



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

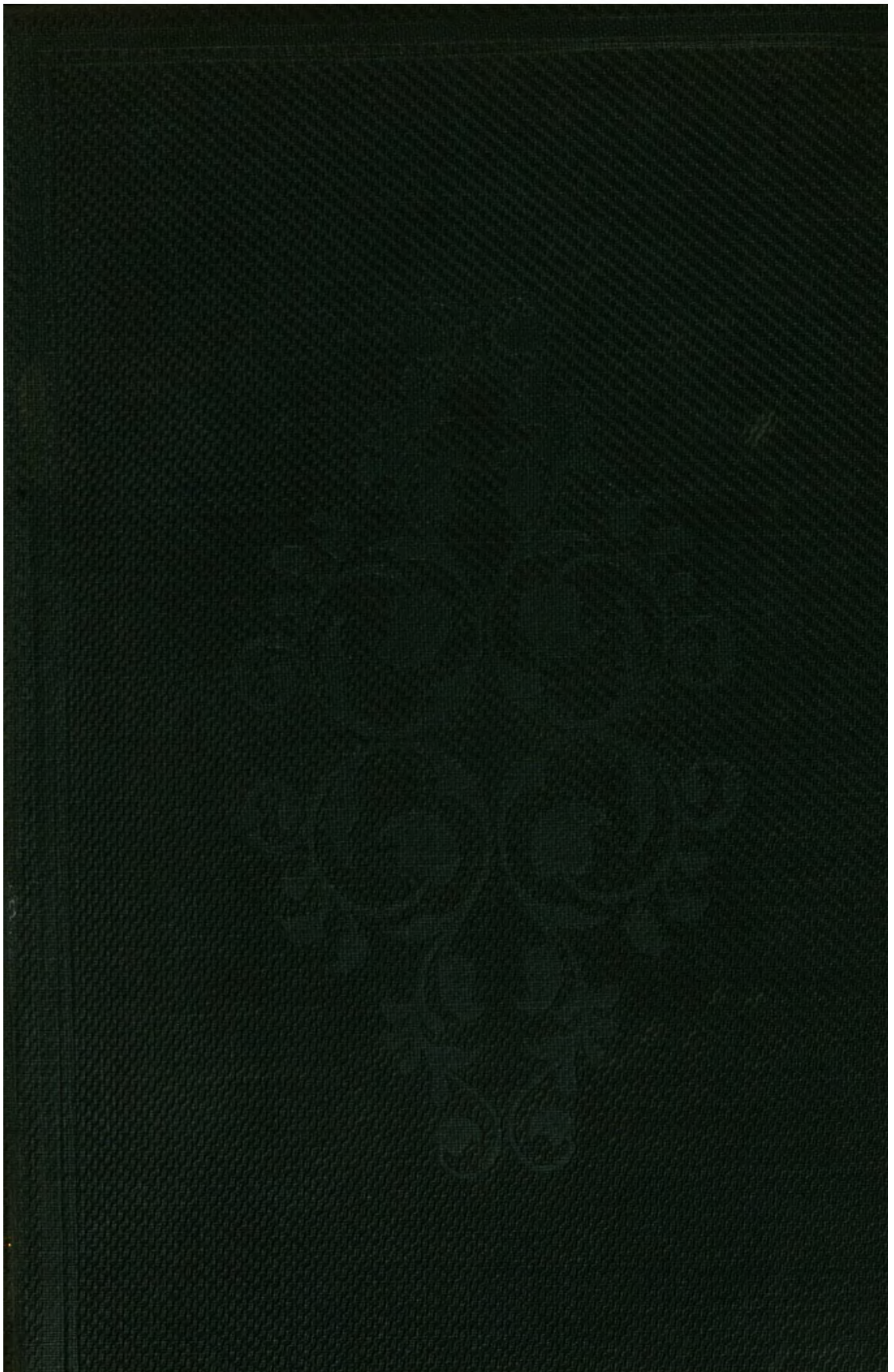
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>

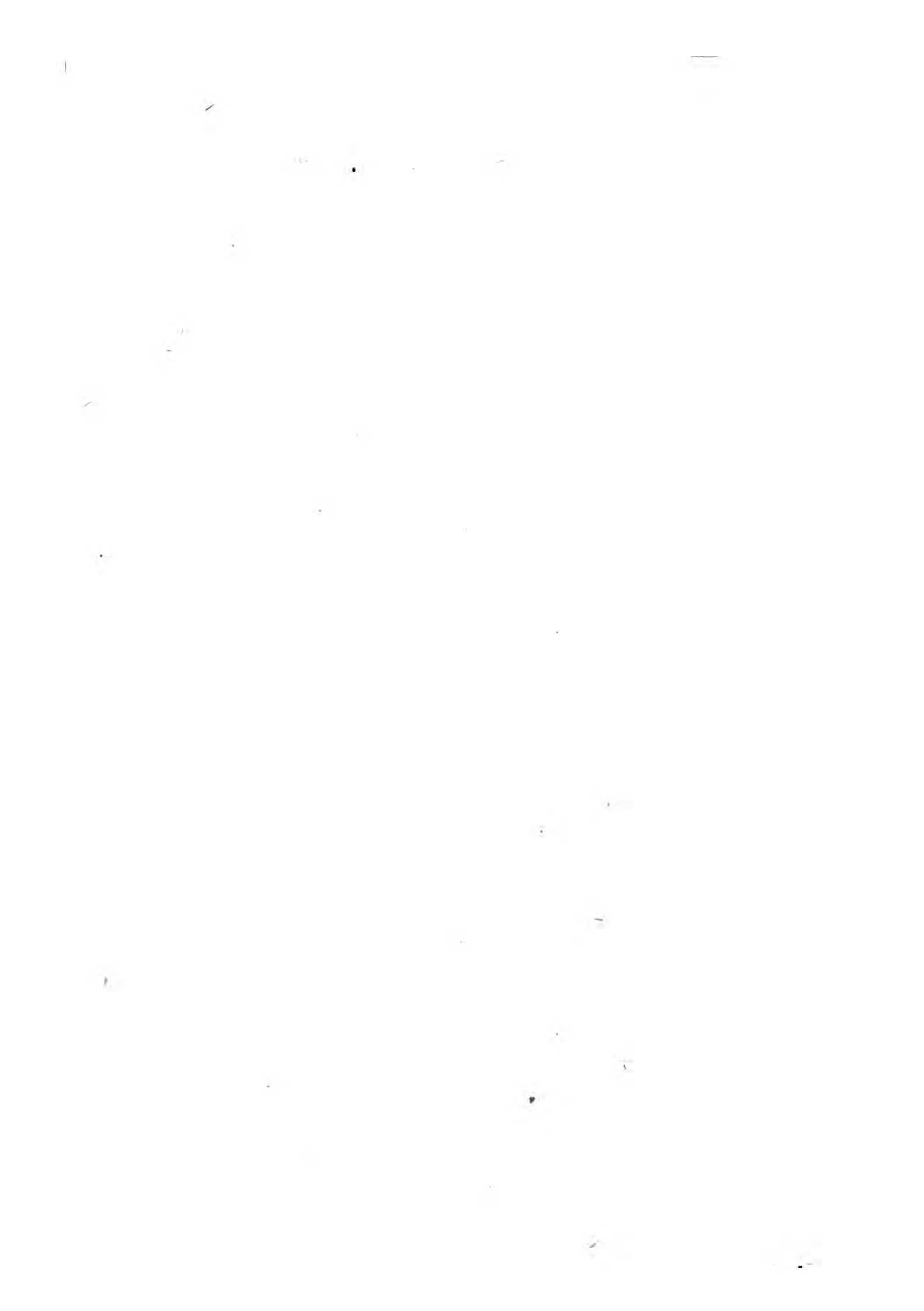


This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.





Year	1998	1999
1	100	100
2	100	100
3	100	100
4	100	100
5	100	100
6	100	100
7	100	100
8	100	100
9	100	100
10	100	100
11	100	100
12	100	100
13	100	100
14	100	100
15	100	100
16	100	100
17	100	100
18	100	100
19	100	100
20	100	100
21	100	100
22	100	100
23	100	100
24	100	100
25	100	100
26	100	100
27	100	100
28	100	100
29	100	100
30	100	100
31	100	100
32	100	100
33	100	100
34	100	100
35	100	100
36	100	100
37	100	100
38	100	100
39	100	100
40	100	100
41	100	100
42	100	100
43	100	100
44	100	100
45	100	100
46	100	100
47	100	100
48	100	100
49	100	100
50	100	100
51	100	100
52	100	100
53	100	100
54	100	100
55	100	100
56	100	100
57	100	100
58	100	100
59	100	100
60	100	100
61	100	100
62	100	100
63	100	100
64	100	100
65	100	100
66	100	100
67	100	100
68	100	100
69	100	100
70	100	100
71	100	100
72	100	100
73	100	100
74	100	100
75	100	100
76	100	100
77	100	100
78	100	100
79	100	100
80	100	100
81	100	100
82	100	100
83	100	100
84	100	100
85	100	100
86	100	100
87	100	100
88	100	100
89	100	100
90	100	100
91	100	100
92	100	100
93	100	100
94	100	100
95	100	100
96	100	100
97	100	100
98	100	100
99	100	100
100	100	100



A TALE FOR THE PHARISEES.

A TALE
FOR THE
PHARISEES,

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"DIVES AND LAZARUS."

The Author reserves the right of Translation.

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

MDCCCLIX.

249. C. 392.

PRINTED BY M. SNELL, 5A, NEWCASTLE PLACE,
EDGWARE ROAD, PADDINGTON.



A

TALE FOR THE PHARISEES.

CHAPTER I.

It would be difficult to determine whether the feeling of loneliness is more profound in the total stranger sojourning in the country, or in a foreigner or provincial in a great city, without friends or acquaintances. In my own opinion, in the latter case it is the more oppressive. The country has always something attractive in it. To the man of taste, a fine landscape must offer great beauties; to the man of science, "no rock is barren, and no waste is bare." Every day brings forth some new loveliness, every season has its charms. In a city, how soon is the eye accustomed to its splendour; how rapidly do we become indifferent to its miseries!

I speak feelingly with respect to the dreariness of the metropolis. In no case is "solitude the least alone" more indisputably proved than in London.

In the latter part of 1857, I was called from my quiet village in Wiltshire, to give evidence as a witness on a trial in the Court of Queen's Bench. I had not visited

B

the capital for many years. Friends, I had none residing within its enormous limits; of acquaintances, but one, and he was the solicitor conducting the suit, and whose time was too much occupied to show me the least attention. Nothing could be more monotonous than the life I led. Each day the trial was put off to the next, and day after day I had no better resource than to wile the time away by wandering through the interminable streets, and gazing without interest into the shop windows. The few exhibitions that were open, I had already seen. The theatres of course, I had visited, and was of course tired of them. Buffon, I think, remarks, "How sad it is to see a lovely landscape, and to have no one to whom we can say, 'how beautiful!'" But if that can be felt in the country, how much more wearisome must it be to sit out a long piece at a theatre with no one to whom we can make a remark; or see a beautiful painting without a being to sympathize with us in our pleasure. But perhaps the most melancholy sensation for a stranger in a crowded city is to meet with thousands upon thousands of individuals in whom he has not the slightest interest, and who in return, entertain for him the most perfect indifference, and, as in my case, the feelings may be heightened by the contrast that at home every face is known to him, and every one he meets regards him with a friendly look.

One afternoon when this lassitude of interest was exceedingly oppressive, when any fortuitous circumstance that could have afforded me the slightest interest would

have been accepted with gratitude, I had wandered to a part of the town inhabited principally by the lower orders. At the end of the street I remarked a crowd round a house that was undergoing repair. I made my way immediately to the spot, and found that a poor labourer had fallen off a scaffold, and was evidently much injured by the shock. He was lying upon the ground apparently senseless, his companions having gone to procure a shutter for the purpose of taking him to the hospital. After a short delay, they obtained one, and having placed their fellow workman with great care upon it, they bore him away; I closely following them. On arriving at the building, my curiosity induced me to enter it, the porter offering no objection, although the greater portion of the crowd were obliged to remain outside. The poor fellow having been examined in the surgery, and his injuries proving to be of a very severe description, he was ordered to be carried into the accident ward and placed in bed. I determined on watching the case to the end, and was on the point of leaving the surgery, when some one touched me on the arm. I turned round and saw at my side an old and valued friend. He had been for many years curate of our village, but finding there was no prospect of preferment, he left us to accept an appointment as chaplain in the Crimea. He now told me that in consequence of the cessation of the war, he had left the service, and had been nominated as chaplain to the hospital. I enquired whether he did not find the duties both onerous and

painful. He replied that so far to the contrary, he never had had any employment which gave him greater satisfaction. He was certainly, at the commencement, obliged to witness sights of a most painful character ; but now, the interest he felt in his duties had overcome that objection, and his services in the Crimea had greatly inured him to scenes of that description. His emoluments, moreover, if not large, were as liberal as the charity could afford ; he had rooms allowed him for himself and wife, and he was treated with great respect and consideration by all.

He then took me to his apartment, and we spent pleasantly half-an-hour in talking over old times and old friends. Before leaving him, he proposed to show me over the whole building. I gladly accepted the offer. I will not detain my readers with an account of what I saw. Institutions of the kind have been too often and too well brought before the public to need any description from my pen. Everything that skill and humanity could suggest was provided for the suffering poor, and if any sentiment arose to mar my satisfaction, it was solely a regret that a greater number of similar buildings were not to be found in the metropolis. The last place we visited was the dispensary. On leaving it, I remarked some thirty or forty young men hurriedly crossing a yard at the back of the hospital, and entering a small outhouse at the further extremity. I asked the chaplain who they were. He informed me that they were students, and that the building was set apart for

post mortem examinations. They were no doubt going for the purpose of being present at the opening of the body of some poor creature who had died in the hospital, but they would wait for the physician or surgeon who had charge of the case, to explain to them from its morbid anatomy, in what manner the disease or accident had caused the death of the patient. A singular curiosity came over me to be present at the examination. I had never witnessed anything of the kind, and I enquired whether my wish might be indulged. The chaplain told me that there would be no difficulty whatever. I had merely to enter with the others, and if any one questioned me (a very improbable occurrence) I had merely to say that I was a friend of his. He would wait for me in his sitting room, as he would be for some time occupied in writing letters.

I followed the next group of students, and entered a room perhaps twenty feet long and twelve or fourteen broad. The brick walls had formerly been whitewashed, but little appearance of it was now left. The room had no window, but was lighted from above by a skylight. Around the walls was raised a platform about a yard in breadth, and raised about two feet from the ground. In front of it was an iron railing about breast high. In the centre of the room was a long coarse table, and on it lay the emaciated body of a woman. It was impossible to judge of her age; the skin had been divided across the skull, the hinder portion was thrust back

towards the neck, and the integuments of the front were pulled over the face, so as entirely to conceal the features. The top of the skull had been dexterously removed, and the brain was fully exposed. The body had also been skilfully and carefully opened, and the lower extremities and hips were enveloped in a sheet. I did not feel the horror I imagined would have seized me on first seeing it; the indifference perhaps arising from the scientific arrangement that was here perceptible. The whole had more the appearance of a wax model beautifully made, than the remains of humanity. At the foot of the table was a basin with clean water, a towel, and some soap. By the side of the table, on the ground, was a coarse black coffin; one arm of the corpse appeared to have fallen off the table and was pointing towards it. In one corner of the room were a pair of trestles. Close around the table were grouped a number of young men; and others, among whom I took my stand, were on the platform, and thus I was enabled to look over the heads of those below me. They were waiting for the surgeon who had charge of the case. Seated on the platform near the door with his feet resting on the ground, was the surgery man in his shirt sleeves, listening with apparent interest to the conversation of the others.

“It will be a pity, Thompson,” said one of the students, “if they examine you on fractures at the college, and you don’t inform them of your uncle’s case; you may depend upon it, it ’ll create a great sensation.”

“One thing is certain,” said another student, “that

august body, the examiners, would be unanimous in their opinion of your qualifications."

"I maintain every word I have said to be true," said Thompson, who was standing by the side of the body, with a case of instruments under his arm, "and what is more, if the examiners hear of it, I'm certain they'll admit its possibility."

"Let's have it over again, Thompson; it's a duty you owe both to science and society to make such a case as widely known as possible."

"The old man," said Thompson, "was crossing the deck, when the ship lurched, throwing him with great violence against one of the quarter deck guns, and breaking one of his legs. My uncle immediately cut two splints out of the head of a pork cask, and bound them tightly on to the limb with some spun yarn. No sooner had he finished, than the old fellow walked off as if nothing had happened."

"Do you suppose, Thompson," enquired another student, "that any one would be fool enough to believe such a statement?"

"Yes, *you* would," said he, "I have only to mention one particular feature in the case, which I have omitted—the leg was a wooden one!"

A laugh followed, and the surgery-man exclaimed in a high state of delight, "that *was* a sell!"

"This old lady must have seen some hard work in her time," said Thompson, lifting up the arm that had

fallen, and opening the bent blue fingers, "look at this hand?"

"She has seen some hard work, and very lately too," said another, "for she is just out of jail, where she was imprisoned with hard labour."

"What for?"

"For a desperate assault in one of her drunken fits on a girl who was walking with a very fine young man; jealous of him, I suppose."

"By the bye," said another, "we want a subject for No. 3 table; we may as well have her, as nobody will claim her, you may be sure. The friends she had, if indeed she ever had any, must have had enough of her during her lifetime, without troubling themselves about her now that she's dead!"

* * * * *

"When do you go up, Jones?"

"I'm rather shaky on the nerves, but I am going to grind now, and I'll keep hard at it too."

"Ah," said Thompson, dropping the arm, "they'll miss you at the Adelphi, then; by the bye, they talk of pulling that theatre down, don't they?"

"Well, I hope not, until the schools are over."

The conversation continued in the same style for a few minutes, when the door opened, and an intelligent looking, gentlemanly man, followed by a student carrying a large manuscript book in his hand, entered the room, and immediately the most profound silence pre-

vailed. The surgeon, Mr. B——, took his station on one side of the body, and the student, his clerk, on the other. The surgeon cast a professional glance over it, and enquired who had opened it. Mr. Thompson having replied that he had done so, the former continued, "I compliment you on the manner in which you have accomplished it. It is neither scientific nor respectful to do these things in a slovenly way. A careless anatomist is invariably an unskilful operator. Have you notes of the case?" said he, addressing his clerk.

"Yes, sir."

"You had better read them."

From the notes, it appeared that the woman's name was Margaret White; her age could not be ascertained. That she was well known to the police from her dissipated and profligate mode of life. That about ten o'clock the previous morning, while in a state of almost helpless intoxication, she had been thrown down by a gentleman's carriage, and the wheels passed over her body. On examination, no fracture nor abrasion of the skin could be discovered. She was ordered to remain quietly in bed. In about two hours time the extremities began to get cold, hot water was applied to the feet, and other remedies resorted to. Stimulants were ordered, but could not be administered, and she sank gradually till the next morning, when she expired.

"Now, gentlemen," said the surgeon, "there is no doubt but that the death from this accident has been caused by an internal rupture."

The examination was conducted rapidly, and the opinion of the surgeon was clearly borne out.

“Beyond the cause of death, gentlemen,” he resumed, “you have a good specimen of the effects of inordinate intoxication, as the liver presents an appearance similar to those generally found in habitual drunkards, and you had better make yourselves well acquainted with its peculiarities.”

“Might we not have the body for the dissecting room, sir?” said one of the students.

“It will perhaps be claimed,” said Mr. B.

“Oh no, sir, there’s no chance of that, she has no friends.”

“How do you know that?”

“She was a very bad character; we have had her in here frequently for injuries she has received during her drunken fits. She was servant in a beer-shop frequented by the worst characters in the neighbourhood. Once, in a fit of passion, she stabbed a barman, because, she being drunk at the time, he would not give her more gin; but the man would not appear against her.”

“Another time, sir,” said another student, “we had her in here after attempting to destroy herself. The policeman who brought her in, told me she had formerly been transported for stealing a cash-box, at a house where she was employed as charwoman.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the surgeon, washing his hands, “you will do well to have her if you can; she may be of some use after her death. She appears to have

done but little good while living. I advise you to examine with a microscope the tissues, and especially the substance of the brain and liver. You will then see how impossible it is for the confirmed drunkard to regain his constitution. In my opinion, a hospital should be a school of morality as well as of medicine; and by being able to explain to a patient when contracting habits of intoxication, its physical results, you may occasionally destroy a pernicious vice that might lead him to his grave. But," said he, drying his hands, and turning to the surgery-man, "is there not to be a coroner's inquest on the body?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you had better put it properly together; besides, it frequently happens that even a creature of this kind has somebody with sufficient respect for her, to see her decently interred, and we must not let them think that any intentional disrespect has been offered to their feelings."

The surgeon left the room, followed by all the pupils. The surgery-man struck a lucifer, lighted his pipe, and after threading his needle, proceeded skilfully and calmly to replace as nearly as possible, the wretched creature's remains in the right position. I leant upon the iron rail and watched his movements. A feeling of solemnity came over me as I gazed upon the body. Can that be the end of life? thought I. Are soul and body both gone? The loves and hatreds, the many griefs, the thousand pleasures its tenant must have experienced

cannot terminate thus! To be for a few days the mere tool of science, and then like something obscene, to be hidden from the sight; where, uncared for, it can resolve itself into its original constituents! Can such have been the end and purpose of its existence? No, the earth claims back its carbon and its lime; the atmosphere its elements; the spirit is with its God. In that presence how will she render an account of her stewardship? What excuse can she offer for her sins? How can she be pardoned? Compare her life with that of a pious matron, one whose duty to her Maker, her family, and mankind, have been carefully and religiously performed. And could the great fountain of justice regard both alike? Think on the mission that woman was entrusted with by her Creator—think of the gifts He had endowed her with; and the abuse she has made of all, and who can then doubt the justice of the sentence? Who can wonder at its severity? Did she by honest labour and employment, endeavour to support the life that heaven had given her? Did she help the unfortunate, or comfort the sorrowful? Has she, knowing good from evil, guided others from wrong, or with her sex's innate sentiment of religion taught the child the language of its God, and told it to hold communion with him? No, she said, "Evil, be thou my good," and then worshipped it. She shunned the godly and sought the wicked. Crime was to her, industry—vice her recreation! Her life was one long course of sin; her only friends, the thief and the prostitute, and now, unabsolved, she stands in the pre-

sence of her Maker; her death caused not by one rash or distracted act, but by the continued and protracted indulgence in one filthy sin. She has left this world unpitied and unloved, and without hope of pardon in the next.

The surgery-man had now replaced the skull, and had drawn to its position the ghastly mask that had covered the face. It would be difficult to describe the rapid change of feeling that came over me when I saw it. The pallid features, exquisitely formed, the pure clear forehead, and the dark hair with its silver threads, each with its own sad episode of woe, had over them a sad placidity, and a profundity of calm grief, that made me blush for my harsh opinions. I felt that "on that sweet brow, sorrow had not been stamped by shame." It mutely pleaded against me to myself, and I felt myself guilty of cruelty. It told me that many sad occurrences in her life had not been heard of by me before I judged so sternly; that I knew not what sorrows had befallen her, what miseries she had endured. That I had not heard what temptations had drawn her from the right path, or what efforts she might have made to regain it. That God does not judge as man judges, and that every fault would be fully weighed by Him, and every excuse or palliative heard; that His mercy was boundless, and that that mercy would plead for her in the day of judgment.

The coffin had now been placed upon the trestles, and I left the room, as my mute accuser was laid within it.

I found the chaplain still occupied with his letters.

“I suppose your curiosity is satisfied,” said he, “few wish to witness a second time a scene of the kind.”

“Although I certainly have no wish to be again present at a similar sight, my curiosity is by no means satisfied. On the contrary, it is excited to the highest degree. They examined the body of a poor woman whose life seems to have been one current of sin and infamy; and yet the expression of her countenance after death, was of the purest description. How can you account for it?”

“It requires a better physiologist than I am, to explain it,” said the chaplain, “but I have known the phenomenon frequently to occur. You said it was the body of a woman—she met her death from being run over when in a state of helpless intoxication?”

“The same.”

“Poor creature! I have some reason to believe that the pure expression of countenance you speak of, might formerly have been natural to her, and that a great amount of her misery might be traced to misfortune. The best are seldom so good as they are painted—the worst are rarely so bad as they are made to appear. I think that with some little difficulty, I could show that, infamous as she was, misfortune was originally an element in her degradation.”

“Did you know anything of her, then?”

“By a singular coincidence I was officiating at Newgate, when she was tried for the robbery of a cash-box.

She then greatly excited my sympathy; but altho' she appeared easily impressed by religion, and fully acknowledged the justice of her sentence, there was a certain prevarication, or rather obstinacy of silence in her description of some parts of the robbery, which raised my suspicion that her piety was feigned. Since that time until her death, I have heard nothing of her until this morning. I now find that a woman some ten years older than herself, with whom she was formerly on terms of great intimacy, has lately left the hospital. I intend finding her out if possible, for another circumstance also induces me to think I have done her an injustice, by forming too harsh an opinion of her failings, and that with all her faults, she was rather an object of compassion and sympathy, than of un pitying reprobation."

"I should much like to know the result of your enquiries: inform me if you succeed in tracing out her history."

"Very willingly—I shall have much pleasure in doing so. Call on me in the course of a few days if you remain in London, or, if you have left for the country, I will write to you if I have anything interesting to communicate."

The trial on which I was subpoenaed, was postponed until the next term. When I again arrived in London, the scene I had witnessed in the hospital was still fresh upon my memory; and my first visit was to my friend the chaplain. In the course of my

conversation, I alluded to the poor woman's death, when he told me he had intended writing to me the next week.

"I have succeeded," said he, "in obtaining a sketch of her history. I have given the particulars to the secretary and he has written them out for publication.. He is however somewhat doubtful as to the manner in which the public will receive his work, and he has invited some of his friends to hear it read, in order to obtain their opinions as to its merit. We meet in his rooms to-morrow evening; if you would like to be present, I am sure that he will be happy to see you."

I readily accepted the invitation, and the next evening he introduced me to the secretary, who was already prepared with his manuscript. The audience was composed of the chaplain and his wife, the resident medical officer, and two friends. The tea-things having been removed, we collected round the fire; the lady took her work, and the secretary commenced reading the manuscript.

CHAPTER II.

ON a Sunday evening in the summer of 1828, when the rays of the setting sun were gilding trees, cottages church, and the rich landscape round one of the loveliest villages of the lovely county of Kent, a number of peasants had collected in the Lammas field near the parsonage. There is a peculiarity about a scene of the kind in England which can be found in no other part of the world. There is an appearance of solemn quiet and grandeur, a look of happiness and contentment, too often delusive, which particularly impress the beholder.

A scene of the kind presented itself at the moment our history opens. Men, with ruddy faces and athletic forms, clad in their clean white frocks, had formed themselves into separate parties. Others composed of women in their Sunday bonnets and neat dresses, and who were principally employed in discussing some point of humble housewifery. The children were playing together apart from the rest, and assisted in forming a scene in which it would be difficult to find another attribute to increase its beauty, and impossible to deprive it of one feature without injuring the whole. One

group was formed entirely of very young children, the eldest perhaps, not exceeding seven years of age. They were playing with a girl who possibly might have reached fourteen. On a bank near them was seated an old woman, apparently watching them with great interest. If the amount of happiness and satisfaction the urchins experienced could be judged by the heartiness of their ringing laugh, the game must have possessed immense attractions, but without having the aptness and acuteness of perception for delight which distinguishes their age, it would have been difficult to have discovered in what way anything like humour could have been derived from it. The elder girl stood in the centre, and the merry creatures formed a circle round her. Suddenly one would start forward and, approaching slyly from behind, pull her frock. The elder would then turn rapidly round and appear to run after the culprit, but with steps so short and mincing, as to allow the little creature ample time to escape, who would then turn round and laugh with delight at its own feat, its companions joining in its merriment; these in their turn would imitate their companion's audacity.

The patience and good temper of the one in the centre was untiring, and her little playmates exercised both to their utmost. Nothing can tell more perfectly the amiable disposition of a girl, nothing can give greater promise of the good, loveable woman, than her power of attracting the affections of young children. Admirable physionomists in their way, they seldom select those on

whom to place their affections who are not worthy of them; and those chosen by them, may always be considered as possessing an excellent certificate for amiability and kindness of heart. She was a handsome, happy creature, a perfect specimen of a young English country maid, with a clear skin, dark brown hair, and deep blue eyes, ordinarily mild, but now lit up by her exertions to great brilliancy. She was nearly womanly in form, quick in ability and a child in simplicity. Bearing ill-will to no one and kind to all, she did not suspect the existence of falsehood or guile in others. She was an orphan; her mother had been a domestic servant, and had married a farm labourer. Her father had died while she was yet too young to remember him. Her mother's death a year later, had left some vague reminiscences on her mind of a being so pure as to identify itself with her idea of an angel. She could remember various kind acts she had performed, soothing her in sorrow, caressing her, and watching over her in sickness, but all so indistinctly, that they floated on her memory rather than dwelt on it. They were so uncertain as to render it doubtful whether they were facts, or the fondly remembered dream of a being who had loved her. Her life, up to the present moment, had met with but few changes. She had been brought up by an old grandmother, who eked out a very trifling pension by keeping a very small shop, for the homely confectionary of the village children. As a child she had exhibited considerable intelligence, and she was

now employed as monitor and assistant at the village school.

While the game was proceeding with great glee, a gentlemanly middle-aged man with a lady on his arm, entered the field. They were met by a very respectable looking young woman, of a grade superior to the generality of those around her. The lady entered into a conversation with her which lasted some minutes, and they then proceeded together towards the group of young children. The gentleman was evidently of some importance in the neighbourhood, as might be seen from the respect shewn to him by all. Even those young republicans, whose ideas of station went no higher than the mistress of the village school, suddenly stopped their romps as he approached, and the old woman rose from the bank to receive him.

The lady advanced to the group of children, and selecting the elder girl, said "Margaret White, I hear an excellent account of you from the governess; she says you have been of great use to her in the school. You are now old enough to be employed in some manner that may relieve your grandmother from the expense of maintaining you. If," she continued, turning to the old woman, "you would like a situation for her, I can offer you one."

"I should be very glad," was the reply, "if she could be somewhere near me, but though she's a heavy expense to me, it would break my heart if I were to lose her."

“The situation I speak of is in my own family, and she will be placed with the housemaid. You may be sure that every care will be taken of her, and she will have six pounds a year to commence with.”

Margaret's eyes looked her happiness. She was at that age when the mind rushes to the face, and answers more quickly than the tongue. The offer now made to her was, in her humble position, a rise in the world which her childish ambition had not yet arrived at. Her engagement in the house of Sir John Webb, raised her in her own opinion, and the remuneration she was to receive, appeared to her nearly fabulous.

It was arranged that Margaret should enter upon her duties at the end of the next week. Many were the cogitations in the house of the grandmother as to the manner in which the outfit could be arranged with the greatest possible advantage and economy. The old woman, with something like family pride, brought out of a mysterious box some remains of clothing which had belonged to the poor girl's mother, and gave the history of each separate piece as she drew it from its receptacle. The gown she had been married in, and which was given her by her mistress for her good conduct while in her service; a shawl she had made a present of to her daughter on the same occasion; stockings which had been bought only a few weeks before her death, and which were as good as new; all were exhibited and examined. The old woman also called attention to the manner in which she had preserved them until her grand-

daughter should be old enough to go out in the world. The necessary alterations were made in them, and beyond that, several shillings were invested in trifling adjuncts so as to make the girl look as if she belonged to somebody in the eyes of her fellow servants, and not as if she had no one to care for her. Saturday evening came, and the old lady bribed a boy with a penny to carry her small box to the hall. It was not so heavy but that they might have taken it themselves with perfect ease, but respectability was to be thought of, and thus accompanying her grand-daughter, the old lady started for the house.

Arrived at the hall, Lady Webb received them with great kindness. The grandmother obtained unlimited permission to visit Margaret any evening she pleased, and they were then introduced into the kitchen. Some refreshment was given them, and after the old woman had partaken of it, and fortified herself for the parting with a glass of strong ale, she, with a somewhat sorrowful and anxious mind took leave of her grandchild, and Margaret remained with a throbbing heart to commence her career in the world.

The young girl was placed in the same room with the cook, a good-tempered, respectable young woman of some four or five and twenty years of age. Margaret's head was scarcely on her pillow, when the excitement of the scene began to decline, and the reaction took place which ended in a flood of tears. Her companion sympathized with her with great kindness. Her sorrow

soon calmed down, and a sound sleep, the tired rest of fourteen, ushered her into the next day.

Margaret soon became a favorite with all, and Lady Webb was so much pleased with her willingness, intelligence, and good temper, that she attached her permanently to her person. Nothing occurred worthy of notice till our heroine was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, when the health of her grandmother, which had been failing for some time past, gave way. To the old woman's great joy, Margaret was with her in her last moments, Lady Webb having kindly allowed her to leave the house for the purpose of nursing her.

Although the love of a grandmother for her grand-child is frequently made a subject of ridicule, yet, if it be examined carefully, there is hardly a sentiment in human nature more pure and beautiful, especially if the mother of that child be dead. The affection she entertained for her own son or daughter is carried on. She associates with it the time when she was herself a young mother, and when one now dead, or fallen into the sear and yellow leaf, was the "God of her idolatry." The dearest cares bud forth anew, and days when her own child was the same pure, bright, happy creature as the one before her, are brought vividly back to her memory. All live and are young again in that grand-child, and she dotes on the little creature, who in its turn conceals from her with flowers, the pathway to the grave.

The parting of the soul from the body is, when witnessed for the first time, a terrible sight to all; and to a

sensitive girl like our heroine, it was certainly most severe. A neighbour was with her at the moment of her grandmother's death, and after it, kindly took her to her home. Some very humble preparations for mourning were then made, for the old woman had lately fallen into great poverty, and a considerable portion of Margaret's wages had gone to assist her. The funeral itself was of the plainest description, but the beautiful burial service of the Church of England, was impressively read by the clergyman. Although Margaret was the only mourner, her fellow servant, the cook, comforted and supported the poor girl. In the middle of the service, she became much affected, and her sorrow was so uncontrollable, that she threw her arms around her friends neck, and remained in that position, inconsolably sobbing, until the ceremony was over.

In the evening, they returned to the hall. Every one kindly sympathized with the young girl, who now for the first time felt that she was entirely alone in the world. The next morning, that solace to the poor—labour, came to her relief, and in a few days, the buoyant mind of her age, recovered its elasticity, while her respect for the memory of her deceased relative remained unabated.

Margaret continued for two years longer in Lady Webb's service, when a circumstance occurred which entirely changed her prospects. Sir Thomas had most indiscretely connected himself with a Bank and a Mining

Company, and both had been unsuccessful. He was little better than a ruined man. After his decease, the estate would go to his nephew, the next male heir. This gentleman, with whom he had been on bad terms for many years, refused to assist him in his difficulties, and nothing remained for him but his wife's jointure, and that did not exceed three hundred a year. The establishment at the hall was thus broken up. Furniture, carriages, horses, were all sold off; and the servants were dispersed in different directions as they obtained other situations. The cook was engaged by a family in Finsbury Square, and Lady Webb obtained for Margaret a situation to wait upon a lady, a friend of her own, in Eaton Place.

As might naturally be expected, a great alteration had taken place in the last few years in the person of our heroine. She had changed from the growing girl into the fine young woman. Her face was, in reality, exceedingly handsome, and, there is no use in denying the fact—she knew it. It was perhaps fortunate for her that she did so. She had had many admirers, but her opinion of her own charms kept all at a distance. She was exquisitely formed, tall, without being masculine, and, if any faith is to be placed in the antique or in anatomy, generally in fine art phraseology, synonomous terms, she was as perfect a model of female beauty as could easily be found. Her duties had considerably aided her to this result. From the nature of her employment, every muscle of the body had received its

full and equal development. She carried with her the appearance of perfect health; while from absence of exposure to the atmosphere, she had obtained great female delicacy of complexion. In temper, she was naturally mild, and was endowed beyond that with a sweet and retiring disposition. All the women liked her, all the men admired and many loved her. With qualifications such as these, the world of London, if it possessed attractions and advantages, was not without its dangers. She had however, not only her natural reserve for her protection, but was also a good and virtuous girl, well and piously brought up. On leaving the house, her mistress parted from her with regret, and her friend the cook, who left a few days earlier, promised to call upon her on her first holiday.

There is no difficulty in believing that, to a country girl arriving in London for the first time, from her own quiet rustic village, an immense amount of surprise and astonishment must be occasioned. The long journey by the night coach, was at last relieved by the vast and apparently interminable suburbs of the metropolis, and the bustle and confusion of the city, as the coach made its way towards Charing Cross. All the principal curiosities were pointed out to her by the coachman as she sat behind him on the roof; he turning round from time to time to converse with her, and indicating them with his whip as they passed. The Monument, Mansion House, Bank, Guildhall, and St. Paul's, all had a sketch of their histories poured into her ear. Every new ob-

ject tended to surprise and confuse her, and when she was transferred from the stage to the hackney-coach, she was hardly capable of giving distinctly the direction to the coachman. As she approached her destination, the grandeur of the surrounding streets, then scarcely terminated, completely overwhelmed her with wonder, and the quiet of the house when she reached it, was almost a necessity, after the incessant excitement of the journey.

The gentleman, Mr. G. Watkins, under whose roof she was now employed, held a government appointment of great trust. He was absent during the day at his office. His wife was an amiable lady-like woman, a great invalid, and like her husband, somewhat elderly. The duties of our heroine were principally to wait upon Mrs. Watkins, and if Margaret was fortunate in obtaining a kind and considerate mistress, Mrs. Watkins was no less happy in meeting with a domestic whose attention and solicitude contributed so much to the comfort of the habitual invalid. The only other member of the family, was their son, a gentleman of about twenty-seven years of age, a captain of Hussars, and who was at that time with his regiment in India. It was however, ordered to return home the next year, its period of service abroad having almost expired; and his parents, who had not seen him for seven years, looked forward with no little anxiety to his arrival. The domestic staff of the house was composed of a butler, footman, two housemaids, and a cook. The coachman being a mar-

ried man, resided with his wife and family over the stables. Although Margaret rapidly increased in favour with Mrs. Watkins, her life was, at the commencement, by no means agreeable in the kitchen. The butler as well as the footman was unmarried, and as both were smart looking men, they easily imagined that a young country girl would soon yield to their attractions. The other servants were naturally somewhat jealous of these attentions. They considered that the monopoly of the attentions offered to Margaret, was uncomplimentary to them, and were naturally somewhat annoyed at the preference. The butler and footman had however each arrived at a false conclusion, and a very short space of time passed before they saw how utterly fallacious were their hopes. At length all things settled down quietly into a comfortable routine, and if Margaret formed neither attachment nor friendship for her fellow servants, the duties of the house were carried on in an amicable manner.

Some months passed with little of interest to record. The family had spent a short time in the winter at Brighton, and had returned to town for the season. Our heroine had not only gained the perfect confidence of Mrs. Watkins, but her friendship as well. She had also certainly improved in appearance, and any little awkwardness of manner which she might have imported with her from the country, had entirely disappeared.

Many were the attempts that were made upon her heart; equally numerous were the failures. The butler

and footman had long since quitted the field and had now perhaps a spiteful satisfaction in witnessing the discomfiture of others. Often did footmen, wearing the smartest of liveries, quit the carriages they were attached to, waiting at houses five or six doors distant, and saunter carelessly before Mr. Watkins' house, sanguine of success, but their attractions were powerless. In vain did those waiting at the houses on either side, strain their necks to look over the blinds in the dining room; in vain did those calling at the house endeavour during their short stay, to cultivate such a friendship with the footman as would entitle them to ring at the area bell to visit a brother in the service. Even the good-looking policeman no longer raised his eyes to the upper windows, but contented himself with exhibiting his whiskers to the cook. Even his sergeant after twice calling at the house to inform them that bad characters had been seen in the neighbourhood, gave up the attempt. The tradesmen, if chance gave them an opportunity of calling at the house, soon lost all hope of success.

We must not imagine that Margaret's heart was inaccessible to love. She was, on the contrary, as susceptible as most girls of her age, but she had painted to herself the man she could admire, and she had heard him often described by others. She had dreamed of him, and in her dreams he had been too beautiful to allow her to wish for a less noble reality. Little did Mrs. Watkins think, when speaking with her husband on the near ap-

proach of their son's arrival, how interesting the subject was to the poor girl in their presence. Little did they think that those praises of the handsome young soldier were listened to with avidity by another. Often did the girl reason with herself on the folly of her thoughts, and as often was she convinced of their absurdity; but love has little to fear from reason, and the next panegyrics the mother pronounced on her son, were sure to bring back the feeling to its full strength. At last the news of the ship's arrival reached them, and a few hours afterwards a letter, informing them that the next day their dear son would be once more with them. To them how slowly did the time seem to pass as each successive hour seemed longer than the preceding one. Four o'clock had just struck, and as Margaret, after having completed Mrs. Watkins' toilet, was proceeding to leave the dressing room, an impatient step was heard rushing up the stairs, and before an answer could be given to the hurried tap at the door, it was opened, and, with a cry of joy, the delighted mother held her dear son in her arms. Margaret stood breathless for a moment, and then, remembering herself, left the room. Momentary as had been the glance, not one feature in his face had been lost on her. His reflection in a mirror could not have been a more perfect copy than that which had fixed itself upon her memory. His tall manly form, his noble brow and handsome features, browned by the sun of India, his dark brown hair and darker moustachios, at that time worn by few regiments, all were retained by

her. She flew to her room, and with her hand pressed upon her palpitating heart, seated herself on the side of her bed. She remained in that position for some time and then leaving the room, went down stairs into the kitchen. There she found a new visitor in the Captain's servant. He was an Irishman; a bold impudent looking fellow. He had left England with the regiment, and had acted as valet to his master during the whole of his stay in India. He was naturally looked upon by the servants with much curiosity, and with the perfect self-possession of a soldier in a kitchen, soon made himself at home. He honoured Margaret with a prolonged stare, and then went on receiving instructions from the footman as to the different portions of the lower regions in which his abilities for brushing and cleaning were to be displayed. Margaret had no occasion to see any of the family until evening prayers, but remained below, listening with breathless attention to the long and somewhat apocryphal descriptions given by the Irishman of the various travels, dangers, and adventures of himself and master.

After prayers that evening, had Margaret been asked what had been read or what had been prayed for, it would perhaps have been impossible for her to have given an answer. Her memory of Mrs. Watkins' remarks as she was preparing that lady for her bed, were far more vivid; of those she could have given a perfect repetition. That fond mother's tongue was without intermission employed on one subject. Half thinking

aloud, half talking to her favourite servant, the good lady had but little idea that the poor girl whom she was addressing, was the same flesh and blood as herself. Little did she think that love in that heart burned as brightly as in her own; terrible would have been her indignation at the girl's presumption, had she suspected the truth!

Dismissed for the night, silently the fond girl sought her bed. The dawn found her in the same train of thought that had occupied her mind, when she laid her head upon her pillow.

Mrs. Watkins, the next morning, feeling somewhat more indisposed from the excitement of the preceding day, breakfasted in her boudoir, and our heroine, as was the custom on those occasions, waited on her. Mr. Watkins had left at an early hour for his office, and the mother and son were alone. Fortunately for Margaret, the years she had been in service had enabled her to obtain a perfect command of countenance, and thus under the appearance of being totally absorbed in her duties, she retained every word that was uttered. The momentary glances she was enabled to take, confirmed her in the admiration she had already conceived for the Captain. As he sat there, his proud noble and frank air, his good humoured hearty laugh, exposing his beautifully white teeth, made still whiter by the contrast with his dark moustache, his handsome face beaming with animation as he talked rapidly of his adventures, all combined to render his mother perfectly happy, and

her eyes testified her joy. Occasionally, he would glance at the beautiful girl who stood behind his mother's chair. His admiration of her was great, but the cold reserve on her face somewhat chilled it; little did he imagine what was passing in her mind.

Days passed, and although she frequently saw him, she avoided rather than sought the opportunity of being in the room with him. In the mean time the Captain's servant paid her the greatest attention, and tried by every means in his power to thrust himself on her notice. Not only was he unsuccessful, but from his relative position to his master, his attentions were positively annoying to her. The man was not only vexed at her indifference, but was jested upon his want of success by the others, and this so irritated his pride, that he determined to make another attempt. One morning when half tipsy, he met her in one of the passages near the kitchen, and attempted to enter into conversation with her. She refused to listen to him and on endeavouring to pass him, he put his arm round her waist and attempted to kiss her. The change that came over her astonished all. Always mild and generally good humoured, she was changed in a moment, so ungovernable a burst of passion came over her at the insult. Her fellow servants attempted to calm her. They reminded her that the man was half tipsy, and the fellow himself expressed his sorrow for his conduct, and assured her, if he had thought she would have been offended, he would not have attempted it. All was useless. She rushed up to her

bed-room, and locking the door, wept till her eyes were so red that she was obliged to excuse herself to Mrs. Watkins when she waited on her at night, under the plea of a violent headache. The poor girl had in her mind associated herself with the Captain, and the fellow's behaviour brought so forcibly before her the difference of position between her and the man she loved, as to make the comparison insupportable.

Another circumstance occurred which also caused her great annoyance. On one side of Mrs. Watkins bed-room was the boudoir. It was fitted up especially to obviate the necessity of her ascending or descending the stairs more than possible. A door communicated directly with it from her bed-room, which was of course also entered from the staircase. One morning, when Mrs. Watkins was below Margaret entered the bed-room. Between the fire-place and the window was a cheval glass, and exactly opposite the door of the boudoir. She walked directly up to the glass, and after, with some little coquetry, adjusting her cap and turning herself slowly half round so as to take as perfect a view of her figure as possible, she ended by making her reflection a profound courtesy. Whether she was pleased by the appearance she made, or from any other cause, when she had left the glass, a look of great satisfaction was on her face, which however vanished and made room for a deep and painful flush when she saw the Captain, who was seated in the boudoir with his newspaper on his knee, watching her attentively. She tried to recover herself,

but it was impossible. Nothing is more painful to a woman in love than to appear ridiculous in the eyes of the man she admires, and the ridicule in this case seemed heightened by the humble position of the performer. She hurriedly left the room, and in consequence avoided him for some days, dreading that a smile or remark might betray his remembrance of her absurd conduct.

The absurdity was however lost upon him, and a very different feeling occupied its place. The movement before the glass had brought fully before his view the graceful form of the poor girl, and the more he looked at her the more beautiful she appeared. From his profession and habits, he had but little compunction in obtaining her affections, and he immediately commenced a systematic attack upon them. He met her frequently and had always some remark to make when he saw her. At first her answers were merely monosyllables; by degrees she answered him more at length. At first the sentiment she felt at his conversation amounted almost to pain, from the excitement it occasioned; it soon however changed to happiness. His language became warmer, hers appeared still cold, but the tremulous accent of a girl in her first love became apparent. Another sentiment also restrained her. She dreaded lest a feeling of ridicule might arise from her country ideas and homely language. Again the pleasure of listening to words, every one dear to her, assisted in her silence. Oil was continually added to the flame by the warm but indiscriminate admiration expressed by Mrs.

Watkins, when speaking of her son, still not one word had been uttered by him to his intended victim, which could in the slightest manner explain his intentions or alarm her prudence.

The Captain's regiment had been quartered in Dublin, and one morning at breakfast he received a letter ordering him to join by a certain day. A private communication informed him that he could obtain a very extended leave of absence, but it would probably not commence till he had been with his regiment at least six weeks. He had still four clear days to remain in London, and this would give him time to be present at the Woolwich Artillery Ball, although he would be obliged to leave the day following. On the cases containing his dress uniform being opened, it was found that through the carelessness of his valet, they had been packed so badly, that in more than one place, the gold embroidery had been tarnished and injured. To give it to the Captain's servant to put it in order, would probably have been to make bad still worse, for the fellow was continually half drunk, and as there was hardly time enough to send it to the army tailors, Mrs. Watkins determined on employing Margaret to assist in arranging it in the best manner they could. It would have been interesting to watch the look of admiration and pleasure on the girl's countenance as each successive piece of embroidery and ornament came under her hands, and the attention with which she listened to the explanations of her mistress as to the manner they were worn.

At last sabre-tasche, sword knot, epaulettes, and embroidery all had been inspected and arranged, and that evening they were to be worn. Mrs. Watkins was also invited to the ball, and after dinner Margaret was called upon to assist at her toilet, but the good lady not feeling herself sufficiently strong, after several efforts, gave up the attempt, and determined on remaining at home. Ten o'clock had struck, and Margaret was in the boudoir waiting till Mrs. Watkins, who had been taking tea in the drawing room, should return. She was listening anxiously for the Captain's step when he should descend from his dressing room, and forming in her own mind what excuse she could make for entering the drawing room when he would be there. He was to leave the next morning and she was determined if possible to see him in his splendid uniform before he went. His step was heard on the stairs, but instead of descending to the drawing-room, he entered the boudoir, and she found herself for a moment entirely alone with him. He had evidently expected to find his mother there, but seeing Margaret, he smiled, and asked her how she liked his dress.

"It is very handsome indeed."

"You really think so?" said he, advancing and placing his arm round her waist. She raised her eyes with the intention of answering him, but the words died on her lips. He caught her in his arms and kissed the unresisting girl. At that moment his mother's voice was heard on the stairs. He immediately quitted his

hold, "are you there," he said, with the most perfect coolness and self-possession as he descended the staircase, "I thought to have found you here." The trembling girl supported herself with a chair; fortunately Mrs. Watkins took her son's arm and descended with him into the drawing room, and Margaret's agitation passed unnoticed.

The carriage had arrived, and the Captain having received the compliments of his father and mother on his appearance, as well as the admiring glances of the servants of the establishment, with the exception of Margaret, who still remained upstairs, left the house for the ball. Mrs. Watkins retired early that evening, and Margaret immediately afterwards sought her own room. There feigning sleep, she escaped the questions and chattering of her fellow servants respecting the splendid appearance the Captain made in his uniform.

Although Captain Watkins returned at a late hour, the establishment was early on foot the next morning, making preparations for his departure. His father had already left for his office, and he breakfasted with his mother. During the meal, on more than one occasion, his eyes met Margaret's, but no opportunity occurred for conversation. At eleven o'clock all was in readiness and Margaret was in the dining room, standing at some distance from the window, so as to witness his departure without being seen.

Some one touched her on the arm; it was the Captain's servant. He said nothing, but holding out a note

in his hand, presented it to her. Margaret merely gave him an angry look, and turned from him. The fellow again presented it, and with an impudent, knowing manner, merely said, "its from the master." The girl felt humiliated, but took the note, and the man immediately left the room. The luggage being now secured, the captain entered the carriage, and was soon out of sight, and Margaret then took an opportunity to read the note. It contained merely the following words written in pencil, "I will write to you next week, the letter will be addressed to Miss Emma Jackson, Post Office, Knightsbridge."

A feeling nearly akin to relief came over our heroine after his departure. She had now time and opportunity to reflect on the occurrences of the last few days. Not one idea of wrong had entered her mind. Not only was she naturally virtuous, but she had also a somewhat exalted opinion of herself, as has been already stated. When the Captain was in the house, the intensity of her affection blinded her to a certain degree, to the great difference in their social position, but now alone, and having time and opportunity to consider calmly over the matter, she obtained a clearer and juster view of the affair. She could not disguise from herself the impossibility of their union, when the question was coolly before her; but love, that great sophist, argued differently, and he brought before her every foolish story she had heard respecting noblemen and grandees marrying maidens of humble birth. Although her own good sense told her

these were all false, still it was not without long and painful endeavours on the part of the blind god to prove their possibility. In her difficulty, she determined on consulting her former fellow servant, the cook, and with that intention she requested Mrs. Watkins to spare her for a few hours the next afternoon.

The permission was readily granted, and when the hour arrived, Margaret started on her journey to Finsbury Square, occupying herself during the time in considering how she could place the case before her friend and adviser, so as to obtain her sanction and advice to continue the correspondence. The cook was at home, and after the family's dinner had been sent up, and everything in her department put into order, Margaret gave her a hint that she wished to speak to her privately. The cook took her with her to her bed-room, and there, while Margaret was making a clean breast of it, her confessor, who was seated by the side of her bed, and apparently occupied in making up a cap, listened with a countenance expressive of the most grave and serious attention.

The recital over, the cook proceeded to give her opinion, and did it with that calm, prudent judgment, and sound common sense, which women of the lower classes so frequently shew in difficult positions. She explained and proved clearly, the impossibility of marriage in Margaret's case; the danger she ran in continuing the acquaintance, a danger all the greater from the sincere affection she bore him. She also adroitly appealed to

her womanly feelings, whether a girl of her appearance might not choose some honest, honourable man for a husband, who instead of being ashamed of his wife, would look upon her with pride. All these and many more reasons were adduced, and she concluded by begging Margaret not only as she loved her, but as she loved herself, to leave the house and take a situation in some other family. After a few attempts to offer some reasons which might shew a probability of her being able to marry the Captain, Margaret admitted the excellence of her friend's counsel, and promised as soon as she could summon sufficient courage, to give warning and take another situation.

The time had now arrived for her to leave. Her friend offered to accompany her as far as the Bank for the purpose of taking an omnibus, those vehicles having then lately appeared. On their route, another circumstance occurred, which accidentally backed with a severe warning, the excellent advice that had been given by the cook. Arrived at the corner of the Bank, they saw there some sailors talking with some disreputable women. One of the men attempted to enter into conversation with Margaret and her friend, who however passed rapidly on their way. One of the girls, apparently nearly intoxicated, ran after them, and calling out to the sailors that she would catch one for them, took hold of Margaret by the arm. Our heroine turned round indignantly, and pushed somewhat forcibly the woman away.

“Take care what you are doing,” said the other, “you are mighty good yourself I have no doubt,” then looking in Margaret’s face, she said slowly and emphatically, “don’t treat a poor girl like me in that manner, before a twelve month’s over, you will be no better yourself.”

Margaret blushed, and was annoyed at the remark, but she said nothing. The words however of the girl remained deeply rooted on her memory.

“*La nuit porte conseil,*” and Margaret’s reflections on her pillow, completely matured the determination of the previous evening. Mr. Watkins had already left for his office, and Mrs. Watkins had just finished her breakfast in her boudoir, when Margaret entered the bed-room. Her courage was at its highest, and she determined on speaking to her mistress on the spur of the moment. On passing the glass, before which she had behaved so absurdly, she paused, but only for a moment. There was now no coquetry or jesting in her manner; the look was perfectly serious, and perhaps an idea struck her that her destiny was something more honourable than to be the mistress of any one, however high or wealthy his position might be. She then entered the boudoir, and after removing the breakfast things from the table, said,

“If you please ma’am, I wish to leave your service by this day month.”

The words caused the greatest astonishment to Mrs. Watkins.

“What did you say?”

Margaret repeated the words.

“Oh! certainly.” said Mrs. Watkins, sorry and angry at the same moment.

The news flew rapidly through the establishment. Mrs. Watkins enquired of the butler if he had heard any thing in the house that had offended her maid. He had not heard one word that could account for her conduct. She had certainly had a dispute with the Captain’s valet, in consequence of some impertinence he had offered her, but that was more than three weeks since, and the whole affair had blown over. Did he know of her being offered any situation of greater emolument? Certainly not, he had but once heard her speak of her wages, and then she had expressed herself perfectly content with the amount she received. The whole affair was inexplicable to Mrs. Watkins, who hoped that it was occasioned by some outbreak of temper, and that the girl would change her mind before the term of notice had expired. She was however greatly vexed at the circumstance, and after dinner mentioned it to Mr. Watkins, adding that she was the more annoyed as she had shewn the girl a great deal of kindness. “Do not annoy yourself,” he answered, “if you expect gratitude from these people, you will be sadly disappointed.”

Continued attempts were made by the other servants to obtain if possible the secret of Margaret’s conduct, for, from her silence, they were assured that a secret there evidently was, but all their efforts were fruitless. She had written to her friend in Finsbury Square, in-

forming her of the step she had taken, and also requesting her to obtain, if she had the opportunity, a situation for her in that neighbourhood, as she wished to live at a distance from her present abode. About ten days afterwards she received an answer from the cook, telling her that the housemaid's situation in the same house she lived in would be vacant, as the present servant was obliged to leave from ill health; that the wages were equal to those she at present received, and the family was composed of very kind and amiable people. The cook further informed her, that in consequence of the personal knowledge she had of Margaret, she thought her mistress would be content with a reference from Lady Webb, if still in England, or with a written character from her if abroad. She had stated that Margaret had been but a very short time in her present situation, and she had invented some servant's fiction about some disagreement with her fellow-servants, as her reason for quitting her place.

The arrangement fully met with Margaret's views; she would thus be able to destroy all connection with the house in Eaton Place, and obviate the possibility of meeting any of its inmates. This step was the more necessary, in consequence of the strong affection she still bore for Captain Watkins, and she rightly judged it no bad virtue to avoid as much as possible all temptation.

Time passed slowly on. Margaret had seen Mrs. Johnston, the cook's mistress, who had consented to take

the reference from Lady Webb, and had written a letter to her address in France. A few days afterwards she had an answer, speaking in the highest terms of Margaret's behaviour during the four years she had been in her service, and it fortunately omitted to mention the date of her leaving. The arrangements were at last completed, and it was agreed that Margaret should proceed direct to Finsbury Square, on her leaving her present situation.

It must not be imagined that all this was accomplished without a struggle on the part of Margaret, but the determined girl was now resolved, and she would allow nothing to alter her resolution. Mrs. Watkins was more kind than ever, and Margaret was sincerely attached to her. She had moreover, heard part of a letter read from Captain Watkins to his mother, expressing his regret, not only at the inconvenience she was put to by losing her maid, but at the difficulty she would experience in finding as excellent a person to supply her place; also advising her to keep her with her on any terms, if possible. But a still greater and more terrible temptation existed in the letter addressed to her at the Knightsbridge Post Office. Often would the wish, increased by natural female curiosity, urge her so strongly to possess it, that nothing but an inflexible determination could withstand; still she resisted all.

At last the evening had arrived for her to leave. She had received her wages, packed up her boxes, and they had been carried below. She had determined on calling a coach for herself, as she wished the servants to be kept in

ignorance of her new address. She had put on her bonnet and shawl, and was descending the staircase, when she passed the room which had been occupied by Captain Watkins. The door was ajar, and nobody near her. She entered, and approaching the pillow, she leant over it and kissed the spot on which his head had rested, with all the fervour of her soul, with the ardour a devoted worshipper could offer to the relic of a saint, with all the intensity of an English girl of nineteen in her first love, and then ran rapidly down stairs.

Arrived in the street, she stopped for a few moments to collect her thoughts. All her affection for her lover had returned, and burned as ardently as on the moment she met him in the boudoir on the night of the ball. A desire came over her to possess the letter. Her love pleaded so feelingly, it argued so sweetly, she could not resist it. She reflected that it would be unkind in her to let him think she had forgotten him, who still loved her. She would only take the letter and in answer simply bid him adieu for ever, merely adding that he would always be dear to her. She would give no address in the letter, and then no harm could possibly follow. She started off rapidly for the post office. Arrived there, she hesitated, for her courage half failed her. She remained some minutes before the house, and then, without purpose, crossed over to the other side of the road. Her good angel there whispered to her that she had done well up to the present moment, and conjured her not to waver, but to leave the spot. She remained irre-

solute ; prudence, virtue, pride, all urged her to quit ; love still counselled her, and the letter was there within her reach. She prepared to cross the road to the stationers who kept the office. A hackney coach passed at the moment, and the coachman made her a sign with his whip. She answered him by beckoning to him to stop. He pulled up his horses, and opened the door. She told him as she entered to drive to Eaton Place for some luggage, and then to go on to Finsbury Square. He again mounted the coach box. Margaret with her hands pressed against her face, threw herself back on the seat—and the letter remained in the post office.

CHAPTER III.

AMONG the many advantages to be derived from labour, is the power, through its means, of lessening the intensity of sorrow. The idle and wealthy succumb to it with comparatively little energy of resistance. The rich parent has not the solace in the affliction caused by the death of a darling child, which is placed in the hands of the poor man. The necessity of providing for the daily bread of the remaining members of his family, tears him in a great measure from the profundity of his anguish, by showing him that he is called upon to support the lives of those still dependent on him for their existence. His energies are excited by the task, and the utter prostration which occasionally falls upon the rich, is avoided. But although the intensity of his sorrow may be less, the duration of his affection is as long and as sincere as that of the most affluent; few but those who have mixed much with the poor can estimate the tenacity of their family affection.

The same difference exists between the loves of the wealthy and the poor girl. One can indulge her sorrow to her heart's content if anything occurs to separate her

from the object of her affections, and unfortunately in that indulgence, prudence is not unfrequently absorbed, and the strict watchfulness of the discreet mother or friend is not more than sufficient to prevent an imprudence, if not a disgrace. The humble and prudent maiden has in the necessity of employment, a consolation and safeguard to which the wealthier are strangers.

Never was this more perfectly shown than in the case of our heroine. Her deep sharp sorrow had no small portion of its anguish relieved by the thought and energy required in her new situation. Again the good sense of the cook assisted greatly in the result. They both occupied the same room, and on retiring to rest the first night, Margaret told over again her sorrows to her friend. They were listened to with great patience and sympathy. When finished, Margaret solaced herself with a flood of tears, and the eyes of the cook were also overflowing. In a few minutes the latter dried her tears somewhat hurriedly with her handkerchief, and then taking the sobbing girl's hand in her own, said,

“Now Margaret the worst is over, and we must finish with the remainder. The better way will be to think of him as little as you can help, so every time you attempt to speak of him, I will stop you, and not let you say a word more, and whenever I see you look sad, I will give you a hint and you must begin to talk of something else, so between us we shall soon put an end to it.”

Margaret dried her eyes, and that night her rest was

less broken by dreams or thoughts, than it had been for some weeks past.

The next morning she had an opportunity of seeing the different members of the family; they consisted of the master Dr. Johnson, a physician, his wife and three daughters. The servants were comprised of the cook, one housemaid (our heroine) and a footman. The latter was married, and lived out of the house, but his wife was occasionally employed when extra assistance was wanted. Although she was still with a highly respectable family, she could not but perceive that many dissimilarities existed between them, and those she had just left. In their conversation, the names of people of title were seldom heard; in her last situation on the contrary, they formed the principle staple of their remarks. Their guests too were of a totally different class, even a knight or a baronet was scarcely ever heard of among them. Their associates were principally medical men, with several foreigners, and occasionally people in trade; but at the same time she had sufficient shrewdness to discover that the tenor of their conversation was certainly of a more intellectual order. Among the females of the family there was also a great difference. Although Mrs. Johnson and her daughters struck her as being more clever people than she had previously met with, they evidently approached nearer to herself in position. The undefinable feeling of awe which used to come over her when ladies of title who visited at her last place were present, was now gone.

Here the young ladies frequently assisted in the economy and management of the rooms, and the mistress occasionally made herself more cognisant with the affairs of the kitchen than was always agreeable to the feelings of the cook. All on the whole worked well, and especially between the young ladies and Margaret, a very good understanding existed, not only from her knowledge of the habits and manners of high life, but for her handiness at their toilets, as well as her generally good natured manner. Even among the servants she found a great difference. There was more freemasonry existing among them, and the conversations that were carried on from the door step in the mornings and through the area railings with those of the next house in the evenings, were of the most confidential and interesting character, and as far as the descriptions of the domestic economy and management of their several employers was concerned, they were of the most minute and perfect character.

Margaret had now been several months in her present situation. The sorrow she had felt when first she arrived, had greatly mitigated, in fact the love affair had begun to assume the aspect of a troubled dream, where pleasure and sorrow had been equally mixed. The cook had kept to her determination of prohibiting any conversation on the subject, and with great kindness and watchfulness insisted on her talking on some other subject, whenever our heroine appeared to be in low

spirits. In fact, to use her own phraseology, "they had broken the neck of it between them."

Among the female servants of the square, a subject of interest and jest had now started up. A phoenix among postmen had lately been appointed to the district, in the place of the old one who was decidedly asthmatic. Slight pieces of scandal were already floating about concerning the new comer. The housemaid at No. — had been trying all she could do to attract his attention, but she was always a forward thing. It would be of no use though; he was far too clever a looking man to be caught in that way. Another suggested that sometimes it occurred differently. When men were in love, they were so blind that it frequently happened that those who were the least worthy of their loves, were exactly those who got husbands with the greatest ease. More and more frequent did these sort of remarks become, and at last the curiosity to see this attractive postman seized on our heroine herself.

One afternoon, when she had, in professional parlance, "cleaned herself," and was descending the staircase, the postman's double knock was heard at the door, and solely as she said to save the footman the trouble of putting on his coat and coming up stairs, she opened it. The postman was there for letter boxes were at that time hardly invented although so common now, and placing the letter in her hands, was so struck with her appearance, that he forgot even to mention the name of

the party to whom the letter was addressed; his eyes however were far more eloquent. Margaret also with the rapidity of a woman in matters of the kind, made the best use of hers, and obtained a perfect knowledge of his appearance. He was certainly a very handsome young fellow. Fair complexion and blue eyes, but without insipidity; on the contrary, there was great intelligence in his countenance; his face was oval, his nose aquiline, and his mouth well formed. As he did not open his mouth she did not get a glance at his teeth, but they were white and even. In form he was somewhat above the middle height, and remarkably well made. Although Margaret in presence of the postman presented a perfectly serious countenance, when she descended into the kitchen, there was something very like a smile on her face, but catching the eye of the cook, (who was wiping her mouth with her apron) with a peculiarly arch look in it, the smile from Margaret's countenance vanished, and she was short and snappish with her friend during the whole of the evening.

The next morning the ill temper had blown over, and the duties of the establishment proceeded as usual. The cook in her quiet way however, soon remarked that the postman invariably looked down into the kitchen as he passed the house. This was particularly the case in the afternoons. Time passed, and the postman still continued to make himself "very particular." He never left a letter at the house without casting his glance as far up the staircase as the extremest laws of natural

philosophy would allow, and still without more effect than perhaps a jest at his expense between the cook and Margaret.

At last it began to be noticed that our heroine was frequently near the street door at the hour for the delivery of the letters, and as frequently opened the door when he knocked. No person has greater facilities for a first introduction to servants than a postman, none have perhaps more difficulty in bringing that introduction to maturity. In that respect the policeman has advantages of a very superior description, he can occasionally maintain a lengthened conversation, but the unfortunate postman, as soon as his letters are given and his invariable remark on the weather finished, finds his time expired, and is obliged to leave. Another circumstance was noticed by the cook, that Margaret was no longer indignant when joked about the postman; on the contrary, she appeared to like it, and the cook who really took a great interest in her, did not fail to introduce the subject on every available occasion. The whole domestic population in the Square in fact could see the flirtation, although Margaret fondly imagined that it was unseen by all.

At last when delivering the general post letters one morning, and Margaret being in the passage, had kindly opened the door, he enquired if a Miss White lived there. By a singular coincidence she was the individual, and the letter was placed in her hands. She told no one that she had received it, but rushed up stairs to her bed

room to read it, and remained there so long that the family had to send up the footman to call her. She likewise behaved in a very strange manner during the whole of the day, and her work was performed in such a careless slovenly way, as to call down the severe animadversions of Mrs. Johnson herself, although without any very good effect, as Margaret was seen with only her bonnet on, standing by the lamp post, by the corner of the square, talking to the postman, who with his bag on his arm, was going round with the letters for the four o'clock delivery. This behaviour was the more inexcusable on her part, as it was her duty to assist the footman in getting ready the family dinner, and they always dined at five o'clock. She was also thoughtless and absurd in her behaviour during the whole of the evening, and any one with less good temper or less love for her than the cook, would not have put up with it; the footman pronounced it as positively unbearable. Night came at last, and the cook and Margaret went to their room, the former carrying the candle. As soon as they entered, the cook commenced undressing, but Margaret's hilarity increased to such an extent that her friend, who was tired, turned round to request somewhat sharply, that she would keep quiet, or the family would hear her, when Margaret stopped her by holding up before her the letter she had received in the morning.

“Who is it from?” asked the cook, who was somewhat uneasy when she saw it.

“The postman.”

“You don’t say so, but let me see it.”

“Wait a moment,” said Margaret, “I have not quite read it myself.”

“Just as you please.”

“There now, don’t be sulky, Mary,” said Margaret, “we will read it together.”

“But do you mean to say,” said the cook, “that you have not had the curiosity to read it? I could not have eaten a mouthful without having read every word of it.”

“Well, I did try, but I got so nervous over it, that I did not get through it all, but I know well enough what it means.”

The candle was then placed on the chimney piece, and the letter opened, the two servants with their heads together standing before it. It was written in a neat fluent running hand, but as they both had had but little experience in that style of caligraphy, they did not progress very rapidly in the reading.

17, *Prospect Place*,
17th April, 18——.

“*Dear Miss Margaret,*

You will be surprised to receive a letter from me, but I hope you will forgive me, even if you don’t like it. I have long wished to write to you, but I was afraid you would only laugh at me.”

“ I don’t like that at all,” said the cook, “ if a man is afraid of looking silly, he has no right to fall in love.”

“ I don’t know why men should look silly because they are in love,” said Margaret.

“ *I don’t think I ever knew what love was before I saw you.*”

“ Nonsense,” said the cook.

“ How provoking you are, Mary.”

“ Well, never mind,” said Mary, “ go on.”

“ *I am sure we should be very comfortable together ; my situation is not a bad one at present, and I hope soon to have a rise.*”

“ What a bad light that candle gives,” said Margaret, “ I can hardly see to read, I wish you’d snuff it.”

“ I have left the snuffers down stairs,” said the cook, who was unlacing her stays, but she released one hand and tried to knock off the head of the wick with a pin. Margaret continued,

“ *My family was very respectable, but I have only my mother left. You would like her very much. She is a very good kind creature, and I am sure would be very fond of you.*”

“ That’s very well,” said the cook, “ I like that better than any of it. He is never a bad man who speaks well of his mother, and is fond of her. I like that in him, I must say.”

“ *I hope even if I do not keep in my present situation, to do better, as I believe I could get on in the world if*

I had you for a wife. As soon as I am removed from this district, I intend—

“I cannot see a bit with that candle.”

“Stop a moment,” said the cook, “I will manage it,” and taking a hair pin, she improvised a pair of snuffers with it—and snuffed out the candle.

“How stupid you are,” said Margaret, “just as I was in such an interesting part.”

“Well, I am sorry for it, but I could not help it, so there’s an end of it,” said the cook, who had evidently anticipated the Guizot policy of the *fait accompli* by some years.

A search was made for the lucifer box, but that had also remained below with the snuffers, so the preparations for bed had to be made in the dark, but the conversation by no means halted in consequence.

“Do you intend having him,” said the cook.

“How am I to tell, I am not in such a hurry as to say yes, at the first time of asking.”

“You will have said it often enough before the third time,” said the cook, laughing at her own wit. “But take my advice, have him; as handsome and nice a man as he is, won’t go begging long, if he wants a wife. I can tell you there are plenty in the Square ready to snap him up if you don’t mind, and there are some that are trying it on now.”

They were now both in bed, but the conversation still continued.

“When do you intend giving him an answer?”

“I promised to tell him next week. I intend taking my holiday then, and we shall talk it over together.”

A few minutes silence here occurred.

“What does Miss Snipe charge for making a dress?” said Margaret.

“Four shillings and six-pence.”

“I am thinking of getting the merino I bought last quarter made up, and I shall buy myself a new bonnet.”

“You had better have a straw one now. You’ll want a silk for your wedding.

“You seem to have made up your mind about it, Mary.”

“If I haven’t,” said Mary, “some one else I suspect has.”

A pause.

“How long would Miss Snipe be making up a dress.”

“She is rather slow, but you could have it in a week.”

“But,” said Margaret, “I am not sure that will do. I forget whether it is Tuesday or Thursday that he can get away, perhaps I shall not have time. By the bye, he says something about it in the letter.” Here she got out of her bed to search for it, and with some little trouble found it. She took it to the window, and pulling back the curtains, tried to catch the light from the

gas in the street upon it, but it was useless. She gave up the attempt, and again got into bed. After a short silence, during which Margaret had made an abortive attempt to get to sleep, she exclaimed, "Where shall I get my bonnet from, Mary?"

"There is an excellent shop in Shoreditch, I should go there if I were you."

Silence again occurred for some minutes, and Margaret was almost asleep, but was interrupted by the cook saying,

"What colour shall you be married in?"

"I have not thought about it yet."

"Do be married in white," continued the cook, "the greatest happiness of my life is to see a person married in white." And with this expression of taste on her part, the conversation dropped.

It must not be imagined that our heroine was of a fickle disposition, on the contrary, it would perhaps have been difficult to have found one possessing greater tenacity of affection. That she did love the Captain fondly and earnestly has been seen, but from the moment she left the house, she had determined to overcome the feeling. A strong will was aided in the work by a strong virtuous instinct, and considerable womanly pride. How much it cost the poor girl to carry out her resolution, few can tell, but she had now either succeeded, or her love was latent. To say that she loved the postman would have been to state an absurdity, and

the reader must not think that the conversation about the dress, or her promise to meet him on her holiday were proofs to the contrary.

In a higher grade of the social scale, a marriageable young lady has the opportunity of meeting in society, perhaps more than once, the man who may have been pointed out to her, either by her own feelings or the advice or suggestions of her friends as a suitable partner for her life. She has also those around her ready to guide her in her choice; to advise her against an injudicious match, or to assist her if the union should appear desirable; but with the poor serving lass, the case is very different. She has generally but her own judgment to rely on, and that too often not of the most unbiassed description. Margaret's intended interview with her admirer in her new dress, was in reality something like what an introduction in society would have been to one in a station above her.

On the next day, by one of those occult means known only to female servants, Miss Snipe received an intimation that she was wanted at the house of Dr. Johnson, in Finsbury Square, to take the measure for a new dress for the housemaid, and about three o'clock on the same afternoon that artist, by some means known only to servant's dress makers, found herself in the kitchen of the doctor's house. Nobody had seen her come in, either by the front door or the area gate, and there was no back entrance to the house; but there in the kitchen she was, and on the table were spread the pieces of merino,

and the cook, Margaret, and Miss Snipe were standing round it, as earnestly occupied as the witches in Macbeth round the cauldron. The kitchen door was closed, and the footman, as a point of honour, did not enter till the consultation was over. The stuff was frequently handled by all three in rotation, and then put down again, the quality and colour were spoken of, and the number of lengths counted, till at last it was placed again in its proper envelope and then put under the dress-maker's shawl, who immediately disappeared in the same mysterious manner in which she had entered, after promising faithfully to have the body ready to be tried on the next day, and that the dress should be finished without fail by the next Wednesday evening.

The dress maker was punctuality itself. The next evening, between eight and nine o'clock, the body was brought home, and tried on, and Miss Snipe took so much pains in making it fit perfectly, that Margaret's figure absolutely glittered in the light of the candle from the number of pins which had been placed in her dress, while, during the whole time a very considerable extent of a very beautiful arm and shoulder was to be seen moving as occasion required, in every conceivable position, so as to be certain that the dress would fit perfectly and easily when finished. On the following Wednesday evening, it was brought home, and was, as an article of dress, both for comfort and attraction, all that could be desired.

In the mean time the attempts made by the postman

to see Margaret, were unremitting, but our heroine knew too well the value of making herself sought after to be seen with too much facility. She declined allowing him the slightest glimpse of her person, till she was dressed in the afternoon, and all his attempts to see her at any other time were utterly fruitless. In vain when he found he had a letter for the house, did he hurry round the Square with his other letters that he might have two or three minutes at liberty when he got there. No use! Margaret was never to be seen in the morning, and but rarely in the afternoon. One day he descended to the despicable deception of pretending that he was afraid he had left there, by accident, a letter for David Johnson, being deceived by the D. It is true he remained in the hall some minutes while the Doctor was looking over his letters, the only person he saw was the married footman, who related to him the particulars of the case of his youngest child who was suffering from an attack of the measles.

The momentous Thursday had at last arrived, and a remarkably fine day it was. Not a cloud was to be seen in the sky, and the air was mild and genial, in fact exactly such weather as is most agreeable for entertaining a question of the kind. Margaret had received a note from the postman the evening before, which contained a programme of the day's proceedings. She was to meet him at the corner of the City Road at 12 o'clock, he could not leave his duties before that hour. They were then to walk to the White Conduit House together.

Afterwards he hoped she would let him introduce her to his mother. In the evening they would go to Drury Lane Theatre, if Margaret had no objection. Margaret had decidedly no objection to the theatre whatever—no housemaid ever had—and as for the permission to stay out so late, with some difficulty she obtained it.

Quietly as things had been arranged, it could not be hidden from the young ladies that Margaret had purchased a new bonnet, and had also had a new dress made, and knowing from their own feelings that purchases of the kind generally meant mischief to some man's peace of mind, they were naturally most anxious to see the preparation for conquest, but both Margaret and the cook had determined not to gratify their curiosity. The young ladies however were not easily to be got rid of. Two of them, after having made preparations for making a cake in the kitchen, stationed themselves in the parlour, there being no patients there for the moment, and the youngest, a particularly sharp girl, had placed herself in one of the bed rooms, so as to command the staircase. Cook however was not to be overcome. She had just been upstairs to give a finishing touch to Margaret, when finding the youngest daughter looking out from the bed room, and knowing the others to be waiting in the parlour, she, without knocking at the door, walked into the drawing room.

“If you please ma'am,” she said, “its impossible for me to do my work in the kitchen, if the young ladies are continually running in and out ; I am sure the place

is more like a Bedlam than anything else. I do all I can to do my duty, but if I am, &c."

"Now, cook, pray don't worry me, I am not well. Why do you let them come into the kitchen at all?"

"Well, ma'am," said the cook, "its no use my saying anything. Its no use my trying, all I can do to give satisfaction, &c."

"You had better send the young ladies to me, and I will speak to them," said Mrs. Johnson.

"Yes, ma'am," said the cook, and they were immediately sent to their mama.

Margaret profited by the opportunity to slip down stairs and out of the house, but not so rapidly as entirely to escape observation, for the youngest daughter was heard to say to her sisters as they left the drawing room, "she'd a straw bonnet on with cherry-coloured ribbons, and the cook's shawl."

She was right, it was the cook's shawl, and a very neat and handsome shawl it was, and it became our heroine remarkably well.

When Margaret left the house, she proceeded rapidly to the corner of the City Road. She was perfectly conscious how well she looked. The faces of those she met informed her of it, and she could feel that frequently, when she had passed, they turned round to look at her again. She felt that proud consciousness so much prized by women—she could conquer if she pleased, but she held in her own power the right of using it. She was somewhat annoyed when arriving at the place of

rendezvous, that she did not see the post-man. No woman likes to be the first at the place of meeting, although they generally are so. She had as yet only seen her admirer in his official dress, and she was somewhat surprised when a tall gentlemanly looking man crossed the road and advanced towards her; she was still more surprised when she recognized in him her lover. He was neatly, even handsomely dressed, and Margaret felt something very like pride when she took his arm. They walked on together towards Islington, their ultimate destination being the White Conduit House, then a favourite place of entertainment. Their conversation it would be useless to quote: suffice it to say, that both were on their best behaviour; Margaret had however shrewdness enough to perceive that her companion, in point of intelligence and education; was greatly her superior, though in social position they were equal. Few things strengthen a woman's affection for a man more than the consciousness of her lover's intellectual superiority. She looks on him, not merely as the object of her love, but also as the guide to her mind, her appeal and support in all things above her own comprehension. This, if her lover possesses any knowledge of female psychology, he may produce in her a faith which, with a little skill on his part, to assist in the development, may lead to something very like adoration.

Arrived at the White Conduit House, the serious part of the day's duties began. A discreet waiter with considerable experience in matters of the kind, after having

brought the refreshment they had ordered, left them to themselves, and amused himself by looking steadfastly out of window at nothing. The postman was evidently eloquently persuasive, and Margaret was as evidently pleased. The agreement to "keep company" was duly entered into between them, and the said agreement was as duly sealed by both, when the momentary absence of the waiter from the room gave them the opportunity.

They now proceeded towards the lodging of the postman's mother, and the conversation was carried on with far more animation and less subjection than when they first met that morning. It is true a feeling of anxiety came over Margaret when she drew near the house. She doubted in what manner she would be received, for although her lover spoke with certainty of the affection his mother would have for her, yet our heroine was perfectly aware that the mother and son frequently take a different valuation of the same object. She also tormented herself as to what sort of a person she should find her; whether she would be proud and stuck up, and many other anxieties, all of which were cut short by their arrival at the house. Her lover introduced her to his mother, Mrs. Meadows. She was a rather tall, amiable looking woman of perhaps fifty or five-and-fifty years of age. She had evidently been handsome, and had still the remains of considerable beauty. The expression of her countenance was mild and kind, and she received Margaret with great and evidently sincere af-

fection. The poor girl was too much agitated to speak, but was greatly delighted with her reception.

It is time now to introduce the postman and his mother more particularly to the reader. Mrs. Meadows had been, like Margaret, a domestic servant. She had been in the family of a wealthy landowner in the country, and had always conducted herself with the greatest propriety and respectability. She had married a small farmer on the estate, who a few years after had left her a widow with one child—a son. The property he died possessed of was, after payment of his debts, but trifling ; and that amount was invested by the advice of the solicitor of her late employer's family in the purchase of a small life annuity. She resided quietly in the country until her son was of sufficient age to obtain some respectable employment, and then, through the same kind friends, she received an appointment for him as a letter-carrier in the London district. She had, during his boyhood, contrived to give him a most respectable education. She was naturally intensely fond of him, and he was an excellent and dutiful son to a good, kind, and affectionate mother.

For some time after the introduction, George Meadows was obliged to furnish the *frais de conversation*, his mother occasionally talking to Margaret. By degrees the bashfulness of the latter vanished, and she began to enter readily into whatever subject might be before them. She already looked with considerable affection on Mrs.

Meadows, and thus another subject of happiness presented itself to her. Not only had she obtained the affection of the son, but there was the almost certainty of loving his parent with the tenderness due from a daughter to a kind mother. Once in the course of the afternoon, Mrs. Meadows made a very pretty remark, expressive of the pleasure she felt in receiving her and loving her as her own child. Margaret wished to make as pretty an answer, but Mrs. Meadows perceiving a trembling of the lower lip, and the filling eye, with true feminine tact, immediately changed the conversation.

It was now past four o'clock, and Mrs. Meadows brought from the other room a repast she had prepared for them previous to their departure for the theatre. That good lady appeared to have studied human nature physiologically, and had evidently come to the conclusion, that love required both carbon and oxygen to keep up its flame. Human life would rapidly become extinct without them, and it naturally followed that love must to a considerable extent be under the influence of the same laws. To bread, butter, tea, and loaf sugar, all of the most excellent quality, she added ham, eggs, and shrimps. Margaret of course said she] wasn't hungry, and Mrs. Meadows of course reminded her that she would be several hours in the theatre, and that she had better eat heartily or she might feel faint. The meal went off in a most happy and satisfactory manner, and Margaret, who had now thoroughly recovered her tongue, made

the best possible use of it. She was in fact in a high state of delight, and her pleasure was mirror'd in her face, making her still more beautiful. Their repast over, Mrs. Meadows was proceeding to remove the tea things, when Margaret earnestly requested that she might be allowed to assist her. Mrs. Meadows, whose natural politeness followed the Italian proverb, "it is a civility to offer, a greater to accept," did not refuse her, and Margaret immediately busied herself in the task. She washed up the cups and saucers with great rapidity and skill, as much pleased at the opportunity of capitalizing her small accomplishment in the eyes of those she admired, as a young lady in a different sphere of life might have been in exhibiting some dearly bought, but more elegant source of attraction, while the anxious mother drew the most favourable augury for her son's comfort from the girl's dexterity. When the time arrived for them to leave for the theatre, Mrs. Meadows took an affectionate leave of her, and Margaret quitted her house delighted with her visit.

They arrived at the pit door of Drury Lane Theatre, some twenty minutes before it opened. Oh! the delights of those moments to those in the same position as our couple, and there were many. As the crowd augmented, the necessity of protecting those dear ones under their charge increased in proportion. George Meadows guarded his of course as much from pressure as possible, and Margaret naturally was perfectly assured

when she felt his arm round her waist. The first bolt of the door was unfastened and the pressure became almost stifling, the second followed, and a tremendous rush, occasioning many a scream, ensued, but that desired goal, the money taker's box was at last passed, and Margaret and her lover were immediately afterwards comfortably seated in the very centre of the pit. Our heroine had never before visited a theatre, and her delight and surprise may be easily imagined. Not for one moment were her eyes and mind at rest during the whole of the evening; and if during the performance her tongue was silent, it completely recovered the lost time between the acts. Kean was then in his prime, and the play was *Othello*. Her interest was naturally greatly excited, and her remarks were of the most naive description. During the last scene, her excitement was so great, that she could hardly help screaming at the murder. Her criticism was remarkably simple. "She thought it very wicked." She could hardly realize the fact that the whole was an illusion.

Between the performances they stood up to look round the house. In those days it was not considered low breeding to patronize the English theatre; the house was crowded, and in the boxes were many people of fashion. Both Margaret and her lover were for some minutes silent; the same thoughts occupied both their minds, and they both came to the same conclusion. He thought no lady in the boxes could compare with Margaret in beauty, and she considered that George Meadows was

superior in appearance to any man there. Once when he was occupied in looking at the boxes, she gazed on him steadily and thoughtfully for some moments. She was drawing a comparison in her mind between him and another, and the result was most complimentary to the postman.

The afterpiece having terminated, they proceeded towards Finsbury Square. George Meadows of course, with great gallantry, offered some refreshment, which Margaret declined, as she had promised cook to hasten home as quickly as possible after the performance. In point of rapidity, she hardly kept her word. The pace it must be owned, was remarkably slow and deliberate, arising doubtless from the fact that Margaret was much fatigued, for although she did not complain, yet she was obliged to lean somewhat heavily on her lover's arm as she got near home, a circumstance by no means complained of by George Meadows. Arrived at the house, they had naturally many things to speak of before they rang the bell; indeed it would be difficult to say how long they would have waited, had not a policeman passed at the time, and then Margaret thought it would be better to part. It would be useless waste of time and space to describe the leave taking, suffice it to say it was decidedly of an affectionate description, and Mary, who did not hurry herself to the door, was not blamed by either for her tardiness. Thus ended the happiest day that Margaret had hitherto experienced.

•

“ Well, Margaret,” said the cook, when they had entered the bed room, “ now tell me all about it.”

“ Oh, Mary, don't ask me to-night, for my head is too full. I should not know where to begin,” and she then commenced relating circumstantially for two hours the events of the day, till Mary was obliged to ask her to leave off and go to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME weeks now passed most happily for both the lovers. It is true, Margaret got occasionally scolded by Mrs. Johnson for carelessly performing her duties, but that was not of very frequent occurrence. The love of George Meadows seemed to increase daily, but that of Margaret offered a singular peculiarity. That she loved him was certain—she loved him tenderly and dearly. She loved him for his love to his mother, she loved him for his respectability and talent, she loved him for himself. Her love was boundless, but it wanted intensity. It belonged to George Meadows, but he hardly yet possessed it. She was happy in his presence, her thoughts continually dwelt on him when he was away, but that concentration of affection she experienced for her first lover was certainly wanting. Her love bore to George Meadows the same resemblance that two elements possessing the strongest affinity for each other have before the “Synthesis” of the natural philosopher unites them.

One morning, when Margaret was employed in the bed rooms, she, as usual latterly, occasionally put her

head out of window to see if Meadows was in the Square. She saw him at last a few doors off delivering some letters. He had given them to a servant girl and was leaving, when the damsel called him back and gave him a flower, which he, laughing the while, immediately put in the button-hole of his coat and hurried on. He of course looked up at the window at Margaret, and pointed to the flower. His good humoured glance was responded to by one of intense rage and indignation. George looked surprised, but of course his duties would not allow him to stop, and he waited for an explanation till the evening. Margaret however rushed down stairs into the kitchen, and without saying a word to the cook, seized the bonnet she kept there, put it on her head and was tying the strings with a passionate jerk, when the expression of her countenance caught Mary's attention.

“What on earth is the matter with you, Margaret?”

“I'm just going to tell him I'll never speak to him again; he shan't treat me in that manner,” said Margaret.

“What is it you mean?”

“Mean? Why I saw it myself, so its no use you or any one else denying it.” Here she made a snatch at her shawl.

“Well, Margaret, if you are going mad, I can't help it, but you may as well say what its all about.”

“I saw that hussey at the Simmons' give him a flower, and I saw him myself put it into his coat. He

shall not trifle with my feelings in that manner, I know.'! Here she seated herself on a chair, and began crying.

"Well, I think the man was quite right," said Mary. "If I'd been him, I'd have given you up long before this. You won't say when you'll marry him. As I've told you already, he's not the man to go a begging."

"You'd have given me up? Oh, Mary, you shameful creature, and only because I won't be hurried, but I've done with him now."

"Well, tell him so when he comes this evening," said the unsentimental cook, "but go about your work now, and don't make such a fool of yourself."

Margaret after indulging herself for five minutes with a cry, took off her bonnet and shawl, and did as the cook advised her.

Her duties during the day were performed *tant bien que mal*, and the evening at last arrived. The postman had been ushered down the area steps and into the kitchen by the cook, who immediately left it to inform Margaret that he was there.

"Now, Mary, I know you won't believe what I am going to say, but mark my words, I'll never see George again."

"No," said Mary, "you're quite right, I don't believe it."

"How provoking you always are Mary, but you don't know me when once I've made up my mind to a thing, nothing can change me."

“Are you quite sure you have made up your mind, Margaret; if you have, its to be Mrs. Meadows.”

“Yes, I have made up my mind, but its to give him up.”

“Well,” said Mary, “seeing is believing. I suppose you’ve put on that new cap on purpose to say good bye in.” Margaret with a toss of her head left her, and entered the kitchen.

Of the conversation which took place there, no record is to be found, but in about half an hour afterwards George Meadows had left, and Margaret wore what appeared to the cook, a remarkably sheepish look. Her eyes did not appear quite so red as before the interview, her lips might have been a trifle redder. No conversation on the subject passed between the fellow servants that evening. The next morning, when dressing, Margaret said to the cook, “I’m going to give Missis warning to-day.”

“Why?”

“We are going to be married this day month.”

Cook turned her head away and smiled, but said nothing.

The news that Margaret intended leaving, caused considerable regret to all the family, for she was a great favourite. With the young ladies however, the sorrow was somewhat mitigated by the knowledge that she only left to be married. Margaret had become by her engagement with the postman, an object of great interest with them, and many were the conversations which

took place with her on the subject. On the matter of the wedding dress especially, many discussions arose, not perhaps, totally unmingled with some unpleasantness. The taste of the young ladies and the cook, differed considerably on the subject, and as Margaret wished to please all parties, she had a somewhat difficult part to play. She adopted a middle course in the matter. She was to be married in white, to please the cook, but the dress was to be made after a pattern suggested by the young ladies.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the description of the kindness and interest Mary took in her friend. She played propriety also in an admirable manner. George Meadows had received permission from the Doctor, to visit at the house for an hour or so every evening, and the patience and good temper she shewed on those occasions appeared inexhaustable. The ingenuity she displayed in continually finding something to do out of the kitchen was marvellous. One would have thought the back scullery was her study, her boudoir, her favourite place for retirement and reflection. Her patience was the more astonishing, as those apartments in the neighbourhood of Finsbury Square, are far from cheerful in the twilight.

One afternoon she was seen standing on a chair by the kitchen window watching something which was passing in the street. It was a long cart or rather van, with a painting which covered the whole side. Sir Joshua Reynolds in his lectures on painting, remarks, "that a

well composed picture should tell its own tale as clearly as a printed narrative, but to obtain that excellence in composition was one of the most difficult obstacles for an artist to conquer. The picture on which Mary gazed, admirably corroborated the truth of the statement. It represented a dinner table, and the guests were seated around it. So far the composition was faultless. The party consisted of two general officers in full uniform, an admiral in epaulets, two ladies in court dresses and plumes, a bishop in his canonicals, and the master and mistress of the house. The eyes of none of the party were on the table, but these as well as their hands were raised in wonder. From the expression of their faces, the natural conclusion would have been, that the company were listening to some pious remarks of the bishop respecting the good things which Providence had set before them. Such a conclusion however would have been utterly erroneous. Their astonishment was caused by the lady of the house informing them that the whole dinner service had cost only one pound fourteen shillings and sixpence, and had been purchased at Davies' glass and china shop in the Tottenham Court Road, where all persons about to marry were advised to apply with all possible despatch. After stamping the address well upon her memory, the cook descended from her chair, and having asked and obtained permission to leave the house for an hour or two in the evening, she proceeded with a large basket on her arm in the direction of the

Tottenham Court Road, and there invested a considerable portion of her last quarter's wages in a dinner service as a present for Margaret. She laid out her money most advantageously, both in price and quality. She had, as a cook, naturally some good taste in the matter, and if the number of pieces did not equal those in the model picture, in form and excellence, they were by no means inferior. She had also purchased, at the request of the footman, a slight memorial of his regard for his fellow servant. It was a china figure of a maiden. Anatomically speaking, it was far from good, but it was all of a pure white, with the exception of four dots which were intended to represent the eyes, nose, mouth and chin. Leaning on her knee was an animal of a description which would have puzzled a Cuvier or a Mantell to classify, but all doubt as to its genus was settled by the artist, who had inscribed in letters of gold on the pedestal, "The pet lamb." The footman, with great justice, said it was not a valuable present, "whatever his wishes was, he could not afford much with his increasing family, but he knew she would take the will for the deed."

As the wedding drew near, the visits of the mysterious Miss Snipe became the more frequent, and the consultations and tryings on were incessant; but on the eve of the wedding day, all fitted well and gave great satisfaction. Though somewhat contrary to etiquette in circumstances of the kind, Margaret was to dress at the lodgings of Mrs. Meadows. She had no other friend

in London, or indeed in the world, so the clothes were forwarded there in the evening before the wedding, and Margaret left Mrs. Johnson's at an early hour next morning.

Great preparations had been made to give due solemnity to the ceremony. George Meadows was dressed before her arrival, and as usual looked well—even gentlemanly. His groomsman was likewise a postman and an unmarried man. He was certainly smarter in point of dress than George, but did not look so well. He was somewhat of a melancholy temperament, and bore that characteristic in his countenance. Shortly afterwards the bridesmaid arrived, accompanied by a female friend of Mrs. Meadows.' The former was a pretty fresh coloured lively girl of seventeen, the other was a lady's maid, considerably older, and wore that air of faded gentility so common to her order. Our friend the cook, also joined the party; she had obtained leave to be absent during the morning, and was to assist Mrs. Meadows in preparing the dinner. At last Margaret made her appearance: she looked really lovely. It would be doing her an injustice to describe her dress. The conventionalities of female costume are so capricious, that an attire which might have been most becoming twenty years since, would in the present day be, if not ludicrous, at least in bad taste. It is better to leave it to the imagination of the reader to depict all that was simple yet becoming, and he will not only not exaggerate her

beauty, but form a much better idea of her appearance, than by any description of the author's.

The procession was at last formed, and they started for the church. Margaret and George walked first, the bridesmaid and groomsman followed. The lady's maid stopped at home with Mrs. Meadows, who thought she should be too much agitated to be present at the ceremony. This was a fiction. No sooner was the marriage party out of the house, than she threw on her bonnet and shawl, and accompanied by the lady's maid, hurried off to the church, and there from a back seat watched with deep interest and intense feeling the marriage of her son.

No women pronounce the words for richer or poorer, for better or worse, more religiously than those of the working classes ; no woman in that class ever pronounced it with more pure and sincere truth than Margaret. She knew it was as probable their future fate would be for the poorer and the worse, as for the richer. Had it even been a certainty that such would have been her lot, her love for him was so great that she would have considered it as another reason for their union, and would have married him if possible the more readily—the very prospect of misfortune would have increased her love. She had identified herself with him. He was the dearest portion of her existence. To have lost him would have killed her. She would no more have lived without him than without her soul itself.

The ceremony was over, and the party returned from the church. On entering the sitting room they found that Mary had not been idle in their absence. The first thing which struck their notice, was the before mentioned dinner service. Mary quietly asked Margaret to accept it, and then went into the other room to avoid the thanks. It is not known whether she could hear the laudatory remarks which were made upon her present, or if she could have heard them, there is no proof whatever that she purposely listened. The only reason to imagine she did so, was, that immediately after they were finished, she entered the room with a look of perfect satisfaction on her countenance.

The dinner was all that could be desired. The two pair front having kindly lent its grate for the occasion, Mrs. Meadows' sitting room was as neat as a gentleman's parlour. They had boiled fowls and a roast leg of mutton. Vegetables were there in abundance. At two of the corners of the table were jugs of beer, the others were decorated with one bottle of port and one of sherry. The latter, to judge from the darkness of its hue was as rich and fruity a wine as could be desired, and if ever the appellation of "curious" could be justly applied to old port, it was so with the bottle on the table. The most remarkable object there, was in the centre. It was a cake, prepared by Mary in certain moments stolen from her work, and while Margaret was absent from the kitchen. It was large, moreover its flavour was

excellent. It was not made in the fashion of the present day. It presented a far more digestible appearance and was destitute of that unappetizing plaster of Paris appearance for which they are now so remarkable. The wedding cake has we know an almost sacred "halo" round it in the eyes of many, and we therefore wish to speak of it with respect, but by what ingenious reasoning a Frenchman or any other foreigner could detect that it was more edible than a plaster cast of the Emperor, we are at a loss to imagine. The sides of that on the table were decorated with white paper frilled and curled, the upper surface was brown, but not burnt. In its centre, half by way of ornament, half by a conscientious feeling on Mary's part to do justice to the footman's generosity and friendship, was placed the group of the pet lamb.

The dinner went off admirably, Mary was principally engaged in conversation with Mrs. Meadows and the young girl. The lady's-maid was evidently making an attack upon the heart of the groomsman, and George Meadows was absorbed with his wife, although little conversation passed between them.

The new married couple were to spend the honeymoon (which was to consist of two days) at Gravesend, and the time was now come for their departure. Before leaving the table however, the groomsman rose to propose the health of the young couple. It has been already stated that he was of a most melancholy disposition, and his speech was to match. He spoke with great affection

of his friend George Meadows, whom he had known from a child. His marriage was one of the greatest and most serious events of a man's life, and most sincerely did he wish him joy, although the possession of that joy had torn him from those who loved him most dearly. He had now taken upon himself the cares of a family, and he only hoped that one so much valued by them all, would be spared as many as possible of those vicissitudes and sorrows which so frequently occur in the married state.

There are spots in the sun, and even Margaret's happiness that day was not without some alloy. During the groomsman's speech, Mrs. Meadows was naturally much affected, but her emotion was trifling in comparison to that exhibited by the lady's maid. She fairly sobbed again, but for what reason Margaret could not imagine. When she went into the other room with the young girl for the purpose of changing her dress, she enquired how long the lady's maid had been acquainted with George Meadows.

"She never saw him before to-day."

"Oh, she must have known him before, or why should she cry so at his parting?"

"I tell you she never saw him before, and she cares nothing about his going. She only cried to gain favour with George's friend. If he'd said something funny she would have laughed nearly to have killed herself. She never throws away a chance with any man, and she

is always thinking how she can best show off before them. She sleeps in the same room with me at Lady Ellen Bessamer's. I said to her one night, 'Lor, Charlotte, why do you wear binders to your night cap?' 'Because they are so becoming,' she said. 'Well,' said I, 'what does that matter, nobody can see them.' 'Oh, there's no knowing,' she said. 'Suppose there was to be a fire in the house, and a policeman or one of the fire brigade was to rush in to save us, how much better I should look than you would.' 'She wouldn't though. Oh, don't worry yourself about her, she's a nasty old thing, she's twenty seven if she's a day.'"

Under the influence of this powerful argument, Margaret's equanimity was perfectly restored.

Being now fully equipped for travelling, the bride and her husband took a most affectionate leave of Mrs. Meadows, and then proceeded to the steam boat at London Bridge wharf. The incidents of the voyage down, left but a faint impression on the memory of either. A slight reminiscence of being invited by the steward to take tea. A sharp refusal on the part of George to the cabin boy when asked if he would like a cheroot. An almost equally direct negative on the part of Margaret to partake of that housemaid's luxury—shrimps, and a vague idea that somebody said they were "precious spooney," were the most prominent circumstances which remained upon it. At last the boat arrived at Gravesend, and George Meadows handed, with the utmost

care and precaution over a most commodious landing stage, as fine a specimen of the pure full blown English girl as could easily have been found in the three kingdoms.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN George Meadows returned with his wife from his wedding trip, they resided for a short time with his mother. About two months after their marriage he was removed to a district in the neighbourhood of Camberwell. There he determined on carrying out a project which had occupied his mind for some time past, It was to take a small grocer's and general shop. He imagined that the neighbourhood was well adapted for its success. The greater portion of the inhabitants, if not wealthy, were highly respectable and prudent people; that class in fact, that are cautious in laying out their money, but most honourable in the payment of their debts. Margaret with her quiet, amiable, steady manner, was in his opinion, well adapted to attend to it, and he in his rounds with his letters would not fail to canvass assiduously for customers. After considerable trouble they at last found a situation which perfectly suited them, the rent was low, and the house had lately been occupied in the same way of business. The trade fixtures had been left in the house, and were

to be sold a bargain. George's mother had made and laid by some little economies, and she readily consented to assist her son in his speculation. After considerable bargaining, the fixtures were paid for and the transfer completed. George and Margaret further received from their kind friend and parent, her remaining fifty pounds for a floating capital, and every one who knew them, augured and wished them success. The young couple earnestly requested George's mother to reside with them, but she, whose knowledge of the world was more matured, declined the offer, but promised to visit them at least once a week. Her annuity was sufficient for her maintenance, and she justly considered it the best policy to leave them their perfect independence.

The shop was at last opened, and the business commenced. Margaret was soon expert in its management, and George canvassed for it with great zeal. It certainly succeeded, but not to the extent they had so fondly hoped. George was undoubtedly a favourite everywhere, but he soon found out that a postman like a curate, falls off considerably in the eyes of the fair by being married. Few men are more courted or admired in their respective spheres before marriage, few are less sympathised with afterwards. Again, although their capital of fifty pounds seemed almost inexhaustible in their eyes, it was but trifling in comparison with many tradesmen in the same line of business in the neighbourhood. They were naturally obliged to use great caution in choosing those they trusted, and that neces-

sary care had occasionally a bad effect on their customers. Even a small loss to them would have been of great importance, while to many of the competing tradesmen it would have mattered but little. On the whole however, they had no reason to complain. At their weekly stock taking, if their balance sheets shewed but small profits, they had but few and trifling losses, and if they did not succeed as rapidly as they had anticipated, at any rate they were contented.

A few months after they were settled in Camberwell, the visits of Mrs. Meadows the elder became for a short time very frequent. Private conversations of great apparent mystery took place between her and Margaret. Shortly afterwards certain sums of money were invested at the linen drapers, followed by the appearance of divers articles of dress, not only remarkable in shape, but very diminutive in size. Margaret's appearance also underwent considerable alteration, and little by little the secret became generally known—she was expecting to become a mother. The event took place in due time, and our heroine presented her husband with a remarkably fine boy. It was not however accomplished without considerable suffering and danger on her part, and the shock to her constitution was so great that she never entirely recovered from it. Her baby however, compensated her for all, and was the delight of both herself and husband. If it brought an increase of care and expenditure, it also brought an increase of revenue to the shop. If George Meadows had become

less interesting from being a married man, Margaret had become more so from being a mother, and their connection evidently increased in consequence. She made an excellent parent ; kind, prudent, and affectionate in the highest degree. The child was christened in its father's name, and Mary, whom Margaret had not seen for some months, was invited by letter to be godmother. The letter was returned through the post office, for Mary had quitted her situation, and forgot to leave her address. This gave Margaret considerable annoyance, as she was sincerely attached to her friend.

One day when the baby was about eight months old, Margaret was sitting in her shop, and her son and heir was taking his mid-day nap in the little parlour adjoining, the door of communication being open between them, so that she might hear him if he moved, she was surprised by the entrance of Mary. She looked well, was nicely dressed, and was apparently highly delighted to see Margaret. Our heroine immediately forgave in her mind the annoyance she had felt at her friend's behaviour, but at the same time asked why she had not been to see her. The excuse was somewhat clumsy, but Margaret was too much pleased to behold her again to be very critical. They conversed together for some minutes, when the infant, probably disturbed by their voices, suddenly woke up. They then both entered the little parlour, Margaret seating herself in such a position as to be able to command a view of the shop through the clear pane of glass in the door. The young gentleman

clamoured loudly for his dinner, and his mother was not slow in meeting his wishes. The conversation turned on different subjects connected with the baby, Mary asking many questions, and being evidently much interested in the answers. Master George was getting into that happy state when, half satiated, a baby mixes a little play with his nurse while finishing his meal. He would from time to time turn from his dinner, and laugh roguishly in his mother's face, who would answer him with one of those beautiful nonsensities usual to the occasion—a play so lovely as to absolve it from its utter absurdity, making us wonder at the same time what pleasure the charming pair of simpletons can have in it, and at our own delight at witnessing it. A continued current of ideas is evidently passing between them, but what possibly can be the subject. They are certainly perfectly understood by them both, though the mother would have as little power to explain them as the infant itself. Is she teaching it to think and reason, and her first lesson—the knowledge of happiness? To judge from the little rogue's countenance, such an opinion would not have been without foundation.

At last their play had reached its climax. Margaret had taken the baby's hand and placed it in her mouth, pretending to bite it, though the lips carefully covered the tops of her sharp white teeth.

During the whole of the time, Mary had been watching the scene with great interest, asking a volley of questions as to the expense of its clothes, the manner

Margaret dressed the infant, what ailments it had had, and many others similar, but of no interest to the reader. Suddenly she was silent for some minutes, and then broke out with,

“I wish you would lend me some of his things for patterns, Margaret.”

“Mary!” almost screamed Margaret.

The hand of Master George Meadows fell from his mother’s mouth. He cast on her a reproachful glance, of which she took no notice. He turned his eyes from her, and having given a tremendous butt at his meal, applied himself to it with a determination and integrity of purpose, which seemed to show a resolution on his part, not to be again attracted from the more serious duties of life by female blandishments.

“Mary!”

“I am married,” said Mary, looking rather foolish.

“You married?”

“And why should I not marry as well as others?” said Mary, somewhat sharply.

“And not tell me anything of it Mary. I told you everything.”

Some very angry words ensued between the friends, which it is better not to relate, and they parted for the first time in their lives in great coolness.

As the reader should know all, the reasons for Mary’s singular conduct were as follows :

For some time after Margaret’s wedding, Mary felt very low spirited. Of all women, perhaps cooks suffer

the most from despondency, and with them the mind generally acts on the body. It was so in Mary's case. Her health fell off rapidly, although as she rightly said, neither master nor any other doctor could find out what ailed her. The disease was therefore of a most obscure character, and all obscure diseases naturally require great profundity of science to understand them. The disease under which she laboured, does not appear to have had that attention paid it by the profession which it deserves. It attacks only cooks, and is known by them under the generic name of a "sinking." Mary had of course tried all possible remedies for its cure, and like other cooks, came to the conclusion that nothing gave so much relief as half a pint of beer about eleven o'clock in the day. Although this specific certainly gave great relief to the body, it did but little good to the wounded spirit, and Mary became quite miserable. At last the idea struck her to try matrimony. She must settle herself in life some day, and why not then. She began to think seriously on the subject, and it could easily be accomplished if she should wish it.

Mary, it must be understood, was by no means destitute of admirers—few cooks are. It would only be the strict truth to say she had many, although either from her natural modesty, or their personal appearance, she seldom boasted of them. Most of them it is true, had that peculiar hungry look, so often found among the admirers of her order. Mary was too prudent to be deceived either by their flatteries or those of K 167, who had

also made great advances. She certainly liked him, but her caution prevented the match. She knew too well the sympathy existing between cooks and policemen, to look with much satisfaction on an union of the kind. She knew that even with her moderate attractions, she could tempt any policeman she pleased into the kitchen, and the next cook that came would most likely be able to do the same. If she did marry a man, she wished to keep him to herself. His whiskers were certainly handsome, but her own peace of mind was still dearer to her than they were. Besides, she knew the wife of one of the force, and she assured her that the rattle pockets of the married policemen were just as greasy as those of the single men. One admirer above all other's pleased her. Although he did not possess the personal attractions of the policeman, he had many admirable qualifications. In the first place he was well to do in the world, and that with prudent women at her time of life was a great consideration. As she said, "if he was not employed by the Government, it was next to it." He was beadle at a small City parish church—St. Christopher in the Pattens. How she got acquainted with him, there is no record to refer to, suffice it to say, she married him. It must not be supposed that Mary felt no compunction for her behaviour towards Margaret, but circumstances were very different with them, and Mary must not be judged too harshly on the occasion. Margaret was justly proud of her husband's personal appearance. Mary, with equal justice, had not the same pride in

hers. She greatly respected him, and feared the derogatory comparison which might arise in the mind of her friend when she should see him. He was certainly not a young man, nor had he been for many years. In fact he had arrived at that age when the utmost love, attention, and fidelity in a wife, wear an additional lustre when combined with a competent knowledge of cooking. To compensate however for his want of youth, it must be admitted that he did all in his power to console her, by informing her how attractive he used to be when he was a young man. He dwelt with considerable unction on his black curling hair, but little was now left, and that which remained completely reversed the old latin quotation so well remembered by us all, *Qui color albus erat &c.*, for the colour which formerly had been jet black, was now a snowy white. It would be unkind to Mary to speak unfavourably of his personal appearance, and we will touch as lightly and as favourably on the subject as possible. He was certainly below the middle height, it need not be said how much. It is true that he compensated in breadth for what he lacked in length, but hardly to the benefit of his personal appearance. The most pleasing impression which could be given of him to the reader would be by quoting the exquisite line of Tasso's when comparing a beautiful and modest virgin to a budding rose,

“Quanto si mostra men, tanto piu è bella.”

It described him accurately. The less that was seen

of him, the more beautiful he appeared. If, as we are taught—things which are equal to the same thing, are equal to one another—he was not as destitute of attractions as might have been imagined at first sight. To have seen him to the greatest advantage, would have been at the time when he was arrayed in his official costume. It was handsome and imposing. In colour, deep blue with a scarlet cape, the latter trimmed with gold lace. Gold lace also decorated the collar, sleeves and pocket. As his predecessor had been taller than he was, the coat was somewhat large for him, but the general effect was improved.

It is hardly necessary to take up the time of the reader with Mrs. Beadle's interesting condition and its results. No doubt the celebrated case of Mrs. Commodore Trunnion is fresh in the memories of all; Mary's resembled it in almost every particular. Its principal characteristics were, a great deal of useless needlework, trouble and anxiety for the wife, and considerable needless expenditure for the husband, for which, to the disgrace of human nature be it said, he expressed himself in a most ungrateful manner.

CHAPTER VI.

It would be difficult to find the current of human life pass more smoothly, with one exception, than it did for the next seven years over the heads of George Meadows and his wife. The exception alluded to was the death of his mother. He was one morning sent for in great haste, and was at the same time informed that she was alarmingly ill. He arrived with all speed at her lodging, but before he reached it, life was extinct. She had been attacked during her sleep by apoplexy, and as she was alone, no knowledge of the misfortune was obtained before it was too late for human remedies to be of any avail. George, who was most fondly attached to his mother, felt keenly her loss, and Margaret wept with the sincere grief of an attached daughter for a dear and valued parent. In consequence of the assistance the mother gave her son when he started in business, she left but a few pounds in ready money, that, with the furniture, went to George Meadows; the annuity of course terminated at her death.

Margaret and George had no other children than the one whose birth we have already recorded. It does not

always follow that the children of handsome parents, inherit their beauty, but in this case the child did so in a remarkable manner. It would have been difficult to have found a more beautiful boy. Both his parents doated on him, but Margaret's love was something akin to adoration. She was a fond, kind, patient mother, but was hardly a good one. The boy was not only petted by her, but in fact spoiled. The first deep rooted education received by a child, is taught him by his mother. Margaret, good and pious herself, would have taught him virtue; by her over indulgence she taught him vice. He had only to ask for anything he wished for, and if it were in her power to give it he was sure to obtain it. If from prudence she refused it, he had but to shed one tear and he immediately received it.

We readily learn to command those who yield willing obedience, and we soon claim that command as a right. The stronger our conviction of that right becomes, the less gratitude we have to those yielding to it. It was so with the child, who was remarkably intelligent for his age. The ready obedience of his mother, received no thanks, and as he grew older, any refusal to what he asked for was considered by him as an act of injustice on her part. Meadows dearly loved his boy, but his love was more tempered by prudence. Her errors as a mother went beyond those we have named. Although possessing the most perfect love and respect for her husband, her reasoning powers were not equal to his. Frequently the advice he gave her as to the management

of the boy, was unhappily considered by her as harsh and unreasonable. It occasionally happened that when pressed by her son's importunities, she gratified him, although her husband had prohibited the indulgence. The result was that the child was taught to conceal the circumstance from his father, and deeper lessons in deceit were easily acquired by him afterwards. His violent temper was controlled by his father when he happened to be present, but he gave full way to his tyranny when from under his eye. By degrees he became an adept in dissimulation, and his faults in this respect were too frequently concealed, and even occasionally taught him by his mother.

One morning when the son was between seven and eight years of age, the effects of this system, or rather want of system developed itself. A fresh stock of sweets had lately been purchased, and he requested his mother to give him some from the shop window. They were refused him. Again he applied and was again refused. He got angry. His father was at home and at dinner by himself in the little parlour. Hearing the altercation, he asked the cause, and Margaret this time correctly gave it him. He stopped all further dispute by peremptorily prohibiting his wife from indulging the boy in his whim, adding that as he had lately been out of health, it would most probably be injurious to him. The mind of the over-indulged boy, easily construed this into an act of injustice, and he resolved to possess himself of the sweets without his parent's permission. He watched

quietly for his opportunity. Shortly afterwards his father, having finished his dinner, went on his duties, and his mother for some moments left the shop, telling him to call her if she were wanted. He then crept stealthily to the window, his young heart fluttering with excitement. He looked cautiously around; no one saw him. He listened. The hurried action of his heart was forcing the blood so rapidly through his frame that he heard only its beating and a loud singing noise in his ears. He stretched out his hand and grasped the prize, and the next moment heard his mother's foot upon the stairs. He hastily thrust the sweets into his pocket, and then ran to meet her. Had she looked into his face at that instant, she would have detected him, for he was red as scarlet. Unfortunately her attention was drawn off by some one entering the shop at the moment, and she held his hand in hers without noticing him. He already possessed one attribute of the thief—dissimulation; skill and courage increased by practice. The next day he repeated the experiment, but there was a marked difference in the sensation accompanying it. The painful emotion of the previous day had fled, and a pleasurable excitement supplied its place. He was following the usual course. Physiologists tell us that painful sensations, by use, frequently become pleasurable, and these at last vanish. The savage suffers pain when he first tastes spirits, but soon finds pleasure in the sensation which was at first almost intolerable.

The boy frequently afterwards repeated the theft, but

all excitement had left him. Dishonesty began to appear natural to him, and by impunity it threatened to become habitual. At last a violent attack of indigestion betrayed him to his parents. When he recovered, he received a wholesome and severe punishment from his father. This he looked upon as an act of cruelty rather than a lesson in integrity, and the intercessions and excuses of his mother in his behalf, with her injudicious kindness and consolation afterwards, confirmed him in his opinion.

If the castigation given to the boy by his father did not convince him, it had at least the good effect of preventing the recurrence of any act of dishonesty. He was now sent to a day school in the neighbourhood. Meadows as has been already stated, had received a very respectable education. He knew its value, and was determined that his son should receive even greater advantages. To do the boy justice, neither the money nor the pains were thrown away upon him. He was naturally possessed of considerable ability, and was by no means deficient in perseverance. He wrote an excellent hand and had a somewhat extended knowledge of arithmetic, in fact he possessed what is generally termed the elements of a good commercial education. He left school when he was about fourteen years of age. His temper it must be owned had not improved; he was froward and self-willed, but no small portion of these faults was due to the excessive indulgence of his mother. His father's good sense struggled for a long

time against it, but without effect, and at last he relinquished all further opposition, determining in his own mind to get his son into some mercantile situation as quickly as possible.

Another element entered into this apparent acquiescence on the part of Meadows. For some time past his health had been very uncertain, and the fatiguing nature of his duties rendered him when at home, capable of but little exertion either physical or mental. He however continued unremittingly his researches after a situation for his son, and with some little difficulty he obtained one for him in the establishment of a large linen draper in the neighbourhood. The proprietor was a sharp man of business, severe and punctual in his habits, and expected implicit obedience and discipline on the part of his assistants. Young George Meadows was to receive half a crown a week at the commencement. He was to sleep and have his breakfast and supper at the house of his parents, his dinner was to be given him by his employer. His parents of course were to find him in clothes. The remuneration was certainly not very liberal, but George Meadows wisely considered that his son would be acquiring business habits and also a respectable reference, in case he should leave his present situation. As he grew older his services would become more valuable to his employer, and he could then conscientiously ask for an increase of salary. By way of encouragement, he allowed the weekly half crown to remain solely as pocket money for

his son, without deducting anything for clothes or lodging.

Young George entered on his duties with great zeal and alacrity, but he soon found that the half crown a week he was to receive, was to be fully earned before he obtained it. His master was rigorous, and his assistants were almost as despotic as the master himself. The petted boy also found the meal he was to receive at the house of business, was very different, both in comfort and quality, as well as variety, from those he had been accustomed to at his mother's. He was to dine after the other assistants had finished their dinner, and the scraps left by them were by no means of a description to occasion a lengthened stay at the table, even if such a waste of time had been allowed him. His duties in the establishment, were not altogether of an unpleasant character for a boy. His principal employment was to roll up and put upon the shelves the different articles which had been opened for the inspection of the customers during the day, and to carry out a portion of the different purchases which had been made at the shop.

Young Meadows had now been some months in his situation, when a circumstance occurred which caused Margaret great alarm. Her husband had been complaining of his health for some time past, but his illness had increased to such an extent that he was obliged to relinquish his duties, at any rate for some time. Anxious as his wife was, little did she suspect the terrible cala-

mity which hung over her. Her husband, whom she loved with an intensity of affection and respect which could not be surpassed, was in a rapid consumption. Had she been informed of it, so terrible would have been the news, it would have been hardly possible to have realized it. She attended him with the greatest care and affection, and although she could not hide from herself that he got weaker daily, that characteristic of the disease, the continued assertion of the patient—"that he felt better if he could only get a little strength," assured her.

Dreadful as the calamity of his death would shortly be to her, it was hardly greater than another which hung over her—the behaviour of her son at his employers. It almost appeared that the amount of misery due to human life had been accumulative since her entrance into the world, to burst with one overwhelming flood upon her.

Her son had continued with considerable assiduity at his employment, when one day he was sent out with some yards of ribbon to the house of a customer in the neighbourhood. A wrong direction had been written on the parcel by one of the assistants, although he afterwards denied having done so. It was in consequence left at a wrong house. In the evening the purchaser called to ask the reason she had not received the ribbon. Enquiries were made, the fact of the error established, and young George was sent to rectify the mistake. On arriving at the house where he had left the parcel, to his great surprise the woman who now opened the door

denied having seen it. George explained to her that he had left it in the morning, and that a young woman in the hall, with a bonnet and shawl on had taken it from him. She told him that that person did not belong to the house, that she had only applied the same morning for the housemaid's situation which was vacant, but that her references appeared of such an indifferent description that she was declined without even asking for her character.

It now appeared certain that the parcel was lost. The linen draper was exceedingly angry, and told George he should stop the full value out of his wages. The boy was naturally very indignant at this treatment, and remonstrated with his employer, assuring him at the same time that the fault was none of his. It was however of no avail, and the stoppage of three weeks wages was insisted on. The boy could hardly conceal his rage at this treatment. He had already, in imagination, spent the money which he rightly considered he had justly earned, but there was no remedy, and he submitted sullenly to the injustice. At the termination of the fortnight, when the shopman who had committed the blunder was taunting him with the circumstance, George answered sharply, and the young man gave him a blow. A scuffle ensued between them, and the result was that a lamp glass was broken by them. The fact was reported to the master by the assistant, who of course laid the whole blame on George, and his employer in consequence stopped another week's wages to pay for

the damage. His anger now knew no bounds, and he determined to possess himself of the money he considered his due. The fruit of his first crime had left its seeds, and it now taught him how to seek redress. It whispered to him, if he could not obtain that which was his right openly, it could not be unfair to possess himself of it surreptitiously ; and then pointed out the way.

In delivering his parcels, he had frequently to pass before the house of a dealer in marine stores, whose windows were filled with placards offering the utmost value for anything which might be brought him. Among other things mentioned, were tailor's trimmings, remnants of cloth, silk and ribbons in any quantity. When he first heard that his wages were to be stopped, he thought through this man he could easily revenge himself on his master, as anything he might take could immediately be turned into money at his shop. The remains of integrity were still latent within him, and he abstained from any dishonesty, but the last act of injustice on the part of his master, determined him. In an evil hour he secreted half a roll of ribbon from the stock and took it to this man's house. Arrived before it, he hesitated for some minutes to enter. Twice he advanced to the door, and each time his courage failed him, or rather his better angel drew him back. The owner of the shop, who had been watching him, advanced to the door and made some ordinary remark to him on the weather. The boy answered him, and after a few minutes conversation, the man invited him to

enter. The boy, still timid, refused, and appeared about to leave the spot, when the fellow said,

“I wish you would take one of my bills with you, and if you ever have anything to sell, you would give me a turn.” Nobody in the neighbourhood gives as much for things as I do, and I deal in almost anything.”

“Do you ever buy ribbons, or remnants of silk,” asked the boy.

“I think I do, more in them than anything else; have you anything in that line to sell?”

“No, not now, but I have sometimes.”

“Well, I shall always be glad to deal with you. What sort of ribbons do you have to sell? Not very good I suppose. You haven’t got a sample with you now, have you?”

“Yes I have, but I have not time to stop now.”

“Oh, come in for a moment, and let us see what its like. I can tell you to a farthing what its worth.”

The boy entered, and produced from his pocket the ribbon.

“That’s the sort I have to sell sometimes, what will you give for it?!”

“Oh, I can’t give much for a remnant like this, because respectable people don’t like short pieces. I could’t give more than six shillings for that.”

“Oh, that’s too little by half.”

“But you don’t want to sell it you say. If you did I should offer more, so as to tempt you to come again.”

“If I sold that now, what would you give me?”

“I wouldn’t mind giving you ten shillings, but so help me G——, I wouldn’t give it to any one else.”

“Well, I’ll take ten shillings.”

The money was given him and he left the shop. The fellow, who was a notorious receiver of stolen goods, quickly perceived from the hesitation and confused manner of the lad, as well as from his willingness to receive a third of its value, that the ribbon had been stolen. He said nothing of his suspicions at the moment, but determined on following George home. On making some enquiries, he soon found out where he was employed, and correctly judging the real fact, determined to get the unfortunate boy into his power. A few days afterwards he apparently accidentally met him in the street, and accosting him in a very friendly manner, asked him if he had anything else to dispose of, as he was always ready to give him the full value for whatever he might have for sale. The boy was greatly annoyed at the meeting, and shewed it in his countenance. He replied somewhat sharply that he had nothing for sale, and attempted to walk away.

“Why should you cut me in that manner,” said the man, “I don’t want to buy, if you don’t want to sell. There ain’t any harm in my trying to do a little business, is there? especially when its as much to your profit as mine.”

“I don’t want to cut you,” said George, “but I’m in a hurry now, when I’ve anything to sell I will bring it to you.” The man continued to follow him for a short

time, but finding the boy would not enter into conversation, left him.

The next evening as George was returning to his father's after his day's work was over, somebody touched him on the arm, and on turning round, he found the marine-store dealer by his side.

"I say, young gentleman," he began, "I am afraid you've been getting both of us into trouble, for a policeman has been watching my house to day as a cat would watch a hole. What I want to know is, where did you get that ribbon from, you sold me the other day?"

"It was my own," said George, trying to put a bold face on the matter, "if it had not been, I shouldn't have sold it to you."

"Its all very well, but every man that takes a thing which does not belong to him, says the same thing, or that somebody he never saw before asked him to sell it for him, and promised him a shilling for his trouble, or something of the sort, but it generally is found out that they have not come by it honestly after all."

"Once more I tell you it was my own," said George, "so leave me alone about it will you."

"Do you know I very much doubt it."

"Well," said George, "if you are not content with your bargain, I am willing to give you your money back again."

"No, no, that won't suit me. I've a character to lose. If its all right, I suppose you will have no objection to my going to Mr. G.'s, and asking him if he knows anything about it?"

"Oh, pray don't," George exclaimed.

"Oh, there is something wrong in it, is there? I thought so from the beginning."

"No there is not, but I should not like you to go there, it would seem so strange."

"Strange or not, I shall go, and you can come with me if you like, and then you can see all fair.

"I hope you won't," said the boy.

"Then you have stolen it," said the man, regarding George sternly, who now trembled violently, "you have robbed your master then?"

The boy would have run away, but he felt as if all power had left him. The villain saw the victim was his own.

"Now, are you not ashamed of yourself, to treat a good master in that manner, why its scandalous. Here, you are well paid, well fed, clothed, and lodged by him, and you reward his kindness by robbing him."

"I am not well paid," said George, glad of an excuse, "and besides that, my master has cheated me out of my money."

"Very likely indeed! its so often that masters rob their servants, an't it? Do you think I'm fool enough to believe that."

"Its true though."

"What wages do you get there?"

"Half-a-crown a week."

"Now you are telling me another lie."

"No, I'm not, I only get half-a-crown a week, and

my master has stopped three weeks' wages, although there was no fault of mine."

"If I could believe that, it would put a very different face on the matter, and I should not go to your master. It can't be true though, or perhaps he boards, clothes, and lodges you besides; even then it would be very little for a young man of your appearance."

"He don't clothe or lodge me, my father and mother are obliged to do that, and they are not too well off themselves."

"If that's really true, all I can say is, it's infamous, It's not only robbing a poor fellow of his time and labour, but his honest and industrious parents as well. No, no, my boy, if that's the case, you've nothing to fear from me. I'm your staunch friend through thick and thin. I wonder now if your master would be rascal enough to prosecute any one for robbing him. I don't believe the law would allow him. I remember a short time ago, a judge telling the manager of a theatre, who was prosecuting a check-taker for robbing him, 'Why, is it true you only pay that young man twelve shillings a week (the poor fellow didn't look much older than you do). You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Do you consider that's enough for six evenings employment. Why, I consider you the worst of the two. Every honest man is bound to compensate his workman justly for his labour.' Well the jury found him not guilty, and very right too. It's such fellows as these that make the thieves and those who take only what they are entitled

to, get punished for it. However, don't you be frightened about this little affair, I shan't split. I consider you're the one that's been robbed, and not your master." After a little more conversation in the same style, the man left. He had, however, given George a very pressing invitation to visit him, and the invitation had been readily accepted.

Some days passed without anything more transpiring on the subject, and the lad, on reflection, had determined in his mind not to visit the man again. Notwithstanding his plausible manner, he had a secret dread of him. Although the arguments of the scoundrel had completely stopped all conscientious scruples for the fault he had committed, he determined not to be dishonest again. In his position, it too frequently happens that good resolutions are very difficult to keep. One day, when occupied in folding up some goods which were open on the counter, a man entered the shop and enquired for some trifling article. The sound of the man's voice thrilled through the boy. Though dreading the recognition, he raised his eyes, and the keeper of the marine store shop stood before him. The fellow appeared to be carelessly looking around him, when suddenly his eyes fell upon George. There was in them an expression so keen, so full of threat and meaning, that the wretched lad felt as if he should have fallen on the spot.

In a moment he recovered himself, and was a totally altered being. He felt himself to be a thief, and the associate of a villain. He no longer struggled against

his fall, but determined on visiting the man as he returned home from his day's work.

When the evening came, he went straight from his employer's to the man's house. Arrived there, he stopped for some seconds in front of the shop, hesitating between dishonesty and integrity. Before he had decided, for the principles of honesty were not yet dead within him, the man came to the door; he had, in fact, been watching for him. George advanced towards him and put out his hand, which the other took in a very friendly and jovial manner. "I was afraid my dear fellow you had forgotten me," he said. "I seldom take a liking to people, but when I do I am always their friend. I naturally don't like them to forget me, for my feelings cut sharp, and I must say, I did feel hurt at your not coming to see me as you had promised, but that's all over now. Come in and let's have a drop of something while we talk."

He then conducted George into an inner room at the back of the shop, and they seated themselves at the table.

"Now what will you have? I've as nice a glass of orange wine as ever you tasted. I've something stronger, but perhaps you're not old enough for that sort of thing, although you're such a fine grown fellow."

All boys like to be thought older than they are, and this the scoundrel knew perfectly well.

"Oh, dear no," replied the lad, somewhat piqued. "I am older perhaps than you think for. I like a glass of something good, as well as others. I generally have

a glass of gin and water every evening." This was a lie ; more sober people than his parents never existed, and it is more than probable that he had never tasted gin in his life.

"Oh ! Oh ! I am very glad to hear it, there's nothing I like better than a social glass with a friend." A bottle and two tumblers were immediately placed before them. The man mixed a glass of spirits and water for the boy, but although he made it very sweet, it was not sufficiently strong to incur any danger of intoxication ; he then made another of the same strength for himself, not to excite the others jealousy. The spirit and water soon loosened George's tongue, and gave him courage as well. The man soon found that in a youth so handsome, vanity was not wanting. While conversing on indifferent matters, he opened a drawer in the table for the ostensible purpose of looking for a key. He appeared annoyed at not finding it, and under the pretence of searching for it more minutely, he took from the drawer several articles of cheap showy jewellery, as well as a handsome looking silver watch, and placed them carelessly on the table. He then furtively watched the boy's eyes, and found they were fixed on the watch. There is perhaps no article so much coveted by a lad springing into manhood as a watch, and it is useless to say, that George coveted the one before him, and the man knew it. He pretended to be vexed at the loss of the key, and rapidly replaced the jewellery in the drawer and closed it, leaving the watch upon the table. A few moments afterwards, while

continuing the conversation on some ordinary subject, he took up the watch, opened it and pretended to be minutely examining the works.

“Are you a judge of a watch,” he said.

“No, I am not.”

“That’s a pity, if you had been, I could have shown you as excellent a set of works as ever you saw in your life. Let me see your watch, and I will show you the difference.”

“I hav’nt got one,” said George sheepishly.

“Not got a watch at your age? why you must find it very inconvenient, don’t you.”

“Yes I do, but my father can’t afford to give me one, and I can’t buy one out of my half-a-crown a week, so I’m obliged to go without.”

“Don’t talk to me about that half-a-crown a week, it puts me in a passion to hear of it. That master of your’s ought to be transported. But about this watch. I’ve got it to sell for a poor fellow that’s in trouble, and it must go for what it will fetch. By the bye, if you’d like to wear it for a week or two you can, and then you can let me know how it goes.”

The boy’s eyes told his joy; there was no occasion for an answer.

“Let me see if you know how to wind it up.”

George readily obeyed. “Not so, you’ll break the spring that way, let me show you.”

When the lesson was over, the man offered to go part of the way home with him, and they started off to-

gether, at last he wished George good night, after having obtained a promise from him to come and take another glass with him in the course of a few days. At home, George could with difficulty restrain himself from leaving his sick father's room to examine his watch. He made some excuse about being tired, to go to his bedroom, and there inspected it at his leisure. He opened the works and looked minutely into them, and then attempted to wind it up again. Before he fell asleep, the wish to possess it as his own became so strong, that he determined, if possible, on finding the means to purchase it. To hope to obtain it out of the scanty sum he received weekly as wages would have been absurd, and although his repugnance at committing an act of dishonesty was greatly diminished by the conviction that his services were worth a much larger remuneration than he received, he still hesitated at the thought of further robbing his employer.

After passing a restless night, the sight of the watch the next morning again brought dishonest thoughts into his mind. When he arrived at the house of business, his first care was to let the shopmen see that he was possessed of a watch. This was easily done, but it brought forth the somewhat embarrassing question, as to whom it belonged. To have said it had been lent to him, would have been to have lost the dignity acquired by having it in his possession, so he unhesitatingly stated that it had been given to him by his uncle. No sooner was the lie

uttered, than the desire to keep the watch became irrevocable, and in the course of the day, when a favourable opportunity presented itself, he abstracted another roll of ribbon from the stock of his employers. On his way home in the evening, he again called at the marine store shop. The owner professed great pleasure at seeing him, and made him as welcome as he did on the former evening. After a little general conversation, he asked the boy if the watch went well?

“Very well indeed,” was the answer.

“Ah, I wish I could afford to make you a present of that watch, but I can’t, for I’m not rich, however, it’s a great pity. The watch must go at the price I’m told to get for it, and there’s no friend of mine to buy it!”

“What do you want for it,” said the boy in a careless manner.

“Why it cost six pounds making not a month ago, and I’m told to ask four pounds for it, but to take three for it, if I can’t get four.”

“When must it be paid for?”

“By this day week at the latest, but why do you ask?”

“Why,” replied George hesitatingly, “I should like to buy it myself, if I could.”

“Then if I was you I would, and I tell you so openly; I consider there’s no harm in taking anything from a man who treats another as that master of your’s treats you.”

“But,” said George, colouring deeply, “if I took as many things at once as would pay for that watch, I should be found out directly.

“Oh, there’s no occasion for you to do that, I will pay the money at once, and you can give me five shillings a week ’till the money’s made up. I don’t like selling a thing to you, but, as I said before, I can’t afford to give it, so I’ll tell you what I’ll do. The silver in the case is worth two pounds, ten shillings. You shall only pay that for the watch, and the other ten shillings I’ll pay myself.”

George was greatly pleased at this mark of the man’s kindness.

“Whenever,” continued the man, “you have anything to sell, bring it to me, and I can always either turn it into money myself, or find a friend who can.”

“I have some ribbon here with me now, what can you get me for it?”

“For that I could not get you more than fifteen shillings.”

“Why, there are thirty yards, and the selling price is one shilling and sixpence a yard.”

“Very likely, but perhaps you don’t know that all this sort of goods, has a manufacturer’s private mark in them, and can be easily traced. I don’t much like to have anything to do with it myself, but to oblige you I’ll get it done.”

“Then I’ll leave it for the first three weeks’ money

on the watch." The bargain was struck, and the boy went home with it in his possession.

It would be too revolting a task to trace the degradation of the wretched boy further. He had drawn upon himself so vast a load of misery, that indignation at his crime would be lost in the compassion elicited by his wretchedness. He was the abject slave of a pitiless scoundrel. He was prohibited by him from calling again at his house. When the boy had purloined anything from his employer, he was ordered to give it to a third person, whom he was to meet at some place named by the receiver, always at a distance from his own house, so that the continuity was lost. The sums he received in payment were trifling, and generally, as is usual in such cases, squandered away uselessly. What to do he knew not. He was not old enough for a soldier, or he would have enlisted, but even then he might have been detected and brought back.

In the mean time, the health of the father had been rapidly declining. He had been now for many weeks confined to his room, and his death was almost daily expected. The terrible truth was now known to Margaret, but she seemed hardly able to understand it. Night and day she was by the bedside of her husband, fatigue seemed to have lost all power over her. George Meadows supported his illness with great fortitude and resignation. He now knew perfectly well his hopeless condition, and the fatal nature of the disease. He fully appreciated the

attention and kindness of his wife, and would keep his eyes fixed on her with an expression of unutterable affection and gratitude, which she would answer with a smile so slight, so faint, the tear it attempted to conceal, almost burst through it. His son saw him morning and evening, but the terrible secret which oppressed him dulled the keenness of his sorrow. As death approached, the poor fellow's feeling of religion increased, and one part of Margaret's duties was to read a portion of the Scriptures to him night and morning. Never was a religious worship conducted by a worthier priestess. That crude untaught loving woman prayed in all the majesty of pure womanhood. Every noble, every pious sentiment which God has so abundantly planted in her sex, was in her unstained and uncontaminated. Could there be a God, and her prayer unheard? No, it would have been contrary to reason, contrary to religion, contrary to His Divine Nature.

At last, the hour of the poor fellow's death arrived. His son had seen him in the morning before he left for his employer's, and his father did not then appear worse than he had been for some days. About two o'clock in the afternoon, a female neighbour of his mother's entered the shop, and seeing the proprietor in it, whispered something to him, "Certainly," he replied aloud, "he may go immediately; Meadows," he continued, "you may go home, and you need not return to-day." The woman waited for him, and as soon as they had left the shop, she kindly took his hand and said to him.

“ You must not be frightened my dear, it is what we must all come to. Your poor father is dying, but he has always been a good and honest man, and death don't make him afraid.”

The boy said nothing, but walked rapidly on, completely absorbed in his own thoughts, He had naturally a great respect for his parent, but the idea haunted him that his father suspected him, although he had never said a word that could occasion such an alarm, unless it were his frequent exhortations to his son, always to follow the paths of honesty and truth. It was therefore with a mingled sentiment of sorrow and fear that he entered the dying man's room. He found his father greatly changed since the morning. He was breathing with great difficulty, and dissolution was rapidly approaching. His mother was seated at the bedside, and held her husband's hand clasped in her own. George placed himself on the other side of the bed. The dying man looked at him for a moment, and then continued his gaze on his wife. His inspirations became gradually slower, and the pauses between them longer. All expression but one had left his face, and that only shewed itself occasionally. During the momentary returns of life and consciousness there beamed upon his countenance, as he looked at his wife, an indescribable sentiment of love. No painful attempt at a smile was now made on her part. Her eye was steadfastly fixed on his, though her sight was dimmed by the torrent of tears pouring down her face. Suddenly, respiration stopped. His head turned slowly

and deliberately towards the side of the bed where his son was standing. A peculiarly stern expression was on his face, and he gazed on the boy with a strange fixedness. He continued thus without breathing, for a few seconds, when a pale blue tinge spread over his pallid features, his eye glazed, and life was extinct.

A cry of intense anguish burst from poor Margaret, as she threw herself on the body. One half of herself had been torn from her, and she felt it fully. With her arms round the frame of him whom she had so fondly loved, who had been her guide, her support, her husband, she wept as only a woman can weep who has lost the loved companion of her joys and sorrows, who was happy in giving her happiness, and who took upon himself the heavier portion of the few griefs which had hitherto fallen on her. But why dwell upon the scene, no one but a loving woman could understand its sorrows, no pen could describe it.

How different was the effect of the father's death upon the son. That peculiar look which he had cast on him as he expired, caused evidently by some excentric influence in the stoppage of life's machinery was interpreted by the guilty boy that his father possessed at that moment a knowledge of his crime. The feeling came over him with singular intensity. It would have been difficult even for the experienced physiologist to have determined whether, at that particular moment, the father was living or dead. The son accepted it in both conditions. It seemed

to him a warning both from heaven and earth—the man and the angel. Terror stricken, he could not take his eyes from the corpse, and yet trembled to remain in the room. With his gaze fixed on his dead father's face, he receded to the door; having gained it, he hurriedly descended the staircase, and remained in the darkened shop, as the farthest from the death chamber, in an agony of terror. There he remained for more than an hour till he heard his mother's foot on the stairs. She was still weeping bitterly. He went to meet her, she pressed him to her heart, and then seating herself on a chair gave uncontrollable sway to her sorrow. In a short time, the same female neighbour that had brought the boy word at the house of business that his father was dying, came in and used whatever consolation was in her power to calm the widow. She remained with her till the evening, and then took George to her own house, where he was to remain till the funeral was over, and she then returned to keep Margaret company till the morning.

The next day the boy was obliged to attend at the house of business. The lesson he had received, had with him its full weight, and he determined, come what might, he would never commit another act of dishonesty, and during the whole week, he abstained from any communication with the marine-store dealer. In the meantime, Margaret was exerting herself to prepare mourning, the most painful part of that duty being to choose the widow's cap. When she looked at herself in the glass

with it on, she thought that no grief was equal to her grief, little did she dream that another sorrow scarcely less terrible hung over her.

The preparations for the funeral were now nearly completed, and on the evening before the interment was to take place, George was at his mother's. The undertaker was momentarily expected to close down the lid of the coffin, and Margaret told her son to accompany her to take one last look at the corpse, before it would be hidden from them for ever. The boy attempted to form some excuse, but Margaret would not admit of any.

“You must come now dear, or it will be too late.”

He rose from his chair, but again sat down.

“I don't like mother,” said he.

“George, I am astonished at you. Why not?”

“I don't like seeing a dead body.”

“Not your own father, and such a father as he was. I am ashamed of you.” He still hesitated.

“Come George my dear, why should we be afraid, when we have done nothing wrong? What can we have to be afraid of?”

This argument terrified him, for the last look of his father was still fresh on his memory.

“Come George my dear, come with me.”

He rose, took her hand, and they arrived at the foot of the stairs. His courage again fled, and he refused to move. She spoke angrily to him. He hesitated for another moment, and then bursting into a flood of tears,

threw himself upon his mother's neck exclaiming, "Oh, mother, mother, let me tell you all about it."

Margaret, greatly astonished, returned with him into the little parlour, and then listened breathlessly to the whole narrative of his misdeeds. When he had concluded, she said nothing for sometime, but sat motionless. A person noiselessly passed through the shop, and entered the sitting room; it was the undertaker.

"Can I go up stairs Mrs. Meadows," he said.

"Yes," she mechanically answered, she knew he came to fasten down the lid of the coffin, but her wish to behold her husband for the last time was forgotten. Although she knew well how he was occupied, she paid no attention to it. The undertaker, his sad duty over, came down stairs and told her at what hour the next day the funeral would take place.

"I will be ready," she mechanically answered, and he then left her. The evening was closing in before she had determined what course she would adopt. At last she was resolved. Without offering any reproaches to her son, she told him to get ready to go out with her. When she had put on her bonnet, shawl, and widow's cap, she took him by the hand, and having locked the street door as she left the house, walked rapidly and silently with him till she arrived at Mary's house, who then lived in the Goswell Street Road. Having ascertained that Mary was at home, she left George in the street while she spoke to her friend on the subject of her

visit. Mary had heard that George Meadows could no recover—she was not aware of his death, but Margaret's widow's cap informed her. All the little ill-feeling which had existed in the breast of the kind hearted woman vanished, and she began some words of womanly condolence, when Margaret, unable to speak, rapidly made signs to her with her hand to be silent. In a few moments, she partially recovered herself.

“Mary,” said she, “don't ask me any questions now, for I can't answer you. My boy George has got into bad company. I want you to let him be here for a day or two, if you can manage it, but don't want any one to know where he is.”

Mary readily consented, promising to take great care of him, and not let him out of her sight. Her husband, she said, had gone into the country for a few days, and not even he should know of it.

“Oh Mary, I knew you would stand my friend, don't let him be seen. I can't tell you anything now, my heart's too full.”

“You know you may trust me Margaret, I will take as much care of him as if he were my own son.” Margaret attempted to thank her, but could not, and she kissed her instead; she then called the boy in from the street.

“I must go now Mary, but I will see you again in a few days.” She kissed her son, and then bidding Mary adieu, with a quivering lip and filling eye, she left them, and proceeded homewards. Oh! how sad and desolate

was Margaret's walk home; it was nearly midnight when she reached it. She unlocked the door and entered the solitary dwelling. The grave itself could not have been more silent than that house. As she closed the door, she seemed to have shut out the world. Silent and breathless herself, she seemed to have lost all attribute of the living. An irresistible attraction drew her forward. Noiselessly as a spectre she passed on, ascended the staircase, and opened the door of the room where the dead body of her husband lay. A dark cloud passed from before the moon, and its full beams fell upon the coffin prepared for the next day's funeral. She approached it, and placing both arms on it, leant her face upon them and wept bitterly.

The next day, the funeral took place. Margaret was ready by the time appointed, and sat in the little parlour waiting for the undertaker. He brought with him the hood for her to wear; and having placed it on her head with the assistance of one of her female neighbours, he asked for her son that he might put the hatband on his hat. "He cannot go with us," said Margaret.

"Not go with you," said her friend, astonished?

"He is engaged and cannot go," stammered Margaret.

Her friend fortunately came to her relief by expressing her anger at the lad's master for not allowing him to attend his father's funeral. Her mistake saved Margaret considerable embarrassment.

That heartrending sound—the heavy tread of the

undertaker's men as they lowered the coffin down the stairs—was heard, the short procession was formed, and they proceeded to the church. The only mourner was Margaret, her friend having remained to take charge of the house. The sorrow of the widow appeared, perhaps to those who saw her, less than the occasion required ; little did they know the terrible anxieties which shared in her mind the grief for her husband's death. Once, and once only, was she overcome. It was at the moment when the grave-digger threw from his spade some earth upon the coffin—dust to dust, ashes to ashes—when the rattling sound recalled her for a moment entirely to her loss. With a burst of grief, she bent forward to take one last look at that which contained all that remained in this world of one so dear to her. She tottered, and her legs bent under her. She would have fallen had not one of the assistants taken her by the arm, and supported her till the end. The ceremony over, they returned to the house, and her neighbour, after offering her all the consolation in her power, left her.

Margaret sat for nearly an hour collecting her thoughts, and resolving in her mind what had better be done in the dreadful emergency. She had but one *datum* for her calculations—integrity, and that stood by her in the hour of her need, though at a severe and heavy cost, After she had dressed herself for walking ; with the tears hardly dry upon her face, and still sparkling in the crape of her dress, she sought the house of her son's employer. She found him in the shop, and asked him if she could

speaking a word with him in private. He assented, and took her into the counting house.

“I am very sorry to tell you Sir,” said Margaret, “that my son has not acted honestly by you. He has made some bad friends, and they have led him wrong, but I am ready and willing to pay you for all you have lost.”

The linen draper was naturally much astonished at the news.

“In what way?” he enquired, “has he acted dishonestly?”

“He has been in the habit for some time past of taking goods from your shop. Oh, Sir, pray forgive him, and I will pay you for everything to the last farthing I have.”

“What has he taken?” Margaret enumerated as well as she was able, the several articles mentioned by her son. The master was thunderstruck at the information. He could not have believed it possible he could have been robbed to such an extent without being aware of it.

“I cannot forgive him,” he said, “I should not be doing my duty to my fellow tradesmen if I did such a thing. Where is your son now?” “That Sir, without offence to you, I can’t tell you, pray don’t ask me.”

“Then I will send for a policeman at once.”

“Oh, pray don’t Sir,” said Margaret, in a state of the utmost terror, “if you’ve a child of your own, have pity on mine.”

The linen draper walked angrily to the shop door ; fortunately no policeman was in sight, and he waited to see one pass. In the mean time, he reflected on the subject. He could not give the mother in charge, she had evidently not been implicated in the robbery. To do him justice, he felt, notwithstanding his loss, considerable compassion for her, at least for a nature as calculating and selfish as his own. He remembered also, that he would most probably not be able to find the boy. He likewise reflected on Margaret's offer to pay for the goods. In a few minutes he again entered the counting house.

"You must be aware," he said, "that without any ill feeling towards you, I cannot look over a thing of the kind without knowing more about the matter. You must tell me where your son is. I am his master, and have a right to know."

"If it's your duty as a master to punish him, Sir, it's my duty as a mother to save him if I can. If you will only forgive him, Sir, I will always be grateful, remember, I don't want you to lose anything by him, I am ready to pay for everything he has taken."

"But I don't know what the value is, or whether you have the money to pay for it. It evidently amounts to a very considerable sum. Why I can make out between fifty and sixty pounds already."

"I have brought eleven pounds with me, and there is the Savings' Bank book for thirty-two more. It's made out in my name, and I will give you an order to receive it; I will sell the stock and lease of my shop as soon

as I can, and then pay you the remainder. I am sure she continued, her eyes filling with tears, my poor husband would have done it. All I've got came from him, and in God's name it may go if it can only save his boy."

"Well, well, I don't want to be hard upon you. I am willing," he said after a few moments' reflection, "to take it provided the loss does not exceed the amount you have stated; if it does I shall consider myself at liberty to prosecute him."

"I can't agree to that, Sir, either you must forgive him entirely, or I will pay nothing. I want to save my son's character, and I must do so before leaving this house, or you must do as you please."

The linen draper reflected for a moment on the expense of the prosecution, as well as the total loss of the goods, and then accepted her offer.

"In what way do you wish it to be done?"

"I will give you the money, and make you the order on the Savings' Bank; the rest I will send you as soon as I can. I want you to give me a receipt for money my boy owes you for goods he has had of you."

Although objecting, in his mind, to the transaction as illegal, he found, from the determined manner of the widow, those were the only terms he was likely to obtain, he took the money and the book, as well as the order for the deposit, and gave a receipt on account.

When Margaret returned home, she noticed an ill-looking man examining the closed up house. He watched

her while opening the door, and then sauntered carelessly away. Without any reason for her suspicion, she imagined that this man was her son's accomplice, or rather misleader. She went into her bedroom, and partially drew aside the window curtain. He was at the corner of the street watching the house. This gave her considerable annoyance, as she had wished in the evening to visit her son at Mary's, but she did not like leaving the house without some one to take charge of it, and again she feared he might follow her, and thus find out his abode. She came down stairs, and immediately afterwards the shop door opened, and the man entered.

"Are you Mrs. Meadows," he said?

"Yes, I am, what is it you want with me," said Margaret, scarcely able to conceal her annoyance.

"Oh, I only want to ask after your son. I'm a great friend of his."

"What's your name then?"

"Oh! my name? My name's Smith."

"I never heard him speak of you," said Margaret.

Well, I wonder at that. Where is he?"

"He's not at home now. Do you want to see him very particularly?"

"Why, it is very particular.!"

"Cannot you let me know what it's about, and I will tell him?"

"Oh, no, it's between ourselves."

"But I am his mother."

"Ah!" said the man with a sneer, "very often young

men keep more from their mothers than from any one else."

The look of disgust in Margaret's countenance was so unmistakable, that the fellow could not but perceive it.

"I don't mean any offence," he said, "but the long and short of it is, I must see him, and see him I will, so it's no use his keeping out of my way. But what's the house shut up for," he continued; then looking at the widow's cap. "I'm sorry if I've come at the wrong time; I wish when you see him, you'd tell him to call on me as soon as he can."

"Where do you live?"

"Oh, no matter, he knows where I live well enough. Tell him he must come to-morrow, or he'll get himself into trouble. Nobody shall treat me in the manner he does. I know that."

This interview caused Margaret the greatest terror, and it required some caution, on her part, to know how to proceed. She was determined to break off this man's connection with her son, but it had to be done in such a manner as not to injure the boy's reputation. She at last decided on consulting one of the few acquaintances her husband had in the neighbourhood—he was a serjeant in the police. She explained to him that her son had formed a bad acquaintance; that this man had found out where he lived, and insisted on seeing him, and that she wished to break off the acquaintance. She then asked him how to accomplish it. He listened to her

with great kindness, told her if the man should call again, to inform him that her son would be at home at six o'clock in the evening, and request him to call again at that hour. In the meantime, she was to inform him of the circumstance, and he would arrange to be present. That her son had better not be there, and of course she would not say anything which could lead the fellow to suppose that the police had been informed of his visit.

Ten days afterwards the man called again, and in a most rude and off-hand manner, told Margaret that he insisted on seeing her son, and that if she did not find him directly, he should stay there till she did. Margaret quietly told him that if he wished to see him, he must call again at six o'clock. The fellow said, he would be punctual, and then left the house. After he had gone, Margaret went to the police sergeant, and told him of the circumstance. At the appointed time, the marine store dealer returned, and she took him as directed into the little parlour behind the shop. Immediately afterwards, a third party joined them—it was the police sergeant.

“This man,” said Margaret, “is continually following my son, and I believe for no good; do you know anything of him Mr. C.?”

“Oh, I know the gentleman well enough,” said the sergeant, “we've met before now.” The fellow said he was mistaken, he had never seen him before,

“No, no, I'm not mistaken, and if you like I'll tell you where it was we met. Now, if you'll take my

advice, you'd walk yourself quietly off and never return, but don't go out of the neighbourhood, for I very much suspect we shall want you again before long. But for the present, at any rate, go from this lady's house, and don't you ever trouble her again. I know her, and I know you, and you're not suited for each other. There, be off."

The fellow then slunk away, muttering something about "it's being a hard thing to be mistaken for other people." As soon as he was gone, the sergeant told Margaret that he was a known bad character, but that most probably she would never see him again. In case, however, she received the slightest annoyance from him, to call at the police station, and he would immediately put a stop to it.

The next care of Margaret, was to find a purchaser for her stock, fixtures, and furniture. This was accomplished with little trouble, for a very respectable small general trade had been acquired by her attention and industry, and several purchasers applied for the refusal. At last, one was accepted, the money was paid, and the transfer completed. Margaret having arranged with the linen draper, left the neighbourhood, where she had resided so many years in almost unmingled happiness, but where at last she had experienced such terrible misfortunes.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Margaret left Camberwell, she took two small furnished rooms, for herself and son, near her friend Mary's. As soon as she had obtained a little tranquility, she began not only to look calmly into her present circumstances, but also to make plans for the future. From the sale of her business and furniture, after she had paid the funeral expenses, trade debts, and settled with her son's employer, there remained only forty pounds to begin the world with anew ; this sum she invested in the Savings' Bank. It was but little ; but her son's defalcations had been greater than she had imagined. Her first care was to find him occupation, but grave difficulties presented themselves. In the first place, he had no reference, It would have been useless for her to have applied to her son's late employer for a character—it would have been grossly dishonest on his part to have given it. Again, if he remained in London, she would be in continued fear lest the marine store-dealer should discover his address, and renew the acquaintance.

Her friend Mary again came to her aid. She had a brother in Canterbury, who managed a cutler's and ironmonger's business for an aged and infirm widow. From the incapacity of the latter, he was more the master of the concern than the servant, and as his integrity and industry were unimpeachable, the old lady was fortunate in possessing so able an assistant. Mary wrote to him, requesting him, if possible, to find a situation for young George Meadows in that town, and after a little correspondence, one was obtained, which perfectly suited Margaret's views—her boy was to be employed in the same house with Mary's brother. Not a word was said about his peculations in his last situation—in fact, Mary knew them not. With an exquisite feeling of delicacy towards her friend, she overcame that feminine weakness—curiosity, and asked not one question about the mysterious affair. The beadle, indeed, seemed anxious to know more of the subject, as he judged from Margaret's pertinacious silence, that all was not as it should be. "It was not," he said, "his way of business, he liked everything open and above board," whatever that may be. But stern and Roman like to all out of his own house, especially boys, he still had a superior at home—and that superior was his wife. It is, perhaps, needless to say, he was soon silenced, but certainly not convinced.

Before George proceeded to Canterbury, Margaret had to provide him with an outfit. It had been agreed that he was to board and lodge in the house, but his mother

was to provide him with clothes. He was to receive one shilling and sixpence a week pocket money for the first year, and was to increase a shilling a week each succeeding year he remained, until he was twenty years of age. The dress necessary for his business, caused Margaret a severe diminution of her little capital, and the continued expense of clothing him, threatened to be a severe loss on her very limited resources, but every thing was willingly sacrificed to the desire of seeing her son an honest and respectable man. All was at last ready for his departure, and on its eve, Margaret called George into her room ; determined on reasoning with him on his future conduct, and explaining to him the sin and folly of the past. She looked in his face, but it reminded her so forcibly of his father, that the object she had determined on, almost escaped her. As she gazed on the face of the handsome boy, all was absorbed in the memory of that being, now lost to her for ever. Her eyes filled with tears, and the interview ended by her kissing him and sending him out of the room, for her heart was too full to reason with him. She had, from that moment in her own mind, forgiven him ; and when once afterwards, the thought of writing to him on the subject occurred to her, after she had written a few lines it appeared to her as almost an act of unkindness ; so the pen was thrown aside, and the subject never again alluded to. The watch he had obtained from the marine store-dealer she had sold, and the proceeds she applied towards her payment to the linen draper, but before

parting with him, she placed in his hands the one which had belonged to his father, and made him promise never to part with it. She had an undefined superstitious feeling with regard to it. She almost considered it would be a charm against dishonesty.

After the departure of her son, Margaret, as might naturally be expected, was for some time very low-spirited. From the hour of his birth till his departure for Canterbury, with the exception of his short stay at Mary's, he had never been one whole day absent from her sight. Mary soon perceived the effect which the loss of George's society had upon her mind, and persuaded her to rent a room in her own house, till Margaret could find some situation. Unfortunately, that was not as easily accomplished in her case, as it would have been in her friend Mary's. The latter was an excellent cook, and could easily have found employment, but a housemaid, who is no longer young, has more difficulty in getting suited. At last she obtained a situation. It was to take charge of some chambers in the city, for a solicitor whose private house was in the suburbs. Her duties were fulfilled in a just and conscientious manner, but although they were of a very light description, and the remuneration liberal, the absence of her son had such an effect upon her, that her friend became uneasy about her health. She wrote again to her kind brother in Canterbury, and solicited his good offices to find a situation for Margaret near her son. Her appeal was not made in vain, for, before the termination of the first year of

her widowhood, he had obtained for her a situation as nurse and housekeeper to a parylized elderly lady, who resided about two miles distant from the house her son lived in.

It will readily be believed that Margaret was delighted to see her boy again. He had grown considerably during the last year, and had improved in personal appearance. Beyond that, his character at his employer's was of the most satisfactory description, and he was a great favorite with all. He was industrious, punctual, and civil; beyond that, he took every opportunity of improving his mind at a young man's evening class in the neighbourhood. He was really a most intelligent youth. Although Margaret's small funds were again called upon for his clothes, never was money in this world more cheerfully given, and never was pride greater or more excusable than hers, when she saw her son arrayed in the purchases she had made.

A certain sort of continuity existed between the lady by whom Margaret was employed and the house of business where her son resided. The present owner of the shop had formerly been a confidential servant of Margaret's mistress: she was married from her house, and her husband had been the old lady's servant. After his death, she had continually renewed the lease of the premises to the widow, on very advantageous terms, and a singular sort of intimacy, or rather friendship, existed between them. The old lady was exceedingly particular that great respect should be paid her by her

former dependant, and felt considerable jealousy lest the possibility of the latter's worldly prosperity should render her independent or assuming; while the other, with all the tact of an old favourite female servant, while pretending great submission had her own way in almost every respect. She was certainly much attached to the old lady, although she occasionally tyrannized over her with considerable severity. She had obtained her ascendancy by her real or pretended knowledge of her late mistress's constitution, and she maintained the certainty of her knowledge with so much assurance, that the invalid put unbounded faith in her opinion. A sort of tacit understanding also existed between the old lady's medical attendant and her former servant. The doctor had sufficient tact to perceive the influence the latter had obtained over the mind of his patient, and therefore never prescribed for her when her former servant, Mrs. Bell, was present, without stating to her the reason for the course he was adopting, as she not only felt flattered by the scientific arguments placed before her, but invariably agreed with the wily man of science, perhaps the more readily from her inability to understand his phraseology.

The strong sympathy existing between Mrs. Lawson (Margaret's mistress) and Mrs. Bell, was most fortunate for her new servant. The messages between the village at which the former resided, and Canterbury, were of very frequent occurrence, generally two or three times a

week, and as the subject generally related directly or indirectly to the state of Mrs. Lawson's health, Margaret as her nurse, was generally chosen for the purpose of conveying them. She had thus, not only the frequent means of seeing her darling son, but beyond that, she was allowed to receive him at her mistress's every Sunday afternoon, and she had, moreover, the pleasure of accompanying him part of the way home by the meadows in the evening.

Oh, the delight of those walks to Margaret; she was naturally somewhat of a taciturn disposition, but on those occasions, she gave free license to her tongue. The lad's conversation kept up with her, so between the two (to make use of a somewhat homely expression), it would have been impossible for a third person to have got in a word between them. Another great source of pleasure to her, was attending the parish church with him in the afternoon. Although Margaret possessed considerable religious feeling, it would hardly be correct to attribute her presence in the place of worship entirely to pious motives. The majority of the congregation at the afternoon service were servants, and she knew perfectly well, that on leaving, all their eyes would be rivetted on the handsome gentlemanly looking youth with her. The mother's heart next day would swell with joy, when she received with something like duplicity of manner, the congratulations of her friends on his handsome appearance. There was something very like hypocrisy in her, when she answered that, "it mattered very little to her

what his appearance was, as long as he grew up to be an honest good man.”

During the next four years, little occurred in the history of our heroine, or her son, likely to interest the reader. The latter had continued in his situation; his conduct had been unimpeachable, and his wages had gradually increased till he was able to relieve his mother from the expense of his dress. This occurred after he had entered his nineteenth year. It would be doing him a great injustice to imagine that he did not feel great pleasure in being no longer obliged to draw on the very limited resources of his mother—it is equally certain, that not a murmur ever escaped Margaret at the sacrifice she had been obliged to make. The small sum she had been possessed of, when she arrived in Canterbury had gone. Her appointment, although she was treated with great kindness, was by no means a lucrative one, and the amount of her economies, at the moment her son was able to do without her assistance, did not exceed twelve pounds.

It would have been impossible for a nurse, as kind and attentive as Margaret, not to have made herself much liked by Mrs. Lawson, and her quiet unassuming almost grateful manner to Mrs. Bell, made her equally a favourite with that person. There were other points of sympathy between them. They were both widows, both had been happy in their married lives, and each had but one child—a son. Young Bell had been brought up to the sea, and he was then in the merchants' service. He

was a powerful handsome young man, about five or six years George's senior. As a boy he had been over indulged, and Mrs. Bell had reaped the fruits. She had long since lost all power of advising him, or possibility of control, and for some years, he had been a source of expense and anxiety to her. In person, he was certainly good looking and well made. He was rather above the middle height, and very strong; his countenance, however, lost much of its beauty from its common sensual expression. He was indisputably brave, but that qualification was, to a considerable extent, neutralized by his love of bullying. He was extravagant in everything which tended to his own gratification, but abjectly mean when contributing to the enjoyment of others. He was selfish in the extreme, and would sacrifice any one, even his mother, who loved him with intense affection, rather than suffer in the slightest degree, either in purse or person, himself. He had left England in a South Sea Whaler, shortly before George arrived in Canterbury, but, from a disagreement with the captain, deserted the ship. He found his way to India, and got an appointment on board a country ship, on which he remained between two and three years. He had now quitted that service, and was at this epoch of our history, daily expected in England. Those interested in his arrival, were by no means unanimous in their opinions respecting the event. His mother, of course, was delighted! Whatever anxiety his conduct might have caused her was completely obliterated by his long absence, and an affection as pure

as a widowed mother could bear for an only son supplied its place.

Mrs. Bell's manager (Mary's brother) looked upon the event in a very different light. He had known him well as a boy, and had by no means augured favourably of his conduct as a man. It was therefore with feelings of great annoyance that he looked upon the prospect of his arrival in England, both for his own comfort, as well as the effect his companionship might have upon George Meadows, in whose welfare he felt considerable interest. That foolish wish, so common to most English mothers, of seeing their children associating with those in a station of society superior to their own, shut from Margaret's eyes the real danger her son ran, and her sympathy for Mrs. Bell was so great, that she waited the young man's arrival with considerable impatience. At last the ship reached England, and when it had arrived in the Downs, Mrs. Bell received a letter from her son saying, that as soon as the ship was at Gravesend he should be able to leave it, and his first visit would be to his mother. Three days after the date of his letter, he reached home in good health and spirits, to her unqualified delight.

Robert Bell, had improved neither in appearance nor manners during the last five years. His figure was certainly more set, and exhibited considerable strength, but the roll of the sailor made his walk most ungraceful, and his manner was forward and impudent, without the frankness and good humour which so often forms so powerful an excuse for an excess of animal spirits in a

young sailor. At Margaret's first interview with him, she was greatly annoyed at some very objectionable remarks he made to her son, respecting some females who were passing at the moment, and the annoyance was considerably increased at the evident amusement George Meadows felt on the occasion. Poor Margaret had always looked upon her son, as the child who had sat upon her lap and questioned her on the most elementary subjects by the hour together, and her terror at the instructions he was likely to receive from his companion knew no bounds.

The first objectionable effects which Margaret found in Robert Bell's acquaintanceship with her son, was in absenting himself from her society on the Sunday afternoons. She saw him certainly, occasionally in the week, but on those occasions she had but little opportunity for conversation. It is true, he regularly promised to spend the next Sunday with her, but almost as invariably he broke the promise he had made. Robert Bell used occasionally to visit Mrs. Lawson, and would then joke with Margaret about her son. One day he caused her considerable uneasiness.

"Well, Mrs. Meadows," he said, "take care some day you don't find you've got a daughter as well as a son. I suspect Master George is a very sly fellow, and has got married without your knowing it. If it's true, I can only say, you've got a very pretty girl for a daughter-in-law. Ah, it will make many a fellow precious savage I can tell

you. I intended to have had her myself one day, but she's cut me."

"Oh, Sir, don't put such ideas into his head, he's quite a boy."

"Oh, nonsense, that young gentleman's far more forward than you imagine I can tell you, but, however, if you don't want him to marry, look out, for he's precious sweet upon her."

"What do you mean Sir?"

"I'm not going to tell any tales out of school, you must find it out yourself."

"I am sure you're joking Sir,"

"Very well, if you don't choose to believe what I say, I can't help it."

In a few days, Margaret took the opportunity of calling on Mary's brother, and getting from him all the particulars she could, relative to her son's acquaintance with the young woman spoken of by Mr. Bell. His knowledge of her was at the same time of the most scanty and unsatisfactory description. Her parents had formerly resided in Canterbury, but had both been dead for many years, in fact, she had been left an orphan at a very early age. She had been brought up by an aunt, who was married to a man whose character, although not respectable, was of that description which allows him to mix in the society of his fellows without any particular animadversion or reprobation. He was occasionally drunk, but was not a drunkard, and quarrel-

some without ever getting into any serious trouble. He was too honest to steal, but would get recklessly into debt, without a thought in what way he was to pay it. He did not habitually lie, unless he could obtain credit or profit by so doing. His reputation for fidelity as a husband, was of the slightest description, but he concealed his irregularities with great caution from his wife—not from the remotest fear of her anger, but from respect for her feelings. His wife had been a good natured common place sort of woman. She had been much attached to her husband, and having no children, had brought up her niece with great personal kindness, but with very little regard for her morals or spiritual welfare, and this neglect was by no means improved by the frequent loose style of conversation of her uncle. It may easily be imagined that Sarah Morley's education was of the most imperfect description. She could read with some little difficulty, and her writing was still more defective. She had a handsome face and a well-made figure, an intense passion for dress, with but little intuitive morality, and thus equipped, she started on her journey through life.

Her first stage was, to a certain degree, fortunate. A lady in Canterbury seeing the danger the girl ran in such society as frequented her uncle's house, obtained for her a situation as domestic servant in a highly respectable clergyman's family in the metropolis. Here she remained for two years, and if her character for

steadiness was not so perfect as it might have been, there was no imputation whatever against her morality.

As there were several young ladies in the family, and the girl was not only an expert needle woman, but had, moreover, considerable taste in dress, her services in that way were in frequent requisition. While working in their society, she continued to pick up a considerable amount of second-hand gentility, and the result was, she became convinced that domestic service was beneath her merits, and she resolved to appear in the more equivocal position of a dress maker's girl. In consequence, she left her really good situation to become an improver or something of the sort in the establishment of a second-rate fashionable milliner, with a French name and slightly Irish accent.

How long she continued in that situation, or indeed, in what manner the next three years of her life was passed, it would be difficult to say, still more so to prove. There were vague rumours of her having been in business for herself, of her once being ignominiously dismissed from her lodgings at a moment's notice, of her having been a figurante at a minor theatre, but of all these reports, not one could be reduced to a certainty. Five years after having quitted Canterbury, she returned to it. In appearance, she was not improved. She was of course, more womanly, but had with her, that independant, self assured manner and appearance, which says so little for the respectability of a woman. Judging from her dress,

which wore a faded shabby genteel appearance, her circumstances had not improved during her absence. On her arrival, she found that her aunt had been dead some months. Her uncle readily accepted her offer to keep house for him. He owned the small freehold in which he lived, and also received a trifling annuity from government ; he had formerly been a petty officer in the Navy. Since his wife's death, he had been more economical, probably from having become a martyr to the gout, and he was now obliged to keep within doors, and had therefore not so many temptations to extravagance as formerly. His niece soon established a small dress maker's business in the parlour of the house, and readily obtained a tolerably numerous body of customers, although their respectability was certainly not of the highest description. The house had another class of visitors. 'Certain officers from the cavalry barracks, now found divers charms in the conversation of the old sailor, they had not discovered before his niece had come to reside with him, but as his worldly comforts were considerably increased in consequence of their visits, he troubled himself little about their real object.

Sarah Morley had returned to Canterbury a few months before Robert Bell left England, and he had formed her acquaintance. A flirtation at least, had been carried on between them, and the intimacy was renewed as soon as he returned. He was now a constant visitor at her house. He had lately introduced George to her, and although there is every reason to believe the

lad was much struck with her appearance, yet there could not be the slightest danger of marriage taking place between them; his youth as well as his totally dependant position being a perfect guarantee against anything of the kind.

In fact, said Mary's brother, in conclusion, it was only for the sake of amusement that Robert Bell had encouraged the acquaintance, and he had no doubt, it would soon die a natural death, although he admitted the sooner that occurred the better.

Margaret was by no means assured by this argument. There certainly might be no danger of marriage, but another equally great presented itself to her. She had brought up her son most circumspectly, and his acquaintance with a woman of the kind, caused her considerable annoyance. She wished to reason with him on the subject, but a feeling of delicacy withheld her, and she returned home undecided what course to adopt,

As to George Meadows, he was desperately involved in his first love. Without pretending that he was ignorant of the existence of a degraded class of women, his ideas of female respectability were of the most exalted character. He had been intimately in the society of but one, that one his own mother. From that model he had drawn a picture of the lives of most others of her sex. His love for Sarah Morley was the respectful passionate love of such a youth for a being he believed to be above all others in excellence and beauty. The five years she was his senior, so far from decreasing his love, added, in

his young mind, a sort of dignity to it, which would have been wanting in his affection for a younger girl.

Robert Bell was delighted at the utter simplicity of the youth, and persuaded him that any unworthy report he might hear of her, was the cowardly slander of those she had rejected, and thus a certain pleasing chivalrous sort of feeling sprang up in his endeavours to maintain the reputation of one so dear to him. The very fact of the military officers continually passing before the house, rather raised his pride than incurred his jealousy, by proving to him that he was loved by her, and they were not.

It would be difficult to describe the feeling of the woman towards her youthful admirer. Few of the sex are so apathetic as not to consider the first warm honest admiration of a handsome youth as a compliment, and Sarah Morley felt certainly flattered by his love. To say that she loved him, would be to utter an absurdity; to say she would either injure him or allow any one else to do so, would be to do her an injustice. She had certainly great pleasure in his society. He was in the habit of meeting her after business hours were over, and walking with her in the cool of the summer's evening into the country. At those moments, the intriguing vicious woman would feel a calm sweet pleasure in the society of her handsome young admirer. She would listen to his grave expressions of respectful love with considerable emotion, and almost believe herself worthy of an honest admiration when she heard them. She would lean with real

affection fondly on his arm as they returned, and the lad with pride, felt the weight, and shewed it by his being utterly unconscious of the open undisguised sneers of those who knew them. It is more than probable, that a woman, whose affections were no deeper than Sarah Morley's, would soon have quitted George Meadows, for some wealthy admirer, if one had presented himself. She was, like most of her class, insatiably anxious after money, and she squandered it away with the greatest recklessness when she had obtained it. It was, therefore, not likely that her love for a youth as poor as he was, would be of very long continuance ; but a circumstance occurred which, if it did not increase her affection made her determined, if only from a feeling of revenge, to keep him deeply attached to her.

One evening, Margaret, in consequence of the sudden indisposition of her mistress, was sent to Canterbury to request the attendance of a physician of great eminence who resided in that city. She was instructed, in case he should be from home, not to return until she had seen him and delivered her message. On her road thither, she perceived two individuals walking in the fields apart from all others, and evidently absorbed in their own conversation. One of these was her son George, the other, as she rightly surmised, was the young woman of whom she had heard so much, and so little to her advantage. She determined, on the spur of the moment, to speak to them, and advanced towards them for that purpose. When near them, her courage failed her, and

her heart palpitated so forcibly, that she was obliged to wait for a few moments before she joined them. While resting herself, the young couple perceived her, and imagining that a stranger was watching them, they moved hastily away. Although George had certainly not recognized his mother, she imagined that he had done so, and had walked away in consequence. This determined her to approach them, and in a few moments, she overtook them. George, although colouring highly and greatly confused, put out his hand, which his mother, still feeling angry from his apparent wish to avoid her, did not take.

“My mother,” said George to Sarah Morley.

In cases of this description, all women seem to have an instinctive feeling which informs them, in a moment, the sentiment which another female bears for them. Margaret, at a glance, saw the character of the other, and a deep-rooted aversion was the result. Sarah Morley knew that she was understood by Margaret, and she felt the contempt and dislike which the other entertained towards her most keenly. Not a word passed between them, but their sentiments towards each other, were perfectly understood by both.

Margaret asked George why he did not come to see her the last Sunday. George stammered out some absurd excuse, but promised to do so without fail the next, and after a little more conversation, during which, both parties appeared under some painful subjection, Margaret left them. The parting glance the women threw on

each other when leaving, was most characteristic. One expressed aversion and contempt, the other anger and defiance. Each, however, tried to make the other believe she was hardly aware of her presence. .

As Margaret continued her walk towards Canterbury, her mind was overwhelmed with anxious care and solicitude. She knew well, how often fatal to the welfare in life of a young man was a dangerous female acquaintance, and she felt that one more dangerous than Sarah Morley, could hardly have been met with. She had evidently great experience, and that experience was of the most objectionable character. She was her son's senior by some years, and knew how to influence him with all the power and craft of an artful intriguing woman. She was certainly handsome and very showy in appearance, and that, to the unsophisticated mind of George, would be easily translated into the bearing and manner of a lady. But how to break off the connexion? How to prove to the infatuated youth, the danger he ran was above her ability to imagine. Frequently, she thought of returning and explaining to him in the presence of the woman herself, how derogatory it was to be seen walking with a person of her character. Then she remembered that she had no proof against her, for although the dress maker's business was little better than the cloak of industry thrown over a life of idleness and profligacy, still that appearance was, to a certain extent, respected by the neighbourhood. These thoughts had so occupied Margaret, that the reasons for her journey had almost

escaped her, and instead of making the haste which the occasion required, it was nearly night before she reached Canterbury.

When she arrived at the house of the physician, she found he was from home, but was momentarily expected to return. When he arrived, and heard Margaret's message, he informed her that it was impossible for him to see her mistress that night, but that he would be at her house early next morning. In the meantime, he wrote an answer to the note which Margaret had brought him from the old lady's medical adviser, and our heroine then started with it on her journey home. It was now dark night, and Margaret thought it prudent to keep the high road. She was leaving the city, and had arrived near the barracks, when she saw two figures, a man and a woman, walking leisurely before her. By the glare of a lamp, she easily distinguished the showy dress of Sarah Morley, and she determined to watch their movements. She thought it might not be a bad opportunity for giving a lesson to her son, and she also reflected that possibly the woman herself might feel somewhat ashamed of being detected in the company of a young man at so late an hour, and in such a suspicious locality. They still walked on, she following them. Arrived near the barrack gate, she could perceive by the lamp, that his arm was round her waist. They crossed the road as if to enter, when to her surprise she saw the sentinel open the gate for them. Margaret walked rapidly up to them, but what was her astonishment when she found the man had a

gold band around his cap—that it was not her son, but an officer of the garrison. Every other feeling in Margaret's heart had now given place to one of intense indignation. The pair entered the barrack-yard, and Margaret rushed after them. The sentry who was closing the gates attempted to impede her entrance, but so determined was she to go in, that the man could with difficulty hold her.

“Sarah Morley,” she exclaimed at the top of her voice, “I want you.”

The woman turned round and advanced towards her, but as soon as she recognized Margaret, she immediately retreated.

“Oh, it's no use you trying to get out of my way, I know you well,” said Margaret, as she broke from the sentinel, and ran up the barrack-yard. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself,” she continued, as soon as she had overtaken her, “a nice young woman you are to keep company with a respectable young man. I say you ought to be ashamed of yourself, but I'll expose you, I'll tell him all.”

Shame, or rather annoyance had made Sarah Morley dumb for the moment. The officer here interfered.

“I don't know,” said he, “whether you are drunk or mad, but, by Heavens, if you are not clear of this barrack-yard in one moment, you shall be locked up for the night, and taken before a magistrate the next morning. What the devil did you let her in for?” he said to the sentry.

“I tried to stop her Sir, but I couldn't; she broke from me.”

“Call the corporal, you d—d stupid brute, will you?” called out the officer, who was holding Margaret by the arm, “Here, corporal, turn that woman out of the yard.”

The corporal advanced, seized Margaret with considerable rudeness, and using much coarse language, thrust her into the street.

When she arrived at home, she gave an account of her mission, Although the severity of the old lady’s attack was considerably mitigated by the prescriptions of her own medical man, she was still so unwell that Margaret was obliged to remain near her bedside during the whole of the night. She had now ample time for reflection: unfortunately it did but little good. She knew too well the power that an artful woman of the kind would have over the inexperienced mind of her son, and she was most uneasy as to the result the open war which now existed between her and Sarah Morley would have upon him. The morning came, and the patient was so far recovered, that Margaret was allowed to go to her own room, but although greatly fatigued not only by the events of the preceding day, but by the night’s watching; she felt no inclination for sleep.

During the short time allowed her for that repose, which came not, she determined on finding some excuse to go into Canterbury in the course of the day, and then to call upon Sarah Morley. She resolved to come to such an explanation with her as would possibly deter her from carrying further her connection with her

son, and afterwards to do all in her power to restrain him from so dangerous an acquaintance. In the course of the day, an excuse presented itself for a visit to the town, and as soon as her commission was terminated, she called at the house of the dress-maker. To her great surprise, she was received as a total stranger, and when Margaret explained to her the object of her visit, she appeared both astonished and indignant at the accusation. She persisted with the greatest effrontery, that she had never seen Margaret before, except for a few moments on the previous evening, when she was in company with her son. She assured her solemnly that she must have been totally mistaken in her person, and volunteered to bring forward two or three of her acquaintances who would prove, that at the hour spoken of, she was in their society at the house of a friend in the centre of the town. All this was said with such coolness and self-possession as, at first, to astonish Margaret, and afterwards to cause her the greatest rage and indignation. She expressed her opinion of this artful creature so openly, she spoke so loudly, and with so much force on the falsehood of the excuse, that Sarah Morley told her that if she did not leave the house immediately she would not only call in a constable to remove her, but also complain to her mistress of her disorderly and unprovoked conduct. With respect to her son George, she said it was a pity, so excellent a young man should have such a worthless virago for a mother. Margaret, it may easily be imagined, left the house in a towering passion, and

immediately went to the shop to find her son, and tell him of the circumstance. He was, however, from home, and she was obliged to return home without seeing him.

In the afternoon, Robert Bell called on Mrs. Lawson, but she was too unwell to see him. He then told Margaret, in an angry manner, that he wished to speak with her on the subject of her conduct towards Sarah Morley. He told her that such behaviour could not be tolerated, that if ever she presumed to call at her house again, a magistrate would be applied to for protection, and that he, personally, was so disgusted at her conduct that he had applied to his mother to prohibit her from calling at the house to see her son, moreover, if she persisted in doing so, he would take good care George should not remain in his present situation.

His threats so completely terrified our heroine, that she was obliged to give up any open interference on the subject, and to wait patiently till the next Sunday, when her son had promised to call upon her. When the day arrived, Margaret had thoroughly thought over, in her own mind, how she could best place the danger of his position before him. She determined to explain to him, in the clearest manner, the arts of the intriguing woman he was attached to, without saying anything to pain or offend him. Her plan of action being fully arranged, she waited with impatience for his arrival. Alas! it was useless; he came not, and Margaret, her duties of

the day being over, sought her bed with a heavy and sorrowful heart.

The deep affront which Sarah Morley had received was not likely either to be readily forgotten or forgiven. She determined, if only for the sake of annoying Margaret, to keep George Meadows attached to her. This was easily done, but unfortunately his love for the woman estranged his affections from his mother. Sarah informed him how unjustly she had treated her, and how insulting had been her suspicions, although every proof had been readily offered her—but only out of respect to him—to shew her she was in error.

“I cannot continue my acquaintance with you George,” she said, “I know perfectly well your mother will try to set you against me. In a little time you will believe her, and to be distrusted by you would break my heart.”

George, of course, swore that nothing could alter his love for her. She persisted in her resolution. She was certain in the end, he would believe his mother. The foolish lad, to pacify her, promised not to go near his parent, and unfortunately, for several weeks, he kept his word.

Although Sarah Morley pretended to treat with contempt and indignation, the statement of Margaret respecting their interview at the barracks, so far from the report dying away, it daily increased in strength. George Meadows was, perhaps, the only one that disbelieved it,

Whenever he heard it mentioned, he not only indignantly repelled the attack upon her he loved so blindly, but the angry feeling against his mother increased in proportion. In the meantime, the little business connexion which Sarah Morley had acquired began to leave her, and her conduct, in proportion, increased in effrontery. George alone did not remark it. He, from his perfect faith in her purity, was rapidly becoming the ridicule of all who knew him. Up to the present time, Robert Bell, with all his faults, had kept him from committing any extravagance, but as he had left Canterbury for a few days, in order to obtain an engagement as third mate on board a ship bound to Australia, George took the opportunity to make Sarah a present of a brooch as a love token; a showy common-place trinket, which he had purchased at a Jew's. He was to pay for it by weekly instalments. The price was exorbitant, but by the manner of payment, it appeared less so than it really was. Sarah pretended to be delighted with the present, and embraced George with great tenderness when she received it. Up to that time he had not given her anything, but although his first gift was of little value, she determined it should not be his last. The winter was now approaching, and she pretended to suffer severely from the cold. He enquired why she did not dress in a warmer manner? She replied evasively for some time, but at last owned she wanted to purchase a shawl. She had lost the last one she had, and had not the money to procure another. George again visited the Jew's. He there saw a shawl

which appeared both warm and handsome. He purchased it on the same conditions as the last, and thus the whole of his wages, for some time to come, was mortgaged. In a short time, she discovered another want—a new bonnet. George, to obtain it, did that which would have caused Margaret much displeasure. He pawned the only heir-loom in his family—his father's watch. As a recompense for his liberality, Sarah consented to marry him. She did not even wish to wait till he had procured some employment by which he could maintain them both—what was poverty to her, if she possessed the affections of so generous a man. She, however, in spite of George's entreaties, from bashfulness alone, as she said, declined at that time to name the day.

The foolish lad was now nearly beside himself with joy. No happiness he believed was equal to his. Unfortunately his delight did not agree with the business habits of his superior in the shop, and several angry remonstrances were the result. At first, the foreman attributed it to idleness, but by watching George more closely, he arrived at the truth. He was really much attached to the lad, and as he was a man of sound common sense, he easily perceived it would be better for him to have a mill-stone tied round his neck and cast into the sea, than marry such a woman. He wrote a note to Margaret, asking her to call on him some evening, but the sooner she came the better. The next evening saw the anxious mother at the shop. There was

fortunately no one in it at the moment, and thus they had both time and opportunity for their conversation.

“I am very sorry to tell you Mrs. Meadows,” the foreman began, “that your son has made a bad acquaintance. You remember I told you about her some time ago, but then I did not believe him to be as foolish as he really is. I find he’s regularly over head and ears in love with that woman.”

“I am sorry to say I know it well enough, but you see I can do nothing.”

“Something must be done, and that soon, or he’ll be making a fool of himself, why he’s wanting to marry her, and she’s promised to have him too; but I suspect it’s only her cunning to get some more presents out of him.”

“You don’t mean to say he has given her any presents,” said Margaret, getting terribly alarmed.

“But he has though; he has given her a shawl, a bonnet, and a brooch already.” Margaret got so faint, she could hardly sit upright on her chair.

“Where did he get the money from,” she enquired?

“I don’t know, I thought, perhaps, he might have got it from you.”

“Pray give me a glass of water, I feel very unwell,” said Margaret. The water was given her, and in a few moments she recovered herself.

“I have not given him any money,” she said, “could he have paid for them out of his wages?”

“No, I don’t think he could, he never could save a penny yet, and it’s not likely he has done so since he has

been acquainted with her." Then seeing Margaret's terrified look, he understood her meaning.

"Come, come," said he kindly, "it's all right here, I know, but if it will ease your mind, I know well where the brooch and shawl were bought, and if you stay here a moment and mind the shop, I will go and enquire how he paid for them."

In a few minutes he returned.

"He has paid off part of the debt by instalments," said he, "but he still owes four pounds. I do not know where he got the money to pay for the bonnet, but I will find out for you before I see you again. It's all right, I'm sure. He's an honest lad, and you must forgive him for making a fool of himself in his first love, many a clever fellow as done so before him." Margaret's heart swelled with gratitude at this remark. Out of the few pounds which remained in the Savings' Bank, she could pay off his debts.

"But," said Margaret, "what had better be done about this foolish affair, she surely would not attempt to marry such a boy as he is."

"Even if he does not marry her, it would be dangerous for him to stop here so long as she is in the neighbourhood, I think I would find some other situation for him if I were you,"

"I don't know where to look for one," said Margaret.

"Well, I'll try what I can do; in the mean time, make yourself easy. I'll do all I can to break off this affair, Robert Bell will be back to-morrow, I'll speak to him

about George, he is very good friends with me now, and I dare say we shall be able to manage it between us." Margaret warmly expressed her thanks for his kindness, and they parted.

When Robert Bell returned, he was appealed to by the foreman to use his influence in breaking off the acquaintance between Sarah Morley and George. This he accomplished with very little trouble. He spared George's feelings, but little on the occasion. He told him the character of the woman so plainly, that George was astonished. Although not daring to dispute the statement, he was convinced, in his own mind, it was only a slander caused by jealousy on the other's part, and this opinion was confirmed by Sarah Morley, who accidentally met him in the evening of the day he had heard the statement. Poor George now imagined that all the world was in league against him, for he had also been informed by the foreman, that if he continued the woman's acquaintance, he would be dismissed from his situation. His pride at first stimulated him to quit immediately, and enlist in a cavalry regiment. He thought it would be most romantic to serve his country and fight her battles, and this opinion was confirmed by a recruiting sergeant, whose acquaintance he had lately made, who informed him it was the only way a fellow of spirit should act. He made the proposition to Sarah Morley, that she should become a soldier's wife, but although she had often expressed to George her admiration of a military life, to his surprise, she unhesitatingly declined

the honour, and also advised him against so rash an act.

In a few days, Margaret received another communication from the foreman, requesting her to call upon him, when she again came into Canterbury. When she did so, he informed her he had written to the wholesale house in London, and received an answer, saying, they had a vacancy in their establishment for an assistant, that their traveller had frequently seen George, and spoke most favourably of him, and they were quite willing to engage him. He was to board and sleep at the warehouse, and his salary would be twenty pounds a year. "I have not," the foreman continued, "spoken to George on the subject, but if you would take my advice, let him go. He will do no good here, and the sooner he's off the better." Margaret thankfully accepted the offer.

The next morning her son was informed that his services would no longer be required, and also of the appointment offered him by the wholesale house in London. As there appeared no alternative for him, he was obliged to accept it. He left Canterbury soon after, to enter on his duties in the house in town. His parting with his mother, although he showed some feeling, could hardly be called affectionate. He contrived also to see Sarah Morley. She was little moved on the occasion, but promised to write frequently to him, George wept bitterly, and of course, swore eternal love and fidelity.

Although Margaret naturally felt much at his de-

parture, her mind was greatly relieved from the anxiety, which had lately oppressed it. If a feeling of care occasionally arose respecting the renewal of the acquaintance between George and the woman he loved, it was soon set at rest completely. Robert Bell had received his appointment as mate of the emigrant ship. Sarah Morley had also obtained, by one of those occult methods so frequently practised and so rarely discovered, a certificate of high respectability of character and life. Armed with this document, she presented herself at the government office, and received a free passage as a domestic servant on board the same ship.

Another subject also added to Margaret's happiness; her son's affection for her appeared to have returned. He wrote frequently, and in terms of great affection. She also heard indirectly, that his employers were highly pleased at the regularity and respectability of his conduct. Although the debts he had incurred for his presents to Sarah Morley, (including the withdrawal of his watch from the pawnbroker's,) had absorbed all the little capital she possessed, she considered it was well disposed of in keeping intact the reputation of her son.

The next year of Margaret's life passed calmly enough. Her mistress, though requiring great attention, was by no means inconsiderate of the comfort of her servant, and the loss of bodily health, which might have been expected from her close attention on an invalid, was neutralized by the frequent opportunities she was allowed of taking exercise in the open air. Her appearance had naturally under-

gone great changes since our last description of her. No adult can enjoy twenty years' existence with impunity to his or her personal appearance, and Margaret certainly, in that respect, had suffered considerably; still she had not only the remains of great beauty, both in face and form, but had acquired that peculiar "*embon point*" and carriage which so frequently gives such majesty to the person of the English matron of her age, and which, in a different position of society, would have been considered indicative of high birth and aristocratical pretensions. Her teeth were still good, her eyes were certainly less bright, and the terrible episodes of her husband's death and her son's faults, had left some unmistakably white lines in her hair. These however did not increase in number, and Margaret's existence was now as happy as she had a right to expect in this world. She had also frequent opportunities of hearing of her son. Whenever any commission was to be executed in Canterbury, she was chosen for the purpose; the old lady, though somewhat inclined to be suspicious, had unlimited faith in her prudence and integrity. She had on these occasions, lengthened conversations with Mrs. Bell's foreman, on the future welfare and present prospects of her son. Her counsellor, who was in every respect—prudence, kindness of heart, and personal appearance—the twin brother of her friend Mary, took every opportunity of informing himself of his conduct. The invariable, almost stereotyped reply, was that his conduct was perfectly satisfactory, and this answer, it

may be believed, lost nothing on its delivery by the foreman to Mary.

Another year of unqualified content and tranquility passed over Margaret's head. A third came, and in it, a total change took place in her prospects. For some months past, the health of her mistress had been very feeble, and a bed had been made up for Margaret in her room for the purpose of her being on the spot, if the invalid should require any aid. The old lady was a light sleeper, and early every morning she called our heroine, on whom the charge of the whole household rested and who, from the fatiguing nature of her duties, slept soundly. One morning, Margaret awoke without being called, and lay in a half somnolent state for some time. At last, the striking of a clock informed her that it was more than an hour later than her usual time of rising. She then rose from her bed, and commenced dressing herself as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the patient. She had nearly finished, when, on turning round, she threw down a chair. Margaret was greatly annoyed at this, as it made considerable noise, and must have awakened the sleeper; still not a word of reproach or enquiry. Margaret became greatly surprised at this, and advanced towards the bed. There was no mistaking the fact. Her mistress slept, but her rest was eternal. Death had passed through that chamber in the night, noiselessly as a thief, and had stolen the life of one of its inmates. Her mistress was a corpse.

The terrified servant rushed from the room, and flew

to the bed rooms of her two fellow servants, and begged them to rise immediately, as Mrs. Lawson had died in the night. The women, terribly frightened at the news, dressed themselves quickly, and Margaret then ran at the top of her speed, to the house of the medical man. He had just risen, and he immediately accompanied her home. Arrived at the house, he determined, as soon as he saw the corpse, that, although it was certain the death had occurred merely from a decay of nature, under all the circumstances, it would be advisable to call a coroner's inquest. The next day, it was held, and the verdict confirmed the surgeon's opinion. Margaret was not only exempted from all blame, but was highly complimented by the jury, many of whom knew her, on the habitual kindness and attention she had shewn to her deceased mistress.

The usual routine, after the death of the head of a family was gone through. The funeral was attended by her nephew, a lawyer, residing in London, and the surgeon. A legacy of fifty pounds was left to the medical man, another of ten pounds to Margaret, to purchase mourning (truly servitude is no inheritance), and the whole of the remainder of her property to the other mourner, who could not mourn, and being an honest, straightforward man, did not pretend to do so. The other servants were not remembered by the crabbed suspicious invalid, their late mistress. Shortly afterwards, the furniture was sold by auction, the house put into repair and painted, and a board put up stating it was to be let or

sold. All memory of its late occupant seemed to have been erased by the improvements. She had reigned there supreme for the thirty years of her widowhood, neither liked nor disliked, doing nothing to offend, and never caring to please. Her love or interest in the world had expired with her husband and children, and nothing is now heard of the family, but an occasional vague or uninteresting tradition.

Margaret, in addition to her legacy, received her wages to the end of the quarter. She was further permitted to remain in the house, till it was disposed of, at a sufficient number of shillings per week to enable her to live without incurring a debt, and as a purchaser was not found for four months afterwards, she had ample opportunity of seeking another situation. This was not easily accomplished. It is true, she had now a good reference, but if her age were a difficulty before coming to Canterbury, that difficulty was increased by her four years' residence in it. Many were the applications she made for employment, but all were unsuccessful, and the poor woman was almost beginning to despair, when Mary's brother again proved her good angel.

The firm, by whom George Meadows was employed, consisted of two partners, father and son. They resided in Hammersmith, but came to town daily to attend to the business. The son, however, had lately married, and the dwelling rooms in the town house were put in order, it being arranged that he and his wife should live there. This, of course, caused considerable alteration in the

establishment. The junior partner naturally wishing for as much privacy as possible, kept the mercantile and domestic arrangements as separate as the means would admit. The assistants, few in number, were for the future to reside at their own dwellings, but were to dine at the warehouse. To carry this system out completely, it was necessary to have a servant to cook the dinners for the young men, to clean out the counting house weekly, and to do any other domestic work which might be required. She was also to come in the morning and to return home in the evening. For the duties she was required to perform, she was to receive nine shillings a week and her dinner. This situation was offered to Margaret, who readily accepted it. Her arrangements for travelling were of the most simple description, and two days after she had received the news, she took a warm and almost affectionate leave of the foreman, and started for London.

Margaret was too fond a mother not to feel intense joy at being once more with her darling son. He had now grown quite manly in appearance, and the look of pride in her countenance when she again beheld him, after the first warmth of their meeting was over, was beautiful, and George, to do him justice, shewed much pleasure at once more meeting his mother. One cause of sorrow only appeared to Margaret. On her arrival, she found that her friend Mary had left London; her husband had lately become very infirm, and the parish, possessing some comfortable almshouses in Norfolk, they had offered him one, and the offer had been accepted.

Arrangements had now to be made for the future domestic economy of the mother and son; George was to receive twenty shillings a week, and his mother, as has been already stated, nine. Margaret had nearly thirteen pounds in hand, her son, on the contrary had saved nothing, but had contracted no debts. Margaret determined on investing her little capital in furniture, but previously an apartment was to be sought for. As they were both occupied during the day, this was not unattended with difficulty, at last, however, they succeeded. It consisted of two modest rooms, one very small, the other somewhat larger. The latter was to be used as their sitting room by day, and Margaret's bed room by night; the other was to be fitted up entirely as the bed room of her son. The furniture was now bought, and never was money laid out with more caution or graver deliberation. In the sitting room was a sofa, neat enough in appearance, but ingeniously uncomfortable as a seat; what it was as a bed, Margaret only could tell. If ever sleep wished to prove she was the legitimate daughter of labour, she had only to bring forward that sofa as a document, and the paternity would be proved without the shadow of a doubt. A looking glass was purchased to decorate the chimney-piece. A mirror is generally proverbial for its adherence to truth, but this could hardly be called honest. Certainly, it never flattered, and if Margaret did not look at it in one particular spot, it told the most impudent slander of her still handsome countenance. She had been imposed

upon when purchasing it. The frame was certainly most attractive. On the glass was written in large letters in whiting, British plate 12s. 6d., a bargain. It bore, in reality, as much relationship to that description of glass, as the metallic composition of the same name bears to virgin silver.

The principle portion of the remainder of the furniture, consisted of a small table—true, it was of deal, but a blue cloth covered it—four chairs and a small piece of carpet. In one corner of the room was a cupboard painted a dark brown; it was divided into two parts, an upper and a lower. The upper contained the crockeryware required for their small establishment, as well as their bread, butter, tea and sugar. The lower portion was again divided into two parts. In the upper, resting upon a shelf, were their kettle and two saucepans, the other was used as their coal cellar. The room, on the whole, looked remarkably well, indeed, as Margaret said, a real gentleman might have been contented with it. Taking into consideration the economy practised in the purchasing, the effect was perfectly marvellous. The only thing in it which appeared at all unsightly, was a large paper covered box, and it was evidently as obstinately disposed as its uncomfortable look indicated. It would neither go under the sofa, nor table, nor, in fact, in any place where it was not a prominent feature. It would be somewhat difficult to describe its appearance. It was one of those boxes we see in the halls and on the staircases of our houses, the evening a new female ser-

vant arrives, and which remain there a few minutes, and then vanish. It is invariably delivered from a cab; had it life, we could almost imagine the vehicle was its mother. Margaret, like most of her craft, had a great affection for her box. It was her's when she first went into service, and she had preserved it with great care ever since, papering it afresh whenever it required it, without any regard to the expense or trouble it occasioned. What it contained beyond her wearing apparel nobody knew, perhaps only a few memorials of by-gone days, each telling her eloquently its own oft repeated tale when she looked at it, but which was dumb to all others. To do her good taste justice, she acknowledged her box was unsightly, but it saved the purchase of a chest of drawers. We have shewn that her capital was very limited, and she had reserved the larger portion of it for the furniture of the smaller room. Every thing in her son's bed room was chosen with great care. It consisted of a really good and comfortable bed and bedstead, a wash stand, and a chest of drawers. It is true, the latter was very deficient in the quality of the locks, and the keys of the whole were wanting, but George, from his knowledge of the business, could get them some day put in order at a very trifling expense. On casting his eye over the apartment, a political economist would have concluded that the average of sleeping accommodation was of an excellent character, but like many other averages, it would have been drawn from the greatest possible disparities; Margaret, however, was

perfectly contented with her portion of it, and wished for nothing better.

For the next six months, everything went on smoothly and happily, and our heroine was delighted with her situation. She was, in fact, always near her son. During the whole day, she was under the same roof with him: in the evening, her duties were terminated an hour before his, and she thus had the opportunity of leaving the warehouse and preparing his supper before his arrival at home. The evening meal was generally happy. George was frequently too much fatigued by the day's employment to seek for much out-door amusement, he was also exceedingly fond of reading, and although it frequently happened that hardly a word of conversation took place between them the whole evening (he being occupied with his book, she with her needle), yet the knowledge that he was there, was sufficient for her happiness, and she wished for none higher on this side of the grave.

Among the various duties imposed upon Margaret was that of purchasing the dinners for the assistants. She had been entrusted with it in consequence of her economy and integrity. This was generally terminated before nine o'clock in the morning, and as she was exceedingly regular in her movements, it not unfrequently occurred that she returned to the house at the same time the postman was delivering the general post letters. This man had formerly known something of Margaret's husband, and occasionally a few words of conversation took place between them. One morning when they arrived

at the house together, the postman addressed her with, "Good morning, Mrs. Meadows, I am going to ruin your son to-day, but you mustn't be angry with me, it ain't my fault."

"What do you mean," said Margaret, laughing.

"I want half-a-crown from him. Here's a letter from his sweetheart in Sydney. At any rate, I suppose so, it looks like a lady's hand writing."

The laugh left Margaret's face, and an expression of great anxiety supplied its place. At that moment George Meadows entered the warehouse, and the letter was given to him. At first he appeared highly pleased, then seeing his mother's eye fixed upon him he blushed deeply.

"Come, come," said the postman, "I can't stop here all day. It's all very delightful I dare say, but I'm not in love, and the Post-Master-General is very hard up and wants his money."

George who had been so much engrossed with the letter as to forget the postage, now found the money, and the postman left.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE letter received by George Meadows, was from Sarah Morley, who it will be remembered left England in the ship in which Robert Bell was third mate. This profligate woman, instead of attempting to redeem her lost character by better conduct in another quarter of the globe, behaved during the voyage in such a manner as to secure for herself, when the ship arrived in Sydney, a reputation still more disgraceful than the one she had left behind her in England. Then, as at present, government took but little interest in either the comfort, health, or morals of the emigrants during the voyage, and the facilities for immorality were too attractive to the depraved mind of Sarah Morley to be disregarded. Her behaviour was so disgraceful, that several cabin passengers—ladies with their families—called upon the captain to interfere with his authority, and he, although generally most unprejudiced in matters of the kind, was obliged to threaten to place her in confinement if she did not conduct herself in a more reputable manner. Arrived in Sydney, Robert Bell obtained for her a situation in a family as a servant. He assured them he had known

her in Canterbury, and that her conduct had always been highly exemplary. A character given by such an authority, would hardly be accepted in Sydney in the present day, but at that time, respectability among female servants was so rare in the colony, that, indifferent as her reference was, it was readily accepted. For a few months, her conduct was tolerably respectable, but symptoms of an alteration for the worse becoming apparent, her employers suggested that she should accompany them to their sheep walk, some three hundred miles distant from Sydney, considering that as there was but little society, the danger of misconduct on her part, would be greatly diminished.

The want of acquaintances made the time pass dully enough with her at the commencement, but after a few weeks, she accepted an offer of marriage from a stock keeper on a neighbouring farm. He was a man very considerably her senior, a drunkard, and had formerly been a convict, but his term of punishment had expired. It need hardly be said, that such a man was not very particular in making enquiries respecting the previous life of the woman he promised to make his wife, nor was the reputation of Sarah Morley of a description to be much injured by such an alliance. To introduce the word "love," when speaking of their union, would be at least, an absurdity. He really cared but little for her, she absolutely nothing for him, but the respectability to be acquired by the honourable title of a

wife, even when wedded to such a husband, was most attractive, and they were soon afterwards married.

In a short time, her husband gave up his situation. He had contrived to save a little money—a few hundred pounds, and he determined on starting on his own account. He accordingly squatted on a spot about one hundred and twenty miles from his late employers farm, and at least sixty from the dwelling of any other settler, Although the couple were without the slightest appreciation for the beauties of nature, the locality was most lovely; their principal inducement for choosing it, was a magnificent lake or water hole, as it is called, and near its banks they built their hut, Sarah Morley had now a specimen of roughing it in the bush in its worst form. To an affectionate couple, the first year of an emigrant sheep-farmer's life, is not altogether destitute of charms. The almost certainty, with prudence and industry, at arriving at a competence is always before them, and cheers them in their labours, but with Sarah Morley and her husband the solace of affection was wanting, and the severity of her situation was aggravated, by the brutal conduct of her husband, especially when drunk. Had they been living in a town, she would most probably soon have left him, but here she had no opportunity. Beaman, her husband, was naturally cunning, and that attribute of the villain, had been reduced by him to a science during his felon's life. Whenever she thought of escaping from him, he appeared to know

instinctively her intentions, and punished her with all the brutal severity of a ruffian, before she had uttered them.

The life she lived with him, was one of intolerable slavery. They had with them when they arrived, a waggon containing a small tent, and their household necessaries and tools, a flock of sheep and the frame work of a small hut. While building it, she endured the most severe hardships, and when it was completed, her life was still one of continued hard labour. Another vice was soon added to those she already possessed. Among other stores brought with them, was a considerable quantity of spirits. Her husband was like all other bad men, extremely suspicious, and as he was in the habit of occasionally getting insensibly drunk, he feared the consequences of leaving her on those occasions, in perfect possession of her faculties; he therefore obliged her to keep him company in his intoxication, and as the spirits procured oblivion, she easily fell into the habit.

This state of things continued for more than a year. During that time he had been obliged twice to leave her, to purchase necessaries, for nearly a fortnight together. The precautions he took on these occasions, were most singular. He chose the time for his departure, when there would be the least danger of a visit from the very rare itinerant dealers that might venture to so far a point from the borders of civilization. The small quantity of pens, ink, and paper they possessed, were taken

with him. He then examined carefully her shoes, and left her only an old pair of slippers with the soles almost detached from the upper leathers, so that she could not be able to walk any distance without being barefooted, and as a last precaution, took with him every vessel capable of holding more than half-a-pint of fluid. Beside the lake near their hut, there was no other water for forty miles on the road to Sydney. He never quitted while any spirits were left, so that she had no possibility of indulging in her newly acquired habit, to the detriment of his interests. His manner of leave taking was exceedingly characteristic.

“ Now, look well after the sheep and things when I’m gone; if I find anything wrong when I come back, you’ll never forget it, I can tell you. I may be back in a day or two, or it may be a month, I can’t say; so you’d better be always expecting me.

Beaman made preparations for his third journey. He started, and she did not see him again for three weeks. When he returned, she was surprised to find him bring with him a companion. He was induced to adopt this proceeding for the following reason. No one can possess a considerable amount of wealth, and Beaman’s riches were greatly augmented by the increased number of his sheep, without having some one in whom he can occasionally confide. In his wife he had no faith whatever, she hated him, and he knew it. With his increased flock, he required extra help. To get more labour from her was impossible, the work of a slave on a sugar

plantation was a life of ease when compared with her's. On his last journey he had an opportunity of procuring, both an assistant and confidant in the same individual, to his mind. He, by chance met with a late fellow convict, for whom, while undergoing their term of punishment he had formed an intimacy, in fact, they were members of the same chain gang.

Bad as Beaman's reputation was, this fellow's was infinitely worse. Beaman, when he had undergone his term of punishment, had sufficient morality or caution, to escape the talons of the law again. His friend, although a man of far greater ability, had twice suffered punishment since his original term of transportation had expired. He had, in fact, only been liberated from prison three months when Beaman met him. Their acquaintance was easily renewed, and Beaman, finding he was out of employment and very poor, offered to engage him, not from any sympathy with his poverty, but from the additional power it gave him to make advantageous terms. His friend having a character too bad easily to get employment, readily accepted the offer. He was introduced to Sarah, simply with the words, "My friend Jones." He was tall, and stooped in the shoulders, and appeared by no means strongly built. His age was certainly less than Beaman's. His hair originally black, was fast turning grey, his forehead was low, his eyes, small, piercing, and deeply seated in his head, were half concealed by a shaggy pair of eyebrows, his mouth was wide and thick lipped, and his face long and remarkably

ugly. There was a peculiarly detestable look of cunning and sensuality in his countenance. His hands were large, coarse, and hairy, and his whole appearance un- gainly in the extreme. He had formerly been a dis- senting minister to a small congregation in the manu- facturing districts in England, but his habits of profligacy were soon detected, and he was ignominiously dismissed. He wrote a good hand, and soon afterwards obtained a situation as a lawyer's clerk in London. He was not many months in this occupation before he was arrested on a charge of forgery, tried and sentenced to be trans- ported. From his hypocrisy and facility in quoting Scripture, he obtained much sympathy from the suc- cessive chaplains that were appointed to reform his gang, but invariably the cloven foot shewed itself after a short time, and his true character discovered.

Sarah Morley, destitute of society as she was, con- ceived at first sight, an insuperable repugnance for this man, but of course said nothing. Whilst Beaman and Jones unloaded the waggon and unyoked the bullocks, she prepared their meal. Afterwards, the tent was set up for Jones, and when they had all freely partaken of spirits and water, they retired for the night.

One peculiarity was attached to the character of Mr. Jones. It appeared impossible for him to accept any appointment or occupation without calmly looking round him to see if it were not possible to perpetrate some act of dishonesty. In the present instance, it appeared to him that an admirable occasion presented itself, one, in

fact, worthy of a man of his genius. His patron, in the first place was married, and his wife as certainly detested him. Sarah, it is true, had now little personal beauty, but she was without a rival for many miles. In the next place, Beaman had evidently amassed considerable property. His successful sheep walk proved it, and he was therefore capable of being plundered. Moreover, Beaman was now a reformed character, and would not rob any man unless he could do it under the sanction of the law, but Mr. Jones considered that the ingenuity requisite to evade the law made his method of robbing by far the less dishonourable of the two, and in the present case, the robber less dishonourable than the robbed. He had, therefore, no sympathy whatever for Beaman, and quietly determined to possess himself of his worldly possessions as soon as a convenient opportunity presented itself, and thus revenge himself on the injustice of fortune in allowing so common-place and brutal rogue as Beaman so much more success than he had been able to obtain, notwithstanding his superior intellect and daring.

Jones commenced operations by an attack on the heart of the wife. He adopted the system he had always found most certain of success. All women, however, degraded they may be, have a certain instinctive latent respect for religion, and Jones, as has been already stated, could quote the Bible with great facility. Sarah felt considerable astonishment at the man, and half thought she must have been mistaken in his character. She won-

dered too at the behaviour of Beaman. On the evening after their arrival, Jones expatiated considerably on some Scripture subject, and Beaman, if he did not join in the conversation, listened to it without ridicule or impatience. This was the more extraordinary, as the only subject on which Beaman ever attempted to be humorous was, religion. The reason for his present indifference, was, that he considered it a weakness on the part of his friend; one that he had indulged in for many years, in fact, since they were first acquainted. Beaman had now become insensible to it, or perhaps hardly noticed it.

A few days afterwards, the slight respect which Sarah had conceived for the hypocrite vanished. Beaman had one evening began one of his drinking bouts, and Jones, who at first pretended to some moderation, was soon as intoxicated as his employer. Sarah had that evening taken but little. Beaman commenced singing, and after he had concluded, he insisted on Jones giving them a song, and his dependant sung accordingly.

If Beaman's song were objectionable, Jones's was infamous. It consisted of blasphemy and profligacy. Sarah, though depraved, was still a woman, and she was so much disgusted with the miscreant, that she left the hut. Fortunately for her, both were too drunk to notice her absence. The next morning, Jones, on some casual circumstance, quoted the Scriptures, when Sarah told him with great spirit not to do so again.

"I have not forgotten," she said, "the song you sung last night. I want to hear no more Scripture from you."

Jones saw that she understood him, and gave her no further annoyance on the subject unless he, from habit, occasionally committed himself.

He now changed his tactics. Beaman, for some time past, had gradually become more brutal in his conduct to his wife. His attacks upon her were occasionally such as almost to put her life in danger. Jones, when the husband was away, pretended to commiserate her; when alone with the husband, he directly took every opportunity of adding fuel to the flame. He calculated that things, by this system, must come to a crisis. If Beaman, in a fit of passion, killed his wife, the secret would put him entirely in his, Jones' power. If the wife should be driven to desperation by the cruelty of the husband, the result might be equally satisfactory. Whichever event took place, he would be the gainer.

Beaman had determined on visiting the station at B——, on some business, and might probably be absent for a week. His intention was not only to purchase some household necessaries, of which they stood in need, but also a horse, several, as he had heard, being to be sold there. He was to start early in the morning, but on the overnight, he remembered he wanted a certain ointment for his sheep. He kept an odd sort of memorandum book, in which were a number of receipts in his peculiar hand writing and spelling, and in it was the receipt for the ointment. He sought for this book for some time, but not finding it, he asked his wife where she had placed it; she replied that she had

not seen it. This, of course, he denied, and insisted on her producing it. She searched for it carefully, but unsuccessfully. Beaman got into a violent passion, and threatened his wife with personal violence. When the dispute got hot, and there appeared every probability of Beaman putting his threat into execution, Jones left the hut upon some ordinary excuse, and during his absence, Beaman committed a cowardly and cruel assault on his wife.

When Jones returned, he found the woman covered with blood, and weeping bitterly, he however took no notice of the circumstance. The next morning, Beaman departed on his mission, the receipt book not having been forthcoming. Things went on at the hut for the first few days, without anything occurring particularly worthy of notice. On the evening of the third day, Sarah was standing near a clump of shrubs, and not being aware that Jones was near her, unfastened the front of her dress to examine a fearful bruise she had received from Beaman the evening before his departure. It had, in fact, been a most brutal blow, as the large discolouration fully testified.

“Ah! that mark puts me in mind of other days,” said Jones.

Sarah looked to the spot from whence the voice came, and saw the speaker lounging negligently on the ground, smoking a short pipe. “What do you mean,” said Sarah, hastily adjusting her dress.

“Why, some years ago, I was sent to a farm some

way from Hobart Town. The master was rather hot headed, and one day, in a fit of passion, he gave his wife just such a mark as that, but he never gave her another."

"His name wasn't Beaman then," said Sarah.

"No," said Jones, slowly marking his words, as they fell from his lips, "that's true, nor his wife wasn't Mrs. Beaman neither. But he was a different fellow altogether from the governor here. You were never certain of him for an hour together. Now, if Beaman does get savage sometimes, it's soon over, and he's sorry for it afterwards." Sarah thought the description of the Hobart Town farmer was very like Beaman, but she said nothing.

"Ah!" continued Jones reflectively, "that was a queer affair certainly."

"How was it he never struck her again?"

"He hadn't time, two days afterwards he died."

"How did that happen?" enquired Sarah, with much curiosity.

"Well, it was rather a mysterious affair, certainly. He had a habit, like my friend Beaman, of sometimes taking a drop too much, and occasionally getting dead drunk. One evening, he went to bed so, and the next morning we found him a corpse."

"What did he die of?"

"Can't say, I'm sure. He was very blue in the face, and his mouth was all on one side. There was also a strong mark round his throat, as if he had worn his

handkerchief too tight. We directly sent for a doctor, but he didn't come for two days. We were a long way off from anybody; not so far as we are here though."

"What did his wife do afterwards?"

"Why, of course all that was there belonged to her, as she had not any family. As soon as her husband was buried, she sold off the sheep, and pocketed a great deal of money. Six months afterwards, she married one of the handsomest young fellows I ever saw, although she was not good looking, and was much older than he was—why she was ten or fifteen years older than you are."

"Did they not suspect her of anything?"

"What could they suspect her of? Nothing is more common than for a person to die suddenly when they are as drunk as he was. And if she had done it, who was there to have told?"

"You, of course."

"No thank you, "fair play for all," is my motto—for woman as well as man. If a fellow drives a woman out of her mind, he's no right to grumble at her being mad."

"Is she alive now?"

"Yes, and happy too."

"I wonder at that," said Sarah, "I'm sure I should never have had a happy hour again, let me hate a man as much as I do—I might, I mean."

Mr. Jones saw there was no chance of Sarah's follow-

ing the example of his mythical friend, he moreover felt that she understood him, so he determined never to speak on the subject again.

When Beaman returned with the waggon, he was mounted on a short backed strong built cob, he had purchased. He seemed in great good humour, and highly pleased with his bargain. The farm had gone on most satisfactorily during his absence. Although there was little accommodation or comfort for those living on it, the number of sheep was now considerable. Jones became a greater favourite than ever, and even Sarah escaped, for some time, any extraordinary ebullition of temper on the part of her husband, and no further remarks concerning the lost memorandum book were made.

At the close of a very sultry day, when they were more than usually fatigued by their different occupations, Beaman proposed an extra glass of grog, and his offer was readily accepted, both by Jones and Sarah. The heat of the day, though much moderated by the approach of evening, had not yet passed away, and the men agreed to remain outside the hut. The sun had set, and the full moon was shining in the Heavens with that calm splendour which renders the Australian moonlight unsurpassed in beauty in any part of the globe. Jones and Beaman were stretched on the ground outside the door, and Sarah was seated on the rough bench inside, so as to be near the table, to help the men when they wanted liquor. The red glare of the smoky candle lighting up

the inside of the hut, contrasted finely with the calm light of the moon without. The loveliness of the scene was not lost on the party, insensible as they generally were to the beauties of nature.

“Are the nights in Hobart Town as fine as they are here?” asked Sarah.

“How should I know, I was never there,” said Beaman.

“I did not speak to you, I spoke to Jones.”

“How should he know better than me, he was never there neither,”

“Yes he was, wasn’t you Jones?”

“No,” said Jones, somewhat embarrassed, for he knew perfectly well that Beaman was aware he had not, “but I’ve known a good many that have.”

But you told me you had been there,” said Sarah.

“I say,” said Beaman, “you’ve been gammoning the old woman Jones.”

“Why should I say I’ve been there, when I’ve not? She’s mistaken.”

“What,” said Sarah, “do you mean to say you were not employed by a man that had a farm there.”

Jones immediately saw that nothing but an impudent denial could release him from the unpleasant position he was in.

“I am ready to take my affidavit, I never said anything of the kind, what is it you mean?”

Beaman was getting intoxicated, or he would have remembered that anything asserted by his friend Jones,

was of doubtful veracity, unless he offered to swear to it, in that case, it was certain to be a lie.

“You did not say that your master died suddenly after beating his wife?” said Sarah.

Three parts drunk, as Beaman was, he became in a moment most attentive to the conversation. Jones perceived it, and saw there was no time to be lost.

“I don’t know what you intend by this,” said Jones, “but, so help me G——, I never said anything of the kind.”

“Why Jones, what a liar you are,” exclaimed Sarah.

“I’ll tell you what it is Beaman,” said Jones, much offended, “if I’m to put up with this, the sooner I’m off the better. I don’t like this at all. We’ve always been friends, and I won’t quarrel. I’ll have my money to-morrow morning and go.”

“Don’t be a fool Jones, never mind her” said Beaman, whose ideas were somewhat puzzled by the conversation, but who did not like the idea of losing Jones, at any rate, before providing himself with another help.

“Go, I will.”

“I’ll tell you what it is misses,” said Beaman to his wife, “don’t let’s have any more of this, so stop it at once, or you and I’ll quarrel.”

“I say he did say it,” said Sarah sulkily, “and you may do as you like.”

Beaman rose from the ground in a passion and staggered towards her. Jones interfered. “Come, come, don’t let’s quarrel to night, if we’re to have it out, it

will keep 'till to-morrow. I don't bear any ill-will against your wife, so let's have another drop to make peace between us."

"I'll have no more," said Sarah.

"Won't you though," said Beaman, entering the hut, "then by G—— you shall."

He filled three tin mugs. "Now Jones," said he, "take one, You, to his wife, take that, and I'll have this." Jones drank his off, and offered his hand to Sarah, who, out of fear of Beaman, took it sulkily.

"Now drink yours," said Beaman to her.

As Beaman, when drunk, was little less than mad, Sarah had no alternative, but drank it off. Beaman then swallowed his own, and immediately filled himself another, which he took with him outside the hut. He again threw himself on the ground, and recommenced smoking. A silence for some minutes ensued. Beaman, although he had taken Jones' part against Sarah, had not liked the conversation, which had taken place between that worthy and his wife. He determined, in his own mind, as well and resolutely as his tipsy state would allow him, to enquire further into it the next day. The spirits Sarah had drank began to work on her brain, but she sat silently and sullenly within the hut. Jones was absorbed in thought. He clearly perceived things must soon come to a crisis, or all his plans for the future would turn out failures. After a few minutes reflection, he appeared to have made up his mind, and again commenced the conversation.

“I say Beaman, that seems to be a clever cob you have bought. What did you give for it?”

“Fifty pounds.” This was a lie. In a class of society infinitely superior to Beaman’s, it appears impossible to speak of the price of a horse without lying, so the reader must not be too severe in his opinion with our convict party.

“And cheap too at the money, he’s worth eighty any day.”

“You wouldn’t easily find his match for that money,” Beaman stammered out, for he was now quite drunk. After some more conversation in the same style, more or less intelligible on the part of Beaman, Jones said, “let’s have another drop, and then go and see if he’s comfortably made up for the night, and that all’s right.” Beaman, with considerable difficulty, rose from the ground, Jones assisting him. The former staggered into the hut, when remarking Sarah’s look of tipsy sulkiness, he exclaimed.

“What not right yet old girl; here Jones give her another drop, she will be better then.”

“Let’s all have another,” said Jones, “I hate to see any one drinking by themselves. This is my last though, my head won’t stand any more.”

Sarah was too stupified to talk or make any objection. She saw Jones fill the three mugs. She saw him give one to Beaman, who took it off at a draught. She took up her own and put it to her lips; at the same moment Jones raised his mug to his head. She drank her’s off,

and as she finished it, she saw Jones take his from his mouth without having swallowed any part of it. She was on the point of mentioning the circumstance to Beaman, but with the vacillating mind of the drunkard, thought of something else before she had uttered it. Jones and Beaman then left the hut, the latter so drunk as to require the support of his friend to keep him from falling on the ground. Sarah sat still on the bench for some minutes, when the sight of Jones' tin mug on the table, still full of spirits and water, caught her attention. A vague thought passed across her brain, that there was something wrong, but she knew not what. She rose from the bench to assure herself more certainly, that the mug was full; she reached and taking it up, perceived he had not tasted a drop. The next moment, her idea of wrong had vanished, and she raised the spirits to her lips. The metal touching her teeth, restored thought for a moment, and, with the mug in her hand, she went out of the hut to notice the circumstance to Beaman. There, again she forgot on what errand she had come, and looked vacantly round at the calm beautiful scene. The first refreshing influence of the night air had passed, and a heavier stupor had supervened. A moment of half consciousness returned, and she had a faint idea that she saw two persons near the pond, the one leaning over the other, but all impressed so slightly on the mind, that it vanished immediately. She next became aware that the mug had fallen from her hand. Her last idea was to go back to the hut and lie down.

When she awoke it was broad day, and the beams of the sun were pouring into the hut through the doorway. The door had been left wide open all night, but that was of no unusual occurrence during the sultry weather. Her head throbbed, and her throat was parched. She looked round for some water, and was surprised to find that Beaman had already left the place. She heard some one breathing heavily, as in deep sleep. She raised herself, and saw Jones lying on the floor, his head resting on his arms. Surprised at the circumstance, she rose, and finding herself already dressed, and the accessories of last night's debauch still spread about, she considered that probably he had been too drunk to go to his tent, and had fallen helplessly there. She called to him, but received no answer. She went to him and shook him by the shoulder, and with some difficulty awoke him. He at last sat up, and in a few moments recovered himself.

"Where's Beaman?" said Sarah.

Jones stared at her.

"Upon my soul, I don't know;" then looking round him with astonishment, he said, "How the devil did I come here?"

"I suppose you were too drunk to go away."

"That's it no doubt," said Jones, raising himself, "I was preciously sewed up last night certainly. That fellow Beaman would kill me at drinking any day." Sarah made no remark. Jones shook himself, and saying he would look after Beaman, left the hut. Sarah

then began to put the place in order, and make preparations for their breakfast. When things were put somewhat in order, and the fire lighted, she proceeded to the pond with the kettle to procure water. Her head was still far from clear, and as she left the hut, a vague impression of the last night's scene came over her. She approached the spot where she imagined to have seen the two figures the night before, and the fact again came strongly before her. When she had nearly reached the water, she saw a figure lying on the ground. She approached it rapidly—it was Beaman. He was stretched with his body on the earth, and his face immersed in the water. She screamed loudly for Jones, and rushing rapidly towards the body, removed it from the pond. He was evidently quite dead, and the corpse presented a ghastly appearance. She screamed again for Jones, but he did not hear her. She rushed part of the way towards the temporary stable which had been erected, calling for him at the top of her voice. Before she arrived there, she changed her mind, and ran rapidly back to the pond. She looked at the body, and felt its hands. There was no mistaking the fact—he was quite dead. She again left it, and again rushed towards the stable, when she saw Jones at a distance, walking leisurely in the direction of the hut. She ran up to him, but when she reached him, she was speechless from want of breath, and excessive excitement. She made another attempt—it was useless. She took him by the sleeve of his coat and dragged him towards the pond. When nearly arrived,

the remembrance of the two figures the evening before, flashed across her mind. She stopped, quitted her hold, and looked in a terrified manner in his face. Jones appeared perfectly astonished at her conduct. He looked round and saw the body. "Good God;" he exclaimed, "what is this?"

They lifted the corpse from the ground, and bore it between them for the hut. The mind of Sarah could hardly realize the situation. Was that cold weight in her arms the man before whom she had yesterday trembled? Was that tongue silent now, and for evermore, the one that a few hours since had laden her with execration? Was that hand and arm, now hanging helplessly towards the earth, never again to be raised against her? Was that man, who had so long been the tyrant master of an unwilling slave, now indebted to that slave for hiding his hideous helpless remains from the clear eye of day? She felt bewildered, nor did her mind recover its equilibrium till they had entered the hut, and laid the corpse upon the bed. There, as she gazed on it and saw the drying clayey mud upon the face, some portion of the respect, a woman bears to her husband, however infamous he may have been, returned, and she proposed to Jones to lay the body decently out. Jones shook his head.

"Ah!" said he, "it's an awful sight. What a lesson for us to think of Heavenly things."

"Stop that Jones," said the woman sternly.

“Oh, how sorry I am, Mrs. Beaman, not to see you more impressed by the shocking spectacle before us.”

“Stop that you villain,” she screamed, “I know you.”

Jones looked enquiringly at her for a few seconds, and appeared to reflect. Suddenly changing his tone, he said.

“We had better not touch the corpse. A new settler has lately fixed his station about twenty miles from here, and has been appointed a magistrate. It will appear more open and respectable if I ride over to him. It will serve to identify Beaman and prove his death, and we shall have a witness that nothing was concealed, and also that it occurred perfectly accidentally.

While saying this, he kept his eye upon her. She fixedly returned his gaze, but said nothing.

“Ah!” he continued, “although I am occasionally at fault myself, still drinking is a fearful vice; see what it has led to.”

An almost imperceptible sneer passed across the woman’s face. Jones perceived it, but could hardly understand it. After a moment’s reflection, all anxiety appeared to have left him—he had remembered how intoxicated she had been the evening before.

The cob was saddled and Jones left. Sarah having put some biscuit into her pocket, closed the door of the hut, and proceeded to attend to the sheep. As she looked at the flock, which was now of considerable value,

she remembered that she was absolute mistress of the whole. An indistinct certainty presented itself to her, that her husband had been murdered. She remembered too, that she had often wished him dead, and she was aware of the indirect persuasion of Jones to murder him. That Jones was the assassin she was convinced, but what reason could have instigated him to the act? Her vanity soon found one. Jones would propose to marry her; she would play cunning with him; she would appear to confide fully in him till all was arranged; she would then shew the villain the opinion she really had of him.

Evening came on, and she returned with the sheep. Hunger reminded her of her supper, and she advanced towards the hut. Arrived before it, her courage failed her, and she stood before the door afraid to open it. She remained there for some time, 'till the evening began to dim the objects around her. At last, she desperately opened the door. At the sight of the motionless helpless body, her fear vanished, but a feeling of solemnity succeeded. She took some biscuit and a drinking mug, and left the hut, closing the door after her, slowly and noiselessly as if she feared to disturb him. She took some water from the pond, and her frugal supper being finished, she retired thoroughly exhausted to the tent. Sarah then laid herself down, and was nearly asleep, when she remembered the spot she was lying on, was the one usually occupied by Jones. The woman immediately threw off sleep, rose and left the tent; then throwing herself beneath

some thick shrubs to screen the clear moonlight from her eyes, she was soon fast asleep.

Jones had made so much haste on his errand, that he arrived at the farm the next evening about an hour before sunset, accompanied by the magistrate. This gentleman had formerly been an officer in the navy, but he had now quitted the service, and occupied himself with his sheep farm. He was a straightforward honourable and humane man, but of moderate ability. He took a few notes of the circumstances relating to the death of Beaman. Jones explained the helpless state of intoxication his friend was in at the time of the accident, and ingenuously admitted that he himself had partaken so largely of Beaman's hospitality, that he could not take that care of him which his situation required. He spoke of the deceased, not only with friendship, but respect, and concluded by stating, that in the various affairs which had passed between them, he had invariably found him an honest and honourable man. Sarah, although somewhat surprised at Jones' concluding remarks, readily corroborated all he had stated, and the enquiry finished.

The preparations for the interment were immediately made, the intense heat of the weather requiring it. Jones dug the grave, and after washing the face, placed the body in it, in the clothes the deceased wore at the moment of his death. The party stood round the grave, and were lighted in their melancholy task by the moon, which was shining brightly. There was no funeral

service, such a thing as a prayer-book could not have been found among them. Jones, however, could not let the opportunity pass unregarded of obtaining credit for his piety, before the new comer. He spoke well. He candidly confessed his fault of drinking, and hoped the present solemn scene would act as a warning to them all. How fearful, how terrible was it to be called away in such a moment as had overtaken his poor friend. To wake from a fit of intoxication, and find himself arraigned at the awful judgment seat, where the good were to be separated from the bad, the one to eternal happiness, the other to everlasting perdition.

During this harangue, which continued in the same style for some time, the woman remained in a state of intense terror. She knew every word the miscreant uttered, was a blasphemy, and she trembled lest the justice of heaven should strike them in the act. She stood beside the grave, but could not look upon the body. She turned her gaze from it, but felt as if the eyes of Beaman were glaring on her with a dead phosphoric light. She took courage, and looked upon the corpse. The side of the grave threw a shadow over it, but though in comparative darkness it lay there in terrible distinctness. She looked away from it upon the lovely scene around, but she felt that eye was sternly fixed upon her, and as every succeeding sentence of mock piety fell from the wretch's lips, she almost feared those of the corpse would move and speak. Her terror at last, was so great that she staggered, and would perhaps have

fallen, had not the magistrate kindly assisted her—he attributed her emotion to the natural grief of a wife.

When they had quitted the body, and the grave was filled in, Sarah seemed to be relieved from a great oppression. The next morning, she arose and calmly looked upon her future prospects. Her path seemed clearly marked out for her, and everything appeared to promise good fortune. The sheep, when sold, would realize several hundred pounds, and if the remaining property of her husband, was but of trifling value, this alone would place her in a respectable position. The next morning, the magistrate advised her to ascertain whether Beaman was possessed of any ready money at the time of his death. He had only a few pounds, he having spent all his ready cash when he purchased the cob.

She had now to determine on her first movements. As a matter of form, she appealed to Jones—whom she treated in the most confidential manner—for advice. Jones referred her to the magistrate, and he advised her to go back with him to his station. Jones having ridden very fast; the cob had been left there to refresh itself, and the magistrate had driven him back in a light cart with a horse of his own. A store he said had lately been opened near him, and at that she could purchase her mourning; when that was finished, she could determine at her leisure, how she would dispose of her property. Jones not only offered no objection, but appeared to approve highly of the plan. She left the next morning, and he remained in charge of the farm. She

wished him adieu in a very friendly manner, which Jones responded to with great apparent cordiality, but his last words caused her much reflection. "Good bye mistress," he said, "I'll take good care of all that belongs to you, don't hurry yourself back 'till everything is done to your liking, but I shall not be sorry to see you again, as I shall want to be off as soon as I can."

On the road, the magistrate asked many questions respecting Jones, who did not appear to have made a very favourable impression on him. Sarah was obliged, after the manner she had spoken of him when the magistrate first arrived, to state that he was a man in whom her husband had the greatest reliance. She personally did not like him very much, for he was of a very singular temper, but she had always found him a very honest fellow. She did not know—as was the fact—what arrangements were made between him and her husband, but she believed them to be of a very simple description. Her husband was always very close with her, and she did not know much about his affairs. The magistrate having no personal interest in the matter, the subject dropt.

Arrived at the store, she found everything very expensive, and as she not only required mourning, but many other articles of dress as well—her husband having spent but little on their wardrobes, she was almost destitute of many of the commonest and most necessary articles of clothing—so after having spent what ready

money she had, there was still a heavy account against her.

She was now in readiness to return, but she had still considerable misgivings about Jones. She dreaded being alone with him, so without giving the magistrate her reason for her question, she asked him if there would be any difficulty in finding a purchaser for the sheep?

“None whatever,” he replied, “I am a buyer myself, I am perfectly willing to give you twenty-two shillings a head for them, which is their just value, or if you like to try if you can get a better price for them elsewhere, I am willing to let the bargain stand over till you have made further enquiries. If you sell them to me, you can have the money when you like.” This fell most conveniently for Sarah, and she requested the magistrate, whose ideas of the management of a deceased man’s estate were not of the clearest description, to take them at the price.

The next morning, the cart was again put in requisition, and she started with her new friend for her home. When they arrived, they found everything in good order, and Jones appeared pleased to receive them. Tea and damper having been prepared, they sat down in the cool of the evening to enjoy their meal. After they had finished, Sarah broached the subject of the bargain she had made.

“I have sold all the sheep, Jones, to this gentleman for twenty-two shillings a head; don’t you think I have made a good bargain?”

“What sheep?” said Jones, in a tone of great surprise.

“Why those of course,” she replied, pointing to the flock.

“By whose permission,” he enquired angrily, “you certainly had none from me.”

“But,” said the magistrate, “she had no occasion to ask your permission.”

“Well,” said Jones, rising, “this is a most extraordinary proceeding certainly; if I were to go to your station when you were out, and without your permission, agree to sell your sheep, would you let them go?”

“Certainly not.”

“Then why should you imagine I should let you take these?”

All were silent for some seconds.

“Are you mad Jones?” asked Sarah.

“No, nor drunk, nor a fool neither, whatever you may think me.”

Another momentary pause.

“Mr. Jones,” said the magistrate calmly, “the better manner would be for us to talk over this matter quietly and reasonably like men of business.”

“With all my heart, I’m sure, I’m quite ready.”

“I have agreed to purchase these sheep of Mrs. Beaman,” said the magistrate, “she claims them as her own. You appear to have some right to them, either by loan or otherwise, have you any objection to let me know

what it is? I have no desire to interfere with anything I'm not entitled to."

"I have but one objection to your taking them," said Jones, "but that you will perceive is a strong one. The sheep are mine."

"Excuse my asking you by what right."

"Certainly, by purchase. I have not only bought them, but am quite ready to prove it. Here is Beaman's receipt for the money." Saying this, he took from his pocket a crumpled piece of paper, and opening it, shewed clearly in the peculiar hand writing and orthography of Beaman, the truth of his statement. He, moreover, shewed divers memoranda bearing on the subject in the same hand writing.

Sarah was thunderstruck. She could not deny her husband's hand writing, but she was certain he had never sold the sheep to Jones, and equally certain that Jones had never possessed the money to pay for them. Suddenly, the truth flashed across her mind; the receipt was a forgery—but how to prove it.

"Don't believe, Sir, what that fellow says, he is a villain; you don't know how great a villain he is. My husband never signed that receipt." Jones replied to her assertion by a sneer of contempt.

"Have you no other papers of your husband's, Mrs. Beaman," asked the magistrate, "that can throw a light on the matter?"

Sarah remembered the memorandum book which had been missing; her husband had found it a few days after

his return. In a moment of suspicion, he had hidden it under the rafters of the hut, and had forgotten it.

“There’s a note book of his in the box, but I don’t know if there’s anything about it in it.” After a moment’s reflection, she continued, “There can be nothing on the subject in it, for it never took place.”

She then rushed into the hut, and brought the book back with her.

“Now Sir,” she said, giving the book to the magistrate, “satisfy yourself if there is anything in it to bear out what Jones says.”

“Stop one moment,” said Jones, “I don’t know what may be in that book, but whether there is, or is not anything about the transaction, I claim my right, and will have it. I know my friend Beaman was very careless in his book keeping, and I won’t let anything he may have written, act to my prejudice.”

The book was opened. It was nothing but a common greasy memorandum book in a leather cover, fastened round with a piece of string. It contained, besides the leaves, several loose pieces of paper, some with receipts for ointment for sheep, others for preserving harness, etc. In the pages of the book were different entries of purchases, and sales made by Beaman, but these appeared not to have been regularly entered, but merely written on the page which presented itself at the moment he opened the book. One thing struck the magistrate—the extraordinary resemblance between the hand writing, and that on the receipt. On examining the book at-

tentively, three or four entries were found, all bearing on the transaction about the sheep with Jones, also on the inside of the cover was written the address of Thomas Beaman, ——— Street, London.

“Who is this Thomas Beaman,” asked the magistrate.

“His son, whom I suspect, but I don’t understand the law, has a right to some voice in the disposal of his property.

“His legitimate son?”

“Yes, and by his legitimate wife too.”

Sarah, who for some time past, had been in a state of utter bewilderment, recovered herself for a moment, but it was only to hear fresh trouble.

“When did his first wife die?” asked the magistrate.

“Never, that I heard of, or anybody else either. I should not have said this,” he continued, addressing Sarah, “as it may hurt your feelings, but when you accuse a man of behaving dishonestly, for the purpose of getting from him what fairly belongs to him you deserve it.”

All this he had invented at the moment; Beaman had informed him that his first wife had died in England, and Jones had heard nothing to the contrary.

“Oh, Sir,” said Sarah, noticing the conviction of the truth of the fellow’s statement had on the magistrate’s countenance, “don’t believe what he says, he is capable of everything that is bad. All he has shewn you is a forgery. He hadn’t a shilling when Beaman took him into his service.”

“I am very sorry Mrs. Beaman, but I can interfere no further in the matter, you must apply to a solicitor to take up your cause. I will now leave you, I shall be able to get some distance before dark, and the moon will rise soon afterwards.”

“You had better take Mrs. Beaman with you Sir,” said Jones, “I don’t think I’m quite justified in letting her stay here.”

“Oh, pray Sir, don’t leave me with that man, he’ll murder me if you do.”

“Well, I’ve no objection; if you wish it, I will take you back with me, you may, at any rate, be certain of protection, while you are with my family. My wife, I dare say, will be able to make room for you somewhere.”

The horse was put too, and Sarah was attempting to put into the cart the purchases she had made. “Stop,” said Jones, “I cannot allow you to take those things away; they were purchased with money not your own.” Then, addressing the magistrate, “I expect the cob will be sent back here in three days time at the latest, or you will hear from me.” For all answer, the magistrate walked up to the ruffian and seizing a bundle of Sarah’s clothing from his hand, threw it into the cart. He then asked Mrs. Beaman whether she had got all she wanted, and being answered in the affirmative; he helped Sarah in, and then followed her.

“If you imagine I shall quietly put up with this,” said Jones, in a bullying manner, “you are mistaken. I

will have those things if I tear them off her back." The magistrate, who had just taken the reins in his hands, turned round sharply, and having first thundered out a most unworshipful oath, exclaimed.

"Will you by G——. Try it; I'm an old officer in the navy, and neither you, nor any cowardly vagabond like you, shall annoy a woman under my roof, so look out my friend." Then whipping his horse, they were soon lost in the darkness of the East.

Jones was greatly annoyed at Sarah leaving him. His objection was only made for the purpose of impressing on her, her dependant position. He had not calculated on the probable offer of the magistrate, and like many other cunning people, he had overshot his mark. He had speculated on keeping her with him in a state of almost servitude, till he had disposed of everything, and then to have left her to seek her fortune as she best might, but his amiable intentions were frustrated.

It must not be imagined, that the course the magistrate had adopted in taking Sarah to his house, was altogether without some repugnance on his part. To say the truth, he did not like her; although not particularly shrewd, he could distinguish sufficient discrepancies in the various statements she made, to make him suspicious, but she was a woman, and in distress, and he considered himself justified in protecting her.

She remained for sometime in his house, nearly in the position of a servant. She could find no solicitor willing to take up her cause. She had no power to remunerate

one, and her case appeared too desperate for any one to undertake it on speculation. She sold the cob with a somewhat defective title, for sufficient to pay for her debt at the store,—it should be remembered, that his worship had no hand in the transaction. She continued to conduct herself with considerable propriety. Having determined on reforming her way of life, she looked calmly round to see how she could accomplish it in the most comfortable manner to herself. At last she determined on marrying again, and in comparing, in her own mind, the various qualifications of those around her, she determined there was no one she knew in the colony, to be compared to George Meadows, she therefore, for the first time since she left England, kept her promise of writing to him.

It need hardly be said, there was scarcely a word of truth in the repentant woman's letter. She described herself as continually pining after him; that her doctor thought there was something preying on her mind, that would lead her to her grave, if she did not take amusement, and shake it off. That she had done so, but without effect; she was more melancholy than ever. She would have written to him before, but she knew how opposed his mother was to the match, and she did not like to make words between them. Oh, how happy she would be, if she could only see him once again before she died, but that was too much rapture for her to hope for, though perhaps it might even save her life. She then went on at some length on the facility a young

man of respectability had of enriching himself in the colony, especially if backed by personal appearance and good manners. She concluded, by regretting his mother would not allow him to come to a country, although so greatly to his advantage, where he might probably meet with one whose earnest prayer would always be for his welfare.

The letter having been dispatched, Sarah immediately adopted the quiet and reserved manner of a respectable betrothed woman, whose lover was absent. This conduct added so much attraction to her person, that a new settler, who had established a ferry about twenty miles from the magistrate's farm, finding it answer remarkably well, also conceived the idea of keeping a house of refreshment. For this, as well as his terrestrial happiness, it was necessary for him to have a wife, and Sarah, whose marriage with Beaman, uncertain as it was, had contrived to throw a veil over her former irregularities, was considered by him as exactly the individual adapted to his comfort and welfare, and in consequence proposed to her. Over this offer, she maturely deliberated, as well as exhibited considerable caution in her researches, as to the possibility of his having had another wife, and that wife then living. All her enquiries turned out most satisfactorily. He was an emigrant, and not a liberated convict. He was a quiet industrious middle aged man, from the Midland Counties, and was making a handsome income. There was every probability that the Inn would turn out a most advantageous speculation. She accepted

his offer, and by the time her letter arrived in England, she was again a wife, and if the habit of an occasional indulgence in the bottle be excepted—the only legacy she had received from Beaman—her method of life was not such as to call for any reprobation.

It would be unjust to the ability and perseverance of Mr. Jones, not to dedicate a few lines to his memory. Although he was considerably inconvenienced by Sarah's abrupt departure, he, however, managed to dispose of the sheep, and every other available thing, he could turn into cash. With the proceeds in his pocket, he sought a different part of the colony, and there adding the title of Rev. to his name, he commenced dissenting minister. In theatrical parlance, he for sometime drew well, and business was very good, but his reputation having followed him there, a considerable amount of uneasiness arose in the minds of those who sat under him. He was not a man easily to be daunted, and he resolutely met the attack made upon him. He asserted so unremittingly, so strenuously, that he had never committed the act of forgery, for which he had been transported, that at last he began to believe it himself. The conviction of his own innocence added so much eloquence to his assertions, that he was looked upon as a most ill-used man, and the jury, that had found him guilty, as a set of heartless ruffians. But there were still two subsequent imprisonments to be accounted for. This he did with great candour and ingenuousness. By contact for so long a time with those hardened in iniquity, he became himself

corrupted, and by this open undisguised reasoning, he contrived to place his sins on the governor of the colony, whose innate cruelty and stupidity prevented him from distinguishing, by the Rev. Mr. Jones' personal appearance and manner, his total innocence of the first odious charge, on which he was convicted. The little episode of the subsequent forgery, and something worse at Beaman's was not touched upon by him. He hardly considered himself justified in doing so. If the cause may be judged by the effect, it was doubtful to him, whether the action he had committed, was not perfectly excusable. He had obtained great respectability by it; the possession of money in the colony, as well as in the mother country, being considered a great *prima facie* proof of integrity. Many benighted souls had also received by it, the benefit of his teaching, and no adverse appearance or circumstance had yet arisen to inform him that he had done wrong. As his reputation for piety increased, he determined on writing the history of his life for the benefit of his fellow creatures, and he took great pains in its composition, that nothing should appear in it of a demoralizing tendency. Having completed the manuscript, he was like many other authors, at a loss for its title. At last he decided on one.—“A Soul from the Pit.” With the manuscript in his pocket, he started for Sydney, there being no printer nearer, who could do justice to it. At Sydney, however, he never arrived. Some emigrants passing through a wood one morning found on the ground the dead body of a man. From some

papers upon it, it was ascertained to be the corpse of the Rev. Mr. Jones. His death was not without a certain grandeur arising from the mystery connected with it. A deep gash in his throat, caused by some sharp instrument, had been the immediate cause; but by what hand it had been given, it was impossible to say. From the unruffled condition of his clothes, there did not appear to have been any struggle, yet the absence of a razor, or any sharp instrument, either upon or near the body, destroyed the idea of suicide. Part of a manuscript autobiography was found in his pocket; of the remainder, no clue existed. In his purse was found a considerable amount in gold—robbery had therefore not been the cause; but a gold watch he was known to have possessed had vanished. The bridle of his horse was found upon the ground, and the next day the horse was recovered; of the saddle, no trace was to be seen. How it occurred, was never discovered, but one thing is certain—the earth was indebted to the cause, whatever it might have been, for removing from its surface, as unmitigated a villain as had ever disgraced it.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING the day on which George Meadows had received the letter, the mother and son seemed to have entered into a tacit agreement to avoid each other. Both Margaret and her late husband possessed great tenacity of affection, and their son inherited the same fidelity from them. That he loved his mother tenderly is certain, to have doubted it would have been to have done him a great injustice, but the affection he bore to that unworthy woman, Sarah Morley, far exceeded it. True it is, that absence and silence had somewhat mitigated the ardour of his affection, but the letter explained all in so satisfactory a manner, that his love was now completely renewed. The more he thought over the subject, the more powerful the feeling became. He felt that it would be impossible for him to live without her, and he determined to bring the subject calmly, but determinately before her.

On arriving at their home in the evening, a great coolness at first appeared to exist between them. He earnestly wished to begin the conversation, but had not the courage, and his mother evidently laboured under

the same feeling. After supper, Margaret broke the ice by asking him whom the letter was from he had received in the morning.

“Sarah Morley,” he answered, blushing deeply.

“I’m sorry for it,” said Margaret.

“Now mother,” said he, “you are very unreasonable, you know nothing about her, and why should you set yourself against her in that manner.”

“I do know a great deal about her, but it’s no use telling you, for you won’t believe me.”

A silence for some minutes ensued. “Mother.” at last burst out George, “it’s no use saying anything. I can’t live without her, so don’t tell me anything against her. You only make me miserable, and nothing can change me.”

“George, my dear George,” “exclaimed Margaret, breaking into tears, “Oh don’t say so. You don’t know how wretched you make me.”

“But why are you so unreasonable, I’m sure you’d like her if you knew her better, and she couldn’t help liking you. We could live very close for a few months, and that with the sale of the furniture, would pay your voyage out, and I could work my passage as a servant or something of the sort. Now don’t cry so, there’s a dear old mother.” He took her hand kindly, and Margaret threw her arm round his neck.

“Oh, my dear boy, you don’t know how miserable you will be. Now do take my advice, and don’t think any more about her. If she was a respectable young woman,

"I would walk there with you barefooted," continued poor Margaret, whose ideas of geography, were somewhat obscure, "but I'd sooner be in my grave, and you there too, than see you married to such a thing as that."

George, who saw it was useless to continue the conversation, sulkily took up his hat and left the house. He was sullen and silent for some days, merely speaking to Margaret if he wanted anything, or answering her questions by a simple negative or affirmative. His parent bore it all with the greatest patience, trying by all the little arts known to mothers, to bring round her froward son. She studied the quality and cooking of his suppers with great care, purchasing those economical delicacies which she knew he liked, and putting on the breakfast table some little luxury which she thought would please him, without letting him perceive that she thought it anything more than ordinary. She would anxiously mark the expression of his countenance, when they were put before him, and auger good or evil from the omen. It was all useless, his behaviour towards her did not change, and she began to feel completely wretched; as the loss of her son's love would be to her the most terrible of earthly miseries.

His unkind behaviour towards his mother, continued for more than three weeks, when it suddenly changed. He became exceedingly frank and good humoured, so much so, that an indifferent observer, would have easily detected it was far more so than was natural, and that

his gaiety of spirit was forced ; his mother, however, was too much delighted with the change to note the difference. Things went on smoothly enough for a few days, when a circumstance occurred which, at first, caused her great uneasiness. The chest of drawers in his room had no key when they were purchased, and George, who had few secrets from his mother, soon became indifferent to the circumstance. The management and arrangement of these drawers, was one of the most special of Margaret's home duties. One morning, while thus employed, she found a sheet of printed paper carefully folded up. It was the prospectus of a ship, about to start for Sydney, naming all particulars as to the day of departure, price of passage, amount of luggage allowed to each passenger, and every other requisite information for the sea voyage of intending emigrants. This gave her great alarm, but her wishes soon helped her to an excuse and explanation. She felt convinced he had obtained it while out of humour, and now that his ill temper had passed, he thought nothing more about it. Besides, on reading the bill, she found the cheapest passage money was twenty-six pounds, and her son had barely as many shillings.

Christmas was now near at hand, and Christmas-day fell on a Saturday, the warehouse would therefore be closed for two whole days. Our heroine looked forward with delight to the season so dear to all, and promised herself much pleasure during that short holiday. On the Friday evening, she completed her work as rapidly

as possible, in order to purchase her stores for the occasion. It must be admitted, she was rather extravagant. To such an extent had that weakness overtaken her, that she positively stood for a considerable time before the body of a most respectable looking fowl, which was being offered a great bargain. She went so far as to enter into conversation with the shopman on the occasion, and listened with great attention to the praises he lavished on it, as he turned it round and round in the light of the flaring gas for her inspection. Her habitual prudence, however, saved her, and she determined to spend a larger sum than she had previously intended on the groceries, as a reward for her economy. She had completed her purchases at the grocer's and was leaving the shop, when, on passing before the window, an object struck her eye, and not being able to resist its attractions, she went back for it. It was a lemon, but not for lemonade, as a bottle from the public house distinctly proved. She had determined on giving George a surprise the next day after dinner, and the lemon and the spirit were both purchased with that intent. The beef and flour completed her investments, and she went thoroughly laden home. Before making preparations for supper, she employed herself in decorating the rooms with some twigs of holly and mistletoe, on which she had proposed laying out a penny with a half-starved boy she had met in the street, but somehow, possibly by mistake, but more probably as an offering unto the Lord, two-pence had slipped into the lad's hand instead.

Some pieces were placed in the frame of the window, another over the cupboard, and another still larger over the chimney glass. With some little difficulty, she pinned some to the paper on the wall by the side of her son's bed, and the window of his room was decorated with a double quantity. This finished, she made up a good fire, for the weather was very frosty, then prepared their suppers, and afterwards, seating herself on the sofa, she waited impatiently her son's return, anxious to perceive the effect her decorations of the apartment would have on him. After a few moments, he knocked at the door, and she rushed down to open it. He entered somewhat hurriedly, and ran up stairs into his room. She followed him up, but went into the sitting room. Having waited for a few minutes, and as he did not come, she called to him.

"Come and warm yourself, George dear, what are you about so long there." It was a bitterly cold night, and the fire was burning brightly.

"Don't be in a hurry, old lady, I am only washing my hands, I shall be there directly." In a few moments, he entered the room. He advanced towards his mother, and placing his arm round her, he said.

"How smart you've been making the place."

"I'm glad you think so." Immediately afterwards, an anxious and sorrowful expression passed across his face, and he remained, for a few moments, apparently absorbed in thought.

"What made you so late George?"

“I called on Murphy, to ask him to lend me some books. Oh, how cold it is.”

“Never mind, you’ll soon get warm, there’s a good fire. Do you sleep warm enough at night, if not, you can have my shawl if you like. That room of yours is cold, it catches the draught coming up the staircase.”

“No, I’m quite warm enough when I’m in bed,” then after a moment’s reflection. “The lock of the door though is getting loose, and I should not fancy it, if it came off. Ask Mrs. Jackson (the landlady) to lend you a screw-driver when you go for the beer, and I’ll soon set it to rights.”

“I never noticed there was anything wrong about it George, but I’ll ask her for it.” So saying, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and as she was leaving the house she requested Mrs. Jackson to lend her the screw-driver; she, however, had not one, but advised Margaret to apply to a neighbour, whom she knew possessed one. After the compliments of the season had passed between them, Margaret went on her errand, and having obtained both the beer and the screw-driver, she returned to her home. The supper was placed on the table, and they both sat down to it, George, however, had no appetite. She pressed him to eat, but without effect. “I’m afraid George, they work you too hard, you must not let them do that, I’m sure over fatigue brought on your poor father’s illness.

“Oh, no mother, there’s nothing the matter with me. I shall be in all the better order for the pudding to-

morrow." If he had no appetite, he was, however, in excellent spirits. He talked incessantly. It was almost impossible for his mother to offer a remark, indeed, she was too happy to see him so comfortable, to wish for anything more. Occasionally it might have appeared to her, had she paid attention, that his spirits were forced; that his eye was wild, restless, and haggard, and that while his tongue was running on with such rapidity, his thoughts were either on something else, or that his laugh was only produced to conceal a sigh.

His chattering continued the whole evening, his tongue never ceased. He appeared to have no inclination to go to rest, and Margaret, who was generally most delighted in his society, was now more than once obliged to tell him to go to bed. At last he went. On taking leave of her, his chattering suddenly ceased, and he held her hand in his, as if something was on his mind, and he wished to reveal it, but he said nothing, and left her. When Margaret laid her head on her pillow, the remembrance of her son's look of anxiety on leaving her, came before her, but his lively spirits during the other portion of the evening, completely obliterated the impression, and sleep fell upon a thoroughly happy woman.

The next morning, she arose, and having put her room in order, she prepared their breakfast. When this was completed, she went to call her son, and to her great surprise, found he was already dressed. When he joined her, he appeared so pale, that she felt alarmed for his

health, but he assured her he felt perfectly well. He talked incessantly during the whole of the breakfast, but eat very little. After breakfast, he told his mother he had an appointment with a friend, and that she must defer dinner till two o'clock. This was, of course, readily agreed to, and he shortly afterwards left the house.

As soon as he had gone, Margaret cleared off the breakfast things, and prepared herself for the serious business of the day—the making of the pudding. If it did not turn out well, it would not have been from lack of care, industry, or study in its composition. The manipulation was of the most perfect description. It would have defied the skill of the most practical gourmand to have found one stone in the plums, or one atom of the flour which had not mixed with its fellow ingredients. Her fingers, albeit, well accustomed to labour, positively ached so much after she had placed it in the cloth, and put the saucepan, containing it, on the fire, that she sat for some moments to rest them. She soon, however, rose from her seat, and having arranged the beef, ready to be placed before the fire, she cleared away all the apparatus she had been using, and the room re-assumed its customary neat appearance. A tap was then heard at her door, and in walked Mrs. Jackson.

“I wish you a merry Christmas, Mrs. Meadows.”

“Thank you, and the same to you.”

“Where’s George gone to? I saw him go out.”

“He promised to call and see a friend of his to-day, but he’ll be back by two o’clock.”

“It wasn’t very polite of him to go out without wishing me the compliments of the season, was it now?”

“He did not like disturbing you, or I’m sure he would have done it, for you’re a great favourite of his.”

“Am I,” said Mrs. Jackson, laughing, “I’m sure I’m very proud to hear it, for he’s one of the handsomest young fellows I know. My poor husband was a good looking man when he was alive, and my son-in-law ain’t bad looking, as you know, but they are nothing to your George.”

“Ah” said the proud mother, “what’s more Mrs. Jackson, he’s as good as he’s handsome.

“How old is he now?”

“He’s turned twenty-two.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Jackson, “I suppose he’ll be marrying soon, I’m sorry I have not a daughter for him.”

“I’m sure,” said Margaret, “I wish you had, we should all be very comfortable together, shouldn’t we?”

After a little more similar conversation between the friends, Mrs. Jackson said.

“Are you going to church this morning, if you are not, I wish you’d give an eye to my fire.

“No, I shall stop in to-day, and I’ll look after it with pleasure. You’ll do as much for me to-morrow I know.

“Certainly I will, and at any other time too.”

The church bell beginning, Mrs. Jackson left the house, and Margaret remained alone in it. Her first occupation was to arrange George's room, and on it she generally bestowed great care, so as to make it as comfortable as possible. She took off the counterpane, sheets, and blankets, and having tossed and kneaded the bed, in a proper and scientific manner, she smoothed it ready for the reception of the under blanket and sheet. On turning the latter over the top part of the bed, to keep it in its place, she naturally went underneath the feather bed. To her surprise, she found she encountered some hard substance. She felt it with her hand. It was enveloped in paper, and was thrust between the mattress and the head of the bedstead so tightly, that it required considerable force to remove it. She dislodged it at last, and placed it on the bed. It was a brown paper parcel, which George had brought home with him the evening before, and which he had told her contained books. She took off the wrapper, and on seeing the contents, it fell from her hands upon the bed. Had Margaret grasped a serpent, she could not have started back with greater terror. It was a small lacquered tin cash box, with the names of her son's employers, in gold letters on the lid.

As she gazed on it, a sort of terrible fascination came over her. She regarded it with intense repugnance, but her foot seemed to be nailed to the floor. Little by little the horrible attraction became more powerful, and as it increased in strength, she advanced towards it. Though

dreading to touch it, she felt her hand rebelling against her will, and stretching forth to grasp it. She took it up, and seating herself on the chair beside the bed, she placed the box upon her knees. Her terror vanished in a moment; she suddenly became absorbed in thought, and the dreaded object though before her, was hidden from her sight. She was searching for some excuse or explanation, and at last she found one. A long drawn deep gasp told the relief it gave her—the box was out of order, it had been given to him to repair, and he had brought it home to do it at his leisure. Miserable as the reasoning was, it was accepted by her as a certain proof of his innocence. She now looked on it without any dread. Shame on her for having doubted her son's honesty. The box was evidently out of order, the lock was broken. She lifted up the lids of the two small compartments for gold, and they were both empty—here was another proof in corroboration. The remembrance of the screw-driver then came before her, what could he have wanted it for? The lock of the door, true, how foolish of her to worry herself—although she had never noticed that it had been out of order, but she had not paid any particular attention to it. She then looked at the box without dread, suddenly her terror returned. The marks on the bright naked metal near the lock, shewed that force had lately been used with some instrument to open it. She became faint, and placed the box on the bed. She quickly recovered herself, for she felt it was unjust to her son to suspect him without

better proof. She again remembered the screw-driver, and rose to find it. With some difficulty she discovered it. It was in his chest of drawers underneath his shirts. Why should he hide it? Oh, it was accidental; he had asked her for it, and she knew he had it. What reason could he have for concealing it from her? She applied the screw-driver to the marks on the lock—they fitted exactly. The cruel knowledge of the falsehood he had told her respecting the books then rose before her, as well as the cautious manner he had concealed the box. She raised the tray for the loose cash, and beneath it saw several bank notes. She again seated herself, or rather fell upon her chair, her mouth open, her face pallid, and her eyes without expression. At last, tears came to her relief, and they came in torrents. Her grief was something terrible. Her body swayed backwards and forwards, and she continued for some time raising her hands and letting them fall upon her knees, exclaiming at the same time. “Oh, my God, pity me. What shall I do? What have I done? Oh, pity me, pity me. What shall I do?” She then buried her face in her hands, and wept abundantly. The tears she shed were many and bitter. Their traces on her dress told their numbers, their cause told their quality. She then made an effort to rise, but could not, but she clasped her hands together, and holding them firmly pressed against her breast, murmured, with streaming eyes, as she slowly moved her head from side to side. “What would his poor father have said! What would his poor father have said!”

Tears appear, in some sort, to be the materialized sorrow of a woman, and as they fall, her grief generally lessens in proportion. If Margaret's sorrow was not diminished by their numbers, at any rate, they had the effect of leaving her mental energies more free and unembarrassed, and the church clock striking twelve, warned her that in another hour, Mrs. Jackson would return, and that some course of action should be determined on before her arrival. She rose from her seat, and after subduing, by great mental exertion and pressure with her hands, the swelling in her throat, she began coolly to reflect on what had better be done in the terrible emergency in which she was placed. Her woman's ingenuity soon helped her to a plan, and her love for her son immediately instigated her to adopt it. She now determined on a course which would perhaps appear incredible to one not well acquainted with the psychology of the women of the working classes, but to those who are conversant with it, it will not appear extraordinary, or at any rate, not without the bounds of probability, especially when it is remembered the woman was a widow, acting from the affection she bore to an only son.

She first calmly took the bill of the vessel chartered for Australia which still remained on his chest of drawers. She first read it through and then walked with it into the next room. She put it into the fire and stood by it till it was thoroughly consumed. She went back again, and taking the cash-box in her hands,

minutely examined the contents. It contained two or three documents she did not clearly understand (they were bills of exchange), a fifty pound note, and one for two hundred. She examined the bank-notes carefully. There were no marks on that for two hundred pounds, on the one for fifty was the name of a publican nearly opposite the house of business, but not the one at which the establishment dealt. This note she laid carefully apart and then replaced the others in the cash-box. She again went into the sitting room and opening her papered trunk, placed the cash-box at the bottom of it, carefully covered it over with her clothes; then locked her box and put the key in her pocket. She sat down and coolly reflected for some minutes what ought next to be done. She remembered the screw-driver. She brought it from her son's bed room, and again opening her box, placed it at the bottom of it, beside the cash-box. She again went into her son's bed room and with great care made the bed, afterwards she placed the beef before the fire. She then bathed her eyes for some time with cold water to obliterate as much as possible the appearance of having wept, and carefully folding up the fifty pound note she put it in her pocket; lastly, she put on her bonnet and shawl and remained seated, her lips compressed, and with one hand clutching the other arm with such force that the nails were almost thrust into the flesh, waiting for the arrival of Mrs. Jackson. At last her friend arrived, and Margaret, rushing down stairs, opened the door.

“ Oh Mrs. Jackson,” she said, averting her head as she spoke, “ I wish you would look to my fire now and then ; and tell George, if he should come in, I shall be back before dinner time.” Mrs. Jackson promised to do so, and Margaret then left the house.

She ran hurriedly to the publican’s whose name was on the back of the note. The church service was over and the bar-room was crowded. The conversation was loud and merry, and Margaret joined recklessly in it.

The barman was serving a man with a glass of spirits. “ Give me one too,” said Margaret. She was immediately served, and she drank it off directly. She was not accustomed to it and it made her eyes water.

“ That’s the right sort of stuff ain’t it ?” said the barman ; “ you don’t get the like of that everywhere.”

“ No,” said Margaret, attempting to imitate the manner of a customer ; “ that will do, give me another ?” She took it up and put it to her lips. The barman turned his head to serve another customer, and Margaret furtively threw the contents of her glass on the saw-dust at her feet. The barman turned towards her.

“ Give me another ;” said Margaret.

“ I say,” said the barman, “ you seem to like it ; but you’ve forgotten to pay for the two you have had already.”

“ Do you think I want to cheat you ?” she replied pretending to be very angry ; “ I can pay for them, I suppose.”

“No doubt you can,” said the man, “but we can’t trust anybody such a day as this, we’re too busy.”

“There,” said Margaret, offering the note, and speaking loud enough to attract attention, “change that, if you have got enough in the house.”

The man took the note and appeared greatly surprised. He examined it attentively, thinking at first it must be a flash one or a forgery; at last he perceived his master’s name at the back of it. “Wait a moment,” he said to Margaret, “and I’ll get change.” He took the note into the bar-parlour and shewed it to his master. The publican immediately recognised it as one that he had requested the ironmonger to change, and he directly came to the bar to see the person presenting it. On perceiving Margaret, whom he did not know, he said to her,

“I have not change enough in the house, if you will wait a moment I’ll get it for you.” He then quietly requested his wife to cross over to the ironmonger’s and inform them of the circumstance. The junior partner was on the point of leaving the house with his wife, to visit his father, when the note was brought to him. He hurriedly ran to the iron safe, and having opened it, found the cash-box was gone. He crossed over to the publichouse, where, to his great surprise, he saw Margaret.

“Come over the way,” said he, “I want to speak to you.” She immediately followed him, the publican

accompanying them, partly from curiosity and partly to see that Margaret did not attempt to escape. As they entered the door her master saw a policeman, and he beckoned him to come in.

“ How did you become possessed of this note ?”

“ It’s mine, sir ; I’ve had it some years by me.”

“ How can you tell me such a falsehood, this note was in my possession yesterday. I changed it for Mr. White, and put it in my cash-box, which you must have taken, for it’s no longer in the iron safe.” Margaret was silent ; again the question was repeated, but she returned no answer to it.

“ Policeman, I give this woman in charge for stealing the note.” The policeman took her by the arm.

“ Oh pray don’t send me to prison ; pray don’t, for the sake of my son, he’s been a faithful servant to you, if I have not.”

“ Will you tell me the truth then ?”

“ Oh, sir, will you forgive me, if I do ?”

“ I don’t say I will forgive you, but I certainly will not unless you tell the whole truth.

“ If you’ll forgive me, sir, I’ll tell the whole truth, and give you every farthing back. Oh, do forgive me, for the sake of my son !”

“ I will make no promise. Where is the cash-box ?” Margaret was silent. “ Take her away, policeman.”

“ Oh stop. The cash-box is at my house.”

“ In what part ?”

“ In a papered box in my room.

“ Is it locked ?”

“ Yes, sir ; but I'll give you the key.”

“ You must remain here in custody of the policeman, while I go with a sergeant, and find it.”

“ Oh, sir, if you see my son, don't tell him anything about it. He'd kill me if he knew how dishonest I've been.

“ When did you take it ?”

“ Last night, when I was cleaning out the counting-house. The door of the iron safe was open and the temptation was too much for me.”

“ Well, remember I make no promise.” He then left the warehouse, and having procured the assistance of the police sergeant, went to Margaret's lodgings. They of course found the cash-box locked up in Margaret's trunk, as well as the screwdriver ; the police sergeant immediately saw it had been opened by that instrument and he kept it in his possession. On making enquiries of Mrs. Jackson, whom they informed of Margaret's avowal of the robbery, and the innocence of her son ; she informed them that Mrs. Meadows had asked her for a screw-driver the evening before, and that she had referred her to a neighbour to procure one. The evidence seemed now complete, and they returned to the warehouse.

During their absence, but little conversation passed between the prisoner and the policeman. She asked him if he thought they would forgive her ? “ She did not

care for herself," she said, "but for her son; it would be so bad for him, if it were known that his mother was in prison for thieving."

"I tell you what it is," said the policeman, "if you'd take my advice, you would not tell quite so much; silence says nothing, but you women must talk. You've already said enough to commit you, and if you had held your tongue, its very likely you'd have got off. However, you'd better not say any more; whatever you say, I must tell, and you've talked a great deal too much already."

Margaret said nothing more, but waited with great anxiety the return of the others. At last they came; the police sergeant had the cash box under his arm, and the screw-driver in his hand. The master then addressed Margaret.

"The bank notes and bills," he said, "are quite right, but what have you done with the twenty-three pounds in gold, which were in the box."

Margaret was astonished. The idea that the box might have contained more than she had found in it had not struck her. She was on the point of saying that no gold had been in it, when the truth flashed across her mind. The next moment she remembered the policeman's advice about silence, and she made no answer.

"I don't want to be hard upon you, for the sake of your son," said her master, "but I must know the whole truth. What have you done with the gold?"

Still the same silence. The question was about to be repeated, when the sergeant interfered.

“I don't think it will be any use your asking any more questions Sir.”

“I am very sorry for it, but you see I have no alternative. I give her in charge for the robbery.”

The policeman again took her by the arm.

“Don't hold me,” she said, “I won't attempt to get away, and she walked quietly by his side to the police station.

We must now return to George Meadows. When he received the letter from Sarah Morley, he had at first hoped to have brought round his mother to his way of thinking, but finding it impossible, he continued silent and sullen with her for some time. One evening, he was accidentally thrown into the society of some young men in a different quarter of the town. The conversation turned on the advantages of emigration, and especially the brilliant prospects that a spirited and intelligent young man had of making a fortune in Sydney. George listened to their remarks with great attention. Two of the young men then present, were on the point of proceeding to that colony, and with these especially, he entered into conversation. They were to leave England in the Christmas week, and the ship was to sail from Liverpool. In answer to his numerous questions, they told him the price of the outfit, the passage money, and the name of the agents in London. They advised him

to join them, and as they appeared very intelligent and respectable young men, it need hardly be said, that George sincerely wished he had the power. On leaving, they gave him their address in London, and he promised to call on them. About a week afterwards, he had occasion to pass by the street in which was the office of the agent of the Liverpool ship owner. George, more from curiosity than any other feeling, went in to enquire what were the prices of the berths, when he heard they were all taken on board that ship, but that another would sail in the course of the next month, and he then could have his choice of a cabin. They gave him a printed paper, containing all the information required. This was the bill, afterwards found by Margaret. As the time approached for the departure of his new friends, George Meadows saw them more frequently, and his vexation at his inability to accompany them, increased in proportion. About a week before the time of sailing, one of them said to him.

“What a pity it is you can't go with us Meadows, there's such a capital chance for you. A friend of mine has taken a berth in our cabin. He's going to be married, and his wife don't like leaving England. He wants now to sell his berth, and he is willing to give his bedding and necessaries, which he has bought and paid for, and which are very good, to any one paying him the passage money. He took it in the same cabin with us, and there are only three berths in it, so we should be very comfortable all together.” This was a terrible

temptation for George,—but how to accomplish it? All night it kept him awake. Occasionally, and by degrees, a vague dishonest thought would cross his mind, but he rejected it immediately. Again, and again, it presented itself, and each succeeding time with a clearer outline. Each time, although he refused to entertain it, the plan dwelt more strongly on his memory, and when it presented itself again, its outline was clearer, and less terrible. At last, he began to form excuses for it. His mother was certainly a most kind hearted and just woman, but still she was obstinate and prejudiced. She did not know Sarah Morley, or he was sure she would love her as much as he did—she could not help it. His mother he knew loved him as much as it was possible for one human being to love another. If he left her, and went to Sydney, the temptation for her to join him, would become irresistible, they would soon be together again, he had therefore no compunction in quitting her for so short a period; it would be much less than the time they had been separated while she was in Canterbury, and he in London. Then if he did make use of his employers' money it would only be for a short time, he would send it back before the end of the year, with interest. It need never be known who took it, or who repaid it. To obtain it would be easy; his employers had implicit confidence in him, he would merely abstract the smallest sum absolutely necessary for his journey, and trust to chance (he had almost said to Providence, but he rejected the word), and industry for his future success.

All danger becomes the less terrible as we gaze steadily at it, and the horror George Meadows felt, when the thought of robbing his employers first suggested itself, vanished as he viewed it nearer.

Before he went to his duties the next morning, he determined on abstracting from the next sum he was sent with to the bankers, as much as would pay for his passage out.

In the evening, he called again upon his friends, and told them he was fortunately then in a position to take the other berth in their cabin, but perhaps he should not be able to receive the money before Friday. If they would get their friend to keep it for him, he would certainly pay him the money on the morning of Christmas day at the latest. This was agreed to, and George waited for his opportunity. No chance occurred for him during the week. On the Friday, the senior partner did not come to business, and the junior was frequently absent from the counting house, but although the safe door was open, he invariably had the key of the cash box with him. George was almost in despair. At last, he saw him lock the iron safe, without taking any notice of its contents, and place the key on the desk. The next moment, he went to a different part of the establishment, and George furtively crept into the counting house, opened the door of the iron safe, and abstracted the cash box, and after re-locking the door, he replaced the key upon the desk. Fortunately, or rather unfortunately for him, the others employed in the house had, in consequence of its being

Christmas eve, found some pretext for leaving earlier than usual, so that the action passed unnoticed. He then wrapped the cash box in brown paper, and his employer shortly afterwards quitted the warehouse; George having fastened the warehouse door, took the opportunity of leaving the house by the street door, when no one observed him.

The reader is aware, that when George Meadows arrived at home, he opened the cash box with the screw-driver. He found, to his great vexation at first, that it contained a far larger amount than he required for the voyage; he soon, however, considered the largeness of the sum no objection. He took the gold to pay the young man for the berth—it having been arranged that should be paid for in London—as it would have been dangerous to have attempted to change the notes in the neighbourhood, so he determined to wait 'till the Bank should open on Monday. His plan was to start by the train for Liverpool as soon as he had received gold for them. As the ship did not sail till the Tuesday night, he would have amply sufficient time then to procure his outfit, and all chance of detection would be lost, as his berth had been taken in another name.

When he met his friend on the morning of Christmas day, the gold, with what little money he had in hand, was just sufficient for the payment. He obtained from him a list of things necessary for his outfit, and having enquired the place of meeting in Liverpool, they parted.

On arriving at his home, Mrs. Jackson opened the

door for him, and took him into her room. "George," said she, "I have some very bad news for you, and you will want all your courage to hear it and bear up against it. Your mother has acted very dishonestly, and is now suffering for it."

"Good God, what is it you mean?" said the guilty and terrified young man.

"She, last night, gave way to temptation, and took the cash box from the warehouse."

"Mrs. Jackson, it is not true," said he, faintly, "a more honourable woman never lived."

"I thought so myself, my poor boy, before to-day, but now I know to the contrary."

"Mrs. Jackson," said George, bursting into tears, "I assure you she did not take it." He was on the point of telling the truth, but she stopped him by saying.

"It is too true, George, the police have been here, and they found it locked up in her own trunk, with the screw-driver she wanted to borrow from me. She was taken in trying to change a fifty pound note at the public house, and she afterwards acknowledged that she took it yesterday evening, and put it under her shawl when she left the warehouse. This, I will say for her; she said all along that you knew nothing about it, and hoped they would not tell you, as you would kill her if you knew how wicked she had been."

"Did you say the police had been here?"

"Yes, and your master as well. Your mother had given them the key of her box. They found the notes

and the papers all right, but she has hidden the gold somewhere. The policeman searched all through your things too. He asked what sort of a person you were? Your master told him that you were a very honest steady fellow, and that you had been with him three years, and he had had an excellent character with you. He also said you had frequently been trusted with large sums of money, and he had never missed a farthing. He spoke well up for you George, I can tell you. Oh, don't take on so, there's a 'good fellow, they perhaps will forgive her for your sake; they think so well of you."

George remained aghast for some minutes. He could not collect his thoughts, and he asked Mrs. Jackson what she would advise him to do.

"If you would take my advice, you would go to the warehouse at once, and ask to see your master. It will shew them all that you have nothing to fear. Do all you can to get him to forgive her. All people like to see a son fond of his mother, and I think it very likely they will listen to you. I wouldn't go near your mother to-day, if I was you. She will be so dreadfully ashamed to see you, after what she has done, and you ought to respect her feelings; bad as she is.

"Oh, Mrs. Jackson, don't talk so."

"Well, I'm sorry, George, if I've said anything to hurt your feelings, I won't do it again."

George, having dried his eyes, put on his hat and left the house. He went immediately to the warehouse. On leaving home he thought he saw a man

watching him, and he turned round to see if he were following him. The individual, however, remained in the same spot, and George, reached the warehouse and asked for his employer. The girl seemed surprised to see him but received him very kindly. She asked him in, and told him the junior partner had gone down to his father's and she did not know whether he would return that night. George said he would call again in the evening. "Don't be cast down, George," said the girl, noticing the redness of his eyes, "its no fault of your's; Master knows that well enough. If I was you, and he didn't come up to night, I'd go down to Hammersmith to-morrow and beg him to let your mother off. I think they'll do it,—you're such a favorite with them both."

George, when he left the warehouse, thought of proceeding to the police station to see his mother, but he remembered the advice of Mrs. Jackson, and beyond that he had not the courage to meet her. He stood miserable and irresolute for some minutes, and then determined on consulting Mrs. Jackson again. Arrived at home, he found a messenger from the station with a letter for him. It was from his mother, and ran thus:—

" My dear Son,

" Don't be angry with me for wot I ave done, You see wot steeling comes to. O George, go to your master's and ask them to let your mother off. They all like you.

I am so sorry you don't know. Do, George, go down on your knees to them to forgive me. Don't come near the stashun, for I could not bare to see you after wot I ave done. I ave asked the police not to let you see me if you come, George, indede I ave.'

The letter had no signature, but there was no mistaking poor Margaret's orthography and handwriting.

George waited at the warehouse in the evening, for some hours, but the junior partner did not return. When he got back, he found that Mrs. Jackson had kindly prepared some supper for him, and he sat down to his solitary meal. Although he had eaten nothing since his breakfast, he had no appetite. He ate mechanically; nothing he put in his mouth had any taste, and in a few minutes he gave up the attempt. After sitting a short time with Mrs. Jackson, he went out into the streets, but without any definite purpose. He strolled about for some time. All seemed merry and happy. He saw it, but it did not affect him; he was far too wretched to have his sorrow increased by any comparison with mirth. About twelve o'clock he returned and determined on going to bed. His head was no sooner on his pillow than he remembered how different was the lot of his mother at that moment, and he burst into a violent flood of tears. He thought over the whole transaction, and was disgusted at the miserable idiocy of his conduct. He had twice tasted the fair-looking fruit from the Devil's garden, and had in

both instances found it but dust. In both transactions the money he had stolen had been useless to him, and after his last act of dishonesty, with the exception of a few shillings in his pocket, he was positively a beggar.

The night brought him little sleep and no rest. He rose early next morning and, after taking his breakfast, he went to the warehouse. He found the junior partner had not returned to London, so he determined on walking to Hammersmith, as he would there find both father and son together. On his way down he had time to think more calmly on his position. He was at first inclined to tell the whole truth; but, on reflection, he remembered that the facts were so strong against his mother that he would hardly be believed. Even if they were persuaded he was implicated, in what way would it advance the case. He would likewise be imprisoned without liberating her. While he remained at liberty he might be of some use, as a prisoner he could not be of any. It is also probable that fear might also have had some weight in the decision he had come to, in not divulging the secret. It frequently happens that a coward and a thief are together in the same man.

He arrived at his employer's house and found that father and son were both at home. They were just returned from church, and he was shewn into the parlour. They were both in the room and George was invited to take a seat. "I have come, sir," said George, "to ask you to forgive my poor mother. I don't offer

any excuse, sir. It appears more like a fit of insanity than anything else."

"We don't wish to act harshly with her, Meadows, but you have perhaps heard that she refuses to give any account of the gold; and, if we are to forgive her, we must know the whole truth."

"But," said George, blushing deeply, "are you certain, sir, the gold was there? I have carefully looked over everything, and can find no trace of it anywhere; for my own part, I have not a sovereign in the world." The last was the only word of truth he uttered.

"The affair," said the father, "seems perfectly incomprehensible. That the gold was there you may be certain, from the fact that she does not attempt to deny it."

"It certainly looks like it; but I don't know what more I can say, sir. If you will forgive her, I will work for half, or no wages, 'till the money's made up, or do anything else you please. You shall not lose a farthing, gentlemen, either by her or me, if I can help it."

"I do not doubt either your honesty or your perfect willingness to work out the loss, but I cannot accept such a proposition; my advice to you is, to get your mother to confess the whole truth, and we will then take the matter into our serious consideration; but, if she does not do so, we shall certainly prosecute her."

"But my mother has written to me sir, to beg of me

not to go near her, after what has taken place, as she will not see me if I do, and she is such a determined woman, that if once she makes up her mind, it is impossible to alter it."

"Did you say she had written to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any objection to shew us the letter?"

George reflected for a moment, and remembering there was nothing in the letter more than she had already acknowledged, he said.

"I will show it you with pleasure gentlemen, if you will return it to me, and also promise me it shall not be used against her." The son looked enquiringly at the father.

"I have no objection whatever. I promise you Meadows to return it to you, and not in any way to use it against her." George gave the letter, and both father and son read it attentively. It only tended to raise George Meadows still higher in their estimation.

"It's very sad I admit," said the father, "but we have a duty to perform. Let us wait 'till the examination at the police court to-morrow, and then decide what course we will adopt." George found it would be useless to press the matter further. He took leave of both father and son, and started sorrowfully for London. On the road, it occurred to him, that possibly he might be able to persuade the young man of whom he had purchased the berth, to return him the money for a few days, and

then he would be able to obtain the liberation of his mother. No sooner was the thought formed, than he doubled his pace, turning over in his own mind the while, how he could bring forward the subject in the most plausible manner. His arguments were, at last, fully arranged, and he arrived at his friend's house; but alas, found that he had left that morning for Liverpool, to witness the departure of the others for Australia.

Another wretched night passed, and the next morning he determined again to apply to Mrs. Jackson for her opinion on the course he should adopt. She advised him to employ a solicitor to defend his mother; she was not acquainted with one, but she heard they were always about the police courts to be ready if wanted. He determined on following her counsel, although he was barely possessed of sufficient to remunerate one, and they were a class of practitioners that rarely worked gratuitously.

About ten o'clock, he arrived at the Clerkenwell Police Court, and when it opened, he asked the usher to point him out a solicitor. He was shown one. This gentleman, in consequence of its being Christmas Monday, was in great request, there being many drunken and assault cases, but he told George he would speak to him in a few minutes. In the mean time, George went to the usher, who was likewise exceedingly busy, and asked him when the case of Margaret Meadows would be likely to be called on?

The usher looked down the list.

“There is no name of the kind here, it is most probably at some other court.”

“Which do you think?”

“How can I tell.” George gave the address of his mother’s house. “Go to Marlborough Street, I suspect you’ll find it there.” George immediately started, and ran as fast as he could to that police court. He then asked when Mrs. Meadows’ case would be heard? “One of the last,” was the answer. He waited for some time ’till he could speak to a solicitor. He explained to him the case. On further enquiry, he found although there was a prisoner of the same name, that person was not his mother. The solicitor seeing his anxiety, asked him some of the particulars, and having heard where the robbery had taken place, he assured George there must be some mistake, and that the case was on at the Clerkenwell Police Court. George immediately started off, and ran there as rapidly as his legs would carry him. When he arrived, he again enquired of the usher.

“I assure you there’s no name of the kind here, what is she charged with?”

“Having stolen a cash box.”

“Oh, but the name was not Meadows, she called herself Margaret White, She was fully committed for trial.” It was quite true; when asked for her name at the police station, this uneducated woman of the working classes, remembered that she was charged with a most despicable theft, and that she had acknowledged herself

guilty of it. That she was the widow of an honest honourable man, a man whose memory was scarcely less dear to her than her own existence. Whom she had loved faithfully and fondly when living, and who had been in death, "the god of her idolatry." His name and honour, the reputation and respectability of his only son were in her hands, and nobly she fulfilled her trust.

"My name is Margaret White."

"I thought your name was Meadows?"

"No, that's my son's name, my name is White."

"Did you marry a second time then?" said the sergeant, fortunately for the prisoner.

"Yes."

When she arrived at the police court, she looked anxiously round. There was no one there she knew, and she felt relieved. When placed in the dock, she listened anxiously to the evidence brought against her. When it was finished, the magistrate, after the usual caution, told her if she had anything to say in answer to the charge, she could do it then. She merely replied by an earnest supplication for mercy for the sake of her son. His worship had no power to grant it, and the prosecutors, angry at her obstinate refusal to account for the gold, were silent, and she was removed from the dock.

George, when he left the court, lingered outside it for some minutes, to collect his thoughts. While there, the prison van drove up for the prisoners. His first idea

was to leave the spot, but his wish to see his mother became irresistible. He waited in the crowd, and after three or four had entered the van, his mother came from the cells, with a policeman by her side. George pushed forward and touched her on the arm.

“Mother!” She looked round, and in a moment caught his hand eagerly in her’s. The policeman immediately, but without unkindness separated them, and obliged Margaret to enter. As her foot was on the step, she turned round and looked at her son. In a moment, her face had become covered with tears; painfully increasing the expression of intense sorrow and desolation upon it. She was the last prisoner. The policeman closed the door, and the van drove off. Neither the momentary pressure of the hand, nor his mother’s last glance ever left George’s memory.

When he arrived at home, he told Mrs. Jackson the adventures of the day; she advised him to take steps for his mother’s defence as quickly as possible. To raise the money, George sold the furniture, and the watch which had been his father’s. Poor Margaret, when she redeemed it from the pawnbroker’s at Canterbury, little dreamed of its ultimate destination. George was advised to apply to Mr. Mesheck, a Hebrew attorney with great experience in cases of the kind, to undertake the defence. That gentleman received George most courteously, but while making enquiries respecting the case, dextrously drew from him, what amount he could afford to spend on the defence. George, whose assets after the sale of the

furniture, and watch, as well as a month's pay given in advance by his employers when they discharged him, amounted to fourteen pounds, told the attorney ten. It was from no feeling of parsimony to his mother, which induced him to understate the amount, on the contrary, he would willingly have given her the whole, but he prudently calculated, that if any unforeseen circumstance should arise, that might require a greater outlay, it would be better to be possessed of a little reserve fund, especially as he had tact enough to perceive that Mr. Mesheck did not seem inclined to spend one farthing less than he could help. The sum was certainly not large, but as there would be no witnesses called for the defence, so the expenses would likewise be small, and the solicitor promised to do all in his power to save George's mother, and of course, expressed himself confident of success. To make this certainty doubly sure, he secured the valuable services of Mr. Verbose Boshier, one of the most rising barristers, in criminal cases, of the day.

This gentleman's genius appeared like a concentration of all the principle attributes of the most popular second class Old Bailey lawyers. He was, as Catalani said of Sontag, "*le premier de son genre, mais son genre n'était pas le premier.*" Though he had not been many years in his profession, he had obtained already a just celebrity for the skilful manner he had conducted many cases of great apparent difficulty. He possessed the confidence and respect of all the attorneys of Mr. Mesheck's standing, practising in that court, from the unscrupulous

manner in which he would utter the most unfounded and terrible accusations against any one whose evidence supported his opponent's cause to the serious detriment of his own.

He had once been called upon to defend a thief, who was prosecuted by an elderly lady for breaking into her house, and robbing her of money and plate to a considerable amount. It appeared that twelve years before the transaction took place, she had occasion to engage a housemaid. She received but a short character with her, but as far as it went, it was highly satisfactory. She had remained nearly a year in her situation, when her mistress accidentally heard that her servant had formerly been one of that unfortunate class, whose numbers cast so great a shame on our Metropolis. She was much annoyed at receiving the news, for the girl was an excellent servant, and had conducted herself, since she had been in the house, with the greatest propriety. On charging her with the fact, the poor creature wept so bitterly, and implored her compassion so earnestly, that the old lady consented to allow her to remain, under the understanding that she would be strictly watched; as long as she conducted herself respectably, she might remain, but upon the slightest appearance of impropriety, she would be discharged. The girl thanked her, and nothing could be more satisfactory than her subsequent conduct, and her mistress did not divulge the circumstance even to her husband. A month before the trial, a man of bad character recognized the girl as an old ac-

quaintance, and called at the house to see her. She refused either his acquaintanceship or his love, and insisted on his leaving the house, which he did with a great show of reluctance, and the girl informed her mistress of the circumstance. The thief, however, had profited by his visits to make himself acquainted with the locality, and the fastenings of the house, and a few nights afterwards, accompanied by a confederate, he broke into the premises. From the evidence of the girl, the police got upon their track, and they were taken.

The case was admirably adapted to the genius of Mr. Verbose Boshier. The evidence of the old lady was given in a faultless manner, and the cross examination began.

“Was not the girl a favourite and confidential servant?”

“She was.”

“Had she not formerly been a profligate character?”
The witness attempted to avoid the question.

“Had not that servant been a common street walker?”
The old lady hesitated and got confused, she knew that the eyes of the whole Court were upon her, waiting with curiosity for her reply. Mr. Verbose Boshier, in a bullying tone insisted on an answer. The witness got more confused and began to cry. He, however, felt no pity, but badgered her till he made her admit all he required. He then dared the stupid jury to find a verdict against his client on the testimony of a worthless old woman and her servant. A mistress of a house, who had allowed

a common creature from the streets to reside under the same roof with her husband and sons; and he then drew whatever conclusions from the circumstance which his great experience in the filthy trials at Newgate placed in his hands. The thief, thanks to his advocate's eloquence, was acquitted, and the old lady left the Court with a disreputable stain on her name, for having done as charitable and benevolent an action as a respectable matron could well perform.

His ingenuity was never at a loss, and his daring (under the protection of a judge) was equal to his ingenuity. If a miscreant were accused of cutting his master's throat, and had acknowledged himself guilty of the murder to him as his legal adviser, he would not hesitate in addressing the jury, to call down Heaven's vengeance on his own head, if he did not believe his client to be a perfectly innocent man. He would not hesitate a moment, if it aided his cause, to accuse another, perhaps some poor servant girl, of the crime. If he were defending a burglar, who had been apprehended in a lady's bed-room, he would not flinch from accusing the mistress of the house of having inveigled him there, and then concealed him. He was particularly strong in cross examinations on certain trials where the witnesses, from modesty, attempted to avoid a direct answer, but gave it in such a manner as fully to convey the meaning; or a physician or surgeon attempted to conceal under scientific phraseology expressions repugnant to decency. With him there was no evasion.

Every thing, he insisted, must be told in its own hideous nakedness of expression, and when he found the witness thoroughly confused by the language he had been obliged to use, Mr. Verbose Boshers's cross examination was then sublime, and he shone in his fullest glory. For the lower grade of Old Bailey practice, this gentleman seemed to have been formed by nature. He was not originally educated for the bar. He commenced the world as a shop keeper, but his character was not altogether up to the somewhat indulgent standard of mercantile morality, and in spite of his unblushing effrontery, he did not succeed. He then tried medicine. His impudence was certainly of great use to him in the practice of his new profession, but something like study was required for it, and that at all times was nauseous to him. He tried the stage. His assurance was quite equal to the occasion, but his ungainly appearance caused his failure. He then tried the bar, and succeeded admirably. In his private life, he was not much liked. He was chiefly admired at dinner parties, after the ladies had retired; then tales and witticisms of a certain class, which he had met with in his practice, fairly dripped from his tongue.

The day for the trial at last arrived. Since her commitment, Margaret had resolutely declined seeing her son, although she had frequently sent him most affectionate messages. George had attempted by all the eloquence and arguments in his power, to induce his late employers to give up the prosecution, but it was now

too late. They promised, however, to recommend her in the strongest manner to mercy, out of respect for him, and the affection he had shown to his mother. The case for the prosecution was extremely clear, and the corroborative circumstantial evidence was also most powerful against her. Every chance was lost long before Mr. Boshier commenced the defence, and Margaret saw that her case was hopeless. One ray of joy beamed on her during the examination of the prosecutors. The manner they expressed themselves respecting the integrity of her son, whose character they said was in every respect unimpeachable.

Desperate as Margaret's case evidently was, Mr. Boshier, with undaunted courage, began it. He commenced by remarking that it was a great blessing to the free born Englishman; it was an honour to the noble and learned profession of which he was an unworthy member, that any man, however weak, however fallen, had the right, and could claim the services of the British Bar for his protection. (This as far as it went, was perfectly true; he might have added as long as the prisoner or his friends could pay for it, but that perhaps was so well understood it was useless to remark it.) The evidence, he admitted, appeared strongly against his unfortunate client, but cases of far more apparent certainty had broken down before the searching scrutiny of an intelligent jury. He would not for a moment, attempt to dispute the evidence of the prosecutors, evidently men of high integrity and respectability, but as the jury were

aware; men of the highest respectability were frequently those in whose establishments secrets of an unpleasant nature remained the longest unrevealed—the integrity of their own natures naturally raising them above the habit of suspecting others. He did not deny that the cash box had been stolen, and that there was no account of the gold that was missing; he was even willing to admit (for he would conceal nothing from the Jury—why should he? He had nothing to fear from them on the part of his unfortunate client) that the gold was in the cash box when it was taken. He would go further, he would admit that the cash box was found in the possession of his client, and he would not deny that she had taken it from the warehouse, although this was by no means clearly proved by the evidence for the prosecution. At the same time, he would maintain, the unfortunate prisoner at the bar was not guilty of a theft—“was more sinned against than sinning,” and if the jury would kindly give him their attentions for a few minutes, he would prove it to them in the most indisputable manner.

The firm consisted, as the jury were aware, of two partners—father and son. Although of undoubted respectability it must be borne in mind, they were not tradesmen of the highest standing; not of those merchant princes, who raise the proud name of the British tradesman, equal to that of the most vaunted nobility of foreign nations. In partnerships of this description, it was only natural that the father should receive the greater portion of the profits—in fact, the lion's share. But gentlemen,

with the experience of the jury, he had the honour of addressing, were aware that when the lion's share of the profits of a small firm is taken by the senior partner—very little remains for the junior. The effect of such an arrangement might be seen in the case before them. The father, as they were informed, was able to keep his country house, with every comfort at Hammersmith; the son was obliged to remain in an obscure situation in the City. He also begged the jury to remember (and this point was of the greatest importance) that both father and son were married. It was, as every married man knew perfectly well, impossible that in families, some jealousy of feeling should not exist among the females with regard to dress, and that rule held good in those of the prosecutors. The son's wife was naturally annoyed at the superior dress of her mother-in-law, but, at the same time, was obliged to admit, that her own dress was as good as the more limited resources of her husband would allow. What was she to do gentlemen? We have frequently seen in this Court, that ladies of high position in society, have, from their love of dress, degraded themselves from that position, by abstracting and concealing articles which did not belong to them. If gentlemen, excuses can be found for those ladies, from the peculiar mental effects of certain interesting and susceptible phases in their health, a still greater excuse may be made for the wife of a junior partner, in obtaining money from what she imagined the just property of her own husband, somewhat unjustly withheld from him by the

greediness of his father. The very respect and affection she bore to her husband, would contribute, he contended, to this result. He was instructed by his brief, and from the high respectability of the solicitor, who had placed it in his hands, he had not the remotest doubt of its truth, to inform them that the wife of the junior partner had obtained the assistance of his unfortunate client to obtain the cash box, but not wishing it to be found in her possession, she requested the prisoner to take it to her house, and keep it till she should ask for it. The facts of the case, the jury would observe, were singularly borne out in the evidence for the prosecution. In the first place, the gold was missing, this could of course be expended without any trace of it remaining. Who had received that gold? His client? She did not possess a shilling in the world. Her son? You have gentlemen from the prosecutors themselves, that his reputation is unblemished, beyond that, he has been obliged, by a sentiment of filial piety, to sell everything he possessed in the world, to procure the means for his mother's defence. Who could have received it gentlemen of the jury, but the wife of the junior partner."

Here he paused for a moment, to look round the Court, to notice the effect of his speech. The jury seemed puzzled, the judge evidently unconvinced, if not displeased, and an ominous whispering and shaking of heads were perceptible among the auditors.

It is perhaps, hardly necessary to state that not one word of his defence was in his brief, and if it had been,

he would not have known it, as he had not read it. Margaret, who had appeared utterly bewildered during the greater part of the trial, was roused for a moment by the statement made by Mr. Verbose Boshier, respecting the complicity of the wife of the junior partner in the robbery, and was on the point of contradicting the statement, when she was seen by Mr. Mesheck, who, in a state of intense excitement and admiration at the ingenuity of his counsel, energetically beckoned her to be silent. She imagining it was not the right moment to speak, relapsed again into her half comatose state.

“Such, gentlemen of the jury are, I am instructed to inform you, the facts of the case, and after placing them before you, I shall conclude with the certain assurance that my client is safe in your hands.” No evidence having been called for the defence, the counsel for the prosecution replied, and the judge charged the jury. He brought under their notice the peculiar character of the defence, and left it for them to determine, what amount of faith should be placed in it. The jury immediately returned a verdict of guilty, and the judge in passing sentence, severely remarked on the character of the defence, which even stamped the robbery with still greater infamy than it had possessed before she had attempted to injure the character of an honourable lady.

“My Lord,” said Margaret, “she never told me to take the cash box.”

“That remark comes too late woman,” said the judge severely.

“My Lord,” said Mr. Verbose Boshier, “I followed the instructions given me in my brief.”

“Mr. Boshier,” replied his Lordship, “you honourably did your duty to your client. As the prosecutors have recommended you to mercy, greatly to the honour of their humanity after your conduct, I shall, as a matter of form, sentence you to seven years’ transportation, and shall consider afterwards, what mitigation the circumstances of the case will allow.” Margaret, who appeared hardly conscious, then left the dock.

We have already stated, that from the time of her committal, till the trial, Margaret had refused to see her son. It must not be imagined, that the refusal arose from the slightest angry feeling on her part. At no period of his life did she love him more dearly than at that time, but the very intensity of her affection made her dread the interview. She would have been happy to have seen him again, but the parting would have been insupportable, and she wanted all the nerve she was possessed of. George dreaded the interview in scarcely a less degree. His exertions in her defence, were as unceasing as they were useless, and Mr. Mesheck, had he not given orders not to admit him, would have had a far greater portion of his time occupied, than the whole of the funds possessed of by George, would have remunerated him for. On the day of the trial, George Meadows remained in the vicinity of the Court, and during the whole time, it is impossible for words to convey an idea of his anxiety. The attempt at indifference of manner,

with which he asked the different individuals he saw leaving the Court, in what manner the case was proceeding, was painful in the extreme. At last, he saw a number leaving it in a body, and he enquired of one, if the trial was over.

“ Yes. She’s got seven years of it.”

“ Seven years !”

“ Yes. If she’d had fourteen, it would not have been more than she deserved.” George looked fiercely at the speaker, but the man passed on without noticing him. A moment afterwards, he thought the information might have been incorrect, and he asked a policeman, but the answer confirmed the first statement.

George now hurried back to Mrs. Jackson’s, and there gave uncontrolled sway to his grief. That worthy soul attempted to comfort him to the best of her abilities, but comfort was impossible under the circumstances.

The next day he began to consider what course he should pursue, and he called in Mrs. Jackson to assist him in his deliberations. Her advice was that he should leave England as soon as possible. The unfortunate affair of his mother’s would continually be rising up against him if he remained, and it would probably be a great impediment to his success, in whatever plan he should determine on. She had a half sister, who was married, and resided in New York, and if he would like to try his fortune in America, she would give him a letter of introduction to her. She was not very well off it was true—her husband was a bookseller in a small way

of business. There was no doubt, but that the term of his mother's punishment would be greatly reduced, and when it was over, if he had been industrious and prudent, he would have saved sufficient for her passage to the New World, and they might be together again, and no trace of the unfortunate affair would be known.

George readily approved of the plan, but, at first sight, an apparently insuperable bar to its accomplishment presented itself—he had not the funds. All that remained of his money, was barely two pounds, and the cheapest passage would cost him at least six, besides requiring something more for an outfit. Mrs. Jackson again came to his aid. She could lend him five pounds, which she would withdraw from the Savings' Bank, but as she was not rich, she would trust to his word to send it back again from the first money he earned. This, George readily promised, but how to find the remainder? At last, he thought of writing to his mother's old friend, Mary's brother. At first, he thought of appealing to Mary herself, but then he considered, and with great reason, that from the intimate knowledge Mary had of his mother, she would immediately imagine that something had been concealed, so he gave up the idea. The letter to Canterbury was written with great caution, and dispatched. It contained an earnest appeal for a loan of five pounds, and a solemn promise of repayment if God gave him his health and strength. After a few days, he received an answer. Some little objections were at first made, but they soon

disappeared, and he consented to advance the money, if any one of any respectability would write him a letter, promising to be security for the money. He did not wish to bind them to a particular date, but in the event of the money being a loss from George, he should know to whom to apply. At first, this condition seemed to contain an impossibility, but on talking the matter over with Mrs. Jackson, that kind creature again smoothed the difficulty. She had still a little money left in the Savings' Bank, and she wrote a letter to Canterbury, promising to become George's security, and repay the money if he did not do so before the end of the year—stating to her protegee, at the same time, her willingness to wait till the payment to Mary's brother had been completed, before she should require her own. On the receipt of this letter, Mrs. Bell's foreman drew a bill, at twelve months date, on Mrs. Jackson for the amount, and after she had accepted it, and forwarded it to Canterbury, George Meadows received the money.

He had now sufficient funds for the voyage, and he determined on leaving as soon as possible. He went to the docks and found a ship advertised to sail in a week. He immediately took a berth on board of it, and then purchased the few necessaries he required for the voyage. This being completed, he made arrangements for corresponding with his mother, whose punishment had been commuted into three years imprisonment. Previously to the trial, he had received great kindness from the chaplain of the prison, who still appeared to take great

interest in him, for advice. He told him his plans, and was listened to with great sympathy. The Reverend gentleman highly approved of the course he had adopted, and promised to assist him to the utmost in his power. He could easily have obtained for George the opportunity of taking leave of his mother, but Margaret feared the parting too much to meet him. She also approved of the course he had taken, and promised to count the days till they should meet again. She also begged him to repay as soon as possible, for her sake, the amount his late employers had lost by her. The Chaplain was not regularly attached to the prison, but had merely undertaken the duty for a friend, he however told George always to write to him at the University Club, and he would readily execute any commissions for him he required. Everything being now arranged, and the day for sailing arrived, George Meadows gratefully thanked the Chaplain for his good offices, and after taking a sorrowful farewell of his friend Mrs. Jackson, he went on board the ship.

CHAPTER X.

WE must now leave Margaret to the sad monotony of a prison life, and follow the fortunes of George Meadows. Previous to his embarkation, he had made a solemn vow never to commit another dishonest action, and as the shores of England faded from his sight, he repeated the determination. The passage out was more than ordinarily favourable during the greater portion of the time. On board the ship was an American clergyman. He was a pious kind man, and frequently prayed and expounded the Scriptures to those willing to join him. Among that number was George, and an acquaintanceship, which afterwards ripened into a sort of intimacy, was the result. The minister's wife and daughter were both on board; they had accompanied him during his tour through Europe. They were equally kind, and although there was a great difference in their relative positions in society, their republican ideas permitted a more easy access in conversation to a respectable young man in George's position, than he would have found it possible to have obtained in European society. George,

for his part, was delighted with them, but had sufficient good taste neither to intrude on their society, nor to appear to consider himself on an equality.

The prayer meetings continued with great regularity, and before the ship arrived in New York, George had an opportunity of seeing the advantages of religion. A terrible storm overtook the ship, and they considered themselves, during one whole night, in great danger. Those among the passengers, who had been the foremost in ridiculing the exertions of the worthy minister, and whose character, judging from their conversation, was of the most depraved description, were either in an agony of terror, or took the opportunity of facing death without fear by making themselves intoxicated; while the more religious portion, though quite sensible of the danger, placed themselves so calmly in the hands of the Almighty, as to prove how easy it was for a man, with a clear conscience and respect for religion, at any time to meet his Creator. Fortunately, the storm terminated without any misfortune, but the lesson was never obliterated from the memory of George Meadows. The day before the ship arrived, the minister gave George his address, and informed him he should always be happy to hear of his success, and if at any time, either business or amusement, brought him to Boston, he should most willingly renew the acquaintance. He also gave George, whose funds he knew were at a low ebb, some good advice as to the manner he should conduct himself

in New York, so as to avoid being made the dupe of sharpers who were always on the look out for the unwary.

As soon as George Meadows landed, he engaged a room for the night. He had some difficulty in finding one to suit his very limited finances, but meeting with a young man who had been a fellow passenger, they took their lodging together, and thus materially reduced the cost. He then immediately proceeded in search of the bookseller, to whom he had a letter of introduction, and with some little difficulty, he found the house. Mrs. Jackson's half-sister was at home, but although she appeared to be a kind amiable woman, the introduction promised to be of but little service to him. Her business appeared to be of the smallest description, and this unsatisfactory state of affairs was increased by the lengthened indisposition of her husband, who required almost the whole of her attention. She told George she would willingly be of service to him if she could, but it was hardly in her power. What did he intend doing? George told her it was his wish to obtain an appointment in some store. He wrote a good hand, and was competent to all the ordinary routine of a house of business. She told him that in their small way, they had but little connexion with such firms as were likely to require his services.

"I am sorry for it," he answered. "I have neither money nor friends, and what to do I don't know." The mistress of the shop looked on the handsome and in-

telligent young man with evident sympathy. After a little consideration, she said to him.

“Will you wait here for a few moments, while I speak to my husband.” George willingly agreed, and she left him. After some ten minutes absence, she returned.

“I have been talking the matter over with Mr. Wilson,” she said, “and although we cannot offer you an engagement, if you like to come here and assist in taking charge of the store while you are seeking for a situation you can. We cannot give you any salary, we are too poor, but you can have a bed here and take your meals with us. It will perhaps be an accommodation to you, and it will allow me to be more with my husband.” George willingly accepted the offer, and she promised to have the bed ready for him by the next day.

George amused himself during the remainder of the day in strolling about the City. At first, the usual feeling of solitude came over him. This, however, soon vanished when he arrived at the immense wharves, and saw the innumerable vessels lying at them. He felt, that with energy and perseverance, the road to wealth and respectability was as open to him as to any other, and he determined to enter on it. He thought on the gratification it would be to him, if he could place that being who was now suffering so much ignominy for his sake, in a respectable and independent position, where every comfort would surround her, without anxiety for the temporal wants of the future. All this might be ac-

completed by his exertions, and he would be base indeed, if he did not make the attempt. Evening came on, and he sought his bed, thoroughly fatigued by the exertions of the day, and sleep came for the first time to his relief in the States of America, while his thoughts were within a prison walls in England.

He rose the next morning, and having packed up his modest baggage, went with it to Mrs. Wilson's house. Short as had been his sojourn in New York, it had reduced his funds to so low an ebb, that two days more of similar expenditure, would have rendered him insolvent. He entered on his duties, and his aptitude for business, in a few days placed him in possession of the knowledge requisite for carrying on all the transactions which were likely to take place at Mrs. Wilson's store. She was a kind amiable old lady, and would have done anything in her power to have made him comfortable, but poverty, on the one hand, and the sickness of her husband on the other, rendered her hospitality more limited than her liberality would have wished. Fortunately, the care and assiduity of George Meadows had so good an effect on the business, that the extra expenditure, occasioned by his board, was fully covered, and before two months had elapsed, a very manifest improvement had taken place in the profits. His manners were attractive and amiable, and his prepossessing appearance gained him great favour.

Six months passed over, and during that time, the health of Mr. Wilson had gradually declined, while the

profits of the business had so much increased, that the heavy expenditure, caused by his illness, was not only covered, but money began to accumulate; a state of affairs which poor Mrs. Wilson had not experienced for some years. At the end of eight months, the circumstances connected with the trade were so much improved, that she proposed making George an allowance. "It could not," she said, "be large, but as soon as she was able to afford it, it should be increased."

This circumstance gave George great satisfaction, for he had begun to feel considerable uneasiness at the possibility of his being unable to send to Mrs. Jackson the money to meet the bill. The next month, Mrs. Wilson gave him thirty dollars, and likewise warmly expressed her thanks and satisfaction for his conduct. George was now enabled to send the five pounds to Mrs. Jackson, and a great amount of anxiety vanished, as he paid it into the bankers to her credit. He then expended the trifling surplus on his own wardrobe, which was now requiring his urgent attention. His new employment suited him admirably. He was naturally of a studious turn, and when not immediately occupied in the trade, every vacant moment was occupied in reading. He had commenced a correspondence with the clergyman in Boston, and a good feeling and friendship was established between them. He had also written to the Rev. Mr. S——, in England. He sent by him an affectionate message to his mother, and had received, in return, a most satisfactory letter from that gentleman. He heard

that not only was she in good health, but, in consequence of her excellent behaviour, she had already begun to receive such little indulgences as the severity of prison discipline would allow.

Mr. Wilson still lingered on, and the business continued to improve, so that at the end of fifteen months, he had not only been enabled to repay his kind friend, Mrs. Jackson, the whole of the money he had received from her, but was also enabled to dress himself in a proper, and even gentlemanly manner. He now determined to commence accumulating the money to repay his late employers in England, the sum they had lost by him, and to this he was further stimulated by two messages he had received from his mother. He had already put by a few pounds, when the long expected death of Mr. Wilson occurred. After the funeral, George for some time had, the almost entire control of the business, which he managed with great skill and success. It was really arriving at some importance, when a circumstance took place, which altered considerably George's position. A son of Mrs. Wilson's, by a former husband, who had been for some years residing in the Southern States, returned to New York. He was a wild conceited reckless young man, and by no means a favourite with Mr. Wilson, indeed, so little good feeling existed between him and his step-son, that the latter left the house, determining never to return to it during the lifetime of his stepfather. He had now heard of his death, and he determined on returning to live with, or rather on his

mother. His behaviour was tyrannical and insolent, and George had great difficulty in submitting to his impertinence. The term of the house Mrs. Wilson occupied was upon the point of expiring, and to George's great surprise, he was offered, by the proprietor, the option of becoming the tenant. This offer was the more tempting from the fact of the two principle wholesale houses with whom they dealt, offering him full credit in case he continued the business on his own account.

He had now an opportunity of starting in the world to great advantage. He could, without difficulty, increase his connection so considerably, as to secure to his mother a comfortable home for the remainder of her life, when the term of her imprisonment should be over. But he remembered, that when hungry and a stranger, the widow had taken him in, and it would have been ungrateful on his part to have injured her prospects for his benefit. Had he accepted the offer, Mrs. Wilson would have been ruined. Her son's manners were so repulsive, that even the sympathy her situation as a widow, would have occasioned, would have been lost. It would have been impossible for her to have found another business, and George, much to his regret, declined the offer which had been made him.

Although George entertained sincere respect and good feeling for Mrs. Wilson, the behaviour of her son became at last insupportable, and he was compelled reluctantly to leave her. Before communicating his intention to her, he wrote to his friend in Boston, asking his advice as to

whether it would be possible for him to find employment in that City. He had now a two years' unexceptionable reference, and he understood the bookselling business thoroughly. In a short time he received a most favourable answer. Mr. — was connected with a religious periodical, printed in Boston, and the publisher, who was also a bookseller, in a large way of business, had a vacancy for an assistant. He offered George the appointment, and it was readily accepted.

When Mrs. Wilson heard of his determination to leave her, she was overwhelmed with sorrow and surprise. The immediate pain of parting, was somewhat mitigated in the breast of George, by the angry language she made use of, but the sincere respect she entertained for him, never abated.

His journey to Boston was in the depth of winter. On arriving at that city, in consequence of some difficulty in obtaining a carriage to carry him to the hotel, he was obliged to remain in the cold night air for nearly two hours. By some accident, he had lost his over coat, and the cold struck him so severely, that an inflammation of the lungs was the consequence. This detained him at the hotel for some days, but he was frequently visited by Mr. —, who showed him great kindness. When he recovered, he found his little stock of money, including that which he had reserved to send to England, was absorbed by his illness, and before he had thoroughly recovered, he left the hotel to commence his duties, being unwilling to incur a debt. Although every one

shewed him great kindness, still the situation was a fatiguing one. In a short time, he became accustomed to his duties, and fulfilled them to the perfect satisfaction of his employers. His health, though greatly improved, was far from being re-established, for his illness had left a most distressing cough. It oppressed him greatly during the day, and at night almost deprived him of rest. His emoluments, though considerable, were greatly reduced by the continued medical advice he was obliged to resort to. The spring brought but little relief, but he improved somewhat in health in the summer. Through the kindness of his friend, he obtained something more than his salary, by the use of his pen, in writing for the periodical that gentleman edited, and his productions, if not learned, were occasionally well written, and pleased much.

During the summer, he frequently spent the evening at the house of his patron, and although he never declared his love, he began to conceive a great affection for the daughter. Many a bright vision of the future presented itself to him in his walks back to the city at night, but an obstacle to their accomplishment was daily becoming apparent to others, though he had no suspicion of the fact himself. The disease which carried off his father, had seized him, and as the autumn came on, it developed itself rapidly. Still his constitution struggled against it. If a thought of the possibility came across his mind, the knowledge of the mission he had imposed upon himself, overcame it. He could not believe any

failure could take place in his endeavours to console and cherish his mother, when the term of her imprisonment should have expired. He had lately become exceedingly religious, and his prayers for the success of his plans were unremitting. The time was now approaching, when he should again behold her who had so nobly taken his crime upon herself, and earnestly he longed for the moment to arrive. He had at first counted her absence by years, and they had vanished. He now almost counted by weeks, but those weeks seemed interminable. It was now the month of November, in March she would again be with him. He had now almost saved sufficient to pay off his defalcations to his employers, and the amount requisite for his mother's passage, and outfit as well. In a short time, he would forward the whole to England. A terrible catastrophe, however, was imminent. Before he despatched the money, he broke a blood vessel, and was again thrown on a bed of sickness, and again the cost of medical attendance decreased his capital. He partially recovered, and again commenced his duties. His employers admired his industry and integrity, and sincerely sympathised with him in his misfortunes. Delusive as are the symptoms of the disease generally, they were now but too apparent to him. He could now no longer disguise from himself the position he was in, and great prostration both of body and mind was the result. His employers now came to his aid. They wanted some business transacted for their firm in one of the extreme Southern States, and proposed

to him to undertake the journey, as being the only chance that remained to him of life. The commission on which he was to go, was one requiring no fatigue in its execution, beyond the travelling, and they proposed waiting till one of those temporary lulls, for which consumption is so remarkable, before he started. The day before leaving Boston, he despatched to England the money to repay his employers, and a balance of eight pounds for the use of his mother, as soon as the term of her imprisonment should be completed. These sums he paid into the credit of the Rev. Mr. S——. He also wrote a letter to that gentleman, requesting him to dispose of the money as directed, and begging him to assure his mother, that on his return from the South, the amount necessary for her passage and outfit, would be immediately forwarded. The letter contained another, sealed, and directed to his mother. He had not before written to her; his communications were always messages by the chaplain, and through the same kind source, he received her answers in return.

The evening before leaving for his journey to the South, he spent with his kind friend, the minister, and his family. They received him with great warmth, and after their tea, the father offered up a prayer for George's prosperous journey, and his restoration to health. How he accomplished it, it would be difficult to say, for when he prayed, he knew it would be as easy to reanimate a corpse, as to restore health to his friend, but the power of God is omnipotent, and in his hands was the result.

The wife wept, and the daughter, with every effort to suppress her tears, followed her mother's example. She loved George; she loved him dearly, though not one word of love had passed between them. They had that evening walked together; conversed together, and prayed together, and she knew well it was for the last time—who could blame her tears. George alone was in spirits. He was confident that the journey would benefit him. He talked freely, and even gaily, and was highly delighted with his reception, but the clearly defined red upon his cheek bone, and his hurried respiration, told too well at what cost was his happiness. He quitted them with sanguine hopes of his ultimate recovery; they bid him adieu with feelings nearly akin to those produced by witnessing the funeral of a dear friend.

The next morning, he started on his journey; the excitement kept him up, and he travelled for two days without any inconvenience. He slept the third night at a retired country inn. He awoke in the night from being attacked with a violent fit of coughing, which terminated by bursting another blood vessel, and when assistance came, he presented a terrible appearance. A medical man was sent for, but all that science, or skill could do was useless. He twice attempted to write, once to his mother, the other time to his employer, he was, however, unable to accomplish it, and he was obliged to request the innkeeper to write in his name to the latter. He now knew his case to be hopeless, and he prayed that he might have sufficient strength restored to him to en-

able him to write to his mother. This, however, was denied him. A minister attended him, and soothed his last moments with prayer. He lingered till the fourth morning, and then returned his spirit to Him that gave it. He was sensible to the last moment, and evidently died praying, but for whom no one could say. He was buried the next day, and the earth covered, with all his faults, the remains of a repentant sinner, and in the end, an affectionate and grateful son.

CHAPTER XI.

AT last, the term of Margaret's imprisonment arrived, and as she left the walls of the jail, a letter was placed in her hands from the clergyman, who had officiated as chaplain of Newgate at the time of her trial, and who had been, during the three years of her incarceration, the medium of communication with her son. It merely requested her to call on him as soon as she possibly could. Singular as it may appear, a feeling of anxiety came over her, before she received the note. The idea of again entering upon the world without a relative or friend, or even an acquaintance, almost frightened her. She was ashamed to call on Mrs. Jackson, and she had lost Mary's address. Even the clergyman's note with its cool wording was a comfort to her, it proved there was some one in the world she could speak to, and who would advise her on the course she should adopt. When she left the prison, her sensations were most singular. She thought every one looked at her, and she turned her eyes from every one she met. She imagined that all knew her history, and she felt ashamed to be seen.

When she arrived at the clergyman's house, he re-

ceived her at first somewhat coolly. Her refusal to give any account of the gold, which had been abstracted from the cash box, had left an unfavourable impression of her in his mind, and the interest he felt in her welfare, was solely occasioned by the sympathy he had for her son. He told her that he had received a letter from George, that he had sent over to him the sum of thirty-three pounds. Twenty-five he had directed him to pay to her son's employers, which he had already done, and the remaining eight pounds he had requested him to give to her. That he had a letter for her as well, which he gave her. Of course, it would explain what her son's views were for the future, but in his letter to him, he advised that his mother should remain in London till he had returned from a journey to the South, and he would then forward the funds for the voyage. If she would leave her address with him (the clergyman), as soon as the money arrived, he would communicate with her, and he should likewise forward to her son, her address in London, in case George should wish to correspond directly with her. "If," he continued, "you would now like to read your letter, you can do so."

Margaret broke the seal, but upon seeing George's hand writing, her eyes were so dimmed with tears, that before she had read two lines, she was obliged to relinquish the attempt.

"I'll read it another time, Sir," she said, folding it up, "I am very much obliged to you for all your kindness I'm sure."

“Where do you intend living?”

“I don’t know yet Sir, I shall find some place for a month, and by that time, perhaps I shall receive George’s letter.”

“Not so soon as that certainly. If you would take my advice, you would also get some occupation if you could, for most probably it will be some time, perhaps months, before you will receive any other letter. I am sorry to tell you his state of health is far from good, and if he should be obliged to leave his situation, it is possible, the money he wished to send you may be delayed for a considerable time.”

“I hope Sir, you have not heard any bad news of him. If you have, pray tell me about it.”

“I have only heard that he has been suffering severely from a cough, and that one reason for his journey to the South, has been to give him an opportunity of recovering his health more rapidly. From that circumstance, I imagine the illness, which has afflicted him, is a serious one. I don’t wish to make you uneasy; I merely mention it to you, to shew you the necessity of earning money to eke out, as far as possible, the sum you have received.”

“I am sure Sir, I don’t know what to do. Unfortunately I have no character.”

“Well, you must try and redeem it if you can. Are you a good needlewoman?”

“I can work very well Sir, if its plain work. My eyes are not so good as they were, and I cannot see well enough for fine work.”

“A friend of mine is an army clothier, in a large way of business, and gives employment to a great number of hands; I will speak to him on the subject, if you wish it. I have no doubt, that upon my recommendation, he will give you work, and I do not imagine it will be so fine as to injure your eyesight.”

“I am very much obliged to you Sir, I should like it very much.”

“The pay, of course, will not be very large, certainly not sufficient for you to live on, but, at any rate, it will assist you to make the money you have go further than it otherwise would do.”

“Oh, you may depend upon it Sir, I will make every farthing go as far as it can.”

“Without wishing to hurt your feelings, I must remind you that I expect the strictest integrity. You will be taken on, remember, on my recommendation, and any act of dishonesty, will do harm to others, as well as to yourself, as they will doubt the respectability of those I send them for the future.”

“You may rely upon it Sir, I will do nothing to disgrace you.” She was on the point of saying, that she never had committed an act of dishonesty, and never would, but she checked herself in time. She again thanked the worthy clergyman for his kindness, and promised to call on him again in the course of the next day, and leave her address.

In a short time, she had found a lodging, and her modest arrangements for housekeeping were soon bought.

She then made some trifling purchases in dress, and that finished, she amused herself by strolling about the outskirts of the town; a feeling of dread being still upon her, of being recognized, although who there was who knew her or felt interested in her, it would be difficult to imagine. Plans and visions for the future presented themselves to her in rapid succession. She vainly attempted to paint to herself her future life in the New World; in what manner her son's housekeeping would be conducted, and what sort of people he was with. Whether they knew anything of her history, and what excuses George had made for her not arriving sooner. She was so completely absorbed in these reflections, that she did not notice the locality she was in, till raising her eyes to ascertain where she was, she discovered it was in the Walworth Road, near Camberwell. She now determined visiting some of the well remembered scenes of her joys and sorrows. Her first visit was to her old dwelling. How many circumstances, still fresh on her memory, had passed in it. The first anxieties of the poor man's wife, when embarking their little all in some small way of business, came vividly before her. The birth of her son. The different illnesses incidental to childhood, and their cares and treatment were next remembered, and last of all, the terrible epoch of her beloved husband's death. She felt like one in a trance as she neared the spot, but when before the house, all changed into a stern reality. She hardly recognized it, it was so altered. The quiet modest shop and parlour were no

longer there. The glaring colours and plate glass windows of the beer shop supplied its place. Outside were two or three labourers resting from their work, and a huxter's cart was before it; the horse feeding while his master drank. Hardly a vestige of its former appearance remained; even the bed room window over the shop was changed. The heavy showy wooden architrave with the brewer's name in gold letters upon it, quite concealed it from the street. She walked from the spot half regretting, in her own mind, that she had visited it. She strolled into the town; not a face was there she remembered. She saw the linen-draper's shop where George had so terribly misconducted himself, and she hesitated approaching it. She stopped for a moment, and then walked cautiously forward, fearing lest the proprietor should recognize her. The precaution was needless. She looked over the door, another name was there, a stranger's. She cast a glance into the shop, not a face was there she remembered. Even the arrangements in it were different. The counting house had been added to it, and the whole was much smarter in appearance; in fact, she hardly knew it for the same place. Her last visit was to the grave of her husband. The feeling of a woman at the tomb of the man she loved, and that man her husband, with whom she had lived happily for many years, is one of those sentiments which God has rendered impossible to describe. We will bow with respect to its sanctity, and leave it untouched. Suffice it to say, Margaret felt all a loving faithful wife could do on such an

occasion. While standing near the "narrow home" of him she had loved so fondly, she thought of George's letter. She had already twice attempted to read it, but could not finish it, and she had determined on going carefully through it before going to bed. She would then be quiet, and could mark carefully every word in it. She now altered that resolution, and resolved to read it at once. She carefully read it all, not a word was omitted. The expressions of gratitude and love in it, almost made her happy, though standing by his father's tomb. Oh, had she known the reality, how desolate would the world have seemed to her! She folded the letter, and put it carefully in her bosom. She then, with one last look of affection at the humble grave of her husband, left the spot.

When she arrived at her lodging, she was, as may well be imagined, thoroughly fatigued, and sleep soon overtook her. When she awoke the next morning, she could hardly believe herself at liberty, the pleasing fact, however, soon became a certainty to her. After breakfast, she went to the house of the Rev. Mr. S——, and found he had been as good as his word.

"I have seen my friend," he said, "and he has kindly told me, that if you will go to his warehouse, and give him my card, he will give you a trial. Remember, no one in the house knows anything of your history, therefore be sure you don't mention it yourself."

"You may be sure of that Sir. When shall I go there?"

“You had better go at once. Now once, more, let me impress upon you the necessity of being honest and industrious. By the bye, you have not told me where you live.” Margaret gave him the address, and then left him, greatly delighted at so soon being able to find respectable occupation.

When she arrived at the warehouse, she gave the clergyman’s card to an assistant, who took it to the head of the firm. He could not speak with her, but sent her with the young man to the foreman of that department, with orders to give her a trial. There were several other women present, who had come for work, and Margaret was told to remain with them, and she would be called when it came to her turn. They were all evidently poor, some miserably so and apparently half starved, others were suckling, and their infants were with them in the room. She seated herself among them, and after the scrutinizing glances which women bestow upon each other, especially when strangers, one asked her if she had ever worked for that house before?

“Never. How do they treat you?”

“Well, better than most, but then its not much to boast of.”

“Can you get enough to keep you?”

“To keep you? Certainly not. What house I should like to know does that, but have you never worked at the trade before?”

“No; but I suppose I shall be quite able to do it, I’m well used to my needle.”

“Oh, you’ll soon get into the way of it, if that’s all, but you’ll find it no easy matter at the beginning, especially at your time of life ma’am. If you can do anything else, do it and take my advice. It’s a hard bit of bread at any time.”

“Why do you work at it then?”

“My husband’s a bricklayer’s labourer ma’am, and he only earns thirteen shillings a week, and we’ve seven children, so it helps you see, but it tries the eyes and the chest, especially working by candle light, I can tell you.”

The woman’s name was now called, and Margaret was shortly afterwards left alone. She trembled when she heard the remark about its being so fatiguing for the eyes, for her own were getting very weak, but she took courage and went to the foreman when her time came. He asked her a few questions about her capabilities for the work. He told her they were very particular, and recommended her to be careful. He then took her address, and gave her some soldiers’ shirts to make. If she did them to his satisfaction, she would have regular work for the future.

Margaret took the shirts to her home, and worked diligently at them. At the end of the week they were finished, and she took them to the warehouse with something like pride at her performance, but her self satisfaction received a severe check. The foreman examined them carefully, told her he was content with the work, but that in future she must be more industrious. Most

of the other women they employed, would have completed three times the quantity she had brought home. He paid her the amount due to her. It was only two shillings and threepence, less, by ninepence, than the rent of her room. The next time, she took back double the quantity of work, and she determined, if possible, to finish the whole. Night and day she laboured at it, and at last completed her task by the time she had allotted herself. When she took it to the warehouse, the foreman complimented her on the greater industry she had shown, and said he had no doubt, in a short time, she would be able to complete as much as the other hands. The work, he said, was hardly as good as the last, but he would not look too closely at it; she must, however, be more careful with it in future.

Margaret received this time, double the amount of the previous week's earnings, and she was able to make a considerable saving in her capital by it. Her eyes had certainly suffered by her severe application, and she felt the oppression at the chest so frequently complained of by needlewomen, but the idea that every week brought her nearer to the time she expected to see her son, made her support all cheerfully.

Time rolled on; weeks passed, and then months, still not a word from America. She called frequently on the chaplain, he also had heard nothing. She questioned him on the probable cause, and each time his difficulty in finding an answer for her increased, and his conviction of the cause of her son's silence became more certain.

With Margaret, also certain indistinct suggestions presented themselves to her. There was a strange similarity in the symptoms George complained of, and those which at first attacked her husband, but then George's life was so different from his father's. George was always indoors, or only went out occasionally, but a postman was exposed to all weathers, wet or dry, and could not take care of himself if he caught cold. With this reasoning, she drove the terrible idea from her, but occasionally it returned only to render her the more miserable, without proving anything.

Matters had now begun to assume a very serious aspect. Four months had elapsed since Margaret had expected George's letter, and all the excuses she could frame for his silence, were exhausted. Her friend, the chaplain, had left London. Before he went, he had promised to write to her, if he received any news from America, but not a line had he sent her. Her funds were gradually diminishing, and her eyesight sensibly fading. She gave up the room she rented in a very respectable house, and took another cheaper, in a far poorer locality. Under the same roof were several other lodgers, in fact, almost every room held a different family. Margaret kept herself aloof from the other lodgers, and little beyond the mere expressions of recognition passed between them for several weeks.

One afternoon, on returning from the warehouse, she heard some one sobbing bitterly in one of her fellow lodgers rooms. She went into it, and found a poor wo-

man, in a widow's cap, seated on a chair, and weeping in apparently an inconsolable manner. Beside her were two children, girls, one perhaps was six years of age, the other scarcely more than three. An old table, two ricketty chairs, a little crockery, and a bed of rags on the floor, composed nearly the whole of the furniture. From the appearance of the poor woman's weeds, she had been but a short time a widow, and she was evidently expecting soon again to be a mother. Beside her was a female neighbour, who, judging from her dress, was scarcely in better circumstances—she was vainly endeavouring to offer the other some consolation.

“What is the matter, ma'am?” said Margaret.

“Oh, poor thing, she's very much to be pitied ma'am. Her husband was a labourer at the houses of Parliament, and was killed by an accident about four months ago. She was very well to do during his life time. He was a very sober hardworking man, and was very fond of his family, and she, poor thing, used to work at her needle to help him. But since his death, you see she's had no one to do anything for her, and needlework ain't paid well enough to maintain a family on ma'am, and a growing one too, so she went out by the day charing. But she ain't strong, and the veins swell so in her legs, she can't work hard enough to please the gentlefolks, and so to-day they didn't pay her, as she couldn't do her work, and she's crying because the poor children haven't anything to eat.”

“Come,” said Margaret, “don't take on so. I'll give

the children their supper. There, don't cry so, there's a good soul, you'll do yourself harm."

"And I'll bring you down my tea pot, and we'll see if we can't make you a cup of tea between us."

The two poor Samaritans immediately went about their benevolent work, and the children and the mother had all a meal before they slept.

Margaret thought much about the poor woman before she went to bed, and finished by concocting a scheme she thought might be beneficial to both parties. She had heard the widow was an expert needlewoman, which Margaret was not. The widow was incapable of hard work, but our heroine was more robust, and did not fear exertion, so she thought if they could exchange duties it would be beneficial to both. She proposed her plan the next morning, and the widow thankfully accepted it, if her employer would permit it. Permission was granted, and Margaret and the widow commenced housekeeping together:

Things now went on more comfortably for all parties. The widow worked assiduously and well, and Margaret, when she took the shirts to the warehouse, was complimented on the improvement she had made. Her own work was also performed in so satisfactory a manner, that she had almost constant employment.

The time for the widow's confinement arrived, and circumstances were again less flourishing, but by great exertion, they managed to get through it. At these seasons, it is singular to notice the extreme sympathy

the poor have for each other, and the fact of a child being born to a poor widow so soon after the death of her husband, offered a great attraction to their charitable feelings. Every female fellow lodger assisted her to the best of her abilities, and the frequent enquiries of the men, shewed their pity was scarcely less than that of their wives.

One evening as Margaret was opening her street-door, after having finished her day's work, some one touched her on the arm. She turned round and a remarkably short and slim little woman stood before her. She had good eyes, a well shaped mouth and a good humoured expression of countenance. Her clothes were shabby and ragged in the extreme. Margaret immediately recognised her as a former fellow prisoner, who was under her care in the infirmary when she was employed as a nurse, which from her quiet orderly manner was frequently the case. Her first feeling was one of pleasure at the recognition, her next, one of vexation at seeing one who remembered her during that sad time. She, however, seized her cordially by the hand.

“Why, Kitty King, is that you?” The little woman seemed delighted to see Margaret.

“I thought it was you,” said Kitty; “I saw you leave —— street, and I followed you home. How long have you been out?”

“Hush,” said Margaret, frightened, “no one here knows anything about it; so never speak of it Kitty, or you'll get me into trouble.”

“ Don't be afraid of me, my dear, I love you too well for that. I don't forget people who are kind to me, and it ain't likely I should forget you after the fever I had. What are you doing now ?”

“ I go out by the day, charing,” said Margaret, “ till my son sends me enough to pay for my passage to America, which I expect every day. But what are you doing ?”

“ Nothing very good,” said Kitty, sorrowfully, “ I'm too short.”

“ Too short ?”

“ Yes, too short; nobody respectable will employ as little a woman as I am, so I am maid of all work at a beer shop near here—and all work it is,” continued Kitty, bitterly, “ and all sorts too.”

Her diminutive stature had been a curse to Kitty all through her life. All parties had been unanimous in upbraiding her for it, and at last she began to look upon it as a sort of original sin which had been born with her, which was very wicked, but which she could not help. In the eyes of the world there seemed no excuse for it, and Kitty herself began to entertain the idea that it was unpardonable. This curse began to develope itself soon after her first attempt to earn an honest livelihood, and had never left her since. She had been brought up and educated, when very young, in a workhouse. Her memory was rather obscure about her parents. She was not certain whether they had died when she was young, or whether they had

run away. She became an incumbrance on the poor's-rate when she was between seven and eight years of age and had remained so till she was thirteen. She had but one relative—a brother, who entered the house with her, he was between five and six years her junior, consequently was little more than an infant at the time. Kitty, by what authority it is impossible to say, took upon herself the duties of parent and guardian to her little brother, at least as far as the discipline of the workhouse would allow, and in that capacity paid him the most unremitting attention. She was naturally of a mild, kind and contented disposition, and probably would never have wished to have left the workhouse walls, had she not been impressed with the idea that it was her duty to come out and commence a respectable career for the sake of her little brother. With this notion she begged the proper authorities to allow her to make her way in the world. This, however, was no easy matter, for although arrived at the mature age of thirteen, she was so diminutive that she was hardly taller than other girls of ten. Still the wish to oblige, stimulated as it was by parochial economy, induced the guardians to find her a situation, and Kitty left the workhouse with the determination which stimulates nine out of ten of these poor creatures; to conduct herself honestly and properly, and like nine out of ten of them—she “went wrong.”

Her first mistress was a crabbed, ill-tempered old woman, who kept a small house, which she let out to

single gentlemen, in Chelsea. Kitty was installed as maid of all work in the house, and plenty she had of it. This might have been supportable if she had not been frequently beaten for her misbehaviour, and this was rendered still more disagreeable by being half-starved into the bargain. Her principle misdemeanors were of a class unpardonable in the eyes of poor lodging-house keepers—a habit of continually breaking articles of crockery, and this she was informed, by way of moral after a beating, was occasioned in great part by her being so short. If she attempted to place anything on the table or washstand, from the difficulty she had in reaching it, she frequently broke it against the edge, and if she had to remove it, she was equally unsuccessful. At last the lady's patience was completely exhausted, and she determined on sending her back to the workhouse, but before she had time to put her threat into execution a change took place in Kitty's circumstances, vastly for the better. She obtained through the patronage of a good tempered cook, whose acquaintance she had contrived to make, a situation under the housemaid in a respectable family. She was, moreover, to commence at the astounding wages of six pounds a year. After she had been in her new situation for a few months, a great improvement took place in Kitty's appearance, not only was she getting very pretty, but she had positively grown nearly an inch. She was a great favourite with all, every one spoke of her with kindness and all regretted she was so

short—she would have been such a nice girl if she had been taller. This was the happiest period of Kitty's life, she was always merry and contented but there were certain days when it was positively a treat to see her. This occurred immediately after she had received her quarter's wages. She would then ask and obtain permission for a day's holiday to see her brother, who still continued in the workhouse. Among other preparations for the day was that of making a plain cake for him. It was truly a plain cake; the most rigid theorist on the subject of diet, could not have objected to it. If some might have despised it on account of the simplicity of its composition, the objection would have been more than neutralized by its size. Besides the cake, there was generally another present, a ball, a book, or a kite, or something she thought he would like, and beyond that a shilling—always chosen as the brightest she could find. Armed with these, the little matron of fifteen would start on her walk of three miles to the workhouse, the happiest, and perhaps the proudest of womankind. The kind affectionate patronage she shewed her young brother was admirable to behold, and the respect the other boys evidently held her in, was of the most unqualified description. The anecdotes she gave them of good society, the description of the house she lived in, the persons who inhabited or visited at it, were listened to with intense interest. When she left him she kissed him in an affectionate motherly manner, and promised to do immense things for him when he came out in the world,

if he conducted himself in a proper, honourable manner. When she returned home in the evening her anecdotes about her brother were exceedingly entertaining. It was true that other servants might have brothers, no doubt they had, but to have found one equal to her's, would have been difficult indeed.

One holiday when she returned, there was a look of joyful satisfaction in Kitty's countenance which claimed the attention of all. What was it? Her brother had grown so much, he was half an inch taller than she was. At last the time arrived when her brother was old enough to leave the workhouse, and then Kitty experienced one of those bitter disappointments which occasionally fall on those whose lot it is to bring up children. She had fixed upon a situation for him at the house of a respectable general medical practitioner, in the immediate vicinity of her own home. She had congratulated herself on his being in the service of a gentleman who would look after his health, while she took care of his morals, and with no little pride she frequently painted him to herself with his buttons and his basket, the admiration and envy of the other boys in the neighbourhood. But Kitty was doomed to be disappointed. The confinement of the workhouse had brought on an irrepressible desire to see the world, and he determined to enter the Royal Navy as a boy. He was offered the appointment, but fifty shillings were first required for his outfit. Kitty wisely bowed her head to the decrees of fate, found him the money from her little savings

and accompanied him to Chatham to see him leave for his ship. Before he stepped into the boat she embraced him affectionately, gave him five shillings and her blessing, bade him good bye, and then, with streaming eyes, gazed after him as long as he was in sight.

Kitty remained in her situation two years longer. She had, during that period certainly grown taller. She was now nearly eighteen years of age, and was almost as tall as the average of girls of fifteen. One morning she presented herself to her mistress.

“ If you please ma'am, would you have any objection to increase my wages ?”

“ No, I cannot do that; you should remember your appearance is so young, you could not get more anywhere.”

“ If I'm little, I'm old ma'am,” said Kitty, with some spirit; “ and I ought to be paid accordingly.”

“ That's hardly a reason, Kitty,” said her mistress, “ but the truth is, my family is not so large as it was, and I don't want so many servants. I don't wish to discharge you, for you are a good girl on the whole, but if you like to leave you can.”

“ I should be sorry to leave, ma'am, but I ought to better myself if I could.”

“ Certainly; only be careful that you do better yourself. Have you any other situation in view ?”

“ Yes, ma'am; a very good one; eight pounds a-year as housemaid, and everything found me.”

“Then you’re quite right to go; have you seen the lady?”

“No, ma’am, she’s in the country, but she’ll be in town next week and then I’m to call on her. She’s written up to say that if you will give me a good character, she will take me, so, if you please ma’am, I should like to leave this day month.”

“Very well, Kitty, let it be so, I will give you a good character.” Ten days passed and the lady did not call. “Well, Kitty,” said her mistress, when are they coming to me for your character?”

“Oh, if you please, ma’am,” said Kitty, somewhat sheepishly, “the lady is not coming. I called on her the other day, and said you would give me a good character, but she did not like my appearance; she said I was too short, but I’ve heard of another place which I believe is quite as good, if you’ll let me go about it, to-morrow?”

“Certainly; but remember, you can stay here as long as you please at your present rate of wages.”

“Thank you, ma’am, but I should like to better myself.” Do not moralize, gentle reader, on the folly and ingratitude of servants, if any one proposed a plan for increasing your income twenty-five per cent., you would soon find it was a duty you owed to your family to accept it.

Kitty was more successful this time. The lady, after receiving her very favourable character, engaged her, notwithstanding the ordinary objection to her appear-

ance. Her new mistress was an elderly lady, a widow, with a very small income. She was irritable in the extreme, but naturally kindhearted, and as Kitty was both patient and forgiving, things went on tolerably smoothly for more than a year, when the demon of ambition again entered Kitty's brain, and she resolved to become a cook. To this determination she was also stimulated by the remarks she continually heard made by her present mistress's visitors,—“ Dear me, how little she is; what's her age?” As a cook she could obtain better wages and not be seen by the company; and as she gave satisfaction in that branch of her occupation to the old lady, whose only servant she was, she made up her mind she should be equally successful with others. She had some difficulty in finding a mistress willing to take her, but a lady with a somewhat large family of small children determined on giving her a trial. The old lady was most indignant when she heard of Kitty's intention to leave her; she was like many others in her position, selfish in the extreme, and as Kitty suited her exactly, she considered her wish to quit her service as an unpardonable affront. She told her she should give her a good character for it was justly her due, but never to apply to her for another if she lost her situation. Kitty, who had long since determined to do her duty wherever she might be, cared little for the old lady's reservation; she however, had cause to repent it.

The husband of her new mistress was a clerk in a

public office, and like many others in similar situations—dyspeptic. He was, in consequence, excessively particular in his cooking, and as Kitty knew but very little of the art, beyond the extremely simple “*cuisine*” of her late mistress, she gave but little satisfaction in her new situation. She was, moreover, naturally exceedingly nervous, and as each scolding which, by the bye, occurred almost daily, made her worse, by the end of a fortnight she had become about as detestable a cook as ever entered a house. At last the patience of her mistress, naturally a good-hearted woman, gave way, and a fillet of veal sent up in more than a partial state of crudity, determined poor Kitty’s fate. She received a month’s warning on the spot.

“ Oh, pray ma’am, do give me another trial. I am so sorry, ma’am, it was all the fault of the range.” Another trial was given but, alas, without any good resulting from it. Some mutton chops the next day were sent up burnt and the potatoes were positively raw. This completed it, and an irrevocable notice was given.

“ Pray don’t send me away, ma’am, till the end of the month.”

“ Oh no, I don’t want to behave unkindly to you, you can stay till then, but take my advice, never take a cook’s place again; you are not tall enough, and have therefore not sufficient command over your fire. You can’t see how things are going on.”

During the short time that remained, Kitty made

several attempts to obtain another situation but all were fruitless. The very short time she had remained in her last situation was an insuperable objection, without the drawback of her appearance, to many; and the old lady resolutely refused to give her another character. The time elapsed and still she was unprovided. With some three pounds in her possession she took a cheap lodging in a back street in Westminster. That neighbourhood was then, as now, blessed by the presence of a considerable number of her Majesty's Guards. Those who imagine that the only inconvenience to society arising from that attribute to royalty, is confined to the assaults, &c., on peaceful, unoffending individuals, women and others, reported daily in the newspapers, form a very incorrect idea of the amount of evil produced by that gallant and useful body of men. The degree of demoralization they occasion may in some measure be estimated by a few enquiries at the hospitals, dispensaries, and police stations in their vicinity.

In the same room with Kitty lodged another servant out of place, who had formed an attachment for one of these heroes. Her character was already gone, and she assisted Kitty to the utmost in her power in losing her's. She introduced her to a friend of her lover's. He was a remarkably fine young man and easily caught the poor girl's affections. After a little time he left her utterly fallen, having first borrowed the trifling sum of money she possessed, as a token of his love. The

wretched girl was in despair and she determined on drowning herself. She, however, wanted the courage, and to obtain it, drank so deeply from the cup of the afflicted in her situation, that she forgot her determination in the solace produced by the gin. The next day she was reconciled to her condition. In a short time she formed a sort of partnership with a costermonger, and, unfortunately for her, one of the most disreputable of his disreputable calling. He had lately lost his donkey, or rather drank it. Kitty he thought would answer better than buying another, even if he had the money. She could assist in wheeling the barrow with less fatigue to him. His late donkey had made it a point of honour never to go till he was kicked, and although the exercise was not without its charms it became fatiguing in the end. Kitty would drag it without compulsion, and if he wanted recreation in the evening, he could illtreat her then. The unfortunate man was somewhat deceived even in this speculation, Kitty was too short to have much purchase on the barrow and he was obliged occasionally to drag it himself. Kitty began also to imbibe costermongering ideas of integrity. To do her justice she adopted them with great repugnance, but her friend's method of reasoning on the subject was most conclusive. One day when out in a sort of half respectable kind of neighbourhood, selling potatoes, they called at the house of a customer. On a chair in the passage were two silver spoons which had been placed there for the

moment by the mistress of the house. They soon caught the costermonger's eye. While the purchaser went into the kitchen for a basket, the costermonger whispered softly to Kitty, "Hook 'em." Kitty hesitated. He gave her a look there was no misunderstanding; Kitty immediately secreted them. The potatoes were placed in the basket and the couple left the house. When in the street, Kitty was on the point of hiding the spoons in the barrow.

"What are you about you fool? If the Crushers should come and find 'em, I should lose the barrer. Put 'em in your pocket." Kitty did as she was told.

In a few moments after they had left the house, the woman missed the spoons. She imagined who had taken them, and immediately ran after the thieves. Having overtaken them, she accused them of the theft, The man at first attempted to bully, but a policeman coming up, he immediately assumed an air of injured innocence, and volunteered going to the station-house to be searched, as well as his barrow. They were given in charge, and Kitty, frightened, attempted to run away.

"Stop, will yer?" shouted her friend, "people will think you've prigged them. You haven't have yer." The policeman took her by the arm, and they went to the station. Of course the spoons were found upon Kitty, and her friend flew into a violent passion at her dishonesty.

"She would be the ruin of him," he said, "she was allers at it." They were taken before a magistrate, the

man was discharged, although by no means complimented by the magistrate, and Kitty was committed for trial. She was sentenced to six months imprisonment, and while in durance, made Margaret's acquaintance in the infirmary.

Margaret's recognition of Kitty, was a source of great gratification to the little woman, she had now some one who would look upon her with kindness. "Let me see you sometimes," Kitty said, "I don't want to call at your house, for people may know me, and that won't do you any good. Where can I see you?"

"I generally leave work about this time, and you can meet me as I come home. I would ask you to come in, but I have only half a room, and my fellow lodger has lately been confined."

"I don't want to come in," said Kitty, "but I shall look out for you sometimes, as you come home." Kitty then left her, and Margaret entered the house.

The poor woman recovered from her confinement but very slowly. Her constitution had been considerably debilitated by the privations, and fatigue she had already undergone since her husband's death. She found herself too weak to undertake any labour, and as needlework alone would not yield enough to maintain them, she was obliged to apply to the parish for relief. They readily gave her Poor Law sympathy, and enquired the name of her husband's parish; finding it was in Yorkshire, they waited till the few months had expired to complete the first year of her widowhood, and then despatched her

and her children to a poor village in that county, to receive the charitable assistance they required.

It was quite impossible for Margaret to support herself by her needle, for her eyesight was now so weak, that she could hardly keep at it for an hour together, and the hard work she had lately been accustomed to, had destroyed, to a considerable extent, the delicacy of touch necessary for such an employment, but she was unwilling to relinquish it altogether. After the widow left her, she obtained an engagement to take charge of a large empty house, which she had been employed to clean down. It had lately been disposed of, but the purchaser would not take possession of it for some months, and she was thus not only certain of having a roof over her for some time, but she was also to receive half-a-crown a week as wages. She removed her little furniture into one of the kitchens, and by the help of her needle, continued to earn sufficient to support herself. One by one, the excuses she had formed, in her own mind, for not receiving George's letter had vanished. She now avoided, as much as possible, thinking upon the subject, but it continually thrust itself upon her imagination. The real reason for his silence occasionally intruded itself upon her, but it was too terrible to entertain, and she forced her thoughts upon some other subject, if they attempted to assume a definite form. Fits of despondency frequently came over her, and the dead silence of the large empty house contributed to increase them. Occasionally, when closing it, in the obscurity of the evening, an undefined sensa-

tion that some human form was near her, would come over her. It was not fear, it was rather a solemn sentiment she could not account for. She would look round, still nothing was near her; but the intense silence seemed impossible to continue, and she expected each moment to hear some voice address her, yet whose voice, she did not for a moment dare to think of. One evening, when this feeling was extremely oppressive, she had finished closing the house, and having descended into the kitchen, she seated herself by the window, and looked steadily into the street. Without fearing anything, she dreaded the increasing obscurity, and kept her face to the daylight as much as possible. Presently, she saw a person in the street watching her attentively. It was Kitty King. Margaret immediately rose, ran up stairs to the street door, and let her in. The kind hearted little woman was delighted to see her friend, and our heroine was equally pleased to have some one to speak to. They went into the kitchen, and there poor Kitty opened her sorrows to her friend.

“ Oh, how happy I am to have any one who will say a kind word to me. You don't know the life I lead. The only comfort I have is to get a drop of something now and then. I can then forget everything, and am comfortable. I am sure if you knew all you wouldn't blame me.”

“ Why don't you leave them then ?”

“ Where can I go? To the workhouse? They wouldn't have me. They'd tell me I was able to get my

own living, and then if I did go in, they'd know all about my misfortune, and a precious life I should lead, shouldn't I? Where I am, nobody throws that in my teeth, and if they do knock me down sometimes, I'd rather have that of the two."

"What do they beat you for?"

"Because they say I steal the beer, and when I'm sent out for gin, I drink that too. It's all true for the matter of that. I do it and will. I can't help it, no more could you, or any one else. But ain't you very dull here?" she continued.

"God knows I am," said Margaret, "and there are not many that want comfort more than I do."

"What's wrong with you my dear?"

"I can't tell you. I dare hardly tell it to myself."

"Well, if you'll let me, I'll come and see you sometimes, but it will be rather late. I must go now, or I shall catch it. Let me come to-morrow night, will you?"

"I wish you would," said Margaret, "if you don't get yourself into trouble. What time will you come?"

"I don't think it will be much before half-past eleven, but I'll be with you without fail."

She then bade Margaret good night, who after working for an hour at her needle went to bed.

The next evening, Margaret's despondency was, perhaps, greater than it yet had been, and she waited with considerable impatience for the arrival of Kitty. It was nearly midnight before she came. Margaret took her

into the kitchen, and they seated themselves by the fire. Margaret had determined on giving her friend a treat, and her tea pot was put in requisition. Kitty was as happy as it was possible for a person to be in this world. The very modest luxury placed before her, with a kind welcome, was a circumstance so rare in the history of the poor little woman, that her eyes filled with tears as she thanked her hostess for the treat.

A few nights afterwards, Kitty called again on Margaret. She had made provision this time for treating her friend, and with that intent, had brought with her a small flat bottle, containing rum. Margaret, who had been exceedingly depressed during the whole of the evening, received her most cordially. After chatting for some time, Kitty asked her friend, if she had heard from her son. Margaret answered in the negative, in so mournful a manner, that Kitty perceived she had touched upon a painful subject.

“Come, don't be down hearted,” she said, “you'll be sure to hear soon. In the meantime, put a little water in the kettle and warm it.” So saying, she drew from her pocket the bottle and placed it on the table. Margaret willingly did as she desired, and in a few minutes, the two friends had each a glass of warm spirits and water before her. Like most women in their position, their tongues were soon loosened by their potations. Kitty talked incessantly, and Margaret was little less fluent.

“Have you ever seen Mary Jenkins about here?”

Kitty enquired, "I'm always running up against her."

"Who is Mary Jenkins?"

"She was in the infirmary you know the same time I was, when I had my fever. She was sentenced for an assault."

"I have not seen her, and I don't wish to meet her; from what I remember of her, I didn't like her at all. Don't tell her where I am."

"Lor bless you, I never tell anybody, but she's a good deal to be pitied after all. She was a soldier's wife, and went out with the army abroad. She was then a very respectable young woman, and had been a servant in a good family, but how could she help going wrong. She was separated with the other women from their husbands. There they draggled after their regiments in the sun and rain. They'd no bonnets and no shawls, and everybody was chaffing them. They put up with it as good humouredly as they could, especially as sometimes they got a drop, if they did not flare up. Well it's quite natural you know for a respectable young woman not to like that sort of thing, but what could she do? There was nobody there to look after her, or help her, and the only comfort she had was when she was asleep or drinking, and to get drink she didn't stop at anything, and so at last she was sent back to England with a lot of others, who they said was a shame to their country."

"What is she doing now?"

"Nothing very good, but she's not bad now when sober and quiet, and I'm sure she's sorry for what she's done,

but that's too late now. She lodges just at the back of our house, so I see a good deal of her. She's very good friends with me, though she's a limb to every one else."

"Well, don't bring her here," said Margaret, "that's all."

The conversation now went into all descriptions of subjects. It was very late when Kitty left, and Margaret, under the influence of the spirits and water, slept soundly and happily.

The next morning, Margaret, who was unused to any excess, rose with a head ache. She sat down to her work, and continued at it for some hours, when having finished the number which had been entrusted to her, she took them to the warehouse. The foreman found great fault with the manner she had finished them, and told her, pointing to the one she had completed that morning, that in case another was sent home as carelessly done as that was, he should not give her any more work. She felt irritated at the man's remarks, but had sufficient command over herself not to make an answer, but walked sullenly away. This frame of mind was by no means habitual to her, but she did not recover herself during the whole of the day. On the morrow, the bad feeling of the previous day had left her, but a heavier feeling of despondency than she had yet felt came over her. She worked unremittingly and carefully during the whole of the day, nor did she cease 'till the evening shut in. Before she closed up the house, she sat at the window in

the twilight, completely absorbed in thought, and it was nearly night before she recovered herself. The terrible certainty of the worst was insensibly impressing itself upon her mind, and no excuse, nor reason could she form which would drive it away.

She now rose and went up stairs to close the shutters. Never before did the silence seem so profound, and as each successive window was closed, the silence seemed to increase in intensity, as the remaining faint light of the day was shut out. As she descended the staircase in the dark, the impression that a form was near came again over her. She tried to shake it off, but it increased almost to a certainty. She descended a few steps, and she felt it was following her. She turned round to look at it. Nothing but the profound darkness which might almost have been felt, was around her. Again she descended, again the feeling came over her, and again she proved it was only imagination. She was naturally courageous, and she determined to conquer her fear. She stood still for a few moments, and with her figure drawn up to her full height, she looked calmly around her. She remembered she had injured no one, and she had no cause to be afraid. The sensation entirely left her, and she again descended, but no sooner was her foot upon the next stair, than it came with its full weight upon her, and she felt that the form was again near her. It was useless combating the feeling, it was too strong for her. She sat down on the stairs, and placed her face in her hands. She remained in this position for some

moments and then rose. With her eyes nearly closed, she continued her descent—again the form was near her, nearer than before. With her head averted, she put out her arm to feel it—nothing was within her grasp. Again she went on, and with her hand tightly holding the banister, her eyes closed, and her respiration restrained, till at last she reached the kitchen.

She lighted her candle, which, from motives of economy, was always delayed till the last moment, and she felt relieved when she found herself no longer in darkness. She seated herself to her work. The same oppressive silence continued. So profound was it that the noise of the needle as it passed through her work almost seemed to provoke an echo, still she continued resolutely on. At last the oppressive sensation of solitude was so overwhelming that she could support it no longer. She rose from her seat and laid her work on the table. She remembered how consoling had been the effects of the spirits brought by Kitty, and she determined on trying the same recipe again. She put on her bonnet, and having left the candle in the hall, she went to the nearest public house, and having procured a small quantity of spirits, she returned home. The next evening she determined again to indulge in the same consolation. Small as the expense was, it occasioned a serious diminution of her small means, and her supply of food was diminished in consequence. After a few evenings she began to form an acquaintance with the woman at the bar, and a short conversation

generally took place between them. The evening draught now became a necessity, but beyond the small allowance she began to be accustomed to, she preserved the strictest sobriety.

She had not seen Kitty for more than a week, and she began to be anxious on her account, for she really had a great affection for the little woman. She had almost formed a determination to discover her abode, but a circumstance occurred which did away with the necessity. Margaret had been accustomed to attend morning service every Sunday at the Broadway church. On leaving the church one morning, she saw a group of individuals of the lowest class, collected round a woman who was intoxicated. A feeling of curiosity induced her to look towards them, when the crowd opened and the woman came out from it. To Margaret's intense horror, she found it was the person mentioned by Kitty—Mary Jenkins. She saw Margaret, and at the moment appeared to have some difficulty in remembering her, although she evidently recognized her as an acquaintance. Margaret profited by her indecision to escape, and congratulated herself on not being known.

In the evening Kitty called and informed Margaret that she had that afternoon seen Mary Jenkins. She had not recognized Margaret at first sight but had remembered her afterwards. She had asked Kitty if she knew her address as she intended calling on Margaret. The wretched creature had, like most others, conceived

a great friendship for our heroine, and was annoyed at her own want of memory at the moment. Kitty, however, had told her she was ignorant of Margaret's address, and the matter had dropped. Kitty remained till it was late and the same unfortunate source of consolation—spirits, was again resorted to by her and her hostess.

Margaret had now completed another commission from the outfitters. When she took home the shirts they were closely examined by the foreman. He made no complaints, but was evidently far from satisfied with the work. The same evening she went to the public house, and while talking with the woman at the bar some one touched her on the arm, and on turning round she saw Mary Jenkins. The latter appeared greatly pleased at the discovery; Margaret was, however, much annoyed, although she tried not to let it be seen. Her vexation was the greater, in consequence of the look of surprise of the barmaid—Mary Jenkins's reputation being of a most unfortunate description. She insisted on treating Margaret, who perceiving the wretched woman was partly intoxicated, endeavoured to refuse it, but without effect, Mary Jenkins would take no denial. Margaret thought it would be better to accept the offer, though she felt that she would be committing a degrading action by so doing. The feeling was the more painful in consequence of Mary Jenkins informing the barmaid and the customers, that she and Margaret were old acquaintances. Margaret, after she had swal-

lowed the spirit, hurriedly left the house, but the half intoxicated woman followed her into the street and insisted on accompanying her home. It was difficult to refuse her, yet to let her know where she lived was a most dangerous experiment. Margaret attempted a deception. She told her she could not take her home with her, as the family she lived with as servant was very respectable, and if she did so she might probably lose her situation and she was sure she would not wish to injure her. Mary immediately asserted that nothing would cause her greater grief than doing anything to her prejudice, and then wished her good night. Margaret quickened her pace, but she had hardly gone when Mary Jenkins, with the caprice of a tipsy woman, determined on following her home unperceived. She, therefore, watched the way she went and thus obtained the knowledge of her address.

The next morning she met Kitty King and asked her if she knew where Margaret lived? Kitty answered that Margaret was employed to take charge of an empty house, but she did not know in what street. The woman's suspicions were aroused by the answer. She rightly imagined that Margaret had merely made the excuse to get rid of her, and she determined she should not succeed. The same evening she resolved to call on Margaret, but meeting with some male acquaintances by the way, she remained in their company till it was late, and then asked one of them to accompany her on her visit. The man was a notorious thief and well

known to the police. A constable recognized him as he entered the street where Margaret lived, and then saw him and Mary Jenkins enter the house. Margaret was terrified on opening the door to see her and her male companion. She told them it was too late to admit them, and requested them to leave; they, however, would take no denial and entered the house. They all three went into the kitchen and there, to her great surprise, Mary Jenkins saw Kitty King seated at a table with two glasses on it. It would be useless to disguise the fact, that without having ever been completely intoxicated, Margaret had now been so accustomed to take some stimulant in the evening, that she could hardly do without it, and that particular night she had taken somewhat more than usual.

“Upon my word, Mrs. King,” said Mary Jenkins, “you seem to be quite at home here. I thought, ma’am, you didn’t know where Mrs. White lived. Well, you are a double-faced woman, if ever I saw one. You are a nice one certainly.”

“And if I did know,” said the other, “I didn’t choose to tell you. She’s respectable now, and I didn’t want to harm her.”

“Really, ma’am, you’re very kind, your own character is so very superior,” said Mary Jenkins.

“I don’t want to quarrel with you, so leave me alone. She’s a right, I suppose, to keep company with any one she pleases. If she didn’t want me, I shouldn’t have come,”

“ I don’t think, Mrs. White, you ought to keep company with such a thing as that, at any rate, and not speak to me ; I’m as good as she is. Perhaps you don’t know where she works ? Oh, she won’t do you much credit, I can tell you.”

“ I’m better than you are, any day ;” said Kitty, firing up ; “ so don’t think to come over me, for I won’t put up with it. Oh, you may look as savage as you please. I don’t care for you, or the man with you, either ; I know him as well as I do you.”

“ Mind your own business,” said the man, “ and keep your tongue to yourself, or you’ll get the worst of it, I can tell you.” Margaret attempted all in her power to stop the quarrel, but in vain.

The angry tongues of two half inebriated women were now in full play, and it was quite impossible to quiet them. Each tried to vociferate louder than the other, and the fellow instead of attempting to calm them encouraged the quarrel. With persons in their sphere of life, there is but little to separate angry words from blows, and Kitty King, now completely infuriated, threw a drinking glass at her opponent’s head. The other made a rush at her, but stumbling against a chair, got her foot entangled in the linen on which Margaret was at work. Irritated at the circumstance, without a moment’s hesitation or consideration, she snatched it up and threw it on the fire. Margaret immediately rushed to save it from the flames, and although she partially succeeded, it was still much

scorched. In the mean time the two women were engaged in a severe struggle, and as Mary Jenkins was by far the stronger, she had got the little woman on the floor, and encouraged by the ruffian, was beating her cruelly, while the screams of the other were most appalling. What to do Margaret did not know. To attempt to pacify them was useless, and she stood there terrified and helpless. A violent knocking was suddenly heard at the street door. In a moment all were silent. The woman released Kitty from her clutches, who sprang from the floor in an instant and seizing the candle before the others could stop her, she rushed up stairs, her hair and dress in the greatest disorder and her face covered with blood. She opened the door. Two policemen immediately entered and Kitty conducted them into the kitchen. The man made an unsuccessful attempt to hide himself, and the woman appeared cowed and frightened. Kitty, with great volubility, endeavoured to explain the affair, and made, from the passion she was in, a most confused statement.

“I don’t want to hear any more,” said the policeman, “you’re a bad lot altogether. What are they doing here?” he asked Margaret.

“Oh, if you please, its no fault of her’s,” put in Kitty. “She’s very respectable; she’s an old friend of mine.” The policeman laughed.

“Respectable!” said Mary Jenkins, “what was she in three years for? not for bein respectable, I sup-

pose. I hate your hypocrites, I do; she's as bad or worse than we are, whatever she may say of herself."

"We shall make a report of this, you may be sure;" said the policeman, addressing Margaret. "As for you others, the sooner you're out of this house the better. You're all pretty well known, so don't make a fuss about it. There, go."

Margaret, when she closed the door after them, felt thoroughly bewildered. There was no doubt but that the police would inform the house agent of the circumstance and she would lose her situation. Again, the linen which had been given her for the shirts was so damaged as to be almost useless. She laid herself on her bed with that sort of reckless feeling which frequently falls on those who have irrecoverably lost all. For in whatever light she looked on the future, it presented one unvaried aspect of ruin; and desperate now as to the consequences, she fell into a sullen stupor which ended in sleep.

When Margaret awoke the next morning, her first glance round the room recalled to her memory all the occurrences of the preceding evening. The broken tumbler on the floor, the chairs thrown down, the linen scorched and burnt; all told, too well, the disreputable affray. She sat for some time on the edge of her bed and regarded the scene around her with utter dismay. By degrees her unfortunate position and its irretrievable character became more distinct. For some time she reflected in what manner she could redeem the mischief

the affair had produced, but all her reflections were fruitless. At last a feeling of dogged resolution came over her and she resolved to let things take their course. Worse than they were at that moment it would be impossible to find them, and with that conviction she quietly dressed herself and prepared her breakfast. When she had finished, she folded together the linen which had been entrusted to her and proceeded with it to the warehouse. She there found several other women waiting their turn, and she took her place among them. Two or three attempted to enter into conversation with her, she readily met their advances but her mind was so absorbed with other subjects, she could not keep it up. The obligation she was under to wait till those who had arrived before her were called in, caused her considerable pain. She had arrived with her courage ready for the emergency, but she felt that it was fast fading away. She, however, with considerable difficulty, restrained her tears and at last her name was called.

“ I am sorry to say I have had an accident with the linen and some of it is burnt. What am I to do ? ”

“ Pay for it of course, or you’ll get no more work here ; ” said the foreman, examining that portion of it she had completed. “ But stop a moment, this sort of work can’t go on any longer. For some time past it has been very bad, but this won’t do at all. This is downright carelessness. You can have no more work here, and you must pay for what you have spoilt. ”

“ That I can’t do, I’ve not got no money. ”

“How did it occur?” Margaret framed some clumsy excuse, upon the moment, but it was easily seen through. “I am very much afraid that what I’ve heard before is true, that you are getting into the habit of drinking. Do you live in the same house you did when you first came here?”

“No, I do not.”

“Why did you not tell me when you moved? you know perfectly well it is one of our regulations.”

“I did not know it. Why should I have refused to tell you when I did move?”

“Where do you live now?” Margaret hesitated. She thought if he sent to the house he might hear of the disreputable affair of the previous evening.

“If you are not going to give me any more work,” she said, colouring, “it cannot concern you where I live. As for paying for the linen, I did not burn it, and if I did, I am too poor to pay for it.” Here she turned round to leave the house.

“Take my advice,” said the foreman, “never set your foot in this place again; if you do, you will certainly be handed out by a policeman.” When Margaret arrived at her home, she found a clerk from the house agent’s with a constable waiting at the door.

“So we hear from the police a nice character of you,” he said. “Pray who were the friends you had here last night?”

“I did not ask them to come Sir, and I am very sorry for what took place. I hope you’ll give me another trial.”

“Not an hour. This policeman will take charge of the premises. Come in, and I will pay you what is owing to you.” They entered, and the clerk gave her four shillings and sixpence due to her.

“Now leave the house immediately, pack up your things and go.”

“But I have no where to go to Sir. I hope you’ll let me have a little time to find another lodging.”

“No, I will not, you must go immediately.”

“I dare say, Sir,” said the policeman, “she will have some difficulty in finding a lodging, the poor are very crowded together in this place. If you will let her leave her things till the evening, I will see she takes them away then.”

“On that condition,” said the clerk, “they may stay till the evening, but if she has not taken them away before seven o’clock, turn them into the street.”

“Yes Sir, I’ll see to it. Remember you’re not later than seven,” said the policeman, with a stern voice. She turned round sorrowfully to assure the man she would not. He was standing before the clerk for the purpose of closing the door after her. As she looked in his face, she was struck by its good natured expression, so utterly at variance with the tone he had assumed. He gave her a glance which clearly said—“You have nothing to fear from me.”

Margaret now proceeded to ask the assistance and advice of the only friend she had in the world—the little servant at the beer shop. She had no difficulty in

finding the house, when once in the street. She had frequently heard a description of it from Kitty, and the class of customers she saw entering it, also perfectly corresponded with those she had heard usually frequented the place. She entered the bar room. A rough coarse looking man was behind the bar, employed in serving the customers. He was a surly thickset looking fellow, with a broken nose, evidently one of the lowest class of prize-fighters. Margaret thought for a moment, that Kitty's master's appearance promised but little in his favour. The man asked her what she wanted, and she, by way of gaining his good will, asked for a glass of beer. This was given and paid for. Margaret's courage was strengthened by the draught, and she enquired if a person of the name of Kitty King lived there.

"Well—that's about as much as she does," he answered, "for she got such a thrashing in some place she went to last night, that she got two of her ribs broke, and when she came home this morning, she got her head broke her for her pains. If you want to see her, you'd better go at once, for we're going to start her off to the hospital in a cab in a few minutes. By the bye, do you know any one who would do her work for her till she's well. We're not very particular about character, it's work, we like better." The idea, repugnant as it was to her feelings, of living in that house came over her, but she determined on seeing Kitty before she answered.

"I think I do," she said, "I will tell you about it when I come down." Margaret ran up stairs. In a

small room, or rather closet, roughly parted off from an attic, on a dark looking flat mass, but whether bed or rags, it was impossible to say, lay Kitty King. When her visitor entered, she was placed with her face to the wall, and was quite motionless. She did not appear to notice Margaret's entrance, so her friend touched her on the shoulder. Kitty looked up, evidently much surprised. As soon as she recognised Margaret, she turned round, but with great difficulty, for she was in much pain, and taking her hand in both of her's; without a word she pressed it to her face, and covered it with tears. Margaret could perceive in the dimmed light, that her hair was clotted with blood, and it had also ran down over her forehead. She attempted to calm the poor creature.

"Oh, how good you are," said Kitty. You are the only person that ever says a kind word to me. When people are not scolding me, they are making fun of me. I can't even go into the streets without their laughing at me. I wish God would take me, that I do. My life is all misery. I don't mean any harm to anybody, and why should I be treated as I am. What I got last night I deserve, but look at my head. That brute, the landlord struck me with a quart pot, and I bled so, that I fainted away."

"Well, but you are going to the hospital now," said Margaret, "and there, at any rate, they will treat you kindly."

"They began to be afraid when they saw me bleed so,

and they have got me a ticket to make it up with me. Oh, you don't know what a set they are. A person had better be dead than be here among them."

"They asked me," said Margaret, "If I knew any one to do your work while you were in the hospital, and I thought of doing it myself."

"Oh, don't think of such a thing, you don't know them. But why should you leave where you are?"

"They have turned me away on account of last night, and they won't give me any more work at the outfitters, so I must do something."

"Do anything rather than come here, although, perhaps, they wouldn't treat a woman of your size, as they do me."

"Now then, young woman," said a gruff voice from below, "here's your carriage is come. You'd better be quick."

"Help me down and come along with me, there's a kind soul, I shall never get there by myself, I'm so weak." Margaret helped the little creature to arrange her clothes, (it took but a short time, as all the wardrobe she possessed she wore when she was dressed,) and then carried her down stairs, like an infant, and put her into the cab. "You're a strong 'un," said the beer-shop keeper, as Margaret got into the cab, "if you want a day's work, come here."

They arrived at the hospital and Kitty was taken in, Margaret remaining with her till her wounds were dressed and she was in bed. Margaret then asked her

if she knew of a very cheap lodging for her, and Kitty gave her the address of a very poor woman, who lived in a court in a back street in Westminster. She could, she said, have half a bed with her, but there was also a mother and daughter, besides the person herself, in the room. Margaret's circumstances were such, that she could not choose, and she determined on finding the woman's lodging as soon as she left the hospital.

As Kitty King will not again appear in these pages, we may state for the satisfaction of the reader, that a brilliant change in her prospects soon afterwards occurred. When she recovered from her wounds, some extra help was wanted in the wards, and Kitty was retained as an assistant nurse for three weeks. Her kind and indefatigable attention gained her the notice of the matron, who being naturally of a most benevolent disposition, determined on assisting the poor creature, not only to gain an honest livelihood, but also to redeem, by works of mercy, her lost character.

Kitty continued for a few weeks longer to do the rough duties of the ward, and a situation was then procured for her as a night nurse in a dispensary in the country, where she remains to this day, giving great satisfaction, not only to the patients, but to the subscribers as well.

Margaret, when she left the building, proceeded at once to the lodging Kitty had proposed to her. She found the locality with considerable difficulty. It would be impossible to imagine a more miserable appearance

than the whole court presented. The houses were three roomed. On the ground floor of the one Margaret called at, resided a costermonger and his family. On the first floor, a bricklayer, his wife and six children; on the top, a poor woman and her daughter, who eked out the little life remaining in them (the daughter was evidently consumptive) with needlework, and the woman, to whom Margaret had been recommended. She readily agreed to let her half her bed, and Margaret was to sleep there that evening. She then went back to the beer shop, and was upon the point of entering with the intention of offering herself to work as their servant by the day, reserving to herself the right of sleeping at her lodging. On arriving there, she heard a violent altercation inside. She soon distinguished the voice of Mary Jenkins, above all others, screaming out a volley of abuse at the master for ill treating Kitty King. Margaret immediately left the spot, and proceeded to the house where she had left the few things she could call her own. On knocking at the door, the policeman opened it, and she earnestly begged of him to allow her goods to remain there till the next day, as she intended selling them, but she had not yet been able to find a purchaser.—“ All right, old girl, he said, I don't want to be hard on you, you can leave them till to-morrow, but take them away then, or you'll get me into trouble.”—Margaret promised she would do so, and then left him.

Evening had now set in, and after partaking of a very modest supper, and an indulgence in the unfortunate

habit she was rapidly acquiring, she sought her lodging, and there passed the night. The next morning she again went to the beer shop and arranged with the master. She was to commence her duties as servant the next day and continue them till Kitty recovered. The master wished her to begin immediately, but she had not yet found a purchaser for her goods. This she accomplished in the course of the day and the next morning she entered on her duties.

The terrible truth must now be told—the attractions of drink, with its potent power of drowning thought, had too many charms for Margaret to withstand. It must not be imagined she was yet a confirmed drunkard, but the sweets of oblivion had been already tasted by her, and each succeeding day it required a greater quantity of spirits to procure them. With this frightful habit, her temper and mind were both changing. Like other species of insanity, that produced by intoxication changes the disposition of the individual, and the effect was becoming daily more apparent in Margaret. While under its influence, language and manners, which had formerly been most repugnant to her, had now lost their repulsive attributes, and even when free from its immediate effects, the amiable placidity of her temper was changing into a sort of savage sullenness. Occasionally her naturally kind and gentle disposition would exhibit itself, but she appeared rather to conceal it than act openly from its dictates.

She was still active at her work, but although she laboured indefatigably, her emoluments were most scanty; she received her food and a shilling a-day. With this she appeared contented, or at any rate made no complaint. Praises she received but seldom, and when they were given she treated them with indifference. Threats she passed by in silence, but a certain savage look about her eye frequently restrained her annoyers, as few men like to be opposed by a powerful and enraged woman, and the master of the house had made too good a bargain with her, to allow her to be irritated beyond endurance.

After she had been some months in her situation, it was noticed that she had left her work for three or four nights consecutively, rather earlier than usual. She had been accustomed to remain after her duties were over, to chat with those she knew, and unfortunately to spend a portion of her day's earnings in drink; but on these nights she hurried away so rapidly as to call down the jokes of the customers on her sudden disappearance.

"I say, old lady," said one man, "who is he? You may as well tell us, for we shall be sure to find it out in time."

"Leave her alone," said another, "you may depend upon it she is going to chapel. Tell us where it is and I'll come and fetch you."

"I think you'd soon leave it again if you did," said Margaret; "I don't think you'd like the place."

“ Oh, you're not going home, then. I thought not; come, tell us where it is.”

“ Not now; I'm in a hurry.” In one respect the speakers were right. Although she went to her house she neither went to her bed nor her room, and had not done so for some nights.

About midnight, a tap was heard at the door of the room on the ground floor, and before it could be answered, a police serjeant followed by a constable entered. The serjeant looked round and appeared surprised at the scene which presented itself. Sitting up on a bed on the ground, in one corner of the room, was a woman in her chemise, with a sickly emaciated infant in her arms. She was gazing intently on another bed opposite to her, the foot of which touched that on which she was seated. On it was a child about four years of age, at that moment expiring. It had been stricken down by small pox, and the marks of the disease were terribly visible upon it. By its side lay another child of some six years old, also suffering from the same malady. Seated on the side of the bed and leaning over the dying child, to administer some remedy or refreshment to the other, was a woman dressed. It was Margaret. She had been occupied in the same room in the same way for several nights. Behind her, with the tears streaming down his face, stood a sickly looking middle aged man in his shirt and trousers, evidently suffering from fever. He was holding up a candle, so as to cast a light upon the bed. It also

dimly shewed the other parts of the room. There was but little furniture in it and that of the most miserable description. In a third corner, behind the door, something was placed upon the floor and covered with part of a ragged sheet, through its rents was plainly visible the dead body of another child. It had expired that morning; having also suffered from the small-pox. In a sort of recess, or rather small out-house, and communicating by a door with the room, were seen a costermonger's barrow and a donkey. The latter was attempting to browse upon some decaying vegetables which had accumulated there—part of the poor fellow's stock in trade when he was seized with sickness.

The police serjeant took a step into the room; the constable standing at the door. The serjeant evidently wished to say something, but the words did not quit his lips. He whispered softly to his follower, who merely raised his eyes, and they then closed the door of the room and left the house. The costermonger and his family hardly seemed to be aware they had entered, at least they were too much interested in their occupation to notice them. Suddenly the breathing of the whole group seemed to cease, and a moment of intense silence prevailed in the room—during that short time a soul had left them. The poor mother first broke it with a burst of overwhelming sorrow. She bent over her infant and leaning her head upon her knees, wept uncontrollably. The father leant his arm on the doorpost of the recess, and placing his face upon it, gave

way to a grief scarcely less bitter than his wife's;—his right hand, holding the candle, had fallen helplessly by his side. After closing its eyes reverentially, Margaret took the still warm pestiferous corpse from the bed of its sick brother, laid it by the side of his dead sister in the other corner of the room, and covered it with a portion of the same ragged shroud. She then rose, and patting the still weeping father on the shoulder, took the candle from his hand and placed it on the table, then seating herself on the bed of the poor mother, she attempted to take the baby from her. The action recalled the poor creature's attention for the moment. She turned half-round and flinging her arms round her friend's neck gave full sway to her sorrow. Her grief brought her husband to her side.

“Come, come, old girl, don't go on so; its all over now. Its no good crying, we can't get 'em back again, you know. Better luck with these others, I say, they'll do well enough, you may be sure of that;” and he looked down upon the bed of the sick child terribly disfigured by the disease. He gazed at it silently for a moment, but insensibly turning further round, he saw the others, side by side, in the opposite corner of the room; he then continued, his eyes filling with tears and his lower lip quivering—“they're perhaps best off after all.”

The mother's grief continued and the father again attempted to console her. Words and caresses were alike useless; other consolation was required in a situa-

tion so awful, and they sought it. They appealed in their sorrow to their God. To that Deity whose power over their griefs was omnipotent, and who with ready ear listened to their supplications. Whose aid in common with numbers of their neighbours, they had been taught to invoke in childhood, and whose divinity they worshipped in manhood; their one only God—Gin!

There, under the shadow of that cathedral so richly endowed for the purposes of Christianity. There, in the close vicinity of the houses of legislature, whose members have for centuries professed the most intense interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor. There, on the very ground bequeathed by the piety of former ages for the comfort and relief of the afflicted; by the very walls of the palace of a Sovereign whose love and sympathy for the unfortunate is pure and unfeigned; the father brought forth the only solace that in sorrow he had ever been taught to rely on. With a black bottle in one hand (the contribution of some brethren of his craft, in their opinion appropriate to the occasion) and a wine glass with a broken stem in the other, he advanced towards his wife's bed.

"Come, old woman," said he holding up the bottle, "come take a drop, it will cheer you up." So saying, he poured out a glass, and handed it to her, in a moment it was swallowed to be changed into poison for the infant. He then gave another to Margaret. "You're a good old soul," said he, "I wish I could make a lady on yer," making a ghastly attempt at a joke. Margaret

swallowed the gin and gave him back the glass. He then filled one for himself, and having drank it off, he placed the bottle and glass on the floor.

“ Now don't cry any more, it won't do no good ;—your crying won't call 'em back you know. You've done your duty to them young uns like a mother,—like a reg'lur mother, I will say that, but it can't be helped now, don't you see. If they are gone, the others are here, and they'll do well enough now that — ” A groan from the other bed terminated the sentence. Margaret rose and went to the sufferer ; the mother leant her head on her husband's shoulder who had sat down beside her, and sobbed bitterly. Margaret, when she returned, found the gin bottle and glass again in his hands. He filled the glass, and gave each her portion, and then took one himself. The mother ceased weeping, and wiped her eyes. The infant cried faintly, and she attempted to give it the breast. In a moment, it withdrew its lips, and after a low languid short cry, it remained quiet, but not asleep. The small effort it had made, had exhausted its energies, and it lay there, its eyes wide open, passively still. The father again spoke—he argued according to the tenets of his creed. His language, if coarse, was forcible, and to the point. “ There was no use in crying when things was all over. What good could it do? What's the use of thinking about it? The poor things was dead, and they would be some day, and then there'd be an end. If they was gone, why there'd be better luck for those as stopped.” (Here, he looked

timidly at the other bed.) “It was much easier to work for two than for four—she knew that. There, that’s right, bear up like that, and all will go on well. A fellow can’t always be down, he’s sure to have a start some time or another, and he believed it was his turn now.” Here an appeal to the bottle strengthened him in the opinion. “They should do very well now. As soon as he was a little stronger, he should begin again. He knew a capital beat, and no one was on it. Wouldn’t she have a drop more, it would do her good, and strengthen her up.” The woman smiled faintly, and the man filled the glass. As soon as his wife had swallowed it, he poured out another for Margaret, who had been sitting on the side of the bed, her head drooping, and her arms folded. She, perhaps, had been somewhat bewildered by the man’s philosophy, but she made no remark. She took the glass from his hand, and having swallowed its contents, she resumed her position. When the husband was raising his portion to his lips, another groan was heard from the sick child’s bed. Before he looked towards it, he drank the gin, and then rose from his seat. Neither the mother nor Margaret paid the cry any attention. The man sat down by the poor child, poured out some spirit into the wine glass, and was in the act of placing it to its lips, when Margaret turned her head partially round.

“What are you doing,” she asked.

“Giving it a drop, it will do it good.”

“You had better not, perhaps it will hurt it.”

“Nonsense, it does us good, and it will do him good likewise.”

“I’m sure the doctor won’t like it.”

“The doctor be d—d, what does he care about it, he’s not been here for the last two days. Besides what can a boy like that know about it; why, I don’t believe he’s more than sixteen years old.” So saying, he put the glass to the child’s lips, and attempted to pour the fluid down its throat, but it caught its breath, and brought on a violent fit of coughing. Margaret rose and took the father’s place, then, after wiping the child’s face as tenderly as possible, she resumed her seat on the other bed, as soon as the sick boy was quiet. The costermonger again began to talk, Margaret placed herself in the position she was in before she had been disturbed, and remained in it till the dawn told her it was time to go to her labour.

The next morning the police sergeant made his report to his superior of the scene he had witnessed the previous evening, and the latter called the attention of the inspector of nuisances to the subject. That officer found, after a very short enquiry, that the affair was beyond his capabilities, and brought it under the notice of the medical officer of health. This gentleman, on receiving the information, at once proceeded to the spot, and there determined immediately to bring the state of the whole locality under the notice of the Vestry. That latter, after a very short deliberation, admitted the whole court was a nuisance, which the strong arm of the law ought

to rectify. On enquiry, they found that the property would be wanted for the improvements in the neighbourhood of Victoria Street. The commissioners, actuated by a sense of religion and the welfare of humanity, having already purchased the houses, readily agreed to pull them down without further delay. The miserable tenants received their notice to quit, and in a few weeks, not a brick remained upon another in the whole locality. The authorities complimented themselves on the prompt manner they had acted for the public good, and the guardians of the poor looked with complacency on a remedy which relieved them from the expense of so many of the indigent. The inhabitants were allowed to go where they pleased, not a roof, not a shelter of any kind having been provided for them. They had been compelled, in great measure, to live in that horrible manner, where they were to go to, was a matter of moment, only to the poor creatures themselves. A respectable neighbourhood had been relieved from their presence, the value of property had increased in proportion, the whole transaction had received the approval of the Minister of Public Works, and the Poor Law Board, as well as the Benediction of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Another neighbourhood, it is true, might be injured by the ejection, but that of course was no subject for the consideration of those who benefitted by their removal. Others had merely to adopt similar measures of improvement, and the nuisance might be got rid of with equal facility. It was im-

possible to reform such degraded wretches. Wherever they went they could easily be got rid of, if the proper steps were resorted to for their removal, and the local authorities had sufficient energy and respect for decency and morality to adopt them.

CHAPTER XII.

IN consequence of the house Margaret lived in, having been destroyed for the Westminster improvements, she was obliged to seek for another lodging. The miserable closet allotted as the sleeping place of Kitty King at the beer shop, was still vacant, if she choose to accept it, but a womanly sort of repugnance still existed in her mind to sleeping in such a place, scarcely divided, by some coarse open boarding, from the bed rooms of some of the male lodgers. She, however, had no alternative. A situation more respectable than the one she had left, would scarcely have received her, all of the same description were already too full. Unfortunately it must also be admitted, that both the character and appearance of Margaret was against her reception into any respectable house. When in any way excited by drink, and that was not unfrequently the case, she was quarrelsome in the extreme, and as she possessed great personal strength, and occasionally used it, her conduct frequently brought her into collision with the police. Her unfortunate imprisonment for robbery was

now generally known, and she was therefore naturally regarded with suspicion by all who knew her.

It must not be supposed that the ignominy and injustice she experienced, alone occasioned her newly acquired habit of drinking; although perhaps unable to reason on the subject, she felt, when insulted or ill-treated, that she was expiating in the eyes of the world, the disgraceful conduct of her son, and she would have supported her fall with patience, but the sad disappointment she had experienced at his continued silence, and that silence occasioned by a cause, now, alas, hardly doubtful, had formed a vacuum in her mind so terrible, a misery so cruel, that nothing but the oblivion produced by the gin bottle could allay.

Another inducement to drink arose, in the first instance, from her intense repugnance to the scenes she witnessed at the house she was employed in, and in which she was too frequently obliged, directly or indirectly, to be an actress. The beer shop was frequented by perhaps the worst class of customers to be found in that degraded locality. The thief, the low street walker, the dog stealer, and the coiner, made it their habitual Exchange, and frequently robberies were planned, or their produce disposed of in a filthy back parlour behind the bar. The landlord himself was a returned convict, the most respectable phase in whose existence had been while, a dishonest member of the prize ring. It was Margaret's lot to reside in this house, nor was she entirely disconnected with its inmates till her death.

It would be too painful a task to follow her through the different degrees of degradation. It will suffice to give two or three episodes in it, as they will not only explain more fully some of the remarks made in the first chapter of the work, but show as well, the lingering innate sentiment of good remaining in her mind, although exhibiting itself so mixed with evil as almost to neutralize its original excellence. One fact, however, should also be recorded to her credit—that while in this den of infamy, while associating with the lowest and most worthless, not one dishonest act did she ever commit. Brutality, terror, cruelty, and injustice might have kept her silent to the crimes of others, and that by the rigid moralist, may be considered tantamount to a theft in point of infamy, but the very act of drowning her abhorrence in gin, was a proof that integrity was still in her, and it would be cruel to criticise too severely the little credit her position left her.

The first circumstance will be one of her two attempts at suicide. She one evening heard, in the private room of the beer shop, a robbery planned, which was to be perpetrated in a house in Eaton Square. She found that one of the gang, a showy looking young man, had contrived to entrap the affections of an under housemaid in the establishment. He had promised her marriage, and as an event of the kind is always regarded with sympathy by the other female servants, they assisted the girl in receiving occasionally his visits at the house, without the know-

ledge of the family, and thus he had become acquainted with the rules of the establishment and the habits of the inmates, as well as the position of their sleeping apartments. It had originally been his intention to have made the girl simply his victim, and then his accomplice, but her indignant manner when she received his first proposition, shewed him it would be useless to attempt the second. He had described himself as a law clerk, that his father had been a solicitor, and, in fact, had given such a description of himself, as led his sweetheart to believe that she was on the point of concluding a very advantageous match, and this caused her to be regarded with both admiration and envy by her fellow servants. She had already given warning to leave and the banns had already been once put up.

Margaret, as soon as she was acquainted with the whole of the circumstances, determined on not only preventing the robbery but on saving the girl's credit as well. She went one evening to the house and with some little difficulty had an interview with her. It was not an easy matter to persuade the poor girl that her lover was a thief, but she promised to call at the beer shop and judge for herself. Margaret also told her his real name, and advised her if she was not fully convinced after she had seen him, to satisfy herself more completely by enquiry at the police station. The girl did as she was advised, and the results were, that not only was the robbery prevented, but the acquaintance of the girl with the scoundrel discontinued

Enquiries, however, were made by the gang and Margaret's interference in the affair was shewn. A violent dispute arose in consequence, which ended by Margaret, who was half intoxicated at the time, conceiving the insane notion of putting an end to her existence. With that intent she went to the river-side, near the bridge, and precipitated herself into the water. She was saved with considerable difficulty and taken to the hospital in a state of insensibility. With some difficulty animation was restored and she was sent to the police station, charged with attempting self-destruction. His worship lectured her severely on the subject and finding that her character was of a very indifferent description, remanded her for a week. At the end of that time she was liberated. She went again to the beer shop alarmed lest any other person had obtained her situation. Her fear was uncalled for; no one had applied for it and she was again installed in her occupation.

One night, in the taproom of a public house near the beer shop, a group of individuals was collected round the front of the bar. They appeared to be all of the lowest inhabitants of Westminster, both men and women—but the males were the more numerous. They were evidently highly amused and frequent bursts of laughter rose from among them. The object of their mirth was a wretchedly dressed old woman, more than three parts intoxicated. She was trying, by the most persuasive means in her power, to induce the barman to give her some gin as she had spent all the money she

had. Her attempts to coax him, were painfully absurd. She first promised to make him a present for himself, as well as to pay for the spirits, as soon as she obtained any money, and the sums she offered were so preposterous for the quantity she required, as to cause much hilarity. Finding her promises of payment useless, she commenced praising him ; she told him how much he was admired by all the ladies of her acquaintance. This brought forth a complete roar of laughter, in which the poor creature herself joined insanelly. Then finding her audience in such good humour, she endeavoured to persuade several, alternately, to lend her the money she required.

“No thank you, old girl, I’m afraid you’ve a short memory.”

“Do you think I’d deceive you my dear, only try me this once, do now.”

“Sing us a song,” said another, “and you’ll be sure to get it then. Here’s a gentleman with his hand in his pocket ready to give you sixpence as soon as you have finished.”

“Lend me the sixpence now, and I’ll sing you the song to-morrow. I haven’t any strength left.”

“No thank you, I never pay before hand, its a bad habit, you must sing first.” The wretched creature commenced a song, but stopped short, she could not remember the words. “Oh,” said the fellow, “if you call that singing, I don’t. If you can’t give us any-

thing better than that, you'd better shut up." The woman turned round to the barman again.

"Come now, you're such a nice young man, I know you'll give me a drop."

"It won't do old lady."

"I'm sure I'll do anything you want me, if you will, I'll take care of your house for you when you're married, and make every thing comfortable and respectable for you; do now dear." A laugh.

"No go."

"Come Bill," said one of the bye-standers, "give her a drop. I'm sure she'll be more like a mother to you when you're married, than anything else, Don't be ill-natured."

"I'd better be without a mother," said the man in an under voice, and turning round to the last speaker, "than have such a one as that." Jeers had no effect on her, insults passed unfelt, contempt she was accustomed to, and did not mind it, cruelty and brutality she could put up with, with indifference, but the sentence uttered by the barman struck home. The insane laugh left her face. In a moment she was serious, and drew herself up to her full height. Her eye enlarged, and her lips were closed with spasmodic force. She continued thus, without breathing for nearly a minute. Suddenly, the rigid attitude she had assumed disappeared. With the agility of a tigress, and with almost her strength, she sprang towards the bar,

and seizing a knife which lay on it, she made, before they could arrest her hand, a desperate stab at the man's throat. It struck him above the shoulder, making a long incision. In a moment he was covered with blood.

She turned round on the spectators, the bloody knife still in her hand. Her eyes glared on them so fiercely, none had the courage to seize her. She again stood erect, and assumed her rigidity of position. In a few moments, a quivering of the under lip took place, her eyes filled with tears, and the muscles of her throat contracted. A deep sob followed, and she burst into a flood of tears; before the police arrived, she was in a violent fit of hysterics. She was carried to the station, and the man to the hospital. His wound, fortunately, was not of a dangerous character, all the important vessels had escaped the blow, he was, however, unable to leave the hospital for some days. When he did so, he good naturedly refused to appear against the woman, who, after a severe admonition from the magistrate, was discharged.

One extract from the newspaper police reports, and we close the catalogue of her crimes.

“Margaret White, a worthless drunken virago, well known to the police, was brought before the sitting magistrate at this court, charged with a cruel and unprovoked assault upon Mary Thompson, one of the class of unfortunates.

“The complainant stated, that on the previous evening, she was in conversation with a young man of her acquaintance,

when the prisoner, who was only known to her by sight, passed by them. The prisoner, who appeared to be intoxicated, took no notice of them at first, but having passed them, stopped and appeared to be watching them. As the complainant had never spoken to her, or ever given her any offence, this conduct excited no suspicion, and she saw her approach without any misgiving. As soon as the prisoner got within reach, she commenced a desperate assault on her, making use, at the same time, of the most fearful threats. She tore her bonnet and shawl to tatters, and the poor girl's face and arms exhibited ample proofs of the brutal character of the assault. The magistrate, after deliberating whether he ought not to send the case to the sessions, determined on treating it summarily, but, at the same time, to give such a punishment as would serve the prisoner as a lesson for the future. She was sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour. When the prisoner, who appeared perfectly indifferent to the whole proceeding, left the dock, she carelessly told the magistrate it was a pity he had not made it six while he was about it."

On leaving the house of correction, Margaret immediately proceeded to the beer shop, with the intention of resuming her duties. On arriving there, she found the shutters closed, and the place apparently entirely deserted. She enquired of one of the customers who happened to be passing, the cause, and she was informed that a robbery of jewellery to a considerable amount had lately been committed in a dwelling house. A large reward had been offered for the discovery of the perpetrators, and that, having stimulated the energies of the police, not only were the thieves arrested, but a large quantity of the stolen property discovered. The receiver

had been the keeper of the beer shop, and the booty was found concealed on the premises. The fellow had been arrested, and his lodgers, few of whom could support the penetrating glances of the police, decamped with great alacrity. The place was immediately closed, and as the trial had not yet come on, it was impossible to say when it would again be opened.

This news came like a thunderbolt on the poor woman. Wretched as the employment was, it yet afforded her the means of existence, and she valued it accordingly. It was now, however, lost to her, and she next went to the house of an acquaintance to ask of her shelter, till she could find some occupation. The woman, at whose house she called, received her unhesitatingly. She was of the lowest order of the lowest, yet, as usual, pity still existed in her breast, and she felt for one whose position was, perhaps, more miserable than her own. She took her to her room, warmed her, and did not send her on her way. She shared her bed with her, and soothed her misery to the best in her power. She enquired of all she knew for some employment for her guest. She urged on her degraded acquaintances, the helpless condition and the fading strength of Margaret as a reason to engage her the more readily, they easily admitted the force of the argument, but unfortunately they were as poor as the applicant for employment herself. It was singular to note their anxiety to assist the unfortunate woman, and that anxiety arising solely from the pity they felt for her misfortunes,

a sentiment which appears never to be entirely absent in the heart of a woman, however lost to all sense of propriety or decency in her own person. Their recommendations could avail but little, and after exerting themselves in their friend's behalf, they, in turn, offered Margaret their hospitality. Unfortunately that hospitality was carried too far, and the pernicious habit of drinking re-commenced. Her friends supplied her but too readily, and their offers were but too willingly accepted.

A few weeks after her imprisonment for the assault had terminated, an elderly miserably clad old woman was seen reeling about a street on the Surrey side of the water. She was in a state of complete intoxication, and could with difficulty keep her legs. A crowd of boys had gathered round her. They were trying to irritate her with their remarks and jeers, and every time she attempted to run after them, a noisy laugh was the result. Occasionally, she would absurdly join in it for a moment, and then continue on her way. Her tormentors followed, and again tried to attract her attention, some more forward than the rest, pulling her dress, or standing before her to obstruct her path. She pushed them aside, and attempted hurriedly to escape from them. Presently one of them cried out to her. "Take care here's a policeman coming, you'd better get out of the way." At first she made some remark about not caring for the police, but on looking before her, she saw one really approaching. The man was only a few paces in front

of her, and was evidently advancing towards her. As soon as she appeared to comprehend his motive, she suddenly turned from the pathway, and attempted to cross the road. At that moment, a gentleman's carriage was driving rapidly along. Before the coachman could pull up his horses, the pole struck the unfortunate woman; she fell on the ground, and the wheels passed over her body. A crowd immediately collected, which opened to allow two men to pass out. They carried between them, what appeared to be a muddy bundle of female clothing. The policeman accompanied them to clear a passage, and they proceeded to the nearest hospital. The patient was undressed and placed in bed, and after the surgeon's visit, left alone, with strict injunctions to the sister of the ward to watch her carefully. After some hours, partial consciousness returned. She appeared indifferent to her position, indeed, she hardly seemed to be aware of it. The only anxiety or thought she seemed to form, was for her stays. Had it not been for the melancholy accident she was suffering from, her strong wish to possess them would have appeared absurd, so worn and tattered were they. To quiet her, they were given to her, and she placed them carefully under her pillow. She then appeared more contented, or at least remained perfectly tranquil. At length, the sister remarked that her feet and hands were cold. The usual appliances to restore circulation were resorted to, but she gradually sank, and twenty-four hours after having entered the hospital, her self imposed penance had ter-

minated; she had expiated to the world in her own person, the crime of her child; her earthly purgatory was over, and poor Margaret was at rest with her son and husband.

On removing the body from the bed, considerable curiosity was expressed by the nurses and patients, as to the reason for her anxiety about her stays. It was generally believed she had secreted money in them, it having occasionally happened, that even mendicants dying in those public infirmaries, have had money concealed in their dress. On searching the stays no coin was to be found, but something which appeared to the touch like paper, had carefully been sewn up in them. They were cut open and a letter was extracted. It was so much discolored that the address was hardly legible on the envelope. With some little difficulty it was made out. It had been directed to Mrs. Margaret White, care of the Rev. Mr. S—— University Club, London. With some surprise they perceived the name of the clergyman was the same as that of the Chaplain of the hospital, and it was placed in his hands without being opened. To his great astonishment he immediately perceived it was the same he had received, when Margaret's term of imprisonment had expired, and which he had given to her on her liberation. When he took the letter from the envelope it presented a singular appearance. From having been continually folded and unfolded, it would hardly hold together; it was greatly discoloured, and many parts were almost illegible. That letter had been for more than three years the only real

solace to her grief, the poor creature had received. Drink to her had been simply a narcotic; it had hidden the world from her while under its influence, and for that purpose only had she used it. That letter evidently had been, in sorrow, in pain, in fatigue and sickness, under insult or ill-treatment, her comfort and support, and good use had she made of it.

The Chaplain, with considerable difficulty, copied it. It was as follows:—

“Boston, U. S. A.,

“17th Nov., 185

“My own dear Mother,

“I trust this letter will reach you on the day you obtain your liberty. By the kindness of the Rev. Mr. S——, you have, from time to time, received the particulars of my adventures in America. My health, as you will have heard, has for some time past been very indifferent, but my employers have entrusted me with a commission to the Southern States, where I hope it will be completely re-established, so that nothing may mar the joy of our meeting in the spring. I have already forwarded to England a sum sufficient to cover the whole of my liabilities, and a small surplus is in the hands of our kind friend for your immediate use. I trust shortly to send you enough to pay for your passage and outfit. The letter, advising you of it, will also contain instructions for you in what manner you should proceed, and in what ship you should take your berth.

“Up to the present time, I thought it better not to address my letters directly to you, as I knew they would be opened by the prison authorities, and I must have worded them so as to have kept up the delusion that you were guilty of the crime for which you were suffering the punishment. More than once I have

attempted it, but always found it an impossibility. When I read the few lines I might have written, they appeared to me so like blasphemy, that I felt I was almost mocking a sacred subject in the attempt. My reputation, my liberty, my worldly welfare, and perhaps my soul, have been saved by you, and next to my Creator and Redeemer you appear to me Holy. Dear mother, it would be impossible for me to describe the affection and respect I hold you in. It is near akin to that sentiment, a mortal might feel, could his guardian angel stand visibly in his presence.

“Dear mother, from the moment I last saw you, till the present time, your presence has never left me. In anxiety, in success, in travel, in health and in sickness, you have always been with me. That last sad look you gave me has followed me as the last glance of a Christian martyr, which told his murderer he loved and pardoned him; and that last pressure of your hand, when we parted, comes often to my aid, and proves you love me still. The power, which heaven in its mercy, has given me, of feeling that pressure, is the greatest happiness I now possess. It has grown from the doubtful half dreamy sensation of a vision, to the distinct positive warmth of a loving friend.

“It was nearly a week after the ship had left England, that I was seated on the deck one calm moonlight night, enjoying the quiet which reigned around me. I was soon lost in my reflections, and my thoughts were centered on you. I painted to myself the principle events of my life, and my unworthy behaviour to one so good. When the scene of our last meeting was before me, its recollections were so painful that it brought tears into my eyes, I thought how low, how cowardly my behaviour must have appeared to you, and how great must have been the love that could excuse it. At last I exclaimed, half aloud. ‘She shall never weep for me again, I will never commit another dishonourable action.’ At that moment, I ex-

perienced palpably a sensation which had already more than once partially come over me. My hand was pressed by both of yours as clearly as at that moment when we were obliged to separate. I rose from my seat and looked around me; so certain was the feeling, that I thought I must have slept, and that one of my fellow passengers had awakened me. No one was there. Mother, you alone were near me.

“Frequently since, I have experienced the same feeling, but it will not come at my bidding. When it does, my happiness is perfect. When my first earnings were forwarded to England, the same night it expressed your satisfaction of the action, but on one occasion it was so singularly real, that it would almost have terrified me, had not my happiness at your approval, conquered fear. When the poor woman, by whom I was employed, was left a widow, her son came home to superintend the business. I had had the control of it for some time, and it had flourished considerably during that period. The widow’s son was neither industrious nor civil, and the profits diminished rapidly. The principal wholesale firm, with whom we dealt, made me an offer—If I would start on my own account in the same street, they would give me credit to any extent, so sure were they of my success. At first sight, the offer appeared most tempting. I thought how soon I should be able to maintain you in comfort and respectability, and make, by my affection and attention, some compensation to you for the wrongs you have suffered. But the idea came before me, that my employer, like yourself, was a widow, and that her certain ruin would follow if I accepted the offer. ‘No,’ I replied, ‘thankful as I am for your proposition, I cannot accept it. It would be unjust on my part to injure one, who treated me with so much kindness, when a stranger and in distress.’ At that instant the sensation was so perfect, the pressure so warm and gentle, that it appeared impossible not to be real. It did

not as usual die away, but remained till sleep brought you before me, and so happy was I in my dream, that I wept when the day destroyed it.

“You have heard that I had a serious illness when I arrived in Boston, brought on by exposure to the cold. During the attack, and at the time when almost certain death seemed near me, my greatest happiness was in that sensation of the hand. During the long days, and longer nights, I have placed it on the bed before me, and watched for its coming as the sick waited for the angel to disturb the waters. It was then my frequent companion, my greatest blessing and consolation. It was the pardon oft repeated of one I had cruelly injured. It was the expression of love, of her whose love could not be surpassed; it taught me, how boundless must be that of the Creator, when so much could be given to the creature—how great His mercy to the repentant sinner. May it always continue with me till we meet, but should it please Heaven to forbid the re-establishment of my health, my earnest prayer to my God will be, that the last sensation life can understand, will be to feel my hand in yours. And now, dear Mother, good bye. I shall count the hours till we meet.”

GEORGE MEADOWS.

FINIS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,
In boards, 200 pp., price 1s. 6d.
DIVES AND LAZARUS.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“It is such a volume as might be judiciously recommended to the attention of the present Lord Mayor, and of others who have not the most vivid apprehensions of the industrial struggles of the poor to obtain the means of livelihood. The writer fills his pages with delineations of London life among the lower classes that are by no means exaggerated.”—*The Morning Star*.

* * * * * “The illustrative stories he has woven together have an unmistakeable air of general truthfulness, though perchance coloured a little too vividly, and will be read with unflagging interest. The style throughout is nervous and graphic, for it is evidently from the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. Unhappily we have room for only one extract, and that we take at random. The narrator is supposed to have been suddenly called in to attend a poor woman in childbirth.”—*The Press*.

“There is a large amount of painful attraction—of an interest that would become almost morbid, if that which excites our sympathy were less real than it is—attached to this little book. We are bound to admit that its descriptions are truthful, that the author does not fall foul of the absurd and inhuman working of the present Poor law without ample reason for his statements, while the facts he records seem to us easy of verification.”—*The Dispatch*.

“Our author, whoever he may be, writes sensibly and well, as long as he keeps to mere description: but when, in contemplating the lamentable condition of the hopeless poor, amongst whom it has been his choice or his necessity to move, he indulges in strictures upon the wealthy orders, who are the employers of labour, and thereby to some extent the relievers of distress, he defeats the object he may have in view—the cultivation of active charitable sympathy.”—*The Critic*.

“This small volume comprises scenes of deeper interest and pathos, of more tragical emotion, and of more startling incident than nine-tenths of the novels published. Those who only feel interest about Lord Charleses and Lady Charlottes need not look into it. But those who love to trace human nature in all its phases and developements—those who own their kindred even with the lowest specimens of humanity, and who can recognize worth in the most squalid attire, will read it from the first page

to the last with the deepest interest. Charles Dickens would know how to value it."—*Bath Express*.

"A cynical bitterness runs through his recitals, but it is impossible not to join with him in the laudable desire to draw public attention to the condition of the unobtrusive poor in London, whose trials and sorrows are often appalling, and leave a blot on our social system."—*Morning Post*.

"There is not a story related which might not have happened exactly as it is related; and what a picture of the sufferings of the poor are here brought to light!—the privations which the very poor suffer; the brutality and cruelty of one class—the angelic patience and Christlike compassion of another. We should not envy the heart of any man who could read twenty pages of this unpretending little volume with dry eyes. The writer, whoever he may be, is evidently well acquainted with the condition of the poor and working classes; and we regret to learn his opinion that, in spite of all that is done for the amelioration of the condition of the poor, they are, as a class, steadily deteriorating—sinking every year into a condition of more helpless misery."—*Morning Herald*.

"The plan of 'Dives and Lazarus' may be told in a few words. The 'obscure medical man' is a military surgeon, who quarrels, or rather is quarrelled with by the colonel of his regiment, and quits the service. Then, after a variety of adventures, narrated in the introductory chapter, he returns to England, and, calling upon an old fellow student, named Morton, finds that he is acting as medical officer 'in a low neighbourhood,' as to the locality of which we can only say that it is on the south side of the water. Suddenly Morton falls ill, and the 'obscure medical man' offers to take his place for eight or ten days, during which period he meets with the adventures now recorded. The book, then, is a sort of a Decameron of poverty, suffering, and heroism in low life. The account of each visit is a tale, or a portion of a tale; and though some of them exhibit an amount of skill on the part of the narrator which suggests not relation merely, but invention—there is such a life-like air about all of them that we feel sure they are transcripts of actual occurrences. But after all, what does it matter whether the scenes in 'Dives and Lazarus' be real or fictitious, when it is quite certain that they are possible, and that similar scenes occur every day? The great merit of the author is, that he presents them to us truthfully and vividly."—*Illustrated Times*.

"There is much interest in some of the sketches, which are written with ability and straightforwardness, and the work is likely to be of effectual service, by bringing forcibly before the rich and thoughtless the sufferings of their poorer fellow-countrymen."—*The Sun*.

* * * * * “ We trust this book may do something towards raising a kindlier feeling between the different classes ; but it would have been more likely to produce this desirable end, if the writer had been rather less carried away by his indignation at oppressors real or imaginary, and had omitted the clap-trap of his ill-chosen title page.”—*Economist*.

* * * * * “ Whether or not these ‘ adventures ’ are authentic experiences we are not prepared to pronounce. Many an unprofessional man might have written them. But they contain quite enough of verisimilitude to make them full of poignant and most painful interest. Their directness and simplicity constrain the reader’s attention, and their stern reality is more harrowing than the most elaborate inventions of romance. It is well for us in a time of political tranquility and undisturbed social order to be reminded of the way of life of thousands of our fellow creatures, whose existence is too easily forgotten until poverty is maddened into crime. Yet it is encouraging and consoling to find that among the poorest of the poor the better instincts of human nature are continually active. The ‘ medical man ’ gives the most touching instances of charity, the most delicate and pathetic among these outcasts of civilisation. We are tempted to make many extracts from these pages, but we cannot find space for them unabridged.”—*The Literary Gazette*.

“ The only regret that we can at all call to mind since this unpretending work of value came before us, is that from the form in which it has challenged the sympathy it so widely deserves, its uncommon merits may be overlooked.

* * * * *

“ We commend this sterling work the more uncomprisingly, because in our vocation of delivering judgment we never met with any book that spoke so calmly, or with such freshness from the heart.”—*Constitutional Press*.

“ We should like a more extended work from the same pen—a work that would show the world what ‘ London labour and London poor ’ really are—a work that has yet to be truthfully written.”—*The Leader*.

“ This book is sure to have a large circulation, and we should sincerely rejoice if our recommendation could induce its readers to dwell long and anxiously on the lessons it inculcates. Its literary merits are so considerable, the scenes it describes are painted with so much fidelity and force, it contains so many passages of deep pathos, and so many anecdotes of touching interest, that it is sure to attract much notice.

* * * * *

“ There is a history, too long to extract, from page 83 to 91, of a poor widow and her two children, one idiotic and the other

deaf and dumb, which for pathos and beauty is equal to anything we have read.

“Chapter IX. is also a remarkable evidence of the author’s power. It is a tragedy, of which the heading gives the leading feature—‘A Case of *Delirium Tremens*.’ This chapter, in its 25 pages, tells a tale, the plot of which would make the fortune of many a novel writer.”—*The Tablet*.

“No attempt has been made in this volume to clothe in an attractive literary garb its sorrowful pictures of human life by the charm of an elaborate word-painting; but it is well and vigorously written, nevertheless, with a plain downright earnestness about it, suited alike to its subject and the practical objects at which it aims. It is an unadorned record of the scenes with which a medical man practising in a poor neighbourhood must come into daily contact.”—*The Record*.

“This is a work which, notwithstanding its unpretending title and appearance, contains matter which is well worth studying. The instances which it brings forward are most touching, and had we time and space to extract some of them, would be a useful lesson for those who, at this festive season, are in the enjoyment of every comfort and luxury almost within a stone’s throw of the miseries which he so forcibly describes.”—*The English Churchman*.

“It is alternately instructive, amusing, and pathetic. The man who reads the first chapter will not fail to read the last; and when he closes, he will wish that the book had been longer.”—*The British Standard*.

“There is a simplicity, a verisimilitude, a Defoe-like accuracy of detail, about the chapters of the ‘obscure medical man’ which prove them to be genuine photographs struck on the instant from the living object by the warm, bright sunlight of a quick intelligence, and a nervously active benevolence, and which therefore give them a value to the thoughtful mind which could never be attained by the most ingeniously constructed or artificially developed work of fiction.”—*Daily News*.

“Je recommande a tous ceux qui veulent approfondir cette plaie l’ouvrage intitulé : ‘Dives et Lazarus ou Aventures d’un médecin obscur dans un quartier pauvre.’ Londres, 1858. On y reconnaîtra, au milieu de faits aussi intéressants que douloureux, trois côtés lumineux : 1^o la moralité et la charité *relatives* qui regnent dans les rapports de ces pauvres déshérités les uns avec les autres ; 2^o la supériorité morale, reconnue par un protestant anglais, des indigents irlandais et catholiques ; 3^o la noble et salutaire hardiesse d’une publicité qui descend, le flambeau à la main, dans les abîmes de la misère pour révéler le mal et provoquer le remède.”—*The Count de Montalembert’s Pamphlett*.

1000

1000

1000



