanted to go to Clerkenwell, but she was dead beat, and couldn't go any farther, and that her baby wasn't well, and she didn't know what to do, for she hadn't any strength left. Well, of course, there were plenty who were willing to help her, so they took her into the tap-room and seated her down at a table, and gave her some beer, and some bread and cheese. She didn't like to take it at first, but they would have it; and when she took out her little money to pay for it, they wouldn't let her, but said she was very welcome, and praised her baby, and said it was a fine child, and they'd never seen a finer in all their lives, and all that.

"At last she started off again, feeling almost happy. She walked on towards the Elephant and Castle quickly enough at first, but, by degrees, she slackened her pace. Porter ain't a good thing to walk on, and Mary found it out, for she not only began to feel as tired as she was before she took the beer, but very drowsy as well. It wasn't anything like being tipsy, but a sleepy feeling she couldn't overcome. She felt as if she could have laid down in the street and gone to sleep with pleasure. When she got near the Stone's-end, in the Borough, she felt it impossible to go on any farther, so she asked a policeman where she could get a bed for the night. He very civilly told her of a very respectable house, and she went directly to it. She had now only sixpence left, and she paid fourpence out of it for her lodging. She slept well that night, for she was regularly tired, and had nothing to disturb her.

"When she awoke the next morning, she did not feel well, for she had been over-fatigued the day before; but she got up and dressed her child, and

then, after buying a penny loaf for her breakfast, she started off for Clerkenwell. She easily found out the relieving officer, and saw him in her turn. He, like the one at Woolwich, heard her patiently enough, and then asked her where she came from. She told him, and said she was going to call on him the evening before, but she was so tired she was obliged to stop in the Borough.

"'Then, my good woman,' said he, 'you've no claim on us; we can't do anything for you. You had better go at once over to the Borough, and get them to relieve you. What is the name of the parish where you slept last night?'

"'I don't know, Sir.'

"'What is the name of the street, then; you surely remember that?'

"Mary did not remember it; she had not even asked. She was not even sure she could find it; for she had never been there before.

"'Oh, pray Sir, do something for me,' she said, with tears in her eyes, 'if it's only for the sake of my poor baby. He can't stand the sort of life I've been living for the last two days. He ain't like the same child he was when——' Here she stopped herself.

"'But if you don't remember the name of the street, I don't know what you'd better do. Where do you come from?'

"'We come from Coventry formerly, Sir; but father lived several years in Spitalfields.'

"'Did you live with him there?'

"'Yes, Sir, for more than five years.'

"'Well,' said the relieving officer, 'the case seems clear enough; that certainly must be your parish. Go there at once, and see them before it gets too late. Afterwards you can try the Borough, if you don't succeed; but I think you're all right there.'

"Mary left him, and slowly and miserably went where he told her. On her way there, she laid out

her last penny for a roll, and sat down on some door-steps and eat it. When she got near the place, it was nearly five o'clock. The relieving officer was not at home, and wouldn't be back before seven. She had no choice; so she walked about till seven. Never did she pass two more wretched hours. She was formerly well known in the neighbourhood as a very respectable girl, and nobody there had heard of her misfortune; so she was always looking out if anybody came by that knew her, and then she turned short round and walked away, or pretended to look into a shop window; for she knew that her baby would tell all.

"At last the time came, and she went to the house. He had not come back; but they let her sit down when they saw how tired she was. Eight o'clock struck, but he had not returned; but, at last, a clerk from the workhouse came in. She told him her story, and he made a lot of inquiries about her.

"'But,' said he, 'do I understand you that your father lodged for that number of years in this parish?'

"'Yes, Sir.'

"'Then you've no claim here.'

"'But father was a very honest, respectable man, Sir, and was well known to a great many.'

"'That's nothing to do with it. I've no doubt he was a respectable man, as you say, but that don't give you a claim. Had he been as big a thief as ever lived, and kept a house, it would have been a better thing for you now. Respectability gives no claim to poor-law charity. It's no use your waiting here—they won't do anything for you. You've no settlement. If you'd take my advice, you'd go over into the Borough at once.'

"Well, she didn't thank him, nor bid him good-bye, nor anything; but it wasn't at all like her, for she was a very civil girl naturally. She now went on her way slowly, very slowly, with a sort of dogged look, not at all savage-like, but more sullen. She didn't wrap her

baby up nor notice it, but let it cry. Now and then she'd press it to her breast for a moment, but nothing more; but on she strolled, not looking at anything, and if any one spoke to her, she took no notice till she got to London Bridge. It was then quite dark. There she sat down on the steps by Fishmongers' Hall to rest herself. Presently she began thinking about what she ought to do, and then her own position came clearly before her. She was hungry and tired; her baby was starving, and she had nothing to give it. She hadn't a penny in the world, nor a friend to give her one. Wherever she had gone for relief they had sent her somewhere else, and now she was so knocked up she could hardly move. Presently her baby began to cry again, and while she was rocking it to keep it quiet, she, like a woman, thought she'd have a cry herself, so she put her elbow on her knee and leant her head upon her hand, but it was no use, she couldn't cry. Her eyes were as dry as the granite steps she was sitting on. When a woman tries to cry and she can't, she very often does something rash after it, and so it was with Mary. She put her hand down and raised up her head, and then for the first time saw the river; she had been so taken up with her own thoughts she hadn't noticed it before. It was half-high water, and the tide was rolling in black as pitch, and looked as thick. The lights that shone upon it from the bridge only served to show how black it was as they danced upon the ripples. After a little while she began to look upon the water more attentively. It seemed somehow to want to draw her to it. She didn't wish it, but still it seemed to attract her the more as she continued to look at it. She rose from her seat and descended a few steps, and then seated herself and stared at the water again. She began almost to be afraid of it, but there was something in it she couldn't help, so she got up again and began slowly to go down the stairs. As she went down, her fear got greater; but there was some-

thing in that black water which seemed to say that, once beneath it, all misery would be ended—but still she looked at it with terror. Down the stairs she went, her footsteps getting quicker as she got nearer the river, and her terror increasing in proportion. At last the power to stop herself seemed gone, and she flew like lightning down the few last steps. She got to the last, and then giving a loud scream, threw herself with her baby into the water.

"A boatman heard her, and immediately pulled off to the spot. He saw her rise and sink more than once as he tried to save her. At last, he caught her by the gown, and with some difficulty got her into his boat. She was senseless, and he was afraid she was dead; but he pulled ashore, and carried her to the police station. A doctor was sent for; and as soon as she came to, she asked for her baby. The waterman knew nothing of it; and it was of course drowned. To make a long story short, poor Mary was tried at the Old Bailey for killing her child. She was found guilty, but strongly recommended to mercy, for everybody pitied her; so she got only fourteen years of it, and is now in Australia."

"Ah," said old Baker, who was very drowsy, but who had listened patiently to the story, "I suppose those who made such a law as that seems to be, will call themselves kind-hearted men; I don't."

"Kind-hearted, indeed! as great shams as ever lived, that's what they are. But, lord! humbug is everything in this world. The longer I live, the more I believe that the only fellows that look and behave like what they really are, are brokers' men."

So saying, he drew his much-loved counterpane over him, and, bidding old Baker good night, was soon asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

AND IN THE LOWEST DEEP A LOWER DEEP.

THE prognostication of the broker's man respecting the necessity of Beuzeville's applying for parish relief proved correct. He did not find the difficulty he had anticipated, nor was the treatment he received when he made the application at all of the description he had feared. On the contrary, the guardians appeared to consider his misfortunes as a title to respect, and showed their opinion by the delicacy of the manner they observed, when he made his appearance before them. They allowed him two shillings a-week, and two loaves of bread. It was, perhaps, more than the spirit of the poor laws contemplated, seeing he had yet some articles of furniture left, but they willingly closed their eyes to the circumstance. This addition to their means was a great relief to them, but they still continued very poor. It was true that his second son had obtained a situation as errand-boy at a doctor's, and the eldest daughter was now handy with her needle, and contributed something to the family exchequer by working at an outfitter's; but his rent was accruing, and the lodgings, from which he had been in the habit of obtaining a considerable addition to his income, remained unlet. It had become known in the neighbourhood that a distress for the poor's-rate had been placed on the premises, and respectable persons did not like to take the rooms, lest their furniture might be seized for rent, while disreputable or poor tenants would only increase their expenditure, without in any way benefitting them by their residence in the house. One great source of anxiety, however, had been removed. They had feared that Beuzeville would never recover the use of his hand, but in this they were fortunately deceived. The wound got perfectly healed, and the piece of satin was rapidly approaching completion.

Quarter-day was now near at hand, and they had to make preparations for the rent. A balance of thirty shillings would be soon due on the satin; but the rent that would be owing would be eight pounds. However, it was generally some weeks after the rent was due, that the landlord called for his money; and, as both Beuzeville and his wife were in full work, they did not anticipate much difficulty in meeting the demand. Quarter-day arrived with its proverbial punctuality; and on it, immediately after the clock struck twelve, a man entered the house and asked if Beuzeville was at home. When they met, the man presented a paper, saying, at the same time, that he was authorised by the landlord to demand the rent, and if it were not paid to distrain for the money.

The reasons for this extraordinary behaviour on the part of the landlord were as follows:—Catherine, finding the rent of their present house too heavy, had been making inquiries in the neighbourhood for another cheaper; and, among others, accidentally applied at one possessed by the landlord of their own. He, suspecting that he might be defrauded in his rent if they succeeded in removing without his knowledge, had determined on the course he had taken. Beuzeville told the man to sit down, and he would bring him the money in less than half an hour. Catherine appeared surprised at the cool manner of her husband, but said nothing. He went up into the workshop to get his coat and hat, and then left the house. In less than twenty minutes he returned, and said he was ready with the rent. He counted it out and placed it before the man, asking him at the same time for a receipt. After a short dispute as to the payment of the broker's expenses, which Beuzeville declined paying, the receipt was given.

As soon as the man had left the house, Beuzeville, without saying a word to his wife, went again to the workshop. Catherine was perfectly astounded at what

had taken place, and followed her husband up-stairs to ask for an explanation. She found him seated on a chair pale and haggard. She was on the point of putting the question to him, but a glance round the room removed the necessity—the satin was no longer on the loom. On the spur of the moment he had cut it off, and pledged it for the money he owed for the rent. Catherine in an instant became almost as pale as her husband, but she said nothing to him on the subject. He looked at her despondingly. She approached him with great affection in her manner, and taking his hand said,—

"Edward, Morton's people some time ago sent to say if ever you wanted work they would give it to you. I think you had better go to them at once. I wouldn't lose a moment, if I were you."

"You are right," he replied, "I will go directly."

He put on his hat to leave the room, but at the door he stopped, and turning round said to her, "Take care of that; be sure you don't lose it." It was the duplicate for the satin. Beuzeville proceeded direct to Morton and Company's, but found they were not for the present in want of hands. They told him, however, they knew him well by reputation, and as soon as they had any work for him they would not fail to send for him.

With this scanty satisfaction he left them, and proceeded homewards to consult with his wife what steps they should now take. He had not entertained for a moment the idea of injustice to his employer by the action he had committed; but he had now unfortunately taken a second step in that path which so frequently leads to dishonesty or ruin; which has so frequently led bankers, merchants, and others from well-merited respect and integrity to dishonour and crime—the rash employment of property which has been confided to their charge as a temporary security for monies raised for their private individual advantage, without, perhaps, any

ulterior dishonest design. Beuzeville and his wife saw but one plan they could adopt, and that was by selling their furniture to the best possible advantage. They contented themselves, to a certain extent, by the knowledge that, had they permitted the goods to have been seized, they might probably have been sold for a tithe of their value, but now they would have time to seek for the best market, and not dispose of them till they could do to the greatest advantage. These began immediately. In a few days they had disposed of sufficient to raise four pounds of the money. They then found they had so little remaining for the immediate necessities of their family, that they determined to attempt to economise the remainder by their labour. Catherine had a piece of satinet on the loom, but it was nearly a week before her husband got work, and during that time and the fortnight afterwards they were obliged to submit to the most severe privations. Being in work, of course the parish supply was cut off, and little more than bread and water was the fare of themselves and their children during the time. They supported it, however, with great fortitude, and they were now in hope that in another week they would be in possession of the whole of the money. But the patience of the manufacturer who had entrusted them with the satin broke down before they had completed the amount, and the foreman was sent to Spitalfields to inquire about it. This man, it has already been stated, was no friend of Beuzeville, and he suspected at once the truth. When he arrived at the house he found the front-door open, and without stopping to speak to any one, he went directly to the workshop. He had noticed on entering that a card was on the window stating that lodgings were to let, and he noticed as he proceeded up-stairs that the first and second floors were empty, which confirmed him in his suspicion. He entered the workshop without any hesitation, and found both Beuzeville and his wife in it. The husband was occupied on a

figured piece of black Gros de Naples, Catherine on a piece of plain black silk. Beuzeville on hearing him enter turned leisurely round, but as soon as he perceived who his visitor was, the expression of his countenance would have betrayed all, even had the foreman's suspicions not been already aroused.

"Good morning, Beuzeville. I have been sent by our governors to ask about that satin; they say they won't wait any longer. By-the-bye, where is it?

"Oh," stammered Beuzeville, "I finished it this morning, and took it off the loom; I shall bring it home this evening."

"I'll take it with me now," said the foreman; "where is it?"

"It's in the shop overhead."

Without saying a word, the foreman turned round and proceeded up-stairs. Catherine, as soon as she perceived his intention, rapidly followed him. There was nothing in the place but two empty looms.

"I don't see it," said the foreman, turning to Catherine.

"What is it you mean," she replied angrily, "by walking about our house in that manner, as if it were your own. If my husband says he has got the satin and will bring it home to-night, what is it to you where it is?"

"Fair and softly," said the foreman; "I am acting in the interest of my employers, and I will see all clearly. These looms have not been worked on to-day, nor yesterday, nor the day before, that I can tell as well as you. That figured Gros de Naples that's on the loom down stairs, your husband has been at work at for more than a week. I can tell that by the quantity he has done. Besides that, it never came out of our house; and what right had you to begin with another firm before you had sent home what you had of ours. You would'nt have done it if the satin had been here; you know that well enough. You'd have

brought it home if it had only been to have got the remainder of the money owing on it. I think you've behaved scandalously to us after all the consideration that's been shown you."

"I'm sure," said Catherine, who, like a true woman, began seeking refuge in tears when destitute of any better argument—"I'm sure we're very grateful to you and the house, for all your kindness to us, but we've been very unfortunate lately, very unfortunate indeed; you don't know how much we've had to suffer."

"That's no excuse for dishonesty," said the man, whose tone, however, was becoming more kind; "that satin was not yours. Now tell us truly what you've done with it? for the truth must come out sooner or later, and it's as well to tell it at first as at last."

Catherine made no answer.

"Come, now, where is it?"

This was said very kindly; and Catherine of course did not miss the opportunity. She said nothing, but she wept more plentifully. The man was evidently losing his severity.

"If, now, you will candidly tell me the truth, I'll assist you if I can. I suspect you've pawned it. Is that the truth?"

Catherine, wiping her eyes in such a manner as to conceal her face, acknowledged he was right. He then asked where it was in pawn, and for how much. This was frankly told him by Catherine, who mentioned, not only the shop, but the amount borrowed on the satin; she also stated that they had already economised all the money with the exception of two pounds, and that she hoped to make up the next week.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'd do if I were you. Come down to our people, and in a straightforward manner tell them all about it. I'll speak a good word for you if I can, but I must and will tell all the truth, and so must you, remember. Come yourself, and don't bring your husband with you; he'll do no good.

They'll be precious savage at first, but they're not bad people in the main. If your husband comes, they'll give him in charge for illegally pawning, you may be sure of that. I'm going now, and take my advice, don't be long after me."

So saying he left the room. Beuzeville, who had left in his wife's hands the task of winning over the foreman, now made his appearance for the purpose of thanking him for his kindness, for he had listened anxiously to the whole conversation. The foreman, however, who had shown so much consideration for the woman, had no sympathy for the man, so he passed Beuzeville on the stairs without noticing him.

As soon as the foreman had left the house, Catherine made preparations to go on her mission. She deliberated for a moment which of her younger children she would take with her. She fixed upon little Willy. She was actuated in her choice by the fact that he was a remarkably handsome child, so with true maternal philosophy she chose him for her companion, much to that young gentleman's annoyance, as he was obliged to submit to a preparatory complete cleansing; the streets in Spitalfields, when used as a play-ground, being little adapted to promote the neat appearance of children. In a short time Catherine was ready, and she started on her unpleasant errand. Arrived at the house of business, she was introduced to the head partner. He was a man of somewhat stern appearance, and her heart sank within her when she saw him. She pushed forward her child with the hope of attracting the gentleman's attention to his beauty, but the stratagem failed—he took no notice of him whatever.

"What is this I hear from our foreman, Ma'am? He tells me your husband has pledged a piece of satin he was employed on for our house; is that true? If so, he has done a very dishonest action."

"I'm very sorry for it, Sir, we have been in very great trouble lately; but it wasn't my husband, Sir, I

did it without his knowledge; and I am the person who is to blame for it. It was no fault of his, he did not know of it till it was over."

"If it had been done by him, I certainly would not have looked over it; but I don't want to act harshly to you." (It would have been cruel certainly, as Catherine's appearance told too plainly that she would soon be in greater want of sympathy than harshness.) "But when you took it off the loom, why did you not bring it back at once, and get the money due to you?"

"It was not quite finished, Sir."

"Not finished! Why, then, there is another loss, besides the chance of its being injured in the pawnbroker's shop. Have you brought back the remainder of the silk?"

"No, Sir, I have not."

"Really," said the gentleman, now very angry, "it is not justice to other employers to let this go unpunished."

"I hope you won't be hard on us, Sir. I assure you nothing but great misery would have driven me to do it. My poor children have been sometimes almost starved."

"There, now, don't cry. What is it you propose to do?"

"I have got the money, Sir, all except about two pounds; when the sum for wages that is owing on it is put to it, there won't be much wanting; and we'll make up the balance as soon as we can. I have brought the money with me."

"Have you brought the duplicate with you?"

"Yes, Sir; here it is." The gentleman looked at it attentively.

"Why," said he, "I find you have told me an untruth. You said you had pledged it without your husband's knowledge; and I find, from the duplicate being made out in his name, that he did it himself."

Catherine was silent. The heightened colour on her face answered for her.

"What excuse can you offer for such behaviour ?"

"He is my husband, Sir." The gentleman reflected for a moment, and then spoke somewhat more kindly to the poor woman.

"Send me back the remainder of the silk this evening. Pay me the money you have with you, and I will excuse you the rest ; but remember, I will never give your husband another day's work, nor speak for him to another manufacturer. He has behaved to me in a most ungrateful, dishonest manner. I can pity his wife and family, but I have none for him."

"Oh, don't think so harshly of him, Sir ; a better husband and father never lived."

"I have nothing more to say about the matter; you can go now. But you must send me the remainder of the silk this evening."

Although the foreman scrupulously kept his word in assisting Beuzeville to get over his difficulty with his employers, and concealed as well all the circumstances as strictly as possible, they by some means got known abroad, and Beuzeville fell considerably in consequence in the estimation of his acquaintances. He also found that he was treated with great suspicion by his new employers, but he strove with all the means in his power to give them satisfaction. In time this unpleasant feeling somewhat subsided, but he never completely relieved himself from the stigma this act, if not of dishonesty, at least of breach of confidence, had cast upon him. His circumstances still continued indifferent, or worse, and his funds were frequently at a very low ebb. His apartments did not let, not from any want of persons requiring them, but from the necessary caution pursued by them, before entrusting their goods and furniture into the house of an insolvent or needy landlord. Application was not only frequently made for the balance of the poor-rate remaining after

the distress had been removed, but another had been made and called for, and which, of course, he was unable to meet. His landlord finding that he might possibly lose his next quarter's rent if he allowed Beuzeville to remain upon the premises, called upon him, and advised him to give up the house. He endeavoured to persuade him that it would be far more prudent to take a smaller, than to continue at his present rent, which was heavier than a poor man could be able to pay with certainty. He, moreover, made Beuzeville an offer, that if he would give up possession of the house no rent would be claimed beyond that which he had lately paid.

After a little more conversation, it was agreed that as soon as Catherine's confinement should be over, they would search for another abode. As soon as that event had taken place, Beuzeville, faithful to his promise, sought for another house in the neighbourhood, but found great difficulty in getting suited. The streets around, in consequence of the different improvements which had taken place in the City, and the formation of the Blackwall Railway, had become still more crowded, and the only houses which would suit his means were not only very inconvenient, but most expensive in proportion to the amount of accommodation they afforded. He had little choice, however; so at last they determined upon one in Dean Street. Their new abode consisted of two rooms and a small workshop on the top floor. They were, of course, much crowded for want of space. Old Baker and two of the boys slept in the workshop, the girls in the front room, and Beuzeville, his wife, and the younger children in a small back room, scarcely nine feet by eight. The cooking and domestic arrangements were carried out in the room the girls slept in.

There was another family lodging in the house; a man and his wife and seven children. They were, at an average, a year or so older than Catherine's, and,

of course, an intimacy soon commenced. Their eldest son was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, nearly a year older than Martha, the others were in nearly the same proportion. Mrs. Wilson, the mother, was a good-natured, silly woman, with somewhat loose ideas of propriety. This she especially showed in allowing her children to mix unrestrainedly with others of all shades and degrees of respectability, many of them, both male and female, being of a most objectionable description. Mrs. Wilson was most indulgent to her children, over whom she held not the slightest control, and their manners and precocity at first gave Catherine considerable uneasiness, which unfortunately diminished as they became better acquainted. The father was a civil, hard-working man. He was employed in a large brewery in the neighbourhood. He was seldom seen, as he left the house early in the morning and did not return till late in the evening.

The Beuzevilles had some difficulty in getting accustomed to their new quarters; but at last they began to settle down in them, and much they had objected to at the beginning had been modified by use. He continued working for the new firm, although in point of liberality of payment he found he had not changed for the better.

Another year passed over their heads without anything worthy of notice. Dr. Bodmer saw them but rarely; but they had found in him a good friend. He had given old Baker some light employment in his own house, by which he earned a trifle every week, and received some of his meals as well. The other portion of his daily labours consisted in nursing his infant grandchildren, and doing what little commissions in the neighbourhood his daughter intrusted him with. Catherine continued to nurse her last baby; and the remaining portion of her time was divided between her household duties and the loom. Her eldest daughter continued to work for the outfitter's, and Martha, who

increased in beauty daily, began also to use her needle skilfully, and with profit to the family. The intimacy with the Wilson family was still kept up; and one favourite theme of the silly mother's was, that Martha and her son would make a nice match, and that she hoped she might live to see it. "They were so fond of each other already, that she considered them almost engaged." Catherine, half angry, half flattered, foolishly did not check this silly prattling; and, as these remarks were never made in Beuzeville's presence, who would strongly have objected to them, they passed unnoticed.

Winter came on, and with it a season of scarcity and distress. Few not acquainted with the poor can understand their sufferings in times of privation, especially those who are weavers, and in other trades employed in the manufacture of luxuries. As commodities increase in price, as the necessaries of life become, from their cost, more difficult to obtain, their work, and consequently their emoluments, decrease in proportion. Beuzeville and his wife were both thrown out of employ, and they became much distressed. A family council was held, at which it was determined they would give up one of their rooms. It was also proposed to sell a portion of the furniture of the room they ceased to occupy, and, with part of the proceeds, Beuzeville should go down to Macclesfield, and try if he could not obtain regular work, as he had heard that trade was better there than in London. Necessity, that powerful stimulus to exertion and determination, soon brought their deliberations to an end. They gave up possession of the room, for which another tenant was immediately found. The new comers were a husband, his wife, and three children of different ages, the eldest a boy of fourteen.

The furniture sold at a good price. One half of the proceeds was handed over to Catherine, the other was retained by Beuzeville to meet the expenses of his

journey, and a trifle in hand for preliminary expenditure when he should arrive at his destination. The leave-taking was truly painful. They had never been separated for a day, and now it was more than probable that a month, or perhaps two or three, would pass before they would meet again. All were in tears, all were deeply affected; but perhaps Martha more so than the others. She was her father's darling, and his love had not been thrown away upon her. She loved him intensely, and the pain she felt at his departure was equal to her love. They all accompanied him to the railway station, and there closed around him as if he had almost been their prisoner, had not their grief destroyed the illusion. The signal for the train to start was at last heard. Beuzeville took one last hurried leave of them. The whistle was sounded, and the train left the terminus, carrying with it the love and good wishes of the multitude who, as usual, had collected to witness the departure of the Parliamentary train.

We will now leave Catherine and her family, and follow Beuzeville to Macclesfield. When he arrived there, he discovered with some little difficulty the weaver to whom he bore a letter from an acquaintance in London. Among few trades or professions exists more *esprit du corps* than among weavers; and the letter Beuzeville carried was duly honoured by the individual to whom it was addressed. A room was soon engaged; he was taken by his friend to a firm which gave him immediate employment, although the remuneration he received was less than he had been accustomed to have for an equal amount of work. It was, however, sufficient to maintain him; and he contrived beyond that, by observing the strictest economy in his expenditure, to send up a trifle at the end of the month to his wife. He soon received an answer stating that the money had been received, that she was again in work, that the family were in good health, and all was going on comfortably.

The only subject of interest to the reader related to their son in America. Two or three letters had been received from him before the family left Wilkes-street. They were of little importance, containing principally news of his uncle's family. His wages, he informed them, were so small, that he could with difficulty afford to dress decently on them. He would have left his uncle long since, but he had a great affection for him. Beyond that, he thought it would be cruel to do so, as his uncle had lately been suffering from fever, and was with difficulty able to attend to the business for any length of time together. Of his aunt he said but little, and in that little nothing to her advantage.

To avoid, if possible, the liability they were under to the tax-collector, Beuzeville and his wife, when they left their house, left no clue where they intended to reside. The poor are soon forgotten in a neighbourhood; and the postman, not having received any instructions where the few letters addressed to the Beuzeville family were to be forwarded, it happened that one which had been addressed to them, after the accustomed inquiries had been made, was sent back to the dead-letter office. A few days before Catherine had received her husband's letter, she had been asked by an old neighbour whom she had accidentally met, whether she had received her letter? Adding that the postman took a great deal of trouble about it, asking every one he could think of, likely to know, where the Beuzevilles were living, herself among the number. Catherine, after having informed her that it had not come to hand, went in search of the postman, who, with some little difficulty, brought the circumstance to his mind. He told her it was quite true a foreign letter had been addressed to her, but that he not being able to find her, had sent it back to the post-office. He added that it occurred some months since, and in all probability she would not be able to recover it.

Catherine inquired at the post-office, but without success, so she requested in her letter to her husband that he would inform her what further steps she should take. Beuzeville in his answer told her to write immediately to their son, informing him that his letter had been lost, and also giving him their new address. Catherine obeyed her husband implicitly, and the letter was forwarded to America.

Beuzeville continued for two months longer in Macclesfield. He had now got well known. He had put by a few pounds, and trusted that in another month he would be able to have his family with him. He was much liked by his employers, and had great expectation that he would shortly be taken on permanently as a foreman to inspect the work the others brought home, the person employed at the moment being in very bad health, with little probability of recovery, and Beuzeville had been promised the appointment in case the other should be obliged to leave. The future, in fact, seemed far brighter to him than it had done for some years. A letter, however, that he received from his wife completely destroyed the pleasing illusion. It had been sent by private hand. It shortly informed him that a terrible calamity had visited them, and he must make up his mind to bear it with resignation. She begged him to come up to London as quickly as possible, for she was nearly broken-hearted. She did not like to tell him in her letter; but the bearer, who was passing through Macclesfield, would inform him of all. He was well aware of the trouble she was in, and would explain everything to him."

The weaver who brought the letter did not give it into Beuzeville's hands, but commissioned an acquaintance of his to do so—probably disliking to be the messenger of bad news. The person he employed knew nothing of the circumstances; and as the original bearer had left for Coventry before the letter was

delivered, Beuzeville unfortunately remained in ignorance of what particular misfortune his wife alluded to. He wrote to her immediately, telling her he would leave Macclesfield the next day, and be with her in the evening. Fortunately, the piece of silk on which he was engaged wanted but little of completion, and he finished it early the next morning. He received the money for his labour; and then, having packed up he few necessaries he required, went immediately to the station, overwhelmed with doubt and anxiety. When he arrived at the office, he found the train would not start for another quarter of an hour. He took his ticket, and then seated himself on a bench on the platform. So absorbed was he in his anxiety, that had the place been desolate, instead of being crowded with passengers, he would not have noticed the difference. He conjured up every possible misfortune which could have fallen on his family, without arriving at a probable result. One, perhaps, haunted him more than the rest—it was an accident having occurred to his eldest son in America. So deeply was he reflecting on this probability, that he heard the bell ring for the train to start without noticing it.

"If you're going by the train," said a guard to him, "you must get in, or you'll be left behind."

Beuzeville started up, and a face met his; it was that of George, the tears pouring down his face as when he stood at the gangway of the ship seven years before, to take a last glance at his father. Instantaneously it vanished, and the guard stood before him with the handle of a third-class carriage door in his hand ready to close it. Beuzeville leaped in and took his seat, and the next moment the train started. Oh, how slowly did the moments pass; how long did each stoppage seem! The poor fellow's love for his family was intense, and his anxiety was in proportion. More than once during the journey did the phantom of his son present itself for a moment before him, and then vanish. So painful was the

impression it left, that Beuzeville forced his mind on any subject of conversation that arose among his fellow-passengers, but it was useless; it returned again to his home and his son. Never did train appear to travel more slowly; yet it arrived punctually to its time.

When Beuzeville quitted the terminus he hurried homeward as rapidly as possible. It would be difficult to describe the state of his mind during his walk. All speculation had left him; yet, when it was over, had he been asked what he had met with on his road, or through what streets he had passed, it would have been impossible for him to have answered. Arrived at the house, he found the street-door open, and he rushed rapidly up-stairs to their room. He there found Catherine and her children; she was dressed in black, and the others had also some emblems of mourning upon them. His wife threw her arms round his neck and burst into tears, while their children gathered closely about them. Beuzeville looked at them anxiously. He mentally counted them, and one was missing. He glanced round the room. On one of the beds lay a figure, covered by a sheet—it clung so closely to it as almost to show the form of the features. He approached the bed, his wife still in his arms. Tremblingly he lifted the sheet and saw beneath it the pure countenance, made still purer by its marble hue, of—Martha.

CHAPTER VII.

FACILIS DESCENSUS AVERNI.

When the Beuzevilles quitted Wilkes-street, they found, as we have already mentioned, great difficulty in obtaining another lodging, from the crowded condition of the neighbourhood. A short time afterwards, this evil was greatly increased by the formation of the terminus and arches of the Eastern Counties Railway When the company applied to the Houses of Parliament for their bill, it would naturally have been supposed that Government, judging from the experience it had obtained of the effects caused by the destruction of the dwellings of the poor in other parts of the metropolis, would have stipulated that a certain number of houses for the accommodation of the working classes should have been erected to supply the place of those to be destroyed; but an idea so commonplace never troubled their deliberations. Day after day, week after week, the bill was in committee; every probability, every objection, but one, was raised, attacked, and defended; but that one—the welfare and convenience of the poor—was never touched upon by either side. The act was passed, and the demolition of many hundreds of these dwellings immediately commenced, but not one was rebuilt to replace the deficiency it occasioned. The evils already established by the overcrowding of the neighbourhood, were increased by the immense influx of inhabitants occasioned by these fresh ejectments, while the misery and demoralization they brought, augmented to such an extent that a legislative enactment was necessary to suppress it.

Instead of adopting some means by which dwellings of a superior class might be erected for the poor, and thereby secure a greater amount of morality, health, and comfort among them, our philanthropic govern-

ment again resorted to the only means they had yet learned to stay the evil. Under pretence of making a line of road from the railway terminus to the docks, they destroyed more than seven hundred more houses of the working classes, without taking into the slightest consideration in what manner the poor creatures ejected might find a shelter. How little necessity for the road existed, may be judged by the reader remarking, on his way to the station, the little traffic to be found upon it, even in the present day. How little the Woods and Forests had the welfare of the poor at heart, how little sympathy they had for their comfort, may at the same time be estimated by noticing the many acres of ground which, even to the present day, lie waste, and which were formerly covered by a dense and struggling population. Let the philanthropic reader mark these things, and then reflect what must be the present state of suffering among the poor from overcrowding the district, and what an amount of misery and profligacy such an execrable system must occasion. It must be borne in mind this has not been the work of selfish or speculative individuals, but the cool, determined, calculated act of a minister of the Crown, supported either by the tacit consent or direct approbation of the Poor Law Board.

When Catherine took her lodgings in Blossom-street, the woman of the house did not inform her that it had already been purchased by the Government, and that she only remained there on sufferance; that she had, in fact, agreed to quit the premises at a week's notice. One morning, as Catherine was leaving the house, the woman stopped her and informed her that she must quit the next week, as the house was to be pulled down for the new street. Catherine attempted to remonstrate with her, but it was useless. The woman honestly told her that she would have been perfectly content to have kept her on as a tenant, but that she had no alternative herself, and that she was as much puzzled

what to do for another abode as Catherine could be. There remained no other step to be taken than that of seeking for another lodging. If considerable difficulty had existed when last she removed, it was trifling in comparison to that which she now experienced. To add to her difficulty she found that the whole of her neighbours were in a similar predicament, and the competition for the few vacant rooms in the neighbourhood was so great, that rents were nearly doubled. Mrs. Wilson was likewise in the same difficulty, and she had suggested to Catherine that they should take a small house conjointly, and let off the portion they did not require for their own families; but Catherine rather rejoiced at the possibility of not having Mrs. Wilson in such close neighbourhood. She really liked the kind-hearted creature, but objected frequently to her style of conversation, especially that part of it which related to Martha and her own son.

In consequence of the increased price of apartments, Catherine was obliged to be content with a smaller amount of space than she had previously occupied. She had now only one front room and a small back one, scarcely bigger than a closet. In the latter were lodged her father and one of the younger boys; in the front room, the rest of the family had to sleep and live. Crowded as it was with beds and furniture, room had still to be made for two looms. The space left free was, of course, exceedingly small, and the amount of atmospheric air not only diminished in quantity by the furniture, but greatly deteriorated by so many human beings living in it. Catherine had been about three weeks in this new lodging when one of her younger children complained of feeling very unwell. She took, at first, but little notice of the circumstance, contenting herself with giving it some homely remedy. The next day, however, the child was worse; and, on dressing it, she perceived an alteration in the colour of the skin, which gave her considerable alarm. As soon as she

had dressed it, she took it to Dr. Bodmer, who immediately pronounced it to be the small-pox. He advised Catherine to allow it to go to the small pox hospital, and volunteered to obtain for it a ticket of admission; but Catherine was too fond a mother to think of trusting her child to others at the moment when it most required a mother's care; so she gratefully declined his offer.

Her determination to nurse the child herself, brought with it another anxiety. How was she in her crowded room to keep the patient isolated from the other children? Another boy was sent into the one occupied by her father, and which was already too small for the number it accommodated. Catherine even then found that she still wanted much more space for the proper care of the invalid, and the safety of the others.

The disease had fully developed itself, when one morning Mrs. Wilson called to see her old fellow-lodger. When she perceived the trouble poor Catherine was in, she felt much sympathy for her, and inquired if she could render her any assistance. Catherine felt truly grateful to her, but unfortunately, she said, she had too many to help her as it was. She would gladly have dispensed with the presence of some of her children, but the other lodgers in the house, naturally dreading the contagion, would not receive them.

"Oh," said Mrs. Wilson, "if that's all, I think I can help you. If you like, I will take Martha and one of the little ones with me; and that will give you more room. We're very crowded ourselves, but we've no sickness, thank God."

Catherine warmly thanked her for the offer, but was, for the moment, undecided whether she should accept it. She knew that at Mrs. Wilson's lodgings, the rooms were at least as crowded as her own, and she also objected to Martha's remaining there while the son was at home; but again, she reflected on the beauty of her girl, and the effects the small-pox would have on it if she unfortunately contracted the disease.

While Catherine was deliberating on these things, Mrs. Wilson seemed to guess her meaning."

"You're afraid of my boy, I suppose," she said laughing; "but he will leave for his situation to-morrow morning; and you can send the children then, so you'll have nothing to fear." The weight was taken off Catherine's mind by this intelligence; and she thankfully accepted Mrs. Wilson's offer.

The next morning, the sick child was so much worse that Dr. Bodmer began to fear for its life. He advised Catherine to get as many of the other children out of the house as she could, lest the disease should spread. Catherine immediately made up Martha's little bundle, and despatched her and the youngest child to Mrs. Wilson's. When Martha arrived at the house, she found that humble as had been Mrs. Wilson's description of her own lodging, it was a gross exaggeration of its comforts. It consisted but of one room, somewhat larger than Catherine's, in a house situated in a court at the upper part of Elder-street. In this room, husband, wife, and children, both male and female, three of whom had already arrived almost at puberty, all slept, eat, and lived; the only further accommodation they possessed, was a small kitchen in the yard of the house formed by a shed leaning against the wall. To add to the other objectionable circumstances attending the visit, Mrs. Wilson had that morning received a message from the gentleman who had engaged her son, saying that he should not require him to attend till the end of the week; and, consequently, the danger that Catherine had at first feared was now realised. Mrs. Wilson herself seemed annoyed at the circumstance, but, as she said, it was only for two or three days, and it was not worth while to worry Mrs. Beuzeville about it, afflicted as she was with the sickness of her child. She received Martha with great kindness, and, in her coarse manner, treated both the girl and her little brother with great hospitality, while Martha, in return,

endeavoured to make herself as useful as possible in the crowded establishment.

In the afternoon, Martha and Mrs. Wilson's son walked out together. The latter evidently felt great boyish affection for her, which, however, was hardly reciprocated by Martha. She liked him, but she was of that disposition who would like any one who behaved kindly to her. She was one of those girls who hardly understood the meaning of the word "love" beyond its application to family affection. If she felt a warmer affection for her young admirer than for others, it was simply the sentiment a young and innocent girl would bear to her own brother. She was one of a class found, perhaps, more frequently in England than in any other part of the world. She was almost womanly in form, but a child in mind and simplicity—about as beautiful a phase in female existence, as could be found when among girls in a good position in society, but one more dangerous among the working classes, it would be difficult to imagine, especially as long as they are condemned to live in the horrible manner at present imposed on them by the Minister of Public Works and the Poor Law Board. Should the reader consider the remark uncalled for, or too severe, let him inquire of the medical officer of health, or parish surgeon of a densely over-crowded locality, what are its effects on the morals of the community, and he will hear such statements as will cause him to shudder with horror and disgust. He will have such facts presented to him, facts perfectly well known to the Government, and as perfectly uncared for by them, as will prove to him that thousands of females have been victims to the detestable feeling which considers the presence of the poor as an eye-sore and a tax. He will then know how to appreciate a system which condemns the poor to herd together by themselves in a manner repugnant to every moral feeling, where the female child loses every

particle of decency, self-respect, and innocence, long before her mind is capable of understanding the meaning of the sin towards which it is driving her.

After an absence of nearly three hours, Martha and young Wilson returned to the house. No rebuke was offered them for their stay, on the contrary, the foolish woman joked them on the circumstance, and bantering them, told them they must not consider themselves as two lovers, for Mrs. Beuzeville had not yet given her consent. She told her son "he must get on in the world as fast as he could, and get a good home for such a nice wife, for if he didn't, he'd certainly find some one else would snatch her from him, and quite right too. If she were a young man she wouldn't let Martha have an hour's rest," and much more in the same style. The boy looked confused, and the girl blushed, but was evidently not displeased at the compliment paid to her charms.

About eight o'clock Wilson himself returned from the brewery, and supper was put on the table. Beer, of course, was there in abundance; no brewer's man apparently being able to live without it. Unfortunately, beer was not the only fluid consumed. After supper Mr. Wilson indulged in his pipe, and some gin and water, and, by way of proving his hospitality, insisted on the girl partaking of it. Martha at first refused it, but ceded when he repeated the offer, and, for the first time in her life, tasted that curse of England —that hell-cup—Gin. Though small was the quantity she swallowed, the effects were felt by the girl, not yet accustomed to drink anything but water, and she chattered incessantly. The time at last arrived for them to retire for the night, and Mrs. Wilson, by way of not offending what, perhaps, she considered the prejudices of the young girl, requested her son and husband to leave the room, while she and Martha undressed. A bed was made upon the floor for her guest and infant brother, between the one she occupied with

her husband and the wall, her son and daughters sleeping on the other side of the room. When Martha and Mrs. Wilson were in bed, the son and husband came in. Their preparations for the night were soon made, and in a very short time all were asleep. The situation had been naturally painful to the young girl, but the sensation was considerably deadened by the gin she had taken. A second night and a third passed in the same manner, with the exception that the slight feeling of repugnance experienced by Martha the first night had gone, and the situation was now perfectly indifferent to her. She had also each evening partaken of Wilson's gin and water, and not only liked it, but felt a pleasure in the hilarity of spirits it occasioned. Each day she went to see her mother, but she was not allowed to see the sick child, Catherine fearing that she might take the disease. She did not inform her mother either of the crowded manner they were obliged to live in, nor the fact that young Wilson had not gone to his situation. This was perhaps the first deceit the girl had ever practised on her parents. At last another child was seized with the small-pox, and Catherine then strictly prohibited Martha from coming near them, telling her at the same time she would send for her if she wanted her.

Beuzeville had, of course, heard from his wife both the necessity she had been under of removing, and the sickness of the children. Fortunately the little money she had become possessed of by the sale of the furniture, as well as that she had received for her work, was not yet entirely exhausted, so Catherine had no occasion to draw on him for any.

The fourth morning after Martha had left her mother's house, young Wilson went to his situation. The leave-taking was certainly painful on his side. In his boyish way he was much attached to the girl, but she showed but little feeling on the occasion. A few days after he had left, a younger brother of Mrs. Wilson's came to

London with his wife on a visit to his sister. The result was that the room was too small to hold the whole party, and a bed was taken in another room for Martha and Mrs. Wilson's eldest daughter, a girl about the same age. The latter was exceedingly forward, and without her mother's knowledge had made an intimate acquaintance with a very worthless young man, and she made Martha her confidant. In the same room with them were two other girls, seamstresses by profession, but whose conduct, judging from the tenor of their conversation, was of a very indifferent description. These girls were also in the habit of drinking freely, and some idle young men of their acquaintance provided them with the spirit. In a short time Martha made the acquaintance of a flashy-looking young fellow, and that sentiment which had been dormant to young Wilson was awakened by this scamp.

Catherine's children had passed successfully over the dangerous crisis of the disease, and were rapidly approaching convalescence, when one afternoon Mrs. Wilson called on her with the youngest child in her arms. Catherine was delighted to see it. It was in perfect health, and its appearance formed a strong contrast with the sickly and diseased look of those who had suffered from the small-pox. She took it in her arms and warmly embraced the sturdy little urchin, who in its turn was delighted to see its mother.

"I can't thank you enough for your kindness, Mrs. Wilson," said Catherine. "Without you I don't know what I should have done. We've had a hard time of it, I can tell you."

"I have done my best," said Mrs. Wilson, somewhat sharply, "by both your children, and I think I ought to have had a little better thanks than I have had from Martha, I must say that."

"Why," remarked Catherine putting down the child, "what has she said? If she is not very grateful to you she is a very naughty girl, and I shall scold her well for it."

"She hasn't said anything to me; but to leave my house and come home without saying good morning, or anything, after all I've done for her, is not what I'm used to. We might have been hard put to it, to make room for her, but we did our best to please her."

"I don't understand what you mean, Mrs. Wilson."

"I mean to say she ought not to have come home here without saying with your leave, or by your leave. It wasn't the treatment I've been accustomed to."

"She has not come in yet," said Catherine, "but I dare say she'll be here in a few minutes; you'd better wait, and let her answer for herself. I'm not one of those who would allow their children to be rude or unkind to any one, much less to those who have done as much for them as you have."

Mrs. Wilson did not answer, but turned pale, and looked confused. She tried to recover herself, but could not. She seated herself on a chair, and asked Catherine for a glass of water. Catherine immediately procured it for her, and on giving it asked her what made her feel so ill. Mrs. Wilson returned no answer. She was so faint she was obliged to cling to Catherine's dress to prevent herself from falling. Catherine was greatly surprised at the circumstance, at the same time she experienced an undefinable sensation of coming misfortune creep over her, and she felt almost as helpless as her visitor. A footstep was heard upon the staircase.

"See if that's Martha," said Catherine, to one of the younger children; "and tell her, if it is, to come up immediately."

The child obeyed, but it was not Martha.

"Now, Mrs. Wilson, pray tell me what it is you mean about Martha."

"She left my house yesterday morning to come home, as I thought, and I've not seen her since."

Catherine attempted to place the drinking glass upon the chest of drawers, but she was short of it, and it fell

to the ground and was broken. She seated herself on a bed, and putting her hands against the sides of her head, gazed mechanically, without speaking, at the fragments of the broken glass. She rose again and approached Mrs. Wilson.

"Tell me more about it," she said. "When did she leave you, and where did she say she was going?"

"She said nothing whatever; she left the house without saying anything yesterday morning, and I thought she had come home."

Catherine turned round and rapidly caught up her bonnet and shawl. When she was ready to leave the house, she began to reflect what step should be taken, but she was utterly bewildered. Addressing Mrs. Wilson angrily, she said, "I must and will know more about my child; she was with you, and you ought to know where she is." Mrs. Wilson was aroused by the tone and manner of Catherine, and rising from her chair said:

"I tell you I know nothing more than I have stated; but, if you'll come with me, we can inquire more about it. But don't agitate yourself so—you may be sure it's all right."

Catherine reflected for a moment. She remembered the pure creature her girl was, and one-half of her anxiety left her.

They hurried on to Elder-street, and arrived there quite breathless. All in the house were questioned, but no satisfactory intelligence could be gained. The only information they received was, that a young woman had seen her the evening before, walking down Shoreditch in company with Jem Thompson.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Wilson; "you won't make me believe that a respectable girl like her, would walk about with such a base fellow as that—besides, where could she have known him?"

Mrs. Wilson's eldest daughter, who was their informant, coloured but said nothing. Catherine was now

painfully bewildered, and Mrs. Wilson was little better. They hurried out and inquired of all their neighbours, but all they could hear corresponded with the evidence of Mrs. Wilson's daughter. She had been seen with Jem Thompson, and more than once. They then went to the police-station and told their sad tale. They were listened to with sympathy, and every possible assistance promised them, but nothing up to that time had been heard of her. With Jem Thompson they seemed to be better acquainted, for when his name was mentioned a look of intelligence passed between the constables on duty.

Catherine now sought her home almost broken-hearted. Her eldest daughter, who had been absent when Mrs. Wilson called, having taken back some work to the outfitter's, was surprised on her return that her mother had left the house. Without clearly understanding the tale told by her brothers and sisters, she perceived there was some alarming news about Martha. Old Baker, also, was from home at the same time, but when he returned and heard narrated by the children what had passed, his anxiety was still greater than his granddaughter's. They waited till they heard Catherine's foot upon the stairs, and then rushed out to inquire the news. The poor mother was too overwhelmed with grief to answer them; the temporary excitement of the search being over, the poor creature was perfectly prostrated by her misfortune. Her father and children attempted, but in vain, to console her, and the woman of the house, who had heard they were in sorrow, joined them, to assist in comforting her, but was equally powerless. She kindly attempted to reason with her, and show that tears would do but little good where exertion was necessary, but Catherine did not hear her.

"Oh! ma'am," she said, spasmodically clasping her hands together, the tears streaming down her face, "you don't know all; what my poor husband will do I

can't imagine. He loves that girl so—it will kill him—I'm sure it will. Oh, my child! my child! what shall I do?"

"But perhaps things are not so bad after all. You should make more inquiries before you give it up. A thousand things may have happened which you don't think of. My husband's a railway constable; let's go down to the station and ask him if he's heard anything of her—besides that, he'll tell us what to do if he has not."

Catherine, afflicted as she was, could understand the strength of the good woman's argument. She dried her tears as well as she could, and left the house with her friend, requesting her father before she went to make what inquiries he could.

Old Baker, whose mind was fast losing the little strength it had once possessed, was completely absorbed with his daughter's grief while she was with him; but the moment she had left the room, the whole weight of the terrible misfortune was felt by him. Little Martha had been the darling of the whole family; and none, perhaps, in his strange way, loved her better than the old man did. He endeavoured to collect his thoughts, but he had great difficulty in making them bear on any one point; and it is possible his feeble efforts would have been completely paralysed, had it not been for the eldest girl calling his attention to the necessity of some immediate action. In his hurry he left the house without putting on his hat, and his wild, absent look gave him the appearance of one distracted. People regarded him with pity, and thought the poor old creature ought to have had some one to take care of him. He wandered on without thinking whither he was going. He inquired of one or two individuals he met, whether they had seen a little girl in a dark frock? Years since, the child had been lost for a few hours, and he had been sent in search of her, and the inquiries he then made recurred spontaneously to his memory. She

was at that moment painted on his retina, the same age and size she had been on the former occasion, as well as dressed in the dark frock she then wore. Presently he met a policeman, and his anxiety to explain himself was so great that he was perfectly unintelligible.

"Ah! all right," said the policeman kindly to him; "but don't you think you'd better go home. You'll get cold without your hat."

"Yes, yes," said the old man. "You'll look sharp, won't you? She's a little girl in a dark frock."

"I'll take care, don't you be afraid; now, go home, there's a good man, and leave it to me. What a shame it is," he continued, as old Baker went on his way, "to let that poor old man be out without any one to look after him."

Presently the poor creature saw a small piece of chalk on the pavement. He looked at it anxiously for a moment, and then picked it up. He wandered on a little farther, and then attempted to write something on the door of a house.

"I say, old gentleman," said a man passing, who had noticed his wild appearance; "you mustn't do that, you know. You'll get yourself into trouble as sure as you live. People won't like having their doors marked in that manner. You'd better go home and keep quiet."

The old man muttered something and left the place, followed by a train of street boys. There was something so wild and singular in his manner, that they neither teased him nor jested with him, but followed him silently. Presently he saw a dark-painted shutter, and there being no one to hinder him, he chalked upon it:—

Lost, a litel girl in a dark frok.

He then looked hurriedly around to see if he were noticed, but no one appearing to object to it, he went a little

farther and wrote the same sentence again. He had done so six or seven times, when a passer-by called the attention of the police to the old man. It was the same constable that had noticed him before. He went kindly up to old Baker and inquired where he lived, and with some difficulty obtained from him his address. He then conducted him home. Old Baker at first made some resistance, but the promise of the policeman, who had already taken the chalk from his hand, "that he would look out and write it up wherever he had an opportunity," pacified the old man, and he allowed himself to be led quietly to his house. Arrived there, his intellect and strength seemed entirely lost, till his daughter came back, and they then returned only to be pained again.

Catherine had accompanied the mistress of the house to find her husband, the railway constable. The man kindly sympathised with the unhappy mother when he heard her tale. He had seen nothing of her daughter, whom he knew well by sight. He was also acquainted with Jem Thompson, but, actuated by a kind feeling, he said nothing of his character. He had to remain another hour at the station, and then his duty would be over. He advised Catherine in the meantime to inquire at two or three places he mentioned, and then, if not successful, to come back to him, and he would go with her to every place where he thought it probable the girl might be heard of. Catherine did as he advised her, but without hearing any tidings of Martha, and she then returned to the railway station. The constable's duty being now over, he accompanied Catherine to every place he thought it possible they might find her. Every neighbouring police-station they visited, every policeman they met was informed of the circumstance, and his assistance requested. Wentworth-street, Brick-lane, Flower and Dean-streets, and many other infamous localities, were searched, but in vain. Their wretched inhabitants all seemed to feel

for her, and referred her to others likely to able to afford her information, but all without success, and at last Catherine returned to the house broken-hearted and exhausted.

Seldom has one small room contained as much unhappiness as was in her's that night. Her children weeping bitterly themselves, increased their mother's sorrow while attempting to console her, and the almost childish grief of her poor old father was as great as her own. Catherine prayed for help from the Almighty. It was the simple petition of the good woman of her order—the affectionate hard-working mother. One of those whose time for worship is limited by the necessities of a large and young family, and the pious care of providing for the welfare of their offspring. One of those who offer, in lieu of prayer, unceasing toil and anxiety in rearing, in respectability and integrity, those whom God has confided to their charge ; one in whom it would be doubting the mercy of the Almighty not to believe that in her case—"Labour was prayer." "*Laborare est orare.*"

Her worship was now in words, and those inspired by a bleeding heart. Her prayer was eloquent, though but a few short sentences composed it. It contained earnest supplication, profound grief, and intense reliance in the power of the Deity. It was the full natural outpouring of an innate pious woman's soul when addressing her Maker. "Oh! my God, give me back my child! give me back my child! Oh, pity me! pity me! Give me back my child!"

Few as were the words which composed her prayer, it continued for hours. With her hands clasped together, and pressed tightly against her breast, she walked up and down her small room the greater part of the night. Her face, covered with tears, was raised to heaven, as if in proof how truly meant were the few short sentences she uttered. Her eldest daughter at first frequently attempted to claim her attention, but

it was in vain, her prayer allowed not interruption. The poor girl finding she was unheeded relinquished her interposition, and remained with the other children, silently and respectfully gazing upon the anguish of their mother.

The next morning brought no tidings of the girl; day after day followed but nothing was heard of her. Catherine's anguish at last settled down into a quiet chronic grief. Necessity obliged her to labour, but labour in her case brought no relief. The subject, and everything connected with it, by a sort of tacit agreement was avoided by them all. Martha's name was never heard among them, but perhaps her memory was never absent from their minds. One subject of fearful embarrassment still remained for Catherine—in what manner to break the news to her husband. Day succeeded day, and yet she put off writing till the morrow, and then till the next day. At last the pardonable thought arose, of deceiving him and keeping his child's elopement from his knowledge. Any day and every day she argued there was a probability that her daughter might be heard of, and then it would be possible to persuade her husband that Martha had been a short time absent in a situation, and thus the terrible certainty of the truth might be spared him, and the anguish it would have occasioned him avoided. Shallow as the reasoning was she adopted it, and her husband was thus kept in ignorance of his loss.

About six weeks after Martha had quitted her family a parish surgeon in the neighbourhood of Ratcliffe, highway met Dr. Bodmer near the London Docks. After a few commonplace remarks, the surgeon said to the Doctor, "I wish if you had a few minutes to spare, you would come with me and see a case of mine. It's a very sad one, and I am afraid it will slip through my fingers."

"Is it far off, for I am in a hurry?"

"No! it's here close by in Fox-court, Bluegate-

fields, about one of the most infamous spots in London. Do come with me."

"Certainly," said Bodmer, "if you wish me. What is it?"

"Another gin case; but I feel a great interest in it, and should be sorry to see it run on if it could possibly be stopped. A poor child of perhaps fifteen or sixteen years of age was inveigled into one of these dens about six weeks since. She is a very fine grown girl, but somewhat emaciated from the life she has been leading lately; she appears, however, to have been very decently brought up. As far as I can understand, three parts of the time she has been in the house she has been partially under the influence of liquor; but I very much suspect that she never tasted gin till she came into it. Last night she was in one of the gin-palaces in the neighbourhood, accompanied by two other children not older than herself. They were all three drinking with some sailors, when some prize-fighters and two betting men came in to settle the preliminaries of a fight which is soon to take place, and they also entered into conversation with these wretched children. After a great deal of noise and blasphemy, one of these scoundrels, who happened to be in possession of some money, proposed to bet on the girls which could drink half-a-pint of gin in the shortest time. The poor creatures, already three parts intoxicated, agreed, and the gin was drunk. Immediately after it was swallowed, my patient fell senseless and was carried home. At first the hag that keeps the house refused to admit her, but the wretched lodgers rebelled at this, and the girl was placed on a bed. Shortly afterwards I was sent for. I found her insensible, her breathing short and difficult, in fact, suffering from the effects of the gin upon the brain. I bled her, and after a few hours she appeared to recover, but still remained drowsy and confused. This morning I found she had partially regained her senses, but complained of violent pains in

the region of the epigastrium. The poor child was crying bitterly at the situation she is in. I endeavoured to get from her where she lived, but could not succeed. She said she would rather die than her father and mother should know where she was. The other girls in the house knew nothing of her beyond her being a pal of Jem Thompson's, whoever that worthy may be."

"I have heard that name somewhere," said Dr. Bodmer, trying to recal it to his memory; "but I really forget where."

By this time they had crossed Ratcliffe-highway and entered Bluegate-street. The description given by the parish surgeon of the locality perfectly tallied with its appearance; vice, squalor, and misery seemed to be its principal characteristics. Women, drunken, half-naked, and dirty, thronged the street; their male companions were principally sailors of different nations, in various stages of intoxication. Disreputable as was the appearance of the principal street, it was that of comparative propriety when compared with the wretched courts and alleys running out of it. These were densely crowded with the same class of inhabitants, so numerous, in fact, were they that it almost appeared an impossibility the miserable four-roomed houses they dwelt in could have held them. While these courts, as if to prove that in the lowest depths there was a lower still, opened again, to lead to others still more wretched; places in which the only respectable individuals that approached them, were the casual policeman on duty, or the still more rare parish medical officer. Into one of these last the surgeon and Bodmer entered. A ruffianly-looking fellow and a repulsively ugly old woman were talking together in the narrow passage. They scowled sulkily at the visitors as they passed, but said nothing. The surgeon conducted Bodmer up-stairs, and they entered the bedroom. It would be difficult to describe its wretched appearance.

It was barely nine feet square. The roof was slanting, and the only window in the place was a cracked, dirty pane of glass inserted in the tiles. An old chair, a small broken piece of looking-glass, and a filthy bed of rags, on which lay the poor girl, comprised almost the whole of the furniture of the room. The unfortunate creature was evidently in pain, but a decided change had taken place in her malady since the morning. She was then nearly sensible; at that moment she was violently delirious. A young woman who had been attending her was seated on the side of the bed attempting, but in vain, to calm the sick girl. She rose when she saw the doctors enter.

"Oh, gentlemen," she said, "I am so glad you are come. I can do nothing with her, she is so strong; and that old wretch won't let any of the others help me."

Bodmer and his friend approached the bed. The attention of the sick girl was attracted to them with that painful, anxious flushed look, so common in cases of the kind. Her gaze was first cast upon the surgeon; she appeared to have some vague recollection of him, and remained perfectly tranquil while he felt her pulse.

"Here is a fearful amount of inflammatory action going on," he said to Bodmer.

The sick girl looked steadfastly at him while speaking, and then her eyes followed his to Bodmer's countenance. Immediately she saw him her anxious tranquillity changed in an instant. She rose almost convulsively in her bed, stared at him intently for a moment, as if forcing her mind into a healthy power of recognition, and then placing both hands upon her face, so as completely to cover it, she uttered a prolonged plaintive sort of cry, and turning rapidly away from him, pressed her face upon her bed.

"It's a singular thing," said Bodmer, "but I know that girl's face perfectly well. Where do you come from, my dear?" he kindly inquired.

She returned him no answer. He placed his hand upon her shoulder for the purpose of turning her round. He succeeded, but she still kept her hands pressed upon her face.

"Don't you know anything of her?" he asked the other girl.

"No, Sir, nothing at all; but during the time she has been rambling in her talk, she has spoken more than once of her poor father and mother. Her christian name is Martha, she says, but she would never let us know what her other name is."

Bodmer, who had been gently attempting to remove the hands from Martha's face, but without success, found them yield without difficulty when the girl spoke of her father and mother, and mentioned her christian name. It would be almost impossible for words to convey an idea of the change that had taken place in the expression of her countenance. The half-wild, half-conscious, feverish look she had before she concealed her face with her hands had vanished, and an expression of the most prostrate sorrow and desolation supplied its place. Unlike the general tearless countenance of the febrile patient, her face was now suffused in tears, so powerful had been the effect of those words upon her frame. They had, moreover, brought momentary consciousness with them.

"Oh! pray don't tell mother where I am; pray don't. It would break her's and poor father's heart, if they knew it. I know it would."

Bodmer, by this time, had discovered who the patient really was, and for the moment succeeded in calming her; but the re-action, brought on after the momentary healthy exertion of the brain, had commenced, and delirium rapidly followed. Before they left her she was more violently agitated than when they entered, Before quitting the room they promised they would send some one to nurse her, and on the stairs Bodmer told his friend who the girl was, and asked his permis-

sion to allow him to take charge of the case, as he had a great respect for the family.

"Beyond that," he said, "neither of us, I suspect, will be able to do any good; such inflammatory action as that must be fatal to her enfeebled constitution."

His friend agreed with him in his opinion, and willingly made the patient over to him.

They then descended the stairs, but before leaving the house they discovered that their conversation had been overheard. The old woman they had noticed on entering stopped them.

"So I hear that young woman's likely to die, and I won't have it in this house, so you must take her away."

"She is too ill to be removed now."

"Nonsense! I don't care about that, you must take her away, or I'll turn her into the street—living or dead, it's nothing to me. She can't pay me if she stops here, and how am I to pay other people?"

"I tell you once more she's too ill to be removed; and, if you attempt to turn her out, you'll get yourself into trouble."

"Well, then, for matter of that," said a hoarse gin-drinking man's voice, "out she shall go, whether you doctors like it or no—she's no use here."

"But I tell you, man, she'll die if she's removed."

"Well, I heard you say she'd die if she wasn't, so it's all the same thing in the long run; but she'll go, at any rate. I give you half an hour to fetch her away, and I'll turn her out if you ain't here by that time; so get out of this as soon as you can, for I did not ask you here."

The fellow here advanced in a threatening manner towards the two friends. He was a sturdy thick-set, ill-looking ruffian, with a broken nose and a scar over the left eye. He was dressed in a brown shooting-coat, and waistcoat of the same colour, with a showy cotton handkerchief tied somewhat loosely round the throat.

"I will not come back in half an hour, and you shall not turn her out of the house," said the surgeon, coolly.

"Do you see that?" said the bully, clenching his fist, and shaking it in the surgeon's face. "That's knocked down many a fine fellow in its time, and it won't make many bones about such a scarecrow as you are. Now, be off while you're in a sound skin, or you'll get a taste of it!"

The surgeon's appearance certainly warranted, to a great degree, the man's unflattering description. He was more than six feet high, but more wiry than thin. His hand was large and bony, and his arm long. He could not have stood one minute before the prize-fighter in boxing; but, although he was powerless with respect to that science, his adversary was equally inferior to the particular method of self-defence at that moment adopted by the surgeon. Without making a word of answer to the threat, he quietly but rapidly thrust his hand, with the knuckles downwards, under the neck-handkerchief of the bully, and grasping it tightly, extended his arm and then turned his hand half round. The ruffian attempted to close, but could not. The surgeon turned his hand still more tightly in the cravat, and brought the bones of his knuckle to press with great force on the lower part of the throat. The effects were so rapid and violent, that Bodmer began to fear the man would be strangled, for his face had become a dark purple.

"Come out, you vagabond," said the surgeon, "and let me look well at you!"

The man obeyed him as quietly as a horse in the hands of a tamer. The fore-leg strapped up could not make the animal more helpless, than the pressure on the throat had made the ruffian.

"Look here, Bodmer," he continued, addressing the doctor, who had been occupied in keeping the old woman back. "Let us know this fellow. He has a

scar on the forehead, and one of his front-teeth out. That poor girl is so much changed since this morning that I suspect she has been poisoned, and this fellow must have done it. If she dies, I shall hold him and that old woman answerable, so let them beware."

So saying, he released the man, who was evidently in great pain from the pressure on his throat, as well as bewildered at the accusation, and, before he had recovered, Bodmer and his friend had left the court.

"I have no belief in the poisoning," said the surgeon; "but I wanted to frighten the ruffian, and I think I have succeeded. Now, let's look out for a policeman, and call his attention to the house."

They met one almost immediately, and informed him they feared that a poor girl, who was upon the point of death in a house in the court, might be ill-treated by the old woman who kept it, and they wished him to protect her. The policeman told them he had no authority to enter the house, but he would watch it narrowly. He requested them to call at the station and inform the inspector of the circumstance, for the locality was notorious for the infamous character of its inhabitants; and if there should be a disturbance, it was possible he should not be able to defend himself.

The surgeon and Bodmer immediately followed his advice. On describing the old woman and man to the inspector, he asked them some further particulars with respect to the appearance of the latter; and on hearing that he had a scar on the forehead, and had lost a front tooth, in addition to the other circumstances, he exclaimed:

"I have been on the look out for that fellow for the last month, and had given up all hope of finding him, but I think we shall have him now. He is suspected to have been concerned in a burglary of a very bad character in the City."

He then gave some orders to the sergeant on duty, and the friends left the police-station.

It was now Bodmer's painful duty to inform Catherine of the misfortune of her daughter. This he accomplished with great tact. Perhaps from his intimate knowledge of the female character, it would have been difficult to have found one better adapted for the task. He first, as if casually, attracted her attention to Martha's absence. Catherine answered him, and then immediately attempted to change the conversation. Bodmer, however, kept her to it. He spoke so kindly of the lost girl that the ready tears started to the poor mother's eyes, and painful as the subject was, she then continued it without assistance from the Doctor. She spoke of her affliction for the poor girl's loss, her sorrow becoming greater as she proceeded. Bodmer sat quietly by her waiting for his opportunity. At last Catherine came to the remark Bodmer had been expecting.

"God knows, it would be the happiest moment of my life if I could see her again, living or dead."

He was now certain that the sense of the horrible position the unhappy mother would find her child in, would be considerably dulled by the intensity of her affection, and he broke the subject gently to her, and cautiously informed her of all. He managed it exquisitely; he spoke simply but with great compassion. He evidently felt deeply for the poor woman's misfortune, and his humane sympathy was plainly visible in the expression of his countenance.

As she was seated on her chair he had placed his hand lightly on her's to draw her attention more acutely to the point, and the poor creature seemed to feel support and confidence in the gentle pressure. As he had imagined, the intelligence that her child was found overcame her horror at the circumstances of her degradation. The point she almost alone seemed to feel was the helpless, uncared-for condition Martha was in, while suffering from sickness.

Catherine put on her bonnet and shawl, and left the house, accompanied by the doctor. As they walked

on she inquired more particularly the nature of her daughter's complaint. Bodmer informed her that she was suffering from inflammation, but prudently kept the cause of it from her, and thus one source of misery was lost to her. Cautiously and with great judgment he broke to her the probably fatal nature of the disorder, mentioning, of course, the slight possibility of her recovery. He knew well the small hope of recovery would principally occupy her mind, while the probability of her daughter's approaching dissolution would be before her.

As they arrived nearer the house, so great was the poor woman's anxiety to see her child that the horrible condition of the place was lost upon her. The evening was fine and the streets were crowded with sailors from all nations, and speaking their different languages; who were conversing, or trying to make themselves understood, by the wretched females around them, while the thief and the bully were watching those who seemed to be in possession of money, especially those who appeared to be more or less under the influence of liquor. The dark Lascar and the filthy Chinaman were there in numbers, speaking their few words, not of English, but of the lowest slang, with women, English by birth, but who seemed to have lost every attribute of their country; while to render the scene more awful still, female children, whose age should have sheltered them from the knowledge of vice, were amongst the worst and most blasphemous in their conversation. All these were lost upon Catherine; she saw but one object, and that in the distance—her beloved child stretched on a bed of sickness.

When they arrived near the house they saw one of the policemen who had been at the station when Bodmer and the surgeon called in the morning.

"All right, Sir," he said, in an under-tone as they passed him. "He was the fellow we wanted. You'll find the old woman civil enough now."

They at last got to the house, and found the policeman had spoken the truth. The old wretch opened the door to them.

"Walk up, Sir," she said; "you'll find the poor dear more comfortable now. I've put her into the front room. I'm sure anything I can do for her I will readily. She's very much to be pitied."

"I hope you'll keep your word. This is her mother —she'll nurse her now, so you'll have no more trouble."

The old woman made no answer. She slank away, or rather appeared to have vanished, as a bad spirit might have done when finding itself unexpectedly in presence of an angel. Conscience was evidently not dead in the old wretch, nor the *woman* entirely stamped out of her. She felt her utter degradation, and appeared no more while Catherine was in the house.

They had now entered the front room where Martha was. It was certainly larger, and somewhat better furnished than the one she was in when Bodmer saw her in the morning. To one not acquainted with the poor in the more wretched localities of London it would have appeared miserable, but Catherine had been too well accustomed to privations lately, to find it objectionable on that account. An old table, two chairs, and a small tent-bed without a top, constituted the principal furniture in it. They found Martha still delirious, and evidently in great pain. Her fever was certainly less violent than it had been in the morning, probably from the decrease of her vital energy, for her mind was even more disturbed than when Bodmer first saw her.

She gazed at him for a moment when he entered, but without any expression of intelligence in her countenance. She then looked at her mother. Her brow somewhat contracted, as if endeavouring to collect her thoughts, but it appeared to be in vain, and she turned her head to the poor girl on the other side of the bed, who had hitherto been her nurse, as if to ask for an explanation. The girl apparently misunderstanding

her, put some fluid to her lips which had been ordered by the surgeon. Martha slightly raised her head to meet it, and the vague thought of her mother vanished. She laid quietly for some minutes, and then the idea appeared to recur to her, and she turned again towards her mother. Catherine, with one of those kind, indescribable smiles which women can call up when those they love are in sickness and want consolation; that peculiar smile which tries to cheer the sufferer, while the heart of the consoler is breaking, leant over her and kissed her. An uneasy look of astonishment was all the answer Martha gave; but presently she muttered something about little George, and then she tried to rise in her bed, saying she had forgotten to mend her father's stockings, and must do it immediately. They gently pressed her back, and then she looked at her mother again, and consciousness appeared to be returning, but another attack of pain withdrew her attention, and when it subsided, the exhaustion it produced was so great, that she fell into a sort of uneasy stupor.

Bodmer shortly afterwards left them, and Catherine made some hurried preparations for passing the night. She thanked the poor girl who, from pure sympathy, had nursed Martha so kindly, and told her she had better go to rest, as she would nurse her daughter now. The other, however, mildly, but firmly refused her. "She was, she said, better where she was, than anywhere she had been in lately, and she was not at all tired. Catherine then asked her if she would purchase a lemon for her to put in the water for Martha to drink? The girl readily consented, and asked whether she had not better get Catherine a little tea and bread and butter for her breakfast at the same time. The offer was readily accepted, but Catherine, on putting her hand in her pocket, found she had not a penny. She sighed, and told the girl she would not trouble her, as she had left her money at home.

"Oh, that's no matter, ma'am; I can lend it to you;" and she took from her bosom a few shillings wrapped up in brown paper, which she had secreted, and taking from them as much as she required, replaced the remainder. The poor girl had evidently much pleasure in assisting the afflicted mother. She perhaps felt she was doing a pious action—making an offering unto the Lord, but it was with money obtained from a forbidden source. The Christian law has, however, superseded the Levitical in many things, and doubtless the offering was accepted.

The next morning Bodmer and the surgeon called together. The girl was evidently worse — not the slightest hope of recovery remained. That mute intelligence which reigns amidst those engaged round a bed of sickness informed Catherine of the truth, and she turned her head aside to conceal her tears. When their visit had ended, they told the girl, who was still faithfully at her post, to come for some medicine; and Bodmer, after giving some instructions to Catherine, promised he would see her again in the evening. When clear of the house, the surgeon remarked that the poor girl's case was almost ended, and perhaps it would be saving time if they ordered a coffin for her.

"Can the mother afford to pay for one?"

"I am afraid not, for they are miserably poor."

"I will get one ordered by the parish, then, and you can remove her to her mother's house. You had better not let her be here."

"But perhaps your parish will object to the expense, as she belongs to ours; at the same time, I believe it would be a charity."

"I will manage it," said the Surgeon. "Our people are not bad fellows on the whole, though the law would make them so if it could."

The good-hearted surgeon was, however, in error. The undertaker would willingly have obliged him, but he said it was contrary to law. The girl must be buried

by one parish or the other. The Poor Law Board might and would, no doubt, object to such a circumstance, and the guardians were too much under its control to dare to disobey it. He had been a guardian, and therefore he knew what he was saying. He offered willingly to lend a shell for the purpose of removing the poor creature, and would let two of his workmen carry her to Elder-street, without making any charge for it. This was accepted, and the friends parted.

Martha continued in her delirium during the whole of the day. She was occasionally evidently in great pain, which, however, began to subside as evening came on, and the vital energies became weaker. When night arrived, dissolution was rapidly approaching, and then it was that Catherine experienced a great addition to her misery. In the next house, tenanted by the same wretched class of inmates as the one she was in, were some drunken sailors, making "night hideous" by their noise and blasphemy. So thin were the partitions, that every word was as plainly heard as if it had been uttered in the room she was sitting in. Martha from time to time appeared to listen, and a painful look of inquiry was then upon her face. At last one of the men broke out with a ribald song in so loud a tone that the dying girl was aroused by it, and uttered some almost inarticulate sentences, and mentioned the name of some man.

"Oh! do stop them, pray do," Catherine said to the girl, who had not quitted her the whole of the day.

The request was needless. Before Catherine had uttered it, the girl had left the room, and in a moment was in the next house. She accosted the seamen with great indignation, and accused them of cruelty in making such a noise when a poor creature was dying close to them. The fellows, when they clearly understood her, for they were more than half drunk, showed the respect that even the worst of their calling show to a dying

person; they immediately desisted, and expressed in their rough manner their sorrow at the circumstance. The girl returned, and found Martha still greatly disturbed. She was uttering rapidly incoherent sentences, but, as frequently happens, her mind was dwelling on circumstances which had long since taken place—things which had occurred to her in her infancy or early childhood. The excitement in a few minutes subsided, but it left her evidently weaker in the re-action. She remained now for some time hardly breathing, and as silent as death itself. Suddenly her lips moved as if she were speaking. Her mother and the girl listened attentively, and found she was repeating some simple prayers she had been accustomed to make each night before retiring to rest. She concluded with a little verse Catherine had taught her while yet almost an infant:—

> "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look upon a little child,
> Pity my simplicity,
> And teach me, Lord, to come to thee."

She repeated it without missing a word, slowly and so softly that it appeared rather like a materialised thought, than an articulated prayer. She then remained so quiet it would have been difficult to say whether she were in life or death, so still and gentle was her breathing. About midnight a step was heard upon the stairs, and immediately afterwards Dr. Bodmer entered the room. He had intended to have been with them at an earlier hour, but had been detained by a patient. He found Catherine leaning on the bed beside her child, and the girl was seated on a chair opposite to her. The dim candle had been placed on the hearth to screen the light from the dying girl's eyes. Catherine looked at him for a moment as he entered the room, and then mournfully raised her hands and let them fall again upon her knees; the girl merely rose to

him as he took his place at the foot of the bed. Not a word was spoken by either.

About an hour later Bodmer placed his hand on Martha's—it was already cold. Catherine followed his example, and the touch told all. She knelt by the side of the bed, and while giving full sway to her sorrow, prayed earnestly to her Maker. Her prayer was that of a broken-hearted woman of her class, simple, yet touching. She spoke not of submission to His will; she made no mention of His righteous judgment; she asked not for pardon nor help. It was comprised but of one oft-repeated sentence, yet so pathetically uttered, it must have been heard and heeded. "Oh! my God, pity me! pity my poor child! pity me!" In cases such as these, all attempts at consolation are useless, and Bodmer attempted none. He continued standing almost like a statue at the foot of the bed, watching silently but attentively the scene. The kind-hearted girl remained almost breathless, with a calm, sorrowful expression of countenance, but as speechless as Bodmer himself, and poor Catherine had for the moment ceased her prayer. The candle was burning so dimly that the room around them was almost in darkness, and all was as quiet as the grave.

"Mother!"

All were astonished—the sound was so hollow and unearthly. The dying girl's lips had not moved—no expression was in her eye—but the seal of death was becoming each moment more distinct upon her countenance—still the voice must have been her's.

"Mother!" again it exclaimed, in the same tone as before.

"My dear, what is it?"

"Mother, do forgive me, mother. God forgive me, I've been a wicked sinner."

Not another word was uttered by the motionless lips. Catherine, with awe in her voice, attempted to assure her she was forgiven, but the words were not com-

pleted. The girl rose from her chair, and appeared frightened. So peculiar was the scene, so solemn did it appear, so ghostly was the voice, that even the cold man of science was for the moment surprised. An instant's reflection told him the cause of the peculiarity of the tone; still he remained silent as the others. A few minutes later the last spark of life was extinct, and the poor child's miseries were over.

Catherine had now regained possession of her grief, and gave full sway to it. The immediately sad duties required were performed by Bodmer, assisted by the girl. He then left the bereaved mother to the care of her newly-found friend, and quitted the house. By six o'clock in the morning this untiring man had returned with the undertaker's men, and the body was removed to Catherine's room, taken from the shell, and laid upon the bed. He then conducted the poor mother back to her home, and afterwards went to his daily duties, leaving her to her sorrow undisturbed.

The remains of the poor girl remained on a bed in the crowded room for two days before Beuzeville's arrival. Her sisters and brothers were soon used to her sad presence, and she lay there like an exquisitely sculptured monument on a tomb. Three days after the father's return the funeral took place. Fortunately some of the sad facts attending his child's death were withheld from him, and he thus avoided much misery; but his grief at the time was heartrending. Although his family were then in intense poverty, he made some humble attempts at decent mourning in the dress both of himself and wife; and with that extraordinary feeling of respect the working classes of England are accustomed to show to the remains of their deceased relations, he declined receiving any assistance from the parish for the funeral, but bore it himself, although his family suffered severe privations for it afterwards. The only mourners were Catherine and her husband. They con-

sidered the deplorable condition of their children's dress would be disrespectful to their dear daughter. Sadly the humble procession moved to the grave; the earth covered the poor child, and her painful story remained only in the memories of those who had so fondly loved her.

Bodmer returned once more to the house in Bluegate-fields—it was to visit the poor girl who had been so kind to Martha in her illness. He justly considered that with so much kindness of heart and innate Christian feeling, she might readily be brought back to a life of respectability and virtue. He was not mistaken, for she willingly accepted the proposition. He knew most of the clergy in the neighbourhood, and had no difficulty in enlisting their sympathies in her favour. Before the end of a week the girl had been received as a penitent in the Magdalen Hospital.

Do not imagine, reader, that the end of poor Martha is either overdrawn or unnatural. On the contrary, nothing can be more common-place. Among the poor of our metropolis episodes similar to her's are of every-day occurrence. It would be tedious to number them by tens or hundreds—they may more readily be counted by thousands. Peculiar circumstances in the different cases, may offer considerable changes in the method of arriving at the grave, but her death-bed was far less cruel than many of her class. From one bridge in the London Docks twenty-seven are reported to have sought oblivion in death, and on more than one occasion latterly, the poor dying wretch has actually been placed in the streets, to avoid the temporary inconvenience the miscreant keeper of the house would have been put to, by allowing her to expire on the premises. If these asertions appear difficult of belief, ask any clergyman, medical officer of health, or police inspector attached to a poor neighbourhood, and he will confirm their perfect probability :—or, better still, apply to the Minister of Public Works or President of the Poor Law

Board, for either could prove the truth, far more readily than find an excuse for their indifference to the subject.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHOLERA IN 1849.

A LAPSE of twelve months has taken place in our narrative since the death of Martha, and we now take up the thread of it during the height of the cholera visitation in 1849. Notwithstanding the slow march of that scourge of heaven towards this country, giving ample time for making preparations for its reception; notwithstanding that the public press had, trumpet-tongued, given timely notice of its approach; when it arrived scarcely any adequate steps had been taken for avoiding it. In London, the rich alone had the power of protecting themselves from its attacks. They had the

* That drunkenness and profligacy, with their effects, accidents, and disease, increase in proportion with the overcrowding of the working classes, is singularly borne out by the statistics of the Metropolitan Hospitals. At the west end the poor are much dispersed, and cases of the kind at St. George's Hospital, do not exceed 25 per cent. of the assistant-surgeons' out-patients. At the Charing Cross, where they are more crowded, these cases exceed 30 per cent. At the Westminster Hospital they average 50 per cent. In the immediate vicinity of this hospital, and but at a short distance from the Houses of Parliament, Mr. Barnard Holt, the eminent surgeon, in his capacity of Medical Officer of Health, discovered, in 1859, no fewer than fifty rooms, each barely ten feet square, containing on an average six persons to each room. The most extraordinary example, perhaps, is that of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where it appears from an article in the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* (April, 1858), they amounted in that year to more than 15,500 patients—*the majority of that number being women and children.* In the London Hospital one-half, and in the Poplar Hospital 65 per cent. of the serious accidents are caused by intoxication.

possibility of leaving the crowded city and flying for refuge from its ravages to some healthy country locality, but the poor were obliged to remain, and receive nearly the whole of the shock. Long as its warning had been, the Government had made so few preparations to meet it, that its uncontrolled effects were in many parts terrible in the extreme. Occasionally it was most capricious in its attacks. In one street of small houses in Westminster, twenty-two were closed on one side of the way, each having at least one death in it, others two, and some even three; while on the opposite side of the road not a single fatal case, nor one serious attack, had occurred. Occasionally it would remain in one locality with fearful intensity for some time, and then, while at its height, without apparent cause, almost suddenly leave it and fly to another which, till then, had remained perfectly healthy, and there carry on its ravages with irresistible fury. Everywhere among the poor were sorrow and desolation. If in their own houses they had no cause to lament, in those of others dear to them its effects had been most cruel. Some of the episodes of that time which might be quoted, were of the most distressing description. Parents losing in one day two, three, and even four of their children, were circumstances of frequent occurrence. The public receptacles for their relief—it would be absurd to call them hospitals—were of the most miserable and inefficient description, in consequence of the wretched parsimony shown by the parochial and Government authorities. The medical practitioners in the metropolis, and, in fact, in every part of England, acted nobly on the occasion, but their numbers were too few to enable them to cope successfully with the disease, and among them a large proportion, in comparison with other professions, fell victims to their zeal. It was almost impossible for them to find effective assistants, and so scarce were expert and kind nurses that to obtain them appeared almost an impossibility. In the poorer portions of the eastern

districts the disease was especially severe, and among those who worked the hardest to combat it was Dr. Bodmer. He appeared indefatigable. He was engaged from early morning till late at night, and then so much more remained to be done that he was obliged to apply to the parish authorities for further assistance. They readily granted him the permission, but their liberality was useless, none unoccupied could be found.

One afternoon while the disease was at its height, he had entered his house for the purpose of hastily snatching some refreshment, when the door of his little dining-room was opened, and a friend, a surgeon to a West-end parish, entered. Bodmer, though pleased to see him, was in too much haste to think of compliment or courtesy, so he merely requested him to sit down while he finished his dinner.

"Bodmer," said the new comer, "I am almost distracted. I don't know what to do for an assistant. I have been driving round to every hospital in London for the purpose of finding one, but without effect. The last place I called at was the London Hospital, thinking I might pick up a student there, but they appear to be as much in want of help as I am. Can you tell me of one?"

"My dear fellow, I am as unfortunate as you are. I am not only obliged to visit and prescribe, but also to make up the medicines myself. Beyond that, no mother will allow her son to carry them out—naturally enough, perhaps—so I am obliged to make my paying patients send for the medicines themselves, at the risk of offending them."

"Have you much cholera about here?"

"In some parts it is very bad indeed, but principally among the poorest."

"At our end of the town it is also very fatal in many localities, and the worst of the matter is, that little or no preparation seems to have been made for its reception. I often think, if some of the scenes I witness,

occasioned by the indifference of the authorities to the miseries of the poor, were to take place in some rich foreign capital, what an immense amount of virtuous indignation it would elicit in this.

"You perfectly astonish me. I should have thought that, in a wealthy neighbourhood like yours, nothing would be wanting which could have afforded relief," remarked Bodmer, bolting his food as if he were eating against time for a wager. "You have but few poor in proportion to your means. In a poor parish like this, there may be some excuse for deficient arrangements. I must acknowledge they are willing enough here to assist the sick poor to the best of their ability; unfortunately, however, their ability is of the smallest."

"Those who imagine anything of the kind will make a most fearful blunder," said the visitor, laughing. "Like most other arrangements of the sort in this country, the accommodation and sympathy for the poor decreases exactly in proportion as the wealth of the district is the greater. I will, if you like, while you are eating, give you a description of my visit to one of the cholera hospitals in my neighbourhood, and then you may judge for yourself. It will be an excellent example of the theory, as the parish holds the concentration of all that is royal, noble, grand, virtuous, pious, learned, and patriotic in the nation. At least we are told so; and, as good subjects, we are bound to believe it.

"In my own parish I have under my management the cholera ward. As I happened to be two or three days since in ———street, I remembered that the cholera hospital for that neighbourhood was in it. I determined to visit it for the purpose of finding if I could, from its arrangements, what, if any, beneficial alterations I could make in my own. With some little difficulty I found the place. I went up a narrow passage by the side of a public-house, and at the extremity found the building. It was of the poorest description.

It had evidently, till very lately, been used as the workshop or store-rooms of some small tradesman in its vicinity. Its height was perhaps twenty-five or thirty feet, its breadth about eighteen, its depth thirty. It was divided into two floors, with two long narrow rooms on each floor. There was no internal stair-case. A sort of step-ladder conducted to the first floor, which was raised perhaps six feet above the level of the ground. Here was a small square landing, and from it the steps led to a similar landing on the second floor. The low basement appeared to be used as a store still, for it had no connexion with the establishment. On the first landing I saw the surgeon in charge of the sick; I explained to him the purport of my visit, and requested permission to visit the building. He readily consented. He informed me he was acting under the parish surgeon, who was so occupied with the numerous sick in private dwellings of the poor, that he could only visit the hospital once in the course of the day. During the remainder of the time it was under his sole management. He was assisted in his duties by his friend Mr. G., indicating a youthful-looking personage by his side, who was a pupil at the Westminster Hospital, but who had kindly left it for the time, to render him all the assistance in his power. Mr. G. seemed somewhat abashed by the notice taken of him, and after acknowledging the introduction, went up the steps to the second floor.

"We entered into the first room, which opened directly from the open air. There was only one small window in it, and that was at the farther extremity. This was the ward for the males. Small iron bedsteads were ranged side by side against the wall; so closely were they placed together, that it was difficult for a person to pass between them. On the first bed was a fine chubby, full-grown boy of perhaps six years of age. He was labouring under a severe fit of vomiting. After each successive attack, he raised his head from

the basin, which was placed upon his lap, and gazed in a terrified manner on the next bed. He had a reasonable excuse for his terror. There lay the corpse of a child about his own age, so close to him he could have touched it. The deep blue choleraic hue was upon its countenance, and its sunken eyes were still unclosed. On the next bed was a powerful brewer's drayman, now utterly prostrate; the other beds were tenanted by the sick in different stages of the disease. The friends of two or three patients were present, and at the extreme end, standing by the side of a bedstead, was a sickly-looking Catholic priest attending a dying member of his creed.

"My conductor explained to me the cases and their treatment as we passed along. He was a singular proof how much the continued vicinity and contact with misery and disease deadens the nerves to the situation, without diminishing the innate humanity of the man. He spoke of his different patients without the slightest apparent sympathy, and yet during the three weeks he had been on constant duty, not an unkind, angry, nor impatient word had he used to any one. He had not, as he said, had three hours consecutive sleep at any time. He had frequently been awakened seven or eight times the same night, and each time to attend another death-bed, but not one word of objection or fatigue had ever escaped him. His dismal duty over, he would again lay himself upon his bed, as coolly as an ordinary mortal would after a fatiguing day's exertion, to be awoke again, perhaps, in another hour to perform a similar painful duty. He was in that place so accustomed to the society of death, that the grim spectre and he might almost be said to have occupied the same pillow. He spoke of death as a capricious, but not unfair antagonist, from whom he was engaged in snatching lives. If he succeeded, he justly gloried in the results; if death got the mastery, he admitted the defeat without animosity. Death had behaved very

fairly to him, personally, in the struggle, and he had no right to complain of his behaviour. Dwelling together in a manner in the same small rooms night and day, his powerful opponent might at any time have carried him off, but up to the present moment he had behaved in a very honourable manner. He had shown himself a '*Beau Joueur*.'

"'Now,' said he, stopping at a bed, 'I am not a little proud of this case; bad as it looks, I am certain I shall be able to save it.'

"The patient merely looked at him, but without any expression of satisfaction or interest in the matter.

"'Here,' said he, going to the bed-side of the brewer's drayman, 'is one that will slip through my fingers. Whenever I notice that icy coldness of the tongue, nothing will do any good.'

"The patient looked at him with perfect choleraic apathy. When he spoke of the certainty of the poor man's death in that unreserved manner, I answered him very softly, that the patient might not hear us. He understood me directly.

"'One of the most remarkable features in the disease,' he said, 'is the astonishing indifference the patients show to the probable fatal termination of their cases. I hold it,' he continued, 'as a kind dispensation of heaven to destroy the cruel mental anxiety which would otherwise be occasioned in a person attacked by this terrible malady.'

"He then described his mode of treatment, speaking highly in favour of wet blankets, which, however, he admitted frequently failed. He then asked me if I could suggest anything; he would be very happy to try it for me, and let me know the result.

"This coolness and indifference in his conversation in presence of the sick was the more surprising when compared with the extraordinary sympathy he showed to their weeping relatives. He appeared to have the

most exquisite sensibility for mental suffering, while sickness or death appeared to move him but little.

"On leaving the room I again noticed the terrified boy gazing at his ghastly neighbour. When on the landing-place, outside it, I asked the surgeon why he allowed the dead body of the child to remain on the bed.

"'I have no room for it anywhere else,' he answered. The only place I have for those who die is under where we are standing, and that is now so full there is not space for another, but I will have it covered over immediately.'

"He then called the nurse. No answer. He called again, but she did not appear.

"'Where can that woman have hidden herself,' he said. 'Oh, here she comes, drunk again!'

"At that moment an old woman was seen reeling up the passage towards us.

"'Come up directly, and cover that poor child over with something.'

"The woman made no answer, but passed us.

"'Here,' said he, 'is my laboratory and sleeping-room.'

"We entered; the room was the same length as the one we had visited, but divided into two parts by a wretched ragged curtain in the middle. The further part contained a miserable tent-bed without hangings; a strong fire was burning in the grate, making the room intolerably hot; on it was a large saucepan containing some decoction.

"'My bed,' said he, 'has little to boast of, but I merely lie down on it in my clothes. It would be impossible to dress and undress every time I am called up.'

"In the front of the curtain was an old table and two or three chairs. This was kept as his reception-room. On leaving it, I again looked into the ward where the dead child lay; the nurse was clumsily placing a coarse gauze over it, for she was so tipsy she could hardly stand.

"'How can you allow that old woman to remain here,' I said, 'in that condition?'

"'What am I to do? If I send her away, I might easily get a worse. The other night I was called up to see a fresh case; on going into the ward I looked round for the nurse, but could not at first see her. Presently I found her insensibly drunk, lying on the bed with a man who had died of the cholera half-an-hour before. They are to be pitied,' he continued, 'after all; none of them have been used to the work, and they have been driven to accept it as an occupation, not from any inclination or charitable feeling, but from sheer destitution. When they come here, they soon get disgusted or frightened, and immediately seek support and consolation from gin. Unfortunately, to indulge in it, they are not over-scrupulous in what manner they obtain the money. Now come up-stairs, and I will show you the female ward.'

"I followed him up, and in so doing disturbed the student who had taken refuge there. He immediately descended on seeing us, and we entered the room. It was as totally unfit for the purpose for which it was being used as it possibly could be. The beds were as crowded as those in the men's ward, and as close together. The room was equally badly ventilated, and the disease as terribly severe. We then went into the third room, which was used as a convalescent ward for the women. They seemed greatly pleased at having so narrowly escaped death, and warmly thanked the surgeon for the unremitting attention and kindness he had shown them. There was no apathy there, I can assure you.

"After he had explained the most interesting cases, we descended to the lower landing-place; here we again disturbed the student—he was at that moment occupied with his lunch. He had a pewter pot filled with porter, and some bread and cheese; these were placed on a small ledge beside him, which also bore a small

box of very British-looking cigars. Finding he could not very easily escape, he politely invited me to partake of the refreshment, which I as politely declined. In fact, the knife he was using looked too much like a second-hand scalpel to please my taste, even if I had had any appetite. While speaking with him a poor Irishwoman weeping bitterly came up the steps.

"'For the love of Heaven and the Virgin,' said she, 'do come and see me child: I've another took now, and sure all of 'em will go. What I'll do I don't know at all.'

"'My good woman, I can't leave this place, you know,' said the surgeon. 'You must go for some one else.'

"'But come you must and shall,' she said, getting enraged. 'You're paid for it, ain't you, and you shall do it.'

"'Now don't be unreasonable; you must see yourself I cannot leave.'

"'Why don't you bring your child here?' I asked.

"'And why should I bring him here, ain't three of my childer dead now beneath my feet, and I a happy mother only yesterday morning?'

"Here her grief became uncontrollable. I glanced at the surgeon to know if she stated the truth.

"'It's unfortunately the case,' he said; 'they died last night. They were, in fact, brought here in a dying state.'

"The Catholic priest hearing the poor woman's lamentations, came out and kindly attempted to console her. She listened to him respectfully for a moment, and then burst out with,—'But while your reverence is talking ain't me child dying; will nobody help me?'

"The student put down the pewter pot out of which he had been drinking, and after hastily wiping his lips with his pocket handkerchief, said, 'Come along, I'll go with you, only don't make that noise, people will think we're mad.'

"They then started off together, the poor woman promising him all sorts of blessings as they went along, and for which he seemed to be perfectly indifferent. The priest re-entered the room, and proceeded to the bedside of the man he was attending.

"'Have you many of them here?' I asked, looking towards the priest.

"'Not many, but they never fail to come immediately they are sent for; they're an energetic set of fellows those Catholic priests, after all; so, in fact, are the Protestant."

"'Do the clergy of the Church of England often attend here?'

"'No, they attend principally at the dwellings of the poor: but there are not enough of them. The parochial clergy are indefatigable, but those lazy dons of the Dean and Chapter never make their appearance. We have Dissenters now and then, but not so frequently as the others; perhaps, after all, they would be found to be in proportion to their numbers.

Bodmer had now finished his meal. "Excuse me," he said to his visitor, "but I must leave you, I have so many patients to see." His friend wished him good morning, and started towards the west end. As Bodmer was quitting the house, a shabby-looking girl entered the surgery.

"If you please, Sir, will you come and see a poor woman who is at our house, very ill?"

"Where do you live?"

"Number seven, Hare-court, Basket-alley."

"Very well," said Bodmer, writing down the address on a slip of paper. "I'll be with you, but it will be late, as I have a great many to see. She must take her turn."

Bodmer looked somewhat ruefully down the long list of names of individuals he had to visit. Having arranged them in proper order, he started on his course. As the reader may perhaps not be aware to what an

extent the poor suffered during that visitation, we will accompany Bodmer to some of the houses he called at.

The first was the dwelling of a poor woman suffering from the disease. She occupied with her son and daughter one small room; the son was between eleven and twelve years of age. He was generally employed as a reading-boy at a neighbouring printer's, but at that time he was out of work; the poor woman and her daughter earned a scanty livelihood by working from early morning till late at night, at a wholesale parasol maker's.

On a truckle bed in one corner of the room lay the corpse of her daughter; she had died about two hours before Bodmer entered. The last sad duties had not been performed, and she lay there exactly as she had expired. No want of natural affection had kept the poor woman from performing these offices, but she was so utterly prostrated by the disease that she could not move. Her only nurse, her only help in this peculiarly distressing malady, was her only son. The lad did all in his power to assist her, but of course his aid was not sufficient. Sorrow for the death of his sister, added to his inability, and his terror at the probable fate of his mother, still increased it. To obtain additional aid was impossible. The well-known sympathy and charity of the poor for each other was as beautiful as ever, but there was too much sickness in their own family circles to allow them to extend their exertions much beyond them. Bodmer prescribed for the poor woman, and sent the boy immediately for the medicine; before he returned his parent was no more. Both mother and sister, his only relations, were dead, and the poor lad was alone and desolate in the world.

The next was at the dwelling of a pile driver, employed on some engineering works going forward in the London Docks. His family consisted of his wife and four children, of various ages, but all young. As usual in his class, the whole family inhabited one small

room; his earnings would not allow him better accommodation. In that small space they eat, drank, and slept. The man had left home before five o'clock in the morning, to go to his labour. His work was of the most severe and fatiguing description, and when the gang knocked off for dinner, he was hungry, thirsty, and much exhausted. The men usually separated at that time into two parties, one went to the nearest public house, the other generally sought some out-of-the-way corner, where their wives brought them their dinners. He was among the latter. The women were then waiting, but his wife was not among the number. He waited somewhat sulkily for, perhaps, half an hour, but she did not appear. His temper did not improve by the delay; and the rough, coarse, but good-tempered jokes of his companions at the circumstance made it still worse. He walked gloomily aside to avoid them, and seated himself upon the ground. Another quarter of an hour passed, but his wife came not. The time was now approaching for the work to recommence. He had now no possibility of getting his meal, so he went into a public-house and called for a pint of porter. He drank it, and again went to his work. For a short time the narcotic and stimulant contained in the beer supported him, but, as usual, it soon left a lassitude, even greater than that he had experienced before he had taken it. He was naturally amongst the most sober of his class, but his class are not of the most sober. He again sought help from the beer, and again felt refreshed by it; and this he had repeated three or four times before his labours for the day were ended. When leaving the docks he began to reflect how much he had been obliged to spend in beer in consequence of the negligence of his wife. To console himself he accepted the invitation of some fellow-workmen to partake of some porter; and he afterwards hurried home half tipsy, muttering fearful threats against her. The poor woman's treatment promised

to be most severe, for her husband in size and strength was almost a giant. He at last arrived at home, and angrily burst open the door of his room. He entered, and was sobered in an instant. On one bed was stretched his wife and youngest son, on the other his eldest daughter—all dead. Bodmer had just succeeded in sending the other two children to the hospital. The man looked round him for some moments as if thunderstruck, and then pressing both hands upon his brow uttered one superhuman, fearful cry of anguish. Two female neighbours were there, but they spoke not one word of consolation, the poor fellow's grief was too terrible for that. The giant despair had placed his heavy hand upon him, and he sank—literally sank to the earth beneath it. There on his knees, helpless as a child, sorrowful as a loving woman, was that rough, coarse, athletic man. He said not a word, but with the tears pouring down his cheeks, and outstretched arms, he looked imploringly in the faces of those around him, powerless to ask, and ignorant of what to ask for.

The next visit he made was to a new case. The patient was a poor old woman in the last stage of the disease. Her nurse was a sickly, emaciated woman—her daughter evidently—but just risen from a bed of sickness herself. The room was clean, scrupulously so, but almost destitute of furniture; little besides the bed the invalid was on and a table was in it. Both mother and daughter had supported themselves by working for an outfitter. They had evidently been in better circumstances; worse than they were then in it would have been impossible for them to have experienced. The daughter's voice was both weak and mild, showing when she spoke a gentle disposition, oppressed by misfortune. She was then in deep sorrow, the dangerous position of her parent being but too evident. She and her mother had lived, or rather struggled on, together for many years (the daughter was no longer young), not waging the battle of life, but timidly submitting to its attacks.

The poor remains of their former respectability and wealth had gradually faded away as each successive shock was felt. Their daily earnings barely sufficed for their daily wants; yet those wants were of the humblest description. No appeal had ever been made by them for charity or sympathy. That quiet dignified behaviour under misfortune and privation, which is so common among English women, yet so little noticed by the novelist or public, was all-powerful in them. They formed themselves their mutual support and protection. The mother shielded from the daughter the blow struck at them by adversity, and the daughter supported the mother when fainting from the exertion. They relied on each other for sympathy and protection, and neither had been wanting to the appeal. Their fellow-lodgers respected them, but there was little intimacy between them; for though kind and civil to all, they appeared to be of very retired taciturn habits. Whence they came, or what had been their previous history, no one knew.

The daughter had been the first to suffer from the disease. When she was attacked by it the mother imprudently applied to one of the curses of a poor neighbourhood—the quack doctor—for relief. This fellow, when he saw the position the daughter was in, threw himself upon the poor couple like a vampire. His first move was to frighten the mother—he vividly described to her the danger her daughter was in—his next was to make her believe that he alone could save her. The small stock of money they possessed was soon absorbed. The daughter was decidedly better, but the fellow said he would not yet pronounce her out of danger. They gently hinted their poverty. He told them his time was so occupied by those who paid him, that it would be unjust to his own family to attend to those who did not. There was the parish surgeon for those who were destitute. She had merely to call herself a pauper, and she could get an order from the guardians, and then she

would be sure the workhouse surgeon or his assistant would attend them as soon as he had time. It might be a day, but she would be sure to see him at last. He (the quack doctor) paid heavy poor's-rates, and the poor ought to be attended out of that rate. He had already charged her less than others purely out of a kind feeling, but he could not attend gratuitously. He then looked at the daughter, and shook his head in a mysterious manner. The poor mother was frightened, and begged of him to continue his visits. "She would pay him regularly," she said, "if she sold everything she had." The fellow knew perfectly well the class of woman he was talking with. He speculated on the extreme aversion which poor respectable women have to ask assistance from the parish. They do not doubt the skill of the practitioner, they do not doubt his humanity, but they appear to hold the application for his services as a want of respect to a beloved child or relation, and they will not allow themselves to rely on the parish for relief. Frequently they will apply to the druggist's shopman, whom they are obliged to pay for his absurd or dangerous opinion, rather than risk the seeming disregard to the patient's feelings involved in employing the superior experience of the parish surgeon.

The mother now began to pledge some of the very few remaining superfluous articles of dress which were still in their possession. The money soon went. The daughter was evidently better. "A little more of the same treatment would certainly restore her to health, but a relapse (which the quack doctor said was of very frequent occurrence in the disease, if the greatest caution were not observed) would certainly prove fatal. It invariably was so. In his experience he had never known a relapse which had not carried the patient off."

Her furniture now began to disappear piece by piece. Before the daughter had fully recovered, almost all of it had gone. The quack doctor still continued his

visits, but, finding no money was forthcoming, he determined to be charitable—he would give them credit for the future from the great respect he had for them. They were grateful for his kindness, accepted his offer, and thus incurred a debt. The daughter recovered, and they had then to redeem the clothes in pawn, as well as pay off the amount due to the charlatan for his attendance. Labour, incessant labour, was required to accomplish it; but with that indomitable perseverance which women so frequently show in circumstances of the kind, they attempted it. To obtain their end the sooner, stricter economy was practised in their diet. To the superficial observer this in itself would have appeared an impossibility, but they accomplished it. Vegetables, bad fruit, and bread are not expensive articles in poor neighbourhoods, and on these they lived, and the result was, the mother was attacked by the disease. The quack now refused to attend them, his debt not being yet liquidated, and assistance was requested from the parochial authorities. When Bodmer arrived the case was hopeless—the woman was expiring. What became of the daughter heaven alone, perhaps, knows.

When Bodmer got into the street he looked at his list. "Dennis Sullivan, lodging at Mrs. Flannigan's, No. 6 Hairbrain-court." He had considerable difficulty in finding the locality; but, thanks to the good offices of a policeman, he at last succeeded. His patients were a family of intending Irish emigrants. They were all that were left of several families closely connected by marriage, who had suffered both by the fever and famine in 1847. Finding their village intolerable after the deaths of so many of their relatives, they determined on quitting Europe for ever. The father, his wife and son, the latter a young man of nineteen or twenty years of age, first left Ireland. They landed in Wales and travelled almost barefooted through England, trusting to their labour, first in the hay-field, then in

the harvest, to cover their expenses. As usual, their wardrobe and a portion of their household goods were carried with them, forming two large bundles of enormous size; that indescribable tin saucepan, without which a party of Irish tramps would probably be as much at a loss as a swarm of bees without their queen, formed the apex of the largest bundle. Two carried each a load, the third rested; the wife taking her turn with the father and son. They struggled and laboured on till harvest was over, and they then shaped their course direct to London. By some unknown means—for not one of the family could write—the remaining relatives received notice it was time to leave Ireland and join the others in London. On receipt of this intelligence, the old grandmother packed up the few remaining trifles they possessed; and, taking the two grandchildren with her, came as deck passengers on board the steamer to London. The old woman's feelings must have been of a mournful character when quitting, at more than seventy years of age, her mud hovel and native village, where she had witnessed the births, deaths, and marriages of so many that were dear to her. With all the faults of the low Irish, and their name is legion, they have one beautiful characteristic—intense family affection—and that, doubtless, supported the old woman on her journey. They arrived in London, and so perfect had their instructions been, that they went direct to the room occupied by the son and his wife. It was low, dark, and badly ventilated, but cheap; yet it was, they thought, when they engaged it, but for a short time only they should want it. The joy of the family was great at meeting again, and they showed it in the detestable manner so customary both with the low English and Irish—they purchased a quantity of whiskey to celebrate the event, and all drank of it to excess. The night was hot, damp, and close; the window was unclosed, and a filthy open drain, carrying off the refuse and sewage of the court,

ran beneath it. The next morning the whole family were in a very sickly condition, and they again resorted to their panacea—whiskey—for relief. As naturally might have been expected, the spirit increased the intensity of the malady; but they determined to wait till the next morning before taking further remedies, thinking it possible the symptoms might pass away. They were in error; the next morning a fellow-lodger was obliged to apply for them to the parish for relief, and Bodmer, taking them in their turn, arrived at their house in the evening. When he entered the room, a singular yet solemn sight presented itself. The evening had nearly closed in. There were two lighted candles in the room, but placed beside those who would never see again. On the bare floor lay two bodies, the grandmother and one grandchild, with the usual attributes of Catholic worship upon them. Opposite, side by side, on a ragged bed on the floor, were ranged the father, wife, and another child, all stricken down by the disease, and were suffering from it in its worst state. The eldest son was for the moment absent, probably seeking assistance. On his knees, beside the father, whose head was raised upon a pillow formed by one of the bundles, was a Catholic priest administering the last consolations of religion. He had attempted to obtain his confession, but the poor fellow was too far gone to make it, and the priest was then administering conditional absolution. Behind him stood a poor woman holding the oil for extreme unction when the priest should be ready to administer it. The respect for religious observances, so marked in the peasantry of their country, was distinctly visible in the countenances of the mother and sick child; so strong was it, that reverence overcame the peculiar expression the disease had stamped upon their faces.

Bodmer silently left the room from a feeling of respect for the functions the priest was celebrating, and remained for a few minutes outside the room-door.

Whilst there, his attention was called to a violent dispute which was being carried on, on the landing over his head. There were two voices, a man and a woman's, engaged in it. She was apparently endeavouring to hinder him from entering a room, while the man was kicking and striking violently at the door, trying to burst it open. Bodmer went up-stairs to ascertain more perfectly the cause of the dispute. He there found the woman of the house and an old man. He was tall, thin, miserably shabby in his dress, and appeared half distracted. He and his wife resided in that room. They had evidently formerly been in better circumstances. They mixed but little with their fellow-lodgers, were exceedingly quiet and reserved, and nothing was known of their previous history. The wife had the day before been attacked by premonitory symptoms, and was nursed by her husband with great kindness and affection. The next morning, Asiatic cholera, in its worst form, had set in. The poor old man was now almost beside himself. Both he and his wife had that intense aversion the respectable poor have against applying for parochial relief. From the few pence he had, he purchased at a druggist's shop some cholera medicine, and he was assured at the time, that no one who had ever used it had fallen a victim to the disease. We are easily persuaded to believe that the result we hope for will occur, and the old man returned home completely re-assured. The poor woman took the medicine, but her husband's faith in the nostrum was soon shaken—she rapidly got worse. He applied again to the druggist for advice and assistance. He was again completely assured, there was but one thing wanting—a larger dose of the medicine—it occasionally failed the first time, but very rarely the second. He purchased some more and took it home to his wife. She swallowed it with difficulty, but no good effect arose from it; on the contrary, she evidently was fast sinking under the effects of the disease. He again rushed to the druggist,

but in his hurry, on closing the room-door, the handle of the lock came off in his hand.

Having obtained the medicine, he rapidly returned; but when he arrived at home, he was unable to open the room-door in consequence of the accident which had happened to the lock. In his hurry and anxiety, his presence of mind completely forsook him; he placed a teacup with a broken handle containing the medicine on the floor, and attempted with all the energy in his power to force the door open, but it was beyond his strength. He not only kicked it, but struck it with his hands till they bled with the force of his blows, leaving on the door, which yielded not, the stains of the blood. The mistress of the house, fearing the door would be burst off its hinges, attempted to prevent him, but she merely increased his fury, and a scuffle had commenced between them, the woman calling loudly for help the whole time.

Bodmer interfered, and, by his calm, cool manner, succeeded for a moment in claiming the attention of the poor man. On hearing his explanation, Bodmer found again, as he had often in his professional experience found before, the tremendously sublime, and the sub-timely ridiculous, stood side by side. In his hurry the old man had put the handle of the door into his pocket and forgotten it. Bodmer in a moment fitted it to the lock and opened it. A momentary glance into the room told all. The old woman was at the moment dying; no human skill could be of the slightest avail. The poor old man advanced to the bed, and lifting the dying woman's head with his left hand, attempted, with terror on his face, to place the tea-cup to her lips; all was useless. Bodmer, without speaking to the poor fellow, or letting him know of his profession, left him to the care of the landlady. The change of mind in the old man from his rage at not being able to open the door, to his grief and alarm at finding his wife dying, was not greater than that which had taken place in the

Irish virago (the landlady) when she understood the cause of his violent behaviour. Her voice, before so harsh and shrill, was now mild and gentle, and she endeavoured to assist the poor man in the kindest manner possible.

On entering the room below Bodmer found the priest still there, and the son returned with the assistant of a neighbouring medical man. A few words passed between the latter and Bodmer, upon which the assistant promised to take charge of the case, and the Doctor left the house to visit the next on his list.

It was now quite dark, but Bodmer had still three more patients to visit. The first was to a young woman, the wife of a sailor. He was then at sea on board an East Indiaman, but the ship was expected home daily. She had made England about a fortnight since, and was now beating up Channel against a light easterly breeze. The couple had been married about two years, and had one child. The husband was a remarkably fine young fellow, good-tempered, brave, and generous; not particularly intelligent, but of an honest, affectionate disposition. His wife was a very amiable, mild young woman of very unattractive appearance. She was fully aware of the fact, and often wondered how such a handsome man as her husband could have taken a fancy to her, "he who could have made any young woman love him, whose appearance pleased him." She was short, of a sallow complexion, and deeply marked with the small-pox, beyond these imperfections she somewhat hobbled in her walk, from a slight malformation in one of her feet. If love had been blind on behalf of her husband, he had seen clearly enough when acting for the wife, and the result was, an intensity of affection on her part it would have been impossible to have surpassed.

Her first pregnancy had disappointed their hopes. In consequence of a severe fright she had received, the child had been born prematurely, and died a few days

after its birth. When her husband left her for the Calcutta voyage she was expecting in a few months again to be a mother. The small amount of advance money he had received, he had paid her, but this lasted but a short portion of the time he was absent. She struggled hard to support herself and succeeded, but the difficulty was the greater in consequence of her condition, and this again was augmented by her naturally delicate constitution. She bore up against all; the child was at last born, and Bodmer attended her as the patient of a maternity charity in the neighbourhood.

The text—"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born in the world"—was never more clearly proved than in her case. It was not only a fine healthy child, but the mother, by that facility of perception peculiar to young married women, discovered in its face a remarkable likeness to its father. Another source of joy was opened to her—she had feared she would not have been able to suckle her child, but nature had given her a bountiful supply of milk, and she was perfectly happy.

She now worked on for some months, and at last received the joyful intelligence that she would soon behold her husband. She had received a letter from him, bearing the Falmouth post mark, telling her he hoped to be in London in less than a fortnight. "That he should leave the ship the moment it arrived at Gravesend, and would be with her in two hours afterwards, if he had to walk for it."

The child had been out of health for some days before Bodmer was called in. The amount of nourishment she had hitherto possessed for it had fallen off, and her baby did not take readily to artificial food. Her own health also suffered. Premonitory symptoms of cholera appeared, but these were neglected, as she wished to avoid the expense of medicine. The flow

of milk suffered in consequence, and she took, upon the advice of a female acquaintance, a considerable quantity of porter to increase it. "It was cheaper than medicine," she said, "and would strengthen both her and her child." The quantity of food for the infant was possibly increased by it, though the quality was deteriorated; but the porter, instead of stopping the choleraic symptoms, aggravated them. The mother got rapidly worse, and the child's health decreased in proportion, but her mental energy still supported her. At last she determined to apply for medical assistance, but on reflection she thought she might be better on the morrow; if not, she would definitively apply for advice. For her the morrow never came. The same afternoon she was attacked; the same night she died.

She suffered from Asiatic cholera in its most terrible form, causing distressing faintness; and diarrhœa attacked the child. The poor mother was not only suffering fearfully from the disease, but from a state of mind scarcely less terrible. The consciousness of inevitable death was before her, and probably the same fate for her child. The power of affection in a loving woman was singularly proved in her case. The notoriously peculiar apathy of cholera had vanished, and the most distressing anxiety of mind prevailed, not for herself, but for her child. "If she could only be certain she could leave him, baby, she should die happy." She wanted for no sympathy nor assistance from her fellow-lodgers. She was much liked by them for her gentle, amiable manners, and the near approach of her husband's arrival contributed an additional interest in her. Every one advised her, every one had a remedy of her own, but every one did more harm than good.

When Bodmer arrived he found four women in the room, besides the invalids. A candle on the table dimly lighted up the scene. On the bed was the mother; her eyes fixed on the women, who were gathered round the infant. At a glance, Bodmer saw

there was no hope for either parent or child. The expression of the mother's face was truly extraordinary. The blue tinge of cholera was over it, the eye was sunk, but her interest in the child beamed through all. The infant was in the lap of one of the women, who was attempting to feed it with a little arrowroot one of them had brought with her; but a low plaintive cry was all the effect their kind attentions produced. The women looked in Bodmer's face as he approached them, but they asked him no questions, for a perfect intelligence existed among them. The mother watched them with intense anxiety, and she seemed to understand them.

"Give me baby, Mrs. Jones; I think I can take him, bring him to me," she said pettishly.

The child was brought to her, and she made an effort to raise herself and give it the breast. Bodmer advised her not to attempt it, but she paid no attention to his remark. She was, of course, unsuccessful; the child merely cried more peevishly than before, and turned its head aside.

"My precious, my baby, my own darling, do now, my precious," she said to it, in tones so exquisitely clear and gentle, the voice of the angel she was shortly to be seemed mingled with them. "Now do, my darling."

It was useless; and the poor creature was sinking under the fatigue the effort had cost her, when a stout, motherly good-natured-looking woman advanced, exclaiming, "Give me the child, my dear, let me try." She immediately placed the infant to her own breast. The kind creature went to the other side of the room with the baby, keeping it out of sight at the time, so as to let the mother think that it fed, though it did not. The child was insensible to her kindness; after a feeble effort it relinquished its attempt.

(It was a very bold action of that good-natured woman's. It would be difficult to imagine one requiring greater courage.)

The mother attempted to express her gratitude, but could not. She remained quite quiet for a few moments, and then beckoned Bodmer towards her. She attempted to whisper something, but had hardly the strength. He brought his ear close to her lips.

"Save baby for him," she said, "and I'll always pray for you. I know you can't save me."

Bodmer did not answer her; he merely placed his hand in an assuring manner on her shoulder, and gave her a look of kindness which signified nothing. His mind had one consolation, the mother would die the first; and that heavy pang, the knowledge of her infant's death, would be spared her. He went through the useless ceremony of asking one of the women to come round to his house for some medicine, and then proceeded on his next visit.

"Thomas Wilson, No. 6, Hand and Shear's-court."

Fortunately for Bodmer, he had visited this place more than once; he had consequently no difficulty in finding it. The house was at the extremity of the court, and was kept by an old jobbing carpenter. It contained four rooms, three of which were let off to lodgers, the fourth he occupied with his wife. He was poor—miserably poor—but a kind-hearted, charitable fellow. He had called on Bodmer in the morning to request his attendance, although for an individual to whom he was a total stranger, and he had waited at home impatiently the whole day expecting him.

"I'm so glad you are come, doctor," he said, "though I'm afraid it will be of no use after all; the poor fellow is going fast, it appears to me."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know at all. He's a well-spoken young fellow, and his wife's a remarkably civil, kind creature. They came here last night to look for lodgings, but there's none to let in the whole place, we're so very crowded. I noticed when they came up the court they looked very ill, the husband especially. He was lean-

ing on her arm and looked ready to drop. He could hardly walk, he was so weak. When they came as far as here they asked me if I knew where they could be taken in. I told 'em I could not. They turned round to go away, when the poor fellow staggered and then fell down. Well, we brought him up to the pavement and set him with his back against the wall, while my old woman went to get him a glass of water. When she was gone, I asked the wife what was the matter with her husband."

"'I don't know, I'm sure," she said; 'he was taken ill last night, and the other people in the house advised us to take him over to St. Thomas's Hospital; they said he would be taken in there, and be properly treated as well. So we went there together, and when we arrived they would not admit him, although he was so ill he could hardly stand. We went back again, but when we got to the house, they wouldn't let us in, because they said we owed a fortnight's rent, and the little furniture we had, wouldn't cover what was owing. They'd already let the room to three Irish labourers, who were going to America, and here we are wandering about and don't know where to lay our heads."

"'Why,' said I, 'that's very unlike poor people in general to treat others in that way.'

"'That's the way, though, they've treated us,' she said. Well, Sir, I asked them where the house was, for I thought it wasn't possible; but it was, for I went there and found everything she said was true.

"Why don't you ask them to take you into the workhouse?" I said.

"'Because I must leave him if I do, and I'd rather die first! Pray do something for us,' she said.

"There was something about the woman's voice when she said that I couldn't stand up against. I didn't much like letting 'em in, for I thought it might be the cholera he'd got, and then perhaps my other lodgers might go, and I'm too poor myself to put up with a

loss like that. However, I told 'em the only place I had got was my cellar where I work—if they liked to accept of that they might. It was bad enough, God knows, but it wasn't worse than the street. She thanked me for it, however, and we got her husband down between us. This morning he was took much worse, and I came for you. There's no use hiding the truth; it's the cholera and nothing else, and I'm sure the poor fellow's dying now. If he is, he's less to be pitied than his wife. Ah! she's a good creature, she is."

Bodmer entered with him; the old man procured a candle, and they proceeded to the back of the house. The old man then conducted him into the cellar. It was with some difficulty they could get there without falling, for there were only a few rough, broken steps to assist them. The cellar had neither door nor window, but was entered directly from the back-yard. It might perhaps have been nine feet square, and was so low a tall man could not have stood upright in it. An old carpenter's bench literally comprised the whole of its furniture. On a heap of chips and shavings placed near the wall was the patient; seated behind him, with his head placed in her lap, was his wife. Bodmer perceived as the old man held up the candle that the poor fellow's case was hopeless.

"My good woman," he said to the wife, a poor emaciated, broken-down creature, "you had better let your husband go to the workhouse; you can do him no good here."

The poor woman raised her head to reply, but could not find words. The expression of her countenance was, however, most eloquent. Her face was covered with tears, and a desolation more profound than was painted on it, it would be impossible to imagine. She looked piteously at Bodmer, and then raised her right hand two or three times as if she would have spoken. She let it fall again without uttering a word, and bend-

ing her face on her husband's head, who was too far gone to be sensible of her grief, gave full sway to an uncontrollable sorrow. Bodmer approached her, and said in a kind manner:

"Now do take my advice, and let him be removed; you will probably take the disease yourself if you do not."

"I will never leave him," she said, "but if you could send us a little relief to-night, I should be so thankful. It won't be much we shall want; I know I've taken the disease myself, and I'm not sorry for it. I only hope we shall be buried together."

Finding the poor creature intractable, Bodmer left her, and proceeded immediately to the house of the relieving officer, who made with him such arrangements for the comfort of the poor creatures as the exigencies of the case would allow.

Bodmer, though well acquainted with the locality he was now in, had considerable difficulty in finding the dwelling of his next patient. He searched for it as well as he could, and endeavoured to read the address on his list by the light of a gas lamp, but without success. It was now nearly eleven o'clock, and with the exception of the immediate vicinity of the gin palaces, all was still in the neighbourhood. Where labour is accustomed to dwell, early hours are generally kept. Bodmer inquired for it of a man whom he met. "He had never heard of such a place, and he had lived about there pretty well all his life, too." The Doctor thought he must have mistaken the name, and he took out his list again. No, he was quite right, it was the address. "Never heard of it," said the man again, as he walked away. Bodmer at last saw a policeman, and made the inquiry of him.

"Well, Sir, if it's the place I mean, its in the next street; but I think it hardly can be, for it's a very disreputable one. Its ten to one if you go there, that you're not robbed before you come out. There's more

than a hundred people live in the court, and there ain't five honest ones out of the lot; it's about the worst place in London, besides, the cholera has broken out there."

"That is just the reason I want to find it," said Bodmer. "I am a surgeon, and they've sent for me to see a case."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Sir; if you'll come this way, I'll show you where it is."

He then conducted Bodmer into the next street, and taking him up a passage, showed him the entrance of the court. Although the houses were very low, being only two-roomed, it was with difficulty he could find his way, it was so intensely dark. A gas-lamp was at the top of the passage, which threw a faint light down it, but it did not reach the court. The place was so narrow, that, to use the policeman's description, those living in it could have shaken hands with each other from their opposite neighbours' windows. Bodmer remembered the house was at the further extremity to the right hand. At last he arrived at it, and found the door, but there was neither knocker nor bell. He tapped at the door two or three times, but received no answer; he again sought for a bell, and in so doing his hand struck against a latch, he pressed it, and the door opened. At first he heard nothing, but on listening attentively, a regular breathing, as of some one in deep sleep, was perceptible near him. He advanced cautiously, and his foot struck against something; it was the bottom step of a flight of stairs. He remembered it was on the top floor of the house he was to find his patient. He ascended, cautiously feeling his way. When he got to the last stair, he nearly fell over something, which immediately moved. He felt with his hand, and found two children were sleeping there, but he had not awakened them. He took one of them by the shoulder, and having fairly aroused him, he asked him if any sick person lived

there. He had some difficulty in making himself understood, but at last the boy was sufficiently awakened.

"Yes,—mother."

"Where is she?"

"There, in that room."

"Open the door, then, for I can't find it."

Those inside the room had heard the conversation, and then opened the door. The window of the room was alone visible; the darkness was too profound to distinguish anything else.

"Cannot you get me a light?" said Bodmer. "I cannot see where I am."

"We haven't got such a thing, Sir," said the hollow, broken voice of a man. "Who are you?"

"I am a surgeon, and I have been sent for to see a sick person in this house."

"Oh! I'm very sorry, Sir; we waited for you till it was dark, and then we thought you wouldn't come."

"But, my good man, you must get me a light now, or I cannot do anything."

"I assure you, Sir, we haven't got a candle; but, if you'll wait a moment, I'll see if the woman below can lend me one, if you'll let me pass you."

Bodmer made room for him as well as he could; the man went past him, and the two boys entered the room. The man descended the stairs and tapped at the door of the room beneath.

"What the devil do you want?" was the polite answer.

"For God's sake lend me a candle; here's the doctor come to see my poor wife, and we haven't got a light!"

A little growling was heard, and then a voice said:

"Wait a minute, then."

Shortly afterwards a lighted candle, without a candlestick, was thrust out. The man ascended the stairs and entered the room, where Bodmer was waiting for him. It was small, low, and almost destitute of furniture.

The atmosphere was so impure that the parish doctor, albeit well accustomed to scenes of the kind, could hardly breathe in it. On a bed on the floor lay a poor woman ill of a fever. Across the bed at her feet lay a child dead from the cholera. A sickly and apparently childish old man was seated on the floor near the bed; he regarded Bodmer with much indifference. The two boys, who had slept on the stairs, and who were almost naked, stood by their father, a gaunt, sickly-looking man, with an almost idiotic expression. One object particularly struck Bodmer's attention. The cord of the window-pulleys had been broken, and something had been placed to keep the sash open. It was a small black, parish coffin, half inside the room and half out. It contained the dead body of an infant, one of perhaps five months old, who had also died of cholera. Bodmer approached the bed, and the father held down the light, so as to allow him to see the patient more clearly. From the momentary glance he had had of the man, his features appeared not unknown to him. The wife's, though altered by the disease, also appeared familiar. He inquired of her what ailed her? She had hardly noticed him before, but his voice now aroused her fully. She rose up in her bed till she was in a sitting position, and then lifting her thin arms, took Bodmer's hand in both of her's; and, pressing it against her face, said:

"God bless you, Sir, for your kindness; I'm sure you will help us if you can!"

Bodmer started at the sound of the woman's voice—it was Catherine's.

The *facilis descensus averni* is among our poorer classes, perhaps, still easier than in the days of the Roman poet, the *revocare passu* is no longer the surmountable difficulty it then was, but appears to be with us an utter impossibility. That one detected misdeed of Beuzeville's—the pawning of the piece of silk—had never been expiated. He had suffered much at the

time, but society expected still more, and received it. His reputation, as a dishonest man, had steadily followed him since his return from Macclesfield. Rumour had falsely reported, when he left London, that he had again been guilty of the act. Rumour, equally false, whispered, when he returned, that he had left Macclesfield for the same reason. Both statements were unjust; he had never since that rash deed committed one dishonest action; but he had, unfortunately, contracted another vice. The death of Martha had been a fearful shock to him, and he never fully recovered it. He got work, it is true, as soon as he returned from Macclesfield, but it was not from houses of great respectability; his credit had sunk, and his emoluments with it. He laboured hard, but without advancing; and his family were in the depths of poverty, deeper than even the trifling wages he received warranted or excused. The unfortunate man had sought a solace in his misery, but it was not from the source in which true solace can be found. In his neighbourhood for one church, chapel, or place of Christian worship, there were at least fifty gin-palaces, institutions which, under the plea of affording physical refreshment, were in reality as perfect temples dedicated to the worship of vice, as any which could be found in the filthiest mythology of the ancients; and as licensed and protected by the Legislature and Magistracy, as the purest altar of the Most High.

These were close to the unfortunate man's dwelling; their doors were always open, and he had but to drink and forget—it was all he asked—and that he could obtain. Catherine, in the meantime, worked hard, but without making sufficient profit to counterbalance her husband's expenditure. Things went from bad to worse; the couple got behind-hand in their rent, and another portion of their little remaining furniture was sold to meet the demand. Another source of grief was opened to them—the continued silence of their son in America. Since they had left Wilkes-street, with the exception

of the mis-directed letter, they had heard nothing of him. Several times they had fruitlessly written to him, and twice Beuzeville had written to his brother George, but he had received no answer. The only conclusion they could come to was that their son was dead, at any rate, he was lost to them. The second son had quitted the situation he was in and had entered the Royal Navy as a boy; of him, also, they had heard nothing since he left. The eldest girl, who inherited the remarkable beauty which her mother had possessed in her younger days, had obtained a situation in a respectable dress-maker's in the country. The second daughter was daily increasing in beauty, and thereby daily increasing Catherine's uneasiness. Fortunately, her elder sister had obtained for her a situation to assist in the household duties of the establishment for which she worked. This was to Catherine a great relief. Much as she loved and enjoyed the presence of her child, she willingly resigned it to secure her respectability. The mistress of the house where she was engaged was a pious, good woman, and the knowledge of that fact contributed greatly to Catherine's resignation. There now remained four children at home. The eldest was nine years of age, the second six—they were both boys. The two last were a boy nearly five years of age and an infant. The old man still remained with them. He had been obliged from debility and extreme old age to leave his employment at Bodmer's. He was but little encumbrance to Catherine. He had sufficient strength left to attend upon himself, and to make himself useful to the younger children. Whence his food came, it would be difficult to say—he rarely took a meal at home. The women in the neighbourhood, mothers of families, had taken a fancy to the old man, partly from pity, partly from his attention to his daughter's children, and occasionally supplied him with pieces of bread and scraps of provisions, and he was perfectly contented.

Catherine, in her troubles, had been obliged to apply

several times to the parish for relief. It was for some time willingly bestowed, but the patience of the parochial authorities was at last exhausted. Beuzeville's newly-acquired character of a drunkard became known to them, and they reasonably argued that it would be unjust to employ the money of the rate-payer to support a man addicted to intemperate habits. It was perfectly true that the poor fellow had been seen in the street, completely intoxicated, more than once. They also considered that it would be for the benefit of his wife and family if they were separated from him. The workhouse test was accordingly applied.

Without disputing the fact, that in Beuzeville's case a strong defence might be made for the law, yet a more cruel, un-Christianlike power than it gives is not perhaps to be found in the history of legislation. It may be a test for the idler or drunkard, but a more infernal instrument of torture for the poor, industrious respectable man was never invented. When a labourer is in difficulties, out-door relief is generally in the first instance afforded him. In poor parishes this is, of necessity, of the most parsimonious description, or—to use their own phraseology—they are not relieved, but only got rid of. Work, in winter, especially in the country districts, is frequently difficult to obtain, and the consequent privation and want obliges them to apply again. The test is then applied. The screw is put on—"Come into the house, and you shall be received, but you shall have no more out-door relief." They have no wish for him to accept the offer, on the contrary, they know the poor will frequently endure the most terrible privation rather than do so, for in the workhouse the man would be separated from his family. Among the poorer classes poverty appears to increase affection, and misery itself contributes to keep them from the workhouse. The guardians of parishes in which the poor are crowded, are not to be blamed too severely for this. In these the poor are obliged to relieve each

other. The richer parishes employing them are, by our iniquitous laws, absolved from the necessity of relieving them in their distress. They are not only permitted to eject them from their parishes by pulling down their dwellings, but have been frequently complimented by ministers of the Crown, in their places in Parliament, on the prudence and good management they have used. It would perhaps be impossible to induce the foreigner to believe the extent to which it is carried on. In the country districts especially, it not unfrequently happens that all the poor in a district of twenty miles in circumference, are forced into one small parish in the centre, where no rich reside, from which they frequently have to walk miles each morning to their labour, and as many home again in the evening; and when in distress to relieve each other, even by the sale of their goods, if necessary. The Poor-law Board, especially established to prevent injustice, either upon the poor or the rich, stands by the while and applauds the infamous cruelty. In poor parishes in towns, every fresh rate increases the number of paupers, and brings others down to the necessity of applying for parochial relief, whose respectability revolts at the degradation.

Beuzeville went through the horrible torture of the workhouse test. When it was first determined to stop the trifling weekly allowance he received, the excuse offered was, that he had still furniture left. This excuse lasted but a short time. His remaining goods, with the exception of a little bedding and a few necessary articles, were again seized for rent. He again applied, and made out a piteous tale, and was again refused. "He could come into the house as soon as he pleased, but no more out-door relief would be allowed." The poor fellow looked at his starving wife and family, the temptation was great but their family love was greater, and he refused it, and with their approbation. They increased in value in his eyes, as

his worldly means diminished. The neighbours began to pity them, and the children were principally fed by the charity of those scarcely better off than themselves. A short time longer, and they were obliged to remove; the house they had lived in had been destroyed to clear the neighbourhood, and they were obliged to search for another lodging. This was a labour of intense difficulty. In Shoreditch, nothing could be found for them, and they rented the miserable room in which Bodmer found them, in the parish of Whitechapel. They had been there about six weeks when Catherine was, from continued confinement in their miserable dwelling, and privation, attacked by fever, and two of the children by cholera.

Bodmer remained with them for nearly an hour. The kindness he showed greatly consoled the unfortunate woman. Beuzeville appeared stupified; he was not intoxicated, nor had he been drinking that day, but there was a wild expression in his look which showed his mind was evidently giving way. Bodmer earnestly advised Catherine to go into the London Hospital, and offered to procure her a ticket. He promised to see her the next morning, and then they could talk over the matter. He determined to advise Beuzeville, the old man, and the boys, to go into the workhouse; but, as he was aware there would be some difficulty in persuading them to adopt such a course, he also deferred that subject till the next day. To feel his way in the matter he requested the eldest boy, a meagre, sharp, half-starved lad, to accompany him home to bring back some medicine for his mother, determining to obtain from him on their road as much information respecting the family as he possibly could. Catherine's offspring had sadly degenerated during their misfortunes, and this boy was a proof of the fact.

"Well, my lad, how do you manage to get a living?"

"I generally go along with Slippery Bill, and he almost always gives me my grub!"

"Who is Slippery Bill?"

"He's a coster. Sells anything—principally fish!"

"Has he got a donkey?"

"No; he ain't up to that! He's been unfortunate."

"Can't get his money, do you mean?"

"No, it ain't that; but the police has got a spite against him, and they're always worrying him."

"How did you get acquainted with him?"

"He lives next door, and he ain't proud!"

"Does he make much money?"

"That depends. When the weather's very hot and close he does very well, cos the fish won't keep, and it ain't very good, so he can buy it cheap."

"But, then, people won't buy it of him."

"Oh! He knows all the places about here where they ain't very particular; and, besides that, he's such a hand at gammoning them, he can make them believe anything."

"Don't you think it would be better if you could get into the workhouse and be brought up respectably. I think I could manage it for you if you liked?"

"No, I don't; I don't like it at all. I'm like father for that. I'd sooner starve than go there!"

"Why?"

"I don't know—but I won't. If father goes there, I'll run away. I know Slippery Bill will always keep me and Tommy."

"Who is Tommy?"

"My little brother; him as you stepped upon as you came up the stairs."

"But if Slippery Bill can't always get enough for himself, how can he find enough for you."

"Ah! you don't know what a lot of dodges there is for a fellow to get a living by, if he's only up to em', and Bill's up to everything. I know you'd like him."

"Well, I think you'd better come with your father into the workhouse.

"No, thank you, no workhouse for me. I shouldn't be sorry to see father there, though, so as he could be taken care of, for I don't think he's quite right in his head—people say so at least."

By this time Bodmer had arrived at home, and, having prepared some medicine, sent the boy back with it.

Bodmer's first visit the next morning was to the Beuzeville family. He found Catherine considerably worse. He told her it was necessary, to save her life, that she should be removed to the London Hospital. That it was impossible she could recover in the place she was then in. She at first objected to leave her husband and children, but Bodmer did not in any manner disguise from her the certain death which awaited her if she neglected his advice.

"She might live," he said, "many years with those of her family which remained if she obeyed him; there was the certainty of her leaving them for ever in a few days if she neglected his counsel."

This decided her, but she whispered to Bodmer, begging him to assist her old father, husband, and children.

"I don't know," she said, "which is the most helpless among them."

In the course of the day Catherine was removed to the hospital; the two dead children were taken to the parish dead-house, and old Baker and Beuzeville went into the union till their settlements could be ascertained. When search was made for the two children, they were nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. SLIPPERY BILL, COSTERMONGER, ETC.

Mr. Slippery Bill was a thin, pallid, pock-marked, beardless, narrow-chested, dirty, ragged young man, with a peculiar, hoarse, cracked voice. His age is not mentioned, as it would be impossible to state it with any degree of certainty. He was considered as young, but, with those in his way of business, there is frequently little difference in appearance between seventeen and twenty-seven years of age. The best guess that possibly could be made would be to quote him at nineteen. His face was not naturally ugly, and it was by no means destitute of expression — on the contrary, it would be difficult to point out a physiognomy which carried greater or more variety of expression than his did. Patience, cunning, good humour, privation, industry, shrewdness, sickness, and simplicity, were all painted on it. He might not naturally have been of dirty habits, but water was scarce with him, and his method of living tended considerably against the exercise of personal cleanliness. It should be recorded in his favour that, when he had a good opportunity for a wash, he indulged in it, and evidently with pleasure. He also never failed, in the course of the summer, bathing two or three times in the Thames by Limehouse Reach, but he generally left the water darker than he went in! Perhaps the proximity and bountiful supply from the sewers injured his complexion. "True as you say, gentle reader, are there not baths and wash-houses, and water is not an expensive luxury, even in poor neighbourhoods." But baths and wash-houses, cheap as they are, are above the means of an individual who occasionally goes without every alternate meal for more than a fortnight together, as inflexibly as if he were

performing a religious vow, and that abstinence occasioned by sheer poverty, unless, indeed, he resorted to dishonest means to supply the deficiency. Again, frequently with his class water is exceedingly difficult to obtain. "But still, perhaps the reader may say, there must be a great want of prudence and economy among these people, or they might put by a trifle for cleanliness or a season of distress." True, again, gentle reader, but a beneficent Legislature when it forgot to supply the water, compensated for its neglect, by allowing a gin palace to be erected at the corner of every street, and these have unfortunately too much attraction for those of his class to withstand.

His dress possessed several singular contrarieties. It hung together, when, on any one else, it would have fallen to pieces. It kept on him, when, from any one else, it would have tumbled off: for its suspension set all laws of natural philosophy at defiance. Not a single article on him was made for him, but they seemed so natural to him, as almost to be a portion of his person. In fact, his garments seemed under the authority of his will, and kept in their places solely because he wished it.

Beyond his wardrobe, every article of which he carried on him, he had but one valuable in the world—his "barrer." It was meat and drink to him, he said, and he loved it accordingly. It was not handsome, and never had been, it is also certain it had never been varnished, and doubtful whether it had ever been painted. The long, flat, peculiar surface, used by his craft in the formation of their carriages, was somewhat dilapidated, but the wheels, the most valuable portion of it, were still as sound as the first day they left the wheelwright's shop. No warrior ever held his charger in greater affection and admiration, or took greater care in its management, than Bill did of his "barrer."

The attention of the reader is particularly directed to the delicacy displayed in describing Bill's profession in the heading of this chapter—"Costermonger, &c."

"Grocer, &c., Cheesemonger, &c., Chemist, &c.," may carry a certain amount of obscurity in the phraseology. Nobody can tell exactly what the *etcetera* there means; but costermonger, &c. implies not only the profession conveyed in the word, but also of being occasionally employed in another certain class of transactions, which had caused the infamous conspiracy of the police against him, and which was hinted at by young Beuzeville at the termination of the last chapter.

Bill was not naturally dishonest. Necessity was more to blame for his misdemeanours than original sin. There is little difficulty in teaching a starving boy to steal, and hunger had been Bill's first instructor in dishonesty. His education had never been sufficiently advanced to allow him to read novels, defending and excusing crime. It is true he had no great aversion to mal-appropriating the goods of others to his own benefit, but he preferred honesty of the two. It was not with any conscientious aversion to the sin, but he admired integrity the most, as a matter of taste. He compromised his feelings at last between taste and necessity. He worked on, honestly, as long as he conveniently could, keeping dishonesty in the background as a sort of reserve fund, a prudential surplus against a rainy day, and which a cautious trader should never draw upon, but in cases of severe necessity.

It must be admitted, however, that even in his mercantile transactions, he occasionally infringed on the strict rules of integrity. His principal commerce lay in the cheap, fading fish line, and he had more than once been detected in subtracting from Billingsgate, the healthy viscera of fish which had been cleaned and sold by respectable dealers, and substituting them in the bodies of those he had to dispose of; thereby committing a fraud on his customers, although if it be one totally unjustifiable in mercantile transactions the author (not being a mercantile man) is unable to say. Perhaps, after all, it was only a portion of the art and mystery of his craft.

Of Bill's ancestry very little has to be written. He could far more perfectly than many others, whose claims have been admitted at the Herald's office, trace his descent from the night of time, and that with extreme facility —it was no farther off than his grandfather. Even of him, the family records spoke of as living at an era when history and tradition were commingled; and had it not been for the physical necessity of that ancestor's existence, the proofs of his title to a place in the annals of his country were of so obscure and unsatisfactory a description that the Court of Chancery would not have entertained them for a day, unless a sufficient sum were in hand to cover the expenditure occurred in the litigation, and then a "*locus standi*" at the least would have been discovered. In that case, the cause would most probably have endured, so as to allow Bill to remain the miserable creature the reader has found him.

His knowledge of his mother was also of an extremely vague description. In fact, he remembered nothing certain about her. If Bill wore in his appearance the signs of her poverty of constitution, and his own early privations, it is by no means clear that his mother had not been a respectable character. This idea was in some measure substantiated by certain fragments of the Church Catechism which still floated on his memory, and which he had the habit of quoting on all occasions, when he wished to impress upon a customer the proof of his respectability, and likewise in all moments of trouble or joy, without particularly adapting them to the position he might at the moment be in. For example, if taken into custody on suspicion of any act of dishonesty, his favourite text was "Born in sin;" and this, by some occult or obscure reasoning of his own, seemed to afford him considerable consolation. When released from prison, and about to take upon himself the punishment of hard labour under the primitive curse, and which on Bill's weak constitution weighed with double severity, he adopted it resignedly, cheerfully determining at the same

time to continue honest—and "lead a new life." How far he was wrong let theologists decide. Unfortunately his determinations to be honest were, after a time, when under the influence of gin and bad advisers, too frequently broken. The hardest portion of his moral creed was to "honour and obey the king and all that are put in authority under him." He had contrived in his mind to trace this command, from the throne to the policeman who collared him. The latter power he looked upon as the regal executive; but to honour him was an impossibility—to obey him a cruel necessity. Between the costermonger and the policeman a natural enmity exists similar to that which might be expected to be found between a good and a bad angel, —the good angel, of course, in this instance, being the policeman. Bill compromised the matter at last. He obeyed the policeman in a manner which would have been considered perfectly satisfactory by the most punctilious admirer of the church catechism, and detested him as little as it was possible in his nature to accomplish.

At the break-up of the Beuzeville family, Charley and Tommy sought Bill's protection, and hospitality and most cordially he gave it to them. He was, with all his faults, naturally a kind-hearted fellow. If he had no friends—and he certainly had none in the ordinary acceptation of the word—he had, at the same time, no enemies; and many who did not love him, looked upon him with kindness. The two boys had for some weeks taken a great fancy to him; and he, in return, had, in his way, much affection for them, though perhaps, on the whole, little Tommy had the balance of his love.

The first thing they determined on, was to shift their quarters, so as to escape pursuit. This was easily done. Bill was an excellent tenant, and owed no rent; although this qualification on his part was perchance attributable to a system invariably adopted by his

landlord, that of requiring pre-payment before he put his tenant into possession for the night; and in those parts of the town it may be considered a perfectly justifiable precaution to lodgers of Bill's description, as, with the exception of his barrow, the whole of his goods and chattels were always carried on his person; and those were of a description which invariably left their owner in "light marching order." From the densely-crowded state of the neighbourhood, it was with most a task of immense difficulty to find a lodging; with Bill it was different. The smallest nook or corner was good enough for him, for, like General Haynau, if he wanted shelter and protection, rather than go without it, he would accept the hospitality of a dust-bin. He had always a resource, even if a dust-bin could not be obtained, he could bivouac under his "barrer;" he had frequently done so—in fact, the first night his guests were with him, they had no better shelter.

The morning after they had joined him, Bill proposed to his two *protegés* to educate them as costermongers, and teach them the art and mystery of the craft. They agreed with pleasure, and immediately entered on their duties as un-articled pupils without premiums. He generally gave no lessons under a quartern of gin and a two-out glass, but now he could afford to be generous. They entered with him at a fortunate time, for he had at that moment a floating capital of eighteen pence, and no liabilities. Before daybreak, they started off to Billingsgate Market. Charley and Tommy watched the barrow while Bill made the purchase. The only duty imposed upon them was to take great care of the vehicle under their charge, to obey the instructions of the police to the best of their abilities, and especially to remember that carriages taking up were to have their horses' heads turned towards the Tower. There was a mystery connected with the purchase, which Bill did not think fit

to explain to his pupils, but which has already been alluded to, and which will appear in the sequel.

After the lapse of half-an-hour, Bill returned, bringing with him a considerable freight of mackerel and soles; and they were, as soon as they got into a bye-street near a pump, placed and displayed upon the flat surface of the barrow in the most artistic manner possible. In consequence of the intense heat of the weather, and the prejudice existing in many parts of the town against fish diet during the cholera season, not only was he possessed of a large stock-in-trade, but sixpence of his capital remained still in his pocket. Half of this sum was invested in a breakfast for the three, the pump at which they had washed their fish, acting as honorary tea-pot and milk-jug, *pro tem.* They afterwards started off to the beat the most likely, in Bill's experience, to furnish a quick sale. The locality was far from being one in a fashionable quarter, their principal traffic lying in the very poorest streets in the poor parish of St. George's-in-the-East. The order of their proceedings was as follows:—Bill pushed on the barrow; Charley was on guard at one handle, Tommy at the other. Bill first called out, to the utmost of his hoarse, cracked voice—"Mackerel alive, ho! fine fresh soles!" Charley immediately repeated it five tones higher, and Tommy followed in the octave. This manœuvre had really a fine and telling effect, and a very rapid sale was the result. Another advantage arose from the three working together: they never missed catching an otherwise doubtful customer. Bill had his eye fixed in a straight line before him; Charley watched the windows and pathways on his side, and Tommy those on the other; and whenever any one gave a glance at the barrow, the one next to that individual immediately addressed him or her, and, in an insinuating manner, persuaded them to buy. They generally rested for a minute at the extremity of a street they had gone through, and

then looked down it to see if any one had come into a better frame of mind since the barrow had passed, and were inclined to purchase, and by so doing they frequently picked up customers that might otherwise have been lost.

Bill, in his dealings, showed great knowledge of the world. He had much natural politeness, and his manner was occasionally most persuasive and insinuating. He had the power of adapting his phraseology admirably to the different classes of customers he had to deal with. With the prudent housekeeper he was serious and business-like. With the fast, he was slangey in the highest degree, calling his fish "slap-up and bang-up," and making use of other expressions still more objectionable. With those not well understanding the mystery of purchasing fish, he was exceedingly candid, and most confidentially explained the excellent qualitie s of his merchandise. It must be owned, however, his own advantage was never lost sight of in the transaction.

The first street they entered—and where, by the bye, they disposed of a considerable portion of their freight —was inhabited by a very wretched class. These poor creatures, slatternly, dirty, half naked, and barely sober, purchased readily. There was no joking among them, still less anything melancholy. They bought carelessly, and if Bill had asked double the price he did, they would have given it without hesitation. It was singular to remark the respect these wretched women showed to childhood. Not an objectionable word of any description was made use of by them while Charley and Tommy were near them; they all spoke kindly to them, and one of them broke off a piece of barley-sugar she was sucking, and thrusting it into Tommy's hand, gave him a kiss at the same moment, pure enough for the lips of an angel.

They shortly afterwards entered a street of a totally

different character, one of a description frequently found in that part of London. The houses were as small as those in the one they had left, but there was a certain air of neatness, cleanliness, and respectability about them. The inhabitants also appeared of an industrious, creditable description. They were principally small *employés* in the docks and warehouses in the neighbourhood, foremen to engineers, and the higher order of mechanics. At the time Bill visited it, the male population appeared to have entirely left it, not one of them was to be seen. Business went on with tolerable briskness, and only one thing occurred worthy of notice in it, and that only as proving Bill's facility for adapting his conversation to every class of customers. They were stopped at a clean-looking house by a fat, swarthy widow of perhaps fifty years of age. She had evidently formerly been very ugly, but had with years fallen off considerably in her appearance. A seedy-looking man stood by her side while negociations were going on. He showed her great attention, was evidently "*aux petits soins*," and trying generally to make himself very agreeable. His age was considerably younger than the widow's; in beauty of appearance he was perhaps also her inferior. He was tall and swarthy; he had dark eyes with yellowish whites to them, a large mouth, which was always open, and almost destitute of teeth. His lips were thin and parched, and the whole expression of his countenance of a pseudo-sanctimonious description. His long neck was ornamented with a dirty white neckcloth, evidently intended to give him a clerical appearance, but which looked more like a duster twisted in the fashion of a rope about it. His dress was a shabby, black suit, nearly thread-bare. Of what sect he was a minister it would be difficult to say. Although dirty enough for a begging friar, he wanted their dignity and picturesque appearance. His utter want of respectability was so perfectly marked on him,

that a Mormonite elder would have considered himself insulted by the comparison.

Negociations began and were carried on with much animation on both sides; the clerical-looking gent occasionally passing an opinion, which of course always corresponded with one which had been expressed by the widow. The subject immediately under consideration was the purchase of a pair of soles. The sale of the mackerel Bill did not press in respectable localities; the heat of the day, which was excessive, had not improved their appearance, and he, out of respect to their memories, had covered their frail remains over with his pocket handkerchief. At last the price for the soles was agreed upon, and the widow appeared satisfied with her bargain. Conversation now took place on a more amicable footing while Bill was preparing the fish.

"Where do they come from?" asked the widow, pointing to the soles with the plate she held in her hand.

Bill's knowledge of hydrography was of the most limited description, but he named the most distant spot he could at the time remember, in order to advance the value of his merchandise.

"Herne Bay, Ma'am."

"Are they always caught in pairs?" she inquired.

"Allers, Ma'am."

"How strange," said the widow, reflectively.

"We find the same affection in other animals," said the clerical-looking gent. "The dove, the canary, and the love birds we see in the shops, all exemplify the same attachment. What a lesson for man," he continued, leering at the widow. "How wicked of him when he neglects it."

"They're considered the most affectionate fish as is, Sir," said Bill, dragging the skin off the back of one.

The clerical-looking gent seemed annoyed at Bill's presumption and interference.

"How is it," he inquired, pointing to a large single sole lying apart from the rest, "that you have but one there?" He thought to take Bill at a disadvantage, but he was mistaken.

"Don't know, I am sure, Sir," said Bill, in no way discomposed; "perhaps," he continued, sighing deeply, and looking at the fish with a tender, affectionate expression of countenance—"perhaps it's some unfortunate cove as has lost his wife, and had come up to the top of the water to give *went* to his feelings, and so got cotched!"

The man appeared pleased at Bill's answer; it was a piece of hypocrisy after his own heart. He immediately looked at the fish with a most melancholy sympathetic expression on his face, with the exception of one eye, which almost imperceptibly winked at Bill. The soles were now ready for the frying-pan, and Bill was on the point of leaving, when the widow stopped Tommy.

"I hope he's a good boy, and don't say naughty words," she said, appealing to Bill.

"He's a wery good boy, mum—a reg'lur child of Grace."

"Do you know what is meant by wicked words, my dear?" said the man.

Tommy immediately brought to mind three occasions on which he had been called to order by his mother.

"Devil, guts, and ——." What the last word would have been it is impossible to say, for Bill slapped a sole down on the flat of his barrow with such force as to drown it.

"He's a wery good boy, indeed, mum," he put in, trying to stop the conversation, fearing to what an extent Tommy's "knowledge of words" might go.

"What chapel does he go to?" inquired the widow.

"Mr. Jinks', mum."

"Mr. Jinks! What is he?" inquired the man.

"A Yarmouth bloater, Sir!"

"A Yarmouth bloater ?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir, I mean a Plymouth brother !"

(Reader, it is not true. Mr. Jinks was a myth which had arisen, already ordained, from Bill's brain.)

The three now pushed on the barrow and left the street. When out of ear-shot, Bill said, reflectively :

"How I did hate the look of that chap ; he was worse than pison to me !"

He then continued, addressing his pupils :

"You didn't behave well there ; you should allers have one eye on your customers as if you was a listening to what they said, and with the other you should look up and down the street. How many more do I know I might have sold if you had. You must be more attentive another time."

Before eleven o'clock they had disposed of three-fourths of their fish to great advantage. They were then obliged to rest for a short time, as they were all three getting much fatigued, and the day was excessively hot. Its effects were not only felt on the master and his two pupils, but on the fish as well, and Bill had been obliged more than once to beg a little water at the different houses they had stopped at to sprinkle his merchandise. They chose the vicinity of a shady beer-shop for their place of rest, and there indulged in a pint of beer between the three. When they came out, they noticed a tall, slim, and remarkably swarthy-looking lad, with a miserable stump of a broom in his hand (he was evidently a crossing-sweeper) passing the house.

"Hallo, Slammy, where are you off to ?" said Bill.

"I was just going home," answered Slammy, in a desponding manner. "I've been at the crossing the whole of the morning, and haven't taken a blessed copper !"

[Mem.—The author has not been able to obtain the etymology of the word Slammy, although he has twice written to "Notes and Queries" on the subject.]

"Slammy," said Bill, reflectively; "you're allers unlucky, and I'm afraid it's a good deal your own fault. Why, if I'd your appearance, I'd do well enough, I know, at the worst crossing in London."

"Ah! it's wery easy talking, but it aint as easy to do, I can tell you. Why, this dry, fine weather is enough to keep any fellor down!"

"Nonsense," said Bill, impatiently; "don't gammon me. The finer the weather, the more people there is about, ain't there, and the better humour they're in. Why don't you come the Injin dodge? With that face of you'rn, you'd be sure to make it pay."

"How can I come the Injin dodge?"

"What sort of a shirt have you got on?"

"Well, it's a pretty good'un!"

"Have you got a pocket handkerchief?"

"Yes!"

"Well, then, come in here."

Bill took him into a back-yard. In a few minutes they returned, Slammy then wearing his shirt outside his trousers, and his pocket handkerchief twisted like a scarf round his waist, giving him considerably the appearance of a Lascar. The only thing which militated against it was his hat. That was as genuine a Ratcliffe Highway article of dress as could be found in London. Bill's keen eye for pictorial effect quickly detected the fault in the composition, and told him how much the hat was out of keeping with the rest of the figure. It did not give the *couleur local* necessary to produce the desired effect. He took up his remnant of a pocket handkerchief which had, during the greater part of the morning, been used for covering the fish and wiping the particles of dust from them; and, wrapping it in the guise of a turban round Slammy's head, made him look so like an Asiatic seaman, that it would have required a somewhat keen eye to have detected the imposition.

Slammy," said Bill, eying him with great pride;

"you only want threepenn'orth of tracts in your hand, to look as if you'd jist landed from Bombay! Now, give us your castor."

"What for?" said Slammy indignantly.

"What for! why, as a security for my handkercher. What proof have I you would'nt bolt with it; it's my belief you would."

"If you can't trust to my honour," said Slammy, "there's my hat; but take care of the brim, for it's nearly off now." Bill for the moment did not answer, but he put the hat carefully over the mackerel, so as to shelter as many of them from the sun as possible. Slammy was about to say something in mitigation of Bill's contemptuous opinion of him, but Bill stopped him.

"Now, suppose I was a lady, and had just given you a copper, what would you do?"

Slammy jerked his thumb against his forehead, and was on the point of saying something, when Bill stopped him.

"That won't do at all," said he; "the Injins allers does so." And he immediately taught Slammy to salaam in a proper and Oriental manner.

"Now let's go," said Bill, "to the Commercial-road, and see what luck you'll have."

They immediately started off together, and an apparently favourable locality was chosen. Slammy put himself in position, and Bill and his young friends drew off a few yards to watch the effects. They had scarcely turned their backs, when Slammy called out in a terrified voice, "Bill, come here!"

"What is it now?"

"I say, what am I to do—I don't know their lingo. I shall be found out at once—I know I shall."

"My eyes," said Bill, in a tone of impatience, "how helpless you are. Did you ever hear anybody speak Welsh?"

"Yes; there's a Welsh milkman and his daughter

lives in our house, and I've heard them talk sometimes."

"Well, Injin is very like Welsh; you'll soon manage it—only don't be frightened at trifles."

He then joined Charley and Tommy, and the three, leisurely leaning against the barrow, watched with much interest Slammy's efforts. Three or four groups passed without giving him anything, although Slammy salaamed most gracefully. An elderly lady was about to cross. She looked at the crossing-sweeper for a moment, and evidently pitied the friendless foreigner. She sought for some money in her pocket, and at last found a half-penny, which she gave to Slammy. He was upon the point of thanking her in English, but he saved himself in time, and instead, muttered some gibberish as closely resembling Welsh as possible, and so contrived to keep up the illusion.

Immediately after the lady had turned her back, Slammy looked at the coin in his open hand, and spat upon it, saying something inaudible, to himself, at the same time.

"Why, you precious fool," roared out Bill in a tremendous passion, "is that like an Injin. Do yo think monks and moguls is up to the handsel dodge. Don't you know they is all savages, without edication. Don't you know it's none but Christians as knows how to do it. You'll be soon found out, I see. Come along," he continued, addressing Charley and Tommy; "come along—it's a disgrace to know such a fellow. I'm blest if my barrer would have him for a donkey."

This episode of Slammy's had occupied not less than an hour and a-half; and during a considerable portion of that time the cloudless sun had been pouring down his beams unrestrainedly on the unprotected mackerel. The soles had been, with the exception of the widower, disposed of. It is true that the hat in pledge from Slammy had been made to shelter as many of the mackerel as its size would allow, but that number was

few—fewer than might have been expected—in consequence of the delapidated condition of the brim. The sale now went off very slowly. The mackerel were rapidly acquiring a most unpleasant looking deep yellow tinge, and the voices of the three sellers were, from fatigue, getting very husky. At last a rough-looking man, having the appearance of a powerful railway navigator, stopped them and inquired the price. Bill, by way of forcing a sale, put them in at a remarkably low figure, and the intending purchaser took one in his hand for the purpose of examining it more attentively.

"They don't look to me to be very prime," he said.

"They're as fresh as a daisy," said Bill. "They was only cotched last night."

"Gammon."

"Look here," said Bill, showing the gills, "you don't see nothing like that, unless the fish is fresh."

"Let's look," said the man. And he took up the fish much against Bill's inclination. He opened the fresh-looking gills, and with all the tact of a virtuoso put his finger inside, when lo! out came the whole of the viscera. The fact is, and we have delayed making the painful acknowledgment till the last moment, that during Bill's temporary absence at Billingsgate, he had been employed in making ready the deception, and the result was, that no decayed old dandy, nor faded maiden lady trying still, by artificial means, to wear the appearance of youth, was more disgracefully made up than were Bill's mackerel. He was terribly confounded at the detection; indeed, so much so, that he was positively at the moment at a loss for an excuse, which was with him a circumstance of very rare occurrence.

"Now, oughtn't you to be ashamed of yourself, you damn'd young wagabones, to go about cheating people in that manner. You ought to be given up to the police, that you ought. Get out with you, you warmint, you'll all come to the gallows, that you will."

By way of pointing his moral more emphatically, he applied such a vigorous kick on that portion of Bill's back where the spinal column loses its name, that it fairly lifted him off the ground, and nearly threw him with his face upon his barrow. As soon as Bill regained his equilibrium, he silently and sadly pushed off. Not a word was spoken by either of the three for some minutes. Bill was completely crest-fallen, not from the abuse or kick he had received—those things had occurred to him more than once before, and he didn't mind them much—but from being detected in an act of dishonesty in the presence of his *protegés*, to whom he had determined to offer none but examples of the strictest integrity. He continued his way sadly, silently, and despondingly for some time.

Charley was old enough to understand all, but Tommy was completely astonished, and looked up inquiringly into Bill's face as they walked along, as if asking for an explanation. Bill hardly knew what to say. He at last took refuge in the Catechism, and repeated several times, looking ruefully in Tommy's face the while,—

"Born in sin! Born in sin!"

Having absolved himself by this avowal, he went on more unrestrainedly. He determined to practice no further imposition that day. He thought it probable that the consequences might be even still more unpleasant than the last, if he did. The prospect of approaching danger contributed considerably to raise the spirit of integrity within him, and he determined to deceive no others with those fish. In a short time they came to a large gully-hole, the bars of which were very wide asunder, and between them, one by one, they cast down the mackerel into the sewer, leaving them to find their way into the Thames, in whose gigantic abominations all their unpleasantness would be lost, the bereaved sole alone which yet remained, they kept for their evening repast.

On balancing his accounts, Bill found he had made a net profit of three shillings. He rightly judged that if a trader could make three hundred per cent. profit on his capital in one day, he might be content. Bill was not of an avaricious nor greedy disposition, and he considered that ratio of profit ample, and was accordingly satisfied. Slammy also, under Bill's advice, had done exceedingly well. He had taken enough in his new character to purchase another handkerchief, and he immediately sent back the one he had borrowed from Bill, and gratefully begged of him to accept the hat as a proof of his esteem. He had met with one or two disagreeables, or rather alarms, in the course of the day from the near approach of genuine Lascars, but as they did not notice him, he was "*quitte pour la peur.*" He determined, however, to practice his profession further West for the future, where he would be less liable to be disturbed by accidents of the kind.

Bill determined to pass a quiet family sort of evening with his young friends, and with that intent engaged a fourth bed in a room in a lodging-house for the three, with right of use of the fire. He borrowed from the landlady a tea-kettle, and having cut up in slices the bereaved sole he put them into the kettle to boil whilst he went to make some preparations for their tea, leaving Charley in charge of the fish. He first purchased a half-quartern loaf and a penn'orth of butter, which was wiped off the knife on a piece of an Act of Parliament, which had been sold for waste paper. He then went to the grocer's shop for an ounce of tea dust, and a quarter of a pound of moist sugar. While waiting his turn he noticed a lad employed at the back of the shop at a large round tray. Now, as Bill was of an inquiring disposition he approached as nearly as possible to the lad to see what he was about. He found him employed upon some stoney-looking, dried-up French plums, which he was dipping in a sort of syrup and then gently wiping, greatly improving their

appearance by the operation. and making them look quite fresh and attractive. Bill, when he left the shop, reflected deeply on the circumstance. Here was a respectable tradesman, a father of a family, and a churchwarden, placing on his plums as deceptive an appearance as he had been in the habit of doing to his fish. If the action were a dishonest one, it is certain a man in so respectable a position as the grocer would not have committed it; and if in one trade a deception of the kind might be practised, why might it not, with equal justice, be permitted in another? It would have given him great pleasure to have been assured that both transactions were honest; but he had still some qualms of conscience left, and he determined not to attempt his exculpation before his pupils till these could be removed. Before he went home he determined to treat himself to half-a-pint of beer, and he went into a public-house to obtain it. It was served him, and the porter had nearly disappeared. He lifted the pot to his lips and finished the remainder, with the exception of a few drops, these he poured out reflectively upon the table. There was no intention of offering to the Gods, nor any superstitious feeling connected with the act, which caused the serious expression on his countenance when he had finished. As he leant his head backwards against the partition in the tap-room, absorbed in thought, he was reflecting on the colour of the porter. "Could that have been composed of malt and hops alone? certainly not, or bitter ale itself would then be an imposition." He then remembered whose "Entire" it was. The name of the second partner in the firm stood high, and justly so, for benevolent and useful deeds. If it were wrong in Bill to put his fish in the most attractive light possible before his customers, was it not equally wrong in the brewer to place that as solely malt and hops before the public, which was not solely composed of those ingredients? Nothing deleterious, it is true, would be put into the porter,

but did his customers eat the viscera of the fish? No, he was now convinced, and that evening he would boldly and distinctly prove to his pupils that he had not been guilty of any injustice, and the punishment he had received from the navigator was totally undeserved.

He now returned home and found the sole cooked to perfection. It was taken out of the kettle and equitably divided between them; large pieces of bread served them for plates, and plates and all disappeared beneath their energetic appetites. Their hunger was not sufficiently appeased when they had finished, and they determined neutralizing that which remained at their tea. Charley was sent out for a twopenny loaf; and Bill, who was particular in his eating, ordered Tommy to empty the water the fish had been boiled in out of the kettle, and put fresh into it. When this was accomplished, Bill put the sugar and tea into it and set it on to boil, determining in his own mind to explain during that sober, social repast, to his pupils the difference between a direct act of dishonesty, and the tradesman-like artifice he had made use of. Charley had now returned with the loaf, and the tea being adjudged perfect, the tea service, which was comprised of a tin mug Bill had a short time since *found*, they seated themselves on the bed, and it was determined they should drink by turns. Charley poured out the tea, and respectfully handed the mug to Bill. No sooner had the latter placed it to his lips than he exclaimed, with much severity of manner:

"Tommy, I don't like this. I am *w*ery particular in my *w*ittals. You did not empty all the water away before you put the fresh in, and I can taste the sole quite strong. Be more careful another time."

Bill then proceeded to cut up the loaf, and continued to make the pennyworth of butter extend over an incredibly large surface. In the midst of this employment, suddenly his countenance assumed a serious cast.

Holding the loaf in one hand, and flourishing the knife (which, by-the-bye, was the one he used in his profession for amputating the fins of fish and other necessary operations) in the other, by way of calling the attention of his auditors, (the paper, with the remains of the butter resting on his knee,) he began his lecture.

We will not detain the reader with the whole, or even a tithe of Bill's arguments; they were deep and naturally obscure, from their very profundity. He showed how perfectly impossible it was in this world entirely to separate the good from the bad; and though it was our duty to do so as far as in us lay, yet it was not expected we could go beyond that point. His fish was his living; well, he sold 'em cheap, and he had to live, and the amount of evil he committed was making 'em look as well as possible; it did 'em no harm whatever, and very often pleased a customer who might have been dissatisfied without it. Where was the wrong? He then cited the cases of the brewer and the grocer, and explained the analogy between them and his own in a manner perfectly satisfactory to his auditors, the facility being the greater in consequence of the tea being now completely ready, and his pupils anxious to begin. Bill was silent during the repast, but again took up the thread of his discourse as soon as it was finished. Impatience had kept his pupils attentive before they began, but there being now nothing more to eat, they appeared less alive to the subject. Tommy, in fact, was overcome by fatigue, and began to indulge in the morbid habit he had acquired of sucking his thumb. Bill noticed it, and determined to improve the occasion. Suddenly stopping short in the lecture, he said:

"Tommy, did you notice them three chaps cadging in the Commercial-road to-day, with only one arm a-piece?"

"Yes."

"Do you know how they lost them?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, when they were little boys they were very naughty and would suck their thumbs, and one night when they was'nt thinking of it they swallowed their arms."

Tommy, alarmed, immediately took his thumb from his mouth, and by way of resisting temptation, sat upon his hand. Bill continued his lecture a little longer, and then the three, coiling themselves down on the bed, sought the repose and strength necessary for the next day's exertions.

About a week after Catherine's removal to the hospital, Slippery Bill determined to inquire after her health. To this he was greatly stimulated by the anxiety of the two children under his care. With considerable delicacy he refrained from informing his wards of his intention, fearing the answer might be unsatisfactory, if not worse, so he directed his steps towards the London Hospital, apparently without any ulterior intention beyond selling his fish. Before visiting the building, he, for the first time since the boys had formed his acquaintance, inquired of his young friends their surname. Charley informed him, and Bill not understanding him, asked him to repeat it. "Beuzeville," said Charley. A customer at that moment approaching the barrow, Bill's attention was in part called off from the answer, and he incorrectly understood the boy to have said Bousfield. Arrived in a back street near the hospital, he left the children in charge of the barrow, and run round to the front gate to inquire of the porter if Mrs. Bousfield were better. "She's gone out well two days ago," was the reply; a patient of that name having been there, and who had left the institution cured, as the porter had stated. Bill had now a pleasing task on his hands, and he hurried off to convey the delightful intelligence to the boys, whose affection for their mother was intense.

They were naturally overjoyed at the news, and they all three proceeded to the workhouse to inquire after her. Charley made the application, but they had heard nothing of her; he requested to see his father, but his father had been removed to another workhouse. They begged to see the old grandfather, but it was against the rules. They went then to the old lodging, but nothing had been heard of her there. They were now completely at a loss what to do. Bill consoled them by saying that she would turn up soon, if they had patience; and poor as the consolation was, they were obliged to accept it.

The children and Bill continued to live together till the latter part of the autumn, when a circumstance came under the latter's notice which caused him considerable uneasiness. The strength of his "barrer" was sinking—its constitution was evidently fading away. A few months more and all human skill would be useless—or, in Bill's own words, wheelwrights would be in wain. He had taken the best advice upon the subject. He had consulted an eminent jobbing barrow maker, who candidly informed him that science would be useless in the case, and he had better let nature take its course. Every farthing he spent upon it would be so much money thrown away. It might linger on till the spring, perhaps, but certainly would not last longer.

The intelligence caused Bill great pain. It has already been stated how much he loved his "barrer," but now there was apparently no hope, and he resigned his treasure to its fate. That climax arrived, however, sooner than was expected. One morning, in a very narrow street, it fell a victim to an absurd point of precedence. It attempted to take the wall of a brewer's dray: its right to that honour was disputed by the ponderous vehicle, and the result was, the barrow got so frightfully crushed, it was impossible for the future it could ever be of the slightest use, even to its owner.

The loss of his barrow caused Bill great distress both of mind and body. The proprietors of barrows, it is true, will let them out by the hour or the day, but they not only demand a most usurious remuneration for the accommodation, but they insist upon a deposit being left before it leaves their premises, unless the hirers are well known to them, and even then they make exceptions, and objected to Bill for the very reason of his being too well known. In the mean time Bill and the boys struggled on together in the best way they could; but circumstances got with them from bad to worse, and Bill was reluctantly obliged to draw on his reserve fund. To do him justice, he was at the last extremity when he did so. He had even gone so far as to dispose of his jacket.

On a cold foggy morning, late in the month of November, about two hours before sunrise, Bill and the boys left their cellar and proceeded towards the Minories. When they got near the railway arch, Bill said to his pupils, "Now you stop here till I come back."

He did not inform them of his purpose, and he would not allow them to accompany him, as he shuddered at the idea of their imagining him capable of a theft. Bill, after he had left his friends, proceeded direct to Billingsgate, and remained there till day was on the point of breaking—in fact, it was dawn when he left, but the dense cold fog placed all in obscurity. He had nothing in his hand; but uncertain as the light was, it was not difficult to perceive that he appeared much bulkier than usual. He hurried on towards the Minories to find his companions. When he arrived near the railway arch the fog cleared a little. This appeared to annoy Bill, and he felt, in fact, very uneasy, frequently looking around with much caution. On turning the corner of a street, he suddenly found himself in the presence of a policeman. Bill stopped, and was on the point of turning back, when, remembering it might cause suspicion if he did not go on (for

the eye of the policeman was evidently upon him), he continued on his way, trying at the same time to put on the most *nonchalant* air. He passed the policeman, but he felt certain that the man was following him. The policeman's suspicions had not been awakened without cause. Not only was Bill's appearance twice as bulky as was natural, but there was an indescribable, incomprehensible movement going on between his shirt and his skin. Sometimes it would enlarge itself to the size of a man's hand, and then again it would sink away till it was almost imperceptible. Sometimes it was upon the right side, sometimes upon the left—then it was in front, and then it shifted to the back. At last the policeman's curiosity increased beyond all control, and he put his hand upon the swelling which was at the moment under Bill's right arm. It felt cold and clammy, but immediately reduced itself in size, and appeared to vanish, or rather to glide away from under the pressure.

"What the devil have you got here?" said the policeman.

Bill turned round, and looked in the man's face distractedly. He attempted to form an answer, but before the words had escaped his lips, the tumour suddenly rose with great rapidity under his left arm.

"Collar me," exclaimed Bill, driven to desperation, "it's no use making a fuss about it, I can't stand it no longer."

The policeman did as he was requested.

"What dodge have you been after now?" he inquired.

Bill made no answer. They walked on in silence, but presently came full upon Charley and Tommy. Poor Bill hung down his head, and seemed greatly to feel his degradation. On they went without Bill speaking to the boys, who, however, followed close in the policeman's wake. They arrived at the police-station, and the constable stated his charge.

"Search him," said the inspector.

Bill was placed in the dock, and the operation began. The policeman unbuttoned the shirt collar, and, thrusting his hands into Bill's bosom, pulled out a fine pair of soles. The second experiment yielded a similar result, and a third, equally productive, followed it. The fourth experiment terminated differently.

"Why, what in the name of fortune have you got here?" said the policeman.

No answer; still the same dogged silence. The policeman, with some apparant difficulty, grasped the object, and pulled it out. It was a fine, large, lively Dutch eel. Every one was astonished, with the exception of Bill, who looked the picture of shame and despair. It was the contortions of this animal, roused into unusual action by the warmth of Bill's body, which had attracted the policeman's notice. Bill had secured the soles, and was upon the point of leaving the market, when he saw the eel lying in a most seductive manner under a bench. The temptation was too great for him to withstand. He was fascinated by the beauty of its form. He looked carefully round; no one saw him; he placed it in his bosom, and the abduction was complete. Bill, however, soon found out that he cherished, if not a viper, something nearly as bad. The placid quiet creature which had attracted his admiration under the bench, proved as agile as a hungry serpent now he was in its power. He glanced rapidly and continuously around him till he met the policeman, and if his agonies were not equal to Laocoon's, he was fully as uncomfortable as that unhappy priest and father.

Bill was now locked up in a cell, preparatory to being taken to the police-court. Charley and Tommy, by the kindness of the jailor, were allowed to come into the yard to speak to him. Bill appeared at the little wicket in the door greatly affected, and the two boys cried bitterly. He had always been kind to the children, and he knew that they had loved and respected him, but

that now their respect was for ever lost. He knew that as soon as their grief should be over, he would appear in their eyes as a thief and a hypocrite. He determined, however, on the spur of the moment, to do them one last kind act, and he nobly sacrificed his own feeling on the occasion.

"Charley and Tommy," said he, "take warning by me —you see what thieving comes to. Never do nothing dishonest, it don't pay in the long run, though it may seem to do so for a time. You'll never see me again, nor I don't want you; for I hope you'll never be friends with a thief. I began young, and it's stuck to me; you're young and you have'nt, so don't begin. Take my advice like good boys, and leave the costermongering trade. Unless a chap's got a precious strong head of his own, the temptations to *w*ice and dissipation is so strong in that line, and appear so beautiful, there ain't many as can stand up against 'em. I could'nt, and how has it ended? My hopes is smashed, my heart is burst, my barrer is squashed, and I shall be lagged—at any rate, I hope so; as it won't be by no means my first con*w*iction, I dare say I shall be. I shall then be able to leave the country, and perhaps in some years time may be leading the innocent life of a shepherd in *W*an Dieman's Land."

Here he was much affected, and his auditors scarcely less so.

"Oh! Bill, I hope you'll get off," said Charley.

"There ain't no chance of it; I'm known to the gaoler."

"Yes," said the gaoler sorrowfully, "we've met very often before this, you know."

"Only four times," said Bill.

"Oh, come now, you've been in trouble more than four times," said the gaoler, mildly correcting him.

"Not at this court," said Bill. "I think if I was you," he continued, addressing the boys, "I should take to crossing sweeping; if its well managed, a *w*ery

good living may be picked out of it. Slammy could put you up to it if he liked, but I don't know as he would. He's got on in the world, and is proud, and I dare say would'nt remember us now we're come to grief. You can try him if you like, though. He sweeps the crossing opposite the butcher's shop in the Brompton-road; but I don't think you'll get much good out of him. I don't know that trade *w*ery well myself, but I think you had better choose a West-end crossing. After you've studied it a little—but you must do that, for nothing ain't done now-a-days without practice and study—you'd better work together. You must pay great attention to your dress, for that does a great deal. Keep your faces as clean as you can, and make your feet as muddy as possible—it tells with the women. Tommy would come out *w*ery strong so. When you work together, and a lady is crossing, let one keep on one side of her and the other on the other. Them ladies has a knack of being afraid of busses, and they're allers looking out for them when they cross, but they allers looks to the side away from the sweeper. If you're two together her dodge won't be of no use, so you'll be able to nail her. You'll naturally want capital to begin with, and I ain't got none now to give yer. There's twopence-halfpenny was taken off my person when I was searched, perhaps the inspector will let you have that; it's no use to me, and Mr. Solomons won't do nothing for that. Would you speak for 'em?" he continued, addressing the gaoler.

"Yes," said the man, good-naturedly; "I'll promise you they shall have it."

"I'm *w*ery much obliged to you, Sir. When you've got the twopence-halfpenny, you'd better go to the chap wot's got Slammy's crossing in the Commercial Road. He don't make it answer, so you'll be able, I dare say, to buy his broom with the money. You'd better practice there for a day or two before you go out West, so as to get your hand in. It's always best to

come out at a new crossing with a dash; people like to see a chap wot's up to his *pur*fession. Don't come to the court, for it would hurt my feelings for you to see me committed. And now before you go, look at me well, for it's the last time you'll see me, and mark well my words. Take warning by me, and always be honest. Try to love, honour, and su*ckle* your father and mother, and do your duty in that state of life which your godfathers and godmothers have promised for you."

Here Bill withdrew his head from the wicket. The last glimpse of his countenance showed an expression of intense sorrow. The two boys, after receiving the twopence-halfpenny from the gaoler, were turned by him into the street. Though still weeping bitterly, they soon afterwards followed Bill's advice, and sought Slammy's old crossing, where the transaction was completed for the broom.

When Bill was brought before the sitting magistrate, he found the police had succeeded in finding the owner of the soles, but no inquiries they could make, could give them the slightest clue to the owner of the eel. Not one had been sold in the market that morning, and not a fishmonger there had missed one from his stock. It was placed, however, in court with the soles as "*pieces de circonstance*," and while there showed a vivacity which, with a little stretch of the imagination, might almost have been taken for joy. Bill began to entertain almost a supernatural dread of the creature. He now hated the sight of it as much as he had admired it in the morning; yet it possessed over him a horrible sort of fascination, and he couldn't take his eyes off it. At last the magistrate asked him what answer he had to make to the charge. The question called Bill's attention back to the business of the court. He stated the fish had been given him by a chap, who told him to take it to the Shoreditch railway station, where he'd see a lady with green spectacles and

a red parasol, who'd give him sixpence for the job. The magistrate said he had heard a story very much like that somewhere before, and the prisoner did not even deserve the credit for originality in his defence.

"Well, your worship, I was driven to it by distress."

"Fully committed," said his worship; and Bill was removed from the dock to remain in durance till the trial; or in the more euphonious phraseology of a brother costermonger—"He got in a *wan*, and he went away."

CHAPTER X.

OLD BAKER'S TRIP INTO THE COUNTRY.—THE USED-UP MAID-SERVANT.—SOMETHING MORE ABOUT CATHERINE.

We must now return and trace the history of the other members of the Beuzeville family. The father's mind was totally wrecked by the death of his children and dispersion of his family. A few days after his wife had quitted him, melancholy insanity set in, and he was removed to a lunatic asylum. The accustomed litigation with respect to the settlement of an insane pauper was avoided in his case; there was proof, ample and sufficient, of his long residence in the parish of Shoreditch, and that claim was admitted without remonstrance. With old Baker the case was different. He had always lived in lodgings, and consequently he had no claim on parish charitable sympathy, although he had resided there the greatest portion of his life in industry, integrity, and respectability. The guardians had great difficulty in obtaining from the old man the name of the village in Norfolk from whence he originally came. He had either forgotten it, or was, perhaps, aware of the purport of the inquiry, and no threat nor persuasion could induce him to reveal it. He was at

last handed over to a sort of detective constable, expert in matters of the kind, and he took the old man in hand. This functionary soon obtained the information required. He concealed his official capacity from old Baker, and began by conversing with him upon indifferent subjects; after a short time he turned the conversation on the manufacture of Norwich crapes. The old man soon got eloquent on that subject. "He used to work at it himself in his younger days." The constable wondered how men who had been used to labour in the fields could get their hands supple enough for work of the kind, but he supposed only those could do it who had been brought up in the towns.

"Generally," the old man said, "it is so, but not always; I'd never seen a loom before I was seventeen years of age, and I'd been used to the fields always before that."

"Ah, but," said the constable, "maybe you lived near Norwich, and so was half a townsman before you began."

"I didn't live within twelve miles of Norwich, and had never been there in my life before I went to work there."

The constable was too expert to push the conversation further that day, but he resumed it again a few days afterwards, and with little difficulty drew from the old man the name of his native village. Communication immediately commenced between the clerk to the guardians and the similar official to the union in Norfolk. The identity of old Baker was established with tolerable, but not perfect certainty. The parish, however, was miserably poor, and could not afford the expense of litigation; beyond that, it was a great consolation to know that the old man was past his eightieth year and very feeble, so he could not last long. They grumbled somewhat at having a man from the metropolis, who had been thoroughly used up in the service of the richest community in the world, thrown, now he

was helpless, on their poor parish for that support and relief which, in common honesty, ought to have been afforded him by those who had profited by his labour; but it was part of the inexorable iron rule of the poor-laws, and it was their duty to submit, so old Baker should be received without further remonstrance. A warrant for his removal (fit name for a fitting instrument) was made out, and old Baker was informed he would be required to leave London in two days' time.

It would be impossible to describe the impotent rage and profound sorrow of the old man, when the news was conveyed to him. He at first trembled so fearfully with passion they feared he would have fallen into a fit, and he then as suddenly gave way to a flood of tears, and cried like a child. He appealed to every one in authority, imploring their assistance and commiseration, and every minor official he threatened in the most absurd manner. The chaplain was the first person to whom he applied. He placed pathetically enough before him, and with consistent reasoning, the great hardship it was for him to be separated from his child. To him she represented all that had been dear to him in this world. His dead wife and his numerous family, all long since entombed, lived in her, and to separate him from her was like "tearing his heart out." "He had been a good child when he was young, he had been a good husband and father, and had worked hard and honestly to do his duty to God and man, and it was'nt fair he should be punished in that manner, and not because he had done wrong, but only because he was old and unfortunate. Misfortune was'nt sin. It was'nt Christian-like to behave so; they could'nt have treated him worse if he'd been a slave."

The chaplain was much moved by the appeal, and he exerted himself in the old man's behalf, but he soon found out that which he might easily have discovered before—that poor-law humanity and Christian sympathy have little acquaintance with each

other. The old man then applied to the surgeon, pretending that he was too unwell to undertake the journey; this plea, however, was soon negatived. He then applied to one of the guardians, a very humane man. To him old Baker attempted to put it on the score of parochial policy. His daughter could'nt get on without him, how could she, with her young family? He had always had to take care of her, that was to say, of her children, and now she was upon a bed of sickness, she wanted his assistance more than ever, especially now that her husband was mad. If they did not let him stop there, they'd have to maintain her and all her family. The guardian pitied him, but had no power to help him. He then applied to the clerk, but there was no alternative, the law was imperative, and must be obeyed.

Still his supplications continued, and the officials at last were obliged to hand him over to the constable to manage. That functionary performed the duty with his usual tact. He spoke to the old man confidentially as a friend.

"You've gone a wrong way to work in the matter," he said to old Baker. "Them guardians ai'nt a bad set of chaps if you manage 'em properly, but they want humouring. They are a precious stiff lot if once they get their backs up. It's all very natural for you not to like to leave your daughter. From what I've seen, every body who knows her must be fond of her."

"Do you know her yourself?"

"No, I don't know her, not to speak to her, but I know a good many in her neighbourhood that does, and every one speaks of her as if she was an angel. What I'd advise you to do is this. Go down quietly for a little time; if it's fine weather, it will do you good, and you're not over strong now."

"I won't go at all. I'll stop here with my daughter."

"Now, if you'd only have a little patience, and hear what a fellow's got to say, before you snap him up in

that manner, you'd get on better. As soon as your daughter comes out of the hospital, they'll allow her and her children some out-of-door relief—there's no doubt of that, every body likes her so. Well, then, I'll keep my eyes on her, and as soon as she gets the allowance, I'll tell her where to send for you, and you can come up without the guardians knowing anything about it. If your daughter comes out now, and you refuse to go, they'll send you as a prisoner, for the warrant has already been made out; and then they won't give your daughter any relief unless she comes into the house, and so you'll never see anything of one another again."

He concluded by saying he had to go down into Norfolk himself the next day, and they might have a very pleasant journey together. He did not tell the old man that he would then be in his, the constable's, custody.

Old Baker at last appeared convinced by the constable's reasoning, and agreed to accompany him, if he would faithfully promise to let him know as soon as his daughter was again settled in a lodging. This the constable promised without the slightest hesitation, as he would have promised anything else which would have made the old man more tractable and contented. It was at last agreed the constable should be with him by six o'clock the next morning, so that they might be in time to start by the Parliamentary train.

The next morning the constable was true to his appointment, but found that a considerable change had come over the old man's feelings in the course of the night. He now declined going without receiving a positive assurance from the clerk that his expenses should be paid back again to London, when his daughter would be able to receive him. This the constable volunteered on his own responsibility, with the same alacrity he had promised everything the old man had required of him; but this time nothing would serve

him but he would see the clerk. At last the constable's patience began to give way.

"Now, its no use your arguing," said he, "the warrant for your removal is made out, and go you must. Why, it's all for your own and your daughter's advantage, you know. It will be much easier for her when she gets better to get on at the beginning without you; besides, after all, you'll be a great expense to her exactly at the time she can least afford it."

"I'm not," said the old man; "I work for all I get. I would not take a crumb from her if I wasn't sure I did for her more than it was worth. I tell you she can't get on without me. I've nursed her when she was a child; I've nursed her children for her when she was a mother, and how can she manage without me now?"

"She's got a husband, ain't she, and it's his place to take care of his wife; she's no call to come upon an old man like you to help her, when his strength is so far gone he can hardly help himself."

"I never was stronger in my life than I am now," said the old man, rising on his legs and immediately sinking again upon the bed on which he had been sitting, for they refused to support him when called upon so incautiously, "if it wasn't for these rheumatics, and they're better to-day. But what use can my daughter's husband be to her now he's insane? You ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk so."

"Well, I didn't remember it, and I'm sorry if I've offended you. I'm glad to hear the rheumatics is better at any rate, for we shall have to walk to the station. It's a fine morning, that's one good thing.

"I won't go," said the old man, folding his arms and glancing defiance at the constable; "I won't go, and that's flat."

"Come, now, don't be unreasonable, you'll see your daughter again before long. I should say three months at the longest. Why, a trip into the country this fine

weather would give you five years more life. You'll come back strong and hearty, and then you may be as happy with your daughter as a king. Why, you would be able to work again like a young man." The old man appeared to reflect.

"Why, there is something in that," he said. "If I could get a little strength, I could work again as well as any of them—better, perhaps; only the spectacles they make now-a-days is so different from what they used to be in my time."

"That's talking reasonably," said the constable; "come, now, and get your breakfast, and then we'll be off."

The breakfast was soon finished, and the scanty wardrobe of the old man enveloped in a pocket handkerchief. Suddenly he was on the point of leaving the ward, when the constable asked him where he was going.

"I am just running over to the hospital to bid Kate good-bye. She'll take it unkind of me if I don't."

"Nonsense—are you mad!" said the constable. "In the first place, the porter here won't let you out without me. In the second place, the porter at the hospital won't let you in there without an order, and that you ain't got. In the last place, you must be as mad as her husband if you want to see her now. Why, man, she's just getting better, and the idea of your going would make her worse again; and you know you'd never forgive yourself for that—you know you wouldn't. Why, you've no more head than a pin. Stop till you come back well and strong, and you'll be of some use then. You'd do a precious deal more harm than good now."

"Well, if you think so, I won't go; but you know it's a hard thing to leave without saying good-bye."

"So it is, I admit that, but it's all the better on your part not to do it, though it may hurt your feelings for the time."

The constable was now ready with his credentials, and the pair started off together. There was little leave-taking, for the officer, finding the old man in the humour to go, took him at his word. They walked slowly onwards, little conversation passing between them, till they came to the vacant ground cleared by the destruction of the houses necessary for the formation of the new Commercial-street. Here the old man appeared to recover from the bewilderment he had hitherto shown during their walk, and stopping short, took the constable by the sleeve of his coat.

"Do you know where we are now?" he said.

"Commercial-street; at least it will be some day, I suppose."

"That ain't what I mean at all."

"Well, what do you mean, then? Be quick, for we haven't much time to lose, I can tell you."

"Where are we now? I mean. Well, I'll tell you. Some years ago, a street crossed here; and about here in that street stood the house I lived in. I lived here a matter of I don't know how many years. I first came to it when I married my old woman. It's a hard thing after I lived here so long without asking help of anybody, and paying everybody honestly and honourably—though I worked like a nigger to do it—and now I'm come to the workhouse at last. Sent away like a felon; I'm your prisoner, you know that."

"Well, and the best thing for you, for the matter of that. What can you do better? But don't talk about being my prisoner, when I assure you I feel like a friend to you, for it hurts my feelings."

"Well, I beg your pardon. I don't want to do that; but it's the fact, after all. Well, thank God," he continued, "my poor old woman, that's dead and gone, don't know it. She'd have broke her heart, she would."

"Come along, will you? we shall miss the train."

"No, I won't. It was here all my poor children

was born. They're all dead and gone now, except Kate. They all died here, and so did the old woman —better luck for her, too, than to be as I am."

Here the old man began sobbing violently, and a crowd began to collect.

"Now, do come along," said the constable; "we can talk as we go, can't we?"

They started off; but, after a few steps, the old man stopped again. The constable began to get exceedingly annoyed; for the eyes of many were upon them.

"I remember the place about here," said old Baker, "as well as possible; every house they've pulled down I can remember. The undertaker lived there that buried my old woman."

"Where was she buried?" said the constable, saying something at hazard.

"In Shoreditch churchyard."

"Shoreditch churchyard! what, on the other side of the station there?"

"Yes," said the old man, astonished to find so much animation shown by the constable.

"Why, that is a curious thing, certainly. My poor wife and her baby lies buried there too. [His wife must have been very quick about it, for he had left her in bed with her child about two hours before.] Come along, and I'll show you where she lies, poor thing. She was as good and kind a creature as ever lived."

"And I'll show you where all mine are buried, too;" and they started off together. The constable was a profound pauper psycologist. He knew perfectly well the *foible* of the old Spitalfields weaver to be Canning's bill for the introduction of French silks, and he began upon it.

"Did you live here before the foreign silks were allowed to come in?"

"Yes, I did, and a scandalous thing it was. We could get a decent livelihood then, if we worked hard for it, but it's more than a fellow can do now. That

chap Canning ought to be dug up and his bones burnt. I hate those fellows that are always talking about British liberty, and doing all they can against the British workman. All the other things he did might be well enough, I don't dispute them, but he'd no right to do anything to hurt the weaver."

"I don't exactly see how it hurt the weaver," said the constable. "I've often wanted to have it explained to me, for I've heard a good many talk about it, and none of 'em seemed to like it."

"I'll tell you how it was," said Old Baker; and the constable listened for the one hundred and ninety-ninth time to an old weaver's description of the effects of Canning's Bill upon the trade.

They had now strolled tranquilly on till they were opposite the railway station. They continued on till they were nearly past it in the direction of Shoreditch church, when the policeman turning short round exclaimed, in a voice of great alarm :—

"Come on, as quick as you can, or we shall lose the train. I'd no idea it was so late. Come along, do."

And leaving the old man he quickly entered the station-yard. The rapidity of the movement startled the shattered mind of the poor fellow, and he followed the other as fast as he possibly could.

"Don't go on so quick," he called out in a peevish tone; "I can't keep up with you."

"Take my arm, then, and come faster, or we shall be left behind." He knew perfectly well they had a quarter of an hour to spare.

Arrived at the office, the bustle occupied the old man's mind for some moments while the constable obtained the tickets; they then went upon the platform. Old Baker was now perfectly silent, in fact, the excitement bewildered him. He looked curiously and inquiringly at everything he saw; but before he appeared to comprehend it something else caught his attention.

"Look here," said a gentleman, holding a copy of the *Times* in his hand, to a friend on the platform—"look here, is not this terrible?"

"I've left my glasses at home. What is it?"

"The description of a poor old negro slave in America. He had been living with his daughter for several years in one of the free States, assisting her in her household duties, and doing what little labour he could, when he was recognised as a runaway slave. His master, for the sake of example, claimed him, though he was worth but little, and sent an officer to bring him back. The scene of the old man's parting from his child, the only relative he had in the world, is beautifully told. I never read anything more pathetic in my life."

"American liberty and fine feeling, I suppose," said the friend. "Truly, they will have their reward. Thank God, we've none of that sort of thing here."

"No, it wouldn't go down here, I'm happy to say. We ought to be very proud of our country. There's none like it, with all its faults."

"I wonder, now, if the slave were to stab the officer, whether their laws would admit of any excuse in mitigation of punishment?"

"Certainly not—you may be sure of that."

"Well, in my opinion, the black would have been perfectly justified." The constable thought the speaker held extreme opinions; but those poor blacks were very much to be pitied, after all.

They were on the point of entering the carriage when some one touched the policeman on the arm. He turned round and found a constable of his acquaintance, accompanied by a decent-looking woman, and two boys of perhaps eight and ten years of age. The woman had an amiable, subdued, and gentle expression of countenance, but she was sickly-looking and emaciated. The boys were healthy, well-made lads, evidently strangers to the woman.

"Why, where are you going?"

"I've got to take this old gentleman into Norfolk. He's been rather rebellious (this in an under tone), but I've managed him at last. Where are you bound to?"

"I've got to take these boys to Cambridge, and the woman a little further on. We may as well ride together as far as we go."

They immediately got into a compartment by themselves. The boys went to the farther window, and were soon occupied in gazing on everything they saw with intense curiosity. The woman seated herself at the other window, with her back to the engine, and old Baker placed himself on the seat in front of her. The constables were in the centre, and were soon occupied on professional subjects. The train moved on. The boys were in a high state of delight, and talked together incessantly. The movement of the train leaving the station appeared to awaken some sad thoughts in the mind of the poor woman as the objects receded from her sight. Presently her eyes filled with tears, and she turned her head towards the window to conceal them. They evidently came fast, for her handkerchief was employed to wipe them away several times in the course of a few minutes. Old Baker gazed at her with wonder, but said nothing. The constables looked at each other, but were also silent; they apparently respected the poor creature's sorrow.

"Who are those lads?" asked the constable from Whitechapel.

"Their father was butler to a gentleman at the West End. He had contrived to earn a little money, so he gave up service and started a coffee-shop. In fact, he was obliged to leave his situation, because his master found out he was a married man. He said he was sorry to part with him, because he was an excellent servant; but to be deceived in such a manner was infamous, and he wouldn't put up with it. The coffee-shop did

not answer; it wasn't the man's fault, though, for he was up early and late. Well, as if things wasn't going on bad enough for him, his wife was took ill with a fever about the same time and died. He was very fond of her, and her death was a great blow to him. He took to drinking, and that finished him. He died about six months after his wife's death from drink, and the children was taken to our parish. They found out the father came from Cambridge, so the warrant was made out, and I'm sent down with them. The woman is not from our place; but, as I was going down, they asked me to look after her and pay her what attention I could. She's a very decent woman, and has been very respectable, poor thing."

He did not say anything more about the woman, but treated her with a kind, attentive sort of respect. Her history is a very common-place sort of affair; perhaps it is hardly worth while narrating it. The type is, however, set up, and it may as well go in, so if the reader has been accustomed to the management of the London poor, he is candidly advised to skip it altogether, as he will doubtless have met with many cases very similar in his own experience; the author could count them by hundreds.

She had been for many years servant in a gentleman's family; her mother had been a nurse in the same establishment before her, and was much respected by her employers. When the daughter was about thirty-five years of age, and had put by a little money in the savings' bank, she received an offer of marriage from a journeyman carpenter. He was some years her junior, a fine-looking young man, but an idle, drunken vagabond; these qualifications he had, however, contrived to hide from her before their marriage. The poor woman, flattered by his attentions, married him. They were to settle in Fulham, and the family with whom she had lived so many years, by way of reward for her long and faithful services, gave her a considerable por-

tion of her furniture, under the condition that her mother should live with her.

Things went on smoothly enough for a few weeks, but at last the cloven foot began to show itself in his treatment of the mother. This occasioned some unpleasant feeling between him and his wife, as the latter was much attached to her parent. The fellow's behaviour, however, to the poor old creature at last got so unbearable that she was obliged to apply to her parish for relief. Her parish was in Highgate, for her husband had obtained a legal settlement there; and the old woman was admitted into the workhouse. Here she was treated with great sympathy, and occasionally had, as a treat, a visit from her daughter, when the latter could obtain permission from her brutal husband—a circumstance of very rare occurrence. Occasionally, when the old woman received intimation that her son-in-law would be out for the day, she would visit her daughter; but this happened rarely, as she was very infirm, and the distance was considerable.

About a year after the daughter's marriage, a blow from her husband, when she was far advanced in pregnancy, brought on a miscarriage, leaving behind it effects upon her health of a most distressing character. The conduct of her husband, instead of ameliorating from her forgiveness, became still worse, and among other acts of tyranny, was a positive prohibition against her visiting her mother—about as cruel a punishment for his wife as he could have invented.

About a month before her introduction to the reader, her husband one fine morning asked her if she would like to spend the day with her mother, if so, she might go. The poor woman was but too happy to accept the offer, and thanked him warmly for his kindness.

"It's a long way there and back," said he, "perhaps you had better ride one way;" and he gave her sixpence for an omnibus. The effect of this kindness, so different from his ordinary behaviour, was over-

powering upon his wife, and the expression of her countenance was one of extreme gratitude. Her preparations for her visit were rapidly made, but as she was leaving the house he stopped her for a moment.

"We want a basin," said he, "if you don't feel too tired in the evening and can walk back, I wish you'd buy one with the sixpence as you come through the Tottenham-court-road."

She cheerfully told him she would do so if it were a fine evening, and then started forward on her long and fatiguing journey. The happiest time the poor creature had spent for many months was on that day. How warmly did she defend and find excuses for her husband when her mother complained of his behaviour.

"Jem was a queer temper," she said, "there was no doubt of that; but he certainly had a good heart at bottom, that nobody could deny." The mother was silent upon that subject.

Evening came on, and the daughter took leave of her mother, and the long and dusty Hampstead-road was ended before she began to feel fatigue. Onward she continued her journey, but the way began to appear terribly long. Arrived at the Tottenham-court-road, she halted. She had begun to feel greatly fatigued, but the wish to please her husband was dominant, and instead of taking the omnibus, she determined on purchasing the basin; that completed, she continued her painful walk to Fulham. To add to her discomfort, she began to feel that her feet were blistering; but the knowledge that she had no money left, and she could not choose but to walk, stimulated her to exertion, and she resolutely continued her weary way onwards. Night came on, still she was far from home. Her feet were now in a lamentable condition, but anxiety deadened the sense of pain, and she pushed forward till she arrived at Waltham-green. Here nature could hold out no longer, and she sat herself down on a bank to rest. It was but little relief she obtained, the attraction of home was

all-powerful, and each minute she remained it became stronger. Faint and weary, foot-sore and thirsty, she at last reached Fulham. She arrived at her home; at that moment the church-bell toll'd the hour of midnight. Exhaustion and fatigue in a moment vanished; they were absorbed in the dread of her husband's displeasure at her being so late. Before reaching the door she looked up at the windows—he must be in bed, no light was to be seen. Oh! how she dreaded disturbing him. She advanced to the door to knock, holding the basin forward in her hand as a peace-offering. To her surprise the door had not been closed, it had merely been pulled to. She entered softly, all was dark; she felt for the table, it could not be found. She was much astonished at the circumstance, and attempted to find a chair, that she might rest herself for a moment. No chair could be found. She groped carefully round the room, not an article of furniture could she feel; it appeared perfectly empty.

She thought she must have mistaken the house, and she went out into the street to assure herself. "No, she was right, it was her home." She again entered and passed softly into the back-room, which they used as their bed-room. She advanced cautiously towards the bed not to awake her husband—nothing was there! She felt round the room—not an article of any description could she find. What to imagine she did not know. There were two rooms above which had been let to some lodgers, but they had left. "Perhaps Jem had taken the whim into his head to live up-stairs, instead of on the ground-floor." She crept cautiously up-stairs—all was empty. The poor woman, utterly amazed, sat herself upon the floor, and placed the basin beside her. Day shortly afterwards began breaking; and as the light increased, the reality of her position became more certain. Before the sun had fully risen, there was no longer any doubt on the subject. Not a piece of furniture remained in the house, nor an article

of her clothing more than she had on her at the moment —all had gone. The little purchase she had made the previous evening was there on the floor, the only remaining thing in the world she could call her own. She sat herself upon the stairs, and wept continuously till she heard her neighbours moving. She then went into the street, and the first she met told her all. She had hardly quitted the house the day before, than a dealer in second-hand furniture came with a cart and removed everything away. Her husband remaining in the house a short time longer, the neighbours asked him if he were going to move. He answered in the affirmative, adding they would not see him again in a hurry; he had sold off everything, and intended to emigrate. There was no room in England for a fellow that wanted to get on in the world. If anybody asked after him, they could tell them as much as that.

The woman was now utterly confounded, and she applied in her distress to a policeman for advice. He recommended her immediately to apply to one of the guardians of the poor, and pointed out the house of one likely to take up her cause with heartiness.

"If he was not at home, she could apply to some other, they were all very kind men," he said; "and would assist her if they could, he was sure of that."

Taking her basin with her, she made her application to the first guardian he had recommended, and her tale was listened to with much sympathy. He advised her immediately to go into the house, and her case would certainly be inquired into. With some difficulty they discovered the name of the parish her husband came from, and finding it was in Cambridgeshire, they wrote to the guardians on the subject. Her right to relief there being proved by the fact of her marriage, she was told she must prepare to leave London in the course of a few days. In vain the poor creature pleaded that she had never been to Cambridge in her life, and that she knew no one in the place; that her mother, whom she

so tenderly loved, was the only relative she had in the world. The guardians admitted the case was a hard one, but they had no alternative. Their poor-rate was fearfully heavy, and they could not increase it. She inquired whether she could not be admitted into the workhouse at Highgate, and she could then remain with her old mother. They told her it was impossible she could be indulged to such an extent. Unfortunately for her, her conduct had always been respectable. Had she not been married to her husband, the thing might have been managed, but her title to respectability precluded her from any claim on the sympathy of the parish her mother resided in. She had better submit quietly to the law, without resistance or remonstrance. The guardians kindly from their own pockets contributed enough to allow her to spend the next two days with her mother.

Painful, indeed, was the parting on her side, but fortunately she had not the courage to inform the old woman it was the last time they should meet. The mother was surprised at her daughter's tears, but attributed them to some dispute she might have had with her brutal husband, and made no remark. The next day she left London in company with the constable, not by any means as his prisoner, or acting under compulsion. She needed none, for in spirit she was thoroughly broken down. The man was requested to show her every attention and civility in his power, and he conscientiously fulfilled his trust. In his company she left that city, in which her best years had been spent in incessant labour, combined with perfect respectability and integrity—without a shilling in the world to call her own—with nothing but the clothes she had on her; for even the basin had been left behind, a present to a poor woman with a young infant in the casual ward—to seek for charity and assistance from those she had never seen, who had no sympathy with her, and whose only introduction to them was through

the medium of her marriage with a man, of whom all they remembered was that he had acquired the reputation while with them of a drunken, dishonest scoundrel.

As the party got near Cambridge, the conversation became more general; the poor woman had found her tongue, and even Old Baker took part in it. When the train stopped they all descended, and one of the constables volunteered standing a glass of beer all round. Old Baker was delighted at the offer, and warmly thanked the man when he placed the glass in his hands. He was on the point of placing it to his lips, when suddenly his mind changed, and he asked the woman if her father were living?

"No, he had been dead many years, but she had left a good old mother in London, and she was afraid she should never see her again."

He asked her no more questions, but gazed steadfastly at her, apparently forgetting that the beer was in his hand. The bell rang for them to enter the carriages. The old man walked towards them—the beer still in his hand. They called his attention to it, and he placed it on the counter without having tasted a drop—he had forgotten all about it.

The new acquaintances now bade farewell to each other, and the old man and his companions again took their places. No further conversation took place between them; the policeman, in fact, fell fast asleep, and did not wake up till the train arrived at Norwich. They then took their seats in a cart going to ——, and the constable introduced his companion to the master of the union. All formalities necessary for his reception having been gone through, the constable bade adieu to the old man, who showed so much feeling and seemed so loathe to lose his society, that the bystanders imagined they were old acquaintances. The poor fellow felt as if he were parting with his last friend, the connecting link between him and that place where he

had left all that was dear to him, and he watched the constable sorrowfully till he had quitted the building.*

When old Baker went into the ward, he found there a number of aged men, who looked at him with curiosity, but took no further notice of him. No one welcomed the poor fellow, and he felt wretched and desolate in the extreme. The others continued the conversation among themselves, which his entrance had interrupted. He listened to them, but could hardly understand them. They were principally used-up farm labourers, and he remembered nothing whatever of country life. He had left it when quite young, and he had not visited it since.

The next day the excitement of the journey had passed off, and the re-action came over him. He spoke to no one, would not eat his meals, and appeared nearly idiotic. The officers of the establishment, in fact, considered him so already, and expressed their opinion to the master. Beyond occasionally clasping his hands firmly together, and moving his head sorrowfully from side to side, he made no movement, and gave no sign by which they could imagine he was interested in anything. The third day was Sunday, and the paupers were permitted to leave the building and stroll about the country. He saw them go out without wishing to follow them. When told he might accompany them if he chose, he merely shook his head and remained at the window looking down into the yard. Suddenly he appeared to alter his mind, and went below and seated himself in the sunshine on a bench in the yard. His attention was presently attracted by a woman, a tramp, who, with three young children, one in her arms, passed him. He watched her attentively, and with much

* The reader, perhaps, may be surprised to learn that the travelling expenses of constables on missions similar to the above form an item in the Poor Law accounts of not less than £60,000 a-year.

interest. Presently one of the children lagged behind, and the old man rose to speak to it. The child got frightened when it saw him approach, and attempted to run after its mother, but fell upon the stones and began crying. The old man immediately picked it up, and attempted to console it, but the child only cried the louder.

"You'd better leave him alone," shouted the woman, "he can't abide strangers," and rushing back, snatched the child angrily from the old man's hands.

The poor fellow seemed to feel the affront most acutely. He attempted to say something in reply, but passion rendered his words utterly incoherent, with the exception of something about his daughter's children. The woman took no further notice of him, and old Baker, after gesticulating violently as long as she was in sight, turned round, and still muttering to himself, left the building, the porter offering no opposition. He strolled about carelessly, apparently indifferent where he went. When supper-bell rang, the paupers returned to their meal, but old Baker was not among them. Inquiries were made about him, one individual alone had seen him, and that must have been more than an hour after he had left the building. He was then apparently very low-spirited, and was crying bitterly. The man spoke to him, but he turned away and made no answer. It was decided that, as he was a stranger, he had lost his way—he would be sure to return later. Night came on, but he did not arrive, and the porter began to get uneasy about him; but the evening was warm and the nights short, so that he could not come to much harm if he did not return till morning. The next day came, but old Baker had not returned. They sent out and made inquiries about him, but without success—nobody had seen him. The next morning came, and he was found.

A barge was being towed along the canal, when the man on the horse suddenly stopped.

"What's wrong now, mate?" shouted the man at the tiller.

"What's that in the water?" said the other. "Why, it's a man, as I'm alive!"

The barge continued moving on slowly, having way on her when the horse stopped. The man quitted the tiller, and, seizing the boat-hook, brought the body alongside the barge, and then took it on board. The pauper dress showed it belonged to the workhouse, so they carried it on shore and left it in the care of the porter, who recognised it as the corpse of old Baker. A coroner's inquest sat on it, and as no intelligence was forthcoming as to the manner the poor fellow had met his fate, a verdict of "Found drowned" was returned. A short funeral service, without a mourner, was performed, the earth closed over him, and old Baker was heard of no more.

The day after Catherine was received into the hospital she was attacked by delirium, which continued till the crisis of the fever had passed. A naturally strong constitution carried her through the disease, although her case, from its great severity, was several times considered hopeless. When the fever abated, it left a debility so distressing, that she was unable to leave the hospital for a month afterwards. Bodmer, who felt great interest in her, visited her several times during her convalescence. It was also his painful task to break to her, as opportunity offered, the distressing events which had taken place during her illness. He considered it would be better to lay the whole facts before her while her mind was in an almost prostrate state from the debility left by the fever, but this he did with great caution, that he might not cause such an excitement as would bring on a relapse. He had indirectly heard of her father's death from the clerk of the union, this he first communicated to her, concealing the circumstances connected with it. The immediate sharp grief soon passed; the old man had been almost

childish for some months before it happened, and his extreme old age had in some measure prepared her for the event. The grief of witnessing his dissolution had been spared to her, and she had sufficient philosophy to remember that every day he had lived, for some years past, had been little better than one of privation and pain. Without a particle of diminution of that respect and love for her parent which she had so fully shown during his life, she, after the first sorrow which the intelligence caused her, resigned herself to the will of Providence, and admitted the justice of the dispensation.

Her husband's affliction was a greater sorrow to bear up against. This Bodmer mitigated to a certain degree, by the venal fiction, that the physician at the lunatic asylum considered her husband's case far from hopeless, and she must not despair of having him again with her fully restored to health, both in body and mind. She had, it must be remembered, been aware that his mind was affected long before her attack of fever, so that the shock had been broken to a considerable degree before Bodmer informed her that he had been put under restraint. The mysterious absence of the two children, Charles and Tommy, was a far more difficult subject to manage than either of the others. He made many inquiries respecting them before he broached it to her, but only one circumstance respecting them could be discovered—they had been seen in the company of the costermonger. Where that worthy had gone to, nobody knew. This information, so far as it went, was most unsatisfactory, for that individual's character was not such as to allay alarm in the mind of a parent, or promise much for the future respectability or welfare of the children.

Bodmer continued to avoid any direct answer on the subject, when Catherine questioned him about them, till the effects of the intelligence he had communicated respecting her father and husband had somewhat sub-

sided. At last he was obliged to acknowledge the fact, not only that the boys had disappeared, but that no intelligence could be obtained of them. He endeavoured to calm her sorrow by telling her they had been seen in the company of a working man who had resided in the neighbourhood, about a week after her removal to the hospital. The police, he assured her, were making inquiries in all parts, and although hitherto without success, they promised him not to relax their efforts till they were found. Small as this consolation was, and untrue as a great portion of it might be, it was all that could be offered her. At first she gave full sway to her anxiety, but upon Bodmer reminding her how injurious might be the effects of her grief upon her health, and how necessary her existence was for the future welfare of her children, he succeeded somewhat in calming her; and those two great solaces for the afflicted, time and hope, coming to his assistance, she continued to support her health, till she was sufficiently recovered to leave the hospital.

Although on her re-entrance on the world her prospects for the future looked bleak and dreary enough, they were perhaps less so than might have been expected. The particulars of her family misfortunes had become known to some of those charitable individuals so often found interesting themselves for the welfare of the unfortunate. Inquiries were made respecting her former mode of life, and the high character she received from all contributed to raise the interest already felt in her favour. A donation from some Samaritan fund was made her, thanks to the interference of the chaplain in her behalf. A wealthy Jew, a liberal contributor to the charity, who did not consider it adverse to his creed to extend his sympathy to a Christian, though bountiful in solacing the poor of his nation, made her a present of a decent suit of mourning; so when she left the hospital, in pecuniary

matters she was in a better position than she had been in for some time previous.

Her appearance had naturally undergone a great change from the effects of misfortune and disease. She was now, artistically speaking, extraordinarily beautiful, she was a perfect specimen of that loveliness of sorrow so often found in English women. Although all appearance of youth had long since passed away, the exquisite shape of her features still remained. Her complexion, blanched by her long confinement to her bed, approached the whiteness of marble, yet so transparent was her skin, that the insipidity of the stone was lost while its beauty remained, and this again was more fully brought out by the sombre colour of her dress. Misfortune had painted the lily, and made it still more beautiful. Her mild blue eye appeared milder than ever, and was yet clearer and more brilliant. Her face was a lovely page of picture reading. Sorrow with resignation, pain with patience, unflinching love under misfortune and privation, were painted on it, while clearly and distinctly "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" was traced upon her brow. There was something more than earth about that tall fragile form. It was too weak, too exhausted to have stood alone. An arm from heaven was evidently around her and supported her. Her shape and features told it plainly. There was as much of the immortal as the mortal about her. She taught man the possibility of angels, from her close resemblance to them, and how nearly a good pious motherly woman in affliction approaches their nature. There was a dignity, too, about her more than belonged to earth, and man acknowledged it. That pale, sickly woman, in a common black dress, had a respect paid to her that a princess might have envied. All spoke to her with kindness and civility. The policemen all listened to her inquiries about her children with sympathy and kind feeling; and she spoke to many, to all, in fact, she met. The inspectors

at the stations were equally attentive and civil to her. The rough sailors round the gin-shop doors, would step with alacrity from her path when she approached them, to let her pass ; and many a kindly glance was cast after her by those utterly ignorant of her story. Groups of drunken men and lost women when they saw her approach became silent and made room for her, or she seemed to pass through them like a spirit without notice or obstruction. If she saw a collection of children at play—no unfrequent occurrence in those eastern localities—she would inquire of them after her boys. They would immediately quit their games to listen to her, and repeated her inquiries to those around them, but none could give her any information.

One day, about a week after she had quitted the hospital, while continuing her search she met the wife of the railway constable who had taken so much interest in her when Martha left her home. A singular feeling came over Catherine when she first perceived her ; she wished to speak to her, but dreaded doing so. She felt almost the fascination of terror when the woman approached her. She stopped, and would have turned back, but her feet seemed to be no longer under the control of her will, and remained fixed to the ground. As the constable's wife came nearer, she seemed in doubt who that pale woman in black could be who gazed at her so intently. She looked inquiringly at her, the features were certainly familiar to her, but still she could not remember them. When close to Catherine she recalled her to her memory.

"Mrs. Beuzeville," she said," "is that you ?" Catherine put out her hand, but could not speak ; too many sad remembrances crowded on her brain at the moment.

"Come with me, my dear," said the constable's wife, "I live close by here now ;" and with great tact and kindness, without saying more she conducted Catherine to her room a few doors off, and having seated her guest on a chair said kindly to her—

"I have heard of a good many of your troubles, and was very sorry for them; but I hope you're more comfortable now."

The good creature's sympathy brought back Catherine's ideas, and after swallowing a little water she described her present position with tolerable clearness.

"Well, that's all very sad," said the constable's wife; "but you must not give them up yet, you know. It's very different from losing one of your girls; the boys, if they're honest—and I am sure your's are—can't come to much harm. You'll find 'em again soon, you may depend upon that. I'll speak to my husband about it, and he'll advise you what to do; but you must keep up your spirits, whatever you do."

The advice had a somewhat contrary effect, which the woman perceiving, she determined to play the good Samaritan, and pour the oil on Catherine's wounds, most efficacious with poor respectable women of the working classes, and with that intent immediately put her tea-pot in requisition. Catherine remained with her for nearly an hour, and then left, thoroughly grateful for the kindness she had received. When she quitted the house, the constable's wife again volunteered the services of her husband, which offer Catherine thankfully accepted, and promised to call on her friend again in a few days.

The next day, being a visiting day at the asylum, Catherine went there to see her husband. She had been there the second day after leaving the hospital, but could not then be admitted. She also wished to have some intelligence of the boys before she saw him, in case he should inquire after them. The caution was needless. No sooner did she see him than she discovered the deception Bodmer had practised on her, in assuring her that her husband might probably recover from his affliction. Even the strong, the almost blinding hope such a woman possesses, could not hide the truth from her. That man on whom she had formerly looked

as a superior being to herself; that man whose greater ability had guided her, and on whom she had so often looked for advice and protection, sat there before her helpless and mindless as an infant. He gazed vacantly at her. Occasionally a look approaching intelligence would come over his face when he saw that evanescent, painful smile on hers — a smile so faint and fragile, the gathering tear in the eyelid threatened to fall and destroy all vestige of it. Once he released his hand from hers, and raising it slowly, took hold of her black shawl and appeared to examine the stuff for some moments. He then raised his eyes and looked at her bonnet, and then at her dress generally. The black colour appeared to convey some idea to him, and he looked inquiringly into her face, as if he would have spoken, but the expression faded again. His hand quitted its hold on her shawl, and sank slowly upon his knee without his uttering a word. The time arrived for her to leave him. She kissed him affectionately, but he took no notice of her, and poor Catherine left the building disconsolate and desolate indeed.

Her little money was now rapidly getting exhausted, and she determined on accepting an offer she had received through the instrumentality of the mistress of her two daughters in Sussex. It was to take charge of the offices of a solicitor in the town, whose health would not allow him to sleep there. The emolument she was to receive was trifling, but it was sufficient for her small wants. Previous to leaving London, she called on Bodmer to thank him for his kindness to her, but he was from home. She spent her last evening in town with the railway constable and his wife. They received and entertained her with great kindness. The husband promised to make all possible inquiries respecting the boys, and took down her address in the country, to write to her on the subject, in case he might have any intelligence to communicate. The worthy couple

parted from her with regret, and the next day Catherine joined her daughters in the country.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SLAVE-OWNER.

About six months after Catherine's departure to join her daughters in Sussex, Dr. Bodmer one morning, as he was preparing to start on his visits, received a letter by the post. It was from a Mr. Mortimer, whose acquaintance he had formed some years since at the time of a disputed election for the Tower Hamlets, that gentleman being an intimate friend of one of the candidates, on one of whose committees Bodmer was serving. Bodmer and his friend but seldom met, as Mr. Mortimer resided at the west end of the town, and the Doctor's visits to that quarter were few and far between; while the other's visits to the eastern districts were of yet rarer occurrence. Still a close sort of intimacy existed between them, arising from the fact that both were much interested in the question of the treatment of the poor; and Mr. Mortimer, who had more than once written on the subject, and had also been most energetic in bringing it under the notice of the Government, though without much good resulting from it, had frequently found the perfect practical knowledge the little doctor possessed in the matter, of great use to him in his labours.

The letter contained an invitation, or rather urgent request for Bodmer to dine with him the next day at the Reform Club, of which Mr. Mortimer was a member, as he much wished to introduce him to a friend who had but lately arrived in England, and to whom he believed Bodmer could be of great service. Bodmer, always ready to oblige his friend, and in this

the more so, as the illustrious Soyer, more by the kind patronage of the *Punch* writers than his own merits, was rising rapidly to great celebrity; and the Doctor, like most of his craft, had a strong affection for a good dinner. He immediately took off his hat (he seldom wore gloves when on duty) and wrote a hurried note expressive of his readiness to oblige any friend of Mr. Mortimer's, and his certain punctuality in keeping the appointment. The next day, after carefully polishing himself up for the occasion, he hailed an omnibus and arrived at the club somewhat before his time. A page, by the direction of the porter, conducted him to the blue drawing-room, where he found Mr. Mortimer and two other gentlemen, one a Mr. Thompson, a radical member of Parliament, the other, to whom Bodmer was to be specially introduced, a Mr. Courtney, an American gentleman lately arrived from one of the Southern States of the Union, and who was now visiting Europe for the first time.

"One of the principal objects of my friend Mr. Courtney's voyage," said Mr. Mortimer to the Doctor, "is to obtain some family information in London, and he is somewhat at a loss how to proceed. As his researches will probably be chiefly confined to your end of the metropolis, and as I know, Bodmer, that you are always willing to assist any one in difficulties, and have a most extended knowledge of that part of London, I have introduced him to you. As dinner will be ready in a few minutes, perhaps it would be better to postpone the whole subject till a later period in the evening. You can then go thoroughly into the matter without interruption. Mr. Courtney is also much interested in the condition of our working classes, and our social institutions generally as connected with them, and as I know you are, perhaps, as well up on that subject as any man in England, you would greatly oblige me by giving him what information you can respecting them. Pray," continued Mr.

Mortimer, laughing, "be as patriotic as you can, and make everything appear as much *couleur de rose* as possible, for Mr. Courtney is one of those who maintain that kind treatment to the pagan blacks is not more unjust than oppression and cruelty to the Christian white. Pray prove to him the contrary, and let him go back to his own country so fully impressed with the merits and enlightenment of Old England, that he may hold them up for respect and imitation to the model Republic.

Dinner was soon afterwards announced, and the guests with their Amphitryon proceeded to the coffee-room. The *cuisine* was good, the wines excellent, and the guests courteous; everything went on smoothly, and acquaintanceship almost ripened to intimacy. Conversation went on fluently; Mr. Thompson, who was a liberal of the Whig school of politics, finding immense fault with every Tory or Ultra-radical element in the Government, at the same time maintaining, and firmly believing, that our Legislative institutions were, on the whole, superior to all others in the world. Mr. Courtney was a tall, well-made man, between fifty and sixty years of age, with a remarkably handsome, open, intelligent countenance, dark eyes, thin hair, inclining to grey, and a somewhat tanned complexion. His manners were easy, gentlemanly, and candid. His education had evidently been excellent, and his knowledge and experience of the world were certainly most extensive. During the dinner he made many inquiries respecting London, not only with regard to its aristocracy and wealth, but its poor population as well. On asking a question of Mr. Mortimer on the latter subject, which that gentleman was unable to answer, he referred him to Bodmer for information. "He will be able to tell you, I have no doubt, for he knows the subject much better than I do; any other question you may wish to ask about it, I am sure he will answer, and correctly. He is about the best instructor on the 'manners and habits' of our poor you could find."

"I shall most willingly become his pupil," said Mr. Courtney, "the more so as I admit I may be somewhat prejudiced against you, and yet I should be sorry to do you an injustice; as you know, perhaps, I am the proprietor of many slaves, and beyond that I unhesitatingly maintain the necessity of negro slavery, not more for the benefit of his owner than that of the negro himself. Unless I am very much mistaken, there is occasionally as much injustice and cruelty practised on the white man under, nominally, free institutions, as on the black in countries like the United States of America, where African slavery is permitted. I have been, it is true, only a few days in London, but during the greater portion of that time I have been in the neighbourhood of the docks, and I tell you candidly, I have seen more misery, more abject misery, near them in that short time, than I have seen among the negroes in America in my whole life. But seriously, I should be sorry to form an incorrect or unjust impression on the subject, and should be most grateful to any one who would show me that I am in error."

"There is an immense amount of misery there, I admit," said Mr. Thompson; "but a vast portion of it is due to the naturally improvident, vicious habits of the working classes themselves. There is, I am sorry to say, very little foresight or prudence to be found among them."

"I can hardly agree with you there," said Mr. Courtney; "because many I saw had evidently been accustomed to great misery and privation while too young to be accused of improvidence. The number of stunted, narrow-chested, ill-developed frames I found among the young men was most remarkable; and it must be remembered that those signs are almost indisputable proofs of want of vital stamina, arising from impoverished constitutions in their parents, or insufficient care and nourishment during the earlier years of their own lives. Very many of the children I saw,

too, promised, if they lived, to be no better able to wage the battle of life than those already arrived at maturity. You may, perhaps, consider it affectation on my part, slave-holder as I am, possessing the callous feelings which you English philanthropists so unhesitatingly accuse us of, when I tell you my heart bled to see the abject misery of these poor infants. You certainly would not bring the charge of improvidence against them ?"

"Certainly not; but I would against their parents."

"But let me ask," said Bodmer, "what providence or foresight can a labourer practise who has a wife and young family, and who when in full pay can only earn sixteen shillings a-week ? Imagine the amount of work an English labourer is expected to perform, perhaps greater than any other in the world; at least forty per cent. more than is on an average obtained from slave labour. Calculate, I say, the expense of nourishment requisite to compensate for the enormous loss that such labour brings upon the vital powers, to that add the expense of his clothing, then the food and clothing of his wife, and, say, two children, with the enormous rent of his miserable room, and then tell me how the labourer can practise economy ? Remember he is merely in possession of that income when in health and in full work. Deduct also the time in each year when he has no employment, or is prostrated by sickness, from his small earnings, and then tell me that want of constitution in his children is solely the fault of the parents' improvidence. They are not only too poor to find sufficient food, but even to a great extent that which is as requisite to the labourer as food itself—atmospheric air—and this absolute necessary our infamous Legislature appear each year to be reducing to the utmost extent in their power, by destroying, on every possible excuse, as many of the few dwellings still left standing for the use of the poor, as they can obtain possession of. If one-half the energy or foresight

were used by the Minister of Public Works to provide dwellings for the working classes which he shows for destroying them, the advantage not only to the sanitary condition of the people, but to their morality as well, would be incalculable."

"While I grant," said Mr. Thompson, "that the morals of a community may be injured by overcrowding, I don't see how an insufficient amount of sanitary precaution, or want of vital stamina in children, can be adverse to their morals. I should have thought that physiology would have proved the contrary to be the case."

"Then you are very much in error," said Bodmer; "the decrease of bodily stamina has a most prejudicial effect on the morals in the poorer localities. The tender, delicate-constitutioned boy, so much an object of just solicitude to the wealthy parent, would almost infallibly be a young thief if a denizen of a poor eastern district. For ordinary labour he would not have sufficient strength, and skilled labour his parents would not have the means of teaching him—they use only brute power themselves to obtain the means of existence. Hunger soon tempts their son, and the breach of the eighth commandment with him follows quickly upon disobedience to the tenth. Trace him still further, and you will soon find the child who first stole to allay the pangs of hunger, the tool of some receiver of stolen goods—leading a life of perfect misery—starving or stealing one half of the year, and the jail or the crank the other. A slave, pitied perhaps while in prison; an unpitied slave to some sordid scoundrel when nominally at liberty. Powerless to labour from constitutional weakness, powerless to reform—for he was utterly neglected when at that age when instruction is most needed—he drags on a miserable existence, only too fortunate in body and soul if death snatches him away earlier than the others of his class. Compare also that fragile plant, the delicate girl in the rich man's family,

watched with every care and solicitude, and every application of science sought for to compensate for want of natural strength, with the hard-worked labourer's child in a poor district, and what is the result? The latter, unable from want of power to labour, uninstructed, uncared for by any but her poor mother, who from necessity is condemned to allow her child to herd with perhaps five or six others of both sexes in the same room, without the slightest possibility of personal decency, is lost, irretrievably lost, before her mind understands the meaning of the sin she commits. How is the want of providence in poor parents to blame for these results in their children?"

"But what are your clergy about," said Mr. Courtney, "to allow such a state of things to pass without remonstrance? With your boasted free institutions they have certainly the power to do that?"

"You are quite right; they have the power to remonstrate, and that only; they have tried the experiment with the higher powers several times, and what was the result? If their application be made to the Poor Law Board, it is treated with indifference, if not flippancy. They are nothing but poor working clergy, and it is not to be supposed they would have much weight, if they have not political power to back them; or perhaps they may be advised to petition the Houses of Parliament; and if you are at all versed in our Parliamentary history, you can easily know what that means."

"To the honour of slavery be it said," remarked Mr. Courtney, "it is not unkind to childhood; no slaveholder would be so indifferent to the welfare of his negroes as to treat them with the severity or neglect the children of your poor appear to receive in London."

"No," said Mr. Thompson, "so long as the child has a marketable value, it is to the decided advantage of its owner to treat it with kindness; but it must be remembered that solicitude is brought on solely from

interested motives, that its labour may be the more valuable when it can be employed to advantage."

"There," said Mr. Courtney, "you do us, I assure you, a great injustice. The children of slaves are not unkindly treated, not solely for gain, but from the natural feeling which most adults bear to childhood. We can be as humane to the children of our neighbour's slaves as we are to our own. No, there is a much more just and simple reason which may be given. The children of our slaves are in much more immediate contact with the females of their employers, than are the children of the workmen employed by the English manufacturers, and a greater degree of kindly feeling is the result."

"I willingly retract my expression," said Mr. Thompson; "I spoke incautiously. But, admitting the slave-owner to be kind to his negroes, still slavery exists. Poverty and misery we unfortunately have too much of, but they are with us simply misfortunes; with you slavery is an institution. There is, you will admit, the possibility that personal interest may enter into the master's kindness to his slave, but nothing beyond charity and good-feeling can interfere with our treatment of the children of the poor."

"I am by no means so persuaded of that," said the Doctor. "Let us take, for example, the children of the town-born London labourer and his wife. From the fatiguing toil, misery, uncared-for sickness, and crowded dwellings, each day becoming worse, his child rarely lives to maturity. It is sickly and delicate from its birth. The mother had not sufficient strength of constitution for its future well-being before it was born, nor sufficient nourishment afterwards, and in a short time it dies unpitied by all, with the exception of its parents, and gin too frequently consoles them. So terrible is the mortality among them, that not above one in six of the children of London-born labourers reaches five years of age. Their labour would have been but

of little value to the community had they lived, and they are allowed, without the slightest sympathy, to starve. Yes, starvation; it may have been protracted, but still their deaths have been caused by want of nourishment, directly or indirectly. Had they been the children of slaves, would similar apathy have been shown them? Admit the sickly child of the slave and that of the London labourer to arrive at the age of manhood, and that weakly slaves are habitually as illtreated as the abolitionists would make it appear (which, by the bye, is a physiological absurdity or impossibility), and how does it end? With the negro it would be—work above your strength, or be flogged. With the white—work above your strength, or starve. It is simply one of two evils."

"But you forget there is always the workhouse."

"Admitted. The white has certainly the choice of being during his life confined as a prisoner, without hard labour, but prohibited from living with those dear to him, or forming a natural matrimonial connexion—one of the few real pleasures or blessings allotted to the humbler of the working classes."

"Oh!" said Mr. Thompson, "yours is a very mistaken view of the subject; believe me you are greatly in error."

"I am not in error; I maintain that if the subject were fairly gone into, the balance of humanity in many cases would be in favour of the slaveholder."

"Why, Doctor," said Mr. Mortimer, "are you turned advocate for slavery? I always thought you were a great radical."

"I am no advocate nor apologist for slavery, and dislike the idea as much as any one can do, although I admit there are many ethnological arguments in its favour difficult to get over; but I cannot, with common patience, hear the hypocritical attacks of many of our legislators on the system, whilst they are perpetuating, under the mock name of freedom, injustice and cruelty,

in many cases worse than can be perpetrated by the slaveholder. I do not implicitly believe the praises in favour of slavery made by Americans from the Southern States. I hold that any man may be prejudiced in favour of a system which tends to his individual advantage; nor will I be duped by his slanderer. I judge the case simply from its effects, and, if that be permitted, the slaveholder is infinitely less to blame than the canting philanthropists who are incessantly covering him with abuse. There is no disputing the fact that the children of slaves are healthier and better cared for than the children of the London labourer. The Charlestown negro has a duration of life longer than his employer, or equal to it at the least; the children of the Spitalfields' weaver and dock labourer have not a probable duration of life much exceeding eighteen years, while that of their employers exceeds forty. Get over those facts if you can. The slave does not live longer than his employer from starvation or flogging; the London labourer does not die before one-half of the natural duration of his life has run out from kindness or over-attention."

"Another proof," said Mr. Courtney, "that the cruelty said to be practised by the slave-owner is grossly exaggerated — that infanticide or suicide is almost unknown among them."

"In proportion to our immense population, I consider we have very little of either," remarked Mr. Thompson. "Suicide I believe to be more common among the educated than among the uneducated classes."

"Suicide is far more common among our working population than is generally imagined," said Bodmer, "especially among women; fortunately, however, deaths are not as numerous as the attempts are frequent. Deaths alone from self-destruction are brought under the notice of Government—attempts are rarely spoken of. Inquiries made at the different hospitals and open surgeries of general practitioners would soon prove the

fact. Attempts at poisoning are so common among women, caused by misery or intoxication—the result of misfortune — that they are considered at the large general hospitals, cases of such common occurrence as hardly to excite the slightest interest or surprise. With respect to infanticide, few can form an idea of the immense extent to which it is carried in London; and, unfortunately, it is greatly on the increase."

"But you cannot be correct in that statement," said Mr. Thompson. "I believe that among no class of women in the world is the maternal feeling stronger than among the English; and that I should consider as a sufficient proof that infanticide cannot be common among them."

"I perfectly agree with you in your opinion of the strong maternal feeling existing among English women, but that does not alter the fact of the enormous amount of infanticide in this city. A woman seldom kills her child but under the influence of insanity or desperation—terms too frequently synonymous; but under those influences it is of so frequent occurrence that the subject dare not be inquired into."

Mr. Thompson said nothing, but a most expressive look of incredulity was on his face.

"Here comes a gentleman," said Mr. Mortimer, "who can give us some information on the subject." At that moment an intelligent-looking, gentlemanly man, somewhat past the *mezzo commino*, approached the table. "Give us your opinion on the subject, Mr. Coroner," continued Mr. Mortimer. "My friend here, Dr. Bodmer, pretends that infanticide is carried on to a far greater extent in London than is generally imagined, and that it is rather on the increase than otherwise."

"I am sorry to say there is too much reason to think he is correct in his opinion; the subject is a very serious one, I can assure you."

"Our friend is an American gentleman, and while we, Mr. Mortimer and myself, have been trying to impress

him with the idea that every thing in England is admirable, Dr. Bodmer has been attempting to destroy the favourable statements we have made, by bringing forward facts tending to prove the contrary."

"Well, then," said the Coroner, laughing, "as good Britons leave the subject of infanticide alone; you will do no credit to your country by mooting it, I can assure you;" and he passed on.

"You admitted," said Dr. Bodmer to Mr. Thompson, "that overcrowding might have a prejudicial effect on the health and morals of the working classes; have you made any inquiries to what an extent it acts?"

"None whatever; I merely drew the natural conclusion that such a system must occasion."

"The sickness it occasions is indisputable; the mortality among children, especially in overcrowded districts, is perfectly frightful!"

"But if our population increases so rapidly," said Mr. Mortimer, "how can this excessive mortality reign among children?"

"I spoke of the overcrowded districts alone, remember," said Dr. Bodmer; "in these it is calculated, upon good authority, that not less than four thousand infants die annually from neglect and preventable causes, which may all be condensed under the generic name of misery. Imagine such a mortality to occur in one of the slave states, and among the children of the negroes, what an immense amount of virtuous indignation it would elicit in London; while here it passes not only unregarded, but the causes of this frightful "massacre of the innocents" increases under our Government daily. When the subject is brought forward, political economists reply, with the most perfect composure, 'that it is better both for themselves and the public that they should die, as they would have no constitutions for labour if they lived. They would only be a tax upon the community, without any corresponding benefit.' But shocking as the sickness and death is from over-

crowding, it is nothing to the demoralisation it produces. The poor are driven together in certain localities where they herd, positively herd together, men, women, and children—strangers, or nearly so, to each other; or if relatives, perhaps, more horrible still, without the slightest precaution even for decency or self-respect being possible. There may frequently be found the corpse, dead from fever for probably more than a week; the woman in childbed, probably assisted in the hour of her trouble by her young daughter; the father drunk to drown thought, and the children in rags, and starving. These are not extraordinary cases, they are of continual occurrence; if you doubt what I say, cast your eye over the reports of any medical officer of health attached to one of the poorer districts, and they will confirm the truth of it. I once took the trouble to examine the receiving books of the different London hospitals, and I clearly found that diseases and accidents from profligacy, drunkenness, and misery, exactly increased in proportion to the overcrowding of houses in the district; and the police-court returns, I understand, give the same ratio."

"I do not understand," said Mr. Courtney, "why this overcrowding should exist; from what I have seen of London, there appears space enough unoccupied even in the centre of the town to build fit and proper dwellings for all."

"The cause," Bodmer replied, "arises in great measure from the action of our infamous Poor Laws. London is divided into one hundred and eighty-six parishes; and every parish is called upon to maintain its own poor. So far the system would appear equitable enough; but a little inquiry will show you how gross is the injustice and cruelty it permits to be used towards the poor. The tax for their relief is raised upon the houses in each separate parish; it follows, then, that the greater the number of poor residing in any one parish, the lower must be the value of pro-

perty in it, in consequence of this onerous tax being the greater. Take an example. Fifty years since a city parish might have contained a number of the working classes in proportion to its wealth. Business increases there, and it would naturally be supposed that the number of workmen in it would increase in proportion. Not so, however. The poor were ejected to make room for the increased requirements of the rich, while their services were still of necessity retained for the benefit of their employers. The ground and house property in the parish increased in value by this forcible ejectment, as the tax for the relief of the poor of course diminished in proportion as there were fewer poor to draw upon its funds; while the poorer parish into which they were driven had a still heavier tax thrust on it, in supporting and relieving those in sickness or distress who were in common honesty the poor belonging to the richer parish. But the mischief did not stop here. The parish into which these workmen were ejected, was further injured by the more independent class of inhabitants leaving it to reside in some other genteeler locality, where the taxes were not so high, and the void they occasioned was filled up by others of a poorer class, so that in a few years, less perhaps than a quarter of a century, that parish would be inhabited entirely by the working classes and the tradesmen they purchased their necessaries of, assisting each other when in distress, while their employers, with their enormous wealth, were absolved from any necessity to contribute to the wants of those by whose thew sand muscles so much of their comfort and position was obtained. I am not speaking, remember, of any particular or isolated parish, but of a system which has been generally carried on, over the whole surface of England: permitted, and in many cases directly encouraged, by the Government. I merely mentioned London because you may, without going out of its boundaries, find fifty examples of the injustice I have mentioned.

"But," said Mr. Courtney, "if you are correct, such a system must end by the direct separation of wealth from poverty."

"It is one of the blessings, Sir, of our liberal institutions," said Bodmer, laughing, "and one which you do not enjoy where the negro has not been emancipated. With you, wealth has always the incubus of the sick or helpless slave upon it. Here, thank God, we are not shackled to the same extent by man's despotism. Wealth is free, and can relieve itself when it pleases from misery. It has the power which slavery does not give to the slave-owner, and which, perhaps more than anything else, proves the iniquity of compulsory labour. Our noble or banker may close his purse when he pleases without obloquy or animadversion, and if he opens it to the voice of misery, he is ensured a reversionary interest in heaven to a far greater amount than he has given; you, on the contrary, are obliged to maintain those who labour for you, when they are in sickness or unable to work, without respect for it in this world or hope of benefit in the next."

"I must say, Doctor," said Mr. Mortimer, "that I consider you are unjust to our wealthier classes, and particularly our legislative bodies. I agree with you that an alteration, and a great alteration in our mode of treating the poor ought to be made; but, at the same time, it is a subject surrounded with difficulties."

"In 1834 there was no difficulty found in altering the law for the benefit of our legislators themselves, and the wealthier classes in general; why should there be, when the change would benefit the poor?"

"To what do you allude?" said Mr. Thompson.

"To the Act of Parliament passed in the year 1834. Prior to that time, domestic servants, when in sickness, distress, or out of employment, were relieved at the cost of the parishes in which they resided at the time of their misfortune; in fact, according to the spirit of the Poor Law, when originally framed in the reign

of Elizabeth, and as it is still understood, so long as the reading tends to the disadvantage of the poor and the benefit of the rich. As wealth increased in the already wealthy parishes, a greater number of domestic servants were required in them. The result was, that in some of the larger parishes, the number of this branch of the working classes increased to an enormous amount; in fact, one parish alone numbered no fewer than sixty thousand. In that, and a neighbouring parish (Paddington), the principal portion of the legislative bodies and the wealthy aristocracy resided. From the frequent sickness, distress, and other misfortunes afflicting their servants, the call upon the pockets of their employers was naturally considerable; in fact, proportionate to the amount required from manufacturers residing in other parishes in support of their work-people or artisans. The wealthier classes wished to be absolved from the necessity of relieving their own poor, and appealed to the Legislature on the subject, begging of it to remove from them the onus of obligatory charitable contributions to those on whom so much of their own comfort and welfare depended. This appeal was listened to the more readily, as an alteration in the law would be beneficial to the legislators themselves, and, consequently, the justice of the demand more easily understood. A law was immediately passed abolishing the right of domestic servants to parochial relief, and thus in one short Act of Parliament, the just claim of the enormous multitude of domestic servants to assistance from those for whose benefit they laboured was destroyed. No matter how long a servant may have resided in a parish, or toiled for the benefit of a particular family, the instant the value of his services is diminished either by sickness, deprivation of strength, by age, or the caprice of his employers, that moment all continuity of sympathy between master and servant is destroyed; and now every year large numbers of these poor creatures, used up, sick, maimed, blind, or with

lost characters by theft (this, by the bye, arrives but rarely in proportion to their numbers, for they are generally a most honourable body), are sent to the poor villages or parishes from whence they came, and where they were bred, to receive that charitable assistance which in common honesty ought to be afforded them by those who have profited by their labours. The action of this disgraceful law may be seen in the aristocratic parish of St. George's, Hanover Square, where in a few years the tax for the relief of the poor fell nearly ninety-two per cent. below the amount required before the passing of the Act."

"But," said Mr. Thompson, "if they live in the parish without being in service for five years, they are even now entitled to relief."

"Granted, and by way of providing against that difficulty, the wealthier parishes have contrived to pull down all the houses where the poorer classes might find a shelter. Beyond this injustice, the few poor St. George's has, possessing a legal claim on its funds, are not allowed to offend the eyes of gentility by remaining among them, for they have built their workhouse in Chelsea, a distance of some three miles from the parish. Two of the wealthiest parishes at the west-end have, with the perfect knowledge and full sanction of the Poor Law Board, prohibited their agents from giving even a night's relief to any poor creatures who may be broken down, foot-sore, or houseless, unless they walk some miles further on to obtain it. From the extremity of Paddington to the river at Pimlico, a distance of three miles, not a night's covering from the inclemency of the weather can a poor heart-broken, lost, destitute woman receive, unless she qualifies herself by some breach of the peace, or crime, to receive the hospitality of a police-station. In the City, that centre of wealth, the state of things is still worse. In the 98 parishes comprising the City Union, not a refuge is allowed to be built, not a bed is obliged by law to be

kept for a night's relief for the wandering outcast. If in the night any poor wretches should break down, they are sent by the police to a small house at the extremity of the City boundary in Aldgate, where their case is inquired into. If they are then found to be destitute, sick, lame, or worn-out, so as to be qualified for relief, they are ordered to walk three miles farther on to Bow to obtain it."

"What can be the policy of such a system? They must require a greater amount of relief when they arrive, and consequently a greater expenditure will be incurred on the funds of the Union," remarked Mr. Courtney.

"This policy was once candidly explained to me by one of the guardians. 'When the poor creatures receive their order to continue their wandering as far as Bow,' he said, 'they generally apply to one of the poor parishes on their road for relief, and so we get rid of them."

'"But,' I inquired, 'suppose those parishes wil. not assist them?'

'"Oh, it don't matter to us, by that time the pauper gets desperate, and kicks up a row, and gets taken to the police-station. The next morning he is of course brought before the magistrate, who finds it an excellent opportunity for a clap-trap. He inquires why the poor creature was not relieved? "He don't belong to our parish, your worship." "What has that to do with it? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Sir." Nothing is said about us in the affair. In the evening his worship goes home to his own parish, where, perhaps, they close their doors with impunity to all wandering poor; and the next day the newspapers compliment him on his benevolence and humanity.'*

* A return of the House of Commons, moved for by Mr. John Locke, M.P. for Southwark, and printed 21st May, 1858, "showing the number of destitute casual poor admitted into the

"I should have imagined," said Mr. Courtney, "that such a system would have occasioned much uncharitable feeling; and yet a want of sympathy with misfortune is not generally considered as one of the faults of the British aristocracy."

"It is latent among them to an immense extent; but it is so cramped by our disgraceful Poor Laws, and their collateral effects, that if the charity of the nation were to be estimated by the sums contributed by the rich, in proportion to their wealth, for the benefit of the poor, we should fall very short of the amount the world has given us credit for. The rich in this City do not know the poor. The latter are driven away. They are out of sight, and too frequently out of mind at the same time. When you can raise the sympathies

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metropolitan workhouses between Lady-day, 1856, and Lady-day, 1857," proves clearly how erroneous is the impression of the public with regard to the charitable exertions of the different Boards of Guardians on behalf of their suffering fellow-creatures. The three aristocratic parishes of St. George's, Hanover Square, Paddington, and Marylebone, within whose limits the majority of the aldermen, police-magistrates, and superior officials of the Poor Law Board reside, relieved on a rental of £2,833,210 during that period only 550 casual poor. Three poorer parishes, St. George's, Southwark, Shoreditch, and Bermondsey, upon a rental of far less than a quarter the above amount, gave shelter and food during the same year to no fewer than 12,217 men, 11,363 women, and 4,585 children, making a total of 28,165 cases. On the richer parishes not one word of blame has ever been cast, while the guardians of the three poorer have continually been held up to the public for reprobation, if not execration, for their want of humanity. In the enormous City Union, comprising 98 parishes, there is no casual ward. Last year (1857) in consequence of the number of wandering destitute poor congregating in the vicinity of Field Lane, it was proposed to establish a refuge for them in the City, and an eligible spot was selected for the purpose. On inquiry, it was found that to carry it out properly an expenditure of £2,000 must be incurred, and the project fell to the ground on the score of economy. The same year the City alone paid the income tax on eighteen millions!

of the rich, they are certainly most benevolent; but it is exceedingly difficult to paint a case in such colours by description as shall work upon their feelings. Then, again, in that way the begging letter impostor, who has made it a study, might be more powerful than a minister of religion. That beautiful feeling caused by the immediate presence of the sufferer is lost on our rich. If any case comes before the public which excites their sympathies, they are always ready to answer the call, but unfortunately not in the manner to place their sympathies in the most favourable light. One of the most favourite methods of distributing their alms is through the medium of magistrates. Not only is as much imposition practised on these gentlemen as on any other class of the community, but true charity is too delicate, too exquisitely beautiful a plant, to flourish in the filthy atmosphere of a police-court. It should come either directly from the hand bestowing it, a minister of religion, or through the medium of some more fitting almoner than a criminal judge. Again, the class of cases accustomed to apply for charitable aid at a police-court are not always the most deserving of relief. Among English women of respectability there is a strong and noble objection to parading their griefs before the public. The amount of misery they will occasionally suffer without complaint, is heartrending to contemplate. These poor creatures pass unnoticed by the benevolent. Thanks to the isolation produced by our Poor Laws, their sorrows are never heard of, while some shameless damsel who may have persisted in obstructing a thoroughfare, by offering for sale to old gentlemen going on 'Change combs for their back hair, and who, after having set the police at defiance in language which would shock the feelings of Tothill-fields, and make Billingsgate blush, is brought before a magistrate for punishment, will receive subscriptions from the benevolent to as large an amount as would

serve to feed some reputable destitute woman, with half-a-dozen children, for a month. The effect of this separation of the rich from the poor has a most detrimental effect on the West-end charities. There is, perhaps, no benevolent institution of greater advantage to the poor than a well-conducted general hospital. Four out of six of those situated in that aristocratic portion of the town are insolvent, or nearly so; and then, again, these are frequently grossly abused by parties, pretending benevolence, contracting, by the payment of some trifling subscription, for the cure of their sick servants, while still retaining their situations, and whose services are too valuable to their employers to allow them to be discharged. I have myself seen in a poor West-end hospital at the same time, the butler of a Duke and the nursemaid of a Prime Minister, both holding, while in the charity, their situations in the families of their employers; thus consuming the little funded property which had been left to the institution by the piety of former ages, for the use of the wandering sick and needy."

"But still you have many wealthy charities, have you not?" inquired Mr. Courtney.

"Some of the City hospitals are very wealthy, but they seem to follow the same rule that appears to regulate our other benevolent institutions—the greater the amount of funds they possess, the smaller is the proportionate amount of good they perform. Some of our charitable educational endowments are enormously wealthy, as well as many of other descriptions; but, alas! how little of their immense wealth reaches the poor for whom it was intended. It is astounding to contemplate the enormous wealth left by the benevolent in this City, for the use of the poor; but the amount of injustice which has been used to deprive them of it is still more wonderful. Go into any part of the metropolis you please, and take the first object of

charity of any class that may present itself. You may be sure there is the hand of a dead man somewhere near you, with gold in it for the sufferer's relief; be equally sure that some one else, no object of charity, will seize it, and be defended in the robbery by some injunction of our omnipotent Court of Chancery. During the time of the Catholics, with all their faults, the poor were treated with great kindness, far more so than at present. The amount of wealth left in those days for the service of God and the poor is incalculable. Where is it now? Given to nobles and others, who dole out, under the name of private charity, an infinitesimally small portion of it to those who, in common justice, should possess the whole; while these pseudo-philanthropists claim the thanks and admiration of the world for their liberality. Many of our Protestant endowments still retain the appellation of charities; but little of that virtue can be found among them. Look at the St. Paul's, Dulwich, St. Catherine's, Blue-coat, St. Olave's, and Charter-house Schools. To these might be added the Merchant Tailors, Westminster, and several others, if their original trusts were carried out; but that highly complaisant body, the Charity Commissioners, doubt whether they can really be claimed as such; and judging from the uses made of them, perhaps they are justified in their doubts. In the Charter-house, as purely-intentioned a charity as any in the world, they possess, in livings in the Church of England, gifts to the amount of ten thousand a-year, intended for the poor scholars in the school who might distinguish themselves in theological studies. They have not a poor boy in the school; and the livings appear to be given to those who receive them on the scale, that the less they require wealth, the richer shall be the cure to which they are appointed. As if to show the perfect indifference of our great to the justice of the poor man's claim, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Prime Minister for the time being,

are generally elected as Governors of the Charter-house School."*

"You certainly," said Mr. Thompson, "would not have them give the livings at their disposal to the children of the working classes? Such a system would be most derogatory to the respectability of the clerical profession."

"I don't understand why they should not do so. Christ did not show any difficulty in that respect in the choice of His disciples. One great secret of the continuity of the Roman Catholic Church with the working classes of their creed, consists in their readiness to accept all talent for the use of their Church, in whatever grade of society it may be found. The children

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* In the autumn of 1857, a most eloquent appeal was made by some benevolent individual, through the columns of the *Times* newspaper, on behalf of the Field-lane Refuge for the Destitute Poor. It was responded to by the public with earnestness and liberality. Few of its readers were, perhaps, aware that within three hundred yards of that refuge, in a southerly direction, stands a building (Bridewell) especially endowed for the wandering poor of the City of London; that it is now empty, and has been so for the last six years; that it is not only large enough to accommodate the whole of the wandering poor of the metropolis, but possesses also an income of not less than £8,000 a year to maintain it. No part of the appeal was more pathetic than that on behalf of the children; yet, within three hundred yards of the refuge, in an easterly direction, stand two charity schools—one for the children of parents too poor to educate them, the other endowed by Edward the Sixth for the children of the wandering poor. These establishments possess, at the present time, an income of not less than £107,000 a year, not one shilling of which sum is allowed to filter through the grasp of those managing them for the benefit of those for whom they were originally endowed. The two City hospitals, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's, admirable institutions as far as they go, are still capable of great reform. Were the same economy practised in their management which is shown at the Westminster and St. George's hospitals, a thousand more beds might be maintained for the sick poor than they contain at present.

of the working classes possess at least as much ability as those of the higher, and I hold it only justice to the Protestant Church to allow it to obtain all the support it can. In these days it cannot afford to lose a friend. If you doubt the capabilities of the children of the poor for this purpose, or their faculty for appreciating and applying the liberal education necessary for the clerical profession, pay a visit some day to the Christ Church national schools of St. George's-in-the-East, or any other poor locality, and judge for yourself. I maintain that children possessed of greater energyand ability do not exist in this world than those of the intelligent English artisan or skilled workman."

"If Dr. Bodmer be not in error in his statement of the misapplication of charitable funds in this country, it would appear that other sons of toil than the American negro can be deprived of their property, if it should be the pleasure of their superiors to possess themselves of it."

"Yes, there is but a difference in the method of plundering them."

"Doctor," said Mr. Mortimer, good-humouredly, "I am ashamed of you. It is not like a Briton even to draw a comparison between one of our sons of freedom and a slave. You should remember that although an injustice may be placed on the white man, his status in society is very superior to that of the slave. The moral degradation which invariably attends on compulsory labour is certainly wanting in the English working classes."

"I have not been sufficiently long in England," said Mr. Courtney, "to form an opinion on the status of the working classes generally; but certainly that of the domestic servant and the slave is not so greatly different. Before arriving in England, I only knew them from your press and novel writers. As they, especially the latter, never speak of them without some insulting or sneering remark, I expected to find a pert, worthless, ignorant

set of beings, and I was much surprised to find, when I arrived, the highly respectable, well-conducted people they are, especially the women. I assure you, the kind and friendly feeling existing between the old domestic slave, who has been for any time in a respectable family, and his owner, is far greater than that between your master and servant. We enter with far more interest into their humours and welfare, and they, in return, look upon us with affection and respect. They are also much attached to our children, while a complete, entire separation appears to exist between you and the servants you employ."

"I perfectly agree with you, that an insufficient degree of sympathy exists in England between the mistress of an establishment and her female servants," replied Mr. Mortimer. "With respect to the derogatory insulting manner they are occasionally spoken of, I assure you that it is entirely due to the abject snobbism of our novel writers, and is by no means the opinion of the great mass of the English public towards those they employ. When I spoke of the different status of the slave and the white labourer, I alluded to the feeling extant in America, and, I am sorry to say, with some in England, that the negro is an inferior specimen of the genus 'homo' to the white man—a conclusion borne out to a certain degree by the extreme repugnance an American white would have to marry a negro woman, even supposing that in education, wealth, and station, she should be his equal; a feeling by no means entertained towards the white female servant."

"Are you quite sure," said Bodmer, "that an equal repugnance does not exist in England against a matrimonial union with a domestic servant. I hold a totally different opinion—that the white domestic servant in that respect ranks no higher than the slave. I could readily give you three or four cases in point, if you would allow me."

"Pray go on, Doctor," said Mr. Mortimer, laughing.

"The first example is that of a certain baronet, the only grandee I ever knew anything of. He was a man between sixty and sixty-five years of age, a martyr to rheumatic gout; his wife had been for many years under restraint as an incurable lunatic. The baronet, during one of the attacks of the disease, lost his nurse; she died suddenly from apoplexy. The family was residing in the country at the time, and no other nurse at the moment could be procured. They were greatly distressed at the circumstance, as the man was as helpless as an infant. In their embarrassment the housekeeper, a woman of about forty years of age, a widow with an irreproachable character, who had resided with them for many years, came forward and volunteered her services, which were at the moment thankfully accepted. The baronet temporarily recovered, and the woman resumed her duties as housekeeper. A second attack and a third came on, and on each occasion she was called upon to nurse him, which she did with great kindness and attention, but without a breath of scandal being uttered about it. The baronet's wife died, and a short time afterwards he married the housekeeper, who, when his wife, still fulfilled her duties of nurse as unremittingly as before her marriage. It would be impossible to describe the rage of the family when they heard of the connexion the baronet had made; it was unpardonable; they would never set foot in his house again after so degrading an action. 'They could have forgiven much, but there were faults beyond forgiveness, and his was one. Had he been strongly suspected, nay openly accused of assisting an adulterous woman, his own mistress, to guide the hand of her dying husband in signing a will beneficial to their illegitimate child, to the prejudice of the moribond's relations, it would have been passed over without the slightest loss of caste or respectability in his aristocratical position. Had he, to assist a fellow-reprobate in a disgraceful

trial, stepped into the witness-box, and openly admitted that he patronised and dealt with an infamous wretch, who trepanned poor foreign girls into this country, and then sold them, body and soul, to such as him and his fellows, it could have passed without the slightest displeasure, nay, more, he might possibly have received the compliments of the judge upon his candour. Had he swindled at cards, or on the race-course, it might have been passed over—such things had been done before—but to marry a woman in such a position was too disgraceful for even family affection to tolerate.' His children behaved so unkindly to him that he determined to leave England and reside in France, where he remained till his death, which occurred about three years after his marriage. At his decease the old baronet was possessed of at least four thousand a year. He left all that was not entailed to his family, with the exception of an annuity of four hundred a-year, which was settled on his widow. Even that small sum was a source of discontent to his children, and they determined to take legal proceedings to deprive the *creature* of it if possible. Fortunately their family solicitor was an honourable man, and he dissuaded them from the attempt.

"The next case was that of a very wild and dissipated young man of good family, the brother of a clergyman of the Church of England eminent for his piety and learning. The young man's career gave great trouble to his elder brother, but he assisted him both in purse, as far as he was able, and in good advice. All was useless, and the rake continued his usual method of life. During a recess, brought on by a severe sprain, he determined to reform. Love had counselled him to this step, for he had become violently attached to the daughter of the poor woman who kept the house he lodged at. She was a quiet excellent young woman, a lady's-maid in a respectable family. Her education was certainly not very good, but she had been formerly a

pupil-teacher in a national school, and wrote a good hand, and could spell correctly. Her accomplishments went no further, but she was an excellent housewife. The young man married her, and incautiously informed his brother of the circumstance. It was indeed a shock! The clergyman had forgiven much, and had sufficient charity to forgive much more, but for this there was no help. All communication between them was broken off, and the rev. divine never after mentioned his brother but when necessity compelled him, and then merely designated him as 'my unworthy relative.' The girl made an excellent wife; she was industrious and patient; and these qualifications were tried to their utmost, for her husband was a great invalid. He continued to support himself and his wife by copying law writings. At last he was obliged for some months to relinquish it, but still she continued to keep up an appearance of respectability, and pay her way. The secret I at last discovered, for I attended her husband. She had contrived to imitate his handwriting so exactly, that it was almost an impossibility to tell one from the other. After her duties as a wife and a mother—for she had one child—had been performed in the day, she would sit up the whole night, and by the light of a dim candle complete the writings entrusted to her husband. I have lost sight of them now for some time past. But I am afraid I am tiring you?"

"Not at all, Doctor," replied his friends; "pray go on."

"A retired captain in the army, with his wife and family, lived near the sea coast in Yorkshire. He was an honourable, brave man, very poor, having only his half-pay to live on, but very proud. He had three daughters, varying from seventeen to three-and-twenty years of age. An unpleasant circumstance, or rather a most mysterious one, occurred, which caused no little scandal in the neighbourhood. The second daughter, it was said, was engaged to be married, but beyond a very

palpable flirtation with an officer of a cavalry regiment quartered near them, no other proof of her intended union was to be found. The regiment left the neighbourhood, and shortly afterwards the young lady herself disappeared for some weeks in a manner to excite much curiosity. At last the father left home under the plea of a journey to London, and in a few days returned in company with his daughter. The circumstance was never thoroughly cleared up. No inquiries were made of the family by the gossips in the neighbourhood for an explanation, probably from respect to the father, who appeared after his daughter's return either in excessively low spirits, or under an evidently counterfeit gaiety. Suddenly, and without any apparent cause, the whole family left the neighbourhood, saying it was their intention to spend some years on the Continent. They had contracted no debts, and the postman had orders to forward any letter addressed to the family to the captain's army agents. They did not, however, leave England, but settled on the sea-coast in Devonshire, where they occupied a small but very pretty cottage on the outskirts of a large village. Here they lived in a very secluded manner, knowing few, and receiving but little company. After they had been in their new residence for the space of a twelvemonth, the eldest daughter, a good-natured, worthy creature, without much beauty or talent, but with an average amount of common-sense, received an offer of marriage from the proprietor of a small, but very respectable inn in the neighbourhood, much frequented by the hunting gentry near it. The innkeeper was a very respectable man, of good manners, and apparently of tolerable education, moreover he was well to do in the world. The father hesitated for a long time before giving his consent to the match; he did not dislike the man, still less the money, he even envied his independent position, but such an union with a person in his station of society appeared derogatory.

His daughter, however, was determined to have her own way in the matter, and the couple were married. Things went on very smoothly for some time afterwards. The captain now considered the marriage as a "*fait accompli*," and received his son-in-law with considerable cordiality. Another by no means objectionable circumstance resulted from the union. The innkeeper was much attached to his wife, and finding that any little attention to her father greatly pleased her, he sent frequently presents of game, of which he had abundance, and other comestibles to his father-in-law, which not only made an agreeable addition to their somewhat scanty table, but also won the heart of the old gentleman, who, like most others of his profession, was not insensible to the pleasures of good living. Things went on very happily till one day another officer in the army on half pay domiciled near them, who had formerly served in a crack cavalry regiment, where he had contrived to spend the little patrimony he formerly possessed, called on the captain, and with a countenance intended to express sorrow, but which hardly concealed a malicious joy, informed him that he had some most unfortunate intelligence to communicate to him. He had heard, he said, from undoubted authority, that the captain's son-in-law had formerly been a gentleman's butler, who, dying, had left his servant a few hundred pounds, with which he had purchased the lease and good-will of the business he then conducted. The news fell like a thunderclap on the old captain. To move from the neighbourhood was an impossibility — he had not the money, and for such a cause he could not ask his son-in-law to lend it to him. The affair became generally known in the vicinity, and the poor captain, with inward grief clearly stamped upon his countenance, submitted as meekly as possible to the infliction. He abstained from visiting his son-in-law entirely, and never invited him to his house. If they met, nothing

beyond the ordinary courtesy of salutation passed between them. Boniface put up with the affair with the greatest placidity. He allowed and even encouraged his wife to continue the presents he had been in the habit of making, and the old gentleman and his children partook of them without disgust or indigestion. He may now be seen wandering about the village, broken down and haggard, and, in the words of the second daughter, whose unfortunate absence from home is now forgotten, her 'sister's degrading union is fast bringing down her father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

"The last case is a very short one. The husband is a tidewaiter in the customs, the son of the senior partner in an eminent tripe, sheep's head, and trotter firm in Barbican. He married the maid-servant at the house in the Borough where he lodged. His family, of course, did not approve of the match, and for some years refused to receive her, but as she made him an excellent wife, and a good mother to his children, who were patterns of neatness and cleanliness, the family at last relented, and visited her. They were much pleased with the tact she showed in the management of her house, and at last cordially forgave her the presumption she had been guilty of in marrying into their family. To this they were in part led by the more liberal doctrines of their religious creed—they were Dissenters; but at the same time they were fully convinced that marriages can hardly be happy when the parties marry out of their own spheres, although their son's might have proved an exception to the rule. I submit that these cases show as great a repugnance towards an alliance with a servant in England as could be shown in America to one with a slave."

Mr. Thompson now took leave of the company. Mr. Mortimer, Mr. Courtney, and the Doctor, left the dinner-table, and proceeded to the drawing-room, where having chosen a table where they were to a great

measure out of ear-shot of others, Mr. Courtney proceeded to state his case to the Doctor.

"About two years since I had occasion to visit the Northern States, and, partly on business, partly from curiosity, I took Lowell on my way. I there made the acquaintance of a gentleman connected with one of the principal factories. He was an Englishman by birth, young, gentlemanly, and very intelligent. During the week I remained there I saw him daily, and an almost intimacy sprung up between us. His history was shortly this. He had left England when quite a boy, and had resided with his uncle, who kept a store in one of the Western Free States. He candidly told me that the reason of his leaving England arose from the poverty of his family. They had formerly been in very respectable circumstances, but were then much reduced. He appears to have been by no means comfortably settled when he arrived in America, in consequence of the continued disputes he had with his aunt, or rather from the capricious tyranny she exercised over him. For some time he continued to correspond with his family in England, but his parents suddenly stopped answering his letters. He had frequently written to them, requesting to know the reason of their silence, but without success. Shortly after the answer to his last letter was expected, his uncle died. If the lad's life had not been agreeable before his uncle's death, it was infinitely worse afterwards, so much so, in fact, that he found it impossible to remain with his aunt. He left her, and both were pleased at the separation. He then went to Lowell, where he got an engagement in one of the factories, in a very subordinate position, under one of the engineers, and in it he continued for some years. It appears he had always much pleasure in the study of mechanics, and during his leisure hours he was in the habit of amusing himself by making models of machinery. At last he completed one which appeared to him might be adapted with great success and profit

to cotton machinery, and he determined, if possible, to take out a patent for it. Serious difficulties presented themselves. He had no money, and although a patent with us is not the expensive security to the inventor it is with you, still it requires some means to accomplish it, and he had nothing. He determined on saving sufficient for the purpose, and with that intent he continued to live in the most economical manner, refusing himself not only all the luxuries of life, but often many of its necessaries as well. At last he had saved sufficient for his purpose, and the patent was taken out. It succeeded admirably, and he received a considerable sum of money for the invention; the first, with the exception of very trifling amounts, he had ever been possessed of. His first care was now to write several letters to England, one in fact to every place he thought his parents might be heard of. No answer was received to any. The next year he applied himself to another invention of even greater importance than the former, and it was during the time he was occupied upon it that I made his acquaintance. When I left Lowell to join my family in the south, I quitted him with great regret, for I had formed a sincere friendship for him. The next year I was surprised at receiving a visit from him at my own house. He was making a tour partly for health, partly for instruction in the cotton districts. I showed him as much hospitality as was in my power, and he remained with me for more than a month. He told me he had completed his second patent, and sold it to great advantage; he had now some intention of purchasing an estate in the south with the proceeds, as the colder climate of the north did not agree with him. The more I saw of him the more I liked him, and it was with feelings of sincere satisfaction that I found an attachment springing up between him and my only daughter. My wife, who is a constant invalid, was as much pleased at the circumstance as myself. He proposed, and was accepted, and after a short journey

to the north, to realise what property he had remaining there, he returned to us and purchased a fine estate contiguous to my own. The marriage took place a few months afterwards, and we have lived almost as one family since. Finding I could now leave my affairs entirely in the hands of one I could rely on, I determined putting in practice a wish I had frequently formed before—that of visiting Europe. I was the more disposed to take the voyage from the constantly expressed desire of my son-in-law to hear some tidings of his parents, for whom he appears to have entertained a strong affection, especially for his mother. They formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, and since my arrival in England I have been employed in trying to discover their abode, but without success. On talking the matter over with my friend, Mr. Mortimer, he told me that he was acquainted with a medical practitioner who possessed a great knowledge of the locality, and who probably would be able to give me some information on the subject; so, following up his suggestion, he has kindly introduced me to you."

"What is the name of the family?" inquired the Doctor.

"Beuzeville."

"Beuzeville; singularly enough, I know a family of that name, and it is not a common one. They formerly lived in great respectability, but latterly have been very unfortunate. I remember, too, they had a son who, as I heard, went to America when quite a lad."

"I have no doubt it is the same family," said Mr. Courtney. "My son-in-law's christian name is George, what his father's is I know not. His mother's christian name is Catherine."

"They are the same, evidently. I remember it was the wife's name, perfectly well. A more worthy, amiable creature than she is, if she be still alive, never existed."

"Alive! Do you not know where she is now?"

"No, I have lost sight of them for some months past. When last I saw them they were reduced to the greatest poverty. However, all I can do to assist you, I will, the more readily, as I have the greatest respect for the poor woman, and I have no doubt I shall succeed. Where shall I find you if I have anything to communicate?"

"I am living at Morley's Hotel, at Charing-cross. It will give me great pleasure, Doctor," continued Mr. Courtney, "to form your acquaintance more intimately, for I wish to know something more of England than I can learn in walking about the London streets."

The Doctor having expressed the pleasure he should have in being able to afford Mr. Courtney any information, the friends parted.

CHAPTER XII.

RESEARCHES.

When the Doctor volunteered to find the Beuzeville family, he took upon himself a far more difficult task than he had calculated on. The morning after the dinner at the Reform Club, he commenced his inquiries at the Whitechapel workhouse. There he ascertained that old Baker had been removed to the union at ——, in Norfolk, and that Beuzeville himself having a legal settlement in Shoreditch parish, had been sent there. Of the other members of the family they knew nothing. He then applied at the London Hospital to find what address Catherine had given when she entered that institution. He found it was the house she was living at when she was prostrated by the fever. He then applied to the Shoreditch workhouse, and was there informed that Beuzeville had been sent as a lunatic to a pauper asylum for the insane, and that he had

died about a month before his inquiry. At the asylum he found that Catherine had given her address at Worthing, also that she had been in London to attend her husband's funeral. Bodmer immediately wrote to Worthing, and in a short time his letter was returned through the dead-letter office with—"Left the town, present address not known" written upon it. Of her daughters he knew nothing. He made inquiries for the two boys at the different police-stations, but without the slightest success, and at the end of the week he was reluctantly obliged to write to Mr. Courtney, informing him of his inability to procure him the information he required.

Mr. Courtney in the meantime had not been idle. He had obtained the valuable assistance of the American Consul in the matter, and through him applications were made to all the inspectors of police, and a liberal reward was offered them if they discovered anything of the family. Advertisements were also inserted in the daily papers, and Mr. Courtney determined to delay his departure from England for another month, to test the success of their joint exertions.

Notwithstanding the Doctor's want of success, the intimacy between him and Mr. Courtney increased; and whenever the former's professional engagements would allow him the time, he continued to pay a visit to his American friend. One day, when they met, Mr. Courtney said to him—

"I am very glad you called, Doctor; I was on the point of writing to you. I have this day had a message from the police, saying they believed one of the boys was in the Westminster Reformatory, but that he stoutly denied his name. They wanted some one acquainted with his person to see him, for the purpose of identifying him, if possible. Will you come with me?"

"Certainly, with great pleasure; but I am not quite certain I can remember them. It is very possible I

may be able to say if they are not those you are seeking for, as I have a clear general idea of the family likeness."

The two friends immediately left the hotel, and proceeded towards the Broad Sanctuary. Arrived at the Reformatory, and having stated their business, they were readily shown the inmates, but those they sought for were not among the number, of that Bodmer was certain. While in the building they met the surgeon having medical charge of the inmates, and the Doctor immediately recognised him as an old acquaintance. On inquiring the purport of their visit the surgeon readily volunteered to put himself in communication with other medical men of his acquaintance attached to similar institutions, for the purpose of finding the boys. "You may be certain that in the end you will succeed," he said. "It is impossible that, without money, they can leave London, and to remain long in it under the same circumstances without applying somewhere for relief would be equally impracticable. Have a little patience, and you will yet find him."

"Do you experience much difficulty in maintaining discipline here?" inquired Mr. Courtney. "Your rules appear by no means severe."

"None whatever; the inmates are, on the contrary, exceedingly tractable and well-behaved."

"Do they principally come from town or country?"

"We take them from all parts, town or country, as the case may be."

"I find," said Bodmer, "that the physical characteristics of the London thief are well marked on many of them."

"Yes, it is singular how easily they are to be recognised."

"I suppose you find," said Mr. Courtney, "that ignorance and drunkenness are the principal sources of crime among them."

"That they are great sources of demoralisation I am

perfectly ready to admit, but not to the extent generally imagined; at least, regarding them as unmixed, absolute causes. With the London thief especially they are generally only proximate causes, while misery, abject misery, is the exciting cause in almost all cases, and the immediate in many. Believe me, in the far greater portion of our pickpockets, especially those from our poorer districts, misery is to blame originally for their crimes, and that misery is caused by unjust legislation. Look," he continued, pointing to a stunted, sickly-looking lad, of perhaps eighteen years of age, "there is the type of the class, narrow chested, thin, and weakly. There is no difficulty in any medical man perceiving that lad was half starved in childhood; and nine out of ten resemble him. It must be borne in mind also that ignorance, that famed parent of crime, is brought on by careless or bad legislation. Give these poor children the means of education and improvement, and it is wonderful the respectable members of society they will become."

"We have had in our neighbourhood," said Bodmer, "a remarkable case in corroboration of your assertion. In the worst portion of the parish of St. George's-in-the-East, perhaps one of the largest, certainly the poorest in the metropolis, some national schools were established, under three of the Blackwall Railway arches. It would be difficult to imagine demoralisation among children more abject than in that locality prior to their being opened. As the number of the children increased their respectability increased in proportion; and this was still more encouraged by the indefatigable exertions of the incumbent of the district church. In the course of a few years the change was so great that the juvenile population in the vicinity of the schools could hardly be recognised as the same. One morning a little, feeble, respectable-looking old man called upon the incumbent, and requested a few minutes' conversation with him. His request was readily granted. He stated that he

had a favour to ask. He was a milkman, and had resided many years in the neighbourhood of the district national schools. Before they were opened he was always in intense poverty, not that he had not abundance of customers, but they were so dishonest, that his bad debts were as great or greater than his profits. As the scholars increased in numbers, and the influence of the schools was greater, his customers increased in integrity and numbers, till at last he was able to lay by a considerable sum of money, in comparison with his position in life. He felt assured he could not live long, and he considered it would be an act of ingratitude on his part to die without leaving some testimonial to the schools for the good they had done him. He wished to leave £150 for their benefit; would the incumbent inform him in what manner it could be done so as to avoid expense or litigation. The reverend gentleman reasoned with him for some time; he told him that although such a legacy would be an act of piety, it should not be done to the prejudice of his relatives. The old man told him he had behaved justly to them, that he had set his heart on making the bequest, and he hoped the incumbent would advise him. This was done, and the old man went away contented. He died shortly afterwards, and his executors handed over the money to the benefit of the trust.''

"I can imagine," said Mr. Courtney, "that the power of a clergyman would be very great in those poor districts, if he conscientiously did his duty."

"It is singular to observe how great it is, and how readily they obtain the confidence and respect of the working classes, if they have an average amount of zeal and tact. I mean those of the clergy—and there are many of them—who interest themselves in the temporal welfare of their poor, and do not confine themselves to promising them eternal punishment as a reward for the misery they are enduring in this world. To the more reasonable class of our working clergy—those men who

admit that there is a strong affinity existing between the Christian religion and common sense—the working classes show the greatest respect, and keep faith with them to the utmost in their power. In the parish I have just alluded to, there was lately an example of it. The winter had been remarkably severe, and distress was very great. The parish authorities did all in their power to relieve it, but in a parish as poor as that is, their means were in inverse proportion to their good will. The incumbent felt deeply for the distress around him, and determined in his humble manner to do the utmost he could to relieve it. He told those he knew that if they would come to the parsonage on each Sunday, he would give every applicant a pint of good soup and half a loaf of bread, and this he would continue till work got more plentiful, but that he relied on their honours to come no more after they had obtained employment. This was readily promised, and the clergyman made his preparation for the next Sunday. He wrote to several of the wealthy aristocracy, of those who consider the church a more fitting place for the distribution of alms than the police-court, and requested subscriptions in furtherance of his object. These were forwarded him with great liberality. On the first day of distribution fifty attended, principally the wives of dock labourers; they, in consequence of the long continuance of easterly winds preventing shipping from getting up the Channel, suffered more in proportion from being thrown out of work than the others. The next Sunday the number increased to eighty, the third to one hundred. The easterly wind still continued, and the same number applied the following Sunday. The next day the wind changed to the south-west, and in consequence the following Sunday the number had decreased to sixty, a considerable number of ships having entered the river. The south-west winds continued, and the men got gradually into work, so that the number the next week had fallen to twenty, principally old women; at last there were but ten applicants, and the greater

portion of the soup made was thrown away, so perfectly had they kept faith with the incumbent in the promise they had made him."

"Their conduct was most creditable," said Mr. Courtney. "It would be difficult to imagine anything more honourable, especially when we consider the temptations to which the poor are exposed."

"And yet," said the Doctor, "it would perhaps be impossible to find a locality where greater demoralisation exists than in the vicinity of that parish. Let me ask you, or any man of common candour, whether with principles so good, and immorality and intoxication so flagrant, there must not be some gross failing on the part of the legislative bodies, especially when we bear in mind that perhaps all the capitals of Europe united do not possess the endowments and funds for the advancement of morality and religion equal in amount to those of London."

"You spoke of the national schools," said Mr. Courtney; "would there be any difficulty placed in the way of my visiting one?"

"None whatever," replied the Doctor; "the teachers as a body, both male and female, are well-bred and courteous; but we should hardly have time to inspect one to-day."

"If you were seeking for abuses, instead of establishments to admire," said the Surgeon, "I should call your attention to one close by—I mean the Westminster School. It was in the Catholic times a pure charity. It was taken from the poor at the Reformation, and Elizabeth re-organised it; she made it a grammar-school, but free to all classes. It contained a clause, however, that no boy in possession of ten pounds a year, or who would inherit that sum from his father, should be eligible to be on the foundation.* The poor,

* Quoted from a letter from Lord (then Mr.) Brougham to Sir Samuel Romilly, on "London Charitable Endowments," and printed 1818.

therefore, might have profited by it, if they had wished it, as well as the rich—the small tradesman in the neighbourhood as well as the man of fortune. In time, however, it gradually detached itself from the shopkeeper and artificer, and its advantages were applied solely to the benefit of those perfectly capable of providing instruction for their own children, without appealing to public charitable institutions. Its funds are equal to the expense of educating the whole parish in which it is situated, and a large surplus would even then remain untouched, yet hardly one to whom the cost of education is an object, is allowed to have a boy taught there, for though by its rules the school ostensibly remains open to all, the impediments thrown in the way of the general public are so great as to render its intended uses almost unattainable. There is also a peculiar mystery involved in its presentations to the Universities. An affectionate, almost fraternal compromise seems to have been entered into between the heads of colleges, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, and the superiors of the school; so that it is almost impossible in the present day to name all that really belongs to the general public, and what is absolutely private or capitular patronage."

Mr. Courtney and Bodmer now took leave of the surgeon, and proceeding homewards, in a short time arrived at Morley's Hotel. As they were entering it, they met a gentleman and a lady leaving it.

"Remember," said the gentleman to Mr. Courtney, "we shall expect you to dinner at six. We must not dine later, or we shall not be in time for the theatre, and my wife, who has never seen one in England, wishes to be there at the beginning."

"I am sorry," said Mr. Courtney, "that I cannot profit by your kindness. My friend here is going to dine with me."

"Oh you must bring him with you as well," said the lady, with a slightly foreign accent; "we have ordered

dinner for four, and have just received a note from a friend, saying he cannot come."

"Well, Doctor," said Mr. Courtney, "you cannot do better than accept the invitation. Mrs. Watson is an admirable hostess."

The Doctor did as he was advised, and Mr. Watson and his wife left the hotel, promising to return in less than an hour, for it was then five o'clock.

"What do you think of my little Russian friend?" said Mr. Courtney; "is she not quite pretty enough to be an English woman?"

"Quite," said the doctor; "her husband is an Englishman, though, is he not?"

"Yes. He is obliged occasionally to visit Russia, and two years ago he met his present wife at Moscow. He fell, very easily, you may believe, desperately in love with her, proposed, and was accepted, and a very nice couple they make. You will like her immensely. She speaks English perfectly, and her little foreign accent only gives a piquancy to her words."

"Have you known them long?"

"Only since I have been staying at the hotel. Now draw near the fire, for it is bitterly cold. Are your winters in England generally as severe as this?"

"No; they are ordinarily very mild; this dry, cold, bleak weather rarely occurs. Which theatre are you going to to-night?"

"Covent Garden. It is the first night of the new pantomime (boxing-night, I believe, you call it). It is, I understand, the time of all others to see your industrious classes enjoying themselves."

"It is, certainly. As far as the theatre goes, it is all very well; but with too many, I am afraid, gin has far greater attractions."

The evening papers were now brought in, and Mr. Courtney and his friend, with their feet on the fender, were occupied with their contents till dinner was announced. The meal passed over without anything

worthy of remark; Bodmer was highly pleased with the charming little Russian and her husband, who appeared to be a highly intelligent man. The time arrived for them to leave for the theatre, the carriage was in readiness, and half-an-hour afterwards they found themselves snugly ensconced in a comfortable private box.

The play was Richard the Third. As far as the dialogue was concerned, it might as well have been anything else, for not one word was audible, so noisy was the audience. The house was crammed, and it appeared as if every one present had determined to lend his assistance to drown the voices of the actors, although these last exerted their lungs with a perfect integrity of purpose. The ghost scene, as well as the battle, commanded some little attention, but all the rest was utterly disregarded, so great was the impatience of the audience to arrive at the great treat of the evening—the pantomime. When the overture to it commenced, the silence of the public was as marked as they had been obstreperous before, and, with the exception of an occasional stamping of the feet, when keeping time to the popular airs accustomed to be introduced into compositions of the kind, had they been a party of critics at a classical concert, their conduct could not have been more attentive.

The overture finished, the fun and bustle commenced, and the delight of the audience, great as it was at the beginning, appeared to increase till the pantomime got to the last scene. Among the audience none appeared to enjoy the performance so much as the many children who were present. Perhaps one of the greatest treats possible to the psychologist is to watch their young faces during a performance of this kind; to mark with what an acute and happy appreciation of the ludicrous they can pick out points of overwhelming mirth from feats on the stage, which to middle-aged sobriety appear the acme of vapid stupidity. The Russian lady appeared

highly interested and amused, though evidently more by the novelty, to her, of the scene, than the intrinsic value of the performance.

"Well, Margaret," said her husband, "have you any amusement in Moscow to equal that?"

"Certainly not," she said, "if you will give me my choice of two answers—talent or absurdity."

As frequently occurs at the first presentation of a pantomime, the performances lasted till a very late hour; indeed, it was considerably past one o'clock before they were over. When they arrived in the lobby, Mr. Courtney sought for the servant to tell him to bring up the carriage, but no servant was to be found; they waited patiently for some minutes, but as he still did not make his appearance, the link-man was requested to seek for it. It was no fault of that functionary's, if the vehicle was not forthcoming, for he performed his duty in a most exemplary manner. First, Mr. Courtney's carriage was called for in a voice of cracked thunder; it was then repeated in a tone somewhat less powerful, as if the crier were getting farther distant. It was then repeated over and over again, each succeeding time less loud than before, till at last it was almost inaudible. Then it was heard no longer, and after a silence of nearly ten minutes the link-man returned, saying the carriage was nowhere to be found. The fact really was, that both coachman and footman were as fully aware it was Christmas time as Mr. Courtney himself, and had proved their conviction of it by getting insensibly drunk, much to the satisfaction of the horses, who were dozing quietly and comfortably under a cover in the green-yard. The link-man was then requested to find them a cab. He told them he thought it was impossible, but he would do his best. In a short time he returned, his mission having been unsuccessful. 'It was,' he said, 'impossible to find a cab, although he had been for one as far as the Strand.' Bribery was then resorted to, and a reward of an extra

shilling promised if he succeeded. Stimulated by the reward, he again started off, and again returned unsuccessful. Not a cab, he assured them, was to be had for love or money. It was now past two o'clock, and there appearing no alternative, the party started off for the purpose of walking home, the Doctor accompanying them. They wrapt up Mrs. Watson as warmly as possible, for the night was bitterly cold. If the bleak east wind is not of frequent occurrence in London, it makes the most of its obnoxious powers when it comes, and that night it exercised them to the fullest. The streets appeared nearly deserted. None were to be seen but the policeman on duty, some drunken men staggering homewards, growling, or muttering to themselves, as the case might be; while some wretched creations of gin, carmine, and soiled dress, were endeavouring to enter into conversation with them. Crouched in the road, under the shelter of a post at the corner of Bow-street, was a miserable woman holding something pressed to her breast, which might have been an infant, or bundle of rags—it was very small; she raised her eyes drowsily as they passed, but was too sleepy to speak. When they neared the northern side of the market, not a soul was to be seen; the intense cold seemed to have driven all away. They walked on in the centre of the road silently and rapidly, for their words seemed to be frozen within their lips. Suddenly a little girl of apparently ten or eleven years, but perhaps older, sprang, or rather seemed to spring, from the ground at their feet, for no one had seen her approach. She had neither bonnet nor shawl, and the few clothes she had on her were of the scantiest description. She was fearfully thin, and the neck, legs, and feet, for she was shoeless, showed how little flesh covered the poor creature's bones.

"Please, gentlemen, give me a ha'penny, I'm so hungry; do, if you please, Sir, only a ha'penny. Do, my good lady, give me a ha'penny. I'm so cold, and

ain't had nothing to eat all day; do give a poor girl something, ma'am."

All this was said rapidly, and repeated more than once, in a perfectly professional whine, utterly distinct from the voice of real urgent application from necessity; and yet the child was evidently destitute. Perhaps misery had become chronic with her, and she was used to it.

"Go away, you naughty girl," said the Anglo-Russ; "go home to your mother; what are you doing in the street at this time of night?" (It was now past two o'clock).

"Please, ma'am, I ain't got no bed to go to, ma'am, and mother's dead, and I ain't got no father; please, good lady, give a ha'penny to a poor girl; I'm so hungry, ma'am."

Mr. Courtney, shocked at the girl's appearance, put some halfpence into her hand. The child did not thank him, but gave a satisfied kind of chuckle as she turned aside. The effect of his gift was in another way, however, most marvellous. The sound of the pence, slight as it had been as they fell into the girl's hand, called in a moment round the party at least a dozen children. Whence they came, it was impossible to say, the earth seemed to have spawned them. The eldest among them did not appear to have been more than twelve years of age, the youngest not more than seven or eight. They immediately surrounded Mr. Courtney and his friends, and clamorously demanded charity, the girls as rudely as the boys, whom they equalled in strength and numbers. They were all in rags and dirty in the extreme, some, apparently, half naked. Although pushing each other aside vigorously, there was no quarrelling among them, on the contrary, they seemed much rather inclined for fun. The boys were like the ragged street boys generally, neither better nor worse, but the girls made the heart bleed to see them. All attributes of their sex seemed lost, their principal

difference from their male companions consisting in their utter shamelessness. They were all thin and stunted in their growth; and amidst their troublesome importunities the sound of a sharp, harsh, dry cough was frequently heard, which told too well the life of the poor creature was being sacrificed to the hardships of her mode of life. Though lost, irrevocably lost in body, their wretched, helpless, neglected infancy must have pleaded powerfully before the throne of the Almighty in favour of each poor child's soul. Suddenly two other individuals joined the group. The elder was a boy of ten or eleven years of age, the younger barely more than six or seven. The elder was dressed in a ragged pair of trowsers, fastened up by a piece of string as a brace, and a shirt; the younger had also on an apology for a shirt, and underneath, reaching to his heels, what appeared to be the dilapidated petticoat of some little girl; neither had any covering on their heads nor shoes on their feet. They had evidently had a fatiguing day, for they had slept soundly, and even now appeared hardly awake. When they were disturbed they were crouched under some market gardener's baskets asleep. They rushed hurriedly up to the others, and commenced begging, the eldest boy speaking, the younger occasionally introducing a word. So drowsy were they still, that the elder did not notice whom he addressed, but ran on with extended hand, mechanically uttering his stereotyped whining phrases.

"Give a copper to a poor boy, Sir; if you please, Sir; do, Sir; I've swept the crossing nice and clean, Sir."

A loud, shrill laugh from some of his companions thoroughly awakened him, and he then perceived the mistake he had made—he had been addressing a little girl of some eight years of age. As soon as he was aware of his blunder he pushed through the group and was upon the point of addressing Mr. Courtney when he stopped suddenly as if recollecting himself,

turned sharply round and rushed rapidly away towards the baskets, his little companion pattering after him. In the confusion of ideas attending his sudden disturbance from sleep, he had left unguarded, open to the easy grasp of any of his scarcely honest associates, his broom. Though worn to a stump, it was all his treasure. It was the sum-total of his realised capital, his entire stock-in-trade, and he respected it accordingly. He dived anxiously under the baskets — it was still there, as safe and sound as at the moment he had raised his head from it, for it had been his pillow. He then ran with it in his hand toward the party, and began hurriedly to sweep the perfectly clean road as assiduously as if it had been the muddiest crossing.

"Just wait a moment and let me catch some of you," roared the strong voice of a policeman, as he emerged from the colonnade. He dashed in among the children making, purposely, grasps at nothing, while pretending anxious endeavours to catch them. "Just wait one moment."

Even more rapidly than they had appeared the whole group of imps vanished from the sight. They had gone different ways, the two boys with the broom towards the basket, under which they were in a moment snugly concealed. The last that remained visible was a little barefooted girl who limped away more slowly than the others, evidently suffering from chilblains. She cried as the policeman approached her.

"Come, my dear," said he, with a gentleness of voice strangely in contrast with the rough tones he had lately used—"come with me, my dear, you ought not to be out here."

The child screamed with terror when he took her hand. The man let her go again. He looked after her earnestly for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and continued his beat. Mr. Courtney and his friends silently hurried on to the hotel, all evidently absorbed in their own reflections. How different would

those of two of the party have been had they known the fact, that they had met in that wretched group of miserable children the two boys whom they so anxiously sought.

A warm room, a good fire, and an excellent cup of tea succeeded, at last, in somewhat thawing the friends, but still conversation flagged, till Bodmer took up his hat to depart.

"Doctor," said Mr. Courtney, "I dare say you think I have played very poorly the host since our return, but you cannot imagine how much the sight we witnessed in Covent Garden shocked me. You English accuse us slaveholders of cruelty; but I unhesitatingly state that it would be impossible, through the whole length and breadth of the slave States, to find as cruel a spectacle as that we saw. You boast of your humanity so loudly that the world is deceived by the assurance of your assertion, and gives you credit for what you claim; but, do you deserve it? Are helpless children in any country as neglected as they are in yours, at any rate in London; and it is the richest capital in the world. The more I see of England, the more fully am I persuaded that you possess a reputation for civilization far above that which you deserve."

"It is really extraordinary," said Mr. Watson, "nay, almost incomprehensible, but it is certainly only in England where this abject infantile misery is to be found. In no other capital in Europe does it appear. You might remain for months in Paris without seeing as much as we have witnessed to-night. What do you say, Margaret?"

"I have never seen," she replied, "anything in my opinion more dreadful than those poor young creatures. I assure you I have witnessed more misery among children during the fortnight I have been in England than I have met with in Moscow and St. Petersburg in my life."

"All you say," said Bodmer, "is unfortunately but

too true, nor do I believe any remedy will be applied to it till the people themselves take up the question, and study it a little more than they now do, and then, when they are aware to what an extent they have been defrauded, some reformation may take place. The sight we saw to-night, was, as you say, heartrending, but pity is almost absorbed in indignation when we reflect that the very ground on which it occurred, and for some considerable distance around it, of very many thousands a-year in value, was formerly a charitable trust. It was left solely for 'the use of God and the poor,' and yet not one shilling of its enormous revenue is applied to either. All is absorbed by one noble family, and not an effort to restore it, not a word of reprobation has ever escaped the lips of one of our legislators, either against those who formerly perpetrated the fraud or those who now enjoy the proceeds."

CHAPTER XIII.

RESEARCHES CONTINUED.

One afternoon, about a fortnight after the visit to Covent Garden Theatre, Mr. Courtney called on Doctor Bodmer to inquire if he had obtained any information of the Beuzeville family. Fortunately, he found the Doctor at home (no very usual occurrence in the after part of the day), and he and his visitor were snugly ensconced in the little surgery, and in earnest conversation, when a man in the uniform of the Thames police entered. He told Bodmer that he had been sent by the Inspector to inform him that two boys, answering the description of those inquired for, were now in custody on a charge of pilfering some trifles from a barge in the river. If the Doctor and his friend would like to see them, they were at that moment at the

station, and would remain there till the next morning, as it was then too late to take them before the magistrates that day. Bodmer thanked the man for the trouble he had taken, and promised to call and see the boys in the course of the day. The policeman then left the house, and Mr. Courtney, whose anxiety on the subject increased in proportion as the time for his stay in England became shorter, proposed starting on the spur of the moment. Bodmer having no particular engagement agreed, and they immediately left the house. They hurried rapidly along, and at last arrived at the station, but only again to be disappointed—they were not the lads they were in search of. Mr. Courtney was on the point of leaving the doctor, for the purpose of proceeding homewards, when the latter informed him that he had promised a friend, who resided in Farringdon Street, to spend an evening with him the first time he had one disengaged; and if Mr. Courtney would walk, he would accompany him so far on his road. The proposition was agreed to, and the friends started on their journey westward.

As they continued their walk, Bodmer took occasion to pass through those localities most likely to impress his friend with his theory of the unjust treatment of the poor. When they arrived in New Cannon Street—one of the finest in the metropolis, where it is almost impossible to draw the line between the palace and the warehouse, so admirably have its architectural elevations been designed—Mr. Courtney was much impressed with the wealth and magnificence he saw.

"The cruelty of our poor laws," said Bodmer, "is as apparent in this wealthy district as in any other in the metropolis. Some time since a poor, wretched, emaciated creature, a woman, applied to St. Bartholomew's Hospital for relief. She lived in one of the numerous courts in that neighbourhood. She was suffering from bleeding at the gums, and a complication of other disorders, brought on by poverty and privation. She

was told she would be taken into the hospital as an in-patient. 'I cannot come in,' said the woman, 'I only want to get some medicine.' 'My good woman,' said the doctor, 'you must be an in-patient. It is no use disguising the matter from you; you are very ill, and more than that, you are in great danger. If you come in you will most probably be cured; if you neglect my advice, you will certainly die.' The woman, terrified by this statement, went into one of the wards; a bed was assigned to her, and fitting medicines immediately ordered. About midnight she rose from her bed, and commenced dressing herself. 'What are you doing?' inquired the sister of the ward. 'I am going home.' 'You must do nothing of the kind,' said the sister, and she immediately sent for the house surgeon. When he arrived, he told the woman she might do as she pleased, but that if she went out she would certainly die. 'What am I to do,' said the woman, 'I have six children in my room at home; they have nothing to eat, and my husband will not be home to-night.' The surgeon immediately provided the woman with some wine, and other medical comforts, and she left the ward. A short time afterwards, the chaplain of the hospital was relating the anecdote to a friend of his, the clergyman of one of the parishes comprised in this street. 'I wish,' said the latter, 'I had had that poor woman under my hands. One of these improvements has destroyed half my parish, and another, half the remainder. I have several wealthy charities, and many benevolent individuals have offices in my cure, but I have no poor; they have all been driven away. I made lately an application to the proper authorities for permission to build a model lodging house, offering to take the charge of it myself, and to guarantee that none but respectable persons should be allowed to reside in it.' 'No,' was the answer I received, 'we have got rid of the poor now, and it would be impolitic to invite them back again.' The tenants of these houses," continued

Bodmer, "are the principal employers of the labouring poor of London, but the law exempts them from any contribution for their relief when in sickness or distress."

The friends had now arrived at the foot of Ludgate Hill. Mr. Courtney then took his leave, and continued his journey westward, and the Doctor turned up Farringdon Street towards the house of the friend with whom he was to dine. The author will not detain the reader with an account of the dinner. After the descriptions of two similar repasts he has already so kindly gone through with so much patience, it would be an unjustifiable trial of his good nature. Suffice it to say, the dinner was of a very simple description, and the guests all of Bodmer's own profession, with one exception, a chemist from Whitechapel. The evening was passed in perfect good-fellowship and harmony, and it was past midnight before they separated, when Bodmer and his friend, the chemist, left the house together. Although the weather was somewhat unpropitious, the wind blowing keenly from the east, and a drizzling rain, or rather sleet, was falling, the two friends determined on walking home. They proceeded up Snow Hill, the chemist holding up an umbrella, which sheltered both himself and friend. Both were in good spirits, and the conversation proceeded with great fluency. The subject before them was, as frequently occurs with men after a social evening—women. Bodmer was expatiating with great earnestness on his admiration for the whole sex.

"I detest," said he, "that idea which seems to be prevalent with a great body of our social philanthropists, that women are only to be cared for and respected when young enough to attract man's admiration to their personal beauty. I maintain, that at all ages they are equally worthy of our loves. Though their attractions may be of a different quality, they are equally worthy of our regard. Female children and old women seem

to be utterly unworthy of notice with these gentlemen. Nothing disgusts me more than to see in any of our hospitals some pious athletic young man, probably a clerk in a public office, praying by the bedside of an 'erring sister,' utterly unconscious of the satirical glances of the other patients, or the indignant looks of the sister of the ward. Why cannot these gentry carry their benevolence further? Why should the whole of their family affection be bestowed on their fallen sisters, so as to leave not one thought or care for their drunken mothers, or little shoeless, shivering daughters? Surely their souls are as well worth saving as that of an attractive young woman. To judge of the theory of these gentlemen by their practice, we should be led to believe that heaven was particularly fond of the souls of women between seventeen and twenty-five years of age, and maintained the balance of its impartiality by neglecting them in proportion before and after that period."

"You surely do not include the clergy in that censure?" said the chemist.

"Certainly not; as regards these fallen women, I hold the conduct of the clergy of all denominations to be exemplary and unexceptionable; charitable and humane without pretension, always ready to assist them, and at the same time keeping themselves intact from the slightest breath of scandal. But the refinement of charitable feeling found in some of these lay brethren exerting themselves in favour of young women who have misconducted themselves, is occasionally exceedingly ludicrous. One would naturally imagine that all women fallen out of their sphere would be equally low, but that does not appear with them to be exactly the case. An institution has lately been founded for reclaiming those who were formerly in a more elevated position in society, such as young ladies and governesses. These damsels repent there, not in sackcloth and ashes, but in drawing and Berlin wool. They have every

comfort and luxury provided for them, and are petted and caressed as objects of sympathy of an extra interesting character. There was at first some difficulty in finding respectable female servants for the establishment, virtuous young women not particularly liking to wait on those whose characters were not of a description to excite their admiration. The managers at last adopted a plan they considered likely to suit all parties. The domestics in future were to be chosen from women of the working class whose characters had been lost, but who had been reclaimed in refuges of a lower order. The system at first did not work very well. Even with these damsels there seemed to be some difficulty in understanding why the others should take precedence of them, and they assumed a somewhat more familiar bearing towards them than the young ladies altogether admired. These last, by way of keeping the others at a proper distance, behaved to their inferiors with considerable haughtiness. One of the latter replied to a lady penitent, who was lording it over her with great dignity, 'I'm sure, ma'am, I don't know why you should crow over me in that manner; you wasn't worse than I was.'"

"Bodmer," said the chemist, "you astonish me. I thought you held every class of women in respect; but you now appear to make an exception in some cases."

"Not at all. All I do is to deny that these women have a greater claim upon our sympathies than any others; for my own part, I can find an immensity to admire in women of every station, and every age. Take the swarms of dirty, ragged little girls that abound in this neighbourhood. There will not be one among them who will not have some charming attribute about her, if not of body, certainly of mind. I cannot imagine a more beautiful specimen of God's creation than the mind of a very young, poor girl, as nature formed it. Mark in the midst of their squalor and misery the affection and indefatigable industry they

exercise in assisting and comforting their poor mothers, and the attention and consideration they show to that limp bundle of sickly flesh and d irty rags—the baby. Their only out-door exercise a walk in some dirty, crowded lane, unless, perhaps, on a sunny day, they enjoy a stroll in the wastes of Farringdon Street. How many hundreds of them have never enjoyed an amusement superior to the rare barrel-organs which occasionally pass by their alleys; and yet how cheerfully is their playless, joyless infancy passed. When still in childhood, yet possessing the sins of womanhood, thanks to the physical instruction provided for them by a benevolent legislature, the latent affection of the future wife is pushed to unnatural precocity and degradation, and then crushed. Even then, many beautiful characteristics may be found among them. I will pass over the days when they are young women; all can then sympathize with them, and take them as matrons with their personal attractions fading. It is wonderful how beautifully, how grandly, do some of the English woman's attributes then develope themselves. Privation with patience, bad treatment with forgiveness, illness with resignation, fatigue without complaint, and unceasing labour without repine, all are easily to be found in them. Even in the 'old crones,' as it pleases our novelists to call them, in the parish workhouse, are most beautiful characteristics to be found, if a man is but willing to search for them."

"You do not then consider them the worthless, drunken set they are generally described in the genteel literature of the day?"

"On the contrary. In the first place, old age among women of our working classes, is a *prima facie* proof of respectability of life. Women in their station rarely live to be old if they have led bad lives. I grant, occasionally, a tendency to gin somewhat too strongly developed may be found, and they may sometimes be detected in malingering the spasms to obtain it; but

that is, in my opinion, a venial fault, when the misery they frequently have had to endure is taken into consideration. I have often amused myself in setting the poor old creatures talking, or in listening to their conversations. They invariably turn to some episode of their lives, when their maternal or wife-like duties have been called into action. 'How her poor husband did so and so; how long he suffered before he died; how he would not lie up in time, although she always told him how dangerous it was. How long her daughter Fanny was ill, when she was obliged to leave her situation, and other circumstances of the same description.' In speaking of the occurrences of their own lives, it is singular how far more strongly have good or kind actions from others towards them been impressed upon their memories, than injustice or ill treatment—however gross the latter may have been. When they were in domestic service, the actions of kind mistresses are always brought forward—hardly ever those who treated them with injustice or severity. If ever any individuals are spoken of with anger by them, it is invariably for some offence offered to those they loved, and not from any affront offered to themselves. 'Oh, he behaved shameful to my poor daughter, shameful; or, he never behaved well to my husband, although nobody could have worked harder for him than he did. He was a hard, bad master, that he was.' The strongest proof to my mind of the higher status of woman in the animal creation to man is shown by their extraordinary impressionability to religious sentiments. It is almost an impossibility to find an old woman in the workhouse who is not really pious, or rather will not readily and eagerly listen to any religious conversation or instruction. Of their innate religious tendency, I had lately a very singular case in proof in our workhouse. A poor old woman had suffered many years from an ovarian tumour, and her health gradually sank as her disease increased. She was grateful for anything done for her,

and was quiet, resigned, and eminently pious. As her vital energies fell off, her piety seemed to increase. Sickness had no power over her, and death did not make her afraid. At last immediate dissolution became imminent, and the mind sank as it approached; but the sentiment of piety remained, and you could distinctly hear her muttering prayers. The thought of God was so firmly fixed upon her mind that it was impossible to separate it entirely from Him to any earthly object or circumstance. I thought that the application of a little ice in her mouth might refresh her, and I placed a small piece of it on her tongue. As soon as she felt the grateful cold her mind was partially attracted to it. 'God's ice,' she said—even then the idea of her Maker could not be detached from her thoughts. She continued to sink, and coma came on, still prayer, although imperfect, remained. 'World without end—without end—world—world—Amen,' came disjointedly from her lips, and when the machinery of breathing ceased the lips still seemed endeavouring to form some word of praise or prayer."

"Bodmer," said the chemist, "you appear to me to be a general lover; you seem to be attached to the whole sex."

"*Confiteor*," said Bodmer, "I plead guilty to the accusation, if there are any among them to whom I make exception, it is to those who are termed 'strong-minded women.' When a woman imitates a man in mind, she sinks immediately in position or respect. The best thing that could be said of them is, that they are mostly shams, and have merely put themselves into the trick of singularity. They cannot teach themselves to unsex their minds. They cannot learn to do it by themselves, and it would be folly, even if it were not an impossibility, for man to teach them to accomplish it."

"We cannot put men's heads upon women's shoulders," said the chemist, sententiously.

"And it is doubtful whether it would increase their beauty if we could," said Bodmer.

Whether the good cheer the chemist had partaken of had sharpened his perceptibilities for the ludicrous, whether Bodmer's remark contained an amount of wit undiscernible either to the reader or author, or whether the absurd figure a woman would have made with the little doctor's ugly head upon her shoulders, caused the immoderate burst of laughter he broke into, it is impos sible to say, but so violent was it that he was obliged to wait some moments before he could recover himself. At last the laugh ended, but, as it subsided, another sound mingled with it. It was a low, long wail of misery, and it continued for some moments after the chemist was silent. The friends looked around them, but nothing was to be seen. They had arrived at the recess in Newgate Street, opposite Christ's Hospital, and they determined the sound was caused by the wind rushing through the double row of iron railings before the play-ground, and they continued their way. After they had taken a few steps, a violent gust of wind caught the chemist's umbrella, and, as he stopped to right it, the sound again arose. This time there was no mistaking it; it was the voice of a child fatigued, and in distress, but whence it came they could not determine. They looked carefully around, but saw nothing. A moment afterwards a policeman came up, and Bodmer immediately informed him of the circumstance. The man directly turned on his bull's eye, and with the light swept the whole of the recess, and at last they perceived something crouched down in the eastern angle beneath the dwarf wall. The three approached it, and found two boys huddled closely together. The elder might have perhaps been eleven years of age, the younger was certainly not more than six. They were half naked, and the few clothes they had on them were merely rags. The younger was silent and motionless, the elder shivered violently, and uttered a low plaintive cry.

"I am not sure that child is not dead," said Bodmer; "something must be done for him immediately. Hallo, my man," he continued, calling to a watchman whom he saw in the play-ground of the school, "here is a poor child dying; will you let us bring him in there?"

"I dare not, Sir," said the man, respectfully; "it's more than my place is worth, but I'll come round and help you, if I can."

"The child should be taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital at once, and the other to some refuge. There is none near here, is there?" said Bodmer, addressing the policeman.

"No, Sir, there is nothing nearer than the Minories. I would take the young one willingly to the hospital myself, but I cannot leave my beat for so long a time."

"Come, Bobby," said a cabman, who had driven up, "jump in, and I'll drive you for nothing, and you can't say that's a hard bargain, at any rate; jump in, I say, you won't be gone long."

The policeman immediately carried the child into the cab, and it drove off towards the hospital. Bodmer stopped the next cab that came by, and he attempted to lead the elder boy towards it, but although the child was too cold to articulate, he attempted to return to the angle of the wall, although he could hardly move his cold naked feet over the pavement. Bodmer allowed him to return, holding his hand the while, or he would have fallen. When he had arrived at the spot where he had been found, he stooped down and grasped with great difficulty, so benumbed were his hands, the stick of a birch broom, the broom itself having been worn away. The child raised it mechanically, and when Bodmer took it from him, he offered no resistance, but allowed himself to be led to the cab. The friends entered with him, and the chemist, taking off his great coat, wrapped it round the child, and then placed him on the back seat of the cab, Bodmer being seated

by his side, and the chemist on the front seat. The driver was told to go to the Minories, and the cab started.

"What a perfect specimen of civic philanthropy that Bluecoat school is!" said the chemist; "the idea of two poor boys dying from cold and hunger outside its gates, and yet with its enormous wealth bequeathed for such unfortunates, one of their servants dares not allow the poor creatures shelter, lest he might lose his appointment!"

"A perfect specimen, indeed! but after all there is something to admire in the ingenuity its managers show in combining charity and self-interest together. The accumulated wealth of the institution, as you say, is enormous, and the proceeds, or revenue, are expected to be applied to charitable uses, and it is maintained they are so employed. But in what way? A gentleman has a family of sister's or brother's children looking up to him for support or assistance, and who have to a certain degree a legitimate claim upon his sympathy. The gentleman looks calmly round to find in what manner he may do the greatest amount of good to his protégés with the smallest expense to himself. His attention naturally turns to the Bluecoat school. There for four or five hundred pounds paid down, he has the right to nominate a child every three or four years. Give the charitable donor thirty-five years of age. He has then a probable duration of life of some twenty-eight years, and assume that the expenditure for a child in the school is £50 a-year. It is, at least, that; for they are well housed, fed, and clothed, if not well taught, while in its walls. You will then perceive he will be able to provide handsomely for his nephews, and, beyond that, for his clerks, or any others for whom he may sympathise. Do not imagine the children will acquire low habits while there; the sons of flourishing barristers, captains in the navy, and colonels in the army, are to be found among the pupils. Besides

his worldly advantages, he has acquired unlimited reversionary right to treasure in heaven by the transaction, and that by weakening the funds, which ought to be applied to the children of the wandering poor, and yet performed in a perfectly religious and legitimate manner. There is something exceedingly eccentric in the whole transaction. He has, with money legally abstracted or stolen from heaven, raised a powerful rampart to shelter himself from the attacks of the devil. I look on that institution with great satisfaction. If ever the people or working classes begin to inquire what are their rights, I believe that charity will be taken as one of the strongest proofs of the iniquity and injustice which have been perpetrated to their prejudice."

The cab having arrived at the Minories, Bodmer and the chemist, the latter carrying the boy, alighted. The place was so small that only a few children could be admitted. When the porter saw the boy, he said :—

"I am afraid, Sir, you must take him on to Bow. This place is only intended for little children who have wandered from their homes, or have been lost by their parents, and I think I shall hardly be justified in admitting a boy of his age."

"But you would surely not refuse to shelter him, ill, cold, and starving as he is ?"

"Well, Sir, I'm afraid it's against the rules, but I will take him in if you wish it ; what's your name, my boy ?"

"Charles Beuzeville, Sir."

"What name did you say ?" said the Doctor.

"Charles Beuzeville."

"God bless me," said Bodmer, "this is singular, indeed. Where do you live, my lad ?"

"I haven't any home, Sir."

"What is your father ?"

"He was a weaver, Sir, but he went mad."

"Where is your mother ? "

"She was took ill, Sir, and went into the London Hospital, and when she came out we lost sight of her."

"I have been searching for this boy," said Bodmer to the chemist, "for months past. You need not enter his name, porter; I will take him home with me."

They then left the house, and Bodmer, after taking leave of his friend, called a cab and proceeded homewards, and that night Charles Beuzeville, for the first time for many weeks, slept in a bed.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THE next morning Bodmer found Charles seriously ill. Strong symptoms of inflammatory action of the lungs appeared, and these were again aggravated by the boy's anxiety about his brother. Bodmer had determined on delaying his visit to St. Bartholomew's Hospital till after his round of calls was ended; but to please his patient, he altered that resolution, and proceeded there at once. When he arrived he found that animation had been restored, but with considerable difficulty. The child was sensible, but his position was too dangerous to allow of any unnecessary risk, so the doctor left him, and continued his round westward towards Morley's Hotel. Mr. Courtney was at home. He was naturally delighted with the news Bodmer brought him.

"We have now, I believe," he said, "an earnest that success will attend us in our search for the others. I will immediately return with you, and as we pass the different newspaper offices, we will insert advertisements offering a reward to any one who shall give us such information as will lead to the discovery of the others. If you have no objection, I will make the reference to

you, as I intend leaving London for Paris next week, and when I return, you will inform me of what success you have had. I sincerely trust it may be good, for I cannot remain in Europe more than a month longer; I have already stayed longer than I had anticipated. Beyond the wish to please my excellent son-in-law, I feel a great interest in his mother from the description you have given me of her, so pray do not spare any expense in making all possible inquiries for her."

Mr. Courtney and Bodmer then left the hotel and proceeded on their mission. The advertisements were inserted, and the friends arrived before noon at the Doctor's house in Shoreditch. They found Charles still seriously indisposed. The boy was delighted to hear that his brother was better, and well cared for, and his agitation considerably subsided. Still the effect of the change in his circumstances could hardly be realized by him. Modest as the little doctor's establishment was, it was palatial when compared to the shelter Charles had lately been accustomed to. The interest taken in him by Mr. Courtney also puzzled him exceedingly, and he naturally could hardly believe the news that his elder brother, whom they all believed to have been dead for many years, should be alive, and married to the daughter of that gentleman.

An arrangement was entered into with the Doctor to take charge of the boys till they should be sufficiently recovered to be removed from medical superintendence. After that Bodmer naturally considered it would be impolitic to allow them to remain in London, where they might possibly be met by some of their old associates.

After two days' stay in the Hospital, Tommy was removed to Dr. Bodmer's. Under his care the children rapidly recovered, and a friend of his living a short distance from London, engaged to take charge of them till Mr. Courtney should return from his Paris trip. Before they left Bodmer's house a great change for the

better had taken place in their appearance. They were both handsome lads, and their new clothes contributed to give them a respectable appearance. Although the term of Mr. Courtney's absence would be short, Bodmer provided the boys with a tutor, and as they were naturally intelligent, and as that intelligence had been sharpened by the privations they had undergone, and the shifts they had been put to during their Arab life in the streets, the improvement they made was very great. Bodmer wrote several times to Mr. Courtney reporting progress, and each letter was more satisfactory than the former as far as regarded the boys; with respect to Catherine he was not equally fortunate. Several answers had been sent in from the advertisements, but none that bore upon the case, and Bodmer began to despair of receiving any news of her and the rest of her family before Mr. Courtney's departure for America. One day when the Doctor had finished his round of morning visits, and had seated himself quietly at his dinner, his errand boy entered.

"Oh, if you please, Sir, I forgot to tell you that a woman called here this morning to see you while you were out." Bodmer, who was at that moment occupied with his meal, paid but little attention to such commonplace information.

"Oh, she said, Sir, that you would be glad to hear that her son had returned home from sea, and is quite a very fine young man." As Bodmer had a very large number of female patients whose sons were in the habit of going to sea, and as invariably returned home (in the opinions of their mothers), very fine young men, this information was scarcely more interesting to him than the former.

"And she wanted to know, Sir, if you had ever heard anything of her two sons what she'd lost before she left London."

Bodmer threw down his knife and fork, and leaped

up on his feet with such animation that the errand boy was perfectly astounded.

"What was her name?" he loudly inquired. The boy got frightened and nervous.

"Please, Sir, I forget."

"You stupid fellow; did she say where she lived?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Where was it?"

"Please, Sir, I don't remember." Bodmer made a stride towards the errand boy, who retreated into the surgery.

"Come here, you silly fellow. What sort of a woman was she?"

"She was a very decent-looking woman, Sir. She was dressed in black, and wore a widow's cap. She said she'll call again in a day or two, as she wanted to see you very particular."

"She did not say at what time she would call?"

"No, Sir, she said nothing else."

Imperfect as the information was, Bodmer was obliged to rest satisfied with it, for he could obtain no more; and he endeavoured to wait with patience the events of the next two or three days. He now never left the house without giving strict injunctions to his boy not to allow the woman to stir till he came back, and in case of disobedience, he threatened him with immediate destitution. Every time he returned he inquired if his visitor in black had been. He did not write to Mr. Courtney on the subject, as he thought it would be better to have something certain to relate; for although he was convinced that Catherine had been his visitor, yet there was still a probability that he might be in error, and he thought it would be better to prove his anticipations to be a certainty before he adopted them as such. At last he was successful. One evening, while solacing himself with his accustomed glass of gin-and-water, some one rang at the surgery bell. His

errand boy had retired for the day, so Bodmer rose and opened the door, when to his intense joy he saw Catherine standing before him. He took her warmly by the hand, and led her into his little room. He was so agitated that at first he could hardly speak, and Catherine looked at him with wonder. The Doctor immediately felt that the excitement he had exhibited was derogatory in the eyes of a female patient, one of those who held that nothing could disturb his self-possession and nerve, and therefore held him in greater confidence and respect on that account. He stopped himself by a sudden effort.

"Well, Mrs. Beuzeville," he said, in a strictly professional drawl, "and how do you do now?"

"I am very well now, Sir," said Catherine. "I have not been ill since I left London, thank God. I was a good deal cut up when I heard of poor father's death; but I remembered he was a very old man, and the last years of his life he had been in great misery, so after all, it was better it pleased God to take him." She had evidently not heard of the manner of his death, and Bodmer did not inform her.

"How did you hear of his death?"

"A friend of mine, the wife of a railway constable, heard of it, and she wrote to me about it. She could not tell me the particulars. I called the other day to tell you, Sir, that my boy has come home from sea, and a very fine young fellow he is. He brought home with him more than thirty pounds in money; he'd hardly spent anything upon himself while he was abroad, and he has allowed me to take as much of it as I pleased. As I and my two girls had been offered regular work at a cloakmaker's in London, I thought it better we should all come up, as then I could make more inquiries about my two poor boys. It's a sad thing, isn't it, Sir? I have continually written up to London about them, but never could hear anything of them."

While she was speaking, Bodmer had been turning

over in his mind how he could best introduce the subject; at last he was resolved.

"I am happy to tell you, Mrs. Beuzeville, that I have some excellent news for you about them. I found them nearly a month ago, and they are both alive and well."

"Oh, Sir," said Catherine, reproachfully, "and you never told me anything about them."

"It was no fault of mine, I assure you. I have not only sought you in every place I could think of, but have, as well, advertised for you several times in the papers."

Catherine was perfectly astounded.

"Where are they now, Sir?" she said, hardly able to credit the evidence of her senses; "cannot I see them?"

"No; they are in the country with a friend of mine, but I will send for them to-morrow. Now sit down, and listen to me calmly, for I have much to tell you. Fortunately, it is all good; so much so, in fact, that it will require all your courage to support it. You had a son who went to America many years ago, when he was quite a lad."

"Yes, Sir, he went over to his uncle, but we have not heard from him for more than seven years; we were almost afraid he was dead."

"I am happy to tell you that he is not only alive and well, but a rich man into the bargain. There, now, recover yourself, or I will not say a word more."

Catherine with some difficulty restrained a strong hysterical cry, but succeeded. Bodmer sat quietly, and almost doggedly, till every symptom of it had vanished.

"If you have now sufficient command of yourself," he said, "I will go on; but remember if you give way at all, I shall stop, and not say another word; so have a little control over yourself, for I assure you the news I have to tell you is worth hearing. Some time after you left London I was introduced to an American

gentleman, who was most anxious to find out the family of a weaver of the name of Beuzeville. I told him that I had had for some years a family of that name for patients, but that I had lately lost sight of them. I, however, promised him I would make what inquiries I could, and let him know the result. I was, I must say, most indefatigable in my attempts to find you, but without success; not a clue to your whereabouts could I obtain."

"Oh, Sir, I left my address with the railway constable's wife."

"But as she was unknown to me, it is not singular that I did not inquire of her; let me go on, and don't interrupt me. I was equally unsuccessful in my search after the boys. I believe that I made inquiries at every police-station in London, and always without any good result accruing from them. At last both Mr. Courtney (that is the name of the American gentleman) and myself were beginning to despair, when one night, as I was returning home at a very late hour with a friend, we discovered two children almost perishing with cold and hunger. One of them, the younger, was almost dead; him we sent to the hospital, and the elder I took home with me when I found he was your son. Both he and his brother recovered rapidly, and Mr. Courtney placed in my hands a sum of money, with a request that I would do every thing necessary for their comfort and welfare, as it was impossible he could attend to them himself. He was obliged to visit Paris before he returned to America, and he was on the point of starting when I found the children. I have done as he requested, and they are now in the country with a friend of mine. One thing I should state to their credit, and that is, although they have suffered the most terrible privations and misery, not one dishonest act did they ever commit."

Catherine made no remark on hearing this compliment paid to her children, but a strong expression of

pride was visible in her countenance. It was evidently not entirely at the proof of the integrity of her sons, great as it was. There was an unmistakable appearance of self-satisfaction mingled with it. She felt that their honesty was a part of her. She felt that the continuity of maternal feeling between her and her boys was still unbroken. She knew herself, and was certain they could not be different.

"Where do you live now?" inquired Bodmer.

"At No. 54, Lant Street, in the Borough."

"Very well; to-morrow afternoon I will bring the boys with me to see you."

"But George, Sir, you have said nothing about him."

"I have hardly had time," said Bodmer smiling. "George's history is too long to go into it in detail. It is shortly this. He remained with his uncle till the latter's death, and then finding it was impossible to agree with his aunt, he left her, and went to Lowell, where he obtained a situation in a factory. During his stay there he made two inventions for the improvement of cotton machinery. He sold his patents for a large sum of money, and about the same time made the acquaintance of a gentleman from the southern States. He accepted an invitation from him to visit his plantation, and during his stay there he fell desperately in love with the gentleman's daughter. He made her an offer of marriage, which was accepted, and after the wedding George purchased an estate contiguous to his father-in-law's. Mr. Courtney having always entertained a wish to visit Europe, now yielded to George's requests to put his long-contemplated project in execution, and during his stay here to find out his parents, from whom he had heard nothing for years, although he had frequently written to them."

"Why, Sir, I have sent him at least a dozen letters, and never received an answer."

"He is under the conviction that his aunt contrived

some means to intercept your letters. From all I hear, his love for his family is as warm as the day he left England. Mr. Courtney has already written to him all he knew of your family."

"He has not heard all, I hope, Sir?" said Catherine.

"Do you think I am a likely man to tell what ought not to have been told?"

"No, Sir; you have always been a kind friend to us from the first day I saw you with my poor baby till to-day, when you have given me the best news I have ever heard in my life. I am not ungrateful, Sir, I assure you. I don't think there is one kind action you have done us that I forget, or could not tell you of, if you wished it."

"Well, that's all very flattering," said Bodmer, laughing, and rising at the same time; "but they have not been of such an agreeable description as to afford either of us much pleasure in repeating them. Now go. To-morrow I will call on you with the boys. Other things we can talk of then. You have heard quite enough to occupy your mind for some time to come." So saying he opened the door, and Catherine departed to convey the joyful intelligence she had received to her daughters and son.

When she arrived at home she found her family impatiently awaiting her arrival, that they might commence their supper. They immediately noticed that something extraordinary had happened, for their mother was evidently much agitated. When Catherine had rested herself for a few moments, she commenced her story, and it may easily be imagined that it occasioned intense interest. When she had finished, the conversation began, and was carried on with such animation that the dawn was breaking before they noticed their evening meal had remained untouched. Every probability was suggested and argued; every minute particular considered with as much earnestness as if they were already acquainted with every circumstance connected

with their future career. When they sought their beds, they each appeared to have but one fear—that they might wake in the morning and find it was a dream.

The next day they waited with intense impatience for the arrival of the Doctor. It was rather late in the day before they saw him; but as he had brought the two boys with him, the delay was readily forgiven. Catherine clasped her children to her heart, and as she released each, he had to pass through the affectionate embraces of the others of the family. After some time Catherine began to notice the appearance of her boys, and was delighted with the change they had undergone since last she saw them. They were now not only handsome, healthy lads, but looked really gentlemanly. Bodmer having ascertained that accommodation could be found for them in the house, left the family to rejoice over their re-union, promising to call on them the next afternoon. He also told them that he had that morning received a letter from Mr. Courtney stating that he should arrive in London in the course of that day. He also told them he would endeavour to bring him with him the next day, and they must make themselves as neat as possible to receive him.

It would be useless to describe, even if it were possible, the happiness of the Weaver's Family that evening. True affection appears to increase among the members of the same family in proportion with the misery they may have endured, or the misfortunes which may have befallen them, and the accumulated amount of love in that small room that evening, might form an equivalent for the affection that many a wealthy family have experienced during their whole lives. During the next day they were all in a state of intense anxiety, expecting the visit of Mr. Courtney. About four o'clock in the afternoon he arrived, accompanied by the Doctor. As naturally might be expected a considerable degree of embarrassment was at first appa-

rent, but this rapidly faded away before the kind manner of Mr. Courtney. Doctor Bodmer introduced the family individually to him, and that with no little pride, for a handsomer family it would have been difficult to have found. The boys were well grown lads—the one lately returned from sea was a remarkably handsome young man. But Bodmer's pride was principally occasioned by the females of the family. The girls were not only beautifully formed, but bore on their countenances that exquisite sentiment of mildness, amiability, and intelligence so often met with among English beauties—an expression with great difficulty found in an equal extent among the females of other countries. Beyond that, their complexions were clear, and their features exceedingly regular.

But the apex of Bodmer's pride was in the mother. She was in his mind eminently lovely. The pure, mild expression of her face was heightened in his eyes to something more than earthly by the misfortunes she had undergone with such exquisite resignation. Her form had all the matronly dignity of the English lady of her age, a beauty not perhaps sufficiently appreciated by their countrymen, but which, artistically speaking, is occasionally extraordinarily dignified. Her dress—and no woman is above its use, to increase the attractiveness of her appearance, certainly not at Catherine's time of life—was neat, well-made, and in good taste, and the naturally transparent quality of her complexion was brought out by its sombre colour. Mr. Courtney was evidently much pleased with his new-found relatives. He proposed that apartments should be taken for them near his hotel, where they were to remain for the fortnight before their departure for America, with the exception of the two younger boys, who were to return to the home Bodmer had found for them.

The time had now arrived for their departure, and the day before they were to leave, Bodmer called on them with the two younger boys. He then took leave

of Mr. Courtney and the Beuzeville family. He was apparently cold and polite, but it was evident it was only assumed to cover a feeling he perhaps imagined it would be derogatory to show. With Catherine he hardly spoke, but merely shook hands with her as he wished her good-bye, urging, as an excuse, that he had many patients to see that day. He returned home somewhat later than was usual, and after having sent the errand-boy home, and his ancient "sylphide of-all-work" to her bed, he seated himself by his fire. He was so deeply absorbed in thought, that he had actually forgotten his pipe and his glass of gin-and-water. Suddenly he was aroused from his reverie by a ring at the surgery bell. He went to the door, and opened it, when, lo, Catherine stood before him. She was handsomely dressed, and looked really lady-like. Bodmer almost respectfully asked her in, and Catherine, after telling the cabman who had brought her to wait, accepted Bodmer's invitation, and entered the surgery.

"I could not leave England, Dr. Bodmer," she said, "without thanking you more particularly for the invariable kindness I have received from you."

Bodmer looked at her for a moment, and thought she looked exceedingly handsome. He requested she would sit down in his little room, which she did, and it was nearly an hour before Bodmer woke up the cabman from his nap, and, having put Catherine inside the vehicle, she drove homeward.

The next day the Weaver's Family left London for Liverpool, and in due time arrived in America. With the other personages of our story little remains to be told. A year or two after Catherine's departure the Doctor's house was purchased for some fresh metropolitan improvements. He received a moderate sum for his interest therein, and he then left the neighbourhood, and has not been seen there since. Nothing certain is known of him. An old shipmate is said to have stated that he saw the Doctor in some seaport

town in the southern States of America. That he had a good practice, and was married to a very fine woman about his own age; but upon inquiry the narrator could not be found, and it might perhaps, after all, only be a report without foundation. Slippery Bill, as he fondly desired, was transported, and has now arrived at the acme of his wishes, and is a *w*irtuous shepherd in *W*an Dieman's Land. Slammy still retains the crossing opposite the butcher's shop in the Brompton-road, and is gaining an excellent living. He has, it should be mentioned to his credit, improved his knowledge of the Welsh language to such an extent that it would require a remarkably keen ear in an individual unacquainted with Oriental languages to distinguish it from genuine Indian.

FINIS.