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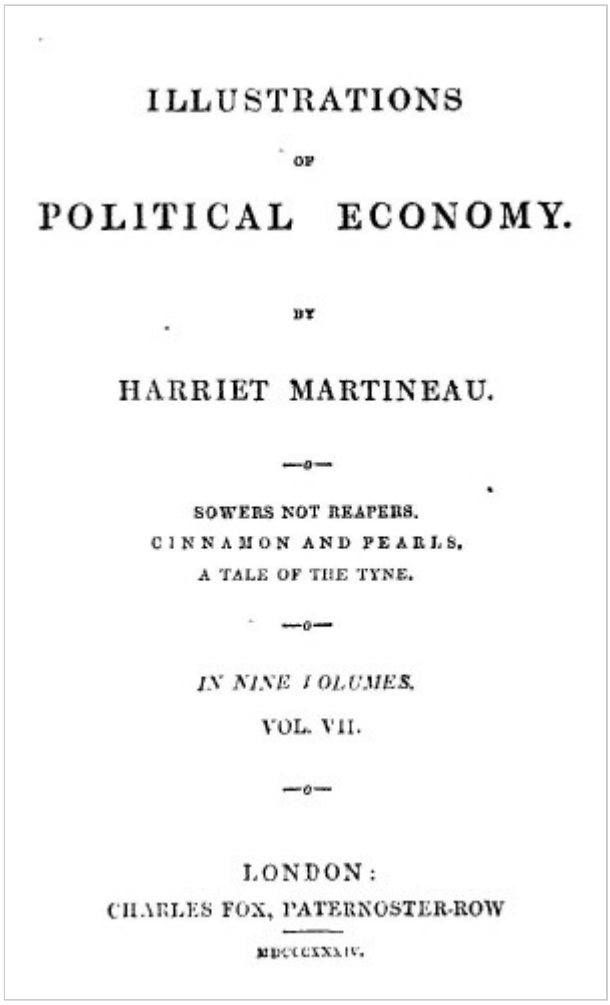

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

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SOWERS NOT REAPERS.
CINNAMON AND PEARLS.
A TALE OF THE TYNE.

—o—

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

—o—

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PREFACE.

From the moment of beginning my work, one of my most anxious endeavours has been to keep myself out of the sight of my readers;—not from any affectation of reserve, but because, in this case, there is no necessary connexion between the author of the work and the matter discussed in it. Occasions have arisen, however, to induce me to speak in the first person, in a preface; and I now do so again on account of certain questions which have been publicly as well as privately treated, respecting the proper direction of the popular influence which is attributed to me, and which it would be equally weak and hypocritical in me to disclaim.

What I wish to explain is,—briefly,—that I take my stand upon Science. Whether the truths attempted to be illustrated by me on this ground be Tory, Whig, or Radical, is a question to be determined, if they so please, by Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, and not (at least at present) by me. It comes within the scope of my object to illustrate certain principles of Social Morals, as well as of Political Economy; but it is altogether foreign to my purpose to determine by what political party those principles are the most satisfactorily recognized. I may have,—I have,—a decided opinion on this point; but, as it has nothing to do with my work, I must protest against all attempts on the part of those who speak of me as an author to render me distrusted by any one political party, or to identify me with any other.

All have their mission. It is the mission of some to lead or support a party;—a mission as honourable as it is necessary. It is the mission of others to ascertain or to teach truth which bears no relation to party; and to fulfil it requires the free use of materials and facilities afforded by any in whose possession they may happen to be. This last is my office,—imposed on me by the very act of accepting my first services. Its discharge requires perfect liberty of action and of speech;— freedom alike from anger at the vituperation and ridicule of one party,—from distrust of the courtesies of a second,—and from subservience to the dictation of a third. Such freedom I enjoy, and am resolved to maintain. The sciences on which I touch, whether in the one series or the other on which I am occupied, bear no relation to party. The People, for whom I write, are of no party,—I, therefore, as a writer, am of no party. To what party I might be proved to belong by inference from the truths I illustrate, I leave to be decided by those who may think it worth their while.

If this explanation should expose me to the charge of self-importance, let it in justice be remembered that it was not I who originated the question respecting the proper direction of my influence, or invited any interference therein. No such direction is attempted by myself. As I think, so I speak; leaving what I say to find its way to the hearts and minds which have a congeniality with my own. Whenever I begin to modify the expression of what I think from a regard to one class of minds rather than another, I shall probably be thankful for assistance in determining the direction of an influence which will have lost half its vitality in losing its freedom.

Meantime while declining all control in the use of such power as I have, I will most humbly accept aid from any quarter in the improvement of its character. With its extent and mode of operation I am and shall be satisfied, because these are not included in my responsibilities. With its quality, I hope never to be satisfied; as the time ought never to arrive when it will not be inferior to my aspirations.

H. M.

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SOWERS NOT REAPERS.

Chapter I.

MIDSUMMER MOONLIGHT.

The nights of a certain summer of the present century would scarcely have been known for nights by those sober people who shut themselves in as it grows dark, and look out in the morning, perceiving only that the sum is come again. During the nights we speak of, repose did not descend with the twilight upon the black moors of Yorkshire, and the moon looked down upon something more glittering than the reflection of her own face in the tarns of Ingleborough, or in the reaches of the Wharf and the Don. Some of the polished and sharpened ware of Sheffield was exposed to the night dews in the fields, and passed from the hands of those who tempered to the possession of those who were to wield it.

Others were also abroad, with the view of relieving their hardships instead of seeking to avenge them. The dwellers on high grounds were so far worse off than the inhabitants of the valleys, that they could not quench their thirst, and lose in sleep their weariness and their apprehensions of hunger. During the day, there was drought within, and the images of drought without;—hay dried before it was mown; cattle with their tongues hanging out, panting in the parched meadows: horses lashing madly at the clouds of flies that descended upon them as they stooped to the slimy pools which had still some moisture in them; wells with cracked buckets and dangling ropes: and ditches where there was an equally small probability that children would find weeds and be drowned in the search. During the night, when some of these spectacles were hidden, it was necessary to take the chance of preventing a repetition of them on the following day; and those who had cattle growing lean, children growing fretful, and no remaining patience with a dry well, bore with the weariness of night-watching in the hope of relieving the more urgent evil of thirst.

On the night when the midsummer full moon gradually emerged from the partial eclipse caused by the smokes of Sheffield, and shone full on the hill-sides to the west, two women were sitting near a spring which had rarely, till lately, failed to bless the stony region in which it was wont to flow. They came to watch for any gush or drip which might betoken the fall of showers somewhere among the hills; and patient would their watch have appeared to an observer. The one sat on the stone fence which separated the road from a field of drooping oats, and never moved, except to cast a frightened look around her when an unseasonable bleat proceeded from the restless ewes on the moor, or the distant foundry clock was heard to strike. Her companion sat, also in silence, on the edge of the dry cistern where her pitcher rested, and kept her eyes fixed on the fitful lights of the foundry from whose neighbourhood she had come.

“I have been thinking, Mary,” said Mrs. Kay, leaving her seat on the wall, and speaking in a low voice to her sister-in-law,—“I have been thinking that my husband may, perhaps, come round for us when his hours are up at the foundry, instead of going straight home. I wish he may; for I declare I don't like being out in this way, all by ourselves.”

Mary made no answer.

“It is all so still and unnatural here. There's the foundry at work, to be sure; but to see the tilting-mill standing, all black and quiet, is what I never met with before. We may see it for some time to come, though; for there seems little chance of a sufficient fall to touch the wheel at present. Do you think there is, Mary?”

Mary shook her head; and Mrs. Kay, having examined the spring with eye and ear, stole back to her former seat.

After looking into the field behind her for some time, she came again to say,—

“My husband talks about the crops, and the harvest being at hand, and so on, but I do not see what sort of a harvest it is to be, unless we have rain directly. What a poor-looking oat-field that is behind the wall! and there are none any better on these high grounds, as far as I can see.”

“There would be some chance for the low grounds, if the springs would flow,” answered Mary.

“Why, yes. My husband was telling me that there is a corner left of one of Anderson's meadows down below, where the grass is as fresh and sweet as it there had been forty-eight hours' rain. It was but a corner; but there was one of the little Andersons, and his sister, raking up the grass after the mower, and piling their garden barrow with it. to give to there white pony. Even Anderson's beasts have been foddered, as if it was winter, for this fortnight past.”

Mary nodded, and her sister proceeded.

“I wonder how many more improvements of Anderson's we shall see after this next bad harvest; for bad it must be now. It seems to me that the less his land yields, the more he lays out upon it.”

“The less it yields, the more he wants, I suppose.”

“Yes; but it is an accident its yielding so ill for three years together; and where he gets the money, I don't know, except that bread has been dear enough of late to pay for any thing.”

“That's it, to be sure,” said Mary.

“Dear enough for any thing,” repeated Mrs. Kay. “When I used to have my fill of meat every day, I little thought that the bread I ate with it would grow scarce among

us. No rise of wages, such as the masters make such a complaint of, can stand against it."

Mary shook her head, and there was a long pause.

"I'll tell you what, Mary," resumed the chief speaker, after a time, "there would be much more pleasure in talking with you, if you would talk a little yourself. It sets one down so not to know whether you are listening to what one says."

"I always listen when I am spoken to," replied Mary: "but people are not all made talkers alike."

"Why, no, that they certainly are not. My husband laughs, and says that a pretty dull time you and Chatham must have of it, when you are out walking on Sundays. You will both get all you want to say in a week said in five minutes. Well, I don't wonder at your not answering that; but you will not be offended at a joke from your own brother; and you know he does not think the worse of Chatham for keeping his thoughts to himself, and—Mercy! what did I see over yonder!"

And in her hurry Mrs. Kay pushed the pitcher, which Mary caught before it went rattling down among the stones. She sat very quietly, watching the motions of a number of men who were crossing a gate from one field to another at some distance, and who seemed to be making for the road.

"Mary! Mary! what shall we do if they come here?" asked the trembling Mrs. Kay.

Mary rose and took up her pitcher, observing that they might sit safe enough in the shadow of Warden's mill, just to the left; and then they might have another chance for the spring as they came by in their way home. Mrs. Kay could scarcely be persuaded that going home would be perfectly safe as soon as it was daylight, and that the men who had evidently been out at drill would be dispersed by dawn.

The women crept along, under the shadow of the wall, and then quickly crossed the broad strip of moonlight which lay between them and the mill. Before they reached the steps, which happened to be on the shadowy side, Mrs. Kay was nearly unable to walk, and her terrors were not lessened by the apparition of a person standing on the first stage, and looking down on them from the top of the long flight of steps.

"Sit still," said Mary, beginning to ascend, till she saw that Warden, the miller, was coming down to inquire their business. She then briefly explained what brought them upon his property.

"So you are looking for water," he replied, "and I am looking for wind. For three weeks there has not been a breath, and not a steady breeze since long before that. The bakers are calling out upon us so as to keep us out of our beds, watching for any rack in the sky that may betoken a coming wind."

"And have you ever seen, sir, such a sight as sent us here?" inquired the trembling Mrs. Kay. "Such a sight as there is in the fields there?"

“What, the nightly drill? O yes, many a night, though they may not be aware who has been overlooking them. They have never come near enough on light nights for me to pick them out by their faces, so that there is no occasion for me to take any notice; but I mark how they get on in shouldering their pikes and learning to obey orders. Here, as I stand by the fan-wheel, I hear the word of command quite plain through the still air; and once they came upon this very slope. It was too dark a night for them to see me; but I heard them stumble against the very steps you are sitting on, Mrs. Kay.”

“How long do you suppose it is to Last, Mr. Warden?”

“Till prices fall, or the people have burned a mill or two, perhaps. 'Tis a happy thing for you and yours, Mrs. Kay, that Oliver's foundry does not come under the ban. There it blazes away, night and day, and I hear no curses upon it, like what are visited upon the mills. It is well for you and yours that Kay has to ladle molten metal instead of having to manage machinery. I hope he is well, Mrs. Kay?”

Mrs. Kay did not answer, and was found to be in no condition for dialogue. Fear and fatigue had overpowered her, and she could only lean, faint and sobbing, against the rail.

“She is not strong,” observed Mary. “Do you happen to have any thing in the mill to revive her? My pitcher is empty.”

Warden fanned her with his hat, having no other means of refreshment in his power; and he carried on the conversation with Mary while doing so, that the poor woman might have time to recover herself. It was not merely machinery that was the object of the trained bands, he observed, In many parts they had pulled down corn stores; and it was rumoured that Kirkland's granaries were threatened by the very people who were now near them. If they really entertained the idea that it was a public injury to have a stock of corn laid by while the price was high, it was no wonder that they were angry with Kirkland, as well as with some people that had much more credit, without having done and suffered so much to get it. He should like to know what the country was to do without such men as Kirkland, when there had been three bad harvests following one another?

“Your mill would stand idle if there was not corn brought from here or there,” observed Mary. “But are those people that we saw bound for Kirkland's granaries? I should be sorry to think that they were about any mischief.”

“They could be about little but mischief at this time of night, and with arms too; but it is full late, I fancy, to be going so far. It is said my father-in-law's threshing-machine is doomed.”

“And what does he say to that?”

“O, he swears at the people because they can't be contented when he is. But, to my mind, it would not be so great a hardship this year as another, seeing how little corn there will be to thresh. Not that I approve such doings in any way; but when people

are so badly off with the high price of provisions, and the uncertainty of peace, what can you expect?"

"You talked of noting faces; are there any of our people now in yonder fields, do you suppose?"

"Do you mean Sheffield people, or people of your village?"

"Why, either."

"There are undoubtedly many from about Stockport, and out of Leicestershire, who go the round to stir up discontent, and teach the drill. But it is said there are a good many neighbours of ours among them too. What is more likely than that those who have not had their fill in the day should turn out at night to something that may amuse them better than lying awake, or dreaming of cheap bread? This is just what you have been doing, you see; and what Mrs. Kay had better have let alone, it seems. Come, Mrs. Kay, how are you now? Able to walk, do you think?"

Quite able now to walk, and to ask a hundred questions on the way about the cause of the terror which had shaken her, and the probable duration of the hardship which had reduced her; on neither of which matters was much satisfaction to be gained from the miller.

The spring was still dry, but Mary chose to watch till the children came to take her place in the morning. The miller took charge of Mrs. Kay till she was fairly within the light of the foundry fires, and then struck across the fields homewards, hoping that his mill would not again be the refuge of frightened women while he was on the spot.

Mary's watch was vain, and the more wearisome from her occasional fancy that it would not prove vain. More than once she was persuaded that she heard the trickling of water while listening intently after the moon had gone down; and when she fell asleep for a few moments, her thoughts were full of the hardship of having only one pitcher to fill when the water was overflowing every place. Not the less for this did she carry home this very pitcher, swinging empty at arm's length, when the village was up and awake, and the sun beating down hot upon the slippery turf, and glaring, reflected from the stone fences, upon the dusty road.

At the door she met a neighbour, Mrs. Skipper, the baker of the village, who supplied a use for the pitcher.

"Well, Mary Kay, and what's the news with you?"

"Nothing particular, Mrs. Skipper. Are you come to tell us again that bread is risen?"

"Why, that I am, I'm sorry to say; and I wish you would change looks with me, Mary, and then people would not taunt me as they do, when I say that bread has risen."

"How would that alter the matter?"

“O, they talk about my being fresh-coloured, and all that, and say it's a sign that I live of the best, whatever I may charge to others. Just as if I made the bread dear, instead of the corn being as high to us bakers as to other people; and as if there was no assize of bread in London.”

“And as if you cared for being called handsome,” added Kay from behind, having come to breakfast in the midst of the greeting.

“I think you are handsome—very handsome,” said little John Kay, looking up earnestly into Mrs. Skipper's bonny face. She stooped down to give him a hearty smack, and promise him a half-penny bun if he would come and see her.

“There now, master John, you well nigh made me spill my cider, boy. Here, Mary, hold your pitcher. yes, it is for you—for all of you, I mean. You will give John a drop, I'm sure. Ah! I thought you would like it, now it is so difficult to get any thing good to drink. Do but taste it, Mr. Kay. Is not it good? It was sent me by a cousin of mine, and I thought I would bring you some, especially as I had to tell you that the bread is risen again. It is nineteen-pence now! What do you say to that, Mary?”

Mary, as usual, said nothing. She did not find that speech mended matters of this kind; and besides, it was time she was setting about her task of purifying the distasteful water which they must drink, if they meant to drink at all, till the springs should flow again. She emptied the clear, fresh-looking cider into her own pitcher, and returned Mrs. Skipper's with a look which was less indifferent than her manner.

“What I say is,” observed Kay, “that if bread is risen, our wages must rise. We are all of one mind about that—that a man cannot live for less than will keep him alive; to say nothing of his being fresh-coloured, Mrs. Skipper. We call none of us boast much of that.”

“Well, how's your wife, Mr. Kay? She was but poorly, I thought, when I saw her two days ago.”

“O, she is a poor thing enough. She was not much to boast of when she had an easy life compared with the present; and now she droops sadly. John can hardly call her very handsome indeed. Can you, John?”

“John, carry your mother a cup of cider, if she is awake,” said Mary; “and tell her I am home, getting breakfast.”

“There, that's right, Mary,” said Mrs. Skipper. “You have such a way of telling giddy people what they should not say and do. I am going my ways directly, to leave you to yours. But send one of the children after me for a nice hot roll for your sister. The new bread is just coming out of the oven. And be sure you tell me whether she likes the cider, you know.”

“And if she has not an appetite for the roll, we won't send it back, I promise you,” said Kay. “She has got into the way of not touching her breakfast, lately; and the same

thing cannot be said of me, when I have been busy casting all night. Somebody will eat your roll, and thank you for it."

"That means that I may send two; but—"

Kay protested, and Mrs. Skipper explained, and Mary announced breakfast.

"Breakfast, such as it is, Mrs. Skipper," observed Kay. "No disrespect to your bread! But time was when I could afford it newer, and plenty of it, and a bit of something to relish it. One does not relish it so well when one can't cut and come again, but may have just so much and no more."

Mrs. Skipper wished he could see what she saw of poor creatures that could get none,—not the smallest and driest loaf, to try whether they could relish it. If the potato crop failed, she did not know what was to become of them; or of herself either, if they went on to look in at her shop window. She had not the heart to draw the bread, with them looking on, and not stuff a bit into the children's mouths. And, dashing away the tears from her bright black eyes, widow Skipper hastened whence she came, hugging by the way the child who was sent to wait her pleasure about the roll.

Before sitting down to his scanty meal, Kay went to rally his wife about what she had seen and been alarmed at in her late expedition, and to advise her to cheer up, instead of giving way, as she seemed disposed now to do. She was up, but he supposed hardly awake yet; for she had not much to say, and seemed flurried, and not able to take exactly what he meant. He thought she had better have slept another hour.

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Chapter II.

A HARVEST EVE.

Mary rightly believed that there was a chance for the corn on the low grounds, if rain should speedily fall. By the time that the horned sheep, of the western moors had cropped the last bite of juicy grass in the dells, they were gathered together by the shepherd to abide the storms which were gathering about the summits of Wharnside and Pennygant. While they stood trembling and bleating in the rising blasts, the cattle in the vales left the muddy pools, and turned towards the shelter of the stooping and rustling trees; and many a human eye was raised to the whirling mills, whose inactivity had wearied expectation so long.

Neither the wind, nor the rain which followed, pleased every body, any more than any other wind and rain. Havoc was made by the blasts in Mr. Fergusson's young plantations, where a thousand saplings stood, dry enough for firewood, ready to be snapped by the first visitation of a gust. Trees of loftier growth strewed the Abbey lawn, and afforded matter of lamentation to the elder members of Mr. Fergusson's family, and of entertainment to the children, who watched for hours the operations of the woodmen in removing the fallen ornaments of the estate. Every washerwoman within some miles who happened to be pursuing her vocation that day, had to mourn the disappearance of cap or handkerchief from the line or bush; and how many kitchen chimneys smoked, no chimney doctor near would have ventured to say. Meanwhile, the millers and their men bestirred themselves cheerily, as sailors do when the breeze freshens after a long calm; and careful housewifes dislodged all unclean insects from their water tubs. and swept out their spouts in preparation for the first droppings. As might have been expected, the rain came, not in droppings, but m sheets. No woollen coat, woven or unwoven, saved the shepherd and his sheep from being drenched to the skin. Every tree became a commodious shower-bath to the horse or cow beneath it. Many an infirmity was exposed in thatch or tile which had never before been suspected; and everybody looked gloomy in Anderson's farm, (except the ducks,) from the apprehension that the meagre crops would be laid, past recovery. On the first cessation of the storm, matters did appear sad enough: in the villages, eyery thing smutted, from the smoke of the furnaces being beaten down; in the country, all brown and muddy-looking till the waters had had time to retire into the ditches, and the verdure to show itself; and even then, the straggling oats and prostrate wheat presented but a small improvement on their former appearance. Landlords and tenants crossed each other's path while taking their rounds, but could not agree as to the probabilities of the approaching harvest. Mr. Fergusson hoped that a day or two would make a great difference in the appearance of the fields; while Anderson was certain that it was too late for the crops to revive under the gentlest rain, and that they would prove to have been utterly destroyed by the flood which had swept down from the hills. Neither could establish his point till harvest came.

Then each proved to be right. On the high grounds, the produce was, in truth, scarcely worth carrying away, while in the vales there was better work for the harvest wain. Even there, however, there were more gleaners than reapers; and the artisans who came forth in the evening to see what had been done, agreed with the disappointed Irish, who must travel farther in search of harvest work, that the total crop would indeed turn out to be far below the average.

The best of the harvest fields did not present the usual images of peace and contentment.

“Out, out, out!” cried Anderson, to a troop of boys and girls who had pressed in at his heels as he entered a field whence the sheaves were not yet carried. “How many times am I to have the trouble of turning you out, I wonder? Wait, can't ye, till the corn is carried?”

At the flourish of his stick, the intruders took flight, and jostled each other at the gate, in their hurry to get out; but they returned, one by one, keeping in his rear, like a spider watching a fly, till they could stoop down behind a shock, and filch from the sheaves at their leisure. Following the example of the children, a woman dropped in at the gate, another entered from a gap in the fence, at a moment when the farmer had his back turned, while the heads of two or three men appeared over the wall. It was plain that the tenth commandment was not in the thoughts of any present, unless in Anderson's own.

“Here again, you rogue!” he cried, lifting up a boy by the collar from a hiding-place between two sheaves. “You are the very boy I told twice to go to the field below. There is plenty of room for you there.”

“But there is no corn there, sir.”

“Corn or no corn, there you shall go to be made an example of for pilfering from my sheaves. Here, Hoggets, take this lad down to the Lane field, and give him a good whipping in sight of them all.”

“O, no, no! Mercy, mercy!” cried the boy. “Mother said I should have no supper,—father said he would beat me, if I did not make a good gleaning. I won't go, I tell you; I won't. O, sir, don't let him beat me! Ask father! I Won't go.”

Mary Kay came up to intercede. The boy was her nephew; and she could assure Mr. Anderson that John was told to go home at his peril without an apron full of corn.

“Then let his parents answer for his flogging, as they ought to do, for driving the boy to steal,” said the farmer. “I am not to be encroached upon because they choose to be harsh with their boy; and I tell you, mistress, this pilfering must be put a stop to. This very season, when the crop is scanty enough at the best, I am losing more than I ever did before by foul gleaning. Let the boy's parents be answerable for the flogging he shall have. Hoggets, take him away.”

“Had you not better send Hoggets to flog the boy's father and mother?” Mary inquired. “that would be more just, I think.”

“O, do, sir, do!” entreated John; “and I will show him the way.”

“I dare say you would: and this aunt of yours would find some excuse next for their not being flogged.”

“I won't promise but I might,” said Mary; “for they may have something to say about what has driven them to covet your corn. It is not the going without one supper, but the being supperless every night. Instead of a beating, once and away, such as they promised the poor lad, it is the scourge of want, sir, for week after week, and month after month.”

“I am very sorry to hear it; and if they come and ask in a proper way, they may chance to get some help from me. But, as to countenancing my property being taken because they are poor, it would be a sin for their boy's sake, and for the sake of all the boys that would follow his example. So off with him!”

Mary was far from wishing to defend the act of pilfering from sheaves, and equally far from supposing that her brother and sister thought of any such mode of fulfilling their command when it was delivered to their boy. Mr. Anderson might be perfectly sure that Kay and his wife would not come and ask, in the “proper way” he alluded to, for what they were wearing themselves out in struggling to earn, and as for the boy, she believed she could answer for him that the being deprived of what he had gathered, or, at most, a private beating, would avail to make him observe other commands in endeavouring to fulfil those of his parents. Anderson still thought differently; and, perceiving at the moment half a dozen little beads peeping from behind so many shocks, was confirmed in his opinion that the boy must be flogged. Hoggets accordingly whipped up the little lad, slung him, screaming and writhing, over his shoulder, and disappeared behind the wall, while the farmer hunted out the other culprits, and sent them, for a punishment, to see their companion flogged in the field. Mary first detained them to see her restore John's hand-fulls of corn to the sheaves, and then went down to do the best she could for her poor little nephew in his agony.

She presently overtook him, and found that his agony was now of a more mixed character than she had expected. He was alternating between hope and fear. The quivering nostril and short sob told what his terror had been, while his raised eye, and efforts to compose himself, testified to his trust that he had found a deliverer. Two young ladies on horseback were talking with Hoggets, and looking compassionately on the culprit, while Hoggets touched his hat eyery instant, and had already lowered the boy from his disgraceful elevation. The Miss Fergussons only asked him to delay till they had overtaken Mr. Anderson, and endeavoured to procure pardon; and Hoggets thought it was not for him to resist the wishes of the ladies.

The whole matter was argued over again, and the farmer strongly urged with the plea that corn was more tempting to the poor than eyer before,— the quartern being now

one shilling and eight-pence. The farmer thought that the stronger the temptation, the more exemplary should be the punishment. If he could supply eyery bread-eater near him with abundance of corn, so as to obviate the temptation, he would gladly do so, as he held prevention to be better than punishment; but, as he had not this in his power, the best thing he could do was to discourage compliance with temptation. In this case, however, as the boy had been a good deal punished by exposure, and by being off and on in his expectations of being flogged, enough was done for example, and John might run home as fast as he liked.

“That will not be very fast,” Mary observed, “since he is to be beaten at the end of his walk for bringing his mother's apron home empty. I have heard say, sir, by one that knows well, that our people are treated like this boy; brought low for want of food, driven to skulk and pilfer for it, and then disgraced and punished. But there is this difference, that you cannot prevent the want, and, in the case of the people, it might be prevented.”

“Chatham put that into your head, I suppose. It is just like one of his sayings. But I wish he would not make the worst of matters, as if any thing ailed the nation more than there has been ever since people herded together with mischief-makers among them here and there.”

Miss Fergusson hoped that there had not always been, and would not always be, such proceedings as some which were going on now. The coppice field had been green and smooth as velvet the evening before, and this morning at daybreak it was brown and trampled. The skulkers and meditators of violence had been there; and the records of her father's justice-room would show that the disgrace and punishment spoken of by Mary were fast following the destitution which is the cause of crime. She hoped Mr. Anderson did not suppose that this was the natural state in which people will always live, while congregating for the sake of the advantages of society.

Anderson hoped that men would grow wiser in time than to set up midnight drills as a remedy for the distress which always occurs from time to time; and then Mr. Fergusson would have less disagreeable justice-work to do. The ladies believed that the shortest way to obviate the folly would be to obviate the distress; and, as they moved on, were recommended to pray for a better harvest than had this year blessed the land.

John had stolen away in advance of their horses. Finding that they were proceeding to join their brothers, who had been grouse-shooting in the moors since daybreak, it occurred to the poor boy that by following in the track of the gentlemen, he might chance to pick up something which would serve as a propitiation at home for his failure in the article of corn. It was possible that a wounded bird or two might have been left by the sportsmen, and that those who could not purchase bread might sup off game:—no uncommon occurrence in a country where the tenants of a preserve are better fed than the inhabitants of a village. Halt resolving to try his fortune on the other side the hills, and never to face his parents again unless he could find a black cock, John plunged into the moors, keeping the ladies in view from a distance, as a sort of guide to the track that the sportsmen had been pursuing. He had not speed of

foot to sustain, for any length of time, his share of the race. The riding party disappeared in the dusk; no living thing crossed his path, but many inanimate ones put on the appearance of a fluttering bird to deceive the agitated and hungry boy; and the breeze which stirred them did not cool his brow. He could nowhere find a pool of water from which he might drink. His legs bent under him; and at the thought of how far they must yet carry him before he could reach, shelter, north, south, east, or west, he began to cry.

Tears do not flow long when they may flow freely. It is the presence of restraint, or the interruption of thought, causing the painful idea to recur, which renders it difficult for a child to stop a fit of crying. John had no such restraint, and was subject to no further interruption than the silent appearance of light after light in the village below, and the survey of an occasional sheep, which came noiselessly to look at him and walk away again. By the time that the dew began to make itself felt upon his face, he was yawning instead of crying; and he rose from the turf as much from a desire to be moving again as from any anxiety as to what was to become of him this night. A manifold bleat resounded as he erected himself, and a score or two of sheep ran over one another as he moved from his resting place, giving hope that the shepherd was at no great distance. It was not long before he was seen through the grey twilight, moving on a slope a little to the west: and, to John's delight he turned out to be an acquaintance, Bill Hookey, who lived close by the Kays till he went upon the moors in Wilkins the grazier's service.

“How late are you going to be out, Will?” was John's first question.

“As late as it be before it is early,” replied Will. “Yon's my sleeping place, and I am going to turn in when I have made out what is doing on the river there. Look farther down,— below the forge, boy. They are quiet enough this minute, or the wind is lulled. When it blows again, you may chance to hear what I heard.”

“But about sleeping,” said John. “I am mortally tired, and I've a great way to go home. Can't you give me a corner in your hut till morning?”

“Why, I doubt there will be scarce room, for I promised two of my ewes that they should have shelter to-night; and this lamb is too tender, you see, to be left to itself. I don't see how they can let you be served.”

John promised to let the ewes have the first choice of a snug corner, and to be content with any space they might leave him, explaining that he wanted to be abroad early to glean, and that it would save him a long walk to sleep on this side Anderson's fields, instead of a mile to the east of them. He said nothing at present about his hunger, lest it should prove an objection to his abiding in Will's company. The objection came spontaneously, however, into the mind of the prudent Will.

“I hope you've your supper with you, lad, or you'll fare hardly here.”

“O, never mind supper,” said John, brushing his sleeve across his eyes. “I have gone without often enough lately.”

“Like many a one besides. Well, if you don't mind supper, so much the better for you. I have left but a scanty one for myself I was so mortal hungry at dinner time; and there is no more bread and milk in the jar than the lamb will want.”

“Can't I get some fresh sweet grass for the lamb that will do as well? Do let me! Pretty creature! I should like to feed it.”

The offer was scornfully declined, and he was told that he might help any of the older lambs to graze, but that he must, at his peril, touch this particularly precious, newly-dropped lamb. John was more disposed to graze on his own account than to assist any creature in eating what he could not share. It next occurred to him to propose a bargain. He thought it promised to be a cold night. Will agreed that it might be middlingly so. John had his mother's stout apron with him, and Will should be welcome to it to wrap the lamb in, if John might have some of the lamb's bread and milk. Will had, however, a provokingly comfortable woollen wrapper, one end of which was always at the service of the pet lamb for the time being. While the next mode of attack was being devised, the soft pacing of horses' feet on the turf, and the occasional striking of a hoof against a flint, were heard; and Will, offering an obeisance which was lost in the darkness, made bold to inquire what sport the gentlemen had had on the moors.

“Excellent sport, if we had bagged as many as we brought down,” answered one of the youths: “but thieves seem to be as plentiful as furzebushes hereabouts. There were so many loiterers about our steps that our dogs could not move quick enough when we brought down more than one bird at a time.”

“There will be a savoury supper or two eaten to-night by those who sport without pulling a trigger,” observed the other Mr. Fergusson. “But they are welcome to my share of the powder and shot they have helped themselves to.”

John's heart swelled at the thoughts of how he should like to be a sportsman after this fashion, especially as the gentleman declared that he should have been welcome.

The ladies had paused to listen to another such sound from afar as Will had described. Many of the twinkling lights from the village had disappeared, and there seemed to be a great bustle below the forge, displayed as often as the big bellows exerted themselves to throw out a peculiarly vivid flame to light up the banks of the river. Will was of opinion that the people were in a hurry for their corn, and unwilling to await Kirkland's time for opening his granaries, and unlading his lighters. There had been talk,— as he had overheard on the moors,—of going down the river to where the lighters took in their cargoes, and demanding the distribution of the corn upon the spot. Probably this was what was now being done at Kirkland's, instead of a few miles nearer the river's mouth.

“It is time we were off, if that be the case,” cried one of the gentlemen. “Kirkland must not be borne down in this manner, for the people's sake any more than for his own. Come, Charles. The girls will be safe enough with Jackson. Let us run down to

the village. Here, little boy! You know Anderson's? You know Mr. Anderson himself?"

John hung down his head, and acknowledged that he knew Mr. Anderson.

"Well, here is a shilling for you. Run to Mr. Anderson, and beg him from me to come down, with his steadiest men, if he has any, to Kirkland's premises, as fast as possible. Off with you! What are you waiting for?"

"If he should be gone already, sir?"

"Why, then, go and call your father, if your father is not an ass, like the rest of the people hereabouts."

John heard one of the young ladies check her brother for his expression, reminding him that nothing makes the ears grow so fast as the having an empty stomach; and the boy pondered for a moment whether his father's ears had lengthened since the time when the family had become subject to hunger. His hand involuntarily went up to the side of his own head; and then came the speculation whether he should offer Will a high price for the lamb's bread and milk on the spot, or wait to change his shilling at Mrs. Skipper's counter. A sharp rebuke from his employer for his delay sent him bounding down the slope, calling up his courage to face the farmer, and consoling himself with thoughts of real white bread, dispensed under Mrs. Skipper's bright smile.

Alas! Mrs. Skipper had no bright smile, this evening, even for John; much less for any one who had not so decided an opinion about her being very handsome. Anderson had looked full as grave as John expected, whether about the matter in hand, or the boy's past offence, was not clear; but the farmer's gravity was nothing to Mrs. Skipper's terror. She scolded everybody about her, ran from one neighbour to another for advice whether to barricade her windows, and could by no means attend to John's demand of a penny roll till he was on the point of helping himself; and, slipping the shilling into the till, Mrs. Skipper huffed him when he asked for change, and turned her back upon him so as to make him fear that he had made a more costly bargain, after all, than if he had bid for the lamb's bread and milk upon the moor. All this was not without cause. A friendly neighbour had come up from the river-side to warn her that it had been proposed by the people assembled round Kirkland's granaries, that, failing a supply of food from his stores, the hungry should help themselves out of the baker's shop. It seemed but too probable that the threat would be executed; for Mrs. Skipper found (and God forgive her, she said, for being sorry to hear it!) that Kirkland was prepared for the attack; having thrown open two granaries to show that they were empty, and promised that he had something particular to say about the wheat on board the lighters; something which was likely to send the people away as hungry as they came. A champion soon appeared in the person of Kay, who was almost the only man of the village who was not engaged on the more important scene of alarm. Women came in plenty, and children stood, like scouts, in the distance; but the women were found to be very poor comforters, and the children ran away as often as they were wanted for messengers. Mary was there; and her indifference to the danger served

almost as well as Kay's promised valour to restore spirits to Mrs. Skipper. It was something to do when the most valuable part of the stock was carried away to be hidden in some safe place, and the oldest loaves ostentatiously placed so as to be stolen first, to taunt Mary with her not caring for what happened to her friends, and looking as indifferent as if she came merely to buy a threepenny loaf. Mary made no reply: but her brother declared that he must just say for her, that if she was indifferent about other people's concerns, so she was about her own. There was Chatham, very busy down by the river-side, with everybody listening to him but the one who had the most reason to be proud to hear what he said; and Mrs. Skipper would see, when she was cool, that it was rather hard to scold Mary for being better able to give assistance than if she was subject to being heated like some people. Mrs. Skipper begged a world of pardons. She was not half good enough for Mary to care at all about her, and she was ready to bite her tongue out for what she had said. As Mary did not intimate any wish to this effect, however, no such caillegibleastrophe took place, and the necessary disposition of affairs proceeded quietly.

Mrs. Skipper had not to wait long to know her fate. Chatham came to tell her that the people had been exasperated by finding that there was no good corn for them on Kirkland's premises, and had gone on towards Sheffield, to burn or pull down a mill or two, it was supposed, as some faces well known at the midnight drill were seen among them. If the few who remained behind should come and ask bread of Mrs. Skipper, he advised her to give it without any show of unwillingness.

“Mercy on me! that will be hard work, if they look beyond the bread on the counter,— two days old,” cried Mrs. Skipper. “Suppose they should get at the dough, what am I to do to-morrow? And the flour! There has not been time to hide half the flour! They will want to cut my head off every day for a week to come, if they strip me of my flour, and expect me to go on baking at the same price. O, Mr. Kay, what shall I do?”

“Do as dealers in com in another shape have done, often and often,” replied Chatham. “Bear your lot patiently as a dealer in that which the people want most, and in which they are most stinted.”

Mrs. Skipper looked doubtfully at Mary for a further explanation of what it was that she was to do.

“Do you mean,” asked Kay, “that they have stripped Kirkland of his corn, and expect him to sell more next week at the same price?”

“They would have done so, if Kirkland had had much wheat to part with. The trade of a corndealer, I have heard him and others say, has always been a hard one to carry on. All parties have joined against them, for as long a time as can be remembered.”

“Ay; the farmers are jealous, I suppose, of their coming between them and the people, thinking they could get better prices if there was nobody to be served between them and their customers. And the people, in the same way, think that they must pay higher for their bread, to enable the corndealers to live.”

“Forgetting that the farmers have something else to be doing than buying and selling corn, here and there, wherever it is wanted, and getting it from abroad when there is not enough at home, and government lets more come in. But it is not only the farmers and the people. The government used to punish the buying up of corn where it was plentiful, and selling it where it was scarce. Many a corndealer has been punished instead of thanked for doing this.”

“I do not see why any man need be thanked for doing what answers best to his own pocket, as it certainly does to buy cheap and sell dear. But to punish a man for coming between the people and want, seems to me to be more like an idle tale than anything to be believed.”

“Kirkland's father was taken up and tried for doing this very thing, not longer ago than a dozen years or so. The law was against him, (one of the old laws that we are learning to be ashamed of;) but it was too clear that he had done no harm, for anybody to wish that he should be punished. So they let him go.”

“Who told you this?”

“Kirkland himself told us so, just now. He said he had rather be brought to his trial in the same way, than have the people take the matter into their own hands to their own injury. I thought it was very brave of him to say so at the moment.”

“Why? Were the people angry?”

“Like to tear him to pieces.”

“And he within their reach?”

“Standing on the plank between the lighter and the wharf”

“Ugh! And they might have toppled him into the water any minute!” cried Mrs. Skipper. “I am sure I hope they won't come near me.”

“The most angry of them are gone on, as I told you,” replied Chatham. “And that is well for you, perhaps; for never did you see angrier faces. They called out, two hundred voices like one, that it was a sin they should have to pay twenty pence for their quartern while he had a houseful of wheat stored up, and more coming.”

“And so it is, if he can get more when that is done.”

“That is the very thing he cannot be sure of doing, as he told these people they must know very well. No one can be sure beforehand when and how he may get in corn from abroad; and, at any rate, it cannot be had till it has grown monstrously dear at home; and so he insisted upon it that he was doing the wisest thing in selling his corn as others sell it, and no cheaper; that we may not eat it all up now, and starve entirely before the end of the winter.”

“Well, I grumble as much as anybody else at our having to pay twenty pence for our loaf; begging your pardon, Mrs. Skipper, whose fault I know it is not. I, with a wife and children, can't reconcile myself to such a price, I grumble as much as anybody.”

“So do I,” said Chatham.

“Only you don't blame Kirkland.”

“Kirkland can't help the grievance, any more than you or I; and I am sure he suffers enough by it. There is a loss of some hundred pounds by this one cargo. It is more than half spoiled.”

“Spoiled! How?”

“The sea-water has got to it, and it is downright rotten.”

“What a pity, when it is so particularly wanted! Such accidents signify twice as much at some times as at others; and that this should happen now—just when bread is at the highest! O dear! what a pity!”

“It would not signify half so much if there was more certainly coming, and the people knew what they had to depend on. But if more is ordered, it may come or it may not: and it may be in good time, or not arrive till the season is far advanced; and so much must be paid for shipping charges (always dear in autumn), that it may mount up as high as our own home supply, after all.”

“What a worry Kirkland must be in!” observed Kay. “He is not one of the quietest at any time; and now, between hurrying his correspondents abroad, and finding his cargo spoiled at home, and having the people gathering about him with their clamour, he must feel something like a dog with a saucepan tied to its tail.”

“Not like your master, Mr. Kay,” observed Mrs. Skipper. “There is no law to meddle with his selling his brass abroad or at home, as he likes; and so he knows what to expect, and how to live with his neighbours; and has little to worry him.”

“I beg your pardon, Mrs. Skipper. My master is prevented selling freely abroad and at home; and prevented by the same law that worries Kirkland. And the worry is great, I can tell you; though Oliver does not run about, losing his breath and fidgeting himself like Kirkland, but walks so solemn and slow, you might take him for a Quaker.”

“Well, I thought, as his foundry is always at work, and people must have things made of brass, and nobody objecting,—I thought things went easily enough with Oliver.”

“His foundry works at night,” said Chatham, “and his metal runs as well at Christmas as at Midsummer; and yet Oliver's prosperity depends on rain and sunshine as much as if zinc and copper were sown in the furrows and came up brass.”

“There, now,” said Mrs. Skipper, “that is one of your odd speeches, Chatham. And Mr. Kay nods as if he knew what you meant.”

“I have good reason to know,” replied Kay. “I and my fellow-workmen must have higher wages when corn is scarce, and then Oliver must put a better price upon his brass, without either his or our gaining anything by it: and then——”

“O ay; there will be less brass bought; that is what you mean.”

“Moreover, there are plenty of people abroad that want brass, and would take it if they could give us corn in exchange,—so regularly as that they and we might know what we are about. And so, as sure as sunshine or rain falls short, some of Oliver's furnaces die out: and as sure as Kirkland's corn-vessels might come and go, without let or hinderance, our foundry would send a light, night and day, over all the vale.”

“That is the way Chatham's sayings come out,” observed the widow: “but I think he might as well speak plain at once, and make no mysteries.”

“I spoke plain enough about what was going to happen to you and your bread,” said Chatham, “and now you will soon see whether it comes out true; for here is the street filling fast, I see.”

“Poor souls!” cried the widow, having run out at her door to look. “They do not seem creatures to be afraid of, when one comes close to them;—so tired and lagging! I say, Dixon, won't you have something to eat after your walk? Smith, you look worse still, and I saw how early you were off to your work this morning, and you have a good way to go to supper. Try a roll, won't you? Come, that's right, Bullen, set to, and tell me if it is not good bread: and you. Taylor.—carry it home to your wife, if you scruple to eat it yourself.—Bless you, make no speeches! I only wish I had more; but this is all, you see, except the dough that is laid for the morning, and that belongs to my customers, not to me.—Well; I am pleased you like it. I would have thought to get in some cheese, if I had known, before the shop was shut, that you would be passing.—Never make such a favour of it. I'll ask the same of you some day. Or you will remember me when times mend with you.—Do look, Mr. Kay; if they be not going to cheer!—I never thought to live to be cheered.—Bless them! how hearty they are!”

And laughing, sparkling, and waving her right arm vehemently, the dame watched in their progress down the street the neighbours whose approach she had thought, an hour before, she could scarcely survive. Kay followed the munching groups, to see what they would do next; and Chatham drew Mary's arm within his own, to escort her home, leaving the widow to bolt herself in, and survey at her leisure her bare shelves, and sweep down her empty shop-board, —soliloquizing, as she went on,

“I forgot these little sweet-cakes, or some of the children should have had them,—for they are rather stale. It is well they did not press for the dough, for I don't believe I could have refused them anything at the moment,—and then what should I have said to the Fergussons' man in the morning?—Well; it does look forlorn, now it is all over; and it was but this morning that I refused to take Mrs. Holmes's ten-shilling bonnet because I thought I could not afford it; and now I have given away,—let me see how many shillings' worth of bread! Ugh! I dare not think of it. But it is done, and can't be

undone; and besides I dare say they would have taken it, if I had not given it; and, as I bargained with them, they will do the same for me some day. Smith does look rarely bad, to be sure. I wish he be not going; though, if he be, it will be pleasant to think that one gave him a meal when he was hungry. Not that it won't be pleasant to remember the same thing if he lives. I wonder what his poor wife's expectation is concerning him. if she loses him, l hope she will find it no more of a trouble than I have done. So much less than I thought! I think poor Mrs. Kay droops almost as much as Smith. But there's no knowing. Those weakly people often live the longest;—except, to be sure, when they have got into a habit like hers. Not a word has her husband ever let drop about it. I wonder whether he knows as much as I do. He shall never hear a word of it from me, nor not even Mary, though I fancy she can't be blind. Catch Mary Kay blind to anything! For all she looks so dull and stony when she chooses, she sees as sharp as a hawk,—and has such a way of setting one down. She's a good creature too, with all she does for those children; and nothing could be more handy than she was about the bread to-night. I wish she might chance to look in in the morning, and give me more of her handiness, to help to make the place look a little less forlorn than it does with all these empty shelves. I was very hasty, to be sure, in emptying them; but, as the parson said on Sunday, God loves a cheerful giver. So now, I will cast a look to see if the dough is rising, and go to bed; for it must be full late, I am sure."

Chatham and Mary were meanwhile walking home, conversing after their fashion,—making six words do where others would use twenty. An incident occurred on which they understood each other without any words at all. A gleam of light fell across the street as a door on the shadowy side of the way slowly opened, to let out a woman, who walked along under the houses, slowly and with her head hung down. It was the door of the gin-shop that opened, and it would have been absurd to pretend not to know the woman. Mary instantly slackened her pace, and motioned to cross over to the dark side.

"She is steady enough," said Chatham. "She will get on very well by herself."

"To be sure she will. It is not quite come to that yet. But let her get home first, and not know that we have been following her. It is only merciful."

"She shall have mercy from me;—more perhaps than from those who are answerable for her failing and sinking as she does, poor soul!"

Mary consented to turn back to the end of the street, to give a little more time, and asked whether grindstone cutting was not warm work in these sultry noons. She had learned all she wanted about grindstones by the time she could safely knock at her brother's door with the hope that there was somebody stirring within to open it.

"I say nothing about coming in to sit with you all till Kay comes, because——"

"I was not going to ask you to-night. Tomorrow evening, perhaps. Good night. I hear her coming. Good night."

And Chatham was out of sight from within, before Mrs. Kay, her bonnet off and her cap, somehow not put on, opened the door, and left Mary to fasten it.

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Chapter III.

FASTERS AND FEASTERS.

There were two opposite lights on the horizon that night, to those who looked out from the village. While the moon sank serenely behind the dark western hills, a red flame shot up, amidst volumes of wreathing smoke, in the direction of Sheffield. Some persons were trying the often-repeated experiment of gaining bread by the destruction of that by which bread is gained. A metal-mill was gutted, its machinery broken, and its woodwork burned, because the sea water had got to Kirkland's corn; and more mills were threatened in case the price of bread did not fall within a few days. As no one could answer for the price of bread falling within the time specified, the only thing done was to take measures to avert the promised destruction. For this purpose, strict inquiries were made as to what the habitants of the district had been about the preceding evening: who had gone home from the harvest-field; who attended the arrival of Kirkland's corn: and how many there were who could give no good account of themselves. Early in the morning the officers of justice were abroad, and Mr. Fergusson and his sons were seen riding about, greeted not the less respectfully wherever they went from its being known that their object was to bring some of their neighbours to justice. Mr. Fergusson's character stood too high among his tenants to allow of their thinking the worse of him under any misfortunes that might happen. Let him do what he might in his character of magistrate, he was trusted to do what was right, as he showed himself, on all occasions, not only compassionate to the sufferings of the people, but as wise in discerning the causes of the suffering as anxious to relieve it when relief was in his power. Accordingly, hats were touched when he looked in the faces of those whom he met this morning, and ready answers given to his inquiries where the innocent were called upon to speak, and respectful ones from the guilty, when the necessity came upon them of making out a case. All the complaisance that there was, however, was engrossed by the Mr. Fergussons. The constables got only sneers and short answers, and men and women looked suspiciously on one another all through the district, none knowing what a neighbour might have the power to tell. Perhaps so many cross words were never spoken in one day in the vale, as the day after the burning of Halsted's mill. “What do you look at me for? You had better look to yourself,” was the common sentiment at the forge, in the field, and on the alehouse bench. As for the children, they were so perplexed with instructions what they were to say, that It was only to be hoped no one would ask them any questions.

It was not to be supposed that Mrs. Skipper could stay quietly at home while strangers were passing up and down the street about whom her journeyman could give her no information, and while reports were travelling round of one neighbour and another being compromised. She burst in at Kay's, just after he was gone to his work, when his wife was preparing to put away breakfast, and Mary was beating out the corn which she had gleaned the evening before, and which was destined to the mill this day.

“I have not brought you a hot roll this morning, Mrs. Kay; no, nor so much as a crust. I cannot afford any more of that at present; and so you will not look for it from me.”

“What do you speak in that way to me for? I don't know what you mean,” said Mrs. Kay, with an angry, puzzled stare.

“Nor I what you would be at, I'm sure,” replied Mrs. Skipper. “One would not believe you were the soft-spoken Mrs. Kay, now-a-days. You can be sharper in your speech than ever I am, let me tell you.”

“That is the more reason why you should be soft in yours,” said. Mary. “She has borne with you sometimes, when you have been better in health than she is now.”

“Well; that is true: and she does look so poorly. . . . . Ah! now, there's master John coming out with a speech about my fresh colour again.”

John was not thinking about anybody's colour. He wanted to know whether it was not true that he had had eleven-pence change from her the night before.

“To be sure you had, after taking a penny roll.”

John called his mother to witness. that she might tell his father, that he was in possession of a shilling before the troubles began at Kirkland's; to say nothing of those farther on. His father had doubted his getting that shilling honestly, and had desired his mother to take possession of the eleven pence till the whole was unquestionably accounted for; and now John wanted his money back again. Mrs. Kay did not, however, heed his request; and the matter ended in Mary's. persuading the boy that if he had the money by the time he was at liberty to go out, it would do very well, instead of pressing for it now that his mother was busy thinking of something else.

“Why, take care, Mrs. Kay!” cried her neighbour. “Your hand shakes so, you will certainly let the dish down, and that will cost you more than a meal of my best bread would have done. Well! that is a beautiful potato to have left among the peelings. And here's another! I wonder you let the children scatter their food about in that manner.”

“'Tis not the children,” observed Mary. “They have not more than they are very willing to eat, poor things! Their mother has but little appetite, and she is apt to slip her food back into the dish, that it may not make her husband uneasy.—I want, your help more than she does,” she continued, seeing that Mrs. Skipper's officious assistance was obstinately refused by the poor woman. “Will you step behind, and help me to beat and winnow my corn, if you have a minute to spare?”

With all her heart, Mrs. Skipper said; but she *had* an errand, though it was not to bring cider or hot bread. She had learned the secret of making potato-bread: not the doughy, distasteful stuff that many people were eating, but light, digestible, palatable bread. She would not tell the secret to everybody,—giving away her own trade; but when she saw a family of old friends eating potatoes, morning, noon, and night, she could not help telling them how they might get something better.

Mary thanked her, and observed that she did not know how she could put her gleaned corn to a better use than in making the experiment of a batch of mixed flour and potato-bread.

“Ah! do; and I will treat you to the baking, and look well to it myself. For my credit's sake, you know; having set you to try. Come, let us have the corn beat out.”

They went to the back of the house to thresh and winnow, and then the widow's first exclamation was about how sadly out of sorts Mrs. Kay seemed to be.

“These are not times for her,” replied Mary. “They bear harder upon such as she was than upon anybody. Who could have thought, you know, when she was an only child, brought up delicately for a poor man's daughter, that she would come to loathe a potato breakfast, and have no other?”

“Bless you! I know,” whispered the widow, with a wise look. “People may take things over-night that leave them no sense, nor temper, nor appetite in the morning. My dear, I see how it is.”

Mary was apparently too busy with the wheat to take any notice of this intimation. The next thing she said was,

“Where are all the potatoes to come from that will be wanted if people take to this new sort of bread? and indeed whether they do or not; for potatoes they must eat, either by themselves or made into bread. How are we to get enough?”

“The price is rising, they say; faster than the price of anything else, except corn: and if you go up yonder towards the moors, you will see what a quantity of new ground is being taken up for growing potatoes. I have had half a mind to try what I could do with a bit of a field myself. Anderson knows what he is about, generally; and what he tries in a large way might be safe for such as we in a small.”

“I would not try,” replied Mary.

“No, not if yon were me, because you think I fly from one thing to another, and do myself harm.”

“Besides.” said Mary, attempting no denial, “how will it be with you next year, if there should chance to be a fine wheat and barley crop? People do not live on potatoes when they can get bread; and I am sure it is not to be wished that they should. I hope there will be much less demand for potatoes next year; and it is likely there will. We have had so many bad seasons, it cannot be long before a good one comes.”

“And then what a pity it will be that so much money has been spent in fencing and managing these potato-grounds! It may chance to come to be worth while to turn the sheep on again. That *would* be a pity.”

“Say rather it is a pity they were ever turned off. The land on the moors is much more fit for them than for us to feed off; and leaving them there would leave the money that

is spent on the land (more than it is worth, if matters went on in their usual course) to be used in a more profitable way."

"In what way?"

"Why; take your own case. If you pay so much for hedging and ditching, and draining, and manuring the potato-ground you have a mind for, and the crop brings you no more next year than the same plot now brings as a sheep-feed, is not the money just lost that was laid out in making a field of it? My opinion is that it would bring less; and if it does not, it ought to do. Our people will be badly off indeed if food is so high next year as to make them take your potatoes at a price that would make your bargain a good one; and if they are obliged to do so, they will be eating up in those potatoes the money that should have set some of them to work at weaving or cutlery-employment. Better buy corn of Kirkland when we can, and let the sheep graze on."

"Ay, when we can. There is the very thing. If we could always do that, as much as we pleased, we should not spend much of our money on the moors; but it is because it is all a chance whether we shall be buying of Kirkland next year, that one thinks of taking the chance of potatoes selling well."

"I would not."

"No, not you. You would spend your money, if you had any, in a little bargain of grindstones, for the sake of a certain person."

"That would depend on the price of potatoes," replied Mary, smiling, "for they would depend on the price of corn; and on the price of corn mainly depends the cutlery trade; and where is the use of grindstones unless the cutlery business flourishes?"

"There is another thing to be looked to; and that is, that those you help in cutting grindstones do not get themselves into trouble;—ay, by being abroad at night, and having the constables after them in the day, I would have you consider that, my dear. Merey! how frightened you look,—as white as my apron! Now, don't push me away because I let out a thing that made you frightened."

"Angry—very angry," said Mary.

"Not with me, to be sure; for I did not make it, be it true or not true; though I need not have cast it in your teeth as I did. It was Dick Rose told me; and he said he knew it from——"

"Do get me a little vinegar, Mrs. Skipper. I never pinched my finger so smartly before. I shall not be able to get my thimble on this week."

"Well, now, it was that made you turn white, while you pretended to be so angry with me that you made my heart beat in my throat. I shall know you now another time, mistress Mary."

“Not you,” thought Mary, as her giddy companion bustled into the house for vinegar.

“I don't see your sister,” said she, returning, “but I guessed 'where to look for the vinegar. Is the pain going? Well, only do you. ask Dick Rose about how the folks were seen creeping out of the quarry, one by one,—those that worked there, and some strangers that came to visit them; and how——”

“I shall not ask Dick Rose any such thing, when there is a person that can tell me so much better,” said Mary.

“Ay, if he will.”

“John, fetch me the large blue apron,” cried Mary; “and bring out Nanny with you. I promised she should lend a hand, and see the chaff fly.”

Before John could reach the door, a sharp scream,—the scream of a child,—was heard from within. Mary flew to see what had happened, but just as she was entering, her brother, seeing that some one was behind her, slammed the door in her face, and was heard to bolt it. Mrs. Skipper would not listen to what she had to say about the child having a fall, but exclaimed,

“Well, I should not have thought Mr. Kay could have behaved in that manner to you; and he looked at me quite fierce, so as I thought had not been in his nature.”

And she stepped to the window to tap, and ask an explanation: but she caught a glimpse of something that quieted her, and sent her to stoop down over the wheat again, without looking at Mary, or speaking another word. Kay was carrying his wife up stairs. The helpless arm, hanging over his shoulder, was just visible, and the awe-struck children, suspending their crying, moved Mrs. Skipper to concern too deep to be expressed in her usual giddy speech.

“Which way are you going?” asked Mary at length. “I am off for the mill, as soon as I can get in to take the children with me.”

“And I home; and you may depend on me, you know for what. My tongue does run too fast sometimes, I know; but you may depend on me, as it was only by a chance that I was here.”

“Thank you!” replied Mary, warmly. “And I will take it kindly of you to show me the way about the bread, as soon as my corn is ground.”

By the united resources of the children within, the door was unbolted, and the party allowed egress into the street, when Mrs. Skipper turned down, and Mary up; the children asking her, one to go out of the way for the sake of the pond on the heath, and another hoping to jump down five steps of the mill-ladder, four having been achieved last time. Mary would have been glad to forget their mother as easily as they.

When Warden saw her toiling up the slope on the top of which the mill stood, her bundle on her head, and a child tugging at each side of her gown, he civilly came down to relieve her, and told her that she was more welcome than on the occasion of her last visit. It was a fine breezy day, he observed, and perhaps she might like to look about her from the top of the mill, if she did not mind the shaking that there always was in a wind. Mary thanked him, but dared not leave the children, lest they should put themselves in the way of the sails. This difficulty was soon obviated by the miller's taking the girl upon his shoulder, and calling to his man to bring up the boy, and let him play among the sacks in the first story, or climb higher, as he liked.

“I suppose you saw the fire finely from here, if you chanced to be looking out last night,” Mary observed.

“My man did, as he stayed to take advantage of the wind. He says it lighted up every turn of the river between this and Sheffield. You may see the smoke still, among the other smoke. Half the country has flocked there this morning, my father-in-law told me just now, as the passed on his way to pay his rent. It is a good time to choose to pay his rent, when every body is thinking of something else than emptying” his pockets. Otherwise, it is not the safest and pleasantest thing in the world to be carrying money over the by-road between this and Fergusson's. Yonder he goes, continued the miller, stooping to the little girl whom he was keeping steady with his arm round her waist. “Yonder goes Mr. Anderson, on his black mare. You may see him trotting along the lane between those young oaks.”

“He will come back slower in the evening when he has left his money behind him,” observed Mary.

“He will not wait till evening. He will just finish with the steward, and come home again, for the Mr. Fergussons are abroad over the country to-day; and besides, my father-in-law is wanted at home every hour of the day while the improvements are going on. Look how busy he is thereabouts.”

“I see; they drive the poor sheep higher and higher up the moors, with their walls and their ditches.”

“Yes, year by year.“ Before these many bad ”seasons, the sheep used to browse on this very slope where my mill stands. I used to come up among the bleaters every morning.”

“You speak as if the bad seasons were the cause of the change.”

“And so they are, mainly. Where numbers increase as they have done here in my time, more food will be wanted at all events, be the seasons what they may. But when the soil yields scantily, for years together, the inclosing will go on faster, from the cry for food. Yonder field, red even now with poppies, would never have been sown if the nine-acres in the bottom had yielded as they ought. The nine-acres used to yield as much as was reaped this year in itself and the poppy-field together.”

“And there has been all the cost of taking it in besides.”

“Yes. and my father-in-law does wisely to pay that cost (if he must pay it) before his rent is raised. He and the steward will have an argument about that rent to-day, I fancy. The lease will be up soon now, and rents are rising every where; and I suppose my father-in-law is content to let his mount up too. He would not otherwise be carrying on all these works.”

“I wonder at his being content to pay more rent after so many short harvests.”

“It is easier than after larger; for corn sells dear, more than in proportion to its scarcity. Nobody can tell you better than Anderson that a single short harvest makes a heavy pocket; much more a succession of short harvests.”

“Till the poor get a-head of the rate-payers, I suppose,—no longer. When Mr. Anderson has to maintain half of us down in the village, because we cannot buy food, he will find us lighten his pockets as fast as bad years can fill them.”

“The manufacturers must help him then. They must raise their people's wages——”

“And so must Anderson.”

“They must raise their people's wages, and maintain the poor in the towns, and in the working villages.”

“I wish the manufacturers joy of their good nature. They first pay dear for their own bread, and then pay dear for the labour which is to buy their workmen's bread, and then spend what profits are left in supporting those whose labour they cannot employ; and all to make Anderson's and other farmers' pockets heavy for a little while after bad seasons. I wish them joy of their patience.”

“Anderson will want patience too, when his turn comes. Depend upon it, as soon as he gets fairly saddled with a high rent and high rates, there will come a fine crop or two to make prices as low in proportion as they now are high. He cannot bring down his men's wages all in a day; much less can the rates be disburthened at once; and so it will be well if he makes ready beforehand for such a change.”

“I hope he does make ready; but what I see there looks little like it.”

“What, you mean the bay-window and balcony now making to my house, and the shrubbery he is laying out. All that was not wish of mine, for I thought the white house looked very neat as it was before; and the bit of garden behind was as much as my wife and I had time to attend to. But her father liked that his daughter's house should be improving while he was adding so much to his own, and he made us accept of the alteration, whether we would or no. He said, that while he was sending my wife's sister to Paris, and bringing up her brothers to look higher than he once thought of for them, he could not leave her neglected, as if he was ashamed of her having married more humbly than the other girls will do.”

“And his own house looks hardly like the same place. His having built up among all the rambling old parts gives it one face as a whole.”

“Yes; three more bad years, and it will look like a gentleman's mansion. Yes, yes; these are the joyous rent-days, when the steward gets every farthing, and pretends to shake his head because it is no more; and when the farmers try to look dismal about the short crops, and then sing merry songs over their ale,—such of them as have not taken to port. Well, the millers' day will come in time, it is to be hoped.”

“When will that be?”

“When the people are not setting their wits to work to make potato-bread, and eating every thing that grows rather than flour. We have had more going and coming, more watching and jealousy about waste, and more grumbling because we cannot grind for nothing,—more trouble of all sorts about a few trumpery bundles of gleanings this last week, than about fifty sacks when I first became a miller.”

“I will give you as little trouble as I can with mine,” said Mary; “but you must not call it a trumpery bundle, for it is worth much to me. If you knew how much, I might trust you not to waste any of it.”

“You would not dream of my wasting, if you saw how carefully I look to every grain. Why, I drive away the very birds themselves, if they light when the sails stop at any time. We do not leave the sweepings to them and the wind, as we used to do, but sift them as a housemaid sifts for pins. That is the reason why I do not offer your young master a handfull for the pigeons, as I used to do.”

“Don't think of it, pray. He is going to play with the ducks on the pond as we go home, and that will do as well: besides, I hear him laughing now, merry enough without the pigeons.”

“Playing hide and seek with Jerry among the sacks, I fancy.”

“Where he must have done playing for to-day,” observed Mary. “How quiet every place looks for a working day!” she continued, giving one more glance round the horizon before she descended. “Except the sheep, creeping like mites on the uplands, and the labourers gathering like ants about the new inclosures, I see nobody stirring.”

“I seldom see it so quiet, except on a starlight night, when there is no noise but the whizzing of the sails when they go by starts; or perhaps an owl from my gable. But you see the people in the quarries stick to their work, as if they had no share in what was doing last night.” And the miller looked full at Mary as he spoke. “I see a man or two with his pick in yonder stone-pit, hewing away as if nothing had happened. Cannot you see them? Well, it is a wonder your head has stood the shaking in this breeze for so long. Many people can fix their sight on nothing after the first two minutes.”

Mary was determined to see more of the quarries before she went home than could be discerned from the mill-top. She let one child peep into the hopper to see how the corn ran down to be ground, and the other to exhibit his jump of five steps, with a topple at the end of it, and then walked quickly away towards the part of the heath where bilberries were to be found, and where she thought she might leave her charge

safely employed while she looked into the quarry to see whether Chatham was really there, and whether or not he had had any transactions with the constables since she saw him last.

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Chapter IV.

A POOR MAN'S INDUCTION.

It took but a little time to show the children how to find bilberries, and not very much longer to teach them not to eat what they found; after which Mary was at liberty to walk round to the mouth of the stone-quarry, beside which the fashioning of grindstones went on, in subservience to the cutlery business of Sheffield. She avoided the sheds where the sawing and smoothing proceeded, and looked only among the men who were excavating the stone. But few were at work this day; Chatham was one of them. He was engaged high up, with his face to the rock, and having no glances to spare for the scene below him, or for the narrow, rough path by which his present position must be attained.

Mary had never been here before, and she lingered in hopes that Chatham might turn, and encourage her to go on. She gathered rag-wort from the moist recesses by the way, and paused to observe how the ivy was spreading over a portion of the stone face of the quarry which had been left untouched for some time, and to listen to the water trickling down among the weeds by a channel which it had worn for itself. As Chatham still did not turn, she proceeded to climb the path, being aware that children who were playing in the bottom had given notice of her presence, and that face after face peeped out from beneath the sheds to gaze, and then disappeared again. When at length she laid her hand on the arm of the toiling man, he started as if his tool had broken under his blow.

“Mary! what brought you here?”

“I heard that the constables were after you.”

“So did I; and here I am, if they choose to come.”

“And what next?”

“My words and deeds will be taken up against me, perhaps. Perhaps it may be found that I am a good friend to all the parties that were quarrelling last night. This last is what I wish to be.”

“And trying to be so. you will get blamed by all in turn.”

“By all at once, if they so please. As often as they choose to ask my opinion, as they did last night, they shall have it, though they themselves try to hoot me down. I do not want to meddle; but, being bid to speak out, I will speak, out of the fire or the water, if they bid me burn or drown. So it is not the notion of a constable that can frighten me.”

“Out of fire or water, would you? Then much more would you speak in a moonlight field. O, tell me if you were there.”

"How did you spend your thoughts, Mary, those nights that you sat by the spring, during the drought? What were you thinking about when your sister threw down the pitcher that you caught? That must have been a weary night to you both."

"You saw us! Then it is true; and you are one that hopes to get food by night-arming?"

"Not I. If the question of stinting food or getting plenty of it were waiting to be decided by arms,—the hungry on one side and the full on the other,—I would take up my pike with a hopeful heart, however sorry I might be that blood should be shed in settling so plain a matter. But what could a little band of pale complainers do, creeping under the shadows of yonder walls, with limbs as trembling as their hearts are firm? How should they be champions of the right while they are victims of the wrong? They must be fed before they can effectually struggle for perpetual food."

"Poor wretches! they did look, it seemed to me, as if they had no life nor spirit in them."

"The spirit goes from the sunk eye to swell the heart, Mary; and those that have not strength of arm this day, may prove, many a day hence, what their strength of purpose has been. This is what the authorities ought to look to. Instead of scouring the country to wake up a wretch from the noon-day sleep which he seeks because he has had no morning meal, they should provide against the time when his arm will be strong to make his hungry dreams come true. Instead of carrying one man in disgrace from his loom, and another from the forge, and another from the quarry, to tell the old story—'We have been patient long, and can endure no longer,' our rulers should be satisfying themselves whether this is one of the stories which is to have no end. It cannot be very pleasing to their ears. The wonder is, that if they are weary of it, they go on from century to century to cry, 'Tell us this story again.'"

"They cannot yet be so weary of it as we."

"No; for they hear others in turn with it,—tales of victories abroad, and of rejoicings at home in places where no poor man sets his foot. Their painters show them pictures of jolly rent-days, and the music they hear is triumphant and spirit-stirring. If they go abroad in the day, they laugh to see their enemies made mirth of in the streets; and if at night, they glorify themselves and one another in the light of illuminations. Thus they can forget our story for a while."

"I would rather they should come here than go myself among them, to be the merriest of the merry."

"Ay; if we could set each of them down in this vale as one of ourselves, they would be surprised to find how dismal night-lights are when they shine upon scowling brows and hollow cheeks; and how little spirit war-music has when it cannot drown the moans of the famished, and the cries of mothers weeping for their children."

"It seems to me that their very religion helps to deceive them about us. Last Sunday, the clergyman looked comfortably about him, and spoke very steadily when he read

about the springing corn in the furrows, and that the little hills rejoice on every side. I thought of the red poppies and the stones in Fergusson's new fields, and the scanty gleanings on the uplands, and my heart turned back from my Bible."

"It should not have done that, Mary. It is not that the Bible is in fault, but that some people read it wrong. There is never any day of any year when there are not springing grains and ripening harvests on God's earth."

"You ought to be able to speak to that, having gone so far round the world when you were a boy at sea."

"I can speak to it. If there are angels hovering over the fields, as 'tis said there once were, and if the earth lies stretched beneath them as in a map, they may point to one fruitful place or another, and never cease their song, 'Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. The pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered over with corn. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.'"

"But of what use is it to us that there is corn somewhere, if we have it not? Are we to bless God that he feeds some people somewhere, while there are still poppies and stones where we look for bread?"

"You might as well ask 'of what use is the fruit on the tree to him who sits hungering at its foot?' And, 'is not a parched traveller to repine at his thirst, when a well is springing in the neighbouring shade?' What would you say to hungering and thirsty men like these?"

"'Bless God that there is fruit, and climb to reach it. Be thankful that there is water, and go down to take your fill.'"

"We are required by our rulers to do one half of this reasonable thanksgiving, and to fore-go the remainder. We are bidden to thank God for his gifts, but forbidden to reach and take. —How great is the folly of this, you would see at a glance, if you could go where I have been."

"To see how perfectly happy people are in the fruitful places, while so many are suffering here? To see how unequal is the lot of dwellers in different countries?"

"Not so; but worse. There is but too much equality in the lot of dwellers in fruitful and on barren soils; between those who are too many for their food, and those who bury their spare corn out of their way. If some were satisfied while others suffer, the sufferers might be the more patient because all were not afflicted like themselves; but it is when all suffer, and might yield mutual relief, if they were not prevented, that patience is impossible. I would ask no man to have patience with our state who had seen the state of many others, striving after patience as painfully as we."

"What Others?"

"Why, there is the labouring man of Poland, for one. He creeps out of his log hut, shivering, half naked, in the first cold of autumn, to feed his pigs with the grain——"

“Grain! What sort of grain?”

“Wheat, or rye, as may happen; whichever happens to be rotting the fastest. Between him and the black forests on the horizon are plains, stretching away for leagues upon leagues, some sprinkled with a few cattle, and some showing a stubble that you would be glad to have the gleaning of; and others lying waste, though richer as soil than many a field of Anderson's.”

“O, but that is a shame, with the people so poor.”

“It would make the people no richer to till those wastes, unless the crops could sell. The people there do not want food——”

“So I think, if they feed their beasts on wheat and rye.”

“They want clothes, and good houses, and all that makes a dwelling comfortable; and yet, though our warehouses are overfull of broad cloth, and we could furnish twice as much metal-work as we do, if we had bread for the workmen, it is only by fits and starts that we will let Poland sell us corn, and clothe her sons. Then, again, near the Black Sea——”

“Is that sea really blacker than other seas?”

“The sun glitters there as bright as on the heaving Indian bays, and it is as blue when the sky is clear as any tarn in yonder hills. God has done all to make it beautiful, not only from above, but by spreading fertile tracts all along its shores. If man would do his part, sending ships upon its bosom, and leaving no spot desolate around, it might be made the happy place that, in my opinion, the whole earth might be made, and will be, some time or other.”

“The people are not happy there now, then?”

“Not what we should call happy, though they may like better than we should the flitting from plain to plain to gather corn, as bees flit from blossom to blossom for honey. They reap for three seasons from a field, and then move to another, leaving an exhausted soil and a desolate place behind them.”

“We might teach them husbandry, if they would let us have some of the fruits of it.”

“And then they might learn to live a little more like Christians than they do, and have some of the pleasures that we have, in the midst of all our hardships, in growing up from the state of brute beasts into that of thinking men. There are other parts,—in America,—where thinking men live who fret in the impossibility of making their children wiser and more civilized than themselves,—which should be every man's aim for his children. They can give them work,— but what is it all for?—food. They can give them work,—but what does it all consist of?— food. They can hold out a prospect of increase, —but of what?—food. They long for a thousand comforts, if they could but convert their corn into these comforts. They perceive that there are a thousand advantages and blessings over the sea, if they could but stretch out a long

arm to throw corn into our lap, and reach home—things which we can now use no more than they, because we have too little bread, and they have too much. Though their sons are thus condemned to be clowns, and ours to be paupers, we must hope that they will learn from our follies so to deal together as that the clown may become a wise man, and the pauper take his stand on the rights of his industry."

"But why, if so many countries are fruitful, is England alone barren?"

"England is fruitful in corn; but yet more so in men, and in arts which she chooses to make barren of food. England has corn on her hills, corn in her valleys, corn waving over her plains; yet this corn is not enough, or not always enough, for the multitudes who gather together in her villages, and throng her cities, and multiply about her workhouses. If this corn is not enough, England's duty is,—not to starve hundreds, or half-starve thousands of her children, but to bring out corn from all the apparatus of her arts. She should bring out corn from her looms, corn from her forges, corn from her mines; and when more than all this is wanted, let her multiply her looms and her forges, and sink new mines from which other millions may derive their bread."

"You dig bread from this hard rock, I suppose, when you furnish grindstones on which the cutlery is to he prepared which may be exchanged with the Russian and the American for corn."

"I do: and to limit this exchange is not only to limit the comforts of us workmen, but to forbid that there shall be more lives in our borders than the fruits of our own soil can support. There is room for myriads more of us, and for a boundless improvement of our resources; these resources are forbidden to improve, and these myriads to exist. Whence rulers derive their commission thus to limit that to which God has placed no perceivable bound, let them declare."

"Then there are not too many of us, if all were wise."

"By no means. If all were permitted to be as happy as God bids them be, there would be neither the recklessness of those who multiply without thought, nor the forced patience of those who have a conscience and listen to it. If all were wise, they would proportion their numbers to their food; but then that food would not be stinted by arbitrary laws which issue in evil to all. Our rulers turn away, if perchance they see in the streets infants that pine for a while, only to die; and pronounce that such children should never have been born. And it may be true; but it is not for our rulers to pronounce, except with shame; for it is only while waiting for their becoming just that it behoves the people to be as self-denying as they require."

"Strangers that pass this way for their pleasure," observed Mary, "wonder at the hardness of our shepherds in turning their tender lambs exposed upon the moors, where, if some thrive, many pine. Do not they themselves (as many of them as have to do with making laws) turn out the young of our cities into stony fields, where they pine like starving lambs?" There is small use in pitying—small kindness in saying that such should never have been born, if there are indeed fields where for stones they may gather bread."

“When I see money buried in the furrows of such fields,” replied Chatham, “I feel that it is taken twice from those whose due it is;—from the mechanic who, instead of standing idle, would fain be producing corn on his anvil; and from the spiritless boor abroad, who would as willingly exchange his superfluity to supply his need. When I see the harrow pass over such fields, I see it harrow human souls; and voices cry out from the ground, however little the whistling husbandman may heed them.”

“The husbandman will not long whistle, if all must at length scramble for food. His turn to see his infants pine must come at last”

“At last! It comes early, for there are more to follow. There is the farmer to swear that it is hard upon him that his labourers must live, as it is upon his substance that they must live. Then comes he for whom the farmer labours in his turn. He complains that, let the sunshine be as bright, the dews as balmy as they may, he can reap scarcely half the harvest of his gains, and that he is pressed upon by the crowds who come to him for bread.”

“He can hardly wonder at this, when it is he himself who forbids their going elsewhere. To what third party would he commend them?”

“Perhaps he would quote Scripture, as may be done for all purposes, and tell them that the clouds drop fatness, and bid them look up and await the promised manna. Till it comes, however, or till he and his tribe have unlocked the paths of the seas, he has no more right to complain of the importunity which disturbs him than the child who debars the thrush from its native woods has to be angry when it will not plume itself and sing, but beats against its wires because its fountain is no longer filled.”

“I could not but think something like this when I saw even so good a man as our Mr. Fergusson on rough terms with some of the people he met on the way, when he went out to view the harvest-home.”

“The harvest-home which used to be a merry feast when it was clear that its golden fruits were to be wealth to all! Now, there is no knowing what is to become of it; whether it shall be divided and consumed in peace, or scrambled for by men possessed by the demon of want, or burned by those who cannot share, and are therefore resolved that none others shall enjoy. It is said, and no one contradicts, that the harvest-moon rose clear, and lighted up alike every mansion and cottage in the dale; but I was abroad to see her rise; and I declare that with my mind's eye I beheld her eclipsed, shedding a sickly light, maybe, upon the manor and the farm, but blight and darkness into the dwellings of the poor.”

“It has ever been God's hand that has drawn a shadow over sun and moon, but now—”

“Now man has usurped the office, and uses his power, not once and again to make the people quail, but day by day. To none is the sun so dark as to the dim-eyed hungerer. To none is the moon so sickly as to the watcher over a pining infant's cradle. Let man remove the shadow of social tyranny, let him disperse the mists which rise from a

deluge of tears, and God's sun and moon will be found to make the dew-drops glitter as bright as ever on the lowliest thatch, and to shine mildly into humble chambers where those who are not kneeling in thanksgiving are blessing God as well by the soundness of their repose."

"Are those whom you meet at midnight of the same mind with yon? Do they go to church on Sunday to bring away this sort of religion for the week?"

"They do not go to church,—partly because they know themselves to be squalid,—partly because, as you say, their hearts turn back from their Bible. They are slow to believe that their soul-sickness will be pitied somewhere, if not by man. They no doubt feel also some of the unwillingness of guilt; but I can tell,—I will tell those whom it may concern,—that the way to bring these men from their unlawful drill into the church aisle is to preach to them full. and not hungering, that God giveth to all living things food in its season. This, like all other words of God, is true; but with his vicegerents rests the blasphemy if shrunken lips whisper that it is a lie.—Such sufferers, if they did make Sabbath, have not the leisure that I have to work out their religion by themselves, during the week, making it and toil lighten each other."

"So that is what you do in this place,—high up on the face of the stone, with no moving thing near you but these dancing weeds overhead, and no sound but the dull shock of your own blows! So your religion is what you think over all day!"

"In some form or other; but you know religion takes many forms;—all forms, or religion would be good for little. I am not always thinking of the church and the sermon; but sometimes of how I am to advise the people that come to me, and sometimes of what I could tell the powerful if I could get their ear; and oftener than all, Mary, of what was said between you and me the evening before, and what will be said this evening, and of what we may dare to look to in a future time."

"With so much to think about, you could do without me," said Mary, smiling. "You would hardly miss me much, if I was drowned to-morrow, till the country is quiet, and there is nothing more to be complained of."

"Meanwhile, Mary, you want nothing more, I suppose, than to clean trenchers and wash and mend stockings. To do this would make you perfectly happy for evermore, would it?"

"It is light work cleaning trenchers for a half-starved family." replied Mary: "and as for the stockings, the children are going barefoot, one by one. So, no light jesting, Chatham; but tell me—;"

"Who these men are just at your shoulder? They are constables, and come for me, I rather think."

"And what next?" inquired Mary, as she had done half an hour before.

"I know no more than when you asked me last; but I suppose they will either let me come back here to think over the matters we have been talking about, or put me where

I may consider them at more leisure still, not having my tools with me wherewith to hew down stone walls. You well know, in that case, Mary, what I shall be thinking about and doing; and so you will not trouble yourself or be frightened about me. Promise me."

"Certainly: what should I be frightened about?" asked Mary, with white lips. "You cannot have done wrong,—you cannot have joined in—"

She stopped short, as the constable was within hearing. His office was an easy one, as Chatham cheerfully surrendered himself; and Mary turned to descend, as soon as he had flung on his coat and disposed of his tools. They were permitted to walk arm-in-arm, and to talk, if they chose to do it so as to be overheard. Not being at liberty in heart and mind for such conversation as the constable might share, they passed in silence the groups of workpeople, some of whom grinned with nervousness or mirth, and others gazed with countenances of grave concern; while a very few showed their sympathy by carefully taking no notice of what must be considered the disgrace of their companion. In a little while, Mary was told she must go no farther; and, presently after, she was at the door of her own home, with a child in each hand,— one talking of bilberries, and the other telling a story of a duckling in the pool, which had billed a worm larger than it knew what to do with; and how it ended with dropping the worm in deep water, and, after a vain poke in pursuit of it, had scuttled after the rest of the brood. All this Mary was, or seemed to be, listening to, when her brother looked out from the door, and told her impatiently that he had been watching for her this half-hour. His wife was asleep at present; but he had not liked to leave her alone in the house, much as he wished to go out and see what sort of a net the constables were drawing in.

"Have you heard of anybody that they have taken?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Well! Anybody that we know?"

"Yes; Chatham."

Kay looked at her for a moment, sent the children different ways, and then looked at her again.

"You are not down-hearted, Mary?"

"No."

"He will come out clear, depend upon it: my life upon it, it will turn out well. Oh! it will turn out a good thing,—a real good thing!"

"Everything does."

"Ay, ay, in the end; but I mean——But come, sit you down. I am in no hurry to go out; and I will get you something after your long walk."

“Pray do not; I do not wish it, indeed. I will help myself when I am hungry.”

As she seemed not to want him, Kay thought perhaps he had better go. Before he closed the door behind him, he saw that Mary was taking a long, deep draught of cold water.

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Chapter V.

TAKING COUNSEL.

As there was sufficient evidence, in the magistrate's opinion, of Chatham's having been once present at the midnight drill, and active among the crowd by the river-side the night before, he was committed to prison, it being left to himself to prove, at the time of trial, for what purposes he had mixed himself up with the rioters. As he was a very important personage in his village, his jeopardy excited much speculation and interest. For the first two or three days, there was much curiosity among the neighbours to see Mary, in order to observe how she took it. Mary was somehow always busy with her sister and the children; but when a gossip or two had become qualified to testify to her aspect—that she looked just as usual,—and when the children were found to have nothing particular to tell about her, everybody was vexed at having been troubled on behalf of a person who was never put out, happen what might.

Times were so flat this autumn that there was abundance of leisure for talking about whatever might turn up, and no lack of tongues to treat thereof. Some of the foundry-men were turned off, as it had been necessary to raise the wages of those who remained. As there was no in-crease of business at the time this rise of wages took place, and as Oliver himself was living at a larger expense as provisions became dearer, there was no alternative for him but to turn off some of his men, contract his business, and be as content as he could with smaller profits than he had ever before made. By the rise of wages, his remaining men were, for a short time, relieved from the extreme of misery they had endured in the interval between the great increase in the cost of provisions and the raising of their wages; but they were no richer than they had formerly been with two thirds of the nominal amount of the present recompense of their labour. Want still pressed, and must still press, up to the point of Oliver having no more wages to give, unless the deficiencies of the harvest might be supplied by large importations from abroad. In the uncertainty whether this would be done, and with the certainty before their eyes that there had not been food enough in the country for three years past, Anderson and the neighbouring farmers took in more and more land. and flung about the abundance of money they received for their dear corn.

This money was not the less buried in the inferior new land for its being passed from hand to hand among the labourers. The guinea that came out of Anderson's profits of the preceding year, to be paid to Kay as wages, was spent in buying a third less bread of Mrs. Skipper than might have been had in better years. The baker, in her turn, bought less flour of Warden with it than in former times; and Warden used it for a dear bargain with Kirkland, ad Kirkland with Anderson for wheat. Anderson paid it to the ploughman of his new fields, for less labour than the same sum had procured for better land, and with the prospect of a less return to the labour employed. The guinea would then go again into Mrs. Skipper's till for still less bread than before; while

Anderson was making answer to all com-plaints about this waste, that he should not long be the better for it, as the taking in of every new field would oblige him to pay his landlord more of the produce of every superior field at the expiration of his lease.

The circulation of this morsel of wealth, dwindling on every transfer, was easily traceable in a small society like that of the village. The waste could be detected in every direction, and the landlord stood marked as the focus of it. Whether Mr. Fergusson was the better for the waste incurred on his account was a separate question; and, till it was decided, he stood in a remarkable relation to the people about him: he was their injurer and their benefactor;—their injurer, in as far as he was one of the persons for whose sake a bad system was upheld;—their benefactor, in his capacity of a wealthy and benevolent resident among them. He was taunted with being the landowner, and was offered obeisance as Mr. Fergusson. All were complaining that he received an unconscionable share of the fruits of their labour: but there was not one who would not have grieved at any misfortune that might befall him. They talked loudly against him and his class for narrowing the field of their exertions, and praised the pains and good-nature with which he devised employment for those who were perpetually being turned out of work.

The fact that he must have supported these extra labourers as paupers, if he had not rather chosen to get some work out of them in return for the cost of their subsistence, made no difference in the kindness with which Mr. Fergusson attended to their interests, and endeavoured to preserve in them a spirit of independence till better times. The effort was vain under a system which authorized men to say that they had not surrendered their independence, but that it had been taken from them, and that those who took it away might make the best they could of its absence. Notwithstanding all that Fergusson could do, paupers increased in the parish: and while a few stout men, who were turned off from the various works in the neighbourhood, were taken on by Anderson, to try their hands at a new kind of labour, many more lay about asleep on the moors, or gathered in knots to gossip, in the intervals of being worse employed.

No place could be obtained for Kay's boy, John, who pleased himself with looking about him while he had no business to do, and amusing himself as he best could. The less objection was made to this at home, as it was hoped that his curiosity might now and then make him forget the time, and justify his going without a meal—a consideration which was becoming of more and more importance in Kay's family. It happened that Bill Hookey, the shepherd-lad, was one day leaning against the door of a cutler's workshop, when his old companion. John, ran up, pushing back his hair from his hot forehead.

“I'd be glad to be as cool as you,” said John, “standing gaping here. I have been at the forge: crept in when they did not see me, and got behind the bellows. I gave them such a puff when they were not expecting it,—I nearly got flogged. They let me off for blowing for them till there was no more breath in my body than in the empty bellows. But I don't half like standing here: come to the other side: you will see just as well.”

Bill stuck out his legs colossus-fashion, and yawned again.

“'Twas just where you are standing that Brett was when the grindstone flew; and those grindstones make ugly splinters, I can tell you.”

“I a'n't afraid.”

“No, because you've been in the moors all your days, and have not seen mishaps with grindstones and such. You should have seen Duncan. The knife he was grinding flew up, and it was a done thing before he knew what he was about. The cut was only across the wrist; but the whole arm was perished, and good for nothing, just in that minute. The Duncans are all off to Scotland, with nothing to look to, after having had fine wages all this time—for he was a capital workman; but, as Anderson says, we have too many folks out of work here already to be expected to keep a Scotchman. What accidents do happen to people, to be sure!”

“Aye, they do.”

“Then I wonder you put yourself in the way of one, when you would be quite safe by just crossing over.”

“Oh! grindstones very often don't fly, nor knives either.”

“But they very often do.”

“He a'n't afraid,” observed Bill, nodding towards the cutler.

“No, because he is paid high for the risk. Well, I wonder any wages will tempt a man to have such a cough as that. I suppose, however, he don't believe where it will end, as we do. I often think, if several were to take turns, and change their work about, there would be a better chance. If ever I am a cutler, I will try that way, if I can get anybody else of the same mind.”

“Not you,” said Bill; “you will do like the people before you.”

“Perhaps I may, when the time comes, I may no more like to try my hand at a new thing than you. Have you asked anybody for work hereabouts?”

“The flock is all sold, higher up the country,” replied Bill. “They would not let me stay on the walk when the flock was gone.”

“I know that; and how you got it into your head that you might go on sleeping in the hut just the same when the place was a field as when it was a sheep-walk. They say they had to take you neck and heels to turn you out, if you would not have the roof down over your head. Why did not you bestir yourself in time, and get work from Anderson, before others stepped before you?”

“There are no sheep now for anybody to keep.”

“Well; if you have no mind to do anything but keep sheep cannot you go higher up, among the graziers, and offer yourself?”

“I don't know anybody thereabouts, nor yet the walks.”

“No, nor ever will, of your own accord,” thought John. “What would you be now, Bill, if you might never be a shepherd again?”

Bill only rubbed his hand over the back of his head, and shifted his weight from both legs to one. Few things could daunt John's love of talk.

“What became of the poor little lamb you were nursing that night that I was on the moors? It was too tender, surely, to walk up into the hills with the rest.”

“It be well if he be not dead by this time,” replied Bill. “I carried him full two miles myself, and I told 'em how to feed him and when; and, for all I could say, they minded no more when he complained—O, they don't understand him no more than if he was a puppy-dog. When I bid him good-bye, he looked up at me, though he could scarce speak to me. He did speak, though, but he would not so much as look at the new shepherd, and if it was not for the ewe——”

“What's coming?” cried John, interrupting his companion's new loquacity. “Let us go and see. I dare say it is somebody fresh taken up. Do you know, I went to see Chatham's jail, the other day. Father locked doors against me because l came home so late; but I had a mind to see what sort of a place it was. I may be in it some day. I should not mind being anywhere that Chatham has been.”

“You that can't stand being flogged!”

“Chatham is not going to be flogged. They say it will be ‘Death Recorded.’”

“What's that?”

“Transportation.”

“Why can't they say so at once?”

“I don't know: but they often speak in the same way. I have heard Chatham say that they talk of ‘agriculture,’ and nobody means just the same as they do by it. Some say 'tis farmers, and some say 'tis landlords, and some that 'tis having corn.”

“I think it is keeping sheep.”

“No, no: the Parliament does not meddle with keeping sheep. When they are asked to ‘protect agriculture,’ Chatham says, Anderson understands, ‘take care of the farmer,’ and Mr. Fergusson, ‘have an eye to the landlords,’ and all the rest of us,—except you, you say.—‘let us have corn.’

Bill yawned, and supposed it was all one. John being of a different opinion, and seeing that a very knowing personage of the village, who vouchsafed him a word or two on occasion, was flourishing a newspaper out of the window of the public-house, ran off to try whether the doubtful definition was likely to be mended by the wise men of the Cock and Gun.

He found that there was a grand piece of news going from mouth to mouth, and that everybody seemed much pleased at it. He did not know, when he had heard it, what it meant; but as the hand which held the newspaper shook very much, and two or three men waved their hats, and women came running from their doors, and even the little children clapped their hands and hugged one another, he had no doubt of its being a very fine piece of news indeed. Bill had slowly followed, and was now watching what John meant to do next.

“I don't believe they have heard it at the foundry yet,” thought John. “I'll be the first to tell it them.”

And off he ran, followed by Bill, and gradually gained upon bv him. Now, Bill's legs were some inches longer than little John's, and, if he had the mind, there was no doubt he might be the first at the foundry to tell the news. This would have been very provoking, and the little runner put out all his strength, looking back fearfully over his shoulder, stumbling in consequence, and falling; rising as cold with the shock as he was warm when he fell, and running on again, rubbing his knee, and thinking how far he should be from hobbling like Bill, (with head hung back, bent knees, and dangling arms,) if he had Bill's capacity of limb. What Bill wanted was the heart to use his capacities. He soon gave over the race, even against his little friend John, first slackening his speed, and then contriving to miss the bustle both before and behind him by stopping to lean over a rail which looked convenient for a lounge.

John snapped his fingers triumphantly at the lazy shepherd-boy on reaching the foundry gate. He rushed in, disregarding all the usual decorums about obtaining entrance. Through the paved yard ran John, and into the huge vault where the furnaces were roaring, and where all the workmen looked so impish that it was no wonder he did not immediately discover his father among them. He nearly ran foul of one who was bearing a ladle of molten metal of a white heat, and set his toot on the exquisitely levelled sand-bed which was prepared to from the plate. Scolded on one side, jostled on another, the breathless boy could only ask eagerly for his father.

“Let go the lad's collar,” cried one of the workmen to another, adding in a low voice, “'Tis some mishap about his poor mother. Can't ye help him to find his father?”

Kay was roasting and fuming in the red glare of one of the furnaces when his boy's wide eves looked up in his face, while he cried,

“There's such news, father! The greatest news there has been this many a day. There's an Order in Council, father; and the people are all about the Cock and Gun, and the newspaper is bring read, and everybody coming out of their houses. Only think, father! It is certainly true. There is an Order in Council.”

“An Order in Council! Well, what of that? What is the Order about?”

“About? O, they did not Say what it is about,—at least, nobody that I heard speaking. But I'll run back and ask, directly.”

“You will do no such thing. You would bring back only half your story. What should a child know about an Order in Council?” he asked of his fellow-workmen, who began to gather round. “Can't one of you go and learn what it is he means?—for I suppose some news is really come; and I can't leave the furnace just now.”

John slunk away mortified to a corner where he could spread wet sand. in case any passing workman should be bountiful enough to spare him the brimmings of some overflowing ladle. It was very odd that his father did not seem to understand his news when everybody, down to the very babies, seemed to be so glad of it at the Cock and Gun.

The messenger soon returned, and then the tidings produced all the effects that the veriest newsmonger could have desired. John ceased his sand-levelling to creep near and listen how there had been issued an Order in Council for opening the ports, and allowing the importation of foreign grain. There was a great buzz of voices, and that of the furnace was the loudest of all.

“Now you hear, lad,” said one of the boy's tormentors. “The Order is for the importation of foreign grain.”

“Just as if I did not know that half-an-hour ago,” said John solemnly. “Why, I was at the Cock and Gun the minute after the news came.”

And the lad rescued himself from the man's grasp; and went in search of some one else whom he might throw into a state of admiration. He met Mr. Oliver himself, saying,

“What is all this about? The people stand in the heat as if it was no more than a warm bath; and my work is spoiling all the time, I suppose.”

“They are talking about the news, sir,—the great news that is just come.”

“News? What news?”

“The King is going to unbar the forts, sir; and he allows the importance of foreign grain.”

“It is high time he should. Your father and I have seen the importance you speak of, this long while.”

“I'll warrant you have, sir. And now, perhaps, father will let me go and see it, if you speak a word to him.”

Mr. Oliver laughed, and told him he would probably see more of it than he liked as he grew up. John thought he had rather not wait till then to see the sight; besides that he thought it hardly likely that the King should go on unlocking forts all that time. The fort that he could just remember to have seen, when his grandfather once took him a journey, might, he believed, be unlocked in five minutes. The young politician proceeded on his rounds, hoping to find a dull person here and there, who had rather go on with his castings, and be talked to, than flock with the rest round the main furnace.

"Well, good fellows," said Mr. Oliver, "what is your opinion of this news?"

"That it is good, sir, as far as it goes; and that it will be better, if it teaches some folks to make such laws as will not starve people first, and then have to be broken at last."

"The laws chop and change so that it seems to me overhard to punish a man for breaking them," observed another. "That law against buying corn when it is wanted is bad enough in the best times, as we can all tell; but if you want damning proof, look to the fact that they are obliged to contradict it upon occasion;—not once only, but many times;—as often as it has wrought so well as to produce starvation."

Kay thought, that putting out a little temporary law upon a great lasting one, was like sending a messenger after a kite,—which proves it ill-made and unlikely to sustain itself. Somebody wondered what Fergusson would think of the news.

"What matters it to us what he thinks?" answered another. "He has stood too long between us and our food;—not knowingly, perhaps; but not the less certainly for that."

Mr. Oliver wished that his men could talk over their own case without abusing their neighbours. He would not stand and hear a word against Mr. Fergusson on these premises.

"Then let us say nothing about Mr. Fergusson, sir, for whom, as is due, I have a high respect. When I mentioned him, I meant him as the receiver of a very high rent; and I maintain that if we make corn by manufacturing, with fire and water, what will buy corn, we are robbed if we have not bread. Deny that who can."

And the speaker brandished his brawny arm, and thrust forward his shining face in the glowing light, to see if any one accepted his challenge. But all were of the same mind.

Mr. Oliver, however, observed that, though he had as little cause as any one to relish the disproportionate prosperity of the landlords in a time of general distress, he wished not to forget that they were brought up to look to their rent as he to look to the returns of his capital, and his men to their wages.

"That is the very thing I complain of," said Kay; "that is, I complain of the amount of rent thus looked for. In as far as a landowner's property is the natural fruit of his own and his ancestors' labour and services,—or accidents of war and state, if you will,—let him have it and enjoy it, so long as it interferes with no other man's property, held on

as good a claim. But if by a piece of management this rent is increased out of another man's funds, the increase is not property,'—I take it,—but stolen goods. If a man has a shopkeeping business, with the capital, left him, the whole is his property, as long as he deals fairly; but if he uses any power be may have to prevent people buying of his neighbours, and thus puts any price he pleases upon his goods, do you mean to say that his customers may not get leave if they can to buy at other shops, without any remorse as to how the great shopkeeper may take such meddling with his 'property?' Give us a free trade in corn, and our landowners shall be heartily welcome to the best rents they can get. But, till that is done, we will not pretend to agree in making them a present of more of the fruits of our labour the more we want ourselves. The fruits of our labour are as much our property as their rents are theirs, to say the least; and if it was anything but food that was in question we would not be long in proving it; but food is just the thing we cannot do without, and we cannot hold out long enough to prove our point."

"They will find it all out soon," replied Mr. Oliver." Whatever is ruinous for many of us must be bad for all, and such men as Fergusson will see this before long."

"They will not see it, sir, till they feel it; and what a pass *we* must have crone to before they will feel enough to give up a prejudice some hundred years old!"

"Before we can ask them to give up the point entirely, we must relieve them of some ot the taxes which bear particularly upon them. Their great cry is about the weight of their taxation. They must first be relieved in that respect."

"With all my heart. Let them go free of taxation as great folks, in the same way that my wife and Mary are let off free at cards on Christmas night, because they are women. This was the case with the old French nobility, I have heard. They paid no taxes: and so let it be with our landowners, if they choose to accept the favour of having their burdens borne by the sweating people to whom they would not own themselves obliged in respect of money matters if they met in the churchyard, though the time may not be far off when they must he side by side under the sod."

"Their pride must be pretty well humbled before they would accept of that kind of obligation. They had need go to church, in those days, to learn to bear the humiliation."

"Perhaps that is what they go to church for now, sir; for they are now taking much more from us than they would in the case I have mentioned. I don't say they all do it knowingly,— nor half of them. There are many of our rich men who would be offended enough at being told, 'Your eldest son's bills at Eton were paid last year by contributions from three hedgers, and five brass-founders, and seven weavers, all of whom have families only half-fed.' 'Miss Isabella's beautiful bay mare was bought for her by the knife-grinder, who has gone to bed supperless, and the work-woman who will have no fire next winter, and the thirty little children who are kept from school that Miss Isabella's bay mare may be bought.' O yes; there are many who are too proud to bear this being said to them, true though it be."

“They would call you a leveller, Kay, if they could hear you.”

“Then I should beg leave to contradict them; for a leveller I am not.—I have no objection on earth to young gentlemen going to Eton, or young ladies riding bay mares, if these things are paid for by the natural rent which a free trade in corn would leave. If we have that free trade, and workpeople still go to bed supperless and sit up without fire, still let young gentlemen go to Eton, and young ladies ride bay mares. In that case, the landlords will be absolved, and the hardship must go to the account of imprudence in some other quarter. O, I am no leveller? Let the rich keep their estates, as long as they will let them find their own value in comparison with labour. It is the making and keeping up laws which make land of more and more value, and labour of less and less, that I complain of.”

“But you did not really mean, Kay,” said a bystander, “that you would let off every man that has land from paying taxes? It is the most unfair thing I ever heard of.”

“It is unfair enough, but much less unfair and ruinous than the present plan. It is better worth our while to pay the landowners' taxes than to lose ten times the amount to enable the landowners to pay them; and that is what we are doing now.”

“Ten times as much as the landlords pay in taxes?”

“Yes,” replied Oliver. “We pay, as a nation, 12,500,000*l*. more for corn than we should pay if our ports were open to the world. Of this, not more than one-fifth goes into the pockets of the landowners, the rest being, for the most part, buried in poor soils. Now if the landlords pay one-half of this fifth in taxes, it is as much as their burden can be supposed to be. And now, which of you would not be glad to take his share of this one-tenth, to get rid of the other nine?”

“Every one of us would go down on his knees to pray the landlords to permit us to pay their taxes, if we could but tell how to get at the gentlemen.”

“The landlords would need no such begging and praying, I trust,” said Mr. Oliver, “it they saw the true state of the case. I hope and believe they would be in a hurry to surrender their other tenth, if they could see at what an expense to the people it was raised.”

Some heartily believed it, but Kay asked why the landowners did not see the state of the case; —a question which it was not easy to answer, unless it was that they did not attend to it. And why did they not attend to it?—attend to it, not merely so far as to sanction an Order in Council for the admission of food when the people were on the brink of starvation, but so as to calculate justly how much corn we grow, how many of our people are properly fed upon that corn, how we may most cheaply get more corn, and—— (but that is a matter beyond human calculation) —how many more busy and happy people might live within our borders if we and the other parts of the earth had free access to each other. If our rich men once attended to this large question, they would see what we see; and seeing, they would surrender, and——”

"And be far richer, as well as happier, than they are now. But, never fear! They will feel soon; and feeling helps seeing marvellously.

"It was found so in the case of the bounty on the exportation of corn. The landowning legislators thought they saw plainly enough, once upon a time, that it was a capital thing for all parties to give a present to every man who would sell corn abroad:—it would employ more hands in tillage than were employed before; it would secure a supply in case of scarcity; it would increase the value of landed property by causing the greatest possible quantity of land to be cultivated. This is what they saw in vision,—or rather through a pair of flawed spectacles. It ended in the labourers producing only half as much wealth in a forced tillage as they might have made in manufactures, if food had been free; in exposing us to the danger of famine, as often as the deficiency of the crops exceeded what we sent out of the country, (no other nation being prepared to send us corn in a burry, as if we were regular buyers:) and lastly, in sending a great deal of capital out of this country into others where living was cheaper. At first, no doubt, tillage was brisk, and some of the objects seemed to be answered: but this that I have described was the end. Then the landlords saw, for the first time, that, in giving the bounty to our corn-sellers, they had been offering a bribe to foreigners to buy our corn cheaper than we could afford to sell it. A pretty bargain for us! So that pair of flawed spectacles broke to pieces on being examined, and——"

"And now they must break another pair before they will learn that they can see best with the eyes God gave them, if they will but put them to the right use. I am not for spectacles, unless there is something the matter with the eyes. And, in the same way, I am not for any man helping himself with the opinions of a class because he belongs to a class, unless he has such a faulty reason of his own that he would do worse if left to judge for himself. Let such of our landowners as are incompetent go on upholding the corn laws because their class has always done so; but let such of them as are men stand out, and judge for themselves, after looking the case plainly in the face. I am not afraid of what their judgment would be, especially as some of the richest and wisest have done so already. Honour be upon them!"

The men were perhaps the more disposed to give honour where honour was due from their notion on the smallness of the number of landowners in those days to whom they could award it. They gave three cheers to the Privy Council for having issued the present Order; and to the few landowners who advocated a free trade in corn. That done, they began to inquire what this order was to do for them, and found that it would just serve to avert the starvation of the people, now, and might probably lead to the rain of a good many farmers within a few months; which ruin must be ascribed, should it arrive, not to the Order in Council, but to the previous state of things which it was designed to repair. Prices had been rising so rapidly from week to week since the quarterly average had been taken, that there was no saying how far even oats might be out of the reach of the poorer classes, before the next quarterly average could be struck, and prices be proved to have risen to the point at which the law authorized the importation of corn. To save the people from perishing while waiting for the quarter to come round, this order was issued without leave of parliament; and, as it would have the effect of lessening the general panic, in the first, place, and also

of bringing a large supply into the kingdom, the probability was that the farmers would find prices falling by spring-time, rapidly,—ruinously for them, calculating as they had done on high prices continuing till next harvest, and laying their plans of expense accordingly.

But all this would be a fine thing for Oliver, would not it?

In as far as cheaper living was a good to him and his people, and in as far as more manufactures would be wanted to go abroad, it would be a benefit; but fluctuations in the fortunes of any class of society,—be they farmers or any body else,—are bad for the rest of society. For every farmer that is ruined, the manufacturing and commercial world suffers; and Mr. Oliver would rather therefore,—not only that corn had not been so dear as it now was,— but that it should not be so cheap as it might now soon be, unless its cheapness could be maintained. Fluctuations apart, the cheaper the better; but it was a strange and unhappy way of going on, first to rain one class by high prices, and then to ruin another by low prices.

All this was allowed to be very true; yet the substantial fact remained, that the day of the manufacturer and mechanic was probably approaching, and that a season of cheap bread was in prospect, let what might follow in its train in the shape of disastrous consequence.

This was enough to proceed upon in rejoicing, and when the furnaces had been duly fed, by strong and willing hands, and a few plates cast amid more talking than was usual during so nice an operation, Oliver's day-men turned out like school-boys on a holiday morning, and tried which, could get first to the Cock and Gun. There they stood, regardless of the chill of the breeze after the heats of the foundry. How could they be sensible to it when they felt that the icy grasp of poverty on their heartstrings was relaxing, and the warm currents of hope had leave again to flow?

Kay was not one of the talkers at the public house. It was so long since he had bad any pleasant news to carry home, that he was impatient to lose no time about it.

This was one of Mrs. Kay's dismal days. She seldom made any complaints; but there were times when the tears would run down her face for hours together, while there appeared to be no particular reason: and she sometimes said she could not account for it herself. On those occasions, she was not moody, or disposed to speak by signs rather than words, as was often her way; she would speak, and move about, and even try to laugh; but still the tears would run down, and she was obliged to give the matter up. Thus it was to-day, though Mary had not yet parted with the hope that, between them, they might stop the tears.

“Which way did John run?” asked Mary. “Did you happen to see, sister?”

“Down by the coal wharf I think,” she replied, speaking rapidly. “O yes, it must have been by the coal wharf, because———No; it was not: that was yesterday. It could not have been to-day, because his father bade him go up the lane to gather acorns for the

pig. That I should have forgot it was yesterday, he went to the wharf! But that is always the way with my head. It is so——”

“It will be better when you have tried the medicine from the dispensary a little longer. What a kind, pleasant gentleman that is at the dispensary! He told me he really believed you would be better directly, if———”

“I shall never be better,—never,—head nor heart, till I see these poor children of mine—— and my husband too——”

“Well well: cheer up! They will be better fed soon, please God. Don't let that trouble you. to night, when you feel yourself not strong.”

“And there's Chatham too. That lies at my heart, Mary, more than you know. I must tell you so, for you have been a kind sister to me and mine.”

“I should be sorry it should lie so heavy at your heart,” said Mary, very quietly. “I thank you for him; but you must not make yourself unhappy about me. I am thinking your husband will be home soon. The sun has been down some good while.”

After a silence, she went on:—

“You should have seen Betsy this morning, how prettily she made the bed, though she could scarce reach up to the bolster. Did you happen to look how she set about it?”

“No. I have been thinking, Mary, how completely you and I are changed. It is not so long since you used to check me for talking; or rather, I used to check myself, seeing that you were no talker. You used to say that people were not all made talkers alike; and you went up and down, and about the house, just like a dumb person, and sometimes looking as dull too. And now——I say, Mary, when I don't answer you, you must not always think that I am thankless. And I know what it must cost yon to be for ever saying something cheerful and pleasant, when Chatham is in gaol, and the cupboard is so often empty, and I such a poor, good-for-nothing—— No, no! Don't try to persuade me. I tell you I can't bear myself, and I don't ask you or any body to bear with me. Mercy! now here's my husband! and I in this condition.”

“Heyday! it is time I was coming home, I see,” cried Kay, good humouredly, as he entered. “You too, Mary! Well, dear, you have cause, so don't turn away; I have only wondered to see none of this before; but I have something for you both. Something we have not had this many a-day. Something better than ever was in this or any other physic bottle,” he continued, shaking the dispensary phial and telling the news.

Mary had no sooner made herself mistress of it than she disappeared, probably to devise the means of getting the intelligence conveyed to her lover. As soon as she was gone, Kay drew a chair beside his wife, saying,—

“Now we are alone, Margaret, and times are like to change, so as to give one the heart to speak, I have something to say to you.”

“O, no, don't,” cried she, starting up. “I know “what you are going to say.”

“You do not;” and he obliged her to sit down. “Don't tremble so, for I am not going to find fault with you in any way.”

“Then you ought. I am a poor, lost——”

“Not lost, Margaret. We have all near lost ourselves in such times as we have had of late; except indeed Mary, who will never lose herself, it is my opinion, it has come across me, Margaret, that I may have hurt you sometimes, with-out thinking, with light talk when you had not spirits for it, (not that I had real spirits, for that matter,) and with saying silly, things to Mrs. Skipper, and the like. Ah! I see you felt it so; and it is no wonder you should. But you may take my word for if, I think nothing of Mrs. Skipper, nor ever did. Only, one is driven on, one does not know how, to behave foolishly when one is near desperate at heart.”

“And that's my fault.”

“Not altogether. No! not by any means. There were many things besides—besides one—to make me unwilling to look back to the time when we used to walk in Fergusson's oak copse, and say——Nay, Margaret, if you cannot hold up your head in thinking of that time, where should you rest it but upon our husband's shoulder, as you did then? How can you turn away so, as if I was your enemy? Well, I turned away too from the thought of those days, knowing, all the while, that it was a bad sign to turn away.”

“And to think of all that has happened since! Of all these children, and of my being such a bad mother—”

“It was the children I most wanted to speak about, especially John. But come, now, Margaret, open your mind to me, and don't be afraid. It was want and downright weakness that first led you into it. Was not it?”

“O, it began long and long ago. When I was weakly as a girl, they used to give me things, and that was the beginning of it all. Then when I grew weakly again, it seemed to come most natural, especially because it was cheaper than bread, and the children wanted all we could get of that.”

“So, often when you have pretended to have no appetite, it was for the children's sake and mine. Well, I half thought so all the time.”

“No, not often; only at the beginning. Afterwards it was true that I could not eat,—no, not if the king's dinner had been before me. I did try for long to get the better of the habit, and three times I thought I had; but a sinking came, and I could not bear it. That was twice; and the third time, it was your joking sharply about——But that was no reason. I don't mean to say it was. You don't know what the support is for the time, John, whatever comes after it. It raises one; and yet I remember times—many times—when I knew I could not speak sensibly if you spoke to me, and yet I prayed and prayed that I might die before the morning light.”

“Does that mean that you were less afraid of God than of me?”

“No, I did not think of being afraid, exactly; but I wanted to be out of your way and the children's; and, for my own part, I should have been very glad to be at rest.”

After a long pause, John resumed.

“You said you tried three times to leave it off. Do you think you could try again?”

“No, John, I do not think I could.”

“Not for my sake,—as you say I drove you into it last time? Not for your own sake? for nobody knows but ourselves, I dare say. I have never breathed it, and Mary——”

“O, Mary has vexed me many a time,—taking such pains, and having so many reasons and excuses with the neighbours. Why,—do you sup pose I never met anybody? And then there was the night that Mrs. Skipper, of all people in the world, gave me her arm. I was forced to take it, but—”

“Mrs. Skipper! Really! She never breathed a word. Depend upon it, she never told any body.”

“If she did not, I am sure I have told plenty of people myself: so don't say any more about it, John.”

“I was just going to say, that now is the time for trying. We are going to have better living, I hope, which is what you will want; and I am sure Mary and I do not care what there is for us if we could see you recover. If you will only give us the word, we will watch and watch, night and day; and you shall have all manner of help, and comfort, and no more thoughts of cruel joking, or of Mrs. Skipper. O, Margaret, try!”

“I am almost sure I cannot,” muttered the poor woman; “but I will just try.”

“Ah! do, and I should not wonder.—You talk of being at rest; and it may be a rest in this very room,—on that very bed,—such as you little thought of when you wished your wish.”

Margaret shook her head. “If I go on, I die; if I leave off, I die; it is all one.”

“No, Margaret, it is not all one; for I have one more thing to say,—and the chief thing. The children do not fully understand yet, though I have seen John wonder-struck lately, and his aunt could not put him off.”

“Why should she?”

“Just because neither she nor I choose that the children should grow used to see drunkenness before their eyes indifferently. I speak plain, because it is about those who cannot speak for themselves. Do you know now what I mean to say?”

“Go on.”

“I mean to say, (and to do it too,) that as often as I see you not yourself, I shall tell the children, not that their mother is ill, or low-spirited, or any thing else,—but what is really the case. Now, Margaret, how will you bear this? Remember I shall really do it, from this day.”

Margaret made no answer.

“You know I cannot let our children's morals get corrupted at home, and them ruined for here and hereafter by such a habit as this. I cannot, Margaret.”

“No; you cannot.”

“I am sure they have enough against them, at the best,—what with poverty, (temptation and no proper instruction,) and sometimes idleness, and sometimes over-work. They have enough before them at the best.”

“They have.”

“And who have they to look to but you and me? except Mary, and she would not set against your example. It goes against my heart more than you know to say an unkind word to you, and always did, when I seemed cruel. But I can say what you will think cruel, and I must, unless you take nay warning.”

“You do not know.”

“Yes, I know, down to the bottom of my soul, what the misery was, and how many, many excuses there are for you. But the children do not know this, and there is no making them understand, and I must think of them first. If it was only myself, I think I could sit up with you all night, and shield you all day, and even indulge you with the very thing itself, when I saw you sinking for want of it. But, as it is, whatever I may do when the children are out of the way, I will do as I said when they are by.”

“Do. I was not going to excuse myself when you stopped me just now,—but only to say you do not know how glad I should be to stop, if I could, though I shall never recover my head again now. It will go on roaring like the sea as long as ever I live.”

“No, no. With good food, you know——”

“I shall never relish food more; but I will try; and do you do as you said. I am not sure how I shall mind it in such a case: I never can tell any thing beforehand now. But you know your part: and if I fall back, you must all mind me as little as you can.”

“Only, don't think me less tender to you, Margaret.”

“No; O, no; you have given me warning, you know.”

“Your poor head! how it beats! You had better let me carry you to bed; you are not fit to sit up. Better let me lay, you on the bed.”

“Well, I can't go walking This is the sinking,—now.”

“And enough there has been to sink you. There! l'll stay beside you. Where's your apron to hang up before your eyes? Now, don't think of any thing but sleep.”

“O, but then I dream.”

“Well! I shall be here to wake you, in case of your starting. Only just give me the key of the cupboard, and do not ask Mary for it any more when I am away.”

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Chapter VI.

TOO LATE.

On a bright morning of the following May, the stroke of the wood-cutter's axe had resounded through Fergusson's woods from day-break till the sun was high. More than one fine young tree which had shaken off the gathered dews at the first greeting of the morning light, now lay prostrate, no more to be refreshed by midnight dews, no more to uprear its leafy top in the early sunshine. Such seemed to meet with little pity in their fail. The very men whose hands had felled them sat down on their horizontal trunks, and kicked the bark with their clownish heels, while they munched their bread and cheese. Children dropped into the green recess from all quarters, to pluck oak boughs and leaves from the fallen stem, wherewith to ornament their hats, and lead a procession to the neighbouring Whit Monday fair. These trees should have flourished twenty, fifty, seventy years longer, if the affairs of their owner had gone on in a steady and natural course. When Mr. Fergusson had walked round his plantations to see these oaks put into the ground, his thoughts had glanced forward to the time when his descendants might give a last mournful look at the doomed trees, towering stately before their fall; and now he was compelled himself to sentence them to the axe before they had attained nearly the fullness of their massive growth, Frequent and sudden losses during the last few months and the prospect of more had obliged Mr. Fergusson to collect all his resources, or surrender some of his domestic plans. He must sacrifice either a portion of his woods or the completion of the new buildings at the Abbey. His oaks must be felled, or his sons give up some of the advantages of education that he had promised them. It was found impossible to collect two-thirds of the rent due to him; and the condition of his farms foretold too plainly that further deficiencies would ensue. Poppies flourished more luxuriantly than ever this season among the thin-springing cora in Anderson's new fields. The sheep had returned to their old haunts, and could not be kept out by the untended walls and ricketty gates which reminded the passenger of the field of the slothful. When Mr. Fergusson was disposed to stop in his walks for purposes ot meditation, he could hardly, choose his station better than within sight of one of Anderson's enclosures when any rapacious sheep happened to covet what was within. It was a sight of monotony to behold one sheep after another follow the adventurous one, each in turn placing its fore-feet on the breach in the fence, bringing up its hind legs after it, looking around for an instant from the summit, and then making the plunge into the dry ditch, tufted with locks of wool. The process might have been more composing if the field had been another man's property, or if the flock had been making its way out instead of in; but the recollection of the scene of transit served to send the landowner to sleep more than once, when occurring at the end of the train of anxious thoughts which had kept him awake. There, was little sleepiness, however, in the tone with which he called his tenant to account for letting his property thus go to destruction. Mr. Fergusson was as near losing his temper as he ever was, when he pointed out to Anderson a ditch here that was choked up in one part and overflowing in another; a gate, whose stuffing of briars was proved a mockery by the meddling children who had unhooked it from its

lower hinge, and the groping swine which enlarged the gap thus made; and the cattle-sheds, roofless and grass-grown, which should be either pulled down or repaired. Anderson's tone was also high, as he declared that a half-ruined man could not keep his farm in as thrifty a manner as a prosperous one; and that if, as soon as he began to improve the property he held, his funds melted away beneath the fluctuations of the corn-market, it was unreasonable to expect him to spend his capital in repairs till he should see whether government would or would not do something to protect agriculture from the consequences of vicissitude. Fergusson thought it useless to wait, on this ground. Government had been protecting agriculture for some hundreds of years, and vet fluctuations there had always been, and fluctuations there would, always be, to judge by all experience. Anderson was not for this the less resolved to let his roofless cow-sheds and crumbling fences stand,—to be rebuilt if government should. extend its protecting care,—to stand as monuments, if agriculture should be neglected.

Monuments of what?—Anderson was a proud man, building for his own and his family's honour and glory when he was in prosperity, and finding something to be proud of in adversity;—Anderson would therefore have replied— ‘monuments of injury.’ Injury from an act of government by which the starving were rescued from destitution, and the oppressed allowed one more chance of the redemption of their fortunes. That act which all other classes received as one of tardy justice,— of absolute necessity,—Anderson complained of as an act of injury to himself, so deep that he left certain wrecks of his property to serve as tokens to a future race of the wrongs he had suffered.

And the fortunes of Anderson *were* injured,—and injured by the acts of government, though not, as his wisest friends thought, so much by the permission of importation as by the preceding restrictions. They rightly called his wrecks and ruins monuments of his ill-luck in speculation, as their poorer neighbours called them monuments of the injustice done to the productive classes by encouraging or compelling the disadvantageous investment of capital. Both parties were right: but Anderson was induced to speculate by acts of protection which failed in the proof; and the disadvantageous application of capital, originating in the same acts, issued in disaster to all parties. If the interests of Anderson were placed in apparent or real temporary opposition to those of his neighbours, the blame rested, not with him, but with the legislation which bad interfered to derange the natural harmonies of social interests; which had impaired the loyalty and embittered the spirits of artizans, curtailed the usefulness and enjoyments of manufacturers, puffed up the farmer with the pride, first of ostentation and then of injury, and compelled the landowner to lay low his young woods before they had attained half their growth.

There was but little prospect of improvement in Anderson's affairs for a long time to come. There had been enormous importations of corn during the winter,—importations which in the end proved as ruinous to the corn-dealer as to the farmer at home. The bargain with foreign corn-growers having been made in a panic was agreed upon at a panic price. The foreigners had naturally laid heavy duties on corn, both because it was known how much the English wanted food, and because what they bought was not a surplus regularly grown for sale, but a part of the stock of

the countries they bought of. In the midst of a panic, and in entire uncertainty how long the ports might be open, the corn importers could not possibly calculate how much would be wanted, any more than the people ascertain how much was brought in. While all were thus in the dark, prices fell in the home market, till wheat which sold at all sold at 50s. per quarter, and much was left which was not even bid for. The importer's foreign debts must, however, be paid. He was unwilling to ware house his wheat, because there was promise of a fine home harvest for this year, and the perishable nature of his commodity rendered it unwise for him to store it against some future contingency. The only thing for him to do, therefore, was to obtain a drawback on what he had imported, and to export it at a lower price than be had paid for it, pronouncing himself and every body else a fool that had entered upon so ruinous a branch of commerce.

This resource of exportation would fail in Anderson's ease, if his harvest should prove never so flourishing. The high average price at home, caused by dependence on home growth, disables the home producer for competition in a foreign market, even if the uncertainty of a sale attending so irregular a commerce did not deter him from the attempt. A capricious demand abroad is the necessary consequence of alternate monopoly and relaxation at home; and when to this uncertainty is added the impediment of a higher average price, and the disadvantage of the known desire of the seller to sell, so small a chance of remuneration is left, that Anderson could not look with any confidence to this mode of disposing of the superabundance of his next crop. No great increase of demand at home was to be expected in the course of one season, as people cannot eat much more bread immediately because there happens to be a good supply, however certain an ultimate increase of demand may be, as the consequence of a single fruitful year. All that Anderson could look forward to, therefore, was waiting in hope of future temporary high prices, unless, indeed, all parties should grow so wise as to agree upon a freedom of trade which should secure permanent good profits to the farmers. Meantime, as capital invested in agricultural improvements is much less easily withdrawn and converted to other purposes than capital applied in manufactures, it was but too probable that the profits of Anderson's prosperous years were buried in useless drains and fences, and in stony soils, while he was burdened with an increased rent and a family now accustomed to a lavish expenditure. It was to be feared that more of Fergusson's young oaks must be brought low to supply the deficiencies of the tenant's half-yearly payments to his landlord.

The woodmen who sat on the fallen trunks thought little, while enjoying their meal and their joke, of all that was included in the fact of these trees having fallen.

Some talked of the work done and to be done this day. Others had thoughts at liberty for the fair to which so many persons within view were hastening; and yet others had eyes wherewith to look beyond the green slope where they were sitting, and to mark signs of the times in whatever they saw;—the whirling mill, with one or two additional powdered persons on the steps, or appearing at the windows;—the multiplication of the smokes of Sheffield;—the laden lighters below Kirkland's granaries;—Anderson's fields, waving green before the breeze;—sheep and cows grazing where there was to have been corn;—and, above all, Chatham taking his way to the accustomed quarry, in a very unaccustomed manner.

“Do look at that fellow, walking as if he was mazed,” said Jack to Hal. “He is not like one bound for the lair. He is on his way to work, seemingly; but what a lagging step for one going to his work!”

“Don't you see 'tis Chatham?”

“No more like Chatham than you. And yet it is,—yes,—that it is! You may know by the way his arm is stuck in his side. But that is not the gait Chatham used to have.”

“No, because he never took such a queer walk before. Don't you know he has been between four walls all these many months, and has but just got out? I have heard a man say that knew well. that the blue sky is a new sky when you have been shut out from it for a long while: and the grass seems really alive; and as for such boughs as this that dance in the wind, you could almost think they were going to speak to you.”

“Chatham seems to be fancying some such thing, he pays so little heed. If he is not going to pass without seeing us!—without once looking up into the wood! His thoughts are all in the middle of the vale. I'll step down, and have a chat with him.”

Before the last mouthful was stuffed into the mouth of the speaker, however, in preparation for descending to the road, livelier sounds than any that it was in his power to make, roused Chatham from his reverie. A train of little boys and girls, who bad disappeared a few minutes before, issued from the neighbouring sawpit, and from behind the piles of planks which lay around, their hats and bonnets stuck round With oak-leaves, aud their procession of boughs arranged in boy and girl style. As each one scrambled out of the pit, there was a shout; as they ranged themselves, there was more shouting; and as they marched down the green slope on their way to the fair, there was the most shouting of all.

“I don't think Chatham seems to relish his walk so much as you thought for,” said Jack to Hal. “He looks mighty melancholy.”

“What! laughing at the brats. And look! he is nodding to one and another.”

“Melancholy enough, for all that. For such a fine-made man, he is a hollow-faced, poor-looking fellow.”

“Just now. When he has been three mouths at his work, you will see the difference.”

“It is a lucky thing for him to have stepped into his work so naturally, as if he had only left it just from Saturday night till Monday morning. That is more than happens to many men who have been in prison. There was Joe Wilson never got the better of it, though he was only in a month. Not a stroke more of work did he get.”

“Because his was for stealing, and nobody could trust him afterwards. In Chatham's case, no one thinks he did or meant any harm, considering what the pressure of the times was. And if the masters believed that he had really broken the law, they would have had no objection to take him on again, in consideration of the cause, which they view as in some measure their own, against the farmers and landlords. Chatham is

pretty sure of work at all times; but if he had been the, worst workman in all Yorkshire, he would have had plenty of masters courting him for having been punished for helping to bring in corn. It pleases him best, however, to bo going back to his old perch, so as to get the matter dropped as soon as possible."

"Ay, ay, for more reasons than one."

"Not only for the sake of Mary Kay, but because the mischief that he wanted to set right is over. It cannot be said now that our people hereabouts want bread; and so the sootier all ill-will is forgotten, the better. Hoy, oy! how does your dame get you such a wedge of cold meat as that? She must be a thriftier body than mine."

"No thrift in the world served to get me cold meat six months ago; but times have changed since; and, as my wife says, it is mortal hard work I have to do here."

"Mortal hard work,—swinging your heels, and looking at people going to the fair! Mine is as toilsome as yours, neighbour; and yet I have only a lump of hard cheese with my bread, while droves and droves of bullocks and sheep are passing within sight to the fair, making one think of mottled beef and juicy mutton. I wonder when the day will come for the working man to have his fill of meat, like him that does not work."

"Chatham will tell you the very day;—whenever this vale, and all our others vales, are portioned out for the purposes they are most fit for,—thc choice parts for corn, and the meadows for pasture, and the heights for sheep-walks, and so on; instead of our insisting on growing wheat at all costs, and so preventing our having as much meat and cheese and butter and milk as we should like. If we could get our corn where we please, we should soon find other food growing more plentiful."

"And a few things besides food. I suppose the Leeds men would take off all the wool we could grow?"

"Yes; and without bating an ounce of what they get already from abroad; for where we get corn, there we must carry cloth, among other things."

"And then we must get more houses run up for our new weavers. By the way, if our landlords let more land to be built upon, that would fully make up for any difference from the fields being turned back into sheep-walks."

"And with a much better chance of the rents being paid regularly for ten years together;— which is no small consideration to such men as Fergusson just now. There's Chatham walking away without speaking to one of us. Call him; your voice is loudest. Well done! You make the very cows turn and tow at us. He won't come. How he points towards his work, as much as to tell us we ought to be going to ours! All in good time, friend Chatham. We have not been shut up for months, with our hands before us, like you."

"Nor yet been much busier than he, for that matter 'Tis a pity this fair did not fall on our idle time. There go the folks in a train, while we are dawdling here——

“Then don't let us dawdle. Off with you, children! We are going to lop the branches, and you may chance to get an ugly cut it you don't keep clear of the. hatchet. Come. neighbour.”

“In a minute, neighbour. Bless us! look at that monkey, down in the road! How the creature dances, like any Christian! And the music sounds prettily, does not it? 1 am just like a child for wanting to be off to the just Who is that rogue of a boy plaguing the beast? I think it is John Kay.”

“Not it. John is in your predicament,— can't go to the fair till night. It does seem hard to keep so young a lad sweating does those furnaces all the week, and on a holyday especially; but he is proud of being on full work, like a man, and left with the few in charge of the furnaces; and they say his parents have comfort of him, in respect of his carrying home his wages.”

That is very well; for they want all they can get, while that poor woman goes on pining as she does. She has got very feeble lately.”

“And well she may, taking nothing stronger than tea, after having lived so differently. She made the change suddenly too. 'Tis not six weeks since I saw her as bad as she ever was,— trying to reach home.”

“Ay; after striving and striving all the winter to get the better of it, poor soul! But that falling back seemed to be the finishing of her. She has never held up her head since, nor ever will, in my opinion, though she has more reason to hold up her head than for these five years past; as they say her family are for ever trying to make her think.”

“Poor Kay finds full work and cheap food come too late for him; for whatever fails to do his wife good brings little comfort to him. For all he used to do in the way of light words and silly fun, he has made a good husband; and no man can be more down-hearted than he is to see his wife in this way. No: that is not his boy John below. He would not let him be abroad plaguing monkeys when he may be called for any minute to see his mother die.—Bravo, boy, whoever you be! Little John Kay could not have done the thing more cleverly.”

“There runs the monkey! Look ye! Through the gap! over the slope in no time! He will be up in the tree before they can catch him. Did you ever see man in such a passion as his master? I don't wonder, having got within a mile of the fair, and full late too.”

“Ah! but you missed seeing how the lad slipped the chain the very moment the man beat the poor animal over the nose. Trust the beast for running away at the first hint! A fine time it will lake to get him back again!”

“Look at his red jacket, showing so unnatural on the tree top! Down he comes again.1 No, not he! it is only to get farther out on the branch.”

“That is a marked tree that he is upon. Suppose we cut it down next. It joins no other, and monkey must come down with it or without it.”

The harassed owner of the monkey received this proposal as a very bright thought. The monkey seemed to be of the same opinion, though not so fully approving of the idea. He chattered, screamed, whisked the skirts of his red coat and clapped his paws together as he saw the workmen gathering round the tree with shouts, leaving neglected nice bits of food winch monkey would fain have had the benefit of, and shaking their tools at him in token of what he had shortly to expect.

At the first shock, monkey became perfectly quiet, squatting with his fore paws clapped together, and looking down, like an amateur observer, on the progress of the work. In proportion as there was any movement below, he descended a little way, to look into the matter more closely, and then returned to his place on the fork of the branch. By the time it began to totter, a new ecstacy seemed to seize the beast. Again he mounted to the topmost bough that was strong enough to bear his weight; and when there, he again jabbered and screamed. Some thought this was terror at his approaching downfall, and others took it for delight at seeing the circle divide to leave room for the tree to fall. The master, however, believed that he saw some object which excited him on the road, which was hidden by the trees from less exalted spectators.

The master was right. There was a crowd gathering at a short distance, as was shortly made known by the busy hum which came upon the ears of those who were standing among the trees on the slope. From end to end of England was such a tumult of many voices heard when the news arrived which caused the present assemblage. The agricultural districts took it very quietly, to be sure; but the manufacturing towns and villages were all in a ferment throughout the island. Meetings were convened at the moment of the arrival of the newspapers; and while manufacturers assembled in town halls, or addressed the people from the balconies of inn-windows, workmen of all classes met on the green, in the wood, about the public house, or wherever they could most numerously collect, for the purpose of declaring their opinions to the government.

The intelligence which caused all this bustle related to what the House of Commons had been doing and planning about the corn-laws—a House of Commons which had the year before barely managed to retain the confidence of the manufacturing classes by throwing out the suggestion of a Committee of its own, that the prices to which corn must arrive at home before importation was permitted should be very much raised. A proposal like this, made at a time when the home price was at least 112s. per quarter, showed so determined an intention on the part of the proposers to render their country wholly self-dependent in the article of food, (*i. e*. to limit the population and wealth of the country to a certain bound, which should be agreeable to the landowners,) that the only chance the House of Commons had of preserving the allegiance of the bulk of the people was by rejecting the proposal; and the proposal had been accordingly rejected. The watchfulness of the people had not, however, been lulled. Their subsequent brief enjoyment of cheap food had strengthened their vigilance over the operations of the Commons' House; and they were the more intent as they knew that the landowners were suffering cruelly from the reduction of their rents and the deterioration of their estates; and that these landlords would probably attribute their losses to the late admission of foreign corn, rather than to the true

cause,—the previous system of restriction. The event proved such vigilance to be very needful The late fall of prices had disclosed an appalling prospect to the owners of land. They found that their extraordinary methods of legislation had exposed their country to a much more extensive dependence on foreign supplies than they had attempted to obviate, and that they had been working hard to reduce their own rents, and hurt their own estates, by the very means they had taken to enrich themselves. During such a remarkably fruitful season as the present (the natural follower of several bad seasons) the supply would be so plentiful as to cause the poorer soils to be thrown back into pasturage, the demand meantime increasing (as it had been for some time increasing) up to the maximum supply; so that on the first occurrence of a merely average season, the nation would be more dependent on a foreign supply than it had ever been before. Under this panic, the House voted a series of resolutions, declaring it expedient to let exportation alone, and to impose very high duties on importation. The news of the passing of these resolutions, and of the preparation of two bills founded upon them, was that which stirred up all England to remonstrance, and occasioned the Yorkshire graziers to leave their droves in the fair, and the corn-dealers to quit their resort in the market, to hear what would be said by the manufacturers who came forth from their desks, the artificers who poured in from the enjoyment of their holyday, and the country labourers who dropped down from among the hills, or converged to the point of meeting from the wide-spreading fields.

The day being warm and the road dusty, it was natural that the sounds of the wood-cutters' labour should suggest to the gathering crowd the idea of meeting on the grass, in the outskirts of Fergusson's wood. Mr. Fergusson and his sons were found in the fair, and they gave permission, and promised to come presently and hear what was going on. Chatham was met on the road, just about to turn up towards the quarry; but he was easily persuaded to go back and help; and the whole party was approaching when Monkey offered them his uncouth welcome from the top of the tree.

This tree was left slanting to its fall when the people began to pour in from the road, and to possess themselves of the trunks which lay about, in order to pile them into a sort of hustings. The organ-man could find no one to assist him in catching his monkey, in case the rogue should vouchsafe to descend from his high place. Nobody could attend to the monkey now; and if he chose to run off from one side of the tree while his master was at the other, and lead the chase as far as Sheffield, he might, for any thing the woodmen seemed to care. Flinging down their tools, or resting them against their shoulders, they threw themselves along on the carpet of wild anemones which stretched beneath the trees; while the more restless mechanics flitted about among the stems, looking, with their smutted faces and leathern aprons, very unnatural inhabitants of such a place. Long after Chatham and others began to enlarge upon the matter which had brought them together, the frowning brows and eager gesticulations of these men, as they talked low with one another, showed that they had their own thoughts, and were not met merely to have notions put into their heads.

“Is it possible to mistake what these men arc thinking and feeling?” asked Chatham of Mr. Fergusson. “If the House of Commons could for once take their sitting here, with the Speaker on yon bit of grey rock, and the members on these trunks or on the

flowery ground, like the Indians when they hold a council, they would legislate for these listeners after another fashion than they now do."

"Why so? I see, as well as you, that these men are thinking and feeling strongly; but are they thinking that which should change the policy of a nation?"

"That which will change the policy of a nation, though not so soon as if the National Council could for once come here to legislate. Friends!" he said to some near him, whose sudden silence called the attention of others beyond them,— "I am telling this gentleman that I believe there is one thought in the minds of us all, though that thought might be spoken in many ways. One might say, that he felt himself injured by the high price of bread last year, and another by the falling off of work—one might point to the grave of his spirit-broken brother, and another hold up before us his pining child— one might be angry with our masters for altering our wages, so that we never know what to depend upon, and another may be grieved that Anderson should have sharpened his speech, and that Mr. Fergusson should come among us with so grave a countenance as this; but there is one plain thought at the bottom of all this,—that the prime necessary of life is the last thing that should be taxed. I should not wonder if Mr. Fergusson himself agrees with us there."

"It depends upon what the object of the tax is," replied Mr. Fergusson. "If the corn-tax be laid on to swell the revenue of the state, I grant that it is the very worst that could be imposed; because, while it presses so heavily on all as to cramp immeasurably the resources of the nation, it presses most on those who have little but the prime necessary of life, and the harder in proportion as they possess little else."

"In what case will you then justify a corntax?"

"When it is laid on to balance an excess of taxes laid on the agriculturists over those laid on other classes."

A confusion of voices here arose, in cries of—

"We will take them on ourselves!"

"You and yours shall live duty-free, if you give us corn free."

"We pay your taxes many times over already."

"I will work one day in the week for you for nothing but a free corn trade."

"I will give you a share of my wages every Saturday night, and my vote, if you'll go up to Parliament, and speak our minds there."

And many a black hand was held out to see if Mr. Fergusson would say "Done." He did not quite say this, but he went on,—

"I am sure I can have no objection to a change in our system; for I have suffered as well as you."

“Ay, and you would make it up by having corn dearer than ever,” cried one of the discontented.

“No, I would not, because I am convinced that this would only bring on a repetition of the same evils some time hence, and in an aggravated form. I dread, as much as you can do, further fluctuations of this kind, Which have injured us all in turn. More bad seasons followed by plenty, with a fickle legislation, and those of you who have pined will die; the masters who have ceased to be rich will be ruined; the farmers who have now buried some of their capital will find that they have got back a part only to lose the whole; and, as for me and mine, I should expect the gates that are now unhinged to be broken up for fuel, and the stones of my crumbling fences to be used for knocking me off my horse. If in those days I should go abroad, it would be to rescue my life from your rage, and not, as now, to economise the income which I can no longer spend among you. No, no; we must have no more mismanagement like that which has well nigh ruined us all.”

“What does he mean? Where is he going? Won't he live at the Abbey any more?” were the questions which went round, and caught Mr. Fergusson's ear.

“I told you,” he said, “that we had all suffered in turn, though I am far from pretending that we have suffered equally. I assure you that I spend many an anxious day, and many a sleepless night, in planning how I may fulfil all my engagements as a member of society, and keep my promises to my children. These engagements were made when I was prosperous; and now I am no longer prosperous. My steward comes to me every quarter-day with a smaller handful of receipts, and a longer bill of arrears; and wherever I turn, I see with my own eyes, and find many comforters to tell me, that my property is wasting for want of care, and that I must sustain great losses hereafter for want of a small expenditure which cannot be afforded now. If I or my tenants could just spare a hundred pounds here, and fifty there, and two hundred somewhere else, it would save me a thousand or two that will have to be spent at last. But it cannot be done. My sons are entering upon a new stage of a very expensive but necessary education; and though my daughters have given up their usual journey to London, I have no hundreds to spare. My tenants cannot scrape their rent together, and it is folly to ask them for their fifties.”

“The papers say you have lowered your rents.”

“It is true that I have; and I am sorry the papers take upon themselves to praise me for it as for an act of generosity. You all know now that I cannot get my full rents, so that I do not in fact give up any thing that I might have: and I consider it no more than justice to reduce the claims which I made when the Farmers were in very different circumstances from those in which they are at present placed. I have no objection to the newspapers stating the fact, because it may lead others to follow my example, and may afford a useful lesson to all; but 1 do object to the act being lauded as one of generosity, as much as I should to the House of Commons being praised for giving up the bills now in question, in case the whole nation should prove to be of your mind about them.”

“Very fair! very good! Spoken like one of the people!”

“I am one of the people,—taxed as one of the people, I assure you,” continued Mr. Fergusson. “Yon offer,—very sincerely, I have no doubt,— to take the taxes of the landowners upon your selves, in return for a free trade in corn. But you know perfectly well that such all arrangement cannot be made, even if we chose to accept your kind offer.”

“Why not? What prevents, if we are all of a mind?”

Chatham thought that it would take so long to bring all people into one mind on the point that it would be a quicker and probably equally good method to allow such a duty on imported corn as would cover the landlords' peculiar liabilities. A small duty,—at the most 5s. or 6s. per quarter,— would be found sufficient, he believed, at the be ginning; and such a duty as this would not materially impede importation. Under such a system of regular supply, pauperism would decrease, or ought to decrease, year by year; this would lessen the burdens of the agriculturist, and open the way for a further reduction of the duty, which should expire when that equalization of taxation should take place which must arrive as nations grow wiser.

“Without committing myself as to the amount of duty,” replied Sir. Fergusson, “I may say that I should not object to some such plan as Chatham proposes: and I would insist that the duty should, above all things, be fixed. It a duty is imposed on the basis of the distresses of the country, it may be right enough that it should be graduated, the duty lessening as prices rise: hut m the case of such a duty as Chatham advocates,—a mere set-off against our excess of taxation,—it should be so far fixed as that every one might know beforehand how it would operate, and all classes be able to make their calculations.”

“Why, yes,” said Chatham. “If any corntax is, generally speaking, bad, none can be so bad as one that makes twice as much uncertainty as there is occasion for. To impose a duty on the basis, as you say, sir, of the distresses of the country, seems an odd way of raising money for the state; and to make such a duty a gambling matter seems to me more odd still. In the case of such a graduated duty as you speak of, failing as home prices rise, the corn-dealer's business becomes an affair of gambling speculation. He sends for corn when wheat is at one price, and brings it in when wheat is at another. If the price has fallen, he has so much more duty to pay that the speculation may ruin him. If the price has risen, he may make enormous profits that he did not expect. I may say this much for the corn-dealer, as Kirkland is not here to speak for himself, that he had much rather pay a constant duty which would leave him no uncertainties to manage but the supplies of corn at home and abroad, than take the chance of enormous occasional profits at the risk of ruinous occasional loss.”

“Ay, Chatham: there you come to a very important part of the question,—the uncertainty of supply. If you can answer for our having a regular and unfailing supply of food from abroad, when we have too little for our people at home, you can answer for more than the House of Commons can; for they adopt as their principle the safety of lessening our dependence on foreign countries for food.”

"When they can answer for our having a regular and constantly increasing supply at home," replied Chatham, "I may perhaps yield the question to them. When you can find any member of their committee who will tell me, at any seed-time, what will be the produce of an average sowing, I will consent to his making the nation depend on that produce. When you can bring me proof that the rich harvests of one district are not of use in repairing the deficiencies of a less favoured district, I will own it to be as safe to depend for supply on our own little island as on the collective corn districts of the globe. When you can convince me that we buy as advantageously by fits and starts as under a system of regular commerce, I will grant that regularly importing countries have not the steadiest market."

A listener observed that Kirkland had lately said, in reference to his having had to hunt up corn abroad during the scarcity, that there was a difference of ten per cent. between "Will you sell?" and "Will you buy?"

"Kirkland learned that saying from a greater man than any of us," observed Mr. Fergusson. "It was Franklin who said that true saying. But there are other uncertainties to be considered, besides the variations of the seasons. Clouds gather over men's tempers as well as over the face of the sky. Tempests of passion sweep away the fruits sown between nations in a season of promise Springs of kindness are dried up, as well at fountains of waters. We have not considered the risks of war."

"Indeed but we have, sir," replied Chatham, "and we come to the conclusion that when we are at war with all the nations whom God has blessed with his sunshine and his rain, we shall not deserve to touch God's bounties, and it will be high time that we should be starved off God's earth. If we wanted to restrict our own trade, sir, instead of throwing it open,—if we wanted to forbid our merchants buying of more than one or two countries, we might believe that war would bring starvation; but never while our ships may touch at all ports that look out upon the seas."

"We do not grow half our own hemp," said a man with a coil of tow about his waist. "Has the British navy ever wanted for ropes? If our enemies at sea ever meant to hurt us. their readiest way would have been to stint us in cordage; and, since they have not done it during all this war, it must be, I take it, because they can't."

"Certainly," replied Chatham. "In cases like these, Mr. Fergusson, our conclusions about the choice of an evil or a danger must be compounded of the greatness and of the degree of probability. Now here is, under the old restrictive system, a vast amount of certain evil, which you and the House of Commons seem to think little of; in comparison with a much greater evil which it is barely within the tree of possibility to happen. Here are present labourers who have had their spirits bowed and their bodies worn by want, and who can look out from this green to the spot where their kindred are laid under the sod, mown down by this sharp law like meadow flowers under the scythe. Here are present the gentle who have been made fierce, the once loyal who were made rebels,—ay, and the proudly innocent who have been disgraced by captivity——"

While Chatham stopped tot breath, one and another cried out to Mr. Fergusson,

“If you think us rude in our speech to you, sir, you may lay it to the bread-tax.” “Get the bread-tax taken off, and you will hear no more of the midnight drill.” “Masters and men never would have quarrelled, sir, but for the bread-tax.”

“From this place, you may see,” Chatham went on, “not only poppies coming up instead of wheat, and stones strewed where lambs should have been browsing, but hovels with mouldering thatch where there should have been slated houses, and a waste wilderness stretching beyond where there might have been the abodes of thousands of busy, prosperous beings; and all through the pressure ot restrictive law.”

“And where there is not a waste, there will soon be a deserted mansion,” added Mr. Fergusson. “I told yon I was going away. My sons must finish their education abroad; and we all go together, that we may live within our means in a manner that we could not do at home. This is one consequence of the late fluctuations——”

“I can tell you, sir,” said Oliver, showing himself from behind a knot of his own men,— “I can tell you another consequence that would have happened if the late fluctuation had not taken place. If prices had not fallen, and fallen just when they did, I must have gone abroad to live, where 1 might work to some purpose,—where my. capital might have been employed in producing wealth, instead of being given to my workmen to buy dear food. Moreover, if prices now rise again so as to make you. change your mind and stay, I must go; so it comes just to the question, which of us can best be spared?”

“If it comes to that,” replied Mr. Fergusson, “it is clear that I can best be spared. Without saying anything about our respective characters and influence, it is plain that it signifies much less where I spend my revenue, than whether you invest your capital at home or abroad. If it must come to this, I am the one to go.”

“And what but a bad state of the law could have brought the matter to this point?” said Chatham. “What greater curse need a nation have than a legislation which condemns either the rent-receiver or the capitalist to banishment?”

Oliver's men proceeded to agree in whispers that he was not in earnest about going abroad; that it was only said to make the landlord wonder, and put the question in a strong light. A man must suffer much and long; before he would leave his own land, and the workmen that were used to his ways, and all that he had ever been accustomed to.

“True,” said Oliver, overhearing their remarks; “and I have suffered much and long. It is true that banishment is the last attempt that many a man will make to improve his fortunes; but it is an attempt which must and will be made, if the fortunes of our manufacturers continue to decline. I know all that you can tell me about the hardship to the workmen who are left behind to be goon driven into the workhouse. I feel how I should grieve to turn you all off, and shut up my foundry; but it is one of the natural consequences of a legislation like that which we have lived under. If our manufactures remain unsold on account of the cost of feeding the labourers, it is certain that the

manufacturers will carry their capital,—the subsistence-fund of the people,—to some cheaper land."

And how much was it supposed that the price of wheat would fall if the ports were opened? was the question proposed by the workmen, in their alarm at the idea of manufacturing capital being forced out of the country.

Six, seven, eight, or, at most, nine shillings, was the utmost fall, on the average of the last ten years, anticipated by Chatham, Oliver, and Fergusson,— a fall which, accompanied as it would be with regularity of supply, and freedom from panic and from the intolerable sense of oppression, would prove an all-important relief to the manufacturer and artisan, without doing the landlord and farmer any injury. Such a fall as this would drive out of cultivation none but the poorest soils, which ought never to have passed under the plough; there would be an end of the farmer's sufferings from vicissitude; and the small reduction of the landlords' rents would be much more than compensated by the advantages which must accrue to them from the growth of a thriving population within their borders.

Chatham observed that many might object to the estimate just given of the probable fall of price on opening the ports,—and it was indeed a matter which required large observation and close calculation; but he, for one, was not disposed to rest the question on probabilities of this nature, but rather on the dilemma,—" If the price of corn is heightened by a restrictive system, why should the nation be taxed for the sake of the landlords? if not,—why do the landlords fear a free trade in corn?"

"There is yet another consideration," observed Mr. Fergusson, "and a very important one, Chatham. You have said nothing of Ireland, while the fact is that Ireland sends us three times as much corn as she sent us ten years ago. There seems no reason why so fertile a country should not supply us with more and more till our prices fall the nine shillings per quarter we were talking, and even till we are able to export. What do you say to this?"

"That it is owing to the establishment of a free trade in corn between us and Ireland that we employ so much more than formerly of her industry, and enjoy so much more of its fruits. What has been proved so great a good in the experiment with one country, is the finest possible encouragement to extend the system to all. If you object, as I see you are ready to do, that this success with respect to Ireland renders a further emancipation of the trade unnecessary, I answer, that the corn-laws are by the same rule unnecessary, —an unnecessary mockery and irritation of the people. If they are not yet unnecessary because Ireland does not yet fully supply us,—in exact proportion as they are not unnecessary, they are hurtful. From this dilemma, Mr. Fergusson, you cannot escape, and you had best help us to press it upon the House of Commons. If you will join us, sir, in drawing up our address to Parliament on the principles we have been arguing about for this hour past, I rather think we ourselves may find, and may help to show the House, that landowners and their neighbours have the same interests, and are willing to be all happy together, if the legislature will let them. Whenever we see a wealthy and wise landowner taking up the question on its broad principles, land addressing the legislature, whether from his seat in the Lords or

by petition to the Commons, as a citizen rather than as one of a protected class, I shall feel a joyful confidence that these broad principles will soon be recognized and acted upon by the loftiest members of the state."

"It is time," replied a voice from below, "for they have long been forced upon the lowliest."

"This is one of the deep things that is better understood by many an one that has never learned his letters than by some who are boasted of for their scholarship," observed another. "Wakeful nights and days of hardship drive some truths deep and firm into the minds of the veriest fool, which the wise man, in his luxury, finds it difficult to learn."

"You say truly enough that it is time," said a third, with sternness in his look and tone. "The charity comes too late which sticks bread between the teeth of a famished man; and the justice we seek will be a mockery if it does not come in time to prevent another such season of misery as we have endured, and as they threaten us with again. Yet they talk of playing the same game over again. Come, Chatham, make haste down, and draw up what we are to say, and let us sign before the sun goes down. We have not an hour to lose."

"Not an hour to lose, as you say, neighbour, when for many it is already too late. Mend the system as fast as you will, there is many and many a home where there will never be comfort more."

Several who were present knew that Chatham must be thinking of Kay's family when he said these words. He went on,

"You might as well hope to close up the clefts of yonder ash, and to make it rich with growing grafts, struck as it was by last year's lightning, as to heal the spirit of a man whose fortunes have been blighted by the curse of partial laws, and to repair his wrongs. For him it is too late. He stands the monument of social tyranny till his last hour of decay. For him it is too late; but not yet for others. There are thousands yet in infancy,—millions yet to be born whose lot depends on what is done with the corn-laws in our day."

"Mine and that of my descendants does," observed Oliver; "though, in one sense, it is also too late for me. I have lost my place in the market abroad; and for this my work-people are suffering and will suffer. But let no chance of recovery be lost through our delay. Come, Chatham; let us be gone, and give the people the opportunity of declaring their wishes before they disperse, and fancy that, because dispersed, they have no power. Let every man raise his voice so that the legislature may understand."

All present were so eager to do this that no leisure seemed to be left for the follies which usually lurk in some corners of all popular assemblies, from the largest to the smallest. No monkey tricks were played by any but the monkey, though country clowns and many boys were present. When the animal, after being well nigh given up in despair by his irritated master, made a sudden descent on the head and shoulders of

a listener, he was very quietly delivered over to his owner to receive the chastisement which was prepared for him, and which no one troubled himself to turn round to witness. All were too busy watching Chatham writing with a pencil and on paper furnished by Mr. Fergusson, who sat beside him on his woodland seat, now agreeing, now dissenting, but in no case desiring to hinder the full execution of the object for which his neighbours were assembled.

When a short petition to the Commons' House against the imposition of further restrictions on the foreign corn-trade had been drawn up, and fully agreed to by a large majority, it was carried away with all expedition to be copied and signed while the fair was yet thronged; and the wood was found by the noonday sun nearly as quiet as when visited by the midnight moon;—as nearly so as the blackbird and the linnet would permit.

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Chapter VII.

THE BREAKING UP.

Kay was indeed one of the many to whom a temporary relie, from the bread-tax came too late. Five years before, no man could be found more eager m the statement of his case of hardship: five months before, he had still some hope that a perpetuation of the then ample supply of food might yet avail to restore his domestic peace. His wife might struggle through her difficulties, and be once more a mother to his children, and in aspect and mind something like the woman he married. Now, however, all hope of this was over, and Kay had had no heart to attend the meeting in the wood, or to mix with his former companions more than could not be avoided. He went straight from the foundry to the side of his wife's chair, as long as she was able to sit up, and to nurse her when she at length took to her bed. He owed her the exemplary attention she received from him; for the same poverty which had seduced her into a fatal habit had embittered his temper, and they had need of mutual forgiveness. Since the noble effort each had made,—he to warn his children against her example, and she to break away from the indulgence which had become necessary,—neither had sinned against the other. No rough word was heard from his lips, and self-denial, by Mary's help, never failed. Mrs. Kay sank slowly and very painfully. She well knew that she must sink, either way, and to this she had no objection; but often and often, in the solitude of her daily sufferings and the restlessness of her nightly dozings, she thought that every body was hard upon her; that they might have let her sink a little more rapidly, and give her what she longed for. They did not seem to feel for her as she thought they might, or they would indulge her without letting the children perceive it. Mary must know sometimes, when she saw her very low, what it must be that she wanted; but instead of taking any notice, she only began to talk about any thing that would win away her mind for a while. Then all these secret complainings were thrust away as if they were suggestions of the devil, and a throng of reproachful recollections would come,—of her husband's patience in smoothing her pillow twenty times in a night, and holding her head for hours when her startings had frightened her; and of Mary's never seeming tired, with all that was upon her, or saving a word about what she gave up for her in keeping Chatham waiting so long. She knew that it was only on her account that they were not married yet, and she hoped she should soon be under the sod, and no hinderance to any body; meanwhile, nobody but she would perceive, so much as Mary had to say now, and so cheerfully as she spoke, that she was giving up any thing for a sister who had deserved so little from her.

Mrs. Kay expressed all this so fully and forcibly to her husband one day, that he told Mary he really believed it would make all parties happier if she would marry Chatham at once. The affair was soon settled, and every body concerned was so evidently satisfied, that very few neighbours ventured to pronounce above their breath how shocking it was to marry from a house where there must soon be a death.

Mrs. Skipper, who had throughout been profuse of neighbourly attentions, came to sit with Mrs Kay while the party were gone to church on the Sunday morning when the marriage took place. She was far trom being the most considerate and judicious of nurses; but Mrs. Kay did not seem so alive to this as her husband and Mary, and appeared to like that she should occasionally supply their place. This morning she showed herself with eves more red and swollen than a nurse should ever exhibit. Mrs. Kay directly perceived this.

“O dear, Mrs. Skipper, what has happened to you? I am sure some misfortune has happened. Tell me! Tell us at once.”

“Why, love, tis no misfortune of mine particularly, but every body's misfortune.”

“Why, that is worse still! Nothing has come in the way of the wedding?” And she tried to start up in her bed.

“Bless you, no! Lie still. The wedding is likely to go on well enough; and in my opinion it is high time they were off to church. No, no. It is only that the Fergussons are gone.”

“Gone!” cried every voice in the house.

“Yes. Just slipped away quietly on a Sunday morning, when nobody was suspecting, that they might not have their hearts halt broke, I suppose——”—A loud sob stopped the good woman's utterance.

“Well, I am sure, Mrs. Skipper, it gives us all much concern,” said Kay. “They are good people,—the Fergussons,—and of great consequence to all the people about them: and it will e a sad thing to see the Abbey shut up, and the grounds left to themselves. It is not the less melancholy” for our having looked forward to it this long while.”

“Why no, but rather the more,” said Chatham, “because we know what misfortune sent them away. When the wind has torn the linnets' nest, we know that they will fly away; and the wood will miss them the more, and not the less, for the fear that they will not venture to build in the same place again.”

“And 'tis six years, come Michaelmas,” said Mrs. Skipper, “that they have had hot bread from me every morning, except while they were just gone to London. They have been the best customers that ever I had. and now there is no knowing——They looked very grave, every one of them that I could see, as they whisked}l past. I wonder whether they saw how I cried. I hope they did. I am sure I don't care who saw, for I am not ashamed of being sorry for such as they.”

“I thought they would have stayed till harvest,” said Mary. “Such a beautiful harvest as it will be this Year. I have been telling my sister, Mrs. Skipper, what a fine promising season it is. “John and I shall manage a better gleaning this year.”

“Why, yes, Mrs. Kay,” observed the widow, “I could not help thinking, when I saw the sun shining, and the fields waving, and the people all abroad in their best, that it is hard upon you to be lying here, so dull, when you have not seen a green field, nor a number of people, for I don't know when. well, I must tell you all about It, instead, when they are gone. Now, Mary, what are you going in that way for, as grave as a quaker, and more so than the quaker I saw married once? I know you have a gown more fit to be married in than that. Go and put it on in a minute,—your light green one, I mean, and I will lend you my pink handkerchief. I will step for it, and bring it before you have got your gown on. And you shall have this cap,—the ribbon is pink, you see; and mv other better one will do just as well for me. Come! Make haste!”

Such was not Mary's will, however: and as her brother declared it quite time to be gone, she proceeded at once to the altar in her dark-coloured gown, thus leaving a fruitful topic for Mrs. Skip-per to enlarge upon to her patient, as soon as the party had closed the door behind them. Before they went out, Mary offered a smiling hint to the widow not to cry any more about the Fergussons, or any thing else, if she could help it, while they were away; and to keep her charge as cheerful, if she could, as she had been for the last few hours; hours of more ease than she had known lot some time past.

On their return, they found Mrs. Skipper,—not crying,—but in great trouble,—in far too deep a trouble for tears. She was leaning over the bed, looking aghast, when Chatham and Mary entered, arm in arm, with Kay and his two elder children following.

“Why, Mrs. Skipper, what have yon. been doing to my wife?” cried Kay, seeing that the sick woman's eves were fixed, and her whole countenance quite different from what he had ever seen it before.

“Nothing, Mr. Kay; but I thought you never would have come back. She took such a strange way the minute you were gone, 1 had the greatest mind to call you back.”

“I wish you had,” said Mary, who had already thrown off her bonnet, and was chafing the cold hands that lay helpless on the bed clothes.

“Ah! she has changed much within a few minutes too. Her hand lies still now; but I had to put it down several times. She kept stretching it out as if she thought to reach something; and I supposed she was thirsty, but——”

A mournful shake of the head from Kay stopped her. He said she had often done this when she was not quite herself.

“Yes: often and often,” said Mary; “and I have seen her as bad as this before. Look, she is coming about. She sees us now.”

“If she be not trying to speak!” whispered Mrs. Skipper.

Mrs. Kay spoke, but she was wandering. She told Mary that next Sunday should be the day for Chatham and her to be married, as she herself should be buried out of their

way by that time. Then perceiving Chatham, she tried to give him some advice incoherently, and far too painfully to be ever referred to after that day by any of them, about not letting his wife come to poverty,—extreme poverty: and about distrusting her in such a case, if she were an angel from heaven.

“For God's sake stop her!” cried Kay, taking a sudden turn through the room; and Mary stopped her by a kiss, though her own tears were dropping like rain. Mrs. Kay proceeded with her self:-accusations, however, as long as she could speak at all; and the awe-struck children were taken out of the room by Chatham.

“No, no!” said Mary, whispering her emphatic contradictions into the ear of the dying woman, as soon as she could command her voice. “You have done the noblest——you have gone through the hardest trial God will not forget your struggles as you forget them yourself, your children shall never forget them. Well, well. It was suffering,—it was hunger that did all that! Don't dwell upon that! All that was over long ago; and now the pain is over,—just over; and we know what the promises are. If *we* deserved them as well——”

“Bless you! Bless you, Mary!” cried the husband, in a broken voice.

But the painful impression of his wife's words remained as strong as ever when the restless eyes were finally closed, and a faint smile rested on the lips whence the breath had departed. John was terrified by his father's manner of fetching him into the room, and saying, as he showed him the corpse.

“You heard her say that she had been wicked. You heard her say——but never mind all that. You will not know for this many a year how noble a woman your mother was, and what she did for your sake. And if I ever hear you say a word', —if I see you give the lease look against her——”

John slunk away as Mary took her brother's arm, and led him beside Chatham, while she hung up a curtain before the bed, and made Mrs. Skipper somewhat ashamed of being so much less able to exert herself than the nearer connexions of the dead. The widow presently slipped out to consult with her neighbours on the necessary arrangements, and to express the most vehement admiration for the departed, while preserving the strictest honour respecting the particulars of the closing scene.

Since that day, the curse of the bread-tax has alighted again and again on that busy vale. Again has the landowner had the painful choice of sinking from his rank at home or going abroad to preserve it. Again has the farmer found himself, now marvellously rich, and now unaccountably poor. Again has the manufacturer repined at having to surrender his resources to support the burden of factitious pauperism,—to take too low a place in the markets abroad in order that his agricultural neighbour may be upheld in too high an one at home. Again has the corn-dealer staked his all upon the chances of man's caprice, with about as much confidence as he would upon the cast of the die. Again gloom has brooded over the dwellings of the poor, and evil passions have wrought there, in proportion to the pressure of want,—the main spring of the vast machinery of moral evil by which society is harrowed and torn. And as often as a

gleam of hope and present plenty has visited the cottage of a long-suffering artizan, it has been clouded by the repinings of some neighbour whose adversity has been, by ingenious methods of misrule, made coincident with his prosperity. In this busy vale, as in every valley of England inhabited by thinking men, there is one question still for ever rising through the night air, and borne on the morning breeze,—" How long? "—and on many a hill there are thinking men to take up the inquiry, and echo "How long?"

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Summary Of Principles Illustrated In This Volume.

As exchangeable value is ultimately determined by the cost of production, and as there is an incessant tendency to an increase in the cost of producing food, (inferior soils being taken into cultivation as population increases,) there is a perpetual tendency in the exchangeable value of food to rise, however this tendency may be temporarily checked by accidents of seasons, and by improvements in agricultural arts.

As wages rise (without advantage to the labourer) in consequence of a rise in the value of food, capitalists must either sell their productions dearer than is necessary where food is cheaper, or submit to a diminution of their profits.

Under the first alternative, the capitalist is incapacitated for competition with the capitalist of countries where food is cheaper: under the second, the capital of the country tends, through perpetual diminution, to extinction.

Such is the case of a thickly-peopled country depending for food wholly on its own resources.

There are many countries in the world where these tendencies have not yet shown themselves; where there is so much ferthe land, that the cost of producing food does not yet increase; and where corn superabounds, or would do so, if there was inducement to grow it.

Such inducement exists in the liberty to exchange the corn with which a thinly-peopled country may abound, for the productions in which it is deficient, and with which a populous country may abound. While, by this exchange, the first country obtains more corn in return for its other productions, and the second more of other productions in return for its corn, than could be extracted at home, both are benefited. The capital of the thickly-peopled country will perpetually grow; the thinly-peopled country will become populous; and the only necessary limit of the prosperity of and all the will be the limit to the fertility of the world.

But the waste of capital caused by raising corn dear and in limited quantity at home, when it might be purchased cheap and in unlimited quantity abroad, is not the only evil attending a restriction of any country to its own resources of food; a further waste of capital and infliction of hardship are occasioned by other consequences of such restriction.

As the demand for bread varies little within any one season, or few seasons, while the supply is perpetually varying, the exchangeable value of corn fluctuates more than that of any article whose return to the cost of production is more calculable.

Its necessity to existence causes a panic to arise on the smallest deficiency of supply, enhancing its price in undue proportion; and as the demand cannot materially increase

on the immediate occasion of a surplus, and as corn is a perishable article, the price falls in an undue proportion.

These excessive fluctuations, alternately wasting the resources of the consumers and the producers of corn. are avoided where there is liberty to the one class to buy abroad in deficient seasons, and to the other to sell abroad ill times of superabundance.

It is not enough that such purchase and sale are permitted by special legislation when occasion arises, as there can be no certainty of obtaining a sufficient supply, on reasonable terms, in answer to a capricious and urgent demand.

Permanently importing countries are thus more regularly and cheaply supplied than those which occasionally import and occasionally export; but these last are, if their corn exchanges be left free, immeasurably more prosperous than one which is placed at the mercy of man and circumstance by a system of alternate restriction and freedom.

By a regular importation of corn, the proper check is provided against capital being wasted on inferior soils; and this capital is directed towards manufactures, which bring in a larger return of food from abroad than could have been yielded by those inferior soils. Labour is at the same time directed into the most profitable channels. Any degree of restriction on this natural direction of labour and capital is ultimately injurious to every class of the community,—to land owners, farming and manufacturing capitalists, and labourers.

Labourers suffer by whatever makes the prime necessary of life dear and uncertain in its supply, and by whatever impairs the resources of their employers.

Manufacturing capitalists suffer by whatever tends needlessly to cheek the reciprocal growth of capital and population, to raise wages, and disable them for competition abroad.

Farming capitalists suffer by whatever exposes their fortunes to unnecessary vicissitude, and tempts them to an application of capital which can be rendered profitable only by the maintenance of a system which injures their customers.

Landowners suffer by whatever renders their revenues fluctuating, and impairs the prosperity of their tenants, and of the society at large on which the security of their property depends.

As it is the interest of all classes that the supply of food should be regular and cheap, and as regularity and cheapness are best secured by a free trade in corn, it is the interest of all classes that there should be a free trade in corn.

the end.

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CINNAMON AND PEARLS.

Chapter I.

THE SILENT TRIP.

The brief twilight of the tropics had just sped away before the shadows of night over the seas which gird Ceylon, when a raft, stealing along the quiet expanse before the breath of the night-wind, approached the spot beneath which lay one of the chank beds that enrich the north-west coast of the island. The situation of the bed was marked by the constant presence of a boat, placed there by the lessees of the chank bed to guard its treasures from pilferers. These thanks, or conch-shell, are a very tempting object of theft to the natives, not only as ornaments for their own persons, but as being in constant demand for the same purpose, and for burial with the distinguished dead, throughout the whole neighbouring continent of India. Sawn into rings, they deck the wrists, ancles, and fingers of many thousand dark beauties who care as little whether they are obtained by filching or by lawful fishing, as some fairer belles inquire whether their articles of luxury are smuggled or legally imported. Great precautions are therefore necessary to preserve the property of the chunk monopolists; and the best of these precautions are often useless. In the present case, the guard-boat might as well have been empty, for any opposition that it offered to the approach of the raft. The guard were probably asleep, or they would have perceived it at the moment that the moon lifted her horn above the eastern wave, spreading a sheet of light over the still expanse. At that moment, the two dusky figures which had been standing erect and silent beside the mast of the raft, began to move, though not to speak. Marana pointed to the golden light which was just appearing, and Rayo, understanding her sign, proceeded to lower the sail of matting, (which might become conspicuous in the moonlight,) and to dislodge the mast. Both figures then lay down beside it, so that the raft might have appeared, even to close observation, to be no more than a piece of drifting wood, but for the gleams sent forth from the precious stones with which Marana's silver hair-pins were set, and for the ripple of Ravo's paddle, which he contrived to ply as he lay. “The critical moment must be when he plunged, as there were no sea sounds amidst which the splash might be lost. All was as quiet as a lake. The guard-boat was no cradle to those who slept within it, for it kept its place as if it had been fixed in the sand of the beach. The black points of rock which rose above the surface at a distance towards the land were reflected with perfect fidelity, instead of in fluctuating lines of shadow. Marana dreaded the plunge for her lover, and fearfully watched to see dark figures rise up in the guard-boat while the circles were vet spreading, and breaking the moonlight to shivers on the surface. No foe appeared, however; and Marana was at liberty for new fears. There were enemies in the green depths below more formidable than any to the right hand or the left. It was quite as probable that a shark might take a fancy to this locality as a diver; and a chance meeting was little likely to end without strife. Marana drew towards the edge of the raft as its heavings subsided, and looked eagerly down, dreading to see a red tinge diffuse itself in the lucid depth, and starting at every shadow that floated

through it. She was fingering her ebony beads meanwhile, and her lips moved as she murmured some aspirations compounded of a catholic prayer and a native charm. The depth was little more than two fathoms in this place, and Rayo was soon up again, though the minute of his submersion seemed incalculably longer to Marana. He delivered his pouch to her to be emptied, and rested himself by floating till he was ready for another descent.

Again and again he dived, till Marana discovered a treasure in the pouch which destroyed ail further temptation to theft that night, and relieved the damsel from the anxiety of watching more descents of her lover. A shell which opened to the right, commonly called a right-handed chank, a shell esteemed worth its weight in gold, appeared in the heap, and it was not worth while to run any further risk when so rare a possession as this was obtained. Rayo's spirits were so raised by his good fortune that he insisted on paddling quite round the guard-boat, near enough to see whether there was any one in it, while Marana looked anxiously at the ascending moon, whose flood of light was now veiling the stars. When she saw arms gleaming in the boat, she thought it too rash of her lover to come between the sleeping guard and the moon, and looked imploringly at him while she pointed to the shore. His curiosity once satisfied, the danger was soon over. Rayo ventured to stand up to paddle, when the raft had distanced the boat by half a mile, and Marana began her inquiries as to what he had seen in the deep.

Rayo made light, as he had done for some time past, of the achievement of diving for chanks. He had practised it as a preparation for becoming a pearl-fisher in waters three times as deep, and for a much more precious treasure. He was to make his first trial of the nobler occupation at the approaching pearl fishery; and he spoke with becoming indifference of all meaner accomplishments. He had seen no sharks to-night; there would be more chance of them in deeper water. He had been startled by no strange appearances: nine fathoms down was the scene tor wonders. He had found no difficulty in filling his pouch: the oyster beds would afford harder work. Marana thought all this was counterbalanced by the absence of a charmer who might say “avaunt i” to sharks, and interpret all marvels, and lighten all toils. If her father could have been on the raft with them to-night, she should think as little of the trip as Rayo himself; and if he could but get himself engaged tbr the same boat that was to carry Rayo out to his first pearl fishing, she should have confidence in his prosperity and safe return.

They fell in with no other vessel till they came in sight of the shore,—the wildest and dreariest part of the shores of Ceylon. A flat yellow beach stretched away on either hand, without rock or tree, or any object which could cast a shadow, except the huts of mud and rushes which afforded a shelter to the natives. In no place was it easier to make a landing, and in none was it more difficult to laud unperceived, when sun or moon was above the horizon. No jutting rocks were there, behind whose screen a raft might lie concealed: no shady creek into which a skiff might glide and secrete itself beneath the mangroves: no groves of cocoa-nut, feathering the margin of the tide, beneath whose canopy dusky pilferers might creep to divide their spoils. All was l:ere open to the sky, and to a sky whose lesser lights leave little unrevealed even on the night of a new moon.

Rayo and Marana had little chance of stealing to their homes unobserved while so many eyes were looking upon them from above, and while a certain pair of vigilant human eyes preserved their wont of looking abroad upon the night. The tall figure of Father Anthony, the priest, was moving on the beach, preceded by his still taller shadow, when the raft floated on shore. Rayo saw this while still afloat; and if he had been an English smuggler, he would have pushed off again before he was recognized, and have kept out of sight till Father Anthony was safely housed. But Rayo's ideas of good manners would not allow of this. He had no notion of failing to pay his respects to any who came in his way, whatever might be the consequence of the meeting; and he now greeted Father Anthony with as much deference as Marana herself, hoping that it was no evil which kept their friend awake at this hour.

"No worse evil than being unable to rest so well here as in Europe, where there are no excessive heats of the day to make us restless at night. But what fish do you seek so late? I fear you have lost your nets," he continued, seeing no fishing apparatus on board the raft.

Marana looked at Rayo, and Rayo said nothing.

"Chanks!" exclaimed Father Anthony, perceiving now of what Marana's burden consisted. "These chanks cannot be yours."

"His hands brought them up," declared Marana, pointing to her lover.

"It may be so, but they are no more his than the comb in his hair would be mine if I were to take it from him. Rayo, why did you steal these chanks? Do not you know that God punishes theft?"

"Is it theft to get chanks for my bride, when I have worked long for them, and can get no chanks by working? I thought God laid the chanks in our seas for our brides."

"They have become the property of some who may let your brides, or the brides of india have them, as they may see fit. God gave them into the hands of those who possess them; and have He will be angry with any who take them away by fraud or violence. All cannot have these chank-beds, and those who have bought them must be protected in their possession."

"I have earned as many as I have taken," replied Rayo; "and to-night God has given them to me. The guard did not even stir when I plunged.

"And God gave him this," added Marana, showing And the precious shell as an indubitable proof of all being right. Father Anthony had not been long enough in his present station to know the full value of what he now took into his hand; but it he had, his decision would have been the same, that the chanks were not Rayo's.

Rayo was much in want of his friend's guidance. In the school, it was taught as a duty that a just reward should be given for toil. Was it a duty out of school to toil without reward?

Certainly not, except in the case of the mutual services which friends and neighbours should yield to each other. But nobody thought of toiling without reward, as far as Father Anthony knew. The chank-fishers, he was sure, were paid. Rayo acknowledged having received certain portions of rice, and of cotton for clothing: but never any wages which would purchase what was necessary for Marana before her father would allow her to marry. Rayo had no objection to work. but he had not doubted about the liberty of paying himself, in case of an insuffieiency of wages. When he heard, however, all the denunciations that Father Anthony had to bring against the *s*in of theft, and it was pressed upon him that he had actually been guilty of the crime, he was perfectly submissive; no less so than Marana, though his eves did not stream like hers, and he did not so instantly betake himself to his devotions. He stood with his eves cast down, waiting for instructions.

“Your duty is clear, Rayo,” said Father Anthony. “He that hath stolen must not only steal no more, but must restore what he hath stolen. When the sun uses, you must go to the owners of these chanks and restore them, relating your offence and seeking their pardon; I need not say humbly, for I have never observed you fail in humlity.”

Rayo made obeisance, and Marana hoped he might also relate how he fell into the offence.

“If he does it without any pretence of justifying himself,” said father Anthony, who was not unwilling that the facts of the oppression under which his poor friends laboured should be brought home, on every possible occasion, to the owner of the wealth which surrounded them, and which they might not appropriate, Rayo may say why he wishes for chanks and for the money that chanks will bring; but he must not defend himself for having taken them without leave. Neither must you excuse yourself before God, Rayo; but seek His pardon before you sleep. May He pardon and bless you, Rayo!”

“How far will you have to carry them? ?asked Marana, as soon as Father Anthony was out of hearing. as If it is not too far for a woman, I will go with you, and carry them, and confess for you. How far must they be carried.”

Rayo painted to his father's hut, his own abode, and began walking towards it with a countenance of perfect content. But Marana stopped, and looked the entreaty which she dared not speak.

“They are heavy,” observed Rayo, taking the chanks from her.

“No, no. I will carry them to the mountains, I will swim with them through the sea, sooner than that the curse shall light upon you, Rayo. Father Anthony says the curse comes upon those who do not do as they say, and a great curse upon those who steal as we have done, unless they restore.”

“It will bring a curse to say what he bids me say to the rich men. I shall fish no more chanks, and lose what I have got, and perhaps fish no pearls. This will be a curse.”

“But what will Father Anthony say to-morrow?”

“Let us see if he finds it out.”

“But the curse will come, whether Father Anthony knows or not.”

“Your father shall charm it away, and you shall have your rings; and the rest shall be sold at the fishery. Then we will build a house, and we will each have new clothing, and we will be married.—But let us hide the chanks. If my father finds them, lie will sell some. If Neyna finds them, she will ask for rings too. We will hide them in the rushes.”

Marana dared not resist, but her horror of the curse grew every moment. She did not think at all the worse of her lover for his determination. She rather admired the bravery of it, her thoughts being employed, not on the sin, but on its apprehended consequences. She doubted whether her father had a charm strong enough to obviate the effects of her lover's rashness; and she was far less afraid of anything that might come out of the rushes than of what might come out of the deed which Rayo went to do there.

When the torches were lighted, without which it is unsafe to penetrate the places where leopards may be crouching on dry sand, hidden by the silky rushes, she went first, fearing, not the glaring eye of a savage beast, but the vigilant glance of some saint or demon whom her religion or the old superstitions of the country taught her to regard as the dispenser of punishment from above. She started as the night-wind swept among the reeds, not so much from dread of some velvet paw that might be stealing towards her, as from expectation of some token of wrath. All was quiet, however. The curse was not perceived immediately to light, and the lovers parted in safety at the door of her father's hut.

Marana stood for some time hesitating between lying down at once on her mat to sleep, and waking her father, to trouble him for a charm without loss of time. A belter plan than either flashed across her mind, and found more and more favour the longer she entertained it. It might avert the curse without exposing Rayo to shame; and the loss of the chanks (which was involved in her scheme) was a small price to pay for such security. She hoped Rayo) might be brought to think so: and if not, she could rather bear his anger than see the curse light upon him. The chanks were intended chiefly for her: and she could do without them for ornaments, and had rather marry Rayo without a house and without new clothing than expose him to the curse: and thus, by a process of reasoning over which the fear of a curse presided, she convinced herself that the best thing she could do was to restore the chanks to their oozy bed.

Without a torch, for she had not now the means of getting one, she stole out, and crept to the hiding place among the rushes. Without bite from snake, or alarm from any living thing more formidable than a bat, she made her way out again. Without help or hinderance, she pushed the little raft into the water, hoisted its mast and mat, and stood out alone into the shining sea. What kind of malignant beings she could imagine to be hovering between the glorious constellations and their earthly mirror, it was for her to tell. The miseries which she believed them commissioned to dispense came from a much nearer place than the nearest of those radiant spheres, or even of the

dense clouds which began to show like a low wall along the horizon. The miseries under the pressure of which her lover had committed crime, and she was now dreading the atonement, came from the corrupt desires and infirm judgments of men near at hand, whose passion was for the possession of the powers of the earth, and not for alliance with the powers of the air.

When Rayo rose in the morning at his father's calls to trim the boat for a fishing expedition, he was surprised to see no sign of his little raft on the beach. It might have been washed away, the sea being no longer so smooth as it was a few hours before: or some unscrupulous neighbour might have used it for his own convenience, It was of little consequence; a raft being the simplest and cheapest of all contrivances by which a Cingalese can set himself afloat. The disappearance was explained when old Gomgode's flat-bottomed fishing-boat, containing himself and Rayo, had made some progress from the land, and was pitching in the rising swell, while the young man threw out his nets.

“Rayo, Rayo,” said Gomgode, “what is floating out beyond? Rayo, Rayo. tell me whether it is not your raft.”

Rayo believed it was, but could scarcely distinguish it yet with sufficient certainty to claim it. The old man's sight might not be really better than his son's, but it was usually sharpened by curiosity to a much greater degree than that of the less vivacious Rayo. He now perceived that there was a woman upon the raft, and then Rayo also began to see very. clearly; and not only to see, but to act. Gomgode could not conceive what possessed Rayo to draw in the nets so hastily, and quit their station, and give up every thing for the sake of following or meeting this raft. when to-day, of all days, it was important to secure a good draught of fish. They had come out early, on purpose, the auction of the oyster-banks being just about to he held, giving a fine opportunity for the sale of fish. One boat after another was dropping out from the shore, and Rayo was losing all the advantage of being out first, was, giving up all his preparations, for the sake of making towards the raft.

“Rayo, Rayo,” the old man exclaimed.

“Father, Marana is there, dripping and struggling.”

“Is it Marana? It is Marana. What sent her out, Rayo? How long has she been out, Rayo? Did you Know that she had your raft, Rayo? O, Rayo, what is she going to do now, Rayo?”

Marana was about to do a somewhat perilous thing. She was about to dash through a threatening wave as a horserider bursts through a blind hoop, trusting to light again. The sea was now far too rough for so slight a machine as this raft. It pitched and shivered as every wave broke over it, and afforded so little secure hold against the stronger swells which succeeded each other, that Marana seemed to find it her best way to pass through them separately. She was seen standing with her face towards the approaching wave, eyeing it steadily, and cleaving her way through it so as to come. out near the very point to which the raft was descending from its ridge. This was all

very well for awhile; but Marana was yet a great way from shore, and it was scarcely possible but that such a succession of plunges must exhaust her before she could commit herself finally to the waves to be cast upon the beach. It was contrary to her habits also to use much exertion, and the effort which brought her out thus alone upon the sea, whatever might be its motive, could hardly be long sustained. Rayo was full of wonder and of fear; and his father's remonstrances and questions stood little chance of being attended to till Marana was safe on board.

Marana herself, though by far the most deferential person that Gomgode was wont to meet, could scarcely bring herself to give an answer to his inquiries till she had obtained Rayo's forgiveness for having, at great sacrifice to herself, averted the curse from him. Meek and downcast, the dusky beauty stood before him, her half-clothed frame trembling with her late exertions, and the salt water dripping from her hair. One corner of her garment seemed to be very carefully cherished by her. It contained the precious right-handed chank. She had not found in her heart to part with it, on arriving at the place of deposit: and, while hesitating, several good reasons for keeping it occurred to her, as is not unfrequently the case with those who are religious after her manner, any more than with those who are not religious at all. It was a pity the shell should be lost, and it was likely never to be fished up among so many. It might be turned to a much better purpose, if her father would make it a charm. There could be no sin in keeping it, if it was thus converted to a religious use instead of being sold for a profit. Marana therefore kept the chank, and was the better able to bear her lover's displeasure from the silent consciousness that she held a treasure for him in her possession.

She did not make a syllable of reply to his lowering look and few cutting words against herself, and when his wrath turned upon Father Anthony, or rather upon any priest or religion which interfered with his doings, Marana testified only by a slight glance round her that she was uneasy under this rashness of complaint.

The moment the boat touched the shore after a prosperous trip, she hastened to her father's cottage, not waiting to observe how much more Gomgode would ask for his fish than they were actually worth, nor even to hear whether anything was yet known of the quality of the oysters which had been brought up as a sample from the pearl banks, and on whose evidence the auction was to proceed. She had an office to discharge, in common with her neighbours; to dress and light up the road bv which the agent of the government was to approach: and she was anxious to obtain the desired favour from her father before she went forth.

The Charmer, who was expecting an application, in the course of this day, to hold his services in readiness for the fishery, was now absorbed in his preparations. He sat in a corner of his hut with his documents spread before him. Strips of the talipot-leaf, on which some consecrated style, guided by a wise man's hand, had traced mysterious characters, lay before the Charmer, and beads and images and various sacred indescribable articles were scattered around. He gave no heed to his child when she entered, and his melancholy countenance wore a deeper sadness than usual.

“Father!” softly said Marana, after some time waiting his pleasure; “where will the sharks be during the fishery?”

The Charmer shook his head, and acknowledged his doubt whether St. Anthony would be permitted to keep them all within the bounds of Adam's Bridge, or whether some would be left at large between the north banks and the shore. The south banks would be safe; but the north, alas! were those in which Marana was interested.

“Father! the monsoon will surely not arrive too early?”

“Not till April is nearly past,” he replied, cheerfully. “It is even likely that there may be complaints in the south of drought, from the delay of the rains. There will be no storms in our fishery.”

“I will ask Father Anthony to praise the saints Will the fishery be rich?”

“To some, and not to others. This is commonly the case; and I cannot discover whose countenanees will be sad in illegibleipo, and whose merry voices will sing along the shore at Condatchy, when the last signal-gun has brought, back the last boat.”

There was a long pause before Marana ventured to utter the more important question,

“Father! will any one be waited for in the paradise under the sea?”

The Charmer rubbed his hand over his brow, and said that this was the point he was endeavouring to ascertain when his daughter entered. His indications were at variance; and whether the fishery was to be fatal to none, or to more than he had put the question for, he could not decide,—Marana felt that she must request Father Anthony to intercede with, as well as praise the saints.

“Is it a blind day to you, father?” she inquired, struck by his tone of doubt on almost every topic she had introduced.

“My blind days are many,” he replied, “and the blindness troubles me. Marcair looks doubtfully upon me, and I look doubtfully upon myself, — because I warned him that a wild elephant would tread his rice-ground seven nights ago. Marcair lighted eleven fires, and thirty-two friends kept watch with him for three nights: and not a twig was heard to snap in the jungle and those who laid ear to the ground say that not so much as a panther trod within a mine.”

“Seven nights since? That was the night that ball of white fire crossed the sky”

“A ball of fire! St. Anthony opened your eyes to see It! A ball of white fire cast from the hand of a saint is more fearful than eleven fires kindled by men's hands.”

“The elephant was seared, father, no doubt, The ball passed, over that very jungle, and then above Marcair's rice-ground, and then into the sea.”

The Charmer's spirits were so raised by the news of this interposition, that he presently contrived to bring his most important calculations to an agreement, and then lost no time in charming the shell, that his daughter might be at liberty to reveal to the neighbours what she had seen on the seventh preceding night, and thus reestablish her father's credit.

She had never heard her father speak more positively on any point than on this,—that if Rayo was married to her before he went out to the fishery, this charm would bring Rayo back safe from the fishery, lt followed that Rayo should have his wish, and be married before the adventure. There being no dwelling ready nor any thing to put therein, was a matter of small moment in comparison with Rayo's safety.

Marana went forth with her usual slow and demure step and demeanour: but the torches which flashed here and there on her path were reflected back from her eyes as brightly as from the topazes on the crown of her head. With a lighter, but no less graceful touch than usual, did she unfurl the fan-like talipot leaves of which the tents for the strangers were composed. With more than her usual fancy did she feather with cocoa-nut leaves the poles of bamboo to which torches were to be fastened at intervals along the road. She was too poor to pay the tribute of white cotton cloth for the government agent to walk upon, when he should arrive within sight of the huts: but she had a new song to offer, which was worth full as much. She had, besides, a little cocoa-nut oil to spare for the anointing of a sister beauty or two, when she had made her own toilet: so that the remark went round that Marana must have got some new charm from her father for her special adornment. Rayo's manner seemed to show that he thought so too.

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Chapter II.

A MUSHROOM CITY.

After the usual expenditure of anxiety, prudence, jealousy, wrath and cunning, the letting of the Pearl banks had been accomplished. A great speculator had offered government a certain sum for the whole fishery of the season, and had then let the different banks to various merchants, to whom the gracious permission was given to make what they could of the natives of the land as well as of the sea;—not only to appropriate the natural wealth of the region, but to bring its inhabitants as near to the brink of starvation as they pleased in their methods of employing their toil. Pearls seem to be thought beautiful all over the world where they have been seen. Empresses in the north, ladies of all degree in the east and west, and savages between the tropies, all love to wear pearls; and where is there a woman, in an Esquimaux hut or a Welsh farmhouse, who would not wear pearls if she could obtain them? And why should not all have pearls who wish for them, if there is a boundless stone, and labourers enough willing and ready to provide them? Alas! there are not only few wearers of pearls because the interests of the many are not consulted, but the labourers who obtain them are by the same cause kept bare of almost the necessaries of life, going forth hungry and half naked to their toil, and returning to seek rest amidst the squalidness of poverty, while hundreds and thousands of their families and neighbours stand on the shore envying them as they depart, and preparing to be jealous of them on their return: both parties being, all the while, the natural owners of the native wealth of their region. And why is all this injustice and tyranny? That a few, a very few, may engross a resource which should enrich the many. Yet, not many things are more evident than that to impoverish the many is the most certain method of ultimately impoverishing the few; and the reverse. If the government would give away its pearl banks to those who now fish those banks for the scantiest wages which will support life, government would soon gain more in a year from the pearls of Ceylon than it has hitherto gained by any five fisheries. If buyers might bid for pearls from every quarter of the world to those who might sell any where, and after their own manner, Cingalese huts of mud and rushes would grow into dwellings of timber and stone; instead of bare walls, there would be furniture from a thousand British warehouses; instead of marshes, there would be rice-fields; instead of rickety coasting boats, there would be fleets of merchantmen riding in the glorious harbours of the island; instead of abject prayers from man to man as the one is about to suffer the dearth which the other inflicts, there would be the good will and thanksgiving which spring from abundance; instead of complaints on the one hand of expensive dependence, and murmurs about oppression on the other, there would be mutual congratulation for mutual aid. Ceylon would over pay, if required, in taxes, if not in advantageous commerce, any sacrifice of the monopolies by which she has been more thoroughly and ingeniously beggared than any dependency on which British monopoly has exercised its skill; and Britain might disburthen her conscience of the crime of perpetuating barbarism in that fairest of all regions, for whose civilization she has made herself responsible. There are many methods of introducing civilization; and some very important ones have been tried

upon this beautiful island, and with as much success as could be expected: but the most efficacious, the prime method, is only beginning to be tried, the allowing the people to gain the property which nature has appointed as their share of her distribution. Let the Cingalese gather their own pearls, exchange their own timber, sell their own dyes wherever and in whatsoever manner they like, and they will soon understand comfort, and care for luxuries, like all who have comforts and luxuries within their reach; and with these desires and attainments will come the perceptions of duty,—the new sense of obligation which it is the object of all plans of civilization to introduce.

Great pains had been taken to civilize Rayo. He had been schooled and watched over he could read, and he respected the religion of his priest; he was willing to toil, and had a taste for comfort. But, beyond the hope of acquiring a hut and a mat or two, there was little stimulus to toil, and as little to conduct himself with a view towards any future circumstances. Strangers not only carried away the wealth of the land, but they prevented that wealth from growing, and therefore the labour of the inhabitants frmn obtaining a wider field. As pearls were fished ten years before, so they would be fished ten years hence, for any probability that he saw to the contrary. A thousand divers carried away a pittance then, insufficient to bring over to them the desirable things which were waiting on the shores of the neighbouring continent for a demand; and a like pittance might such another thousand carry away in time to come; in like manner might they sigh for foreign commodities, and in like manner might foreign commodities be still waiting, wrought or unwrought, for a demand. Therefore was Rayo still in a state of barbarism, though he understood and praised the trial by jury, and could read the prayers of his church. He was in a state of barbarism, for these accomplishments had no influence on his conduct and his happiness. He was selfish in his love; fraudulent with an easy conscience in his transactions of business; and capable of a revenge towards his superiors as remorseless as his deportment was gentle and polished. No circumstance had ever produced so happy an effect upon him as his advancement to be a pearl-diver, an advancement in dignity, if not in gain. It was the last promotion he was ever likely to obtain; but, besides that it softened his heart by occasioning his immediate marriage, it gave him the new object of distinguishing himself, and opened the possibility of his profiting by some stray pearl, or by some chance opportunity of speculating on a lot of oysters. He walked to join his company on the beach with a demeanour unlike that by which Rayo was commonly known; and his young wife looked after him with a new feeling of pride.

He was sure to be as safe as on shore, for the Charmer was to go in the same boat, and no shark binder of the whole assemblage was more confident of having effectually bound the sharks than Marana's father. All were confident: and the crowds on the beach looked as joyous for the night as if the work was going on for their sakes. A city of bowers seemed to have sprung up like Jonah's gourd or like the tabernacles which, in old times of Jewish festivals, made Jerusalem a leafy paradise for a short season of every year. illegible tents, and bamboo huts dressed with greens and flowers were elustered around the sordid dwellings on the sands. Throngs of merchants and craftsmen, black, tawny, and white, with their variety of costumes, mingled in this great fair. The polisher of jewels was there with his glittering treasure. The pearldriller looked to his needles and pearl dust, while awaiting on his low seat the

materials on which he was to employ his skill. The bald, yellow-mantled priest of Budhoo passed on amidst obeisances in one place, as did the Catholic pastor in another. The white vested Mahomedan, the turbaned Hindoo, the swathed Malay merchants exhibited their stores, or looked passively on the gay scene. The quiet Dutchman from the south sent a keen glance through the market in quest of precious stones in the hands of an ignorant or indolent vender. The haughty Candian abated his fierceness, and stepped out of the path of the European; while the stealthy Cingalese was in no one's path, but won his way like a snake in the tall grass of the jungle. The restless lessees of the banks, meanwhile, were flitting near the boats, now ranged in a long row, each with its platform, ropes and pullies; each with its shark-binder, its pilot, its commander, its crew of ten, and its company of ten divers. The boat-lights were being kindled, one by one, and scattering a thousand sparkles over the rippling tide. It was just on the stroke of ten, and the signal gun was all that was waited for. The buzz of voices fell into a deep silence as the expectation became more intense. Those who were wont to make the heavens their clock and the stars its hour-hand, looked up to mark the precise inclination of the Southern Cross; while those who found an index in the flow of the tide, paced the sands from watermark to watermark. Yet more turned their faces southward towards the dark outline of hill and forest that rose on the horizon, and watched for the land breeze. It came, at first in light puffs which scarcely bowed the rushes around the lagoons, or made a stir among the stalks in the rice-ground. Moment by moment it strengthened, till the sails of the boats began to bulge, and every torch and faggot of cocoa-nut leaves on the beach slanted its forks of flame towards the sea, as if to indicate to the voyagers their way. Then the signal-gun boomed, its wreath of smoke curled lazily upward and dispersed itself in the clear air, while a shout, in which every variety of voice was mingled, seemed to chase the little fleet into the distance. The shouting ceased amidst the anxiety of watching the clusters of receding lights, which presently looked as if they had parted company with those in the sky, and had become a degree less pure by their descent. Then rose the song of the dancing-girls, as they stood grouped, each with a jewelled arm withdrawn from beneath her mantle, and her jet-black hair bound with strings of pearl. Mixed with their chaunt, came the mutterings and gabblings of the charmers who remained on shore, contorting their bodies more vehemently than would have been safe on any footing less stable than terra-firma.

The most imposing part of the spectacle was now to the people at sea. As their vessels were impelled by an unintermitting wind through the calmest of seas, they were insensible to motion, and the scene on shore, with its stir and its sound, seemed to recede like the image of a phantasmagoria, till the flickering lights blended into one yellow haze in which every distinct object was lost. It became at length like a dim star, contrasting strangely in brightness and in hue with the constellation which appeared to rise as rapidly as majestically over the southern hills, like an auxiliary wheeling his silent force to restore the invaded empire of night. Night now had here undisputed sway; for the torches which flared at the prows of the boats were tokens of homage, and not attempts at rivalship of her splendours.

Sailing is nearly as calculable a matter on these expeditions as a journey of fifty miles in an English mail-coach. There is no need to think about the duration of the darkness, in a region where the days and nights never vary more than fifteen minutes from their

equal length; and, as for a fair wind, if it is certain that there will be one to carry you straight out at ten to-night, it is equally certain that there will be an opposite one to bring you straight in before noon tomorrow. Nature here saves you the trouble of putting engine and paddle-box into your boat, in order to be able to calculate your going forth and your return. By the time the amber haze in the east was parting to disclose the glories of a tropical sunrise, the fleet was stationed in a circle over the banks. Every stray shark had received its commands to close its jaws, and hie back to Adam's Bridge; and on each side of every platform stood five men, every one with his foot slung on the pyramidal stone, whose weight must carry him nine fathoms down into the regions of monstrous forms and terrifying motions.

Rayo was one who was thus in readiness. He stood next to the Charmer, Marana's father, over whom a change seemed to have come since he left the land. It might be from the fasting necessary to his office; it might be from the intensity of his devotion; but it might also be from fear, that his hands shook as he fumbled among his sacred furniture, and his voice quavered as he chaunted his spells. Rayo perceived his disorder, and a qualm came over the heart of the young diver, a qualm such as assails the servile agent of a rich man's prosperity much sooner than one in whom independence brings bravery. Rayo looked keenly at the Charmer; but the Charmer avoided meeting his eye, and it was not permitted to interrupt his incantation.

It was, perhaps, not the better for Rayo that the opposite five went first, it gave more time for the unstringing of his nerves. The splash of the thousand men who descended within the circle took away his breath as effectually as the closing waters were about to deprive him of it. It was a singular sight to see the half of this vast marshalled company thus suddenly engulphed, and to think of them, in one moment after, as forming a human population at the bottom of the sea. To be a subject of the experiment was to the full as strange as to witness it, as Rayo found, when the minute of his companions' submersion was at length over, and a thousand faces (very nearly scarlet, notwithstanding their tawny skins) rushed up through the green wave. Spouting, dripping, and panting, they convulsively jerked their burden of oysters out upon the platform, and then tried to deliver their news from the regions below; but for this news their comrades must not wait. Down went Rayo, to find out the difference between three fathoms and nine. How far the lively idea of a shark's row of teeth might have quickened his perceptions, he did not himself inquire; but he was conscious of a more dazzling flash before his eyes, a sharper boring of the drum of his ear, and a general pressure so much stronger than ever before, that it would have been easy for him to believe, if he had been a Hindoo, like his neighbours, that he supported the tortoise that supported the elephant that supported the globe. He could see nothing at first in the dizzy green that was suffocating and boiling him; but that did not signify, as he had no time to look about him. He thought he was descending clean into a shark's jaws, so sharp was that against which his left great toe struck, when his descent from the ninth heaven to the ninetieth abyss was at length accomplished. (How could any one call it nine fathoms?) On meeting this shark's tooth, or whatever it was, yelling was found to be out of the question. It was luckily forgotten in the panic, that the rope was to be pulled in case of accident;—luckily, as there was no alternative between Rayo's losing all credit as a diver, and the fishing being at an end for that day, from his spreading the alarm of a shark. He day not pull

the rope; he only pulled up his left leg vigorously enough to assure himself that it was still in its proper place; by which time lie discovered that he had only mistaken a large, gaping oyster for a hungry shark. Rayo's great toe being not exactly the viand that this oyster had a longing for, it ceased to gape, and Rayo manfully trampled it under foot, before wrenching it from the abode of which its seven years' lease had this day expired These oysters required a terrible wrenching, considering that there was no taking breath between. Now he had got the knack. A pretty good handful, that! St. Anthony! where did that slap in the face come from so cold and stunning? Rayo's idea of a buffet from the devil was, that it would be hot; so he took heart, and supposed it was a fish, as indeed it was. He must go now, 0! O! he must go. He should die now before he could get up through that immeasurable abyss. But where was the rope? St Anthony! where was the rope? He was lost! No! it was the rope slapped his face this time. Still he was lost! A shadowy, striding mountain was coming upon him, too enormous to be any fish but a whale. Suppose Rayo should be the first to see a whale in these seas! St. Anthony! It was one of his companions. If they were not gone up yet, could not he stay an instant longer, and so avoid being made allowance for as the youngest diver of tim party? No, not an instant. He rather thought he must be dead already, for it was hours since he breathed. He was alive enough, however, to coil himself in the rope. Then he went to sleep for a hundred years; then, what is this? dawn? A green dawn? brighter, lighter, vistas of green light everywhere, with wriggling forms shooting from end to end of them. Pah! here is a mouthful of ooze. Rayo should not have opened his mouth. Here is the air at last! Rayo does not care; the water does as well by this time. If he is not dead now, water will never kill him, for he has been a lifetime under it.

“Well, Rayo,” says the captain, “you have done pretty well for the first time. You have been under water a full minute, and one man is up before you. Here comes another.”

“A full minute!”

Even so. Who has not gone through more than this in a dream of less than a minute? and yet more if he has been in sudden peril of instant death, when the entire life is lived over again, with the single difference of all its events being contemporaneous? Since it is impossible to get into this position voluntarily, let him who would know the full worth of a minute of waking existence, plunge nine fathoms deep, not in the sandy ooze of a storm-vext ocean, where he might as well be asleep for anything that he will see, but in some translucent region which Nature has chosen for her treasury.

Rayo had re-discovered one of the natural uses of air; but he was in despair at the prospect before him. Forty or fifty such plunges as this to-day! and as many more to-morrow, and almost every day for six weeks! Forty or fifty life-times a-day for six weeks! This is not the sort of eternity he had ever thought of desiring; and if purgatory is worse, Father Anthony had not yet spoken half ill enough of it. Rayo had better turn priest: he could speak eloquently now on any subject connected with duration.

Before the end of the day's work, however, the impression was much weakened. The minutes of submersion grew shorter, fish and their shadows more familiar, and much

of the excessive heat and cold were found to have proceeded from within. Before noon, Rayo could consider of certain things to be attended to on the platform, as well as on the oyster-bed.

Oysters gape sometimes in the air as well as in the water. As Rayo floated in the intervals of his plunges, (having grown so hardy as to resist the remonstrances of the Charmer,) he observed the commander take the opportunity of slipping a morsel of wood into any oyster-shell that might happen to open, to prevent its closing again, and thus to save the necessity of waiting for the putrefaction of the fish before its treasure could be extracted. Rayo also perceived, that by an unheeded touch of the commander's foot, one of these oysters was dislodged from its horizontal position, and slipped with its hinge uppermost, so as to give exit to a large white pearl, so round that it rolled on and on, till it was stopped by a piece of rope, under whose shadow it lay apparently unperceived. It would have been risking too much to mount the boat in this present interval, for the purpose of picking up the pearl. Rayo must wait till after the next plunge; and in the meantime, it was but too probable somebody would move the rope, and either discover the pearl, or let it run away to some useless place. Such a pearl as this was worth all the chanks that Marana had cast away, including the right-handed one. Such a pearl as this would build a boat as well as a house, and make Marana look like a bride indeed. Such a pearl as this was no more than Ravo believed the proper payment of his labour, considering that strangers carried away all the profit from the country people. Such a pearl—this very pearl—might have come into his possession, if he had taken the chance, like some of his companions, of a lot of oysters, instead of small, fixed wages. In short, Rayo designed to have the pearl, and found means of justifying the act of dishonesty, which he would have strongly scrupled if he had been serving a party in whose prosperity he was interested, instead of one who interfered with the prosperity of himself and his countrymen. What Father Anthony had taught served little other purpose at present than quickening Rayo's ingenuity in finding reasons for doing whatever suited him. Such instruction might confirm and exalt his integrity, when he should have any. In the meantime, his social circumstances did more to make him dishonest than his religion to render him honest.

When he came up next time, he made so much haste to scramble into the boat, and seemed so much hurried that the Charmer started up in terror lest he should have lost a limb,— an accident which the binder of sharks had been expecting all the morning, from a complete failure of confidence in his own skill. When he saw that all was safe, he very nearly forgot his dignity so far as to assist the youth in emptying his net of oysters upon the heap in the middle of the platform. He stopped short, however, on Rayo's repulsing his offers of help, and went back to his seat, commending the practice ot coming on board instead of floating between the plunges. Rayo sank down on his knees to empty his pouch. The rope was within reach, and under it still lay the pearl. It was very natural for Rayo to draw the rope towards him, if he really wanted to ascertain whether the one round his body was strong enough; but it was not equally natural for him to put his hand to his mouth under pretence of dashing the wet from his face where little wet remained. So, at least, the commander thought; and he was confirmed by observing a hasty effort to swallow when Rayo was summoned to descend again. Measures of which the youth little dreamed were in preparation for

him while he was down. He was hoisted upon the platform, and before he knew what he was about, a man seized him by either arm, a third stepped behind him, flourishing a knotted rope, while a fourth presented a cocoa-nut shell of liquid, which did not look or smell very tempting. He was told of a summary sentence to be flogged for putting his hand to his mouth while within arm's-length of oysters, (a great crime in Ceylon, whatever it may be elsewhere,) and to swallow a strong emetic as the ordeal of innocence of a further crime. It would have been useless to attempt to upset the cup; for a double dose would have been the consequence, an ample stock of emetics being the part of the apparatus of pearl-fishing least grudged by the speculators. Bolting was equally Impossible. There was nothing for it but to bolt the medicine. The pearl of course appeared, in due time; and when it once more vanished beneath the lid of the commander's spring-box, the fairest of poor Rayo's hopes vanished with it. He might consider himself, not disgraced,—for his companions were wont to applaud the act of stealing pearls,—but turned off from his employment for this bout, and precluded from the means of establishing Marana in any thing better than four bare mud walls.

“Pillal Karra,” (binder of sharks,) “you are wise,” observed the commander respectfully. “I have seen your downcast looks. Doubtless you knew what should befal this youth.”

“If any doubted our power,” said the Charmer, “they should observe how a mysterious trouble comes first to foreshow the misfortune that will follow. When I was younger, I was content to keep off the misfortune; and when I was overruled by the Malabar hags, to let the mischief come without warning to myself. Now when my mind is tossed, I am learning to know that the Malabar hags are riding a coming storm.”

“Have these hags bewitched your son-in-law?”

“No doubt; and I know which of them it is. It is Amoottra, who owes me a grudge on account of Marana's beauty, If she could meet my daughter out of the line of my charms, she would touch her with leprosy.”

“Well; if you can convince my employer of this, and disenchant Rayo, he may come out again to-morrow. Otherwise, he has taken his last plunge for this season; for there parts the first boat from the circle.”

As the boats warped round into line, the sea-breeze freshened, and all were presently making a steady progress homewards. Almost as soon as they came in sight of the orange-tinted shore, apparently floating in the hot haze of noon, they saw a spark glitter, and some seconds after came the boom of the signal-gun which was to announce their return to the anxious speculators and the public at large ia the fair. The flag was next hoisted, and then every man, woman, and child was looking to seaward while hastening to secure standing-room on the margin of the tide. The Charmers began to be ambiguous about this day's success, and to prophesy magnificently for the next. The dancing girls stationed them-selves round certain matted enclosures, ready to welcome the oysters to their place of putrefaction. Father Anthony borrowed a

telescope of a contractor, whose hand shook so that he could make no use of it himself; and Marana stood apart under the shade of a talipot leaf, lowering her primitive umbrella, with tantalizing constaney, as often as a gallant stranger or a curious country-woman would have peeped under it.

A talipot leaf will shelter two heads, and hide two faces, as was soon proved with Marana's. Rayo did not particularly wish to encounter Father Anthony, and had withdrawn Marana among the huts, where, screened by the umbrella, they mourned the adventure. Father Anthony's eyes, however, were keen. Keenly they peered under the shelter, and made Rayo's droop before them. In vain Rayo pleaded his father-in-law's word, that he was bewitched by a Malabar hag. Father Anthony did not allow Malabar hags to lay waste the fold of which he was the shepherd. —Rayo bowed his head submissively, and waited for orders.

“Do not insult the contractor by a plea of witchcraft.”

“I will not, father.”

“Do not seek to be employed again this season. There are many waiting for the office who deserve it better than you. For this season, I shall recommend Tilleke in your place; bv next season, I hope you will have wrestled with temptation, so that I may send my blessing forth with you.”

“Is the blessing passed away?” asked Rayo, prostrating himself before the priest, with deep sorrow in his tone and countenance. “Perhaps not, if you will freely confess.”

“I will, father.”

Marana moved away, and remained out of hearing with her back turned towards them, till the priest at length passed her. Dropping a few words of good cheer, he exhorted her to be a tender wife, but withal faithful to her religion, and then he trusted Rayo would become proof against every kind of evil instigation or influence. It really was remarkable that such influences seemed to beset him in particular places. His sins of theft took place at sea, where compunction never seemed to visit him; while no one could be more penitent and submissive than Rayo on land. Did Marana know of any instance of his committing a theft on shore, or being penitent at sea? Marana could recollect none, and was confirmed in her dread of the Malabar witch. If she could but get Rayo farther inland! she said to herself, as father Anthony gave her his blessing, and went on his way.

This aspiration was nearer its accomplishment than she could have supposed.

“Rayo, what could make you take the pearl?” she asked, when she returned to her husband.

“If there were a cocoa-nut tree here, as in the south, I should not want the money which I cannot get. We might build under its shade, and eat its fruit, and drink the milk from the kernel, and make our ropes of its fibres, and burn lamps of its oil. But

as there are no cocoa-nuts where we live, I got chanks. You threw them away, and I tried to gee a pearl. If I must not have a pearl——"

"Let us go to the cocoa-trees, as they cannot come to ns."

"If I go at all, I will go far; down among the cinnamon gardens, Marana."

"Not to be a cinnamon peeler!" exclaimed Marana, who thought, she saw a desperation in her husband's countenance, such as a man might wear who was about to lose caste. It was now a disputed point which caste ought to rank highest, the fishermen or the cinnamon-peelers; but Marana, as a duty bound, as a fisherman's daughter, regarded the cinnamon-peelers as upstarts. "You, a fisherman, will not mix with the cinnamon-peelers?"

Rayo explained no more of his purpose in going among the cinnamon gardens than that it was not to mix with the peelers. But he gloomily hinted that perhaps Marana ought not to go, would she not there be out of the limit of her father's charms? Night not the hag Amoottra——

"Touch me with leprosy? No," said Marana, producing the precious shall from a corner of her mantle. "My lather needs not draw out his spell at home while I carry this with me. I have shown it to you, Rayo, but you will not sell it? If we live among the cocoa-nuts, we shall not want the money. You will not take it from me to part with it?"

Rayo lot her deposit it in her mantle, and then she was ready to go. Every thing that she possessed was now on her person. Her father was certain, from the nature of his profession, of being well taken eare of; and, if not, her husband's claims upon her would have been paramount. Leaving the Charmer to discover by his spells why and whither they were gone, and old Gomgode to catch fish for himself and his daughter, the young folks stole away towards the richer country to the south. They knew that there was little danger of pursuit. There was no lack of divers to supply Rayo's place. Nobody supposed they would actually starve; and, as for living poorly, it was what thousands had done before them, thousands were doing now, and thousands would do after them. Gomgode supposed Rayo would preserve caste. The charmer trusted his daughter not to expose herself rashly to the bag's wrath, as she knew the consequences. Perhaps Father Anthony missed and mourned them most; but he had a firm faith that Rayo would prove an honester man in the jungle, or among the paddy-fields, than on a haunted sea.

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Chapter III.

MORNING IN THE JUNGLE.

During the time of the cinnamon harvest, it was the custom of Mr. Carr, the agent of the East India Company for the management of their cinnamon contract, to ride every morning through one department or another of the Marandahn, or great cinnamon garden near Columbo. The beauty of the ride might afford sufficient temptation at any season of the year. The blue lake of Columbo, whether gleaming in the sunrise, or darkening in the storms of the monsoon, never lost its charms. The mountain range in the distance was an object for the eye to rest lovingly upon, whether clearly outlined against the glowing sky, or dressed in soft clouds, from which Adam's Peak alone stood aloft, like a dark island in the waters that are above the firmament.

Whether the laurel-like cinnamon wore its early foliage of red or its later of green, or its white blossom that made the landscape dazzling with beauty and voluptuous with fragrance; whether the talipot upreared its noble crest of straw-coloured blossoms above its green canopy, or presented its clustering fruit; whether the cocoa-nut tree bowed before the gusts of autumn, or stood in dark, majestic clumps above the verdure of a less lofty growth, the groves and gardens were a paradise to the eye of the Europeans.

The reaches of road, and the green paths which might be detected here and there amidst the vast plantation, the race grounds and patches of meadow land interspersed, and the lowly roof peeping out occasionally from beneath the palms, gave hints of the presence of man and civilization; while the temple, with its oriental dome supported on slender pillars, jutting out at the extreme end of a promontory into the blue-waters of the lake, or perched on some point of the piled rocks in the background, carried back the thoughts to old days of barbarian superstition. In all this there was so much pleasure as to make a ride in the Marandahn a tempting pleasure at all times and seasons; though Mr. Carr's interest was at its height during the cinnamon harvest.

As he was about to mount his horse one morning, the sound of argument, not to say dispute, reached him from within.

“My dear child,” Mrs. Carr was saying, “Roomseree and Pellikee shall give you an airing nearer home, so that you will not be killed with the heat. Do not think of going with papa this morning.”

“O, mama, you know papa says nothing tires me. I can ride as far as papa; and papa says he likes to show me what the people are doing; and I am sure the people like me to go too. Papa enjoys his ride so much more when I go with him; and the horse does not think me very heavy.”

“Heavy ! no, love! You are so small and slight, Alice, that it makes me tremble to think of your going out under such a sun as it will be by the time you get back. Papa always promises to take a very short ride; and it ends with his bringing you home at the end of four or five hours. Better stay with me, love.”

“All the rest of the day, mama; but papa has had the right saddle put on, and we are to go the west ride this morning. Cannot you go to sleep till we come back?”

Mrs, Carr promised to try; and, to do her justice, she was always ready to do her best to sleep, day and night, bidden and unbidden. With a few sighs over the charming spirits and the unquenchable curiosity of the dear child, she closed her eyes on the dewy radiance of a morning in paradise, and was glad that she had nothing more to do with cinnamon than to be tired of hearing of it, and to taste it when she pleased.

Alice used her eyes to more purpose this morning. She was yet new enough to scenes like those before her to be full of wonder, and other feelings, as natural, perhaps, but less desirable.

“Papa, do giants live in this place?”

“Giant, my dear, no. What made you fancy such a thing? You have seen no very amazing people, have you?”

“No; they are very small pretty people, I think. Sometimes, when I see them under such a very tall clump of trees as that, or among the jungle grass, they put me more in mind of dark fairies than giants; but—”

“But the trees are some of them fit for giants' walking-sticks, I suppose you think; and an elephant is a very proper animal for a giant to ride. Hey?”

“I have seen men on elephants,” replied Alice. “But look there! Look at that great castle!” And she pointed with awe to a mighty object which was partially revealed as the morning mists drew off.

“That is not a castle, my dear; though I do not wonder at your taking it to one. It is a mountain-peak.”

“But the drawbridge, papa;—the drawbridge hanging in the air.”

“Ah! you would be a long time in finding out what that drawbridge (as you call it) is. You think it made for giants; but it would break down under your weight. That is only a bridge of creeping plants, for birds and butterflies to hide in. If a strong wind came, you would see it swing, like your swing between the cherry, trees in the orchard at your grand-mama's, in England.—When we get out of the garden and nearer the thickets, you will see some such flowers as that bridge is made of, hanging from the trees, and binding them together so that we cannot ride through them.”

“But I do not want to get out of the garden yet. Here come the people, one after another, from their cottages, with their crooked knives to cut down the branches.

What are those tawny people doing in the shade? They seem to be sitting very comfortably, all in a ring. This is prettier than seeing grandmama's mowers in England, besides that the mowers do not sing at their work, like these people."

"The mowers in England have more reason to sing than many of these peelers. Look how thin many of them are; and that poor child playing in the grass appears half-starved. Very few people in England are so poor as some of the natives here, who yet sing from morning till night."

Alice observed that they were not all thin; and she pointed to one man whose legs were of an enormous size, and to another whose body was nearly as broad as it was long.—She was told that these appearances were caused by disease; and that the diseases of the labourers were in a great degree owing to their poor way of living. There would be few such swollen or emaciated bodies as these if the people had flesh to eat, or good bread, or even the seasoning which was necessary to make their vegetable food agree with them.

"Seasoning! What sort of seasoning?"

"Salt, and pepper, and cardamoms, and cinnamon."

"Salt, papa! They must be very lazy if they do not get salt enough. There is the sea all round Ceylon; and I have seen several ponds where the water was so salt I could not drink it. There was a crust of salt all about the edge, papa."

"Very true, my dear; but the people are not allowed to take it. The king of Candy lives in the middle of this island; and the kings of Candy have sometimes been troublesome people to the English, as they were to the Dutch before them. Now, as the king of Candy cannot get to the sea, or to any salt lake, without our king's leave, he and his people depend upon us for salt; and our government likes to keep him quiet, and get a great price for its salt at the same time by selling it to the Candians very dear, and by letting nobody else sell any. So the people of the country are not allowed to help themselves to salt."

"But if there was not enough, I would rather make the king of Candy go without than these poor people who belong to us. We ought to take care of them first."

"The government likes to take care of itself before either its own people or the Candians. There is salt enough for every body here, and for half India besides; and large quantities are destroyed every year, to keep up the price, while many are dying for want of it, and those who live can get nothing better than coarse dirty salt which the beasts in your grandmam's, farm-yard would turn away from. If we could count the numbers of Hindoos who die in India for want of the salt which their own country produces, we should find that fearful reckoning awaits the Company there, as there does the government here; a fearful balance of human life against a high price for salt."

Alice thought that if the ghosts of these poor natives could haunt the authorities, such an army of shadows would soon prevail to secure for their surviving countrymen the

food which Providence had made to superabound before their eyes. She knew how shocked and sorry government was that a woman here and there burned herself when her husband died; but when government burned the salt which was left, in order to keep up the price, Alice thought, and so did her father, that government was destroying more lives than ever penshed on piles kindled by native hands.

“But pepper, papa: the king of Candy can grow his own pepper in his own woods, I suppose; for it seems as if it would grow any where here, as long as there are trees for it to hang upon. I see the pepper vine dangling in the woods, wherever I go; and the monkeys throw the red clusters at each other.”

“The monkeys may gather them, but the men and women may not unless they are employed to do so by the government. “The monkeys cannot pay for papper, and some of the people can: therefore the people who cannot must go without, or steal, and run the risk of being punished.”

“Poor people!”

“Miserably poor, indeed. If they were allowed to grow as much pepper as they pleased, and sell it to any part of the world where it is wished for, they would have a great deal of money wherewith to buy things which the government, could sell much more profitable than pepper. Then we. should see mats, strewed with pepper corns, spread in many a nook of the thickets which the panther and the snake now have all to themselves; and many a child would be heard singing among the vines, which now moans its little life away in its half-starved mother's arms. The same may be said of cardamoms. There is no one in these eastern countries who wonld not eat cardamoms if he could get them; and there are endless tracts where cardamoms would grow; and yet very few of the natives can obtain them to eat. Cardamoms grow wherever vegetable ashes are found in this country. The plant naturally springs up on the very spots where other precious things have been burned before the people's eyes; but the plant must be rooted up, or its capsules left to be avoided as forbidden fruit, unless offered to the government for sale, But government gives so low a price for cardamoms, that the people have little heart to cultivate the plant.”

“But what does the government do-with cardamoms?”

“It sells them; but not to half so many people as would be glad to buy. If government would let the people freely sell cardamoms, government would have a people rich enough to pay more in taxes than government will ever make by selling cardamoms.”

“But you said the people might not have cinnamon. How can any body prevent their getting it? Look all round, papa. As far as we can see on this side and on that, and a great way before us, it is one wood of cinnamon.”

“Yes, my dear. This one garden is fifteen miles round.”

“Well, why cannot the people steal as much as they please? If I were a poor native, I would cut down all I could get, and sell enough to make a great deal of money, and then buy what I wished for.”

“As for the cutting it down, my dear, the natives would have little scruple; for, like all people who are cruelly pinched, they are apt to take what they can get without caring to whom it belongs. But how are they to sell it when they have got it?”

“I thought you said that cinnamon grew scarcely anywhere in the world but here; and I am sure there are plenty of people all over the world who are fond of it, and would be glad to buy it.”

“Very true; but those who long to sell and those who long to buy cannot get at each other. Somebody steps between to prevent the bargain. The English government lets the East India Company have all the cinnamon you see, on condition of the Company paying so much a-year. So the spice is carried away to be sold, instead of foreign nations being allowed to come here to buy; and none is left but that which the Company does not think it worth while to carry away; and even that is sometimes burned to keep up the price.”

“Burned! when so many people would be glad of it ! Would not the common people in England like it, if they could get it as cheap as salt? If they did, they would make the fortunes of the people here.”

“And then the people here would make the fortunes of a great many of the working people in England. This would certainly be the case.— What do you think the people in England eat most of, Alice?”

“Bread, I suppose.”

“Yes; and salt comes next. And what next? —Another sort of seasoning.”

It was not pepper, nor mustard; but something that every body liked and used,— from the infant that will leave sucking its thumb for it, to the old man that has but one tooth left in his head;—from the king who lets his queen put it into his coffee, to the labourer's wife who carries home a coarse sample of it on the Saturday night.

“That must be sugar. But I think almost every thing that is good with sugar would be better with cinnamon; and if cinnamon was made very cheap, what a quantity would be used, and how rich the growers might be ! They would grow more and more, and employ more people, till this whole large island was one great cinnamon garden—”

“Every part of it that is fit for such a purpose; every part that has a light dry sandy soil like that which we are riding over so pleasantly. And then much more use would be made of the rest of the land, the richer the inhabitants grew. There would be more rice, and more fruits, and more dye-woods, and more timber, and more of all the useful and beautiful things that this paradise will produce.”

Alice wondered that the whole world did not cry out for more cinnamon and her father agreed with her that such a cry would probably be raised, if the greater part of the world did but know how good cinnamon is. They never could have known, or they would not so easily agree to go without it, for the sake of the pockets of the East India Company.

“The fact is, my dear, the Company and the government do not behave so ill as some people did before them. The cinnamon trade is a very old trade:—as old as the time when the wise and wealthy Egyptians used to trade with the rich and barbarous princes of India; but, though this trade has passed through many hands, there has never been liberty to buy and sell as natural wants and wishes rise. Three hundred years ago, the Portuguese came here, and drove out the turbaned Moors, and sold cinnamon at their own price to the world, (and let the natives have none of the benefit of it,) for more than a hundred and thirty years. Then came the Dutch to take the matter out of the hands of the Portuguese, and they let the world have a little and a little more, by degrees till they prepared the way for a fine commerce for us, if we had but known how to make use of it. But the mistake of the government of England is in letting nobody have the spice who will not buy of us and pay our price for it; when it is very plain that their money would come round to England at last: and in much greater plenty, if we let the natives grow and the foreigners buy of them, as much as they pleased.”

“Those poor people who are peeling, and stopping their songs as we pass, looking and so terribly afraid of us, seem as if they were not fit to make a bargain, papa.”

“They would soon learn, my dear, if left to manage their own interest. At present, they know very well how to steal, but very little how to conduct a fair bargain. The Cingales come begging mad praying, almost on their knees, that we will buy; and if we condescend to ask their prices, they name twice as much as they mean to take; and if we choose to give them only half what they might really look for, they cannot help themselves: or if we have a fancy to pay them in betel-nut, or tobacco, or cotton-cloth, or anything else we may want to get rid of, they have nothing to do but to take it, or to carry back their commodity as they brought it. These people, however,—these peelers, have nothing to sell.”

“When we get among the cocoa groves, papa, there are several cottages, and the people bring out things to sell. I wish you would buy something this morning; just to see how they will manage, poor things ! But who is this, papa? He looks grander than the modelier, with his gay petticoat and his blue dress. I do believe this is Captain Cinnamon, as the peelers call him.”

“It is. He is the chief of the peelers, and he is taking his morning round, as we are. I will speak to him.”

Captain Cinnamon bent his turbaned head in a profound obeisance to the little girl, as well as to her father, which the young lady returned as if she had been the far-famed pearl queen of the olden time, Alice's father and mother were more amused then they ought to have been at the airs of consequence she assumed among the natives, and did not discourage the haughtiness with which she naturally returned their homage. Mr. Carr's own manner, adapted to those he had to deal with, was a bad example for her.

“I'll tell you what, captain, you must take more care of your charge. I am certain there is a great deal of pilfering on in this gardens, and you are answerable to the Company for it.”

The captain was all humility: but how should there be thefts? For what purpose, as the peelers could not sell this commodity.

“But others besides peelers may help themselves, and do.”

“The English gentlemen from the fort ride through the garden,” modestly suggested the captain.

“Nonsense ! do you suppose they steal cinnamon? I tell you I saw a head pop up yonder, and a motion among the shrubs, where neither cutting nor barking is going on: look there, and you will find a thief, depend upon it.”

The captain owned that secure as the Company was of no interference with their monopoly of the bark while the garden was under his care, it was difficulty to prevent persons from entering to pluck the fruit. It was so easy to pull and carry away the fruit unobserved, and it was so precious to the people, and of so little use to the Company, that Mr. Carr's predecessor had connived, at the practice, and desired Captain Cinnamon to do so too. As Mr. Carr thought differently, however, the peasants of the jungle should be humbled beneath his feet In a trice, half a score of peelers were called from their work to hunt the thief; and a grand show of zeal they made in beating among the shrubs, and uttering cries.

“There, that will do,” said Mr. Carr, when Alice had pointed out the gradual retreat of the moving thing (as shown by the twitching of the bushes) towards the ditch which bounded the garden.

“This will frighten him: now let him escape.”

Little Alice now signified her will and pleasure to be informed what was to become of the quantity of bark which was strewed before her eyes. Wherever there was a space between the shrubs where the sun could penetrate to the pure white sand from which the spicy stems sprang, mats were spread; and on these mats were strewed and heaped rolls of the bark, the smaller rolls being fitted into the larger, so as to contain a great quantity of tile commodity in a small bulk.—On some open plots which they had already passed, other such mats, heaped with other such rolls, had greeted the senses of Alice and her father; aud wherever they. caught glimpses through tide alleys of the wood, or reached an eminence whence they could look abroad over the expanse of shrubs, they saw dark forms squatted on the white sand, or gemmed heads rising amidst the verdure, while the rich scent which declared their occupation diffused itself through the still air. Though the bands of the workmen moved languidly, (like the bands of other workmen who do not labour for themselves.) though the process of peeling was clumsy, and the waste of material excessive, yet such quantities of bark fell from innumerable boughs and twigs that Alice could not imagine what was to be done with it all.

Captain Cinnamon told her (with obeisances which were imitated and multiplied by his throng of followers) that all this quantity of spice awaited the disposal of her puissant father, the agent of the Honourable Company; and that he would probably

inform her that when he had caused to be packed that which his wisdom should deem the proper quantity to be vouchsafed for the use of the world, the rest would receive its sentence of destruction or distribution from his lips. Alice held up her head, and rode on, not quite understanding the matter of fact about which she had inquired, but thinking that it would be below the dignity of so great a man's daughter to appear to need further information.

The throng of attendants hovered round them as long as they continued within the verge of the garden—pointing out to the young lady here a little stack of cinnamon awaiting the hands of the packers; and there kneeling groups, with each a chest in the centre, a heap of black pepper lying beside it, to strew between the layers of cinnamon, and pots of resin wherewith to stop the seams and crevices of the chests. Alice could not help learning much from what she saw, not with standing the sudden start of pride which made her prefer issuing commands to asking questions. She felt a sad loss of consequence when her father dismissed the peelers to their proper business, on reaching the ditch which divided the garden from the open country. She was now no more than Alice Carr, riding before her father, as she remembered having done long ago in a field of grandmama's in England, where there were no black people to make bows, and gather round her as if she were a princess.

She complained of the narrowness of the path through the close jungle, and was sorry that they were leaving the lake farther and farther on one side of them; but it was not long before she found that there was here something to admire, Grandmama's horses had never trod such a path as that on which her steed was now pacing: they had never entangled their feet in trails of the blue convolvulus, or bowed their beads to avoid being garlanded with creepers,— now scarlet, now yellow, now white. They would have started at the ghttering snakes that wound in the grass, and at the monkeys that hung by one arm from the boughs overhead, gibbering and chattering in a way that must move all unaccustomed gazers to perpetual laughter. Instead of one proud peacock, perched upon a wall, to be gazed at by a populous neighbourhood, here were numbers of those stately creatures, fanning the long grass as they spread their burnished tails, or making their rich purple hues gleam from beneath the shades of the bowery fig-tree. Nothing could be more unlike the cottages of England than the dwellings which emerged upon the sight, here and there, from their hiding-places among the verdure. These dwellings looked as if they were part and parcel of the jungle, being formed of the wood and leaves that grew there, fenced with shrubs, and decked with creepers, winch twisted themselves over every part, so as scarcely to leave room for the squirrels to pop in and out from their holes in the leafy thatch. The enclosed plots (where any cottage could boast such an acquisition) were as little like the gardens of a civilized country. No rows of cabbages and peas, no beds of potatoes and onions—no supply of vegetables on which a family may depend as some security against starvation. The Cingalese, though blest with a soil and climate in which every thing will grow, are destitute of any such provision as a tenth of the toil of an English labourer would secure, and as a single gem from thc necklace of a native would purchase, in almost any land that has not the misfortune to be a monopolized colony. If any one in Ceylon has a fancy for potatoes and onions, he must get them from Bombay. If his ambition extends to peas and cabbages, he must wait till they can be brought from England.

The shaddock, the plantain, and the jack-fruit, might be seen growing within these enclosures, the little walks being spread with a covering as bright and as curiously variegated as any mosaic pavement, and as soft as the richest carpet. Moss,—the scarlet, crimson, brown, yellow, green, moss of Ceylon,— "the jewellers sorrow," as it is there called, from its beauty surpassing any which the combination of the lapidary can produce, was tufted beneath the stems, and spread under the feet. Instead of thieves of the air, hovering in a we of the scarecrow which flaps and nods in an English breeze, here were four-footed pilferers peeping with longing looks from neighbouring tree-tops, or swinging themselves down from a convement branch, or pushing out what looked very like a human hand, to pluck, or to grub up whatever might, be within reach, while the switch of the owner was absent. Instead of the lowing of cows from the farm-yard, and the cawing of rooks from the rustling trees, and the cackle of geese from the bare pond on the common, there was the chit-chat of monkeys, the screaming of parrots, the timid step of the gazelle among the dry twigs, and the splash of teal and wild ducks from the pool beneath the mangroves. Alice was obliged to be content with tracking the deer with her eye; but at the sound of water, she must turn aside and see whence it came, notwithstanding the fear with which her father ever approached, or allowed any belonging to him to approach, water in these swampy wildernesses. Just for one moment he thought his little daughter might be permitted to look around her; but when he had penetrated a little farther into the shade, he repented of his compliance. A fallen tree had intercepted the course of the tiniest rivulet that ever was seen, and had formed a pool, which had spread and spread, till it had made an island of one tree after another, and was now canopied with a green shade, and mantled with the lotus, and fringed with the bull-rush, from among which rose the cry of waterfowl, and rainbow visions of gigantic dragon-flies. Notwithstanding all this beauty, Mr. Carr repented of having penetrated these shades, so heavy felt the air, and so oppressive was the moist smell of decaying vegetation. A woman was stooping in the grass, too, whose looks did not reassure him. Fever or hunger had sunk her cheek, and given such languor to her gait and gestures as to destroy the grace which co-exists to a remarkable degree with the indolence of demeanour which distinguishes the natives of the country.

"That is very like one of grandmama's hens," observed Alice, as the tawny lady disentangled a fowl from the snare in the grass, and held the fluttering bird against her bosom. "I could almost fancy that was one of the fowls I used to feed in the poultry-yard."

"Look at the cock and you will see the difference," replied her father. "See what a lofty, steady flight he takes half way up that tree, whose lowest branch would allow your grandmama's sycamore to stand under it. Look at the gay, glossy plumage of each fowl, and tell me if you ever saw such on an English cock and hen. These are the jungle-fowl you have heard me speak of as a great blessing to the natives. I hardly know what some of them would do for food without jungle-fowl."

"That woman looks as if she had not been eating any," observed Alice. "She looks as if she had had nothing good to eat this long while."

So thought Mr. Cart; and he stopped to ask her if the trees under which she dwelt were fruitful? Marana (for it was she) replied, that her husband and, she could generally get cocoa-nuts when they were hungry, but that they had sickened many times under this diet, during the short time that they had been in the jungle. Her husband's strength had wasted, and she had had the ague; and it was but seldom that she could snare a fowl.

Did not her husband bring home game, or earn money, or grow rice?

He brought home little game, for want of means to take it. He could not grow rice, as he had neither land nor seed; and as for earning money, how was it possible for a stranger to do so, when so many residents were already unemployed?

“It is true,” replied Mr. Carr, “that the gardens are very full of people, some of whom make more show of working than do any good; but still”

Marana was too courteous to interrupt his speech; but when he had paused for some time to think, she declared that her husband must not be supposed to desire to have anything to do with the Challias, or cinnamon-peelers. Rayo was of the fishermen's caste.

“Well, you must settle it between you which is the highest caste. If you differ among yourselves on such a point, a foreigner cannot be expected to decide it. But why does your husband, being a fisherman, come to live here? Why does not he try his chance among the pearl fishers?”

“There are too many there, as well as in the gardens,” replied Marana.

“Too many for what?” inquired Alice. “There cannot be more men than pearls. Why cannot they take it in turns to fish? And then, if only one pearl was paid to every man, there would be plenty left for the rich men who do not fish.”

“Ay; but then captains and merchants from many nations would come: and that is just what our government does not like. A French merchant would carry away pearls, and leave silk dresses behind him, or money, with which the Cingalese might lay out rice-fields and cotton plantations, or stock meadows with cattle. The Dutch captain would go to some neighbouring countries for grain, and would be paid in pearls. The Russian would bring leather and corn, and carry away pearls. The Englishman would bring iron, and clothing of cotton, and a hundred comforts besides, and would make a profitable bargain of pearls.”

“But this would be a good thing for everybody,—for the ladies who want more pearls, and for these poor people, who want employment, and food, and clothing.”

“But the government must then leave off paying as little as it likes to the pearl-fishers, and being the only party to sell the fair white pearls of Ceylon to all the beautiful ladies in the world who can afford to obtain them.”

“But there are plenty of princes and great men who would give away more pearls as presents, if they could get them; and there must be plenty of beautiful ladies who cannot get pearls, because they are very dear. I should like to give these people a boat, and send them out to fish pearls for some of the ladies, who would give a little less for their pearls, but quite enough to make Rayo rich,—to buy him a rice-ground”

“Though the fisher and the buyer are ready, and the boat may soon be had, Rayo must do without his rice-ground. The government will not give him leave to sell pearls to anybody but themselves, and they will not pay enough to buy a rice-ground.”

At the first sound of buying and selling, Marana had disappeared within the cottage. She came forth again with her right-handed chank, which she offered to Alice for sale, with, a sad and imploring look.

“It is a pity you should sell this shell,” observed Mr. Carr. “It is a very valuable one, as you ought to know.”

“It is.”

“Then keep it,—it may be a little fortune to you some day.”

“We want rice, and my husband's clothing is old.”

“Well, food and dress are of more importance than any shell, to be sure.”

Than any shell but this, Marana thought; but when the idea arose of the hag, and her threat of leprosy, and of the curse which might now pursue Rayo, she doubted whether anything could be more important to her than this charmed shell. Whether the curse had not already lighted upon Rayo, she was doubtful; for never man was so changed. He was as smooth and courteous in his manner to strangers as formerly, and as fond of her as he had ever been: but he was not the indolent, careless, light-hearted youth he had been when she had first known him on the coast. He did not work, for there was no work for him to do but to scramble up a tree and down again when he wanted a cocoa-nut; but he prowled about the neighbourhood, and seemed to have some purpose which lay nearer to his heart than his wife. Marana hoped that he was not bewitched or doomed; but it always alarmed her to meet him unawares in the thicket, and to see how full his mind was of some thought which the hardships of the day and the fever of the night could not banish.

While Alice was handling the shell, and tonging more and more for it, as she observed the solicitude with which Marana watched her mode of playing with it, a rustling was heard in the wood, and Rayo himself burst from the covert, with a rude sort of basket in his arms, which seemed to be filled with the fruit of the cinnamon shrub. At the unexpected sight of a stranger, he turned quickly, and deposited his load in the long grass behind him. While his back was turned, his wife made a rapid sign to her visiters to hide the chank, and say nothing about it, which sign Mr. Carr obeyed by pocketing the shell, and slipping into Marana's hand gold, which made a warm blush visible on her dark cheek, and lighted up her dim eyes with a momentary gleam. She bad never held so much money in her hand at one time before; and the idea of the hag

vanished for the instant before the image of a basket of steaming rice, stewed with cardamoms or peppercorns.

“We must have a lamp,” half-whispered Marana, observing that Mr. Carr sent a searching glance after the acorn-like fruit that was turned over in the grass. “And if Marana is not anointed, how should her husband love her?”

This was a question which Mr. Carr's European habits unfitted him for answering. He asked if there was no method of obtaining the oil of the cinnamon fruit but by pilfering from the garden? None, for poor creatures so weak as these peasants, who could not penetrate into the interior for such purposes. The garden was close at hand; the cocoa-nut oil, with which the oil of the cinnamon fruit was to be mixed, hung overhead; and the temptation was too strong to allow of Mr. Carr's being very angry. He asked how the oil was made to serve the purpose of a lamp during the dark nights, when it became the office of the invalids to watch and nurse each other? Marana produced her lamp,—half the shell of a cocoa-nut, supported on a stick of eboveillegible which was stuck into a little block of calammda wood. On the surface of the oil which the shell contained, floated a little wick, formed from the pith of a rush. Nothing could be more primitive; few things more elegant; and the materials were such as would in few other countries have been found in the habitation of persons in want of proper food.

Alice was bent upon purchasing the lamp also; and small was the price demanded, however Marana might wonder at her husband's demand not being so much as disputed. Busily did she attempt to fulfil her task of making another lamp, and bruising the fruit from which the oil was to be drained, while Rayo seemed to have a sudden fancy for making torches.

Meantime, Mr. Carr cleared the jungle; and, seeing that the sky was blackening towards the west, as if with the first storms of the monsoon, turned his horse's head homeward, bestowing many a thought on the natives whom he saw in field, garden, jungle, and road,—all obsequious, and looking up to every Englishman they met, as it impressed with profound gratitude, while most were poor and comfortless, and it was certain that all were injured by the nominal protection of their country. Even Alice, occupied as she was with looking about her for homage, and with planning an exhibition of her two treasures to her mother, could not wholly forget the sunken countenances of those who appeared to be pining in the luxuriant region which she had just left, and where Nature seemed to intend that all things should flourish.

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Chapter IV.

NIGHT IN THE JUNGLE.

Almost all who lived to the west of Adam's Peak looked with glad eyes to the lowering sky which hung over the sea like a leaden canopy. The rains came late this year; the rice-fields languished; the verdure seemed to crave of the light clouds which floated around the mountaintops that they would descend in showers, There was now a prospect of rain in abundance, and all looked for it with impatience but Marana, to whose troubled spirit the moaning of the rising wind in the trees, and the dull roar of the distant sea spoke of hags riding the blast, and curses cradled in the clouds. As she sat this evening at the door of her hut, weaving a basket of cane which her own hands had cut, dried, and split, she glanced up uneasily to the sky, where the twilight was being rapidly quenched by the rolling vapours, and started at every fire-fly that brushed past her, as if it bad been a spark from the electric mass which overhung the entire region. When it was no longer possible to pursue her occupation, for want of light, she crossed her arms, and remained seated on her threshold. It was not that she watched for the flitting forth of the bat; nor to see the gaudier winged creatures of the wood nestle in the brakes; nor to see the moonbeams piercing a way for themselves through the curtain of foliage till they kissed the modest lotus that slept on the bosom of the water; nor to mark the vigilant stars resume their watch, rising, some like mute sentinels, others in full constellation like trained bands, to look down from their blue height upon all that moved and breathed below. There was no visible kindling of golden fires in the firmament this night; no winging home of a belated bird; and the water-lilies were left to themselves. It was to watch for some opening in the clouds which might let down air and light, that Marana still sat abroad. She felt half stifled with heat, and with a vague fear, and dreaded kindling a light, and closing the entrance for the night.— Roya was still behind the dwelling, tying up bunches of cocoa-nut leaves to burn, and splitting resinous woods into torches. When the twilight expired, he was there. When the black darkness had descended a full hour, he was lighting himself through the wood with one of his new torches.

“It is time to close the door against the panther,” said be to Marana, before he set forth. “Spread the mat and sleep, when you have prayed to St. Anthony for me.”

“And you? will you not kneel to pray on the same mat?”

“I have a prayer to say some way off which no one may overhear. So go in, and trust to my returning,—before day-break, if not in darkness.”

“O, do not bring any more curses, Rayo, by taking what is not ours. Here is money to buy grain in the harbour, and—”

“Money!” exclaimed Rayo. “Your friend Amoottra must have brought you money. Does it not taint your fingers with leprosy, Marana?”

She let the money fall in a fit of horror; but when her husband laughed a laugh which must have been highly offensive to any hag who might happen to be within hearing, Marana conjured him to do nothing to remind the foe of her expecting victim. Rayo had superstition enough in him to induce him to take the hint, though not sufficient to prevent his searching for the dropped money by the light of his torch, and being very glad to pick it up from the brown, crumbling turf where it had fallen. In vain Marana entreated to be permitted to carry the torch for her husband. In vain she urged the desirableness of her being at hand to sing the “Hail!” to the first burst oi the season's thunder. She was commanded to pray and sleep, and dream of the verdure which might possibly have overspread the rice-field before the morning.

She ventured, however, to steal out on the track of Rayo's footsteps. The risk of falling in with a leopard or a tiger-cat while she carried no torch was nothing in comparison with the uncertainty as to what was being done or undergone by her husband. She had been his companion on the raft one night, and in his flight through the woods on another; and now he went out alone, and in silence as to his object. She feared that this reserve argued something more than care for her health; some desperation of design too great to be confided even to her. She blamed herself for all. Some immediate misfortune was, she believed, to follow her impious act of the morning; and all her husband's sins, from his withdrawal of confidence from her, to whatever act he might be now about to perpetrate, must be answered for by her. She went out to watch as an unpractised magician may be supposed to await the results of his first spell, in a state of expectation made wretched by horror and fear.

She followed Rayo's steps at such a distance that she could not herself have been perceived, if he had chanced to look behind him; but the torch which he carried before him marked the outlines of his figure very distinctly, as the light was reflected from the roof of foliage upon his anointed hmbs, from which nearly the last remains of his garments were dropping in rags. When he emerged from the shade, on reaching the ditch which surrounded the cinnamon garden, he slackened his pace, as if meditating the method by which he might go straightest to some fixed point which he had in his eye. He turned to the left. Marana turned to the left likewise, keeping under the shadow of the wood. He stopped, and looked up to the sky. She could not so raise her eyes, for the heavens at that moment opened, and let out a flood of lightning, from which a self-condemned person like herself could not but shrink. Again and again came the lightning, sustaining the awful alternation by which the landscape appeared one moment wrapt in midnight darkness, and the next in noon-day glare. Crashing thunder then came, peal upon peal, driving her from her perilous station under the trees to a more open part of the jungle, where she stood fearfully glancing about her in a sort of expectation that every object within sight would rise up against her, and come crowding about her; for the thunder was enough to waken the dead, and no suspicion crossed her mind that this storm was not especially directed against herself. Rayo's operations did not seem to be impeded by it. He had crossed the ditch while Marana had covered her eye, and in the intervals of the lightning, the dancing spark of his torch might be seen wandering, like a will-o'-the-wisp, at a greater and a greater distance. It was not long before it became evident to his wife whither and for what purpose he was gone. Little puffs of dun smoke arose, like fire-balloons, from behind the dark-leaved shrubbery which he had entered. A delicious scent pervaded the

region as the fire spread, like airs from heaven finding their way among blasts from hell. It was plain that Rayo was setting fire to the bark which was in course of being harvested.

What might be his fate if he fell into the hands of the challias, Marana dared not think. If he could but creep away under the bushes, and leave it to be supposed that lightning had been the agent of mischief, she could rejoice as heartily as he in the discomfiture of the presumptuous challias, and the loss suffered by the strangers who, under the pretence of protection, were perpetually employed in rifling the land of its treasures, and depressing the condition of the natural owners of those treasures. She would have rejoiced to see every twig in this vast garden consumed, if such destruction could avail to drive away the Honourable Company who, by right of purchase, interfered to limit the production, restrict the commerce, and therefore impoverish the condition of those from whom they derived their wealth. If this Company could but be driven from its monopoly, so that every man might plant cinnamon in his garden, and sit under its shadow with none to make him afraid, he who this night carried the fire-brand might be set up for worship on a higher eminence (if such could be found) than Adam's Peak, and be feasted and gailanded daily, instead of like the holy Footmark, once a year.

What Rayo's fate was it was impossible to conjecture, all watching and listening being now baffled by the commotion of the storm. Smoke arose after awhile in a second place, then in a third, thus marking the progress of the incendiary. There were only a few spikes of clear flame visible. Each heap of bark must be presently consumed, and the shrubs were too moist to be in danger of more than a singeing from the file. The most obvious thing to the anxious wife was to follow her husband; and more than once she attempted to move: but, at first, her wasted limbs failed her, and then she thought she perceived tokens of an approaching earthquake. A wind like this had often, in her recollection, brought down some massy distant tree, whose fall shook the ground for many a rood; but now, either many such trees were falling, or some other cause prolonged the vibration. She expected an earthquake, during which the hag would arise, or she herself be swallowed up by some chasm that would open beneath her feet. Suddenly the shaking ceased, and a flash disclosed to her a horrible vision at hand which explained all. Fiery eyes blazed, and white tusks gleamed over the tallest of the shrubs which grew to the left of the place where she stood. She had just seen the twisting of the lithe trunk which could carry her up twenty feet in an instant, and she now heard the snuffing and snorting before which every living thing within many furlongs must be quaking like herself. She felt before the elephant like a worm in the path of a cruel schoolboy,—as certain that the ponderous tread would be directed to crush her; and when the next gleam showed the bulky head and shoulders of this moving mass veering round to face her, she could only pray that she might be annihilated by one tread, instead of being made fatal sport of high in the air.

Rayo proved her unintentional deliverer. The fire he had kindled did not catch the green shrubs; but some flakes were carried off by the wind, and fell among the parched grass near the outskirts of the plantation. There were in an instant rivulets of fire running beneath the stems, joining and parting, according to the quantity of fuel which lay in their way. Every morsel of oily bark casually dropped the day before,

now sent up its tiny jet of blue flame; the dried twigs snapped and kindled, and the gleaming ditch was the boundary-line between the darkness and the light. This fire was as unwelcome to the wild elephant beyond its reach as to the burnished snakes that came wriggling out into the blaze as their holes grew too hot to hold them. He turned short round with a troubled cry, and distanced the scene at his quickest trot, wakening the birds as he brushed their covert in his passage, and leaving far behind the scared elk that burst a way among the stems, and the hyænas that hushed their cry and skulked in the thickets. To the mind of a Cingalese, the elephant of Ceylon is the most majestic of all animals, the elephants of all other countries being reported to acknowledge its supremacy by a salam; but this emperor of the beasts was now put to flight by the same means that made the gazelle palpitate in its hiding place among the grass.

The alarm was soon at an end. The canopy of clouds descended, lower and lower, till there seemed small breathing space left between them and the earth, and then burst, quenching the lightning and the flame at once, drowning the thunder, and threatening to plunge the island in the sea. When the sheet of water had descended for a while, the ditch overflowed, the snakes raised themselves on end, the waters found their way into the lair of every couchant beast, and dripped from the plumage of every bird on its perch. To wade through the jungle in this pitchy darkness immediately after the dazzling apparition of the cinnamon garden had vanished, was impossible. Marana remained clinging to a tree, the creepers from which dangled wet in her face, till she heard the sound of a quiet laugh through the flash and downpour. “Here is the hag, at last,” thought she, expecting to feel the loathsome touch which she was persuaded she must encounter sooner or later. Her agonized cry for mercy produced another laugh, but a kindly one. It was from her husband.

“Rayo! what a storm!”

“St. Anthony rides the monsoon this year,” replied Rayo. “Do you know what the lightning has done in the garden? The Company have been praying for the monsoon for their neighbours' sake. In the morning you will hear how they complain of it for their own.”

“Was it all the storm, Rayo?”

“They will tell you so in the morning. Come home now. I will take you by a path where the waters cannot beat you down like the dragon-fly, nor carry you away like the squirrel that is caught far from its hole. But I forbade your coming abroad. You were afraid to await the hag under a roof, I suppose. If she must come, I wish it might be in the morning. She would see in the garden that which would make her so merry that she would forget you.”

“Can you say your prayers to keep off the curse to-night, Rayo? Dare you?”

“O, yes; and quickly, that I may sleep, and be early ready to see the Challias collect in the garden.”

In the morning, before Marana's long ague-fit had given place to sleep, her husband was on the spot of the late cinnamon harvest. The sky was not clear of clouds, large masses still being in act of rising from the east; but a mild sunshine burnished the scene; the rose-coloured peaks of the distant mountains,—the fresh-springing verdure of the fields which were so lately brown,—and the multitudes of winged creatures that flitted, hovered, and sailed in the balmy air. All was as fair in the interval of the storms as if no storm had ever been. It was much more the faces to Rayo to see no signs of storm in wonderful of those who were most concerned in the loss of the cinnamon. Mr. Carr looked not only free from anger towards the lightning to which he attributed the destruction, but satisfied and pleased at the existing state of things.

“The lightning has saved the Company from the curses of the people,” he heard Captain Cinnamon whisper to a modelier of the garden. “There was too good a crop this year; and if some of it must be burned, it was very well that accident should do it.”

“And that accident should have burned more than the Company would have dared to destroy in the face of the natives. Now they may put their own price upon their bark; and a pretty price it will be, to judge by Mr. Carr's pleased face.”

“Not that he wishes ill to the natives, or to the eaters of cinnamon in other lands. But he is thinking of the good news he has to send to his employers.”

Rayo rolled himself in the sand when he thus learned what was the result of his enterprise.

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Chapter V.

MATERNAL ECONOMY.

If the drought had been confined to the western coast of Ceylon, its effects would have been very deplorable, from the poverty of the people, though, from their being in the habit of the regular importation of rice, they were more sure of some extent of supply than if they had been dependent on their own scanty crops. But this year, the drought extended to some of the districts of the neighbouring country, from which rice was annually imported to a large amount. This, again, would have mattered little, if the inhabitants had had the means of purchasing from a greater distance; but these means could not be within the reach of a colony whose productions were monopolized by the mother country. Hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Ceylon who, if allowed the usual inducements to an accumulation of capital, would have been in common times purchasers of the innumerable comforts which the world yields, and in the worst seasons placed far above the reach of want, were reduced by a single delay of the monsoon to such a condition as rendered it doubtful whether they would ever be purchasers of anything. Again, want of capital was the grievance from which all other temporal grievances arose in this region of natural wealth and super-abundant beauty; and this want of capital was caused by the diversion of labour from its natural channels, through the interference of the evil spirit of monopoly.

Streams ran down from the mountains; and on either side of the streams were levels which lay waste and bare for want of irrigation; and on the banks of these streams lived a population which subsisted on unwholesome and unseasoned or deficient food. These waters could not be made useful, these plains could not be fertilized, these people could not be fed, because the natural wealth of the country was not permitted to create capital to the inhabitants.

The cotton-tree might be met with growing luxuriantly wherever the hand of man or of nature had caused it to take root; yet those who lived within reach of its boughs hid themselves in the woods for the scantiness of their clothing, or went without some other necessary, in order to furnish themselves expensively with cotton-cloth which had been woven four thousand miles off. That it should be woven where it was, and sold where it was, was well; but that the purchasers should not have the raw materials to exchange for the wrought, or something else to offer which should not leave them destitute, spoke ill for the administrators of their affairs.

Potters' clay abounded in the intervals between soils which offered something better; and here and there a rude workman was seen “working his work on the wheel,” as in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, and marring the clay, and making another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter. It would have seemed good to him to make better vessels, to improve his craft, and bring up his children to the art, and supply households at greater distance with utensils, and get wealth and contentment, but that

he had no money to spend on improvements, and that if his children tried to get any, they could find no free scope for their enterprize.

Herds of buffaloes were seen feeding amidst the rank vegetation of the hills, and many a peasant would have gone among them, morning and evening, with his bottle of hide slung over his shoulder; and many a maiden with her vase poised upon her head, if a free commerce in ghee had been permitted with the Arabs who must drink a cupfull of it every morning, and with the multitude of dwellers in the Eastern Archipelago, who want it for anointings, for food, lot sacrifice, and other purposes which now cost them dear. But the buffaloes might graze in peace, the peasants being permitted to sell ghee only to those who could not buy, or who did not consume ghee.

There were cocoa-nut fibres enough to spin a coir rope which might measure the equator; but coir was so taxed, as soon as it became rope, that the government need have little fear that any one would buy but itself and those who could get no cheaper cordage.

Chay-root, yielding the red dye which figures on Indian chintzes, spread itself far and wide through the light dry soil near the coast. How it should hurt the British government that all nations should have red roses on their chintzes had not been satisfactorily explained; but it was the will of that government that few should do so. The government bought up every ounce of chay-root which its Cingalese subjects were obliging enough to sell. There was much loyalty in thus furnishing chay-root; the diggers being paid a good deal less than half the price which the government demanded from its purchasers.

The fragrance of spices was borne on every breeze; shells of various beautiful forms were thrown up by every tide; tortoiseshell might be had for the trouble of polishing, and ivory for that of hunting the elephant; arrack flowed for any one who would set it running from the tree; canes to make matting and baskets were trodden down from their abundance; the topaz and the amethyst, the opal, the garnet, the ruby, and the sapphire, jet, crystal, and pearls, were strewed as in fairy-land; the jack-wood, rivalling the finest mahogany, ebony, satin-wood, and the finely-veined calaminda, grew like thorns in the thicket; yet the natural proprietors of this wealth, to which the world looked with longing eyes, were half-fed and not clothed; and their English fellow-subjects, located in a far less favourable habitation, were taxed to afford them such meagre support as they had.

The world had rolled back with the Cingalese. Monuments were before them at every step, which showed that their country had been more populous than now, and their forefathers more prosperous than themselves. They were now too many for their food too many for the labour which their rulers vouchsafed to call for; yet they were but a million and a half on a territory which had sustained in more comfort a much greater number, without taxing a distant nation to give unproductive aid to a puny people, and before the advantages of national interchange had been fully ascertained. There were traces of times, before the English artizan was called upon to contribute his mite to his tawny brother over the sea; before the government complained of the expense of its colony; before murmurs arose about the scanty supply of cinnamon, while the

Honourable Company was claiming compensation for an over-supply; before the rulers at Columbo began to be at their wit's end to find means for keeping up their credit; before the expenditure of the colony so far exceeded its revenue, as that the inquiry began among certain wise ones where was the great advantage of having a colony which, however rich in name and appearance, cost more than it produced: there were traces of happier times, when the world were to have been wiser, however younger, than at present; or when the Cingalese had been under a wiser sway than that which was now calling upon them for perpetual submission and gratitude. The Dutch might have been hard task-masters; but it was now felt that the English were yet more so; and however much submission might be yielded, because it could not be refused, there was small room for gratitude, as any one would have admitted who could have drawn an accurate comparison between the condition of the foreign and the native, the producing and the commercial, population of the western portion of the island during this season of hardship.

The Dutch-built houses, inhabited by foreign agents, displayed all their usual luxuries; carpeted with fragrant mats, gemmed with precious stones, perfumed with spicy oils, and supplied with food and drinks purchased by native produce from foreign lands. The huts of their humbler neighbours, meanwhile, were bare alike of furniture and food, and, for the most part, empty of inhabitants. The natives of eastern countries seem to find consolation in the open air in times of extreme hardship; not only laying their sick on the banks of rivers, but gathering together in hungry groups by the road-side or by the sea-shore, in times of famine, gazing patiently on the food which is carried before their eyes, and waiting for death as the sun goes down. Such were the groups now seen on the shores of the Lake of Columbo, and in many an open space among the spoiled paddy-fields, while the foreigners, from whom they were wont to receive their pittance, were engaged with their curries, their coffee, and their meats from many climes. Thus was it during the day; while at night the distribution of action was reversed. The foreigners slept at case in their cooled and darkened apartments, or, if they could not rest, had nothing worse to complain of than a mosquito foe, while their native neighbours were silently forming funeral piles along the shore; silently bringing more wood and more from the thickets, as others of their caste dropped dead at length; silently laying out the corpses; silently watching them as they turned to ashes, and placing the limbs decently as they fell asunder; silently ranging themselves so that the funeral fire played in their dark eyes, and shone on their worn and lanky frames; silently waiting till the morning breeze puffed out the last flickering flame, and dispersed the handful of white ashes, which was all that remained of the parent who had murmured his blessing at sunset, or the wife who had whispered her farewell at midnight, or the infant whose breath had parted at the summons of the dawn. Silently were these rites performed; insomuch that any chance-watcher in the neighbouring verandah heard no other interruption to the splash of waters than the crackling of flames, and would not have guessed that bands of patient sufferers were gathered round this fearful sacrifice to the evil spirit of monopoly a sacrifice as far from appeasing the demon as from testifying to the willing homage of his priests. There were not among the gentle Cingalese any of the fierce passions which this demon commonly delights to unleash among his victims; none of the envy, jealousy, and hatred with which the desperately miserable enhance their desperation and their misery. Instead of jostling one another, these sufferers sat side by side: instead of

gnashing their teeth at each other, they were altogether heedless of neighbourhood; instead of inflicting injuries, they merely ceased to confer mutual benefits. No aged man complained of violence, but sank down disappointed, when he found the water-pot placed for the traveller's refreshment empty by the wayside.:No wearied woman murmured at being dislodged from the sheltered bench on the bridge; but neither did those, who had niched themselves there to seek forgetfulness in sleep, stir to make way for a fellow-sufferer. No child was driven from its chance meal by a stronger arm than its own; but neither was there a look or a word to spare for the little ones (more tenacious of life than their parents), who crept from their dead mother to their dying father, trying in vain to suck life from the shrunken breasts of the one, and to unclose the fixed eyes of the other. Some who remained in their habitations in the woods, if less destitute, were not less miserable. If the sight and scent of the bread-fruit were too strong tor the fortitude of some, they ate under the full conviction that they were exchanging famine for leprosy. Whether the belief in this effect of the fruit was right or wrong, those who believed and yet ate suffered cruelly for the want of rice. If a follower of Brama, in passing a ruin, saw a cow browsing on some pinnacle, and, in a fit of desperation, called the sacred creature down to be made food of, he found himself gnawed by the consciousness of his inexpiable crime, as fearfully as by his previous hunger. An ample importation of rice such as might always be secured by the absence of restrictions on commerce would have saved to these the pangs of conscience, till a better knowledge had had time to strike root and ripen for harvest, as it would have spared to others the agonies of hunger while their rice-grounds were awaiting the latter rains, and preparing to become fruitful again in their season. As it was, all were prevented making the most of their own soil from want of capital; and, while rendered dependent on the importation of grain, were denied the means of insuring that importation. By the exorbitant taxation of some of their articles of produce, and the prohibition to sell others to any buyer but the government, the Cingalese were deprived of all chance of securing a subsistence, and of all inducement to accumulate property.

Mrs. Carr did not know that she had ever enjoyed her way of life more, on the whole, than since she had come to Ceylon. She liked lying down for the greater part of the day, and being sure of seeing something beautiful from the verandah when she could exert herself to look abroad from it. She liked being fanned by the punkah, and waited upon by five times as many servants as she wanted, and amused by Alice, and flattered by her husband's station; none of the trouble of which devolved upon her. But she did not know whether some friends of hers liked the place so well; she thought not, by Mr. Serle's grave manner, and the new expression of fear and anxiety in Mrs. Serle's open and happy countenance. Mr. and Mrs. Serle were American missionaries; members of the little band of philanthropists who, setting the example of charity towards their Cingalese brethren, were met and cheered by the open hand of charity at every turn, till they were fairly established in the society and in the hearts of those whom they came to civilize and bless.

“I am glad you did not ask our advice about coming,” observed Mrs. Carr to the missionary's wife: “we find it very pleasant in Ceylon; but I do not know whether you find it as pleasant as we do; and it would have been a disagreeable thing to have misled you. I am glad you did not ask our advice.”

“Mrs. Serle comes to lead such a different kind of life from yours, my dear,” observed her husband, “that any advice from you could have helped her little. You see and enjoy all the natural advantages of the place, which are very great indeed: Mrs. Serle comes to do what she can towards remedying the misery of the people, which is quite as remarkable in its way.”

“And I beg to say that I enjoy the natural advantages of the place,” replied Mrs. Serle; “I like your Adam's Peak at sunrise, and your gay insects, and your flowery jungle, and your pineapples as well as any of you. I do not wish to be the less sensible of these things because the people claim my compassion.”

“Not the less, but rather the more,” observed her husband, “that the misery of the people may be the more quickly remedied. When we find starving men in a paradise, our next business is to find out whose fault it is that they are starving.”

“They are the laziest people here,” drawled Mrs. Carr; “you will hardly believe till you have been here as long as we have”

“My dear love,” interrupted her husband, “Mr. and Mrs. Serle have seen far more of the people already than you can pretend to know, living within doors as you do.”

“O, but I assure you, I can tell Mrs. Serle such things as she will scarcely believe. The laziness of the people is really such as to make me wonder. Alice, love, come and tie my sandal. O, thank you, Mrs. Serle. I did not mean to trouble you, I am sure.”

Mrs. Serle did not need convincing as to the indolence of the Cingalese. It was quite as evident in them as in Mrs. Carr. Neither was she much in the dark as to the causes of this indolence. The probability of a remedy was the almost hourly subject of conversation between her husband and herself.

“You are very much wanted, you see,” observed Mrs. Carr; “I am sure it is a most happy thing for the poor people of this country that so many strangers come to see them and do them good. So many Dutch, formerly; and now so many English; and you and your friends from America.”

“I hope you think the obligation mutual, my dear?” said her husband; “You must not forget how many Dutch and English have made their fortunes here. I say nothing about the Americans; for our friends here have a very different object, I fancy.”

“O, it is an advantage to both parties, no doubt,” observed the lady; “I should never have had such an amethyst as this, in my cross, if Ceylon had not belonged to us, I dare say.”

“And I should only have been like any other young lady, instead of having seven servants when I go out,” remarked Alice,

“And our friend Belton would not have had that beautiful place of his at South Point to live in,” added Mr. Carr: “yet I hear complaints terrible complaints from the Company, about their losses in the cinnamon trade.”

"And I from some members of your government, about the expense of the colony," said Mr. Serle. "Now, if the people are acknowledged to be in a low state, if the government complains of the expense of the settlement, and if the Honourable Company cannot always make its cinnamon trade answer, who gains by Ceylon being a colony?"

"It is usually supposed to be an advantage to an uncivilized country to be chosen for a settlement by a civilized set of people," replied Mr. Carr.

"And I have no doubt that it is so, any more than I doubt the advantage to the civilized country of having some foreign half-peopled region to which her sons may repair, to struggle, not in vain, for a subsistence. I can never doubt the policy of persons of different countries agreeing to dwell together in one, that they may yield mutual assistance by the communication of their respective possessions and qualifications. If this assistance be yielded in a spirit of freedom, without any tyraunical exercise of the right of the strongest at the outset, this intercourse is sure to grow into a mutual and general blessing of incalculable value, if abused, by the sacrifice of the many to the supposed gain of the few, the connexion becomes an inestimable curse."

"To the natives, certainly," replied Mr. Carr. "We may observe that the prosperity of colonized countries is not to be measured by circumstances of climate, natural fertility, position, and so on, but by the policy pursued in their government. In the dreariest parts of our American colonies, for instance——I do not know whether you are acquainted with Canada?"

"I am; and with Nova Scotia likewise."

"Well; in no part of those colonies arc the natural wealth and beauty to be met with which distinguish Ceylon; and in no part, I hope, are the labouring inhabitants to be found in so wretched a state as are too many here."

"Nowhere; and I do not see that the circumstance of the labourers here being partly natives, and the rest, races long settled in the country, makes any difference in the estimate, while it is certain that they are affected by the common motives to industry and social improvement."

"The people here are open to such motives. Witness the growing ambition of the cinnamon peelers, in proportion as their services are in request, and are rewarded with regularity. The Challias hold up their heads now, and dispute precedence with other castes; and so would other labouring castes, if they had encouragement to do any better than crouch beneath the cocoa-nut tree, live upon what it may yield, and die when it yields no more."

"The Nova Scotian is a far more prosperous man than either the native or the settler of Ceylon, though the Nova Scotian is not yet so happy as a perfectly wise government would allow him scope to become. He is not, like our neighbours here, prevented from selling one kind of produce where he pleases, while he is discouraged in the

preparation of another kind by excessive taxation. The Nova Scotian can prepare his fish, and carry it where he likes for sale."

"How rejoiced would our people be to have the same liberty with their pearls and their spice!"

"Yes: but the Nova Scotian has his trammels too, though they are far less grievous. He envies his neighbours of my country, of the United States, as much as the Cingalese may envy him. When he has sold his fish in the wide market which the Brazils afford, he may not take in exchange any Brazilian article that will be most wanted in Nova Scotia. There are many Brazilian commodities which your government will not allow its American colonies to purchase; so that its Nova Scotian subject must return with something of less value, or go home by a round-about way, exchanging and exchanging, till he finds an article that he may lawfully carry. My countryman, meantime, makes the best of his way home with a cargo of something that Brazil wants to sell and the States are ready to buy. This freedom from impediment in his traffic gives him the advantage over the Nova Scotian, as the comparative freedom of the Nova Scotian does over the Cmgalese."

"And this countryman of yours, or his father, was a fellow-subject of mine. Truly, he seems better off' than when we were under the same king."

"And how is your country the worse for his being no longer your fellow-subject, for his country being no longer a British colony? Do you buy and sell less of each other? Do you steal one another's trade? Does not America rather deal the more largely with you, the wider and more rapid is her traffic with the rest of the world?"

"Your argument would go to prove that we should be better without colonies; but what will our merchants say to our parting with markets into which we can empty our warehouses?"

"As to being better without colonies, we agreed just now that colonies are good things both for the natives and the settlers, while the one class wants to be civilized and the other to find a home of promise. Let this connexion be modified by circumstances as time rolls on, the child growing up into a state fit for self-government, and the mother country granting the liberty of self-government as the fitness increases. If the control be continued too long, if the colony be not admitted to understand, and allowed to pursue its own interests, its interests must languish, and it will become a proportionate burden to the mother country. It will have only the wages of ill-paid labour, or the scanty profits of feeble speculation to exchange for the productions of the mother country, instead of a store of wealth gathered by commerce with the whole world. Which is worth the most to England at this moment, Ceylon, her servile dependency, or any province of her band of commercial allies, our United States, I leave your merchants to say."

"It is true, we get nothing now in taxes from your States; but we get incalculably more as the profits of trade; while the heavy taxation of Ceylon will not nearly pay its own expenses, and the mother country must defray the remainder."

“So much for keeping colonies for the sake of their trade. This notion involves two assumptions; that the colony would not trade with the mother country if it were no longer a colony, and that colonial monopoly is a good to the mother country.”

“The very term ‘colony trade’ involves the notion of monopoly: since, if there were no monopoly, the distinction would be lost between that and any other sort of free trade.”

“Well; if the exclusive trade with the mother country be the best for the interest of the colony, the colony will continue it, after the compulsion is withdrawn. If it be not for the interest of the colony, neither can it be so for the parent; since the interest of the seller demands the prosperity of the customer; and the welfare of the whole demands the welfare of its component parts.”

“Indeed, our colonies are too often used as a special instrument of forcing the means of production into artificial channels, to serve the selfish purposes of classes, or companies, or individuals.”

“Thereby ruining the interests of these selfsame classes, companies, and individuals. If any class of merchants call succeed in making them:selves the only buyers of any article from a colony, or the only sellers of any article in it, they may for a time dictate their own terms to their slaves: but not for long. They may stock the market at home with precious things which they get as cheap as stones and straws in the colony; but their mutual competition will soon bring down the price to the common rate of profit. And if not, if the merchants agree upon a price and keep to it, the colony will not long fulfil its part in this unequal bargain. A losing bargain must come to an end sooner or later; and labour being discouraged, and capital absorbed in the colony, the merchants will inevitably find their supplies fall short.”

“I was going to ask,” observed Mrs. Serle, “why the colony need act in such a bargain? If it had any spirit, it would refuse to traffic.”

“Its power to do so depends on the nature of its supplies from the mother country. If it derives only luxuries, it may resist oppression by declining to receive the luxuries of the mother-country, and it may defy oppression by devising luxuries for itself. In these cases, the mother-country sustains a pure loss of the trade. If the colony is dependent for necessaries, it can defy the oppressor no further than by using the smallest possible quantity. Few people discern much value in the trade of a country whose population barely lives. Such a commerce will not repay the trouble of maintaining a monopoly.”

“It does seem to me, certainly, that if any compulsion is used at all, it should be to oblige the colony to sell to none but the parent. If it can buy cheaper elsewhere, so much is saved of the resources of the empire. It would be a loss to the British empire to have Ceylon buy its wine from London alone, if wine might be obtained cheaper from Madeira. The extra price which the carriage and the profits of the middlemen would demand, would be just so much withdrawn from the customer's means of production and of future purchase.”

"And the case is no better when the prohibition regards selling from the colony. If the colonial article produces just the ordinary profits of stock, the purchasing country takes needless trouble in enforcing the monopoly. If less than the ordinary profits of stock, the article will cease to be produced. If more, the purchascr may feel perfectly secure of being thanked for her custom, instead of its being necessary to intrude it by force of law. All this applies as well to a trade-driving government, or an exclusive company, as to a general body of merchants; the only difference being that such a government or company, having a more despotic power by the absence of competition, the tyranny may be consummated sooner, and the mischief wrought more effectually. Your government keeps its pearl-fishers, and your Honourable Company its spice-gatherers, impoverished more effectually than a general body of British pearl and spice merchants could have done."

"Yet the general body of merchants can carry on the work of impoverishment with tolerable vigour and success, even upon a dependency so near at hand as to have great facilities for remonstrance. In the case of Ireland, towards the close of the last century, they contrived to rivet the chains of monopoly for a few years longer, after having done wonders in beggaring the Green Island."

"They were helped by the country gentlemen there, my dear," replied Mrs. Serle, who was an English woman, "and by the manufacturers and shipowners and others. I remember how my grandfather used to talk after dinner about the ruin which would come upon us all if the Irish, with their low wages and light taxation, were allowed to get their own sugar from the West Indies, and to pay for it with some articles of their own produce. And my uncle Joe and the curate used to agree that we were quite kind enough already to Ireland in giving her permission from year to year to send beef and butter to our colonies, and to clothe her own troops, then serving in America, with her own manufactures. The squire and the clergyman and the shopkeeper in the next village got up a petition to parliament against letting the Irish have any more trade, lest they should spoil ours."

"And Liverpool expected to dwindle into a fishing village again, and Manchester that her deserted factories would become the abode of the owl and the bat; and Glasgow pleaded an hereditary right to the sugar trade which lreland must not be permitted to invade. Where this right came from it was for Glasgow to say; but, in enforcing it, Glasgow seemed much tempted to sink audacious Ireland into the sea. It is a pity, my dear, that your grandfather did not live to see Liverpool at the present day, after tea times as much having been granted to Ireland as was titan asked for. In proportion as the commerce between England and Ireland has grown into the similitude of a coasting trade, the prosperity of Liverpool and many another English town has increased, while the resources of Ireland (however deplorably cramped by bad government to this day) have steadily though slowly improved. The same fears, the same opposition, were excited, I think, Mr. Carr, when a relaxation was proposed in some departments of your Company's monopoly, and with the same results.

"Yes. There was an idea, some time ago, that nothing remained to be done in the way of traffic with India. It was thought that the private trader could find no new channels of commerce, and that India could not benefit in any way by a change."

“Can anything equal the presumption of human decisions on untried matters!” cried Mr. Serle. “Did your Company really amply supply the whole of India with all that Hindoo hearts and Mahomedan minds could desire? Was nothing more wanted by a people who died by thousands ill a year for want of salt; who fell sick by hundreds of thousands for want of clothing, habitations, and the wholesome arts of life, and who groaned by millions under privation and excessive toil? If your Company thus reported itself the faithful and wise steward, giving to the people under him meat in their season, I, for one, would have besought, in that, day as in this, to have him cast out. His weeping and gnashing of teeth would have been unheard amidst the shout of joy when the door closed behind him.”

“Well, but he was not cast out,” said Mrs. Serle. “He was only compelled to relax his rude. Was there any rejoicing?”

“Much, very much, my dear. The direct commerce between England and India has already been more than doubled. Private traders have proved that there were still desirable articles that India had not. and that more and more became invented and wished for in proportion as people are allowed to minister to each other. I question whether any man will be again found between this and doomsday to say that India cannot want any thing more, and that there is nothing left for anybody out of the Honourable Company to do.”

“The persuasion arose,” observed Mr. Carr, “from the character of the people, their wants being so simple and few, their domestic habits and pursuits so uniform, and their resort to the productions of their own country so invariable, that they did not seem to need anything that foreigners could give.”

“Shut an infant into a dungeon, and bring him out when he is twenty,” said Mrs. Serle, “and, if he has never tasted anything but bread and water, he will want no other food. than bread and water. If his dress has always been sacking, his ignorant choice will be of sacking still, though broadcloth be lying” beside it. But have patience with him till he has tasted beef and wine, and seen every other man of twenty dressed in broadcloth, and by the time he is thirty, we shall hear no more of his simple tastes, and of his resort to primitive productions. Our ancestors, Mr. Carr, had a very simple taste for acorns of native growth: they resorted to native productions, wolf-skins, for clothing; their pursuits were uniform enough, picking up acorns and hunting wolves; they gathered round their murderous wicker deity, as the Hindoos round the pile of the suttee; and the one people venerated the mistletoe as the other glorifies cow-dung: nevertheless, here are we at this day, you dressed in broadcloth, and I in silk, and both of us philosophizing on civilization. Why should it not be the same with the Hindoo in due time?”

“And before so many hundred years as it took to civilize the Britons,” observed Mr. Carr. “The exports from Great Britain to the countries east of the Cape have quadrupled since the relaxation of the monopoly; and the difficulty now is for traders with India to find returns lot the variety of goods demanded by India. Formerly, England paid in gold and silver; now we pay ill iron, copper, and steel, in woollens and cottons, and in a hundred other articles, of which few Hindoos dreamed a century

ago. India sends back indigo,—the best of a very few articles which may be imported into Great Britain by individuals. Whenever the day shall arrive for the Company's monopoly of China to be abolished, tea, mother-of-pearl, and nankeens, will afford a larger variety, India will make a new start in the career of civilization, and Great Britain a mighty acquisition in her foreign commercial relations."

"In all the cases you have mentioned," observed Mrs. Serle, "the restrictions have been imposed with a view to the welfare of the mother-country, and at the expense of the colony. Are there not cases of a reverse policy?"

"Many; but here, as in many cases, the reverse of wrong is not right. Whether it be attempted to enrich the parent at the expense of the child, or the child at the expense of the parent, a great folly is perpetrated, if, by letting both alone, they might enrich each other. Perhaps the most flagrant instance of this kind of impolicy is the management of the British timber trade. Your government, Mr. Carr, loads Norwegian timber with excessive duties, that the interior timber of Canada may have the preference in the market. By this means, not only is Norway deprived of its just right of priority, and Britain of a useful customer, but Canada is tempted to neglect some very important processes of improvement for the sake of——"

"Of pushing the lumber trade," interrupted Mr. Carr. "I am aware that the Canadians carry their felling, squaring, and floating of timber a great deal too far, to the injury of agriculture, and of the condition of the people in every way. I am aware that any depression of this artificial timber-trade, however felt by mdi-viduals, is a decided gain to the colony at large. Great Britain has, in that instance, made a sacrifice in a wrong place."

"And what a sacrifice! If no partiality were shown, Great Britain might have unexceptionable timber from Norway, and from Canada a supply of the corn she so much needs, instead of the indifferent wood, from the use of which her houses and her shipping are suffering. Let her still procure wood from her colony, which may serve the inferior purposes for which its texture fits it; but to refuse European timber, and persist in building frigates and dwelling-houses which shall hold out only half as long as they might last for the same money,—the people crying out all the while for Canadian wheat,—is a policy whose wisdom is past my comprehension."

"Such is generally the result, it seems to me," observed, Mrs. Serle, "when one party is grasping, and a second self-denying, in order to exclude a third. The matter generally ends in the injury of all three. If they would only follow the old saying, 'Live and let live,' all would do well,—all would do best."

"Where is that rule so violated as here?" said Mr. Serle. looking abroad from the verandah upon the approach of a fleet of barks with firewood, for the nightly sacrifice to the Moloch of monopoly. "Your colonial government here, Mr. Carr, manages to live, to sustain itself by shifts and devices; but as to letting live, let the extinguished fires on the shore, and the cry of the jackal in the woods, bear their testimony."

“And your evening countenance,” added his wife. “I almost dread to see you come home from visiting your neighbours.”

“Mamma said yesterday,” observed Alice, “that she wished Mr. Serle would stay away, unless he would look as merry as he used to do. She says——”

“My dear love, what can you be thinking of?” cried Mrs. Carr, now roused to something like energy of manner.

“She is thinking of your happy exemption from beholding the signs of suffering which are daily brought before my eyes in the pursuit of my vocation,” mildly replied Mr. Serle. “But if I were to stay away till I saw nothing to make me look grave, if I were to stay away till I saw the men grow honest, and the women cheerful, and the children comely, till there were no struggles of poverty by day, or of death by night, I fear we should both be grey-haired before we could meet again.”

Mrs. Carr did not mean anything, by her own account; and the group were, therefore, left to ponder the full significance of the missionary's word.

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Chapter VI.

BLITHE NEWS.

Few indeed were the places in the island where there were no struggles of poverty by day, or of death by night. In Rayo's hut, the poverty struggle seemed to be drawing near its close, and that of death impending. There needed the agency of no hag to touch the dwellers in the jungle with leprosy; no curse from above to make them feel as outcasts in their own land. The sunny days and starlight nights of the dry season were full of dreariness. Rayo, now the victim of leprosy in its most fearful form, passed the day in solitude,—now creeping from his mat to his threshold, and there finding that his swollen limbs would carry him no farther; now achieving with much toil, his daily walk in search of the honeycomb of the hollow tree, or of any windfall of the fruit he could no longer climb to reach. The pitcher-plant grew all around his hut, and regularly performed its silent service of preparing the lnnpid draught to satisfy his feverish longing; but the monkeys were now too strong for him; and often, in a state of desperate thirst, he saw a pert ape, or an insolent baboon, twist the green cup from its tendril, and run up a tree with it, or upset the draught before his eyes. If ever he got far enough to look out upon the open landscape, it stirred his spirit to see the herds of buffaloes on the hill-side, and the proud vessels on the distant main, blmging luxuries from many a clime; feeling, as he did, that the food and the wine thus exhibited to him would have preserved him from his disease, and kept Marana, in all her youth and strength, by his side. If he met a countryman, with whom to speak, his tumultuous thoughts were not calmed; for he heard tell of the high price which emnamon bore this season, on account of the lucky damage done by lightning to the crop. To him and his countrymen it signified little whether the Honourable Company were enabled to ask the prices of such a scarce season as this, or whether they sought from government a compensation for the loss occasioned by an over-supply; Rayo and his countrymen had no part nor lot in the harvests of their native island; but Rayo had in the concerns of the rulers the deep stake of unsatisfied revenge. As often as he became sensible of a new loss of strength, as often as any of the horrible symptoms of elephantiasis met Ms consciousness, he drew sharp and brief inferences respecting the philosophy of colonization, which might have been worthy the ear of a British parliament, if they could have been echoed so far over the sea.

Marana, meanwhile, was hurrying northwards with all the speed of which her wasted frame was capable. She pushed on eagerly by day, now in heat and now in damp, and halted unwillingly at night under the shelter of some rest-house provided for travellers of a different caste. When she looked upon the withered garlands that dangled from the corner-posts, and longed for the draperies of cotton by which healthier persons than herself had been sheltered from the night-dews, she too felt, though of a milder and more placable nature than her husband, that some one had stepped in between them and Providence, and turned their native paradise into a dreary wilderness. She had heard strangers marvel at the absence of singing-birds in her native glades at noon, and among the bowers of the banian, when the sinking sun peeps beneath its

arches, and she had accounted for it to such marvellers, by tales of the wars between the serpent and his feathered prey; but to her it seemed strange that none should ask why the warbhngs of human gladness were so seldom heard in a region whence their outpourings should echo to heaven. If asked to account for this silence also, she would have told of the wily and venomous agency of monopoly, which wages war against the helpless, from generation to generation, till the music of joy is forgotten in the land.

Marana's spirits rose as she approached the northern parts of the island, and, leaving woods and hills behind her, entered upon the level and sandy region, whose aspect never changed but as the sea, which was its boundary, was gleaming or grey, as the heavens were clear or clouded. The bare shore near her father's dwelling was above all beloved; and she stopped for all instant to listen to the tide as it made itself heard above her throbbing pulses, before she stole across the well-known threshold.

The cottage looked as It used to look, except that there were no remains of the, household decorations which the neat-handed love to prepare in countries where decoration requires no expenditure but of skill. Her mother-of-pearl shells, her embroidery of fish-bones, her tutts of many-coloured sea-weed, had disappeared, and instead ot there, there were more snake skins, a new set of sharks' fins, and a larger variety of inexplicable charms. Her father slept upon his mat, a ray of moonlight falling across his brow from a chink in the frail roof of his cottage.

Marana was afraid to waken and alarm him while there was no more light than this in the cottage. She refrained till she had caught a handful of fire-flies, and fixed them in her hair, there being no sign of fire in any, neighbouring cottage. This done, she bent over the Charmer, and charmed away his sleep. He gazed at her long; and, common as was the sight of his dark countrywomen crowned with a green flame, the figure before him was so like one which he had often expected to see in vision, that the repeated sound ot her voice was necessary to assure him that it was indeed his daughter.

“You are flying before Amoottra, my child, or she has already laid her hand upon you. Not the less shall your head rest on my bosom.”

Before she could rest, Marana said, she must confess her impiety in parting with her charm, and obtain another. She sorely repented having sold the chank. The gold it brought was presently consumed; and what was gold in a country where it could not be made to reproduce itself, or answer any purpose beyond delaying want for a time? She would take any vow Father Anthony should prescribe, not to part with any other charm.

“Father Anthony will tell you,” replied her father, with a smile, “that it is better to grow and sell cinnamon than to get a charm blessed, and then part with it.”

Marana prayed her father not to mock her, not to speak of forbidden traffic to one who was deep in sin already. She was told in reply that growing cinnamon was not one of the crimes on which the heavens frown, but an act which the will of man makes innocent or guilty. It was now the will of man to pronounce it innocent, and

every man in Ceylon might have his cinnamon garden, and go unharmed by the powers of the earth or of the air.

But how had this miracle taken place? And was it so with pearls?

“The pearl banks are still sacred, my child; but, as for the spice, it is no miracle that the owners are tired of their losses. Much gold must they pay to the Challias, and much more must they risk on the seas; and when the spice is landed in their own country, the buyers com-plain that any thing that grows upon a common tree should be worth so much. Three years since, even the rich would not buy half that was prepared, though much was burned, as usual. Then the king gave up some of his share of the price, and immediately there were three eaters of cinnamon where there was one before; and, instead of the king losing, the people gained by more of them being able to consume the spice. What wonder, after this. if more cinnamon is permitted to be grown, that more may eat, and more grow rich by selling it?”

“But who will buy it of us. father?”

“Come and see, at the next fishery. Any man of whatever nation, who wishes to buy of you, may do it in the open market, and no punishmen't shall follow to him or you.”

“And if Ravo had a boat, father, and carried spice to any ships he might meet upon the sea, would not that be a crime?”

“A crime no longer, Marana. He may take dollars from the Spaniard, and silk from the Italian, and cotton from the Englishman, and iron from the Russian, and grain from the American, and no one will ask him how he got his wealth, or threaten those who exchange with him. I will go with you, and plant and bless your first shrub with my own hands.”

“Ravo's bands arr too feeble to dig, and he cannot kneel for your blessing,” observed Marana, mournfully. “Will there be any more burning of cinnamon, father?”

“Never more till all people in every land shall have had their fill, and the cinnamon twigs with which we light our fires shall be used un-barked through their abundance. Why should there be destruction of any good thing when the many are to decide what price they will give, instead of the few what price they will take?”

This was the best news Marana had yet heard, and her father had no more to tell. While he was moving about, preparing for the exercise of his art, and leaving his mat for his daughter's repose, he told of poverty and sickness among his neighbours, to whom it mattered not whether the fishery proved a rich or a ruinous one. In the former case, they derived none of the benefits; in the latter, they could scarcely be starved down to a lower point than they were sure to reach in the intervals of the seasons. His representations were confirmed to Marana when she went abroad in the morning to seek Father Anthony, and accost any friends she might meet by the way.

Old Gomgode, her father-in-law, lay on the beach, glancing about him with his restless eyes for something to feed his inquisitiveness. There was no inducement at

present to go to sea in search of curiosities, there being no fair at this season, and none of his neighbours being wealthy enough to make purchases when each had nothing to do but to secure his own scanty provision for the day. Gomgode's sole employment was asking questions of any one he could meet, and longing for the sight of an unaccustomed face.

He started up as he recognized Marana's form, though wasted, and her gait, though feeble and spiritless. When he had asked a multitude of questions, where was Rayo? how was Rayo? why did not Rayo come? and so forth, he was struck dumb by the tidings of his son's afflictions. He silently pointed to the cottage where Neyna, his daughter, might be found, and lay down on his face to importune the saints with prayers for his children; for Neyna, who was awaiting a dowry he could not earn for her; for Marana, who was likely to be a widow before she was a mother; and for the sufferer who was pining in his distant solitude. Before his prayers were ended, Father Anthony had joined him, and was uniting in his intercessions when the young women appeared to ask the priest's blessing.

Marana had not found Neyna in the cottage, but bathing with her companions in a reedy pool behind the dwellings. There was something left among these maidens of the sportiveness which seems to belong to the most refreshing exercise of bathing, and which was Marana's wont in her younger days, There was now a song and now a laugh; now a conspiracy to empty all the waterpots at once on the head. of one, and then the chace of a dusky beauty among the rushes, of Neyna, who had forgotten for the moment her hopelessness of a dowry. She was startled by the apparition of a stranger, intercepting her with outstretched arms in her flight, and recovered her gravity at the first recognition of Marana's faint smile. The other girls wrung out their dripping hair, and came up from the water to crowd round their old companion, to ask tidings of the rich land to the south, where, if there were no pearl-banks, there was every other wealth of nature, where, as the songs of their dancing-girls told them, life under the cocoa-nat trees was all that could be desired; where thousands of yards of cotton might be had from abroad, and hundreds of thousands of bags of rice were landed from foreign fleets. Marana pointed to her tattered garment, and let fall that it was long since she had tasted rice.

Why did she not seek relief from the English? she was asked. Did not the English come to provide for and protect the natives? Had not the English cotton enough to tapestry Adam's Peak, and could not they purchase the rice grounds of the globe?

“We,” said they, “are too far off from this fountain of wealth and mercy. The English come for our pearls once a year, and then they see us gay, and observe that our shore is spread with wealth. They do not know how little of this wealth is ours, or suspect what our hunger and nakedness are when they withdraw the light of their faces. But you live in that light, and yet you are wasted and sorrowful.”

“The English themselves complain,” answered Marana. “When there is a bad cinnamon harvest, the Government complains that the richer of our countrymen pay no dues, and that feeding the poor is a costly burden. When there is a good cinnamon harvest, the Company complains of the abundance, and burns half the crop; so that the

strangers are always complaining, and the labourers of the country are always poor. This is the way with us in the south."

"And with us in the north. Why then did the English come? And why now do they not go away?"

This question was too puzzling for any maiden of them all to answer, and they hastened to refer it to Father Anthony.

"Would you have me go away?" inquired he, smiling. "Shall I set the example to my countrymen, and leave you to your woods and waters in peace?"

"You do not forbid our fishing in our waters; you do not hark and burn our woods; you do not live upon our wealth, paying us only a pittance for getting it for you. Why, therefore, should you go?"

"My children, you speak as if the English settlers were thieves. you speak You speak as if it was nothing to have wise and skilful strangers come to teach you the arts of life. You speak as if you forgot the protection afforded to you by the government of the mother country, and the expense incurred by her for your support."

"Who is it that robs us, not only of our spice and our pearls, but of all that many another country would give us for our spice and our pearls, if it be not the English?" cried one.

"Are we the happier for their wisdom and their skill?" cried another. "And as for the arts of life, do we need strangers to teach us to lie beneath the fig-tree, and sleep away our hunger?"

"From what do they protect us?" asked a third. "If they will go away, we will protect ourselves against their returning; and our own expenses we can bear as soon as ships from every land may come to trade on our shores."

Father Anthony reminded them of the social institutions which had been established among them, with the entire good-will of the natives: but his pupils were obstinate in the opinion that slavery could not be said to be abolished while labourers were dependent for daily bread on the arbitrary will of a monopolizing party; and that, excellent as was trial by jury, the prevention of the manifold crimes which spring from oppression would be still better.

"If the English were to withdraw their protection," said Father Anthony, "would you forbid them your shores?"

"They should be more welcome than they have ever been yet," declared the old fisherman. "Let them land here, and we will spread white cloth for them to tread upon, and carry them on our shoulders to Columbo. If they will buy our pearls, the Dutchman, and the Frenchman, and the Spaniard shall all stand back till the English are served, and the money that we shall receive in our fairs and our markets shall buy the merchandise that comes from Britain. "We have dealt with the English so long,

that we would deal with them rather than with people of strange tongues and ways, if they would but traffic as fairly as other people."

"Why, then, should the English go? Why should they not live in the houses they have themselves built, and walk in the gardens they themselves have planted?"

"Let them do so—the merchant, and the priest, and the judge, and the labourer be there be British labourers here. Of these we can make countrymen and friends. But we do not wish for rulers, if they make us poor, and so tempt us to wickedness. We do not wish for soldiers, if we must give our daughters' dowries to maintain them. And as for the government agent, who takes our pearls, and the Company, that forbid us to grow cinnamon for anybody but themselves, if they will go, we will work hard, and soon make a beautiful ship to carry them away."

"Then it is not the English you object to, but some of their conduct towards you? Let us hope that the time will come when you will live together, not quarrelling for the possession of what Providence has given to all, but finding that there is enough for all."

"Why do not the wise English see this?"

"Many of them do. The wisest of the English see that there is little honour or advantage in calling any colony a possession of her own, if it would bring her profit instead of loss by being her friend, instead of her servant. The wisest among the English see, that to make a colony poor is to make it unprofitable, and that colonies cannot be very rich while they are dependent. To protect and cherish a colony till it can take care of itself, is wise and kind; but to prevent its taking care of itself, and is folly and crime. It is as if every man here should keep his grown up son in the bondage of childhood. Such fathers and such sons can never be prosperous and virtuous."

"Who prevents the wise among the English from acting wisely?"

"Some who are not so wise. Though it may be clear that all England and all Ceylon would be more prosperous if the trade of Ceylon were free, some few would cease to make gains which they will not forego. Some hope that their sons may be made soldiers, if there should be a war in the colony, and others expect that a brother or a cousin may be a judge, or a priest, or a servant of the government."

"But there cannot be many such."

"Very few; but those few have been enough to burden England with expensive colonies up to this day. They are few, but they are powerful, because the many do not know what a grievance they are submitting to. The selfish are few; but it does not follow that all others are wise, or England would leave off maintaining colonies expensively for the sake of their trade, when she would trade more profitably with them free."

"Why do the people not know this?"

"It is strange that they do not bestir themselves, and look abroad, and judge."

"Where should they look?"

"To the east or to the west, as they please. In the east they may see how their trade has been more than twice doubled since they have allowed some little freedom of traffic; and they are told every year how expensive is this island, where no trade is free. They might know that, with the greatest natural wealth, this island is among the least profitable of their colonies. They might know that its total revenue does not pay its expenses, and that no making shifts, no gathering in of money from all quarters, can prevent its being a burden to them and to their children, if they persevere in their present management."

"And what may they learn by looking westward?"

"That the States of America are a source of much greater wealth and power to Great Britain now than when she had a ruler in each of them. She is saved the expense of governing at a great distance, and has more trade with America than when she called it her own. Also, the colonies that she still holds in the west are an enormous expense to her—as fearful a burden as America is an advantage. Besides the loss which the mother country incurs for the sake of the colonies, (and which loss does those very colonies nothing but harm,) there is a direct expenditure of upwards of a million and a half in time of peace, for the apparatus of defence alone. How much more there is laid out in times of war, and in the necessary expenses of a government far from home, the people of England can never have considered, or they would long ago have permitted, ay, encouraged, Canada and Jamaica to govern themselves."

"If the English will but let us take care of ourselves, they may, perhaps, learn a new lesson about the places in the west."

"I am happy to tell you that a beginning is already made. There is only one among you— your father, made. Marana—to whom I have yet told the news. Every man may now plant cinnamon in his garden, and sell it to whomsoever he pleases. The news will not be long in flying round the world, and then more and more will ask for cinnamon continually; your countrymen will grow a greater quantity, and obtain a larger variety of comforts in exchange."

"Then you will have to preach to us as they say you preach to the strangers,—against gay dresses, and rich food, and too much love of gold," said the old man, chuckling.

"And if so, less against theft, and fraud, and hypocrisy, and indolence," replied the priest. "There will be little stealing of chanks when all may fish them; little false bargaining when bargains shall have opportunity to become fair; little pretence of penitence hiding a mocking heart, when there is room for real thankfulness, and for a sense of ingratitude to a bountiful God; and much more industry when the rewards of industry are within reach. However true it may be that mortal men sin while they are mortal men, it is certain that they change their sine with their outward state, and change them for the better as their state improves."

“Some tempters from above must be worse than others, I suppose,” said Gomgode; “but it is surprising to think that our rulers have power to send away the worst, that some less bad may come in.”

Marana hoped that her husband might benefit by the change. If his elephantiasis could but turn into some disease less dreadful, how would she bless the relaxation of the cinnamon monopoly!

Father Anthony could not encourage his dear daughter to look for such a result as this. But there were no bounds to the mercy of God towards one who repented,—as it was to be hoped Rayo did. Father Anthony would journey southwards with Marana and her father, to visit and console and pray with his unhappy charge, Rayo. He was ready at any moment to set forth.

Marana's ecstacies of gratitude and joy were checked only by the fear of what spectacle might meet her in her hut on her return, and by the mournful farewells of Neyna and her young companions, to whom no immediate prospect of a dowry was opened by the new change of policy. They regarded Marana as about to enter a land of promise whither they would fain follow her; unless, indeed, some similarly precious permission respecting the pearl banks should arrive, and convert their dreary shore into a region of hope and activity, They silently received their priest's parting blessing and injunctions as to their duties during his absence, and then watched him on his way. Setting forth laboriously on his mission of charity, he looked, indeed, little like one of the intruding strangers whom they had been taught to wish far from their shores.

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Chapter VII.

UP AND DOING.

Marana scarcely knew what to hope or fear when she had cast the first hasty glance round the hut in which she expected to find her husband. Rayo was not there, and she dreaded to inquire where he was; whether his ashes had been given to the winds, or whether some of these winds had brought him vigour to go abroad into the neighbouring wood. All the way as she came, sights and sounds of pleasure had been presented to her, and she had endeavoured to share the satisfaction of the priest and of her father at seeing the bustle of the country people in clearing their ground for the growth of the long-forbidden shrub; and the joyous parties returning from the thickets with the young plants which, when improved by cultivation, were to form the foundation of their wealth; and the dancing girls spreading the news through the land. She had striven to thank her saint with the due devotion when Father Anthony spread the blessing around him as he travelled; but the dread of what might be awaiting her at home had borne down her spirits. A circumstance which had occurred the day before had alarmed her grievously at the moment, and now explained only too clearly, she apprehended, the deserted state of the but. She had stolen out early to bathe, and when she came up out of the water, she found that a thievish bird was flying away with her necklace, the symbol of her married state. It was true that a shout from her father had caused the necklace to be dropped, and that it was at this moment safe; but was not the pang which shot through her yesterday prophetic of the worse pangs of today? Whether her father believed that his spells could bring back a departed spirit, he did not declare; but he now hastened to utter them on the threshold, while Marana flitted about the hut, taking up first the empty cocoa-nut from the floor, then the dry skin which was wont to hold oil. and then the mat on which it was impossible to tell by the mere examination whether any one had slept on the preceding night.

While she was sinking, at length, in utter inability to inquire further, the priest, who had walked a little way into the jungle on seeing that nothing was to be learned within doors, approached the entrance with a smile on his countenance, No one thought of waiting till the charm was ended. The three west forth; and, not far off, in an open space to which sunshine and air were admitted, appeared a group of people, whose voices sounded cheerily in the evening calm.

Mr. Carr was on horseback, with Alice before him, watching the proceedings of the others. Mr. Serle was digging a hole in the newly prepared soil, while Rayo stood by, holding the young cinnamon shrub which was about to be planted. Mrs. Serle was busy, at some distance, training the pepper-vine against the garden fence.

“Stop, stop!” cried the broken voice of the Charmer; “I have a vow, Rayo,—a vow! I have vowed to plant and bless the first cinnamon shrub in your garden.”

“And my blessing is yours, my son,” added Father Anthony.

“And mine has been given already,” observed the missionary, smiling.

“When was ever any property of your Honourable Company so hallowed?” Mrs. Serle inquired of Mr. Carr, with a smile, as she turned away to avoid seeing the meeting of Rayo and Marana.

“Property is sacred in the eye of God and man,” replied Mr. Cart, gravely.

“So it has been ever agreed between God and man,” said Mrs. Serle. “Therefore, whenever that which is called property is extensively desecrated, the inevitable conclusion is that it is not really property. The time will never come when this island will rise up against Rayo's cinnamon plantation, even if it should spread, by gradual and honourable increase, to the sea on one side, and to Candy on the other. As long as it prospers by means which interfere with no one's rights, Rayo's property will be sacred in the eyes of his country. But the whole island has long risen against your monopoly gardens. There have been not only curses breathed within its shade, and beyond its bounds, but pilfering, and burning, and studious waste.”

“I think it is a pity, papa,” said Alice, “that the Company did not get a Charmer to charm the great garden at the beginning, and a Catholic priest to give it a blessing, and then it would have been as safe as Rayo's is to be.”

“Nonsense, my dear,” was Mr. Carr's reply. He was full of trouble at the responsibility which would fall upon him if the opening of the cinnamon trade should prove a disaster.

“The same charm and blessing will not suit, I believe, Alice,” replied Mrs. Serle. “The charm is, in fact, against hopeless poverty and its attendant miseries,—a lot which the Honourable Company has never had to fear. The blessing is, in fact, on the exchange of fraud and hypocrisy—the vices which spring from oppression,—for honesty,—the virtue which grows up where labour is left free to find its recompense. The Honourable Company—”

“Has never found its recompense, in this instance, I am sure,” said Mr. Carr. “We are heartily tired of our bargain; and not all that we have obtained from Government, from time to time, to compensate for fluctuations, has prevented our losing very seriously from our cinnamon trade. We have been thoroughly disappointed in our markets, and cannot open any fresh ones. I hope now——”

“O, yes! You will do welt enough now, if you will manage your concerns as economically as private traders, and put yourselves on equal terms with the people of the country. There can be no lack of a market when it is once known that every one may sell and every one buy that which every body likes.”

“I believe so; and that there will henceforth be no such considerable fluctuations as there have been while there were fewer parties interested in checking and balancing each other. Still,—convinced as I am that we have done wisely in abolishing this monopoly,—I cannot but feel it to be a serious thing to witness so vigorous a preparation for supplying the new demand.”

“It is indeed a serious filing to see a new era established among a people to whom we stand in the relation of a secondary Providence. It is a serious thing to have the power of lifting up the impotent who have long lain hopeless at this beautiful gate of God's temple, and to see them instantly paying the homage of activity and joy. But this is surely not the moment to distrust the exercise of their new strength, and to fear its consequences.”

“Will poor Rayo ever be able to walk like other people, do you think, papa?” inquired Alice.

Mr. Carr had no hope of cure; but it was not an uncommon thing for the victims of this disease to live on for many years, without much pain, if well fed and taken care of. So great a change had already taken place ill Rayo since something had been given him to do and to hope for, that it seemed very probable that he might revive much further, and prune his own vines, and bark his own shrubs for many a season to come. He must be assisted to erect a cottage on the dry soil of his new garden, instead of remaining in the damp nook which had been the home of his poverty. He must be assisted to obtain wholesome food till the next cinnamon harvest, after which it might be hoped that he would be able first to supply his slmple wants, and then to afford to let them become more complex.

“He is gone to confession with the priest,” observed Mrs. Serle, as she watched the two proceeding towards the hut, while Marana's beads bung from her hand. “Henceforth, Mr. Carr, let Rayo's sins be his own: but I think the Honourable Company can hardly refuse to take his past offences on themselves, however long they have made him bear the penalty.”

“Certainly, if we strike out of the catalogue of crimes,” said Mr. Carr, “all that are originated by institutions, and by social customs, against which an individual can do no more than protest, but few will remain for which any Christian priest will dare to prescribe individual penance. If the heads of colonial governments at home were fully and perpetually aware of this, under what solemn emotions would they step into their office!”

Perhaps Father Anthony was such a Christian priest as Mr. Cart had just spoken of, for he returned from hearing Ravo's confession with a countenance full of mildness, and a voice full of pity. Marana no longer detected under her husband's submissive manner the workings of passion which had often terrified her; and, in addition to this. and to the decided improvement she witnessed in his health, she had the satisfaction of learning from her father that he had so far recovered his confidence in his own spells that he was sure the charmed shrub would prosper, and would avail better to make Amoottra keep her distance than any chank in the Indian seas.

The rest of the party were about to go in search of rice or other good food. They had been too much struck by their accidental meeting with Rayo in the wood,—too deeply touched by witnessing his feeble attempts to pluck up the cinnamon suckers,—to think of leaving him to his own resources in his present state of health. As they were quitting the enclosure, and looked back to see how the slanting sunbeams lit up the

eyes of the care-worn family, the two priests of a religion of promise assured one another that the time was at hand when here every man should sit under his vine and his fig-tree, and none should make him afraid.

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Summary Of Principles Illustrated In This Volume.

Colonies are advantageous to the mother-country as affording places of settlement for her emigrating members, and opening markets where her merchants will always have the preference over those of other countries, from identity of language and usages.

Colonies are not advantageous to the mother-country as the basis of a peculiar trade.

The term ‘colony trade’ involves the idea of monopoly; since, in a free trade, a colony bears the same relation as any other party to the mother-country.

Such monopoly is disadvantageous to the mother-country, whether possessed by the government, as a trading party, by an exclusive company, or by all the merchants of the mother-country.

It is disadvantageous as impairing the resources of the dependency, which are a part of the resources of the empire, and the very material of the trade which is the object of desire.

If a colony is forbidden to buy of any but the mother-country, it must do without some articles which it desires, or pay dear for them;—it loses the opportunity of an advantageous exchange, or makes a disadvantageous one. Thus the resources of the colony are wasted.

If a colony is forbidden to sell its own produce to any but the mother-country, either the prohibition is not needed, or the colony receives less in exchange from the mother-country than if might obtain elsewhere. Thus, again, the resources of the colony are wasted.

If a colony is forbidden either to buy of or sell to any but the mother-country, the resources of the colony are wasted according to both the above methods, and the colony is condemned to remain a poor customer and an expensive dependency.

In proportion, therefore, as trade with colonies is distinguished from trade with other places, by restriction on buyers at home, or on sellers in the colonies, that trade (involving the apparatus of restriction) becomes an occasion of loss instead of gain to the empire.

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A TALE OF THE TYNE.

Chapter I

NO NEWS FROM THE PORT.

Walter was so busy trenching in his garden, one late autumn afternoon, that he paid no attention to any thing that passed on the other side of the hedge. Tram after train of coal-waggons slid by on the rail-road from the pit to the staithe, and from the staithe to the pit, and he never looked up, till a voice from one of the vehicles shouted to him that he was a pretty ferryman to let a passenger stand calling for his boat, for minutes together, while he gave no heed. Walter just turned to the cottage to shout, in his turn, "Father, the boat!" and then went on with his trenching.

The days were gone by when Walter used to uprear himself from his weeding or pruning, or stand resting on his spade, to watch his father putting off for the opposite bank, or speculate on who the passengers might be, whence they came, and whither they might be going. His garden was a tempting place whence to overlook the river, sloping as it did down to the very bank; but Walter had now too much to do and to think about to spare. time for the chance amusements of former days. His father had duly and perpetually assured him in his childhood that "the hand of the dihgent maketh rich," and that "if a man will not work, neither should be eat;" but. though these quotations had their effect, there were thoughts in Walter's mind which were yet more stimulating to his exertions.

He threw down his spade in no little hurry, however, when, in a few minutes, he heard him-self called from behind. His cousin Effie was running up the slope of the garden, crying,

"Walter! Walter! is my father here? You need not be afraid to tell *me*. Is my father here?"

"Your father, no! I have not seen him since church, last Sunday."

"Well, uncle Christopher said just so; but I got him to set me over, I was so unwilling to believe you did not know where my father was. O, Walter! cannot you give the least guess where he is? I dare not go back to my mother without news."

Walter's grieved countenance showed that he would afford news if he had any to impart. He hesitatingly mentioned the public-house.

"O, there is not a public-house between this and Newcastle, nor all over Shields, where one or other of us had not been before twelve o'clock last night. I did not know whether to be glad or sorry that he was not in one of them. Now I should be glad enough to see him in almost any way."

“Before twelve o'clock last night! How long have you missed him?”

“He quitted the keel, they say, just at dark, when she came alongside the collier,—only be-cause he had broken his pipe, and went to get another; but he did not come back.”

Walter was silent; but Effie could interpret his thought.

“It is certain the press-gang was out last night,” she observed.

“Where is the tender stationed?” asked Walter, pulling down his shirt sleeves, and looking round for his coat.

“Just in the river's mouth; but there is no getting at her. Half the boats in Shields have been hanging about her; but, there being only women in them, they do but, make sport for the officers. Nobody but an officer or two is to be seen on deck—”

“Ay, ay; the other poor creatures are kept close enough down below. I suppose, if there are few but women in the boats, her business is done, and she will make little further stay.”

“There is not a seaman to be seen in all Shields since the day before yesterday, they say; and so the jail has been half emptied to make up the number. Walter, you must not think of going to look for my father. There has scarcely a keel passed all this day, because the men will not venture to the port any more, while the tender is there. You will not think of going, Walter? I am not quite sure that it is safe for you to be working here, full in sight from the river. From the other side I saw you as plain as could be.”

“Why, Effie, what do you think they could make of a gardener on board a king's ship?”

“What they make of other landsmenillegible I suppose. “Tis certain they have got some who never were on ship-board in their lives.”

“Indeed?”

Yes, indeed. So I do wish you would work, in you must work, under the hedge, or behind that plot of hollvoaks. Do you know I saw you stop and take off your cap, when you came to the end of this ridge, and then stool—”

“What! while your head was full of your tather; bless you!” murmured Waher, in a low fone, and with a blush of satisfaction.

“Is not it my duty to think of you first?” asked Effie; “and if it was not, how could I help it?”

Walter was in no hurry to answer this, and Effie went on.

"As to saying it, I cannot help that either; and why should I? It makes me wonder to see Bessy Davison pretending that her lover is the last person in the world that she thinks of or cares about, when she knows what a sin and shame it would be to pretend the same thing when he is her husband—which he is almost— for they are to be married next week."

"I am sure we are much more like being husband and wife than they are, Effie; I wish we were going to be married next week."

"I cannot talk about that, Walter, till I have heard something of my father, and made out what is to become of my mother, if he is really gone; but he may get back. There have been some set ashore again two days after they were carried off."

Walter did not say what he knew, that those who were thus returned to their homes were persons unfit for the king's service:—a poor tailor who might, by long training, have become a sail-maker, but would never be capable of more arduous service; a ploughman, who was gaping with amazement at the first sight of the sea, when he was surprised and carried off; and a pedlar, who seemed likely to bie in a week for want of a wider walking range than the deck of a tender. Eldred was too good a man for the kings purposes, as Walter knew, to be set at liberty again on the same footing with such helpless creatures as these.

"What will your mother do, Effie, if your father should really be away a year or two, or more?"

"Eh! I cannot say. There has been no time—Walter, if you could have seen her, all last night, it would have half broke your heart."

"I am sure it has half broken yours. You look sadly worn, Effie."

"O, I am used to her—to her ways of feeling and doing. But she did sob and complain so grievously, we were wholly at a loss what to do with her—poor Tim and I, for Adam was not to be found. I sent to his master's to beg leave for him for a few hours, but he was out of bounds, and so I had no help. For a long time she kept blaming my father, till I was pained that Tim shouht hear all she said. When I had got him to bed, I left off trying to reason with her, which I know l am too apt to do. But, Walter, I am afraid to meet her again; and that is why I am lingering here, doing no good."

"But what will she do!" Walter again inquired.

"I suppose we must all *get* work, as those do who have no father to work for them," replied Effie.

"We had better marry at once," said Walter, who seemed quite able to prove his point, that it would, be a relief to Mrs. Eldred to see her daughter settled at once, instead of having to go back to the pit-mouth, where she had worked in her childhood, and where all parties had believed she would never need to work again.

“It never came into my mind till now,” said Effie, after considering her lover's proposal for a moment; “but I will think about it as I go home, and try to find out what we ought to do.”

Waiter's blush of satisfaction returned while he said something about his wonder how people had any comfort of each other who were off and on, and pretending, like Bessy and her lover, not to understand each other, instead of being straightforward, and agreeing on what was right and fit, so that they might depend on each other without drawback. It was difficult enough sometimes, at best, for people that had consciences to settle their minds so as to be at pcace; and to perplex one another further was, in his opinion, but a poor sign of love. He might feel this the more strongly from his being too timid and undecided. He knew he was; and if Effie could but be aware what a blessing it was to him to be never made sport of—never put off with false reasons—

Effie coloured with indignation at the idea of any one taking advantage of Walter's modesty to make sport of him. In her own heart she daily felt, (and sometimes she relieved herself by saying so,) that there was no one virtue she should like so much to have as Waher's modesty, and that there was no one thing she feared so much as learning to abuse it, by accepting the supremacy he was willing to allow her. Walter's objection, as far as he chose to make any, was that she was too tractable; while his father entertained an idea much more serious. He doubted whether they had grace enough between them to secure a blessing upon their union.

“Uncle Christopher seems too busy to speak to me to-day,” observed Effie. “He has always been engaged with his invention when I have come lately; but I thought to-day he would have come out to advise with me what we must do about nay father.”

“He is bringing his invention to a point,” replied Walter, “and he will soon be ready to take it to London, and look after a patent for it. This fills his mind at present; but you need not doubt his feeling very much for you all, as soon as he can listen to what I shall tell him,”

“But what will he say to your notion of marrying next week—of your marrying while Adam is not out of his apprenticeship yet?”

“He can only say that Adam is an apprentice, and l am not. You and l may be as glad as we please, between ourselves, that I am a gardener, and not a rope-maker.”

“Ah! you would have had another year to serve, trom this time, and then to set up for your self. But, surely, gardening is a much more difficult business to learn than rope-making. Why should Adam be obliged to spend seven years in learning to twist hemp into ropes, when you learned long ago a great deal about the seasons, and the soils, and the nature of different kinds of plants, and how to manage a vast number of them? I should have thought that it would take more time and pains to learn to produce fine peaches, and such capital vegetables as yours, than to become a good ropemaker.”

“So should I; but all works ot tillage have been mixed up together under the name of unskilled labour; and all that belong to manufactures, as skilled labour, which requires

apprenticeship; so that the man who grows the finest grapes that care and knowledge ever produced, is held by the law to be a less skilled workman than one who dabs brick-clay into a mould all the summer through. If I were to turn pippin-monger instead of pippin-grower, I should have inquiries in plenty after my seven years of apprenticeship, and should be liable to suffer for not having served them. But I am a gardener, and never was bound to a master, and am now free to turn my hand to any occupation that comes near my own, if my own should fail, which is a sort of security for you, Effie, that it gives me pleasure to think of."

"Security!" said his father, who had at length found time to come out and inquire into the afflictions of his niece and her family. "It is the notion of young people, who have not seen God's ways in his works, to talk of security. Of what use is the watchman's waking, unless the Lord keeps the city?"

"Indeed, uncle," said Effie, "we want no teaching to-day about change and danger. Yesterday at this time we were looking for my father home from work, and now I much fear.—"

"Fear nothing, child. Fear is sinful."

"O, but, uncle, do you think you yourself could help it if Walter was gone, and you did not know where? Would not you fancy him shut down in that horrible tender? And could you help being afraid that he was miserable, being afraid that he would be ill, being afraid that you would be unhappy for many a long year, for want of him?"

"I dare say you think," said uncle Christopher, seeing that Effie bit her lip to repress her tears,— "I dare say you think that I am a cruel old man, who has no compassion for what other people are feeling. Worldly people would say—"

"O, never mind what people would say who do not see and hear us: but I do not think you cruel, uncle. Only—"

"Only what?" inquired uncle Christopher, setting his hps in a prim form, as he always did when he expected to hear something unaeceptable about himself.

"Only,—very pious people expect other people to feel exactly as they do, aud make out that every difference is a difference of trust in God. Now, I trust in God that my father will be supported, and my poor mother—"

She was obliged to stop a moment, and then went on,

"But all this trust does not make me the less afraid that they will have to be unhappy first."

Uncle Christopher shook his head with a condescending smile and sigh. This was what he called trust with a reservation; but prayed that the true faith might grow out of it in time. He could suggest nothing to be done, Eldred's recovery being quite hopeless, he considered, if he was on board the tender. All that uncle Christopher could promise, was to go and pray with the widowed wife, on the Sabbath morning;

—the day that he could not conscientiously give to his own engrossing pursuit,—the invention for which he hoped to take out a patent.

Walter had no intention of waiting till Sunday. He was going now, but that Effie would not allow it. The press-gang was before her mind's eye, whichever way she turned ; and she had no apprehension so great as of her lover falling in with it. Nowhere could he be so safe as in his father's premises,—ferrymen being everywhere exempt from impressment, He parried her request of a promise not to show himself in his garden so as to be an object of observation from the river, and now saved his father the trouble of depositing Effie on the other side. He had a few words to say to her while they were crossing. His advice was not to harass herself with running about from place to place in search of her father, (who could have no motive for concealing him self from his family,) but to acquiesce in his being made a defender of his country against his will, and to hope that he would prove a faithful and valiant seaman amidst the perils and honours of war.

Effie thought that the very way to prevent this was so to treat a man as to make him hate the government he served, and to paralyze his arm by that sickness of heart which must come over him as often as he thought of his deserted wife and unprovided children. She believed a ready will was the soul of good service, on sea or land.

She had no very ready will to go home to her mother without tidings. She lingered to see her lover recross the river, being aware that he was an inexperienced ferryman, and that the tide was now running very strong. A barge was coming up, in fine style, and it seemed likely that Walter would have landed in time to watch its course, like herself, and perhaps to suspect, as she did, that certain of his Majesty's agents were in it, seeking whom they might entrap. But Walter mismanaged his boat, causing it to make a zigzag course, till he brought it very near the barge, and then seeming to lose his presence of mind so as to put himself directly in the way of being run down. Effie was in momentary expectation of witnessing the clash, and there was a movement on board the barge which terrified her no less.

“They have found him out to be no ferryman,” was her agonized thought. “They will carry him off too, and then my mother and I shall be widows together!”

She ran to the water's edge, and would probably have tried to walk through it, if the boats bad not parted so as to allow her breathing time again. She was then struck with the improbability of the gang offering violence to the manager of a ferryboat, while in the actual discharge of his office; but this conviction did not at once restore strength to her shaking limbs, or remove the deadly sickness from her heart.

She was usually fond of this walk,—for other reasons than that Walter was at one end of it: but to day everything appeared disagreeable. The rustling of the autumn wind in the leafless clump of trees under which she had to pass teazed her ear. She tried to find a path where she might walk without making a commotion among the dead leaves. When it became necessary to cross the rail-road, it seemed to her that it was the most difficult thing in the world to escape the trains of waggons. She felt pretty sure of being run over before she got home. The smoke from the colliery half stifled

her, and the voices from the rows of cottages were more shrill and unfeeling than she had ever heard them before. the river side had been cold; the colliery was too warm; and the wind, or something else, prevented her getting forwards. She could almost have declared that her feet were tied.

While site was toiling on, somebody touched her shoulder. She turned, in attitude to run away; but it was only her eldest brother.

“What! did I frighten you, lass?” cried Adam, gaily.

“O, Adam! It would be well if you never did worse than frightening me in this way.”

“Hoot, toot ! you are coming round to the old story of my having my indentures broke. Let them be broke, if my masters so please! I know my business well enough,—I knew it three years ago well enough to make my bread like another man; and so it is no wonder I am tired of working so long for another, when I am as fit as I ever shall be to work for myself.”

“But the disgrace,—the loss,—if you have your indentures broke!” exclaimed she. “How are you to get on a footing with those who have served their time properly, if you cannot submit to the law?”

“I wish I had been born where there is no such law,” declared Adam. “If I had been a Manchester or a Birmingham man, my apprenticeship might have been as long or as short as any business requires, Or if I had been an American I might have learned rope-making without being bound at all.”

“In America, I have heard tell,” replied Effie, “the people are mostly well to do in the world, and can take their manhood upon them earlier than the youths here may do. They can set up for themselves, and marry, and have their rights earlier than here, where there are so many in proportion to the means of living. As to Birmingham and Manchester,—I do not know what is the character of the working youths there,— but I have heard it said that long apprenticeships are good for the morals of the young people.”

“Then I must be a much more moral person than Walter—Eh, Effie? But I should like to know what there is in my being bound to tread the length of the rope-walk so many times a-day, for my master's profit, that is good for my morals. I hardily think that it, is good for one's morals to be running off as often as one can slip the noose, and sulky and grumbling all the while one is under a master's eye.”

Effie did not see the absolute necessity of either playing truant or sulking. She thought a well-disposed youth should be grateful for being under the eye of a master at a time of life when guardianship was peculiarly needfull.

“All very well two hundred years ago, Effie, —at the time of such apprenticeships as our great grandfather used to tell us of,—when the apprentices used to sit in the same room, and eat at the same table with their masters, and walk behind them to church. But times are changed now. I could tell you such things as you little dream of, if I

chose to prove to you how much management our masters have over our pleasures aud our morals. What is it to them what we do with ourselves When work is over? And as for the time that the wheels are turning, the masters must be clever men if they get half as much work out of their oldest and best apprentices as out of any one of their journeymen?"

"How were apprentices so different in our great grandfather's time?"

"I dare say it might be more difficult to learn arts at that time; and so a longer apprenticeship might be wanted. Neither was there such a rush to get one's bread as there is now; nor, consequently, so much provocation at being kept out of it at a great expense to everybody, when one is capable of shifting for one's self. You cannot wonder, Effie, at my flitting from time to time, when a chance offers of winning a penny, or When I can amuse myself, instead of toiling for nothing."

"But I do wonder, Adam. You forget what you owe your master for teaching you your trade; and you forget what you forfeit, if you have your indentures broke."

"Not I. I paid my master long ago for everything but the meat and drink that I would rather earn for myself. And you need not begin to talk of how foolish we should all be in marrying too early if our being bound till twenty-one did not prevent it. It may chance that worse things than early marriages happen when high spirited apprentices are led or driven into a disposition for idleness. In my mind,—the best way to keep a young man steady and sober is to let him work, as soon as he is fit for it, with tlle hopefulness which comes from working for one's self. You will see how steady I shall be as soon as I have something to work for."

"And if your master casts you off, mean time?"

"Then I must go somewhere away from yon great town, where one can do little without a title of apprenticeship. When the Deep Cut is made,—as they say it certainly will be,—ropes will be wanted there in plenty, for ships that will put in. l'll go and settle near the Deep Cut.— Tis a fine place,—that sluice that is to be. Tommy Thorn and I got over to see it in one of our trips; and there was—"

"Tell me nothing about it now," said Effie: "but go home to your master, that I may tell my mother that you are there: and so carry her some little comfort in her misery."

"Misery! what misery?"

"Ah! Now you are almost the only person within five miles that does not know what an affliction has befallen your; own kin. I kept putting off the telling you, being at last hopeless—"

"And I saw how you had been crying, but thought Walter might have been either rough or particularly tender. But O, Effie, what is it? Is poor little Tim—"

Tim was well again: and Adam was horrorstruck at finding the family misfortune so much greater than he had anticipated. When he learned that Cuddie was

absent,—making his first voyage in a collier to London.—he was full of remorse that his mother had been left without the support of either of her eider sons on such an occasion. Instead of going home to his master, he must first see his poor mother; and when Effie recollected that such a visit might serve as a plea of excuse to his master, and give his indentures another chance, she made no further opposition.

Effie found little promise of comfort on approaching home. About the spout or staithe, whence coals were shot from the waggons into the keels on the river, were gathered groups of people telling and hearing of one and another neighbour who had not returned when expected. This news rendered Eldred's restoration less probable than ever, and all that could be hoped was that Mrs. Eldred was already prepared for this.

If she was, she did not look out the less eagerly for her daughter, or show less disappointment when she found there were no tidings.

“It was silly of me to trouble you for any,” she declared. “I am the last person ever to get tidings that I want. I am the last person to be helped by anybody,”

“Do not you think—” —Effie began, but checked herself, in consideration of the trouble of spirit that her mother was in. The poor woman went on,

“One would think the time was gone by for your father to have the notion of deserting his family. He had better have done it years ago, when I was more fit for the charge. I am worn out now. But I always said there would be no rest for me till I was in the grave.”

“Is there no one who asks us to come and he will give us rest?” inquired one who was sitting beside the hearth, with little Tim on his knee. It was Mr. Severn, the clergyman, one of poor Tim's best friends. Tim was only six years old; but he had lost his sight by an accident at the coal-pit, two years before. He was not an unhappy child at any time; but he was seldom so happy as when Mr. Severn's cheerful voice and steady step came near, or when there was something new to be told or taught, which required that Tim should stand between the gentleman's knees, or sit with an arm over his shoulder. He heard Mr. Severn's question now, and asked who made that promise. The answer brought his mother to tears; but whether they were tears which would do her good seemed doubtful to those who watched with alarm the force of her emotions.

“Mother, you cannot think,—surely you cannot think that nay father has left us of his own accord?” remonstrated Adam.

“if he has, it is you that have helped to send him away. No man was prouder than your father that no vagabond ever belonged to him; and many a time of late has he prophesied that you woul'd turn out a vagabond;—many a time, I can tell you, Adam, when he has heard of your being missed from your work. I hope you will take it to heart, Adam.”

“Mother! mother! this is not the time,” said Effie, in a terror lest Adam should quit the cottage, never to return. “Mother, my father never spoke harshly about Adam, I am sure.”

“Harshly! no. He never spoke harshly to anybody in his life, and always let any one talk him over, and do what they would with him; and that is the case now, I'll answer for it. I thought I had brought up my sons free from his fault; and now they are to break my heart in another way, I suppose. Well! among one and another, I shall soon be in my grave.”

“How is Cuddie to break your heart, mother? I wonder what is the matter with him, good lad!” said Adam, with an affectation of coolness.

Effie east an imploring look at him, and at the same moment Tim began to make his voice heard,—

“O, don't go! don't go! Sir, sir; don't go !”

“I must, my dear boy. I will come back again when—”

“When my mother does not insult me before you, sir,” said Adam. “But you will hardly find me here next time, after what you have heard to-day.”

“yes, Adam, I trust I shall. I shall forget what I have heard, because it was said in a moment of irritation; and you will remember, I trust, that your mother is in deep affliction, and that her words should not be reckoned too strictly against her,—least of all by her son.”

“I cannot be spoken of in this way,” cried Mrs. Eldred. “I have been accustomed to have people against me, all nay days; but I cannot hear myself so spoken of to my children, by anybody, Mr. Severn.”

“Tell us, then, how we shall think of you,— how we shall pray fur you in your sorrow?”

“As one that was able to bear whatever it might please God to lay upon her,” she replied. Her violent weeping did not interrupt her declarations that she could go to the pit-mouth, and work for her living, and preserve the independence and good name she had always sought for herself and her children. She spoke proudly of her family, though she had just betore been bitter against them. She talked of her strength, though she had so lately declared herself worn out. She did not want any comfort but what her own mind could supply her with, well as people meant, she did not doubt, by coming to comfort her. She forgot how she had complained, just before Mr. Severn entered, that nobody eared for her, and that she might bear her troubles as well as she could, without sympathy.

Mr. Severn, who abhorred officious interference, kindly wished her strength and comfort according to her need, and was departing, when little Tim, who bad bustled after him to the door, reached out a hand to catch the gentleman by the skirt of his

coat, missed his aim, and fell from the door-step. He merely slipped on his hands and knees: but the boy was first startled by the fall, and then thoroughly alarmed by his mother's passion of terror. Any child must have concluded himself very much hurt, white his mother was sobbing over him so piteously.

“Indeed, mother, I don't think he has hurt himself.”— “Do but let him walk across the room.”— “He does not seem to be in any pain,” —urged the son and daughter, in vain. Mr. Severn touched Adam's arm, and made a sign to let the paroxysm exhaust itself. Effie quietly placed a cup of water within reach, and closed the door against any prying eyes that might be near. The time had been,—but it was now long past,—when her mother's emotions had invariably opened the flood-gates of her own tears. Her heart was still heavily oppressed when she witnessed passion; but it was now only quiet grief that touched her sympathies. When the sobs were hushed, and only gentle tears flowed over poor Tim, Effie could refrain no longer, but became the most sorrowful weeper of the two. Adam did not know what to do with himself, and therefore did the best thing that remained. He took his mother's hand, and signified a hope of being a greater comfort to her than he had been. He mentioned Cuddie; and here was something pleasant for every one to speak of. Mr. Severn considered Cuddie one of the most promising lads in the parish. Mrs. Eldred told how early she had discovered and pointed out to his father what Cuddle might become; but plaintively added a supposition of his being impressed during the voyage. All, with one voice, reminded her how young he was, and how unlikely it was that his Majesty should pick out lads of seventeen for impressment, when an ample supply of full-grown men might be obtained. Tim had his little story to tell of what Cuddie was to do for him when he came back; and his mother smiled, and blessed the boy aside for forgetting his terrible fall so easily. In ten minutes more, Mr. Severn left her, fully convinced that it would be much easier to count her troubles than her blessings; that Providence has a wise and kind purpose in all that it inflicts; and that the best welcome she could offer her husband on his return would be the sight of what she had done in his absence for his sake.

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Chapter II.

NEWS FROM THE PORT.

Mrs. Eldred did not give too good an account of herself when she declared herself able to do for her family whatever circumstances might require of her. Within five days of her husband's disappearance, she might be found in a situation which she had not expected ever to fill again. She was sorting and screening coals at the mouth of the neighbouring pit. She would not hear of Effie joining her in her labours. Her great desire was that Effie should marry Walter as soon as she pleased. This would be one care off her mind, she declared,—one duty discharged to her absent husband, whose only daughter should not suffer by the unhappy chance which had taken him away. The only argument was as to what should be done with Tim, during working hours. Effie was for keeping him beside her, —not only at present, while she was still in her mother's cottage, but when she should have roved to Walter's. She thought it more seemly that the child should play among the flower-beds than among the coal-heaps, and hinted the posibihty, of his falling down the pit, or into the river, while no one was heeding him. But the plea of danger would not do. No child of his age could be more fit to avoid danger from the pit and the river than Tim. His ear served him better than the eyes of little ones who do not think of taking care; and Tim might always be trusted to discover, by stamping on the ground, how near he was to hollow places. He might always be trusted to calculate the certainties of crossing the waggon-way before the train should come up, and to find his own path down the sloping bank to the stone which formed Ins favourite seat by the river-side—where he might sit, and pull rushes, and hear the water ripple. His mother hinted that he would run more risk among Walter's bees than anywhere else. It was left, at last, to the child's own taste; and he decided to go with his mother. Of all people, he knew least of the hastiness of her temper; for he rarely or never had to feel it himself, and could not yet understand its manifestations to others. He was very fond of Effie, but there was a charm about the corner of his mother's apron which eclipsed all the blandishments of any one else. Besides this, Tim loved society,—not ouly as being a child, but as being blind. He quitted even the corner of his mother's apron when he heard young voices, and pushed into the midst of every group of children he could find his way to. He had an ambition to work as other little ones worked, and to play as they played; and his mother's occupation afforded him the opportunity. The sorting coal may be done by the touch as truly though more slowly than by the eye; and the work which Tim would not haw; been set to these five years, if he had had his sight, he was already permitted to do for amusement, because he was blind. His mother rectified his mistakes when he chanced to carry hie contributions to the wrong heap; and his companions learned to be patient with him when he unwittingly spoiled their little arrangements, throwing down their coal-houses, trodging straight through their coal-gardens, anti stumbling over their coal-mountains. No one seemed to enjoy the burning of the refuse coal more than he, though to him it was no spectacle. He always carefully ascertained the situation of the heap to be burned, and stood opposite to the conflagration, shouting when his companions' shouts told that the flame was spreading, and rather courting than

avoiding the heat and the smoke. There was some question among observers whether the glare did not excite some sensation through the veil of his blindness. He could give no account of it himself; and the point was left to be decided at some future time, when he should be better able to understand his own pleasures.

Mrs. Eldred was at the pit, as if nothing had happened, the morning of Effie's marriage, with in a fortnight of Eldred's disappearance. There was nothing to stay at home for when Effie was gone; and no one ever shrank from being alone more painfully than the widowed wife did at present. She plied her labour busily at the pit's mouth,—now helping to receive the coal which was brought up by tim gin, now screening it, and depositing the large pieces for the London market in one place, and the small for other uses, or for destruction, in another place.

"Eh! bairn, what makes you turn that way, and listen so?" she asked of Tim. The boy jumped and clapped his hands as a distant shot arose. It spread nearer and nearer; and the sound of a carriage,—of several carriages,—was heard. What could it be? It turned out a very fine procession indeed,—the wedding-party in whose honour the bells of St. Nicholas, Newcastle, were ringing, as had been observed by several people about the colliery this morning. The Rev. Miles Otley, a neighbouring rector, had married the daughter of the rich Mr. Vivian of Newcastle; and everybody near was thinking a good deal about it,—not only because the marriage of the rector was a matter of real importance, but because it was a curious thing to the elderly folks to see such a boy as Miles Otley had but lately been, grown into so important a man as he now was. He had had extraordinary luck they thought, in respect both of education and preferment;—luck greatly exceeding that of Mr. Severn, his curate, who was much more popular on all points but one;—the one which constituted the rector's chief importance at present to the people about him. Mr. Otley's sporting was admired, his equipage praised, his preaching was a matter of question, his parties a matter of notoriety; but that which found him favour in the eves of his neighbours was his opposition to a scheme for a public work which they thought would do a great injury to their colliery,—a scheme of which Mr. Severn could not be brought to say any harm.

Some way up the coast there were materials for a colliery which would have been opened long ago, if it could have competed with those which had superior advantages of carriage. A waggon-way to the river, or at once to the port of Shields, might have been made; but it was thought likely to be less expensive, and much more advantageous to the whole district to make a short cut through the rock of the coast, just at hand, and build a small pier, to aid the loading and unloading of vessels. This opening might also afford a shelter for small vessels on a very exposed coast; and there seemed to impartial persons no conceivable objection to the undertaking, if the company who proposed it were satisfied that it would yield them a profit. There was a jealousy about it, how ever, among some coal-owners who did not desire the opening of new works; and this jealousy, of course, spread to their dependents. It was taken up by the gay young rector with an earnestness which could not be accounted for otherwise than that this was the first object out of himself which had ever been known to interest him, and it might therefore have the charm of a new pursuit. He had talked of getting the bill thrown out in Parliament, had visited the proprietors of the land in

the line of the Deep Cur, to endeavour to gain their dissent from the measure, and had been thought to come very near the matter in the last sermon lie had preached (on innovations) previous to his marriage.

Mr. Severn was so far from seeing that the scheme was objectionable, that he firmly believed it would benefit all the parties concerned in its discussion. He knew that more coal was wanted in the south,—not that the people in the south could purchase more of the article, burdened as it now was with duties arid unnecessary charges of various kinds,—but he knew that many manufacturers were pining for want of an abundant and cheap supply of fuel, and that thousands of poor creatures were shivering in their chilly homes, while an inexhaustible deposit of coat lay in the ground; and there were plenty of hands to work it, and an abundance of ships to transport it, if its charges could but be reduced to such a level as that those who needed might obtain. Every means by which a larger supply could be brought into the market would prove, he believed, a stimulus to the whole trade, and tempt more consumers to the purchase. Not only, therefore, would the land proprietors on the line of the Deep Cut, and the labourers, and the ship builders, and the rope-makers, and the pitmen, be benefited in a direct way, but all connected with other coal-works in an indirect manner. It was true that other means existed of supplying the people move amply with the fuel which they wanted; but those means could not at present be made use of. it was true that coal enough,— and no little of a prime quality,—was destroyed at the pit mouth to afford warmth to crowds of those who pass tire dreary winter night in darkness and in cold, in many of the cities of England. It was true that this destruction was sorely grudged by the coal-owners, and corn plained of by the dwellers in the neighbourhood, to whom these wasteful fires were a terrible nuisance; but it was also true that, while the corporation of London had the privilege of measuring the coal which was to warm London, and would admit none which was not in large pieces, there was little probability that the small coal would have any chance yet awhile; and the best hope was in the supply of large coal being increased, so as to lower the price, as far as it was possible for it to be lowered under the officious management of a corporation. As for the means of carrying the projected improvement into effect, as it was a work too expensive for individual enterprise, a company, privileged by Government, seemed the right instrument. Such companies are the fitting subjects of royal and parhamentary favour, when their undertakings serve to promote instead of impeding the lndustry of the many, and the rewards of. that. industry. A company to monopolize the production of coal would have been a curse against which Mr. Severn would have protested with all his might; a company Lo open a new channel for the distribution of coal was a public servant, whom he thought deserving of all honour and encouragement, Inasmuch as government would be bound, by its duty of protecting the industry of its subjects, to discountenance the former, was bound to countenance the latter: therefore Mr. Severn exerted himself to subdue the prejudices against the scheme which existed in his parish: and, furthermore, did what in him lay to disabuse Parliament respecting the misrepresentations of the counter petitioners. It is so much more easy, however, and so infinitely more entertaining, to join in a clamour against a proposition than to listen to reason in favour of it, that Mr. Severn was not at all surprised to hear the shouts which followed the bridegroom's carriage,— “Otley for ever!” “He has cut up the

Deep Cut?" "No new piers; the old ones will do." "Don't let the Cut go out of your mind, Otley. We'll stand by you."

Mr. Severn was visiting a poor man who was laid up with a hurt received m the p't. He turned to the window with a smile as the gay cavalcade passed, consisting of carriages, in which appeared to be all the relations of the bride, and half" those of the bridegroom. Her father, the great Mr. Vivian, perhaps struck the most awe into the beholders,—he was such a very great man!—though he himself seemed less aware of the fact than other people. He had once sat next the Duke of Wellington, and been asked a question by him. He had given a luncheon to the Duke of Northumberland; and the Duchess had taken his arm in the Assembly-room at Newcastle. He was a very powerful man in the Trinity-house; and had had an audience of the First Lord of the Admiralty once upon a time in London. Mr. Vivian himself would have been surprised to know what a great man he was. One sort of proof of the fact was now offered him, the surgeon of the colliery,— also a great man in his way,—arrived in the distance just in time to learn what an event was taking place on the road below, in the was of the bridal party. This gentleman had an earnest desire to be appointed surgeon to the Trinity-house, and had long wished to distinguish himself in the view of Mr. Vivian. He did so now, though not exactly in the way to secure a presentation to the office he sought. He urged his grey pony forward, that he might be within reach of Mr. Vivian's notice, if the carriages should stop to allow the rector to male his acknowledgments to the people. The pony did not want urging, except when it was in one peculiar position. of which it was by no means fond—in the middle of a waggon-way, bestriding the twirling cable by which the waggons are worked. While standing rims, as horses in that neighbourhood are sure to do occasionally, it required no gentle persuasion to induce the pony to draw its hind-legs after its fore-legs over the rope; but that effort once made, it was sure to go on its way rapidly enough to satisfy the most impatient rider. So it was on the present occasion. The animal leaped down the ridge, dashed over the black level which lay between it and the colliery, and ended by shaking off his master, and giving him a roll in the dust, in full view of the wedding party. The surgeon's purpose was doubly answered. Not only had he distinguished himself before Mr. Vivian, but the carriages stopped, and opportunity was thus afforded for requesting the patron's interest at the Trinity-house. Poor Mr. Milford was, however, too dusty, too much out of breath, too anxious about his runaway pony, to give a very clear account of his wishes and his claims; and the matter ended with his handing his card to the patron, and receiving permission to call on him in Newcastle.

Three men now appeared with the recovered pony, holding its head as carefully as if it was likely to start off without the rest of the body. Four women held open their doors, with an invitation to the gentleman to walk in, in order to being dusted and brushed; and a score of children gathered round to point out a torn coat-flap, a burst elbow, and a bent hat. Somewhat annoyed and ashamed, the gentleman turned into the house of the patient he came to visit, where Mr. Severn was still standing, looking upon the bustle before the door.

“Sit down, sir, pray do; and don't think of me yet,” said the patient, looking compassionately on the panting Mr. Milford. “My wife will get you a glass of gin, sir, to cheer your spirits.”

“And if,” said the wife, “you would take a word of advice, sir, you would turn your left-leg stocking, to prevent any more harm coming of the affair.”

Mr. Milford gravely accepted both the gin and the advice, It was a great object with him to make himself popular with, the people, even when the curate was by. He protested that he did not regard the nnsadventure, as it gave him the opportunity of paying his respects to the bridegroom, whom he honoured for his public spirit about the Deep Cut.

“When he was a lad at school,—and none of the brightest, sir,—how little anybody thought what a great man he would be in the church! It was his father's being ruined that destined him to the church. Nobody would have thought of it else.”

“Indeed! I should have supposed the long and expensive education necessary to a learned profession would have been the last a ruined man would have thought of for his son.”

“if he had had to pay the expense himself, certainly, sir. But so much is provided already for a church education, that, if a gentleman has interest, it is one of the cheapest ways that he can dispose of his sons, they say. But for this, they would never have thought of making Master Miles a clergyman, to judge by what I used to see of him as a boy. The big boys used to plague him, as he plagued the little ones; and the master and he plagued each other equally. If Miss Vivian had seen what I saw once, she would hardly have married him, altered as he is. The boys had buried him up to his chin in the middle of the play-ground, and when he screeched and roared, they let him have one arm out to beat the ground with. the did not then look much like a youth, thinking of giving himself up to holy things.”

“Nor many another school-boy, who has yet turned out a good clergyman,” observed Mr. Severn gravely. “I have often thought that much harm is done by expecting ministers of the gospel to be different from others when they are men; but I never before heard that they must be a separate race as boys.”

“Nor I, sir. I only mean that one would not expect a stupid boy, with a bad temper, to choose the church, if left to himself; and its being all settled just when his father fell into difficulties makes one doubt the more whether it was pure choice.”

“Certainly,” observed the surgeon, “there are helps to a clerical education which we, in other learned professions, should be very glad of;—a great many pensions, and exhibitions, and bursaries, and such things, which we poor surgeons never hear of.”

“These are all evidently designed,” Mr. Severn observed, “to provide for religion being abundantly administered in the land. It is piety which founded all these helps to a clerical education.”

“No doubt, sir; but that does not lessen the temptation to enter a profession where so much is ready to one's hand. It is plain to me, sir, that many are drawn into this department who would not otherwise think of it; and nothing will persuade me that they do not, so far, stand in the way of those whose hearts incline them to make the gospel their portion. I do not scruple saying this to you, Mr. Severn, because you are one of those who have not profited, but lost, by the plan. You will hardly deny, sir, that after all your toil and expense at college, one that cares less about his business than you has stepped into the living which you might have had if there had been no other rule of judging than fitness for the work.”

Mr. Severn could not allow this kind of remark, even from an old friend of his family. How was the broken arm? When did Mr. Mil-ford suppose the patient might be allowed to go to his work again?

“I beg your pardon, I am sure, sir,” observed the old friend of the family;” but I meant no offence to you or to Mr. Otley. All I was thinking of was, that in the church, as everywhere else, the best rule for having everything done well is ‘a fair stage and no favour;’ and, indeed, I know no case where favour is likely to do so much harm and so little good: for those that have their profession most at heart are just those who are most likely to struggle on, gleaning only what the favoured ones have left them, and giving up half the fruits of their labour to those who would not have thought of coveting them, if the piety of which you were speaking had not offered them a bribe.”

“I am afraid you think the gospel in a bad way in this country,” observed Mr. Severn.

“I am afraid of something worse,” interposed the surgeon: “I am afraid you are a dissenter, my good man.”

“By no means, sir. I am such a friend to the church, that it vexes me to see spurious labourers bribed into her, and true labourers shut out, or kept under. I believe that there is so much need of the gospel, that the need will always be naturally made known and supplied; and that it is only sported with when it is made a pretence for getting people on in the world who are much more fit to get on in inferior ways. I do not much admire the piety of those who call in strangers to take shepherds' hire, and doom the true pastor to be only a shepherd's dog.”

“A dog!” cried the surgeon, excessively scandalized. “My good man, consider what you are saying: it actually amounts to calling Mr. Severn a dog.”

“There are two ways of calling a man a dog,” observed. Mr. Severn, smiling: “the one in the sense of fidelity, and the other of brutishness. It is the compliment, and not the offence, that our friend means.”

“And there is a third sense,” pursued the old friend of the family. “The dog is fed from the leavings in his master's wallet, and who will say that the curates have any thing better for their care of the fold? Has not the law again and again ordered that the curate should be made at least equal in condition with the common mechanic? and has the law ever availed?—And why has it not? Not because the higher elergy are by

nature a hard-hearted set of men; not because the people disregard the interests of the keepers of the fold; but because theirs is one of the cases which no law can reach. We should see the folly at once of the law ordering that every pitman should have good wages, if there were twice as many pitmen as there is a natural call for; but we wonder at the plight of our poor clergy while we tempt idle and foolish men into the profession, to engross the hire of those who take 20l. a year because they must starve if they waited for 100/.; though 100l. would be a grievously scanty recompense for the toil and expense of an education like theirs."

"It would be all right if there were no dissenters," observed the surgeon, who had now satisfied himself respecting the sit of his coat flap, which had been mended by the silent and thrifty hostess. "These dissenters are shocking people. They ought to be put down,—interfering with the church as they do,"

"Friend Christopher, over the water there, would tell you that the church interferes with the dissenters, seeing that they have two churches to support, while we have only one."

"But only conceive how they interfere with the religious administration of the country! Do you mean to say that if all their dissenting clergy were swept off, there would, not be more room for our clergy?"

"As there is no reason to fear any such desolating plague as that must be which would sweep off so great a body of men," observed the clergyman, "our endeavour should be to bring our operations into harmony with theirs, that———"

"Harmony with dissenters! And this from a clergyman!" cried Mr. Milford.

"Why opposition?" asked Mr. Severn. "To say nothing of the folly of opposition to a body which outnumbers ourselves, the times are past for men supposing that the interests of religion can be served by strife, or opinions changed by opposition. Since nobody thinks of getting the dissenters back into the church by fighting, it only remains for all professing Christians so to co-operate as that they may not interfere with each other, to the scandal of their common faith"

"If every church supported its own clergy, Mr. Milford, and if no one church held out inducements to double the number of clergy wanted——"

"But we hear perpetually that there are too few of the established clergy for the number of souls to be taken care of."

"See it there would be, if every clergyman bv interest were transformed into a clergyman by choice. All I ask is, that there should be no interference in the matter,—no coming between the religious wants of the people and the mimstering to those wants;—whether that interference be on the part of government, or of a corporation, or of pious people who unconseiously curse the church as often as they offer a premium upon false pretension and interested service."

“Come, come, my good patient, let me examine your aim, now I have recovered my breath a little. It will be a kindness to get you back to your wink in the pit, if this is the manner you talk when out of it. We shall have the rector coming to call you to account tor flat blasphemy.”

“Is it blasphemy to complain that Christ's church is not tended as Christ would have it? Is it blasphemy to point out how it is that he has not due honour? Is it——”

“No, no,” said Mr. Severn. “Mr. Milford knows, as few out of his profession can know, where dwells blasphemy, and where piety: in how few places the one; under how many roofs the other. He sees men under the severest trial,—that of varied suffering; and if the natural language of complaint sometimes meets his ear, he will tell you how much oftener looks of patience and words of resignation are to be found in the sick chamber. He knows that if you sometimes say what he may think unwise, you have not, in your suffering, given vent to that which is irreligious.”

Mr. Milford was ready to testify to his patient's Christian bearing under his late trial. When he spoke of blasphemy, it was only in the sense in which he often heard it used about those who speak against the church.

“One would think,” said Mr. Severn, “that if any were jealous for the church, it, should be myself, to whom the church is my all in every sense. Yet I deciare that what we are wont to call blasphemy is much seldomer any irreverence to God than discontent with man's doings. As soon as any of man's established ways of honouring God are found to be faulty, the cry of blasphemy is raised against the fault-finder, though the glory of God may be his aim as well as his plea. It was once blasphemy to blame the Pope. it is now blasphemy to hint that poor curates might be better used. This sort of blasphemy may now, however, be found in every other house within these realms; while the real blasphemy is rare, very rare. Milford, how many blasphemers have you met with among your patients? I, for my part, never saw one,—out of the gin-shop. Within it, two legged creatures are no longer men, however they may still use their tongues to bless or curse at haphazard.”

Mr. Milford tried to recollect. He could remember only two instances;—one of a man in the extremity of pain, suddenly blinded by a horrible accident in the pit. This was no case, as sanity was lost for the time: but it made the beholder's blood run cold so that no other such instance could ever occur without his remembering it, he was sure. The other was also a case of agony,—of the agony of disappointed hope. A very poor man, with a sick wife, had been promised work, and the promise was broken. He reviled heaven and earth when he saw his wife sinking from want. But at the first moment of her revival he repented, and the last of his sorrows to be got over, was remorse for his impiety.

“You would find it less easy to reckon the cases of piety you meet with, in and out of the pale of the church.”

“There are so many degrees of piety, one hardly likes to say that any body is wholly without. It is my lot to be much with sufferers; and while there are some aged folks,

and strong men laid low, who give themselves much to psalms and prayers, it is rare to meet with parents who do not tell their children that it is God's hand which is upon them for good, or with children who do not more or less strive to lie still under their sickness, ‘like a dumb lamb before the shearer,’ as their parents say.—There is one such, sir, one of those patient little ones,—as you can testify, for I know you have held him in your arms for many a half hour.”

“What! little Tim? I have often wondered, hat is passing in that poor child's mind, when he has lain breathing his feverish breath on my bosom. Other children, while thus lying still from feebleness, turn their eyes from the clock to the kitten, and from the flickering fire to follow their mothers' or sisters' doings about the house. This child's eyes roll in vain, but not the less patiently does he watch his pain away. I often wonder what is working in his little mind.”

“The thought of my pony will work in his mind the next time he is ili, I fancy,” observed Milford. “Do but see how he pats him, and feels out the mane, while his mother lifts him up?”

The hostess remarked that the best smiles seen on Mrs. Eldred's face of late had been won from her by this little lad.

Mr. Milford gave Mr. Severn leave to indulge the child with a ride backwards and forwards, while he finished his business with his patient. Mr. Eldred could not be persuaded to make herself quite easy about the pony's quietness, and go back to her work. She lingered, and turned, and watched, as the animal sauntered to and fro, with a man at the bead, a dozen boys at the heels, Mr. Severn holding on little Tim, and Tim himself now quietly laughing, now encouraging his steed as he heard others do, and for ever turning his head from side to side, as if gathering by that motion all the floating sounds which could tell him what was passing.

A sound soon came rushing instead of floating through the air, so vehement as to make the sell restless pony rear bolt upright, jerking the child into Mr. Severn's arms, and calling upon the man at the head for all his energies. The cry, loud as it was, came from some distance,—from the spout or staithe where a waggon was at the moment being emptied into a keel. A crowd soon collected on the spot and it became certain that the shouts were of a joyous character There was talk of “the gang,” “the tender,” “the pressed men”; but the tone was one of triumph, and cries of “Welcome!” were intermingled.—Mrs. Eldred heard part, and believed every thing,—every thing that in another moment would have been absurd,—that the king had had mercy upon her,—(as if, alas! he knew her heart-sorrow;) that peace was made on purpose to restore a father to her children; that Eldred had bid successful defiance to the gang, and was upheld by the whole people; that the world had been, somehow or other, turned upside down for her sake. She pushed her way, with an exulting countenance, among the crowd. She met Ned Etliott, the lame pitman, and passed him by; and she passed by several other returned captives:—Croley, with the weak right arm, and Pullen, the sickly steersman, and Gilbert, the half idiot, who was allowed to lounge about the works. All these she pushed past, and, from the extreme end of the little pier, looked down into the boat which had landed them. There was no one else. Eldred

was neither a cripple, nor sickly, nor foolish; he was of the first order of labourers, and therefore snatched from his voluntary occupation, and made a slave. Most who had leisure to observe their heart-stricken neighbour gazed in silence; but the half idiot snapped his fingers, and blurted out that her husband was far down towards the south by this time, but he sent his love, and——

With a long moan,—the cry which conveys a refusal to endure, the poor woman pushed her informant from her with a force which startled him. She wrenched hands, shoulder, apron, from all who would have held her to comfort her, and cast herself against one of the waggons.— not to wrestle with her sorrow, but to let herself be overcome by it. Mr. Severn and one or two others kept themselves in readiness to aid her when it should not be an insult to speak to her. Her passion was moving,—but far less so than that of another sufferer who silently walked away with face unhidden, and steady step,—unable to join in the feelings of those about her, but not expecting them to regard hers. She quickened her pace, but showed no sign of anger when laughter overtook her,—noisy mirth which her heart loathed.

“A fine bargain his Majesty had of your Eighteen pounds a piece you cost him. I Wish him joy of you.”

“They might have let us have some of it, though.”

“Never mind that, now you are back. Come, lads, wish the king joy of catching cripples at eighteen pounds a piece, just to be let go again!”

“I wish the gang may be within hearing. Give them a shout, lads! Now for it!”

“Whisht! whisht! O whisht! I cannot bear it!” shrieked the miserable wife, “O, you barbarous———you mocking wretches———O, whisht, I tell ye!”

Shrill as her voice was, it was not heeded by many, who were all too much used to its shrillness. Her fellow sufferer regarded it, and turned back to beckon her away.

“Leave them alone! They don't heed. Why should they?

“Heed! Nobody heeds me. Nobody ever cared for me but one, and he is snatched from me. Nobody heeds me.——”

Something fumbling with her apron caught her attention at this moment. Little Tim clung to her knees, trembling, and his face convulsed, as she had seen it before, when her voice took a certain tone, of which she was not otherwise conscious. She parted his hair on his forehead, lifted the child, and put his passive arms around her neck, and went home as mute as he.

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Chapter III.

GROWN CHILDREN's HOLIDAY.

Though it was not true that nobody heeded Mrs. Eldred and her interests, her querulous complaint to that effect was in some degree excused by the substantial injuries she underwent, through interference with, and mismanagement of, the industry of all who were most dear to her. Nothing was further from the thoughts of society than injuring this poor woman and the thousands of others who suffered with her; yet it is certain that if an account had been drawn between her and the administrators of public affairs, her charge against them would have been a very heavy one.

Her husband was carried off by force to pursue a calling which he dreaded and detested, instead of one which was his choice, and in which he had been prospering in the bosom of his family. Instead of standing at his oar while passing up and down the placid Tyne, he was compelled to face the belching cannon, and encounter toils and wounds, or death, on the tossing sea. Instead of going forth to his chosen labour with a jest, and returning with a whistle, he was driven reluctantly to his enforced duty, where he brooded over his wrongs till his countenance grew unaccustomed to a smile. Instead of catching up the chorus of the loyal songs he was wont to hear among the shipping at Shields, he now preserved a gloomy silence as often as King George was mentioned, seemed to have lost much of his scorn of the French, and turned a quick ear to any word that was dropped about America.

Adam felt himself interfered with, too. If he fulfilled the apprenticeship made by law the necessary condition of advantages which should be the right of every industrious man, if of any, he must not only be denied the power of working for himself for three years after he had become as capable of working as he could ever become, but the very advantages to be obtained by the sacrifice must be forfeited if he carried his labour to any market but one, where it might or might not be wanted. If he did not fulfil his apprenticeship, he had no chance in the same town with those who did. and must go somewhere else to work out the rights of citizenship by like arbitrary means. His privileges were also as precarious as they were arbitranly gained. If he lost a limb,—and all the limbs are needed in rope-making, —he could not turn to another trade without forfeiting his rights. It was believed that he could not even take his place at the wheel, instead of walking along the line; for, as it had been decided that turning a grindstone was not cutlery work, it might be proved that turning a wheel was not rope-making. There was no knowing what he might give his hand to, however resembling his regular employment; since the law told saddlers that the girths were no part of a saddle; that cutting the hoofs of a horse was the business of neither the farrier nor the smith; and that though a wheelwright may make a coach, a coachmaker may not make a wheel. What he did know was, that, however frequently and skilfully the law of apprenticeship might be evaded, he could not, under that law, obtain a settlement, be a master, take apprentices, or exercise his calling in his native place,

without having served an apprenticeship of seven years. Many and many a time he wished that rope-making had been a business unknown to Queen Elizabeth; or that he had not been born in a market-town; or that the inventors of trade-corporations had been carried out of the world before completing their invention; or that he had been early transplanted to Manchester, or Birmingham, or some other of the happy places he had heard of, where the trammels by which he was bound are never spoken of but as a matter of marvel. He just contrived to have patience to finish his term of apprenticeship, that he might possess himself of the rights it would secure. His temper and character had suffered much under the pretended control and actual license of the latter part of his term; and fluctuations of health or trade might rob him of his privileges any day; but he was wise enough, by Effie's help, to take them while they could be had. While doing so, he could have treated any inquirer with a good deal of rough eloquence about the policy and the duty of leaving free scope to all labour to find its field of exercise and its reward.

Cuddie had his list of grievances, too—some actual, and others prospective, —all arising from his being meddled with by powers whose duty it was to take care that he was let alone in his industry. Cuddie was just seventeen; and, young as he was, he was liable to be taken from a peaceful to follow a warlike occupation on the seas. In the present day, he would have been safe till twenty-one: then, he was the lawful prey of any pressgang he might happen to encounter. When he should become capable of earning wages, there were many impediments to his working freely and being freely paid. There is actually an Act of Parliament to enforce all colliers in the Tyne being loaded in the order in which they arrive,—as if the coal-owners were not fit to judge for themselves of the state of their trade, and to proportion the number of ships employed to the demand for coal. Thus, if there were too many ships occupied, instead of some being laid by till they were wanted,—all being favoured by law with a certain portion of employment,—it must often happen that the depression falls upon the whole trade. Cuddie would thus be exposed to wait for his turn, however many colliers might be in the river, while his master was losing by the detention in port. No such regulation is found necessary in the Wear. The masters there are exempted from the irritation of being trammelled under the pretence of protection. Then, again, Cuddie must not presume to throw an ounce of coal from his ship into the lighter in the Thames. This office is the privilege of the coal-whippers or heavers, to whom the good people of London are obliged to pay 90,000*l* a-year for a service which, in the outports, is performed for nothing. Everywhere but in the Thames the crews of colliers discharge the cargo; but within the dominion of the corporation of London they are not at liberty to undertake the work, even though they would do for *2d*. what a privileged coal-heaver asks Is. *7d*. for doing. Cuddle must not only see the coal-trade discouraged by the enormous unnecessary charges laid upon the article by the Corporation of London, but he must be prevented selling his labour in discharging the cargo, to those who would be eager to purchase it, if they were allowed by those who have naturally no business to interfere in the bargain.

The evil of such meddling extended also to another member of the family—Effie, in her dwelling by the river side. Out of the interdiction to sell coal by weight came manœuvring and bargaining as to the mode in which coal should be measured. As it was found that large coal measured one-third more when broken to a certain extent,

and nearly double when broken small, it became the interest of the shippers to buy coal large, and break it down before delivering it to the retail dealers in London, who, in their turn, broke it down further, to the injury of the consumer. Out of this management came the arrangement of screening the coal at the pit mouth; and out of this arrangement came the accumulation of small coal, which, instead of spreading comfort through a thousand dwellings, spread smoke and ashes over the neighbouring fields, injuring the harvests, and ruining some of Walter's plants and vegetables. The owners had no choice but of choking up their own works, or subjecting themselves to the penalties of a nuisance, incurred by the very act of wastefully destroying their own property. Thankful would they have been for the services of some such strong-backed demon as the ancient stories tell of, who would have cleared off at night the refuse of the labours of the day, transporting it three or four hundred miles to those to whom this refuse would have been wealth. Happily, this long-protracted absurdity has been abolished. It has at last been agreed no longer to sacrifice the interests of the original producers and the consumers of coal to that of the carriers and middle dealers, and coals may be sold by weight. But, for long after Effie married, her husband had sad tales to tell at his dinner-hour,—sad sights to show in the summer evenings of the devastation which the neighbouring burnings had caused in his garden. Compensation, scanty, and capricious, was given; but it was asked with trouble and pain, and bestowed unwillingly. It seems strange that while ruling powers are laudably anxious about the execution of public works,—to make their roads level and their pavements smooth, — they should so industriously perplex the paths of industry, and roughen the media of commerce. It is a bad thing to lame horses, and break carriages, and weary human feet; but it is infinitely worse to discourage industry, and to compel men to jostle and injure each other where there is naturally room for each to greet his neighbour kindly, and pass on.

Uncle Christopher looked one evening with concern, on a hedge which as much deserved the name of verdure as the shrubs in certain small squares in London, the morning after a fire in the neighbourhood. He was on the point of setting out on his long talked-of voyage to London, on the business of his patent; and he wished to take a parting view of the premises he had not quitted for twelve hours together, since, the day he was made a ferryman many years before. Strongly as he was persuaded that Walter and his young wife were, as yet, in danger of a much fiercer fire than any of the vast number which could be seen round the horizon on a dark night, he preserved such an affection for the results of their toil that he was full of wrath that mortal hands should kindle a fire against them. As he here shook his head mournfully over a row of shrivelled anemones, and there groaned at seeing the young asparagus waving grey instead of green, any brother leaders would have supposed that they were children of grace to whom all this sympathy was given. At the bottom of his grief lay the thought that, if this nuisance continued, Walter would be compelled to carry his gardening skill elsewhere. He could not carry the ferry with him, and then would come a sore struggle to choose between his son and his occupation. Walter would have been highly flattered if he could have looked into his father's heart, and seen how equally the struggle was maintained.

“I see the boat coming for you, with Cuddie in it—below the bend of the river there,” said Effie; “but you will have time to look at my young apricot, and tell me whether you think there is any chance of its bearing.”

She received a very broad hint about setting her heart upon favourites, but was comforted notwithstanding, by an encouraging opinion about the apricot: Walter was further told that he might just mention the asparagus and the apricot together in the first letter he should write after hearing of his father's arrival.

“Why, father ! do you really mean to write to us ?” cried Walter, in joyful surprise.

“No, no,” said Effie. “He means that we shall hear from Cuddie of his getting to London.”

“I mean that if, by grace, I get safe through the dangers of the deep waters, i shall give you the opportunity of being thankful for me.”

“And when will it be, father ?”

“The times are not in our own hands. Effie, you say the boat is to he chiefly your charge.”

“Yes, father, you know I have practised ferrying a good deal lately, on purpose.”

“She is more sure of her oar than I,” observed Walter.

“What of that ? Why do you puff her up ? Except One guide the boar, as well as build the house, we labour in vain, with our weak arm of flesh.”

“Indeed I am not puffed up about ferrying,” said Effie. “I know I cannot do it half so well as you. But I hope to improve before you come back.”

“May my office be given you in full! My outward oar is only a sign, child.—a type of the corresponding office which I hold, of setting souls safe over the abyss where they are like to be drowned, without some servant of mercy, like myself, to lodge them on plain ground. Think of this, my dear, as you pass to and fro.”

Effie could honestly promise not to forget this new interpretation of her office. Cuddie's skiff was now very near, and he was seen waving his hat as a signal; and immediately his uncle Christopher began assuring his son and daughter of the strength in which he went forth, and the faith with which he looked for protection by the way, and a safe return. There was a tremor of the hands, however, and a quaver of the voice which belied what he said, and gave an idea that he felt much as other quiet, elderly people feel on going forth, after years of repose in their own habits, to he startled by new objects and jostled amidst a busy new world.

“I believe he would give both of us for Cuddie at this moment,” observed Effie to her husband, as they stood in the ferry-boat from which the skiff bad just pushed off, with the would-be patentee sitting bolt upright, nursing the model of his invention, and

looking the picture of resignation. “I do not know what he thinks of Cuddie's spiritual state; but it is my belief that he would part with us both rather than give up Cuddie just now. However little he thinks of young people, he looks up to Cuddle as his main dependence in the ship and on landing. I am sure he does; and I doubt whether he would have gone at all without Cuddie at his elbow.”

Walter thought so too, but wondered what was to be done about the matter of the patent, if his father should still be nervous. Cuddie could not help him there. It was to be hoped he would get warmed for the sport, when he should be once more mounted on his hobby.

“Come, let us go up into the garden,” said Effie. “We can watch them longer there.”

Much longer,—past the bend of the river, and then once more at the next curve, till nothing was to be distinguished amidst the grove of masts.

“Gone ! gone !” cried Effie, putting her arm within her husband's, and tripping up the slope with a step much more like a dance than any she had ever indulged within the notice of uncle Christopher,—as she had not yet cured herself of calling him. “Now, Walter, tell me. If we have to remove, where shall we go?”

“You seem to like the idea or flitting, Effie.”

“Fond as I was of this place before I came to live in it, you are thinking. Why, as for the place, I love it as much as ever, as we see it now, —with these laburnums hanging in this corner, and the acacia growing up to be a veil and not a blind. When I saw the moon through it last night, I thought it would be a sin ever to leave the place. But——”

“But there is something about it still that prevents your being happy here.”

“O no, no. Nothing to prevent my being happy. I am very happy,—happier than you will ever be, I am afraid, Walter; for, try as you will, you always find something to be fretted and anxious about, though you take more and more pains to hide it, even from me.”

“I am sure,” said Walter, very seriously, “I grow less and less anxious and distrustful;—ever since——not exactly ever since I knew you, for we knew each other before we could talk; but ever since I knew——”

“Very well; I understand what you mean; and you began describing that moment to me one day, just as if I knew nothing of it myself. O, Walter, do you really think there are any people that have passed through life without knowing what that moment was,—that stir in one's heart on being first sure that one is beloved? It is most like the soul getting free of the body, and rushing into Paradise, I should think. Do you suppose anybody ever lived a life without having felt this?”

Walter feared it might be so; but if so, a man missed the moment that made a man of one that was but an unthinking creature before; and a woman, the moment best worth

living for, and that which joined her past life to the nothing that went before, and her future life to the heaven of realities that was to come after. But one thing he grieved to be sure of;—that this moment was not received as the token from God which it was designed to be; but in far, far too many cases, put away and denied. If this was done as a duty, and altogether as an act of the conscience, it only remained to be sorry that such a putting away was a duty,—but he was more than sorry, —he was ashamed and angry to witness the expectation in so many that they could bring back this moment whenever they pleased;—that they could call upon God to breathe into their hearts as often as they could bring their worldly interests to agree with His tokens.

“It seems to me,” said Effie, “that though God has kindly given this token of blessedness to all,—or to so many that we may nearly say all,—without distinction of great or humble, rich or poor,—the great and the lowly use themselves to the opposite faults. The great do not seem to think it the most natural thing to marry where they first love; and the lowly are too ready to love.”

“That is because the great have too many things to look to, besides love; and the lowly have too few. The rich have their lighted pa-laces to bask in, as well as the sunshine; and they must have a host of admirers, as well as one bosom friend. And when the poor man finds that there is one bliss that no power oil earth can shut him out from, and one that drives out all evils for the time,—one that makes him forget the noonday heats, and one that tempers the keen north wind, and makes him walk at his full height when his superiors lounge past him in the streets,—no wonder he is eager to meet it, and jogs the time-glass to make it come at the soonest. If such a man is imprudent, I had rather be he than one that first let it slip through cowardice, and would then bring it back to gratify hm low ambition.”

“And for those who let it go by for conscience' sake, and do not ask for it again?”

“Why, they are happy in having learned what the one feeling is that life is worth having for. They may make themselves happy upon it for ever, after that. O, Effie, you would not believe,—nothing could make you believe what I was the day before and the day after I saw that sudden change of look of yours that told me all. The one day, I was shrinking inwardly before everything I had to do, and every word of my father's, and everybody I met; and was always trying to make myself happy in myself alone, with the sense of God being near me and with me. That other day, I looked down upon everybody, in a kindly way;—and yet I looked up to them too, for I felt a respect that I never knew before for all that were suffering and enjoying; and I felt as if I could have brought the whole world nearer to God, if they would have listened to me. I shall never forget the best moment of all,—when my mind had suddenly ceased being in a great tumult, which had as much pain as pleasure in it. I had left my father getting up from breakfast, and I was just crossing yonder to take up my rake, when I said distinctly to myself, ‘she loves me,’ and heaven came down round about me that minute.”

Effie could have listened for aye; but the cry was heard from below—“Ferry !”—and she must go. Her husband “crossed to take up his rake,” and found occasion to remark at the instant that Effie tripped along as like the Effie of *that* day as if no day had

intervened. Only her face showed the difference; and that was as if a new and higher spirit had come down to dwell in her.

On her return, the question recurred,

“If we have to leave this place, where shall we go?”

“Somewhere near the Deep Cut, it is my opinion. There will be much custom of all sorts there, when it is opened as a place of trade.”

“But there will be collieries near, and more burnings.”

“Not so as to trouble us, for some time to come. The proportion they have been in the habit of burning here, you know, is about 20 per cent. It will be some time before this becomes of much consequence in a new situation; and we will choose our place carefully. Besides, I cannot but think that, before long, everybody will see the folly of making such waste, for the sake of selling coal by measure instead of weight. If so, there will soon be an end of the burning.”

“And you think garden stuff will be much in request in the Deep Cut.”

“No doubt. There will be such a settling of people about that beautiful sluice, that there will be room for more gardeners than one.”

“And for ropemakers, among other craftsmen. I think Adam had better go, and make new ropes for the new ships that will carry away the new coals.”

“Ah ! if he was settled down with us in a place where he might work prosperously for him-self, he might prove steadier than his mother expects he will.”

“Beside us,—not with us,” said Effie. “You would not think of having any one to make a third again, would you? How comfortable every thing is this evening, while we are alone!— But how do you think your father will get on by himself?”

Walter had never entertained the idea of being of much consequence to his father, from the day of his childhood, when he was surprised at being searched for, at night-fall, among the haycocks, to this very afternoon, when he was full as much astonished to learn that his father meant to write to him. He agreed, however, that his parent ought not to be left, unless the destruction of the garden should make the removal a matter of necessity.

“If we must go, it will be a happy chance that such an opening offers in the neighbourhood.—What could the rector mean by throwing difficulties in the way?”

“He knows best; but I suppose he has some such fears as I have heard certain gentry had when turnpike roads were first introduced into this country. There were petitions in those days from the proprietors of land near London, that turnpike roads might be forbidden in distant counties, for fear there should be too much competition in articles of agricultural produce.”

“They have managed to have their own way, and regard their own interests pretty well since, for all the competition and the roads,” said Effie. “They seem to have been of the same mind with Queen Elizabeth, when she sent out orders to put a stop to the increase of London. They all seem to have fancied that whenever some people gain, others must certainly lose.”

“If this is not our reetor's notion, I do not know what is. But the fact is, whatever this company may gain by opening the Cut is neither more nor less than what is given them in return for the benefit they bestow upon the payers. As for the coal owners on the Tyne, they are as safe as they ought to be. If a demand rises up for all the coal both parties send out, every body will prosper. If not, those who can send out coal cheapest will have the most custom, as is perfectly fair.”

“And there is not the same reason for jealousy as there might be if one great rich man had opened this Cut at his own expense, to serve himself alone, and get all the coal trade to himself. I do not say that he would not have the right; but it would account for a jealousy which would be ridiculous when shown towards a company.”

“No man in our borders is rich enough to do such a work as this. It is the proper undertaking for a company; and I am heartily glad parliament has given them all the leave they asked for. In my opinion, it is the business of a company to do that which individuals have not wealth or power to achieve; and it is the duty of government to smile on undertakings which favour the industry of the people, as much as to frown on the selfish who would get its grace to enrich themselves at the expense of others. In this view, I think parliament as just and kind in countenancing the Deep Cut, as Queen Elizabeth was unjust and unkind in giving patents to her courtiers for the sale of soap and starch, and other things that everybody wanted.”

“Courtiers selling soap and starch! What sort of courtiers could they be?”

“Why, not exactly like the gentlemen who are about the king in these days. But those courtiers did not sell their soap and starch with their own hands. They sold their patents to companies of merchants, who, of course, laid a pretty profit on the articles, as the patentees had done before; and so the people were cheated.”

“Cheated indeed ! we are better off than they, to be sure.”

“Yes, indeed; it cheers one's heart to think how free our industry is left in comparison with what it was, and how the fashion is passing away of enriching the few at the expense of the many. Great things have been done for the people, indeed; and it almost makes one ashamed to complain of the restraints on their industry that yet remain, when one thinks of what they once were.”

“Nay, I do not see why that should be, as long as there is any mischief which may still be done away. If it is really a hardship that handicraftsmen in particular places, and of particular kinds, should be tied down to a seven years' apprenticeship, and that masters, in certain crafts, should be allowed to take only a certain number of apprentices, and that the Corporation of London should make the London people pay

shamefully dear for their coals, and hurt our fields and gardens, and that men should be taken from a prosperous occupation to follow one that they hate, like my poor father,—it is our duty to complain till the government sets these things right, however grateful we may be for what they have already done, and however we may be better off than our fathers. It would be a sad thing indeed to have to pay any price for our starch that our Duke of Northumberland might choose to sell it for."

"And the practice spread to so many articles! When the list of them was read over, (I have heard my father say,) in Queen Elizabeth's parliament house, some gentleman called out to ask if bread was not among them: and when everybody stared, he said that unless the matter was looked into, there would be a monopoly of bread before the next parliament."

"And was there? I suppose nobody dared."

"Nobody: but wondrous things were dared in the reigns that came after. King Charles, who managed to offend his people in more ways than almost any king I ever heard of, took 10,000*l*. from some soap-merchants for allowing them to manage the snap manufacture all their own way, and put as high a price upon it as they pleased. They gave him further eight pounds for every ton of soap they made, so you may guess how dear it came to the people."

"That was a very different sort of company from the one which has managed the Deep Cut. This last is making coals come cheap to the people. I suppose you think they have a fair right to any profits they may make, however large."

"This particular company, certainly; because they do not offer advantages which people must have, and which cannot be had in any other way. There being so many other coal works, and such outlets as the Tyne and the Wear not far off, will prevent the company making such over-grown profits as the people would be right to grudge: but the case is different in different sorts of undertakings. If a company opens a road, and charges too high a toll, another company may open another road, and cause a competition; but if a company opens waterworks, and possesses all the springs within a certain distance, almost any price may be put upon the supply: and therefore I think government should, while giving privileges, take care that they do not overgrow just bounds. A man cannot change his water-merchant as he can change his baker or brewer; and therefore, if government makes him a customer of the mighty water-merchant, it should take care that he is not overcharged. I have heard my father talk a good deal about these things. He has looked much into them,—not only because he particularly dislikes being overcharged, but because his thoughts of taking out a patent have led him to learn all he could about privileges given by governments to trade and to ingenious undertakings."

"Ah, I was thinking of him when you talked about those patents. I never found out, from your manner, that you thought ill of what he is gone to seek?"

"Nor do I, if it answers its purpose. There is all the difference in the world between a patent to sell what lies before everybody's industry, and a patent to sell what a man

has invented by his own ingenuity, and perfected at his own trouble and expense. If a patent could secure to a man the sale of his own article till tie has reaped the reward society owes him, I should think very highly of a patent: and it is only because it is so difficult to secure this, that I have any doubts about my father's trip to London. But it is a hard thing to manage. A world of difficulties are sure to crowd in whenever legislation is brought to bear directly upon industry. There are so many interests to be considered, and it is so impossible to foresee how and where they interfere, that my wonder is how governments can like to meddle as they used to do. One would think that they would be glad to let industry alone, to find its own channels and nourish its own harvests. Indeed the time does seem to be coming when legislatures will leave off troubling themselves to meddle with those whose interest lies in being let alone."

"Do you think it really signifies very much to so many trading people as there are in this country whether government lets them alone, or meddles here and there?"

"Why, Effie, it signifies altogether,—as much as possible. How many trading families do you fancy might be affected by government interference, in one way or another?"

A few hundred thousand, Effie supposed.

"Do you know that there are not more than 160,000 families in Great Britain deriving any income at all from trade, manufactures, and professions?"

"No more than that? And, to be sure, many of these must be so rich that they can very well bear such interference."

"Not so many," replied her husband, smiling. "Fewer than 4000 have more than 1000*l*. a year; and not more than 40,000 have an income above 150*l*. a year."

"Leaving 120.000 with an income below 150*l*. a year. These last must feel the effect of restraint very much; and I think, if there are no more than you say, that all must feel it more or less."

"And through them many that have nothing to do with trade," observed Walter, looking sorrowfully at a favourite shrub which was already dropping its yellow leaves. "What a mistake it seems, Effie, to be lighting those red and yellow fires within sight of this brimming blue river, and the sloping banks, that look so green in the evening sun! What a cruelty it seems to be sending puffs of smoke over the water to touch and shrivel this hanging laburnum, that you put into the ground!"

Effie well remembered the planting of that laburnum. When she and Walter were children, and used to bring wild strawberries from the wood, and plant the roots at noon, shading them from the hot sun under a suspended pinafore; when Effie used to dig a pond which would hold no water, and Walter a grave in which he used to lie down to see what being buried was like; when they mounted the wheel-barrow to took over the hedge and count how many left legs were jerked backwards as the keelmen pulled the oars in the keels that passed;—in those old days, somebody had given Effie a few lupin seeds, which Walter carefully planted, while Effie stuck in a twig—dead, as she thought,—to mark the spot. This twig burst into leaf, and grew into the tall

laburnum which was now waving its branches against the blue sky; and every time that Effie had looked upon it, a feeling of complacency had come over her, as if she had performed a feat—given life to a tree, or been the occasion of a miracle. There was scarcely a growing thing in Walter's beautiful garden that she would not have devoted to the smoke in preference.

The smoke looked surly and encroaching as it rose and spread itself in the darkening sky, after the sun had gone down. It did not, how ever, deter Effie from going into the midst of it, when it was really too late for Walter to work any more, and he could attend to the ferry while she just ran to tell her mother that uncle Christopher was gone; that Cuddie and he had been watched in safety a good way down the river, and that tidings of their further voyage might be soon expected by letter.

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Chapter IV.

EPISTOLARY GODLINESS.

The letter arrived quite as soon as expected.

"My dear son and daughter,

"By the blessing of Providence we got safe down the river, though the press of vessels near the port is very awful. I strengthened my heart when we crossed the bar, and the port and the shipping seemed to be going back from us, and to leave us in the arms of the Lord on the wide sea,—now growing very chilly. My eyes were mercifully directed to Tynemouth for comfort,— not from the light in the light-house, which however began to wax bright, but from seeing how many goodly red houses have sprung up on the cliff, while the dusky priory stands a ruin;—red houses where there are some who take God's word rightly to heart,—while in the priory (where this blessed work never went on) there is martial music sent forth over God's sea, as sure as ever the moon rises out of it. This music of horns I myself heard, and I saw the bonnets of women, and the uniforms of fighting men, over the para pet of the castle yard. But when the word has rightly spread from the new meeting-house, there will be no place left in Tynemouth for scorners. It pleased Providence to try us much during the rest of the voyage. I found the night very cold, even before I was wallowing in the fearful sickness which was laid upon me. The wind also failed, which was a more merciful appointment than if it had blown a great storm. Nevertheless, when we were pitching about, and making no way, I found the collier but a poor, narrow place, and very dismal from the strewings of coal, insomuch that I turned my face to the wall, and found no comfort; but was strengthened to keep an eye on my invention, which, owing to good packing, received none of the harm which I desired might be averted from this apple of mine eye. I was in deadly fear for it during the adventure in which Cuddie was—"

"Cuddie was—something or other. I can't read the word, Effie," said Walter. "I wish it was written a little plainer."

"And I wish he would say a little more about Cuddie," observed Effie. Her husband went on reading.

"But though hinderances were planted round about us, they did not touch my invention, to destroy it. The time spent in going up the river seemed long, especially from Cuddie not being at hand."

"Why, there again!" exclaimed Effie, "What can he mean? I declare it frightens me, Walter."

"No need, Effie; see how the letter goes on about business matters, and working up the river! Ah! here it is accounted for,—Cuddie's not being with him."

"We went up the river as slowly as if we had been set as a watchman therein; and that because the seamen were tossed in spirit through fear of the press gang, and would not work the vessel; insomuch that none but a very old man and a young apprentice lad would go up with us to the mighty city. The master was obliged to hire protected men, and to pay them three pounds a piece to work us up, which being charged on the articles we carried, caused our cargo to be of great value before it was landed. It is wonderful to the discerning eye to perceive how small things work out large ones;—how, from this single need of protected men, there arises a tax upon coals to the inhabitants of London of much more than a million of money. Nor was this the last hinderance. Some lighters came about us, with willing men ready to empty our cargo upon the wharf. Grace was written in the face of one of these men, and the master knew him for an honest and a skilful youth. Yet it was not permitted to employ him, though he would have performed the work for less than those who came after him. These last were lightermen who had been apprentices, and had wrought for seven years on the river. They charge 2*s*. for the work which others would gladly have done for 8*d*. I never learned before how far better men that have been apprentices are than other men. I hope the citizens of London are duly aware of this truth. as they have to pay so very dearly for it. But these favoured men use their favour in a way which is not seemly—persecuting and driving out those that would also have boats and yield service. I much fear that as some of the elect misuse their grace in divine things, those who are elected into corporate bodies misuse the powers which were given them first, as means of protection against the barons and rich men who used to oppress the trading and working men in a very ungodly manner. These corporations are now too much like those barons of old; for they oblige those who consume to pay for the good of those who are privileged—him who burns coal, for the great profit of the lighterman. It should not be forgotten that another office of corporations was formerly, and is now said to be, to warrant and verify the quality of whatever is sold; but it seems to me that the best warrant is in the interest of him who produces, knowing that there shall be no wings of favour under which he may take refuge; and buyers who are fairly treated will be sure to verify for themselves. Indeed the one thing which these unhallowed bodies seem now to make their business—as they therein find their interest—is to entangle the paths of trade to all others, while they keep a wide and smooth road to themselves. This is plain to me in the particular of measuring the coal, which, in old times, might not be done without the permission of the Lord Mayor, and has always been since permitted as a profitable work to the Corporation of London. A profitable work it is—no less than 8*d*. a chaldron being the charge, out of which only 5*d*. goes to the labouring meters, and the other 3*d*., mounting up to 20,000*l*. a year, goes into the treasury of the extortioners. Verily the hire which is thus kept back cries out, not in favour of the meters—for they are well paid—but of the artizans who owe no such gratitude, in respect of measuring coal, as that they should pay 20,000*l*. for it. Why, also, should they pay in their use of coal for the improvements which the Corporation chooses to make in the city? If money was thus raised to build up what the awful judgment of fire had laid low, in the time of the profligate Charles, why should it still be raised, without the choice of the citizens, who must pay the orphan's tax of 10*d*. a chaldron till 1838, to improve the approaches to London Bridge? The citizens, I fancy, would much more admire the improvement of having coals cheap, and would the more willingly pay out of what they could better spare for the improvement of their streets and bridges. It was marvellous indeed to see

so common an article as coal growing into importance as it ascended the river, and after it was landed, so that it had gained in its passage from just below London Bridge to the cellars of the houses, as much value again as it cost altogether in the North. It was marvellous indeed to hear of all the dues charged by the Corporation, considering that they have no more natural business with the citizens' coals than you or I;—the metage, the orphans' dues, the market dues, the Lord Mayor's groundage, the grand metage, the coal-whippers;—no wonder we see in London what strangers from the north are surprised to see,—women stooping in their path to pick up morsels of coal, and trades people measuring out a scanty measure of fuel to their servants, while hundreds of chaldrons are being wasted within sight of your garden.——Of my invention, it is not good to speak at this time and in this manner. Much care has been laid upon me respecting it; it being told me by some who know, that not one patent in a thousand is good for any thing, owing to the difficulty of making it out, and the easiness of invading it. As there is also no security whatever between the time of asking for my patent and its being sealed, you will discern the reason of my not now enlarging on the particulars which you are doubtless craving to know. But to put a bridle on the cravings is a great matter, and I commend it to you in this affair, trusting to be soon brought face to face; though when, it is not for blind creatures like us to determine."

"How wonderfully he has enlarged about some matters!" cried Effie, "and nothing yet about Cuddie, or whether they have learned any thing about my poor father."

The letter went on,

"Having thus told you some few things about myself—(though much remains respecting the manner of my entrance upon this great city, and the blessing which has been given upon my Bible-readings in this house,)—I pass on to matters of a different concernment,—though but little time remains before I must close up my large packet, written in the evenings for the solace of my mind. Having, I say, told you of myself,— except that the left wrist, which was weak, has become somewhat stronger,—I proceed to mention that I have not met Effie's father any where in the streets, as she desired I would mention, if such a thing should happen. It is my purpose to inquire for him whenever I shall be able to go down to the river side. But when I hear what things are done by the press-gangs, I have little doubt in my mind that he disappeared in the same way as Cuddie; which circumstance remains to be related."

"Mercy! mercy!" cried Effie, "what *does* he mean about Cuddie?"

Walter ran over very quickly:— "not a sea man to be seen"— "women wringing their hands on the quays"—"mutiny on board a tender"— "a porter and two shopkeepers carried off"— "shameful expense"—"every unwilling man costs several hundred pounds"—"loss by injury of trade"—"dark night,"—"O, here it is! Dear, dear! Cuddie is impressed, sure enough! How shall we tell your mother?"

Effie snatched the letter, and read.

"It was a dark night, so I cannot give a very clear account of what happened,—besides having been for the most part asleep,—which was a great mercy, as I might have been more alarmed than a chosen Christian needs be. Besides, they might have taken me, but that I look older, I believe, in my night cap than in the comeliness of my day attire. By the blessing of God, I escaped; but my trust well nigh failed me when I heard a voice waking me with the cry of 'Uncle Christopher! O, uncle Christopher!' I had very nearly given place to wrath when I heard that cry from over the side of the ship; but on thinking further, it grieved me yet more that Caddie, of whom I began to have hopes of grace, should have leaned, in such an hour, on a broken reed like me. But I feel his loss much, as he was a great help to me; and there is no knowing when he may come back. I have not forgotten his cry, and his fellow apprentice says that never struggle was seen like his, when the gang, having stolen on board, while almost every one was asleep in the calm, laid hold of him by head and heels to carry him away. He cried out his mother's name; but it has since occurred to me that he may meet his father somewhere abroad; though, to be sure, the world is so wide that they may very well miss each other."

"The air is wider," said Effie. in a hoarse voice, "and they may meet there,—both murdered in the same battle." There was a little more about Cuddie.

"It was a very calm night, as I said; and before I went to sleep again, I heard a little splash in the water. It was certainly from the king's ship, and the news spread that it was Cuddie who made the noise,—sliding down the cable, some say to try to get back to us, while others believe that he sought to drown himself. If he were indeed so given over to Satan, it may be well for him that he is in trouble, paying the toils and perils of the body for the sin of the soul. You may tell Effie that I prayed for him before I went to sleep."

Effie was in no condition graciously to acknowledge her father-in-law's benevolence. Pale, cold, and trembling, she sat in the sunshine which streamed upon her from the window, looking like a wretch whom the ague had stricken. Walter had no time now to attend to his father's further consolation about the fact that the coal trade can man a navy on an emergency, and that one coal owner's possessions alone cause above two thousand seamen to be in constant readiness for the king's service. Neither did he read the concluding account of himself, or of his father's notions of him: of his having been in his childhood a bubbling fountain of iniquity, in his youth a spring yielding sweet anti bitter water, and even yet not past being wholly purified. This last hopeful hint was unregarded in the sight of Effie's grief.

It is difficult to imagine now what social life could have been in those old despotic times when the practice of impressment was general, and the king could, by the very law of allegiance, dispose of every man's wealth and labour as he chose. It is difficult to imagine what comfort there could have been in daily life when the field labourer did not know, as he went out at sunrise, whether he would be allowed to return to his little ones at evening; when the artizan was liable to be carried off from his work-shop, while his dinner was cooling on the board, and his wife looking out for him from the door; when the tradesman was apt to be missing, and not heard of till some king's messenger came to ransack his shop of what soever his Majesty might be

graciously pleased to want; and when the baron's lady watched from the terrace her lord going off to the boar-hunt, and the thought darted through her that he might not greet her again till he had hunted Saracens, or chased pirates, over many a strange land and sea. Then, all suffered together, in liability, if not in fact. All suffered in fact,—whether impressed or not; for all suffer when property is rendered insecure, and industry discouraged, and foresight baffled. Nobody now questions this. Nobody denies that it was right to exempt class after class from such compulsory service; and, so long ago as the time of Charles I., it was found necessary to emancipate solders from this tyranny,—though there were not a few to predict that no British king could ever again raise an army,—that England must from that day bid adieu to victory, and royalty to a throne. Yet, a more wonderful thing remains than the fame of Blenheim and Waterloo, and the actual existence of an English monarch—the fact that some are found in the present day to argue for the enforcement of this tyranny on a single class, when all other classes have long been relieved from it; to argue about the navy as their fore fathers argued about the army;—that Britannia will no more rule the waves,—that there will be no more glory in a sailor-king, no more hope for a maritime people, when impressment is done away. Why so? If the service is pleasant and profitable,—as those maintain who see little hardship in impressment,—there is no need of compulsion to make men enter it,—even on the briefest emergency,—to judge by the universal readiness to embrace what is honourable and profitable. If the service be not thus desirable, why it is not? That smugglers and felons should be delivered over to the king's officers, with the admission that five years' service is a prodigious punishment for their crimes; that the wages of the king's service are low, at the same time that the wages of merchant vessels are raised exorbitantly by the practice of impressment; that the king's pressed seamen are sometimes paid once in five, tell, or fifteen years, while in the merchant service the payment is regular; that the enforced service may be perpetual, while all other service has a defined limit,—all thus is surely no necessary part of naval management, while it fully, accounts for the supposed necessity of getting men by force, because they cannot be had in any other way. All this fully accounts for seamen dispersing before a press-gang, like a flock of birds from beneath a hawk; it accounts tor their changing their names, dressing in smock frocks, hiding under beds, and in lofts and closets; but it shames the attempted justification of impressment. When the trial has been made of the usual means of rendering this service as desirable as any other, (and its natural charms are great;) when the attempt has been made to train up, in time of peace, a supply of seamen to carry on a war, there may be ground for argument as to whether impressment be or be not necessary. It is wholly an experimental question, and has as yet been argued only *a priori*. It is too serious a matter to subject to injury men's lives and characters and fortunes, the happiness or existence of their families, and the industry of a considerable portion of society, through adherence to a false mode of argumentation, and to modes of procedure too well suited to a former barbarous age to be congenial with the present. The more willingly and extensively society is freed from ancient restraints on its freedom and industry, the more conspicuously stands out, monstrous in its iniquity, the practice of the impressment of seamen.

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Chapter V.

NOTHING BUT A VOICE.

In process of time, the Deep Cut was finished, and announced to be formally opened on a certain day, when the tide should be favourable for showing it off to the greatest advantage.

It was thought that a damp would be cast over the proceedings by the present unprosperous state of the coal trade, which seemed to render it less probable than it had at first appeared that the undertaking would soon repay its expenses. The war still continued, and with it the practice of impressment; so that colliers could not be manned but at a very high cost. Wages in colliers were now just four times what were given in king's ships. The difficulty mentioned by uncle Christoper of getting colliers worked up the Thames was also greater than ever; and the price of coal rose so much that the demand slackened, week by week. This was an awkward state of things in which to begin a grand new experiment; but the cost of the Deep Cut had been already incurred, and the only thing to be done was to make use of it, as fast as possible. Some persons wondered that Mr. Otley, who loved a joke, did not make use of this season of adversity for ridiculing a scheme whose execution he had been unable to prevent. No light sayings of his upon the matter were going the round of his neighbour hood; and such members of the Company as had the honour of his acquaintance, were surprised that they had not yet been jeered by him about the large attendance they were likely to have at the opening, from the great number of people about the collieries who were out of employment. But Mr. Otley was quite as loyally occupied in another way—in attempting to draw tighter the restraints of the apprenticeship laws, and to extend the infliction to the flourishing towns which had grown into their prosperous maturity exempt from the privilege, or curse. (whichever it might be called.) of a law of apprenticeship. It was quite the fashion, just now, among loyal men, to petition after the manner which the rector had adopted; and an opposite fashion spread, among those who had been tripped up in the 'old paths,' of going down to the origin of things, and mounting up to their consequences. These latter began to discover not only how impracticable was the apprenticeship law of Elizabeth, how nearly it went to subvert the common law, how it could retain even a nominal force only by evasion; but they saw that if parliament should be prevailed on to enforce it afresh, the next step of the loyal might be to revive the old statutes, that he who should sell abroad sheep, rams or lambs, should lose all he had, then part with his left hand, and for a second offence suffer death; or that a like penalty should be made once more to visit an exporter of fullers' earth; or of tobacco-pipe clay, because such clay is like fullers' earth.

While Mr. Otley was trotting about the country, representing the blessings that arise from compelling every merchant ship to have so many apprentices and no more, and the advantage of keeping businesses within bounds by allowing the corporations of towns to regulate the number of apprentices,—that the Sheffield cutler shall take but

one. the Norwich weaver only two, hatters every where at home and in the colonies, only two,—while the rector was thus straining his sight into the regions of times long past, he seemed to have no leisure for observing what was before his eyes. Long rope-walks were extended beside the sluice; the boat-builder's mallet made itself heard from among the rocks; the fisherman's cottage began to show itself on the narrow strip of beach below; and the last finish was being given to the rail-road which led to the sluice. If there had been no practical evasion of corporation laws, this supply of skilled labour would not have been in existence to answer the demand. If all kinds of skilled labour had been subjected to corporation laws, there would have been no liberty to settle in a new field, without the loss of such privileges as would not have been risked on such an uncertainty as the speculation offered at best.

The day of opening was the brightest of April mornings; and it brought spectators from all parts of the country. Long before the Company's train of carriages was looked for, the fruit and gingerbread stalls were resounding with mirth and gossip. Troops of little children, already as black as if coal had been their plaything from their birth, were accosting strangers, to ask for a token to remember the day by.

Business-like-looking men walked straight to the Cut, and seemed to be computing its width and depth,—most of them expressing great admiration of the work. To the lover of beauty there was much to admire, when he had turned his back on the wooden bridge, and the gates, the vehicles of those who came to see these gates swing open, and the stalls which were but a temporary feature of the landscape. The hewn rock, raw and bright coloured as was its upper part, was already more favourably tinted below by its contact with the water. Small shell fish were clustered upon it, and weed rested wherever a ledge or crevice could be found. The water in the inlet showed the purest green, over its deep bottom of white sand, on which a star-fish here and there was distinctly visible, and from which the sea-anemone slowly rose, like a variegated parachute, which astonished the watcher by its tokens of being alive. Now and then a stray fish came in by mistake, not being aware that any sea path led so directly into the regions of art. As such a poor wanderer darted from side to side of the narrow inlet, striking against the rock and bewildering itself, many a child shouted in glee from the parapet, and ran to and fro to watch till the fish had disposed of itself, either out at sea once more, or beneath some friendly shadow.

These new operations must have been very perplexing to the fishy tribes in general, which might happen to pass that way. Not only was there this treacherous Cut to beguile them landwards, when they least dreamed of such a destination, but there was a labyrinth at sea, in the shape of the foundations of the new pier. The young fry had not yet been taught by their wiser parents (if indeed the parents knew any better themselves) to avoid these piles, and the perils that lurked among them: and young fry of a more powerful species were already kneeling on the beams of the pier, and catching, through the interstices which were left between the planks, a goodly prey of infant fish,—the greater part of which were mercifully thrown over from the end of the pier. Flags waved from every con spicuous point of the rocks and the works. A medley of music came from the midst of the throng about the parapet; and all bore the appearance of a new settlement as completely as if a slice of an American shore had been once more annexed to his British Majesty's dominions.

On the parapet sat one of the last persons who might have been expected to join in the festivity—little Tim. His mother had taken him to the ferry-house, to know if any of the family thought of going, and would take her poor boy, who was fond of doing what other people did, if he could not see what they saw. Walter meant to go, and he readily took charge of Tim. Effie did not quite like the tone in which this request was made. There was a despondency in it which alarmed her, especially as she knew that there was, just now, a scarcity of work at the pitmouth, and low wages to the women and boys employed there. Mrs. Eldred made so much difficulty about accepting the little she could do for her, that to press more upon her was certainly to offend her. But Walter feared she was in great poverty; and when he observed how she was wasted and worn with long looking for her husband's return, the apprehension suddenly crossed him that she had some design to get rid of her miseries in the most fearful way in which impatience exhibits itself. The idea was but momentary, however, as she had immediately referred to things to be done by her own hands, and to be told when she should have more time to stay with her daughter. Tim had quitted her apron, (which he continued to hold for guidance, great boy as he was.) surrendered her for Walter, in the prospect of this trip, and was now seated on the parapet, with Walter's arm about him, and apparently enjoying the bustle as much as those who more reasonably came into it.

“Let me run along by the wall with them!” said he, struggling to be set down. “Let me run with those boys!”

“Better not, Tim. They are only running to see a fish that swims away faster than they can follow.”

“I know that; but I can always run along by a wall.”

And away he would go, his brother-in-law keeping an eye upon him, to see how he defended himself from the knocks and pushes he was exposing himself to. He managed very well, always being one of the first to turn when others were about to do so, from his quickness in gathering up the guiding remarks of those about him. He had generally a word for Walter when he came back towards him.

“Walter, have you spoken to Adam yet?”

“Adam, no; you don't suppose Adam is here, do you?”

“Yes, but I do. I am sure it was his voice I just heard from over yonder, You will see him soon.”

And away went Tim again. The next time it was,—

“The show will soon be here now, Walter.”

“How do you know?”

“Because of the tide coming up. Don't you hear it,—lap, lap, lap?”

“How do you know it is not going down—if you can hear it at all, in this din?”

“O, it is quite a different sound, going out; a—a—I can't tell you what; but quite a different sound.”

“Poor boy!” said a by-stander. “I wish you could see how pretty the water looks, with all the gay flags above it, and the smart people.”

“Thank you,” said Tim, and he shuffled off once more.

“Do you think that is the best way of comforting people for such a loss as that poor boy's?” asked Walter, who was not the person to ask such a question, unless roused on poor Tim's behalf.

“Why, it is what one feels, you see; and what one hears people say every day,” replied the man.

“Well, that's true; but I don't think it is the kindest thing to say. If you can give him a knowledge of what is going on, it is all very well; but not merely to put him in mind uselessly that he cannot enjoy it. At least, such is my rule.”

“And a very good one, I have no doubt. To be sure, to make it one's own case for a minute, one can hardly fancy what answer one would make.”

“Ah! it is not every one that could say, like Tim, 'thank you,' and directly run off to amuse himself.”

“Indeed there are but few; and the great thing is to find out how they take their misfortune themselves. There are some that look as if they would knock you down if you do but come near the matter with them; and others shake all over, or put on a sort of affectation that is worse; and some like to talk and be talked to about it; and others (and they are the wisest) just take it simply and naturally, so as to remove one's difficulty, almost entirely.”

“Tim is one of these last,” said Walter, patting the boy's head, as he came near.

“What am I, Walter?”

“Heating yourself sadly, with getting so pushed about.”

“O, I'll get cool when the show comes, and I sit on the wall again. But if you want to go somewhere else, I'll come any minute ; only, the water is getting so high, it would be a pity to go away and lose our place.”

“So it would, pray away, as you like.”

“Just as if he could see! He talks about the show like any other boy.”

“Ay, and you would be surprised to hear the account he will give his sister when we go home. He picks up a world of odd things that we let slip: and that, and his great mistakes together, make his stories very strange ones sometimes.”

“Yet he seems easy enough to treat and deal with. A kind heart and a little thought may do all that he wants from us.”

“And all that the others want that you mentioned just now. If we let our good will have its way, without being held back and twisted by shyness and doubt, we shall be sure to please people who depend upon kindness more than any others. The only thing I cannot pardon is the giving way to shyness when—”

“And yet I should guess you to be shy your self.”

“Well, so I am; and yet I should be more struck with any body being shy about helping Tim in his little devices than he himself would, though he has no shyness. It always strikes me that when these sufferers have had so much more awkwardness to get over, it is not to be pardoned that we should renew their trouble with ours. But where is Tim gone now? Slipped away in a minute ! He cannot be far off, but what were we about?”

Walter cast an involuntary fearful glance down the inlet, where nothing was happening, however, to disturb the solitary sea-gull which was very quietly balancing itself on the surface.

“Were ye looking for the little blind lad?” asked a woman near. “He met with a friend in the throng, and they went off together.”

In another minute, Tim merged from behind the awning of a stall, holding Adam by the right hand, and a huge orange in the left.

“Tim said you were here,” observed Walter, “and I did not believe him. He heard you half an hour ago.”

“Tim, what did you hear me saying?”

“I did not catch your words, but I was sure it was your voice.”

“I am glad to see you buying oranges, Adam. I suppose this orange came out of yonder rope-walk.”

“Not it; and it is the last I am likely to buy; and I would not have got it for any one but Tim. I am not going to lose my settlement, I can tell you. The place that took such pains to settle me may keep me till there is work for us all again.”

“Keep you ! How?”

“There is no lack of means. There are the rates, and fine corporation funds.”

"And pienty of your sort of work wanted to be done here, it seems. There is a great call for rope-makers."

"And a great call for work among the rope-makers belonging to the town. But we of the town hold back, you observe, to see who will come forward first and lose his privileges. For may part, I mean to hold back till I can be a master, and have apprentices, and do things in proper style; and then Tim shail turn the wheel, and get money like other lads. "Will you, Tim?"

Walter allowed that it was a thing out of the question to give up a settlement in a corporate town in exchange for one in a district like this, whose prosperity must long remain precarious. He scarcely saw how this precariousness was to be remedied if there was a dearth of workmen to do the business essential to the improvement of the place, while there was elsewhere a super abundance of the very sort of workmen wanted. If it was necessary to give very high wages here for work which received very low wages elsewhere, it was difficult to perceive how any fair competition was to be maintained, and the subsistence fund duly husbanded.

"I suppose," said he, "you may thank the law that gave you your apprentice privileges for the low wages you have had of late, Adam?"

"O yes; plenty to thank that law for. People generally complain that it raises wages higher than natural. I am ready to testify to its sinking them lower."

"Both are right, I fancy. Wages are raised, as said, by crafts being confined to fewer hands than need be; and this mischief goes on from generation to generation."

"Why, yes ; if they first make it necessary to be an apprentice, and then forbid the taking more than a certain number of apprentices, It is easy to see how many willing folks will be hindered of entering into a trade; and those that are in it may keep up wages as long as their handwork is wanted. But when——"

"Ah! when the balance turns, and times are bad, wages may fall to the very lowest point, or cease, if the craftsmen are hindered from with drawing some of their number, and turning their hands to some other trade, it does seem an uncommonly stupid plan, to be sure; and when men were beginning to get the better of it, and outgrow and step over it, what a strange thing it seems that a clergyman, like Mr. Otley, should be doing his best to fasten us down under it again, tighter than ever!"

"And at the very time that his lady is sending here and sending there for articles that she cannot content herself to buy in her native place. If the gentleman does his best to prevent his neighbours working out of corporation bounds, the least his lady can do is to employ those neigh hours, instead of buying what she wants from a distance."

"I think so. But what puts such a fancy into her head?"

"She complains that the workmanship of articles is inferior at home to what it is in newer places. And if it is, who is to blame for it but those who meddle to spoil

competition, and persuade their own workmen that they have a sure dependence otherwise than on their own skill?"

"I have heard of such a thing happening, in some strict corporate towns, as the very gentlemen of the corporation themselves passing by their own people to get their work done in the out-lying villages, and having it brought in secretly. Such men are guilty, one way or an other, it seems to me. Either let them bestir themselves to have trade allowed to go free, or submit themselves to the restraints they put on others."

"They are full as foolish as wrong, however; for what do they do by such management but bring so many more paupers on themselves to be maintained? It won't do to try to persuade their idle workmen to go elsewhere. The masters elsewhere do not like hiring so as to give a settlement, any better than we like being so hired. We stick like burrs to those who fastened us upon them, and they may make what they can of us."

"I wonder what they think of all this in other countries."

"In America (our seamen tell me) they laugh mightily at us for tying our legs, and then complaining that we cannot walk. In America, they have none of this mischief of trade corporations and apprenticeships; and how are they the worse for their absence? If American handiworks, and the handiworks of our own new, free towns are better (as every one knows they are) than those of our corporate towns, what can we conclude but that corporate restraints are bad things? I have half a mind sometimes to step away into a free country myself."

"A free country! As if England was not a free country!"

"It is freer than most; and so much freer than it used to be, that I have hopes of our grandchildren seeing themselves as unfettered in their callings as the Americans. But just now, none of us are practically free. Everybody is ready enough to call out about poor Cuddie ; and with just reason. But my case, though not so hard an one as his, is not altogether to be over looked beside it. Instead of being forcibly turned from a labour I like to one that I did not choose, there is a moral force used to prevent my turning from an unprofitable occupation to a profitable one. Now, the labour of a man is his birthright,—his sole property; and any power that comes between him and its exercise is tyranny. Never mind how it may be softened down, and disused, and in some places nearly forgotten. As long as there is such a power lying ready to be put forth against the labourer, that labourer is not a free man."

"These powers will grow less and less mischievous as time rolls on. No corporation in the world can stand against the will of the public to be supplied with what they want. There will be apprentices enough in Norwich and Sheffield to keep the trade going as it should, if the world really wants more knives and stuffs."

"Yes, yes; and look what a list of great men we have got,—no thanks to our trade rules! but in spite of them. Think of Arkwright, and Brindley, and Brunel!"

"And Smeaton. and Rennie, and Watt, and Fergusson, and Hunter. These were never apprenticed."

“No, nor many more that have made themselves a great name. My doubt is whether they would have had such a name if they had been kept listless and longing,—or downright idle, from having no interest in their seven years' work. If,—I will not say I.—but many others, had been kept at our education a year or two longer, who knows what we might have done in the world?”

“Especially if you had been born in some of the spirited new towns, which were little more than villages a hundred years ago, and now rank far before York, and Canterbury, and Norwich, and Lichfield. As for London itself, the most blessed day in its existence will be when its hundred companies dissolve their monopolies, if not themselves. I venture to say this, because we have before our eyes what has happened else where. Look at Spain, now full of corporation glories; and France, where industry and art began to thrive from the day that her corporation and apprenticeship laws were swept away.”

“In France, I'm told, they have made an experiment of everything, from the worst meddling to perfect freedom. I do not know that it was ever settled there, as it is in India, that every man must follow his father's profession, but they did some things almost as wise, in old times.”

“And some with such good intentions as to afford a fine warning against governments meddling at all with production. In one sense, to be sure, governments influence production by whatever they do; (which should make them very careful about every step they take.) But I now mean direct interference. It seemed only prudent and kind to the people to make rules about felling trees, some parts of the soil being absolutely good for nothing unless they had trees in the neighbourhood to encourage moisture; yet the first consequence of these rules was to prevent people planting trees.”

“That is good; but the story of the cock-chafers is better. Do not you know that story? Some district abroad, in Switzerland, I think, was plagued with cockchafers; and to get rid of them, the government obliged every landholder to furnish certain quantities, in proportion to the land he held. The landholders paid the poor people for collecting them; and after a time it was found out that cockchafers were regularly imported in sacks from the other side of the lake.”

“Very good. But there was one instance among many of positive loss in France, through meddling with industry, which is a fine warning to such men as Otley, if they would take it. Before the revolution broke the corporation fetters of the workpeople, there could be no manufacture of japanned hardware in France. The process requiring the art and tools of several different trades, and that a man should be free of them all, this kind of production was left to strangers.”

“This is very like passing a law that there shall be no new inventions; or that every man shall follow his father's occupation.”

“And the practice of these lawmakers agreed with their principle. Did you ever see an Argand lamp?”

“O, yes. Not so good as some gas lamps.”

“But yet giving out three times as much light at the same cost as any lamps that were known before. Argand was publicly persecuted by the company of tinners, locksmiths, and ironmongers, who disputed his right to make lamps.”

“And if they would do that, they would most likely not admit him of their company if he had chosen to trouble himself to canvass for it.”

“Then there was Lenoir, the great French philosophical instrument maker. He set up a little furnace to heat his metals in; and straightway came certain of the Founders' Company to pull it down; and Lenoir was obliged to appeal to the king.”

“There might just as well have been a hotbed company that would not have let you growcucumbers without their help; or a scare-crow company to prevent your hanging up your old coat among the cherry-trees.”

“And here comes a company that would give you plenty of rope-making to do, if you would leave your privileges behind you, and bring your still to their market.”

“Aye: and then as soon as people at home have forgotten me, and my place there is fairly filled by some one else, and there begins to be a talk of business falling off. I may be warned out of this field by some frightened old woman of a church-warden, or some spiteful overseer, who will bid me be gone to my own place. No, no. The company must make a hue and cry for rope-makers indeed, before they will get me to pass out ot bound. Yet, trespassing out of bounds was what I best liked to do, when I was not my own master.—How bravely they come on, in their open carriages, with their flags and their boughs! Well! really it is a pretty sight.”

“Do look at Tim, with his oak bough as big as himself! He must be a fine fellow that gave it him,—that tall lad who keeps a hand on Tim's shoulder to guide him. I'll go and take his place. It is not fair that a stranger should have the trouble of poor Tim.”

“And I think it would be a charity in me to offer myself to some of the gentlemen as a handshaker. Did you ever see? How the folks are reaching up to shake hands! The black pitmen, and the keelmen, with their brown hats in the other hand, and their wives holding up the little ones that will be pitmen and keelmen some time or other.”

“And Mr. Severn too! Look! there he is on the box of yonder barouche, smiling and nodding so cheerfully, thin and worn as he looks.”

“Aye: when we make our many trades as free as we boast we already are, Mr. Severn will get something like a recompense of his toils. In those days, if he but lives to see them, it will happen always as it happens by accident to-day, that he will be full in view of the people that are always ready to welcome him, while Otley slinks away, to follow his own devices out of sight.— Stand back! stand back, and make way for them! Now is your time to look to Tim!”

The gates were now beginning gently to open one way, and the little bridge to swing round the other way. The din was hushed,—music, laughter, children's cries, men's shouts, the whining of dogs, and the tramp of horses. All was still, except the ripple and lapse of water, as a thousand eyes were bent to watch the first vessel that ever passed this way, noiselessly turning the point from the open sea, and gliding along the Cut. It was the first time that the gazers had ever had an opportunity of looking down into a vessel so immediately beneath their feet, (except during the few moments required for shooting a bridge.) It was a singular sight,—some of the tackle almost sweeping the rocks as it passed, and its bulk casting a black moving shadow on the bed of pure sand below the green water. The smutty-faced crew looked up to the thousand eager faces far above their heads, and gave a silent signal that all should be ready to cheer when the gates should be passed.

“There it goes!” said Tim, softly, as he sat on the parapet, with Walter's arm about his waist, and the vessel passing just beneath him. “There it goes!” he whispered again, turning his head in due proportion to its progress.

“Does it graze the rocks or the sand?” asked Walter, wondering at the boy's accurate knowledge of what was going on.

“No: but it makes a great stir in the air. I feel the wind upon my face. Tell me when I may speak, Walter. I have something to tell you.”

A vehement shout now rose on all hands, to put an end to Tim's scruples about speaking amidst a dead silence. All the seamen present pushed, cuffed, and scrambled to get a good sight of the vessel's farther progress when she had passed the gates. While the rivalry of blue jackets and gruff voiccs was going on, Tim uttered his strange communication.

“Waher ! Walter ! I am sure Cuddie is here.”

“My dear boy, what a fancy!”

“Ah ! it seems an odd thing; but I heard Cuddie's voice, just as I heard Adam's before.”

“You know Adam's voice well, hearing it so often as you do. But, remember, it is four years since you heard Cuddle's; and I am afraid it may be more than four years before you hear it again.”

Well! Tim thought it better to be only *almost* sure.

“Besides,” said Waiter, “there is no king's ship near us now. All the king's ships are at the wars.”

Tim had no more to say. The next thing that happened was an outcry on the skirts of the crowd. Everybody thought it was an accident, and rushed towards the spot, or, in order to inquire, stopped others who were doing so. It was only some thief or quarrelsome person, or other kind of vagabond, that the constables and their helpers

had failed to catch. The fellow had got off. Who was he? what had he done? everybody asked. Nobody at a distance could tell, and nobody near would tell. It was hinted that, whatever the offence might be, it was of some popular kind; and that the offender had been helped by the people to escape. The incident took a firm hold of Tim's imagination. He cared no more about what took place during the next hour than the many spectators present who belonged to the class that, having eyes, see not. When the parapet was left to him and Walter, when the tide had gone down, when the train of carriages had disappeared, he was still plying his brother-in-law with questions about his conjectures: and when at length advised to go to sleep in his unaccustomed lodging in a public-house, he went on to weary the sleepy Walter with—

“I should think he will lie in the fields tonight, while we are so snug and comfortable here? If he has murdered anybody, perhaps a ghost will come and scare him? I wonder whether his wife or his mother know where he is? Every foot that stirs, he will think it is the constable come to take him up. Do you know, I have been thinking whether that might not have been Cuddie's ghost that I heard to-day. They say many seamen are shot in these wars, and if we should find that Cuddie was killed just at the very time—What o'clock do you think it was?”

Walter now replied in no sleepy tone. He was not a believer in ghosts, but his mind was interested, more than he could justify, in Tim's persuasion that he had heard Cuddie speak, Tim was so seldom mistaken about these matters! Yet the war was still prolonged, and if poor Cuddie was not ere this at the bottom of the sea, he must be too far off on its surface for the fairy Fine-Ear to have caught the tones of his voice, if Fine-Ear had been this day among the crowd.

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Chapter VI.

SLEEPING AND WAKING.

While Walter was settling this matter with his reason, Effie was sauntering in his garden, —his garden, of late as much improved in beauty and productiveness as the coal-trade was depressed. Sorry as Effie was that her mother was not able to get full work, she could not help rejoicing in the vigour and verdure of Walter's favourites. Her half wish to go away had subsided into perfect contentment with remaining, though uncle Christopher still abode with them. His contempt for them, in a religious view, signified less as they gathered more years upon their shoulders. It became easier to act as if his censorious eye was not upon them, and to take whatever he might do and say as being his way. He enjoyed exceedingly all the creature comforts that Effie put before him, though he could not think of spoiling her by any appearance of acknowledgment of her care, till she should allow him to cater for her spiritual good. He ate his little fowl, or sipped his evening cordial, full of pitying amazement that Effie would not let him lead her devotions, or grant her a gracious permission to sing psalms with himself and his few chosen friends.

It was a prayer-meeting of this kind which kept Effie abroad late this evening. The common room was occupied, and it would have appeared ungracious to shut herself up in her chamber. She therefore carried her work into the arbour after tea, and sat sewing, and looking abroad, and plucking little sprigs of one fragrant thing or another, till every bird within hearing had dropped off from the choir, and left nothing to be heard but a stray grasshopper, and nothing to he done but to cease poring over her stitching and take a turn in the green alley. There she turned and turned again, looking for the young moon and her attendant star among tim fleecy clouds tlmt now parted opportunely, and now melted into a mass, just when she wanted to see what was behind them. Thinking that she could catch a reflection of the crescent in a bend of the river, she ran up the hedge, and leaned over as far as she could, without falling, head foremost, into the ditch on the other side. She was very near so falling when a rustle in the same ditch startled her. She jumped back, expecting to see something follow her. Nothing appeared, and she satisfied herself that it was only a dog or a stray pig, or a sheep about to leave a tribute of wool on the briars, in return for a bite of particularly delicate grass. She turned again along the alley, and amused herself with planting erect any props that might have declined from the perpendicular. While doing so, she perceived the faint, yellow light of a glow-worm on the bank, which her husband gave her for the indulgence of her own fancies about primroses and blue hyacinths. Eagerly she kneeled down to watch the creature, and played with it for some time, now with a gentle finger-tip, and now with a stout blade of grass. The psalm from within doors meanwhile came, softened by distance, into a not unpleasing music. Effie's mind and heart joined in this music more than her uncle would readily have believed. She invariably laid aside amusements and light thoughts when it reached her; and sympathized all the better in the devotions of the company from their psalms being stripped by distance of all that appeared to her harsh and unduly familiar

in their sentiments and language. She now instantly arose, leaving the worm to find its way back to its covert; but—straight before her— stood a man, peeping at her through the hedge, He ducked, the moment he saw that he was ob-served, and she could get no answer to her questions and remarks— "What do you want?— If you are looking for the ferry, it is just below, to your right hand.—If you want our people, you had better come round to the gate." She retreated towards the house, to shelter herself under the sounds that issued thence. She had no fear for her safety while in such neighbourhood; but she pondered the probability of the garden being robbed. There was little in it at present worth removal; but she thought she should do what she had done before when left in the guardianship of her husband's goods—sit up in the star-light, and look out upon the garden, till her uncle, who was an early riser, should be heard stirring in the morning. This measure she presently decided upon; and the decision brought in so many thoughts of chill, and drowsiness, and startings, and nervous fancies,—with all of which her watchings had made her well acquainted,—that when she went back to the arbour for her work and implements, she snatched them up as if a thief had been in hiding there, and fled home as if he were following at her heels.

Uncle Christopher had just left the house with his guests, in order to ferry them over to their own bank of the river. Before putting the circle of chairs in their places, and depositing the hymn-book on its shelf, Effie closed and locked both doors of the dwelling. She had not been seated at her work a minute before there was a tap, and then a push at the door which opened into the garden.

"Who is there?"

"Effie, Effie, let me in!" said a low voice which thrilled through her. For the first time since her childhood, a superstitions terror seized her; and she sat staring, and neither spoke nor moved.

The lattice was not quite fastened, and she saw it open, and a face appear within it which produced the same effect upon her as the voice had done.

"O, are ye Cuddie, or are ye not?" cried she, shading her eyes from the candlelight, and gazing intently.

"Yes, I am Cuddie," said he mournfully, as he entered by the lattice. "But it is hard to believe you are Effie, so unwilling to let your own brother into your own house."

This was said, not like the Cuddie of old, but so like her mother, that Effie no longer doubted.

She poured out a multitude of questions, Whence did he come? When did he arrive? Was he here for good, to follow his own business again? And had her father returned also?

He put aside all her questions, desiring only, for the present, that she would help him to enter the house when uncle Christopher was gone to bed. Uncle Christopher would be back in five minutes, and there was no time to lose in settling how—

“But you are not going away before you have spoken to me, or given one look that I dare to rest upon. Why, Cuddie”

“Well, Effie, I am not going to meet uncle Christopher; I can tell you that. There he lay, muttering his cant, the night I was carried off, and did not so much as put a foot out of bed to help me. He may talk of how many souls he has saved. He has lost one, I can tell him; and if I ever meet him,—and it will be only by chance, I shall tell him”

“There he is!” cried Effie, hearing the rattle of the chain by which the boat was fastened. Cuddie instantly let himself out by the back door, intimating that he should return to be admitted, as soon as his uncle could be supposed asleep. This event was not long in happening, as Effie was not, this evening, very lavish of remarks which might tempt him to linger over his pipe and glass.

When Cuddie re-entered from the garden, his first act was to desire his sister to fasten the door at the foot of the stairs, and hang up blinds against both windows, he standing in the shadow till this was done. Effie timidly objected to blinding the front window which looked down upon the ferry; it was not yet too late for the possibility of passengers. This seemed to serve as a new reason; and she was obliged to hang up her shawl.

“If you want to know the reason,” whispered her brother,— “I am a deserter. Hush! No noise! or you will be the death of me, as Adam was near being this morning.”

“Won't you sit down?” said Effie,—as she might have spoken to an intruder from Bedlam.

“Effie, you always used to say what you felt, and all that you felt. Are you changed too? Come; tell me what you are thinking.”

“I think I am in a dream, and do not know whether you be Cuddie, or a fancy of my own. O, Cuddie, I have always loved you next to Walter, and looked upon you as the pride and hope of the family; and as often as I have started from sleep, these four years past, it has been with dreaming over again your being taken at dead of night, and especially your slipping down the cable. The worst moments I have had from the time you rowed away from this ferry, that bright evening, are those between sleeping and waking, when I saw you cold and altered before me, and I could not by any means make you smile. I never, no I never believed this last would come true. And now,—and now,” she uttered between her sobs, “you know what I am thinking about.”

Cuddie cast himself on the ground, laid his head on her knee, as he had done in many a childish trouble, weeping so that he could not for long be persuaded to look up.

“You are not altogether altered, I see,” said Effie, striving to speak cheerfully. “You are not come back the round-faced, weather-brown seaman I always fancied you would be, but instead, far too much as if you had been famished. Yet your heart is the same.”

“No, no.”

“O, yes. But you have known want lately, and you are discouraged. I much fear you have known want.”

“ 'Tis not that which has bowed my spirit. Effie, I am altogether heartbroken.”

“Do not dare to say that. We must bear whatever Providence”

“But it is not Providence that has done it; it is my king and country,” cried Cuddie, starting up, the flush fading from his face, and leaving it of a deadly paleness. “If it had been the will of Providence, Effie, to take a limb from me. I would have made my way home on crutches, with a stout heart, and none of you should have heard a bitter word from me. If lightning from above had scorched out my eyes, I would have taken Tim for an example, and been thankful through the live-long day. If the fever had laid me low on shipboard, I would have been a man to the last, knowing that my corpse would make the plunge before midnight. But to have one's king and country against one is what is enough to break any man's heart that has ever loved either of them.”

“To be sure it is. What have they been doing to you?”

“Things that I do not hold myself bound to bear, as if they were done according to the will of Providence, and not against it. They first turned my very heart within me with carrying me away, as if I had been a black slave; carrying me away from all I cared about, and the occupation I could most willingly follow. Then, when I had little spirit for my work, and many bitter thoughts to distract me in it, and hurt my temper, the next thing they must do is to flog me. What surprises you in that? Don't you know that impressment brings flogging? Carry away a man as a slave, and next thing you must whip him as a thief, and that brings hanging like a dog. Yes, they flogged me, and my head grew down on my breast from the time that scornful eyes were for ever upon me. This morning I have been hunted by my countrymen, by many an one that I knew when nobody dared look scornfully on me. It was my own brother's doing that they were set on. My country has but one thing more to do with me; and that is to make away with me for desertion.”

“Then you do not mean to do it yourself, thank God!” cried Effie.

“No, Effie. I have been tempted many a time, from the night I slipped down the cable, as you mentioned, till this very afternoon, when I hid in an old coal-pit, and was but too near throwing myself below. I shall make a trial of what is to be done by going where there is no king, and where one may forget one's country. There is not a saint in heaven that could make me forgive them; but there may be ways of forgetting them. I will make the trial in America.”

“Then we shall lose the best brother, and my mother the child she has looked to through every thing, and your king a servant that may ill be spared during this war.”

“Never mind the king. If he knows no better how to get his subjects to serve him——”

“Hush, Cuddie! You a seaman, and talk so of your king!”

“I am not a seaman now. However, say the country, if you will: if she knows no better how to get served than by first making slaves of her free-born men, let her do as well as she can when they leave her to turn against her. As soon as she takes a man's birthright from him, his duty ceases. Mine was at an end when they carried me off, neck and heels, and turned me, in one hour, from a brave-hearted boy into a mean-souled man.”

“No, no.”

“Yes, yes. I say; but though it was so, they had gained no right to disgrace me. That flogging might possibly have been thought justifiable by some people, if I had entered the service of my own free will: as I did not, they had no more right to flog me than the showman yonder has to goad the lion he enticed into his trap. If that lion should ever get out a paw to revenge himself, it would go hard with me to help the human brute.”

Effic was confounded. In casting about for an argument wherewith to stop this method of discourse, she could find none out of the Bible. Christian forgiveness of injuries was her plea.

“There is the difference, certainly, between the lion and me,” said Cuddie: “the Bible is out of the question in his case. It shall be minded in my own, so far as this: I will not lift a hand against my country, and I will go where I may possibly learn to forgive her; but I cannot do it here, Effic, even if my life were safe, I could not do it here. My country loses a stout-bodied, willing-hearted member, and I lose all I have ever lived for; but there the mischief shall stop, for me.”

“Aye, for you; but how many more are there lost in like manner? I think some devil, in the service of our country's enemies, has come to blind our eyes, and harden our hearts, and make us a sad wonder for the times that are to come. Will men believe such a story as yours, such an one as my father's,—a hundred years hence?”

“Yes, they will easily believe, because they will look back to what the service now is, and how it is regarded, and contrast these things with what, I trust, will be the state of things in their day. They will look back and see that merchant seamen are now paid more than they need be, because naval seamen are paid so much less than they ought to be, and made subject to violence. If, as I hope, in those days, the one service will be as desirable as the other, (or the king's, perhaps, the most so of the two,) it will be found that our colliers will man a navy at the first call; and then men will believe that when it was otherwise, there was some fearful cause of wrong that came in between the king and his seamen.”

“It does seem, indeed, as if there was no lack of loyalty among our people, when their minds are not turned from their king by some strange act; and we hear few complaints of the service from those who go willingly to it.”

“There is none that would be liked so well, if it had fair play. Besides the honour of keeping off the enemy, and the glory of helping to preserve one's country, there is so much variety, and so many adventures, and so many hundred thousand eyes looking on, that a sea-life in his Majesty's service has many charms. But honour is a mockery to one's heart, unless it is won by the heart; and what are varieties of adventure to him whose body may be roving, but whose spirit sits, like a gloomy, unseen ghost, for ever by his own fire-side?”

“He who goes of his own will has most likely made provision for those he has left behind; and then the thought of them will come only when it can animate him, and never to discourage him.”

“Oh, you should see the difference between the volunteers and certain slaves like me!—how the one are impatient with the captain till he gets boldly out in search of the enemy; and how the other would fain have the vessel creep for ever along the shore, that he might have a chance of stealing out, and forgetting his present disgraces by daring a worse reproach still. You should see the difference of their patience on the watch, and of their courage before a battle.”

“I am sure I should not care to show bravery in a danger I was thrust into against my will, as I should in one that it was my own choice to face. I should be apt to get away, if I could.”

“My wish would have been just the opposite, that there might be an end of me, Effie, if I had happened to be in a battle since I was flogged: but the battles I was in happened first; and if I was not a downright coward, I had no spirit to fight as a freeman would. It cooled my blood, and kept down my heart, to remember the night when they took me in my sleep to defend others when I was myself defenceless.”

“If it was so with you,—you, who always used to walk first when, as children, we had to pass neighbour Topham's bull,—you, that were ready to go down doubtful places in the mine when nobody else dared, and that brought out the soldier, just drowning in the current by Cullercoat Sands, if it was so with you, how much more it must happen with others, not naturally so brave! But, Cuddie, do sit down quietly, and tell me, as if you were telling of being punished for bird-nesting, what it was that they blamed you for on board ship.”

“Blamed me! They”

“Yes, yes I know; but what was it for?”

“I did nothing well, all the time I was there. Whatever might be going on, I was always thinking of getting away; just the same, whether I was on watch, or going into the middle of the fight, or hiding my face in the blanket, when laid by under my dog punishment. There was enough to flog me for, if the quality of my service had been all that was looked to.”

“You that did everything well that you set your hand to, from the time you were a child! But the getting away you managed cleverly, I dare say.”

“A good many contrive to do that, notwithstanding all the difficulties that are put in the way of desertion, and the punishment that visits it.”

“That punishment cannot always take place, if so many desert. There would be a constant putting to death.”

“Why, yes; considering that above five thousand able-bodied, and four thousand ordinary seamen have deserted within two years, the execution of the whole is a sight that men would be rather unwilling that angels should look upon.”

“Mercy, mercy! Only think of them all in one crowd before a judge, pleading how they were torn, many of them, from their busy homes, and that these same homes were the temptation to desert.”

“Think of them before another kind of judgment-seat, Effie. Where would the balance of crime be laid then?”

“I think no one would dare to carry there any quarrels that grew up out of war,” Effie replied. “Whatever noise of war there may be on this earth, I fancy all will be glad to keep utter silence upon it in another state.”

“Aye, if they could. But how is it to be kept out of knowledge? How am I to account for my temper being bitter, that once was kindly; and my habits being lazy, that once were brisk; and my life being short and troublesome to everybody, that might have been long and busy for others' good; and my death being fearful, like an eclipse, when it might have been as the shutting in of the summer twilight? How am I to account for all this, without any plea of going out to war on the high seas? Why do you look at me so, Effie? I cannot bear being so looked at.”

Effie had often tried to fancy the aspect and demeanour of persons under sentence of death; but she had never imagined anything so awful as the lot seemed to be when it sat upon her brother. To have seen his corpse stretched before her would not have been more strange than to look on his familiar face, to listen to his accustomed voice, and to think that this motion and this sound were awaiting extinction, while the thinking part was fluctuating between this world and the next, not in the frame of calm faith which abides the summons of its Maker, but in the restless mood which attends upon the tyranny of man. Effie had seen her brother once awaiting death as the issue of an illness. What she had then beheld caused her heart now to sink on perceiving the starting eye and curled lip, which told her that her brother was a less religious man than he had been, less humble, less strong, less hopeful, less thoughtful for others than before. She was not fully aware of the difference of the cases, how darkly God's agency is shrouded in the gloom of man's injustice; how the sufferer's whole nature is out raged by dependence upon his fellow-man for the breath of life; and how infinitely the agony of such outrage transcends the throes of dissolution. The humblest convict may feel this, though he may not be able to express it in words, as well as the noblest patriot that ever encountered martyrdom; and it may be this sense of outrage that parches the tongue and enfeebles the knees of one, while it strings the

nerves of another on the way to the scaffold; while both may equally disregard the parting convulsion, and long rather than dread to know “the grand secret.”

“No, no, Cuddie, you do not mean that you who sit there are doomed to be laid in the cold ground so soon, unless you can banish yourself?”

“I do; and for a token you must either help me away this very hour, or see me carried off to death, as one of the doomed five thousand. I tell you I was nearly caught this day. If it had not been for an acquaintance, more thoughtful than Adam, (who spoke out my name the moment he saw me,) I should have been beyond hope at this hour. The whisper passed along, however, 'a poor deserter,' and they opened a way for me, and blocked up the enemy in a crowd, and then gave out that it was only a petty thief they were running after; and in this manner I got off for the time.”

“And so you will again. God will not let such as you so perish.”

“I shall not tempt the risk further by staying. God forgive me for saying so! but I cannot, and I will not, so die.”

“Hush, hush! What would uncle Christopher, what would all religious people say, if they heard such a word from you as that?”

“They might say that if one man presumes to declare 'You shall die at my lidding, for a crime invented by such as myself,' another man may, without presumption, say, 'I will not die for such a cause;' and that he may, with as little presumption, do his utmost peaceably to make good his words. I will be gone this very hour, to make good my word.”

“Our poor mother!”

“Do not tell her that I have been here: she will be for ever hearing the whoop of my hunters, and fancying my death-groans at midnight. Let her suppose me fighting creditably, like any honest volunteer, till you hear what becomes of me.”

“And can you be so near, and yet”

“O yes; I can do many things that you would have sworn, when we last parted, that I never could. You do not know, I dare say, what it is to grow careless of those one most loved, to be able to pass lightly near a mother's door, on one's way to a new world, and not look in. You——”

“Cuddie, what brought you to see me?”

“What would you say if it was to get Walter to give me a coat that might disguise me, and you to supply me with food, that might prevent my needing to speak to any one on the road?”

“I shall not believe any part of your story, if you dare to say so much that is false,” said Effie, rising, however, to see what her humble hospitality could furnish. “I did

hope, indeed, that there were some, besides your mother, that you would have thought worth inquiring after."

"I saw your husband and the others to-day, you know, except uncle Christopher, and him I will look upon now;" and he snatched the candle to go up stairs. His sister stopped him eagerly, to inquire whether he had really seen her husband.

"Aye, that did I. Adam, as I told you, I saw full enough of. And Tim, poor child, was telling Walter that he had heard my voice just before, and Walter gave him a world of good reasons why it was impossible, while I was standing just behind him, as Tim might have seen, if—But how that boy is grown! And a fine unbroken spirit he seems to have!"

"And without any bitterness, Cuddie, though the burden of affliction is laid upon him. We may take a lesson from him: for his is not the content of one that does not know what the blessings are that he must forego. He tells me sometimes what he remembers about the green fields, and the blue river, and the star-light nights; and if his remembrance of them seems more beautiful than the things themselves appear to us, this is only a proof of the greater depth of his patience. O yes, we may take a lesson from him!"

"Ah! I thought when I saw him to-day," said Cuddie, setting down the candle, as if forgetting his purpose of visiting his uncle's bedside, "when I saw him sitting with his placid face raised, and his ear intent to learn all that was going on, I thought of the day and night after his accident, when he was fretting and fretting, as if it was our fault that he could not see which neighbour it was that came to ask after him. nor know when it was day or when it was dark."

"Aye, before he learned to know everybody by the voice, and to tell by the feel when the sun was going down. It was you, Cuddie, that sat beside him during those nights, and brought comfort to him as often as you could step in from your work. Did you think of that, too, when you looked upon him this day?"

Cuddie seized the candle again, and was going.

"Tim himself remembers your nursing, and he shall not forget it, when you are no longer a brother and a countryman. He shall never learn from me that you were here, and left without laying your hand upon his head, or a kiss upon his forehead."

"There will be Adam to watch over him, besides you and Walter."

"And you, when the war is over. You will surely come back, and ply on this very river, and show yourself in the old port, when the cry after deserters is over, and the press-gangs are broken up?"

"Never. I shall make myself altogether an American. King George will never more have me for a subject or a servant; and if he has me for an enemy, by going to war with America, he may thank his own press-gangs for it;—and not only on account of

me, but of the thousands more that seek a home in foreign ships because the British navy has been to them nothing better than a prison."

Cuddie was some time up stairs while Effie hastened to pack such provisions as she had in the house. Indifferent as her brother's manner was when he came down, she thought there were signs of emotion passed away.

"You have not insulted his sleep, I am sure, Cuddie? You have not breathed out ill will over him?"

"No: he first taught me the story of the Prodigal Son, as I remembered when I saw his Bible near him. Besides, I shall never see him again.—Now, leave me to make my way over the ferry. You had better let the boat be found on the opposite side in the morning. They will come hunting for me here, and you must not be found aiding and abetting in my escape. You will have uncle Christopher for a witness to my not having been here; and if he should chance to wake while you are out"

"Whisht! he is stirring! Hark to his step overhead!"

Cuddie and his basket were past the threshold, the door was closed, and Effie bending over her work before uncle Christopher's night-capped head appeared from the stairs.

"I thought I heard Walter?"said he. "I thought Walter had come home?"

Walter was not to be home till the middle of the next day, the old man was reminded.

So he had thought; but he had been dreaming, it seemed to him for hours, of a weary sobbing, the deep sobbing of a man near him; and when he woke up from his dream, there was a gleam from the keyhole on the ceiling; and he next fancied he heard whispers below, so he got up, and partly dressed himself, and came down

"And found me just finishing my work, that I was bent upon doing before I went to bed," said Effie.

"You are not going to sit up much later, child? If you must watch, you might as well occupy your watch with holy things.

Effie thought of the times when Christopher used to spend half the night in perfecting the invention which had enabled him to gather a good many carnal comforts about him. She merely said that she was working for her husband. She would just lock the chain of the boat——

"What! that not done yet? I heard the chain clank just now. Nor the door fastened, I declare! You are a braver woman than your mother, child."

Effie did not know that she had anything to fear. Her uncle feared rheumatism, and therefore hastened to bed again, before she went down to the boat with her lantern.

Cuddie was just pushing himself off, and would not heed her signs to stop. She set down her light on the bank, and laying hold of the boat, scrambled in, at the expense of a wetting. She could never have forgiven his departure without saying a final farewell. Neither of them spoke while crossing; and it was necessary to make haste, as some moving lights on the distant water gave token of the approach of witnesses. The wind blew chill, the young moon was disappearing, and the few and faint yellow fires looked dreary as they flickered through the darkness. Cuddie's hand had felt cold and clammy as he gave up the oar to Effie. She had never before attempted to deceive or mislead any one, and she dreaded meeting uncle Christopher by daylight, as much as if she had been abroad on a housebreaking expedition. It would be many hours yet before she could tell Walter; and how often might it be her lot to hear the family and neighbours speak of Cuddie, and to have to appear to know no more of him than they! Then the news would come to her mother, sooner or later, that he was a criminal Who had fled for his life. She was very wretched.

“Cuddie! you are not going without one word?” she cried, seeing him turn to step out of the boat as it touched the bank.

Without one word he went, for no words would come; but not without giving her some comfort. The agony of his last embrace eased her heart, which a light farewell would have well nigh broken. She dwelt upon it with a strange satisfaction as she recrossed the river; and as she closed her doors, and put out her light to weep in darkness till the morning; and when she related the story to her husband; and when, long after, they heard of the loss of Cuthbert Eldred among others of the crew of an American merchant vessel; and when, in subsequent years, Tim and she used to talk of the brother Cuddie who was the gentlest nurse and playfellow, the most generous brother, and the bravest youth that ever gave promise of being an honour to his class, and an assistance to his country in her times of need.

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Chapter VII.

LOYALTY PREVENTIVES.

Next day, there appeared a sufficient reason for Mrs. Eldred's there great desire that Tim should attend the opening of the Deep Cut. She was not found at her old place when Walter went to restore his charge. The cottage was shut up, and a friendly neighbour came out to deliver to Walter the message with which she had been entrusted for him. Mrs. Eldred had for some time found it difficult for her to live and maintain her blind son, and finding that she and her family, except her daughter, had been impoverished by interference with their industry in one form or another, she had brought herself to do that which if free, she would have despised. She had sued for a place in an almshouse, supported by the vaunted charity of a corporation which caused infinitely more want than it relieved. She had carefully kept this secret from Walter and his wife, knowing what efforts they would make to preserve a proud spirit like hers from the degradation of accepting charity. But she declared that she felt it, though a misery, no degradation. If the trade of the collieries was injured by a corporation in London, so as to deprive her of work, and if her eldest son was hindered by a corporation nearer home from carrying his labour to the best market, she felt that a maintenance was due from corporative funds, and she should receive it without any acknowledgment of obligation till the labour of the family was once more placed at the disposal of the family. The reproach of the pauper dress which she and Tim must henceforth wear must rest with those who had prevented her earning more honourable apparel; and she hoped her son and daughter would not take the matter too much to heart. It appeared that Mrs. Eldred had made these, her explanations, very fully and not very coolly to Mr. Milford, the surgeon, who had argued the matter with her: not attempting to deny that her connexions had been interfered with, but pleading that the interference had been more for good than for evil. But Mr. Milford liked corporations. An idle brother of his, who had been a great burden upon him, had been suddenly provided for by a corporation living; and he himself was still in possession of the Trinity House appointment for which he had canvassed Mr. Vivian some years before. He contended that government had, it appeared, (contrary to his expectation,) done a fine thing in authorizing the company to open the Deep Cut. Everybody knew how much rope was being manufactured there, and how much more was wanted; and when told of the impediments was to the removal of Adam's labour thither, he lauded the arrangements by which Adam could be maintained as a pauper in his native town, instead maintained of being left to casual charity. He insisted much on Christopher's prosperity; on the benevolence and usefulness of the interference of government in securing to him the rewards of his ingenuity, and thus enabling him to assist his connexions materially, if he would. Mrs. Eldred did not impute it to the government that Christopher did not seem more inclined to part with his worldly wealth than if he had openly valued as much, as he professed to despise it: but it was not the less true that Christopher's constant plea for economy was his expectation that his patent would be invaded, and that he should cease to gain by his invention, even if he were not involved in law proceedings to defend it. the principle of the patent law Mr. Milford

might praise unopposed; and the practical arrangements might be improved in time; but Mrs. Eldred could not allow it to be right that Adam should first be made idle by an absurdly long apprenticeship, and then kept idle by corporation restraints; and she would not acknowledge herself half so grateful for almshouse bounties as the surgeon thought her in duty bound to be. Many thanks for their charity, indeed! Mrs. Eldred said. Many thousands in a year might they well give away, considering how they prevented the earning of many more thousands; but the newspapers might as well be silent about their great generosity: for it behoved bodies of men, as well as individual men, to be just before they were generous; and there was little justice in tying a man's hands, however liberally they might put food into his mouth.

Fain would Walter and his wife have taken home the little lad, who seemed to have small relish for the almshouse, in anticipation or in reality. Adam, also, from time to time during the two years which passed before the peace, offered to take the boy home as often as a supply of work afforded him a home. But Mrs. Eldred could not part with Tim; nor could Mr. Severn, still her steady and kind friend, urge upon her a sacrifice which would have caused her restless mind too dangerous a leisure. When peace came, there were many symptoms of a revived querulousness. From the day of the general rejoicings, which offered no charms to her, she dropped expressions which gave as little pleasure to everybody as to herself, about Eldred's being in no hurry to return home. It was a folly in her to have ever expected it. Had he sent her a farthing of money, from the day he went away? It was known that he had changed his ship; had he come in the interval to visit her and his children? No no. She had heard much of the charms of a roving life, and of naval glory; and, doubtless, no such pleasures could be offered by a melancholy, distressed family as he could find in the service; and if he was looking after glory, he would hardly return to the dull duty of taking care of his own—a duty which his dullest neighbours had been discharging while he was away. She vehemently silenced poor Tim's suggestion that his father might not be still living. She would listen to no excuses on Eldred's behalf from Effie or Adam, till the latter had recourse to his old practice of taking his hat, and walking away; and Effie, with her usual ingenuousness, declared her uneasiness at hearing her father so spoken of. The readiest way to bring her mother round was to appear to agree with her ; but Effie could not pay the price of such disguise, even for the pleasure of hearing her mother speak the tenderness which lay at her heart.

The rebuke which attends upon querulousness more closely and constantly than upon almost any other fault, presently arrived. Effie had just left her in grave compassion, mixed with displeasure ; Tim was silently occupying himself in his new art of netting; and Mrs. Eldred was stalking about the little room, making a great bustle to carry off her own excitement, when a few stray words from the court=yard came in at the open window, and made Tim quit his seat.

“Take care, lad; you will stumble over the chair in the middle of the room. Why cannot you ask me for what you want?”

Tim steered cautiously round the chair, and gained the lattice.

“There's one below asking for us, mother,” said he.

“That is impossible. You cannot tell what they are saying below, in all the noise I am making. There is nobody but Adam that can be wanting us,” she continued. “I wish Adam would choose better times for coming: he is always sure to show himself when I am particularly busy, and there is nothing comfortable about us.”

Tim thought to himself that this was rather strange, so much complaint as he was accustomed to hear of Adam's coming so very seldom, and so often as it happened that his mother was particularly busy, and had nothing comfortable about her. He made no answer, however, being convinced that the inquirer below was not Adam. He presently went on,

“Mother, can you spare a minute, just to look out of the window at this person in the court?”

There was a something in Tim's manner that struck her. Instead of throwing down her brush impatiently, as he expected, she came silently, and laid her hand on his, as trembling it grasped the sill. She sank down on a seat after one glance, whispering,—

“My boy, it is your father!”

If Tim could have seen, he would not have known his father. Instead of the black-skinned, closely-cropped, and somewhat awful-looking person that he remembered his father, Eldred was now a weather-browned, blue-jacketed sailor, with a ringlet hanging duly down either cheek, and a little hat, which set off very favourably his broad, round face, now a little shaded by anxiety, but evidently meant to express a true sailor's joviality. Few eyes but a wife's would have recognised him at a first glance. A feeling of pride in him arose as she saw him stand in the doorway; and it tempered the bitter mortification which, in spite of all her professions and self-deception, she felt at being found by him in this place.

When her passion of joy and surprise was over, and her spirits began to dance in girlish lightness, her feelings of mortification found vent in a few slight hints of wonder and discontent. Eldred, with his wife beside him, Tim seated at his feet, and in momentary expectation of Effie's arrival, was disposed to take such hints kindly, though not perhaps with the fidgetty submission which he might have shown in old times. He had not sailed so much about the world for nothing ; nor fought so hard against the enemy to be drilled at home, as formerly. It was easy to be a great man to-day, his companions being more disposed to adore his greatness than to find any flaw in it.

“Send you money !” said he. “Why, you know very well that if I had had any you would have had it all, as soon as I could send it.”

“You do not mean that you have been working all these years for nothing?”

“I have got my wages at last; but, besides the hardship of the wages being so much lower than I had been accustomed to on our river, during the war, there was the worse hardship of our not being able to get our dues.”

“There would be few seamen in our colliers if such was the practice there.”

“And they must go on impressing for the navy as long as it is the practice in any part of it. Poor Cuddie! How I have been turning it in nay mind whether he would chance to be at! home, or whether he would be gone to London I never fancied his being so far out of reach.”

“Father! were you ever flogged? Did you ever try to desert?” inquired Tim.

“I flogged! I try to desert!” exclaimed Eldred, amidst a painful consciousness that his indignation at the words conveyed a reproach to his dear, absent son. “No, Tim, I had a good ship, and a good captain, and”

“And went into the service with more heart than Cuddie,” interrupted Mrs. Eldred; “and would not give it up till the last minute, and then were sorry to leave it for home and a dull keel on the Tyne.”

“You are out there, my woman. The time in my life when I had the most mind to drown myself was when I was stopped in my way to you, a year and a half ago You would not have said much of my liking for a sea-life, if you had seen me,—how I raved for the land as they forced me back from it, just when I thought five minutes more would have set me ashore.”

“What do you mean? and when?”

“A year and a half ago. as I tell you, when I was impressed a second time. I never cursed a Frenchman as I cursed the boat with the infernal gang in it that met us point blank, as we were turning into harbour, and boarded us. Some of the poor fellows with me let themselves out about home. I did not, because I knew it would be of no use ; but, to be sure, one or two of them had served as much as twelve years without seeing their families, and my case was not so bad. But

should have knocked the gang overboard with my bundle with right good-will. I hated my bundle as much as I hated them at the moment, because of having to take it back and unpack it, when I had put it up for home. So you never knew I had been pressed a second time, love?”

“Knew it, no! If I had, I believe the law would have been altered by this day. I would have got all the women, injured like myself, to go up on our knees to the king's own presence, and we would not have left him till we had melted his heart, and got his promise to do away the law.”

“The best of it is that the law of the land is against impressment; it is against violence being offered to an innocent man in any way.”

“Then I suppose there is a particular law to allow impressment.”

“No; no further than that there is a list of those who may be legally exempted, seamen on special service, or protected by the proper authorities, and so on. The marking out

in this way who is to go free, looks like countenancing the practice ; but, beyond this, the law is against the practice. I used to insist on this, at favourable times, but, as you may suppose, to no purpose, owing, perhaps, in part to my endeavour to reconcile myself to my lot. The people at home are they that must make a stir about it. If we pressed men manage to make ourselves tolerably happy, we are sure to be asked, 'Where is the hardship?' And if we are dull and indolent, (as I fear poor Cuddie was, and with too much reason,) they despise us and flog us, and ask what the testimony of a flogged man is worth. So, for the remedy, we must look to the people at home; and they have, too many of them, some grievances of their own to complain of I am sorry indeed to find poor Adam in such an uncertain state, now high and now low. Is it the danger from the overseer that keeps him from settling at the Cut?"

"Yes, and reason enough. He has no notion of putting himself at the mercy of any overseer or churchwarden who might choose to send him home to his parish on the mere prospect of work falling off. The thought of it chafes me as much as seeing Mr. Severn still no more than 0tley's poor curate, when I know that if each had their deserts, if the people were allowed to interest themselves in choosing the pastor that would do his duty best, Mr. Severn would be one of the first in honour and in place, and Otley (if he had not been anywhere but in the church) would have had to wait for a flock till he grew as wise as the children that are now under him, and as sober as our Adam,—and that is not supposing much."

"And what does Mr. Severn himself say?"

"Nothing about Otley; but he speaks up for some things that I should like to see done away. I detest the very name of a corporation, or of any kind of meddling, after all we have suffered."

"I think you are wrong there. A corporation may do many fine things, as long as it keeps to its proper business, which is not to meddle with industry in any way, religious or other. But when it is desirable that a thousand persons should speak with one voice, and that that voice should be authority, and should go down to the next age,—and when it is wanted to give a single responsibility (that shall not be always changing) to a party whose members must change. I think a corporation is the best way of making many into one. I mean where learning has to be taken care of, as in the universities, or inferior governments, like those of our great towns. But when corporations take upon them to favour some, and exclude others, and to fetter all that belong to them, I will go as far as you in complaints of them. Walter seems the most prosperous of you all."

"Yes: now his garden is not smoked. It was a glad day for him and Effie when leave was got to sell coal in London by weight. It put an end to screening and burning. It fell out ill for me, as everything does. But things will prosper better now," she continued, after a glance at her husband's countenance.

"It seems to me as if Effie was long in coming," observed Eldred. "How long will it take you to move out of this place, when she is once here?"

“Move! O, not half an hour.”

“Well, you don't suppose I mean you to stay another hour here. Make ready to be a keel-man's wife again, and leave this room for some poor creature”

“That will be more thankful for it than I have ever pretended to be. But—suppose the pressgang”

“We are safe till the next war; and by that time, perhaps, there may have gone up such a cry from the whole empire as will make our rulers man our navy with men instead of slaves. It cannot be done in a day; but neither, I hope, shall we go to war in a day; and if we set about training our willing youth in time, we may have a navy manned against the day of need as no navy has ever yet been manned. When I was last in the channel Bless her dear soul, here is Effie! And Walter behind her! And his father too! That is what I did not expect. Now, if we had Adam ”

He stopped short, and during the silence, many a tender thought was sent after Cuddie.

Tim was the first to lead the way out of the alms-house; and no inmate ever left it followed by so few regrets as his mother. For her part, having shown no gratitude while in it, she never afterwards forgave the indignity of having been its inhabitant, though the immediate act of becoming so was her own.

As for the rest of the family, their interests were so far from being injured by the growing prosperity of the Deep Cut, that they all benefited by the impetus given to trade, and the new capital and enterprise, unfettered by legislative interference, which it put in motion in their neighbourhood. Their worst grievance henceforth was when rumours of wars brought tribulation among them. Then schemes of flight an hiding were whispered abroad, and discussed by the fire-side, and Tim was regarded half-enviously not only as usual for his virtuous cheerfulness but for his security from the perils and woes of impressment. There has never since been a war, however ; and it is happily yet possible that before the day of strife shall arrive, if arrive it must, Great Britain will have incalculably improved her resources by rendering the service of her sons voluntary, and their labour wholly free.

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Summary Of Principles Illustrated In This Volume.

The duty of government being to render secure the property of its subjects, and their industry being their most undeniable property, all interference of government with the direction and the rewards of industry is a violation of its duty towards its subjects.

Such interference takes place when some are countenanced by legislation in engrossing labours and rewards which would otherwise be open to all;—as in the case of privileged trading corporations;

When arbitrary means of preparation are dictated as a condition of the exercise of industry, and the enjoyment of its fruits, as in the case of the apprenticeship law;—

When labourers are compelled to a species of labour which they would not have chosen,—as in the ease of the impressment of seamen.

The same duty of securing the free exercise of industry requires that companies should be privileged to carry on works of public utility which are not within the reach of individual enterprize, as in the case of roads, canals, bridges, &c., and also,

That the fruits of rare ingenuity and enterprize should be secured to the individual,—according to the design of our patent law.

In the first mentioned instances of interference, the three great evils arise of

The restraint of fair competition in some cases;

The arbitrary increase of competition in other cases;

The obstruction of the circulation of labour and capital from employment to employment, and from place to place.

In the last mentioned instances of protection, none of these evils take place.

the end.

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