



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823

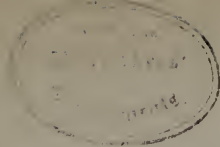
H17w

1869

v.1

1/1

WENDERHOLME



W E N D E R H O L M E

A STORY OF
LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE

BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON

AUTHOR OF 'A PAINTER'S CAMP,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCLXIX



823

H 17 w

1869

v. 1

TO AN OLD LADY IN
YORKSHIRE.

Although, when you last came to see me, you were quite an eminent pedestrian, and rode with me on muleback in Savoy, and walked on glaciers, and jumped with a skipping-rope to please the children, and would, no doubt, have waltzed if there had been any dancing—and although your hair was abundant and brown, and, contrarily to the custom of the present age, was the product of the head which it adorned—you are an old lady, so far as seventy years can make you one.

And you remember a time when the country in which this story is placed was quite different from what it is to-day—when the old proprietors lived in their halls undisturbed by modern innovation, and neither enriched by building-leases

Ms. Laughton 17 Nov 53
Ms. Spencer 36
4 Sep 53
Ms. B. Ray

nor humiliated by the rivalry of the great manufacturers. You have seen wonderful changes come to pass—the valleys filled with towns, and the towns connected by railways, and the fields covered with suburban villas. You have seen people become richer and more refined, though perhaps less merry, than they used to be, till the simple, unpretending life of the poorer gentlefolks of the past has become an almost incredible tradition; and we hear with wonder how some young ladies, of ancient lineage and honourable station in society, went to balls in open spring-carts, and how their fathers made merry on home-brewed ale after dinner-parties at one p.m.

This story is fixed at a more recent date, within the writer's memory and experience. Whilst writing a certain portion of it, his thoughts turned constantly to you, in the time of your sickness and pain; and now he begs you to accept the dedication of it, dear old lady, with kisses of dutiful affection.

P R E F A C E.

IT was at the suggestion of an experienced, yet perhaps too hopeful, friend, that the present writer, who for some years has been more accustomed to critical than imaginative composition, ventured to attempt a work of fiction. The desire to do so was, however, by no means new to him; but it had always been restrained by the conviction, that whilst no branch of literature allures aspirants by such apparent facility as the novel, there is not one which makes such large claims on an author's general powers, and upon his knowledge of men and things. Hence it seemed more prudent to defer any projects of this kind until middle life; but, in the meanwhile, they gave a zest to observation, and an interest in things generally, which, it is natural

to suppose, may have helped to prepare the writer for his task.

A dramatist, or teller of stories, needs a quality which is not so necessary to men in other occupations, and which might sometimes even be detrimental to their activity—namely, the widest tolerance, and even sympathy, which may be compatible with the rectitude of the moral standard. He needs this tolerance, because without it he could not speak with justice of various orders of men—for you can never have the patience to study any man accurately if you have a bitter prejudice against him. Thus, in English novels, French characters are usually not studies but caricatures, and *vice versa*; in many aristocratic novels the middle class is treated with a mixture of ridicule and contempt; whilst in novels which emanate from the middle class itself, or at least from the lower section of it, it is difficult to meet with a recognisable portrait of a gentleman. The fences which separate class from class, sect from sect, nation from nation, are so high, so solid, and so strong, that nothing short of a resolute deter-

mination, or very peculiar circumstances of birth, can get through them, or over them. But the novelist *must* get over them, and when once he has done so, it is likely that he will see something to approve of—something that attracts his sympathy—in men whom the boundary lines of society have set apart as his natural enemies. He may have his moments of misanthropy, but he will always be meeting with some visible and undeniable fact in actual life that will not allow him to be a misanthropist for long. He hated some nation or class, but on coming to know it better he sees some admirable traits which cast, as it were, a spoonful of alkali into the acid vial of his wrath. He despised some old woman because she was stingy; but finding out afterwards that she has been denying herself to save for poor nephews and nieces, he discovered that stinginess might possibly be a virtue. He scorned some Papist for believing too much, some doubter for believing too little; but on a nearer view found out that the Papist was by no means wanting either in information or common-sense, and that the sceptic had a sense

of honour so delicate that there really was no occasion to lock up the silver spoons when he came into the house. Nay, I have even heard of a Frenchman who convinced himself, by personal observation of our national manners and customs, that it is *not* the invariable practice of all Englishwomen to get drunk nightly on ardent spirits; and such is the progress of tolerant and just feeling due to an increased intercourse between the two nations, that instances might be cited of women in our own country who are now willing to admit that, under favourable circumstances, a Frenchwoman may possibly be virtuous.

The reader is respectfully requested to extend a similar indulgence to several characters in this book who may not happen to live, as it were, under the same mental or social latitude and longitude as himself; and if he should ever feel disposed to quarrel with them for not being precisely such as he is, let me submit to his consideration the following wise saying which was actually uttered by a poor but intelligent old woman in Lancashire: "It takes a deal o' sorts to make a world."

WENDERHOLME.



CHAPTER I.

So Jim went forth to meet them with a lantern, and old Sarah kept the supper warm.

Most women in Sarah's position would have had the consolation of a talk with some neighbour, who during the interval of waiting might have helped her to watch the jugged hare, and enlivened her with the most recent news of the locality; but as it happened that Twistle Farm, where she now reigned as housekeeper to Mr Isaac Ogden, a very well-to-do, middle-aged widower, was at least three miles from the nearest house, old Sarah was often condemned to hours of complete loneliness. How a farmhouse could be so entirely isolated as this was,

requires a few words of explanation. Mr Ogden, for reasons with which the reader will become acquainted in due time, and in conformity with the provisions of a then recent Act of Parliament, had taken a fancy to enclose about thirty acres of land in the middle of a very extensive moor that belonged to his own family, and of which, in consequence of his habits as a sportsman, he knew every recognisable spot. The objects which he sought—and he had the strongest possible reasons for seeking them—were solitude and health, and as much of a total revolution in his habits of life as might be attained without entirely severing himself from the neighbouring valleys, where all his friends lived, and to which he was bound by the cords of a local attachment stronger, perhaps, than even he himself was aware of. Having chosen a place very precisely suited to his own needs, and therefore, as was natural, not so well suited to the needs of men less exceptionally situated, and who severely criticised his taste, Isaac Ogden built a small but substantial house, with a barn attached to it, and stabling for three horses and as many cows. As pecuniary profit did not enter into his calculation, he had no intention of selling farm-produce in any other shape than that of living animals, and both cows and horses

were kept simply for the use of the little household. When, as would occasionally happen, there was a considerable superfluity of milk, it was always absorbed by a kennel of four pointers, and the prosperous inhabitant of the pigsty.

Old Sarah was too much accustomed to the place to feel any serious apprehension about the safety of her master, when, as on the present occasion, he had to come home in the dark. Besides, although the night was of the murkiest, it was only just ten o'clock, and there is a superstition about hours which more or less strongly affects all of us, and from which a woman in Sarah's position was not likely to be exempt. From dusk till ten, however dark it is, there is nothing very terrible about the darkness, and the consciousness that people are sitting cosily round cheerful fires encourages and supports us; but when the world's human inhabitants are hushed in sleep, and darkness reigns not only on the external world but even in the abodes of men, there is something awful in the universality of it. If old Sarah had been accustomed to read for her amusement, she would have found the accomplishment of great value in her present situation; but, though not altogether ignorant of letters, she found it more convenient to do her reading by

deputy ; and her fellow-servant Jim, who read the Manchester paper when his master had done with it, kept her acquainted with the principal events of the day—events which she estimated in the following order : first the thunderstorms, then the murders, and finally, the robberies and accidents.

Poor Sarah in her solitude had, however, a consolation which a tyrannical conventionalism denies to women of higher social position, but which many of our male readers will fully appreciate. And now as Jim is gone, and she cannot see a plate or a pan in all the bright kitchen that offends even an eye so critical as hers, she takes down from the chimney-piece an oval leaden box, with a massive lid crowned with the resemblance of a man's head in a night-cap, and having selected a clean tobacco-pipe of white clay with a stem more than two feet long, fills it in a leisurely manner, and sits down to smoke—not in any common chair, but in a sort of episcopal throne of polished oak, on the softest of cushions, under an oaken canopy, and with tall oak back and sides—an invention, in this case at least, not designed with any view to the maintenance of dignity, but simply as the best of all imaginable precautions against draughts. It had been a

present to old Sarah from her master's mother, an elderly but remarkable woman, whose acquaintance we shall make in due time, and who had thought it the most likely means of warding off some rheumatic or neuralgic pains in the shoulders and back of the neck from which the poor woman had been a sufferer, and which, it was thought, might be brought on by her habit of sitting with her back to the kitchen-door that opened to the east, and never altogether excluded the bitter wind which blows from that quarter of the compass. Mrs Ogden had carried her kindness so far as to make the cushion with her own hands: the upper side of it was composed of small hexagonal patches of various very rich old silks, with a sort of star of black velvet in the middle; and the lining was one piece of the most brilliant scarlet cloth.

Whilst Sarah was sitting in this chair of state, indulging in a luxury usually denied to her sex, and thus practically asserting the rights of woman at a time when they were less openly advocated than now, her fellow-servant Jim Henderson was making the best of his way with a lantern down a narrow, stony cart-track, not yet worthy of the name of a road, which led over the wild moor, and finally lost itself on the slope of one

of the minor hills or buttresses of the high country of the heather. The turf here was much more smooth and grassy than in the upper region ; and an experienced carter, by taking his vehicle to the right or left as occasion required, could keep its two wheels tolerably level with each other, notwithstanding the general steepness of the extensive slope. As there were no bogs in this part of the country, it was not thought necessary to mark out a regular track, and the inhabitants of the Twistle Farm seldom crossed the moor precisely at the same place. Jim Henderson felt therefore considerable uncertainty about finding his master here, and would probably have waited where the heather ceased to grow, if he had not heard in the distance the bark of a dog, and shortly afterwards the rapid gallop of hoofs upon the turf.

And out of the darkness, on the trackless, desolate moor, came a little boy of eight or nine years old, riding the roughest of all possible Highland ponies, and followed by an enormous mastiff: the biggest dog, the smallest horse, and the most juvenile rider that ever crossed a wild country after dark.

“ Master Jacob, Master Jacob,” said Jim Henderson, “ if your father has stopped at th’ Red

Lion, as I guess he has done, you shouldn't have come up here by yoursel' of a dark neet; you should 'ave stopped at Milend with your grandmother."

But little Jacob, exhilarated with his gallop, only laughed at Jim's fears, and said he liked riding after dark, and knew the way well enough; besides, what was there to be afraid of? He didn't believe in ghosts, and as for robbers, let them catch him, that was all; he should like to see them try—wouldn't old Tiger tear them to pieces first! Just then Jacob reined up his little pony and added, "Jim, have you a long candle in that lantern; have you enough to last half an hour?"

"Plenty to see us up to Twistle Farm."

"I say, Jim, let us go back a bit; I've lost something."

"Lost summat, Master Jacob; well, an' who's to find it all over a moor like this of a neet? We mun go home now, an' come a' seekin' i' th' mornin' by broad dayleet: an' what is it as yau'n lost, Master Jacob?"

"Father's silver-topped whip that he lent me; and if he comes back early to-morrow morning, and finds it out, he'll nearly kill me for it."

As might be expected, the search for the whip

was fruitless, and little Jacob came home with his friend Jim in a state of considerable anxiety about it. Six months before, the loss of his father's whip would have troubled him very little, but the father he had then and the father he had now could scarcely be considered the same person. Mr Isaac Ogden had become highly irritable of late, and the effects of the change were painfully felt by every member of the little household, the very dogs themselves not excepted.

It was rather a relief, perhaps, to old Sarah and Jim that their master had not returned that night. It is true that Sarah feared him little for herself, but she had been living, during the past three months, in a state of much anxiety about the boy. And now, having served the jugged hare in the parlour, as carefully and neatly as if Mr Ogden had been there instead of the child, and filled his little silver tankard with small beer, she took the liberty of sitting down near the door, and made several very minute inquiries about the lost whip, in answer to which little Jacob, who had admired and coveted it too often not to know every detail, gave her as clear a description as he could.

The next morning the sun rose brightly on the beautiful solitude of Twistle Farm. The situation of the house had been chosen rather with a view

to retirement than for extent of prospect, and it was hidden in a little dell, surrounded by large masses of grey rock. The abundance of pure spring-water had been one of the chief reasons that had induced Mr Ogden to establish himself here ; and he had been able, at a very moderate expense, to reclaim a considerable extent of pasture-land in the bottom of the valley, and, by closing the exit of a small stream, to add a miniature lake to the already numerous beauties of the place. Here some large rocks came down to the water's edge, and a few enormous blocks were more than half submerged. This lake was Mr Ogden's especial fancy and pride. He was an excellent swimmer and an accomplished skater, so that the water had other charms for him than the already considerable ones of its picturesque beauty, being as useful to him (perhaps one might say as necessary) as a table to a billiard - player, or a smooth lawn to an amateur of croquet.

It was unfortunate that Mr Ogden did not add some taste for architecture to these other pure and healthy tastes of his, but if he had any faculties of the artistic kind, they lay dormant to the end of his life. The house at Twistle was simply a small farmhouse, utterly devoid not only of every pretension to architectural beauty, but even of

those more vulgar pretensions which may be generalised under the epithet "genteel." It did not even contain a dining-room or a drawing-room, and the reception-rooms were limited to a single parlour, with a very ordinary carpet on its deal floor, and a set of the commonest mahogany furniture. In the way of fine art, its only adornments were the portraits of some favourite horses and dogs, executed in oil by a gentleman who visited the locality from time to time, and had the shrewdness to take out his pay rather in the shape of long visits and ample potations than in the more tangible form of money, so that if he stayed long and consumed largely, his charges at least were moderate, and his employers never accurately knew how much his masterpieces had cost them.

No sooner had Master Jacob finished his breakfast of porridge and milk than he ran off to the stable and saddled Jerry, and rode as fast as he could to seek for the fatal whip. Mr Ogden, it is true, had stayed at the Red Lion in order to drink deeply with his friends, but Jacob well knew by former experience that however much his father might have drunk the night before, he would set off homewards early in the morning—for Isaac Ogden was one of those men who are proud of

their morning freshness ; and, indeed, he had succeeded in persuading himself that the excesses of the night did little harm if they left no visible traces the next day. So it happened that within a few minutes of the time of Jacob's departure from the Twistle Farm, his father mounted at the Red Lion Inn at Shayton, and rode leisurely as far as the toll-gate, where the pavement ceased, and he put his horse to a brisk trot.

And now, whilst he is riding fast along the turnpike road, let us see what manner of man he is. Forty years old, we should guess, or thereabouts, and in the enjoyment of the most robust health ; a tall, well-made, well-dressed man, greatly admired in this neighbourhood for the qualities best appreciated here. If we say that his health is robust, we speak as ordinary observers ; but a gig is meeting him now, whose driver, being a doctor accustomed to look rather deeper than we do, sees evidence in signs that escape us. The Doctor is one of the most intelligent men in a neighbourhood where good brains are as plentiful as full purses, and the range of his acquired information is not small ; so that if I were asked whether I would rather pass an evening with Dr Bardly or with the richest magnate in the parish, I should certainly prefer the Doctor's rum

and tobacco, seasoned with his witty and well-informed conversation, to the best claret and havannahs without it. And yet, if I am to report his talk quite faithfully, the refined and educated reader will scarcely respect the Doctor so much as I do ; and I shall have the utmost difficulty in persuading him that the object of my admiration not only deserves it for his natural abilities and the worth of his character, but even for his culture and attainments. He is still an eager and enthusiastic student of nature ; his anatomy, so far from having been forgotten, has been followed with such quiet and persevering enthusiasm, that he is now (without being disposed to make any display of his knowledge) one of the best comparative anatomists of his time. He is also an enthusiastic botanist, and has missed few opportunities of acquainting himself with the geology of the interesting district where he lives, and which he often traverses alone in his gig in all imaginable directions. Let us add, that without being an artist he is an excellent scientific draughtsman ; and without being a man of much literary taste or attainment, a hard and resolute reader of philosophical works, and a man keenly alive to the intellectual as well as political movements of his time. And yet, O gentle and edu-

cated reader ! this master of masses of knowledge far greater than most of us ever attain, could not conquer, or did not care about conquering, the most ordinary difficulties of English speech ! He wrote the language as correctly as any of us, but in speaking he committed sins of aspiration and other crimes of almost equal magnitude. For example, take the single word *often*. Since "often" means *many times*, Dr Bardly seems to have thought it necessary to put an *s* after it to indicate repetition or plurality, and since he prefixed a sonorous *h* to it for emphasis, the word, in the Doctor's vocabulary, became *hoftens*; and I am ashamed to say that till the day of his death he never pronounced it in any other manner.

And Mr Isaac Ogden, though he had ten thousand pounds, and was the elder brother of the most prosperous manufacturer in Shayton, and generally admired, as I have said, for qualities esteemed in that township, did not think it necessary, either, to speak pure English every day of the week, though he was perfectly well able to do so on due occasion. He was like the thrifty housewives of Shayton, who are amply provided with the most admirable table-linen, and teapots of massive silver, but who would feel that all their character for good management was imperilled if

these things were made use of on ordinary days. The truth is that *nobody* in the whole township of Shayton except the clergyman, and a few young ladies who considered themselves models of refinement, ever thought of such a thing as speaking unprovincial English in the ordinary intercourse of life, and it would have been condemned as affectation if they had attempted it. When the eldest Miss Hanby, the attorney's daughter, came home from an elegant finishing school in London, and talked about her "aant," her father lost all patience, and exclaimed, "aant, aant—she used bein' thy *hant*!"

So when the Doctor met Mr Ogden that morning, he said, "Well, an' what 'an yau bin up to; nought 'at's reet, I reckon?"

And Mr Isaac Ogden answered, "Doctor, when I want ye I'st send for ye; an' I'st answer none o' your impidint queshtions till such time as I give ye authority to ask 'em."

But the Doctor, though the Lancashire habit of banter was too strong in him to permit any more serious opening to a conversation, was really anxious about his friend Mr Ogden, and would not let him off so easily. "Have ye gotten yer breakfast yet, Isaac Ogden?" said the Doctor; and Mr Ogden admitted that he had not.

On this Dr Bardly put on an expression of most extraordinary seriousness, and looking very hard at his friend, shook his head, and muttered, "I thought as mich."

"What sayn ye?" said Ogden, half irritated.

"I say," answered Bardly, once more looking full in Ogden's face—"I say that when they'n spiled ther stummucks wi' gin-an'-water, an' weakened their digeshtion, they'll *hoftens* go 'bout breakfast.

Now of all the terrible things, as Dr Bardly perfectly well knew, that could be said to an inhabitant of Shayton, this accusation of not being able to eat a breakfast was the most terrible. All the men in the place were more or less given to drink; and the most moderate and exemplary of them—men who were cited as models of abstinence—would in any other part of England be looked upon as toppers, or in a fair way of becoming so. Even the Doctor himself, in addition to a glass of strong ale whenever he felt the least disposition to be thirsty, and a glass of port wine at the house of every well-to-do patient he visited, never failed to conclude his day with a couple of stiff tumblers of rum-and-water. And yet the Doctor was considered so very temperate, and in his own opinion was such a shining example of

self-denial, that whilst he saw the beams in other men's eyes, there was not even a mote in his own. And, indeed, in Shayton such love of creature-comforts as the good Doctor permitted himself was comparatively a very small mote; for such was the tremendous prevalence of drinking in Shayton, that out of twenty adult male inhabitants, fifteen either died of *delirium tremens*, or were only saved from that otherwise inevitable fate by the interposition of some other and more creditable malady. Now there is always a certain stage in the life of a drunkard at which his appetite begins to be visibly enfeebled, and this shows itself most plainly at the morning meal. Hence the men of Shayton were always anxious to prove to their wives and sisters that, whatever might have been their excesses, they were still perfectly competent to eat a hearty breakfast; and in order to demonstrate this in the most undeniable manner, they were wont to stuff themselves till nature revolted, and the very act of swallowing became an impossibility. If the most temperate of Frenchmen had visited Shayton, he would have been looked upon as a lost being, unless he could have so far overcome his national habits as to swallow three greasy muffins, two eggs, a few slices of cold ham, and two large

cups of execrable coffee at eight o'clock in the morning.

When the Doctor had delivered his last shot, he gave his reins a shake, and the wheels of his gig made three revolutions. Then they suddenly came to a standstill, and the Doctor looked round at his friend, adding, "Well, if you reckon as you can eat anything, come and breakfast wi' me, then; it'll be just ready about now, an' th' eggs is sure to be fresh." Under other circumstances a refusal might have been possible, but after that taunt about inability to eat a breakfast, the Doctor well knew that a refusal was not possible. So Mr Ogden trotted alongside the gig as far as the Doctor's house.

That house, it must be admitted, was not situated very pleasantly. There was a large mill just in front of it, on the opposite side of the street—a brick building, six storeys high, with sixty windows in its monotonous façade, and a general coating of soot. The top of the chimney was just visible from the street, and it poured forth such masses of opaque black smoke that the sky was often obscured by it; and there fell a steady rain of black specks, blackening the greasy slime on the slippery stone pavement, and covering all the leaves of the poor little trees in the Doctor's

small garden with a noxious coat inimical to their vegetable respiration. Few plants, indeed, could live there, and for miles round Shayton they struggled and suffered; but the Doctor himself had become, from habit, perfectly indifferent to the neighbourhood of the mill, and had even got a sort of liking for its unceasing and monotonous hum. Being a confirmed old bachelor, he found room enough in his house for all his favourite studies; and, after having made sure of the place by purchase, had laid out two or three hundred pounds in arranging it to his liking. The whole of the garret was a museum of comparative anatomy: one room contained a herbarium, which included specimens of every known plant in the district; and another held the Doctor's library, chiefly consisting of scientific and philosophical works. He had no drawing-room, and what was called the dining-room was simply a general sitting-room or parlour. Here Mr Ogden found a breakfast-table very neatly arranged, and awaiting only the arrival of the master.

As Dr Bardly had to see a patient in the surgery, Martha, his old housekeeper, who knew Mr Ogden very well, brought him the Manchester paper. The only news in it which in any way concerns the reader of these pages was the following:

“THE MILITIA.—It is believed that the twentieth regiment of Royal Lancashire Militia, whose headquarters are fixed at Sootythorn, will be commanded by John Stanburne, Esq. of Wenderholme Hall, in Yorkshire. Mr Stanburne is the representative of one of the most ancient families in the county, and although a young man, has had some military experience as an infantry officer. The appointment is generally approved of.”

Under the heading “Haut Ton,” which words, to many readers inexplicably mysterious, were entwined with a wreath in which rose, shamrock, and thistle were ingeniously combined, appeared another paragraph concerning Mr Stanburne.

“Colonel and Lady Helena Stanburne are entertaining the Earl and Countess of Adisham and a select party at Wenderholme Hall.”

This latter paragraph, copied from the ‘Morning Post,’ was the confirmation of the former.

Now although Shayton was essentially a democratic and industrial place, and although nobody in the whole community had a pedigree—for even the Ogdens had been working men two generations back, and the oldest families in the township were those of two or three very small yeomen proprietors—still they took an interest in the

doings of the great world, and Mr Isaac did not fail to read the above paragraphs about Mr Stanburne of Wenderholme, or Wendrum as it was generally pronounced. In fact, although Wenderholme Hall was in another county, and at least twenty-nine miles from Shayton by the highroad (which followed the level of the valley, and was therefore very circuitous), still in a certain sense Mr Stanburne was Mr Ogden's very next neighbour, for not a single house intervened between Twistle Farm on the Lancashire side of the moor, and Wenderholme on the Yorkshire side—nothing but a rolling expanse of heathery highland, inhabited by innumerable grouse.

The first thing Dr Bardly was disposed to talk about that morning at breakfast did not, however, relate either to Mr John Stanburne or the Lady Helena Basenthorpe his wife, or her august parents, the Earl and Countess of Adisham. It is true that Mr Ogden attempted to start a conversation in this direction, but the attempt was a signal failure, for Dr Bardly, as he poked the fire energetically, turned round in the very middle of the operation and said, "Mr Ogden, I reckon we've got something to talk over together 'at's nearer to us than Wendrum 'all." And no sooner were the two seated than the Doctor began his attack.

“ I could like very well to know where Isaac Ogden made a beast of himself last night.”

“ I wish doctors could mind their own business,” said Ogden. “ Whenever I want you I’ll send for you ; but it isn’t civil to talk to me like that in your own ’ouse.”

“ Civil ! who talks about bein’ civil ? I didn’t ax you ’ere to be civil to ye ! I want to know how many glasses you drank last night at th’ Red Lion, and what sort o’ stuff it was. Martha !” —here entered the old housekeeper with another muffin — “ step over to th’ Red Lion an’ ask James Hardcastle how many glasses Mr Ogden drank last night, and what sort of spirits he took.”

Martha was too much accustomed to her master’s ways to feel any astonishment at this order, and set off immediately to the Red Lion. Neither host nor guest spoke a syllable till she put her head in at the door and said laconically, “ Brandy-and-water ’ot, fourteen glasses.”

“ Now if you go on in this way, Mr Isaac Ogden,” said the Doctor, in perfectly good English, “ you will shortly be very seriously ill—very seriously ill ; you will have an attack of *delirium tremens* ; and in your present condition, the nervous system being evidently shattered, it is quite possible that you might not recover from such an

attack." Then, without leaving his victim time for a rejoinder, he added, "How's little Jacob?"

"Little Jacob's all right," answered Mr Ogden, sulkily.

"Poor little lad," said the Doctor; "he's a fine little lad—it's a pity he should have such a father."

"Nay, now, Bardly, whatever you may say again' me an' my ways, you cannot say I'm a bad father. I do all I can for th' lad, an' always 'ave done. He's as fond of me as other little lads are o' their mothers. I'm both father an' mother to him, an' I set more store on him than he knows on." Here Isaac Ogden's face flushed with a not unmanly emotion, and there was just a perceptible moisture in his eye. The paternal affection, which was the best side of his nature, had been fully roused, and gave him firm ground on which to resist the attacks of his terrible friend. But the Doctor, who was by far the more keenly perceptive man of the two, had just done what he wished with Ogden, and now came the final assault.

"I don't say you may not be a good father to the lad now, but it isn't likely that you'll be so very long. If you go on drinkin' you'll become hirritable, an' when there's any morbid hirrita-

bility, there's hoften a very great impatience of chilter. I shouldn't like to see any child as I'd a fancy for shut up in a 'ouse with a drunkard, an' little Jacob's one o' my special favourites. By the by, here's a bit of a present I bought for him the other day in Manchester; it's a small silver hunting-horn for him to let you know where he is when he's out ramblin' on the moor. He'll be able to answer that great bell o' yours that you ring at dinner-time." The horn was a plain little one of pure silver, with the inscription, "Jacob Ogden, Twistle Farm, from his friend, A. Bardly."

The French say that little presents keep up friendship, and the Doctor had rather a habit of making little presents. As soon as this one had been sufficiently admired, the donor recurred to his serious purpose, and became both scientific and philosophical. The tone of banter and scolding was cast aside, and he gravely showed how easily deterioration of character might be brought about by purely physical causes. The chief subject of his discourse was "morbid hirritability;" but although the letter *h* was used in such a manner as to deprive Dr Bardly of all claim to the title of "gentleman" (as the word is understood in polite society), the substance of his talk was

full of knowledge, and its intention was full of kindness. He had spoken the truth in avowing an affection for little Jacob; but he might have declared with equal truth, if such a declaration had been compatible with the external rudeness of his habitual behaviour, that he loved not only the little boy but his erring and misguided father. Abel Bardly was the best and sincerest friend that Isaac Ogden ever possessed, and for the last six months he had been grievously anxious about him. There had been a time of similar anxiety about four years previously, as the reader will shortly gather from the lips of Mr Ogden himself.

How marvellous it is, that heaven-sent instinct of confession! Not only Roman Catholic ladies, but men and women of every religion, and of no religion, have some confessor to whom it is a relief to speak with frankness about the errors that oppress the mind. Dr Bardly was quite accustomed to this office of father-confessor, and many a time did he, figuratively speaking, enter the confessional, and close the door, and listen patiently to the poor whisperer at the lattice. Men and women who would have shrunk from the tonsured priest as from some black and noxious animal, and who would not even have sought

out a Protestant clergyman for any admitted purpose of the kind, went into Dr Bardly's confessional quite unhesitatingly. And very queer and terrible things did he hear therein sometimes.

“Doctor,” said Isaac Odgen, “it’s a terrible place, is Shayton, especially for anybody that’s fond o’ company. You know well enough how bad I were four or five year sin’, but it wasn’t so much because I were fond o’ liquor; I never drank by my ownself, same as Seth Schofield ’at empties his bottle o’ brandy every night by his own fireside, with no better company than his newspaper. But there were two or three chaps i’ Shayton at that time as were rare good company, an’ we used to meet together at th’ Red Lion of a night, an’ sit laughin’ an’ talkin’ till midnight, an’ one says, ‘Let’s ’ave another glass;’ an’ another says, ‘Come, Ogden, fill up again, lad;’ an’ another says, ‘He’s nobbut gettin’ on slowly, isn’t Ogden?’ so I filled up an’ filled up so as not to be behindhand. An’ then, when I’d gotten into th’ habit on’t, I grew to be as bad as any on ’em; and at last, like a fool as I were, I come to take a pride in it, for I reckoned I could carry more b’out showin’ it than any other chap i’ Shayton. And t’other chaps egged me on, an’ made

bets about me, how much I could stand. An' one time, when I was partner with my brother Jacob in our concern, I'd made a bet as I'd drink a bottle o' brandy, an' go an' pay our 'ands, and never make a mistake; but Jacob saw well enough as I'd taken too much, and after I'd made two or three slips, he shoves me o' one side, and says, 'Isaac, *I'll* pay our 'ands to-night.' So, like a drunken fool as I was, I got into a passion, and, as he wouldn't let me go on, I struck him, and twenty or thirty chaps saw me do it. After this Jacob said nothing, but he got me somehow into th' back countin'-house, and turned the key on me, an' I made such a noise as were fit to deafen anybody, an' if th' door hadn't heen a strong un, I s'd 'ave kicked it i' bits. They didn't let me out again till th' mill was empty, and Jacob 'ad gone home to mother at Milend. You recollect I didn't live with my mother and Jacob, so I went to my own house, cursin' and swearin'. I were i' bed the next mornin' when Jacob marches right up to th' bedside, and says, 'Isaac, I'll gi' thee ten thousand poundt to be shut on thee.' I said, 'It'll be right, Jacob;' an' 'orney Hanby drew up a deed, and I never went to th' mill any more."

"I can recollect well enough when you dissolved partnership," said the Doctor, "but I didn't

exactly know the circumstances." This, we are sorry to say, was a downright lie on the part of the worthy Doctor, who, like every other inhabitant of Shayton, was minutely familiar with all the details just narrated. Nor did the remainder of Mr Ogden's confession contain anything new to his host, as indeed it was very unlikely that it should, considering that the two had been on terms of intimacy during the whole of the period over which the narrative extends. And perhaps if Mr Isaac Ogden had been quite sincere with himself, he would have admitted that he was himself aware of the Doctor's clear knowledge on these points, and of the uselessness of his communication, so far as his hearer was concerned; but he felt the great need of talking about his past life, and Dr Bardly kindly encouraged him in this from the belief that it might affect his future. So Mr Ogden proceeded as follows:—

"If a man takes to drinking when he's got a business to look after, there's always a fair chance for him so long as he sticks to it; but if he leaves it, or if the business leaves him, and he's nothing before him but an idle life, then he's almost sure to get worse and worse. My brother Jacob did well for himself, and perhaps he did well for th' concern, when he got shut of me, but he didn't

do so well for his brother Isaac. He gave me money enough—my share in the business was scarcely worth seven thousand, and he offered me ten—but he left me to go to the devil, and didn't speak to me for six months. My mother came many a time, but by bad luck I was always either out o' th' 'ouse or else drunk, and I wouldn't go to Milend upo' 'count o' Jacob. This lasted till I had that go o' blue-devils, an' when I came round I swore I'd mend an' seek out th' loneliest spot within ten mile o' Shayton, and build myself a house there, and teach my little lad to read and write myself. So I fixed on Twistle, bein' the loneliest spot I could find; and as soon as I were busy about buildin' an' drainin' and makin' that bit of a fish-pond, I got both steadier i' my habits and better in 'ealth. But now that th' place is quite finished, I'm often very dull and lonely, and that's why I come down to Shayton, and see a bit o' company at th' Red Lion."

In this simple language did Isaac Ogden narrate a very noble struggle against sin. He had fled for safety to the wilderness, he had built himself a new dwelling whose virgin purity was defiled by no evil associations, and he had firmly resolved to lead a new life therein, and win for himself tranquillity and peace. The little estate

that he had won from the uncultivated moorland was to be a sacred refuge ; and in building the wall that enclosed it, and divided its sweet verdure from the rough heather and frowning crags around it, Ogden was not merely erecting a wall of grey sandstone, but at the same time spiritually building fortifications about his home. His firmest resolution had been this, that within the precincts of Twistle Farm he would always be perfectly sober ; and, to do him justice, this resolution had been kept quite faithfully, even to the present hour. But although, so long as the improvements about the place, or rather the very creation of it as a dwelling-place, had occupied him, he had stayed there week after week in the utmost apparent discomfort, yet in a condition of happiness to him quite novel and delicious, his absences became more frequent when all was finished ; and although he earnestly tried to avoid old habits, they gradually resumed their hold upon him, and now possessed him almost as absolutely as before, with the single difference that he kept sober at Twistle Farm. He would go to Manchester and besot himself for a whole week together in the hotel that he frequented, and where he was only too well known and too obediently served. He would be often seen of an evening in

the parlour of the Red Lion at Shayton, and the landlord now actually kept a bedroom exclusively for his use. The very rigidity of the law that he had made about never drinking at the Twistle Farm made the state of his nervous system almost intolerable to him when there; and the sweet solitude, which was to have been a refuge from all but the pleasantest and most innocuous cares, had become a hell of unsatisfied cravings, that always lay in wait for him when he went there, and gnawed his vitals till he fled from them to the coarse orgies of the alehouse. Still it was something to have defended the citadel of this one resolution, not to drink in his own house; and the Doctor praised him for it, and encouraged him.

“It seems to me,” added Dr Bardly, “that you want a little better society than such as we have i’ Shayton. It’s a miserable spot for any man with time on his ’ands. Now, as you saw just now in that Manchester paper, they’re startin’ the militia, and there’s to be a regiment at Sooty-thorn, under John Stanburne of Wendrum. I know John Stanburne, and I knew his father before him; and when they start these regiments they’re hoftens rather short o’ hofficers; so as I’m to be surgeon to Stanburne’s regiment, I’ve no doubt I could get you a leaftenancy. What d’ye

say, Ogden, to bein' a leaftenant? It's my opinion it 'uld be about the best thing for you. You're far too much by yourself up at Twistle, and Shayton folk are worth nothing at all for a chap like you."

So it was decided that Mr Bardly was to ask Colonel Stanburne for a *leaftenancy*, and that Isaac Ogden would accept the commission if it were offered to him.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Isaac Ogden told the history of his backslidings to the Doctor, he omitted to mention the cause which first made him pass the bounds of what in Shayton was held to be moderation. He had always "liked his glass," and drunk quite freely of all the intoxicating compounds known to the inhabitants of the place, but this in a young man living at Shayton was held to be as natural and right as for horses and cows to go to the water-trough; so that mothers who had lost their sons, and widows who had lost their husbands, by the universal enemy, *delirium tremens*, would, nevertheless, have felt the utmost difficulty in tolerating anything approaching teetotalism under their roofs; and would terminate the most touching lamentations for the dead, and the sagest reflections on the fearful consequences of excess, by inviting the hearer in the most pressing manner "to

mix himself another glass of brandy-and-water," or whatever he had been drinking. In case of refusal, the hospitable moralist would put on an indescribably dolorous expression of countenance, and say, "Eh well, willn't ye now ? it'll do you *no* 'arm !" For there was always a theory in Shayton that alcohol administered in private houses, and by way of hospitality, was perfectly innocuous ; the truly poisonous and destructive alcohol being that retailed at the Red Lion, the White Hart, and other similar places of entertainment.

There was also another theory firmly held by all the womankind at Shayton, that so long as a man ate heartily of their puddings and pies and sweet-stuff generally, he dwelt in safety. This may partly have arisen from self-love, for we are always inclined to be indulgent to those who appreciate the products of our skill ; and since all the above-mentioned sweet-stuff in Shayton was fabricated by the ladies in their own houses, and a professional confectioner, if such a being had ventured to establish himself in the place, must have died of hunger after eating up his own stock-in-trade, it naturally followed that such of the male inhabitants as were willing to consume home-made dainties of a sugary description, were looked upon with favour and indulgence, and con-

sidered to give evidence of a healthy and unviated taste. And, indeed, although the eating of such pastry did not perhaps prove so much in favour of the palate as the fair pie-makers believed, there can be no doubt that it was clear evidence of a powerful digestion, for that pastry had a weight and solidity in harmony with our national character. There was nothing of French frivolity in it: it reminded the eater of British iron and British oak, and the granite of our northern hills.

So long as his wife had lived, Isaac Ogden gave all possible proofs of his moderation. He hardly ever entered an alehouse, and though he drank freely enough at home, and in the houses of all his friends and acquaintance, he was hardly ever seen to be intoxicated. He had a splendid appetite—he ate heavy breakfasts with quite a natural manner, as if the accomplishment of that surprising feat were nothing to him; and by this means, and a large consumption of pastry in the middle of the day, he won the esteem of all who met him at table. But after his wife's death, as the evenings were terribly sad for him, and he did not know how to pass them alone in the house that for four swift years had been brightened by her dear presence, he first went to see

his friends in their own houses, and then gradually got into the way of meeting a certain set or clique of them at the tavern. The distance that separated his former habit of free drinking from the habit of positive drunkenness was not physically and materially a very wide one, though morally it was immeasurable. He had been living for years, like all the most moderate men in Shayton, in a state of alcoholic stimulation—at least, from ten A.M. till bed-time; and though this condition did not often betray itself to outward observers, it was not the less a preparation of the whole system for the more advanced stage of recognised intemperance. It is no doubt perfectly true, as millions of living examples prove, that moderate indulgence is absolutely innocuous to a sound and healthy constitution; but Mr Ogden's habits at the most temperate period of his life would scarcely have been thought moderate anywhere else than in Shayton, and can only have been considered so there by the effect of an overpowering comparison with the incredible excesses of his neighbours. Vermilion itself may be made to look not so *very* red by surrounding it with the blinding flames of scarlet; and a man in Shayton was seldom looked upon as a drinker until he had been seen to reel down the pub-

lic street in a state of helpless and speechless inebriety.

Of Isaac Ogden's affectionate and sincerely-lamented wife there is little to be said in this history. She was the daughter of a farmer in a distant part of Yorkshire—a sort of gentleman farmer who had given his girls what was considered to be an education; and, indeed, to do them justice, they were quite as well educated, and had as gentle manners, as the daughters of the smaller gentry. This young lady had come to stay at Shayton, on a visit to the parson who had formerly been vicar of her native village, and she had won Isaac Ogden's heart from the very beginning of their acquaintance. Though a farmer's daughter, her health was not really robust, and she depended for existence, much more than she or her friends suspected, on the pure air of the open country, and the routine of healthy occupation. Transplanted to the smoke-burdened atmosphere of Shayton, and having exchanged the peace of her father's fields for a house with a wretched little garden surrounded on all sides by roaring cotton-mills, poor Alice speedily lost her bloom, and her frail life ended itself a day or two after the third anniversary of her marriage. She had had two children: the elder,

our friend little Jacob, had been easily reared, and enjoyed perfect health ; but the second, owing probably to the enfeebled constitution of the mother, was a poor weak little thing, and they lost it. Since his wife's death, Mr Ogden had had very little intercourse with her family. He had gone on one occasion to stay a few days at their house in Yorkshire, but the rumour of his unfortunate habits had preceded him, and was only too fully confirmed by his conduct under his father-in-law's roof. He had his weeks of excess, and his weeks of comparative moderation, and the week that he spent at Eatherby was unluckily one of the former. Every day he got up in a state of nervous ill-humour and ungraciousness, so that it was positively disagreeable to sit with him at breakfast ; but by dinner-time it was still worse, for then he was drunk and dogmatic—laying down the law upon all sorts of rural matters that he did not understand, and keenly wounding the feelings of the whole family by speaking about their poor Alice in a manner that seemed coldly contemptuous. The truth was that he adored her memory, and would have given his right hand to hear her dear voice again, if only for one hour ; but these better feelings were hidden in his own

breast; and as, during the lifetime of his wife, he had acquired the deplorable habit of speaking contemptuously of women to his friends, and making no exception in her favour, the habit now revived with him when he was drunk, and he said things which, to people who did not see very much of him, conveyed a most erroneous impression of his sentiments. Like many other people in Shayton, he had a stupid love of banter, not much controlled by delicacy or good taste; and when he left Eatherby, it was resolved that all intercourse with him should be at an end.

Another local peculiarity of character is that of cherishing feelings of all kinds for a much longer time than any feeling lasts in a metropolis. A coolness, sufficient to chill intercourse between families without putting an end to it, has been known to last consciously for forty years in Shayton, and to be continued afterwards from habit and tradition; but in justice to the inhabitants of the place it is right to add that better feelings are equally permanent, and that a stranger who had visited the neighbourhood at the age of twenty, and made a favourable impression there as a well-behaved and good-looking young man, might, if chance led him to

revisit Shayton at sixty, fully count upon a kind reception on the strength of his former success. The sympathies of the Shayton people were of very limited range, and consequently stronger and more enduring than the scattered interests of larger societies; and so also were their hatreds and antipathies. Their temper was at the same time perfectly faithful and perfectly unconciliating. Their friendships lasted for generations—lasted, in short, until violently shattered by some catastrophe; but, once broken, neither party ever made the least advance towards cementing them afresh, and the degree of separation established by the accident itself remained permanent. Like two cliffs once united, but which, separated by some violent convulsion of nature, gaze at each other for ever across a wide chasm without advancing or receding an inch from their respective positions, except so far as the slow operation of rain and frost may insensibly widen the interval between them—two Shayton households, once divided by a quarrel, remained in sight of each other year after year without the slightest advance on either part to a reconciliation, and without any conscious widening of the breach, though time no doubt was wearing it year by year. The breach between the two brothers,

Isaac and Jacob Ogden, had been established on that fatal day when Isaac struck Jacob at the mill; and after the dissolution of partnership, each of the brothers cast his eye, as it were, across the chasm, and measured the breadth of it as a fact henceforth inevitable. Men of another temper might have felt uneasy about the chasm, and anxious to fill it up or hide it from their own eyes; but these brothers felt no such uneasiness, and were not in the least anxious to conceal it under false appearances. It was not understood to be necessary that intercourse between them should cease; and it did not cease, but it took, and kept, a new and peculiar character. Jacob lived with his mother at Milend, and Isaac went there from time to time, but it was understood that the visit was to his mother, except on those occasions when Isaac wished to consult his brother about his money matters, when Jacob always listened very attentively, and gave the best advice he could. The most marked change in their intercourse was that they were now scrupulously civil to each other, whereas in the old brotherly days there had been much mutual criticism, often bitterly severe. For instance, in those other times, if Isaac had got drunk, Jacob abused

him for it with unrestrained energy ; but since their quarrel, Jacob was as reticent on that subject as if he had been educated in habits of delicacy and tact. When they met in the street before the quarrel, Jacob would often say,—

“ Now, Isaac, con ta walk reight ? ”

And Isaac, by no means offended at the allusion to his failing, would answer by an insinuation that Jacob acted the unmanly part of his mother's darling.

“ Has thy mother given thee a treacle butter-cake ? ”

All banter of this kind, as well as all frank and earnest remonstrance, was for ever at an end between the brothers ; and when they met in the street, even at the very door of the Red Lion, there was no allusion to Isaac's failing, and Jacob was in no danger of being saluted as “ Milend pet.” The brief colloquy was usually as follows :—

“ Well, Jacob, and 'ow's mother this mornin' ? ”

“ She's quite well, thank ye, Isaac ; and 'ow's little Jacob ? ”

“ Very well, thank ye.”

We have seen that Isaac's occasional visits to Milend were supposed to be intended exclusively for his mother, except when he wanted Jacob's

advice on matters affecting his interests; and therefore Jacob never went to his brother's house at all. He did not even go to see the new building at Twistle Farm, and, though he shot over a moor within a mile of the place, scrupulously avoided visiting it. An extensive moor in that region had belonged to the two brothers in common, or at least had been so considered by them; but after the quarrel a line of separation between their properties, which had before legally existed, ceased to be a legal fiction, and was recognised as a frontier. Isaac, of course, when he built Twistle Farm, took care that it should be at some distance from the boundary; and as the brothers shot no longer together, Jacob had never visited his brother's hermitage. Their mother went to Twistle occasionally, perhaps once in three months, but had never been induced to sleep there, for she had a firm belief that if she left Milend for one night, Jacob would be sure to need her.

As Isaac Ogden had all the character of a native of Shayton, it was of course impossible for him to attempt any closer companionship with his brother, or any renewal of intercourse with the family of his wife. He had few relations on his own side, and most of these were poor people,

operatives in cotton-factories, or small farmers in the country. There was no false shame about the Ogdens, and they acknowledged these relationships, inviting some of their very poorest kinsfolk annually to Milend, and feeding them substantially with roast-beef. But it will be understood, without imputing any foolish pride to Mr Isaac Ogden, that he found little pleasure in intercourse with these relations. He had, it is true, but little culture of any kind, yet the little he possessed was enough to create a difference between him and these poor people, wide enough to make much intercourse between them irksome to both parties. And besides, the mere possession of a certain degree of wealth had already separated the Ogdens of Milend from those branches of the same family which had remained in poverty. Various sums of money had been lent and not repaid, or slowly repaid in uncertain and irregular instalments, so that the sense of inequality, already strong in the presence of the substantial comforts of Milend, was still further increased by a feeling of obligation. To do the Ogdens justice, it was not in their nature (or in the customs of Shayton) to treat poor relations unkindly, but it is difficult to maintain agreeable intercourse with people who have little

to talk about but their perpetual struggles for existence, especially when one has an uneasy feeling that these struggles would cease to be necessary if one could only resolve to sign a few annual cheques. In justice to Mr Isaac particularly, it may be added that old Sarah, his house-keeper, was a relation of his, and not a very distant one, and that both he and she regarded her situation as permanent on that account. He would have made it easier for her by giving her the help of a young servant woman or girl; but as old Sarah was still remarkably vigorous, and much too proud to accept wages without fully earning them, she would not hear of such an addition to the establishment, and worked far harder than she need have done to satisfy the most sensitive conscience.

It will be seen, from the foregoing pages, that Mr Isaac Ogden was in a very isolated position, and therefore peculiarly exposed to the temptations of such convivial meetings as might be enjoyed in the parlour of the Red Lion. He might, it is true, have cultivated the society of Mr Prigley, the clergyman of Shayton, at whose house he had met Miss Alice Wheatley before he married her; but the truth is that such intercourse as had subsisted between the clergyman

and Mr Isaac had been entirely due to the presence of Miss Alice at the parsonage in the first instance, and afterwards, during her life, to the interest which *she* felt in the family of Mr Prigley, who knew all about Eatherby and its inhabitants. Though Mr Isaac during his bachelor days had gone to church to please his mother, and had been rewarded for his regular attendance by the pleasure of seeing Miss Alice in the clergyman's pew, and by the brief years of happiness which followed, it must be confessed that Mr Prigley's long sermons had but little attraction for him, and that he had become irregular as a church-goer even during the lifetime of his wife, and since her death had ceased going there altogether. He never went near the parsonage now, and Mr Prigley, with that discretion which is one of the characteristics of the Anglican clergy, and which, whether due to timidity or tact, certainly makes them more agreeable members of society than pastors who speak in season and out of season, never attempted by counsel or reproof to bring back Mr Isaac Ogden to his spiritual fold. Little Jacob, whose spiritual welfare was especially cared for by his grandmother, was taken to Milend every Saturday, and released only on Monday morning, after due attendance

at both morning and afternoon service in Shayton church, and a sermon in the evening which he read aloud to his grandmother, after which he repeated his catechism and a collect.

It was an immemorial custom in Shayton for families to restrict themselves to a very few Christian names, usually taken from the Old Testament, and these were repeated, generation after generation, from a feeling of respect to parents, very laudable in itself, but not always convenient in its consequences. Thus in the family of the Ogdens, the eldest son was always called Isaac, and the second Jacob, so that if they had had a pedigree, the heralds would almost have been driven to the expedient of putting numbers after these names—as we say Henry VIII. or Louis XIV. The Isaac Ogden who appears in this history may have been, if collateral Isaacs in other branches were taken into account, perhaps Isaac the fortieth—indeed, the tombstones in Shayton churchyard recorded a number of Isaac Ogdens that was perfectly bewildering. Even the living Isaac Ogdens were numerous enough to puzzle any new-comer; and a postman who had not been accustomed to the place, but was sent there from Rochdale, solemnly declared that “he wished all them Hisaac Hogdens was deead, every one on

'em, nobbut just about five or six, an' then there'd be less bother about t' letters." This wish may seem hard and unchristian—it may appear, to readers who have had no experience in the delivery of letters, that to desire the death of a fellow-creature merely because he happened to be called Isaac Ogden, implied a fearful degree of natural malevolence; but the business of a postman cultivates an eagerness to get rid of letters, whereof the lay mind has no adequate conception; and when a bachelor Isaac Ogden got a letter from an affectionate wife, or an Isaac Ogden, who never owed a penny, received a pressing dun from an impatient and exasperated creditor, these epistles were returned upon the postman's hands, and he became morbidly anxious to get rid of them, or "shut on 'em," as he himself expressed it. Some annoying mistakes of this kind had occurred in reference to *our* Mr Isaac Ogden at the time when he was engaged to Miss Alice Wheatley, whose first affectionate letter from her father's house at Eatherby had not only miscarried, but actually been opened and read by several Isaac Ogdens in Shayton and its vicinity; for poor Miss Alice, in the flurry of directing her first epistle to her lover, had quite forgotten to put the name of the house where he then lived. This was particularly an-

noying to Mr Ogden, who had wished to keep his engagement secret, in order to avoid as long as possible the banter of his friends ; and he swore in his wrath that there were far too many Isaac Ogdens in the world, and that, however many sons he had, he would never add to their number. This declaration was regarded by his mother, and by the public opinion of the elder generation generally, as little better than a profession of atheism ; and when our little friend Jacob was christened in Shayton church, it was believed that the misguided father would not have the hardihood to maintain his resolution in so sacred a place. He had, however, the courage to resist the name of Isaac, though it was pressed upon him with painful earnestness ; but he did not dare to offend tradition so far as to resist that of Jacob also, though the objections to it were in truth equally cogent.

On his retirement to Twistle Farm, Mr Ogden determined, at least for the present, to educate his child himself. And so it was that, at the age of nine, little Jacob was rather less advanced than some other boys of his age. He had not begun Latin yet, but, on the other hand, he read English easily and with avidity, and wrote a very clear and legible hand. His friend the Doctor,

who rode up to Twistle Farm very often (for he liked the fresh moorland air, and enjoyed a chat with Mr Ogden and the child), used to examine little Jacob, and bring him amusing books, so that his young friend had already several shelves in his bedroom which were filled with instructive histories and pleasant tales. The youthful student had felt offended one day at Milend, when a matronly friend of his grandmother had asked whether he could read.

“He can read well enough,” said his grandmother.

“Well, an’ what can he read? can he read i’ th’ Bible?”

The restriction of Jacob’s reading powers to one book offended him. Could he not read all English books at sight, or the newspaper, or anything? Indeed, few people in Shayton, except the Doctor, read as much as the little boy at Twistle Farm; and when his uncle at Milend discovered one day what an appetite for reading the child had, he was not altogether pleased, and asked whether he could “cast accounts.” Finding him rather weak in the elementary practice of arithmetic, uncle Jacob made him “do sums” whenever he had an opportunity. Arithmetic (or “arethmitic,” as uncle Jacob pronounced it) was

at Milend considered a far higher attainment than the profoundest knowledge of literature ; and, indeed, if the rank of studies is to be estimated by their influence on the purse, there can be no doubt that the Milend folks were right. Without intending a pun (for this would be a poor one), uncle Jacob had never found anything so interesting as interest, and the annual estimate which he made of the increase of his fortune brought home to his mind a more intense sense of the delightfulness of addition than any schoolboy ever experienced. But arithmetic, like every other human pursuit, has its painful or unpleasant side, and uncle Jacob regarded subtraction and division with an indescribable horror and dread. Subtraction, in his vivid though far from poetical imagination, never meant anything less serious than losses in the cotton trade ; and division evoked alarming visions of a wife and eight children dividing his profits amongst them. Indeed he never looked upon arithmetic in the abstract, but saw it in the successes of the prosperous and the failures of the unfortunate—in the accumulations of rich and successful bachelors like himself, and the impoverishment of struggling mortals, for whom there was no increase save in the number of their children. And this concrete conception

of arithmetic he endeavoured to communicate to little Jacob, who, in consequence of his uncle's teaching, already possessed the theory of getting rich, and was so far advanced in the practice of it that, by keeping the gifts of his kind patrons and friends, he had nearly twenty pounds in the savings bank.

CHAPTER III.

MRS OGDEN, at the time when our story commences, was not much above sixty, but had reached an appearance of old age, though a very vigorous old age, which she kept without perceptible alteration for very many years afterwards. Her character will develop itself sufficiently in the course of the present narrative to need no description here; but she had some outward peculiarities which it may be well to enumerate.

She is in the kitchen at Milend, making a potato-pie, or at least preparing the paste for one. Whilst she deliberately presses the rolling-pin, and whilst the sheet of paste becomes wider and thinner under the pressure of it as it travels over the soft white surface, we perceive that Mrs Ogden's arms, which are bare nearly to the elbow, are strong and muscular yet, but not rounded into any form that suggests reminiscences of beauty.

There is a squareness and a rigidity in the back and chest, which are evidences rather of strength of body and a resolute character than of grace. The visage, too, can never have been pretty, though it must in earlier life have possessed the attractiveness of health; indeed, although its early bloom is of course by this time altogether lost, there remains a firmness in the fleshy parts of it enough to prove that the possessor is as yet untouched by the insidious advances of decay. The cheeks are prominent, and the jaw is powerful; but although the forehead is high, it suggests no ideas of intellectual development, and seems rather to have grown merely as a fine vegetable-marrow grows, than to have been developed by any exercise of thought. The nose is slightly aquiline in outline, but too large and thick; the lips, on the contrary, are thin and pale, and would be out of harmony with the whole face if the eyes did not so accurately and curiously correspond with them. Those eyes are of an exceedingly light grey, rather inclining to blue, and the mind looks out from them in what, to a superficial observer, might seem a frank and direct way; but a closer analyst of character might not be so readily satisfied with a first impression, and might fancy he detected some shade of possible insincerity or

power of dissimulation. The hair seems rather scanty, and is worn close to the face; it is grey, of that peculiar kind which results from a mixture of very fair hairs with perfectly white ones. We can only see a little of it, however, on account of the cap.

Although Mrs Ogden is hard at work in her kitchen, making a potato-pie, and although it is not yet ten o'clock in the morning, she is dressed in what in any other person would be considered rather an extravagant manner, and in a manner certainly incongruous with her present occupation. It is a theory of hers that she is so exquisitely neat in all she does, that for her there is no danger in wearing any dress she chooses, either in her kitchen or elsewhere; and as she has naturally a love for handsome clothes, and an aversion to changing her dress in the middle of the day, she comes down-stairs at five o'clock in the morning as if she had just dressed to receive a small dinner-party. The clothes that she wears just now *have* in fact done duty at past dinner-parties, and are quite magnificent enough for a lady at the head of her table, cutting potato-pies instead of fabricating them, if only they were a little less shabby, and somewhat more in harmony with the prevailing fashion. Her dress is a fine flowered satin,

which a punster would at once acknowledge in a double sense if he saw the farinaceous scatterings which just now adorn it; and her cap is so splendid in ribbons that no writer of the male sex could aspire to describe it adequately. She wears an enormous cameo brooch, and a long gold chain whose fancy links are interrupted or connected by little glittering octagonal bars, like the bright glass bugles in her head-dress. The pattern of her satin is occasionally obscured by spots of grease, notwithstanding Mrs Ogden's theory that she is too neat and careful to incur any risk of such accidents. One day her son Isaac had ventured to call his mother's attention to these spots, and to express an opinion that it might perhaps be as well to have two servants instead of one, and resign practical kitchen-work; or else that, if she *would* be a servant herself, she ought to dress like one, and not expose her fine things to injury; but Mr Isaac Ogden received such an answer as gave him no encouragement to renew his remonstrances on a subject so delicate. "My dresses," said Mrs Ogden, "are paid for out of my own money, and I shall wear them when I like and where I like. If ever my son is applied to to pay my bills for me, he may try to teach me economy, but I'm 'appy to say that I'm not de-

pendent upon him either for what I eat or for what I drink, or for anything that I put on." The other brother, who lived under the same roof with Mrs Ogden, and saw her every day, had a closer instinctive feeling of what might and might not be said to her, and would as soon have thought of suggesting any abdication, however temporary, of her splendours, as of suggesting to Queen Victoria that she might manage without the luxuries of her station.

When the potato-pie stood ready for the oven, with an elegant little chimney in the middle and various ornaments of paste upon the crust, Mrs Ogden made another quantity of paste, and proceeded to the confection of a roly-poly pudding. She was proud of her roly-polies, and, indeed, of everything she made or did; but her roly-polies were really good, for as her pride was here more especially concerned, she economised nothing, and was especially liberal in preserves. She had friends in a warm and fertile corner of Yorkshire who were rich in apricots, and sent every year to Milend several large pots of the most delicious apricot preserve, and she kept this exclusively for roly-polies, and had won thereby a great fame and reputation in Shayton, where apricot-puddings were by no means of everyday occurrence.

The judicious reader may here criticise Mrs Ogden, or find fault with the author, because she makes potato-pie and a roly-poly on the same day. Was there not rather too much paste for one dinner—baked paste that roofed over the savoury contents of the pie-dish, and boiled paste that enclosed in its ample folds the golden lusciousness of those Yorkshire apricots? Some reflection of this kind may arise in the mind of Jacob Ogden when he comes back from the mill to his dinner. He may possibly think that for to-day the pie might have been advantageously replaced by a beefsteak, but he is too wise not to keep all such reflections within his own breast. No such doubts or perplexities will ever disturb his mother, simply because she is convinced that no man *can* eat too much of *her* pastry. Other people's pastry one might easily get too much of, but that is different.

And there is a special reason for the pudding to-day. Little Jacob is expected at dinner-time, and little Jacob loves pudding, especially apricot roly-poly. His grandmother, not a very affectionate woman by nature, is, nevertheless, dotingly fond of the lad, and always makes a little feast to welcome him and celebrate his coming. On ordinary days they never have any dessert at Milend, but as soon as dinner is over, uncle Jacob hastily

jumps up and goes to the cupboard where the decanters are kept, pours himself two glasses of port, and swallows them one after the other, standing, after which he is off again to the mill. When little Jacob comes, what a difference ! There is a splendid dessert of gingerbread, nuts, apples, and *fruits glacés* ; there are stately decanters of port and sherry, with a bottle of sparkling elder-flower wine in the middle, and champagne-glasses to drink it from. There is plenty of real champagne in the cellars, but this home-made vintage is considered better for little Jacob, who feels no other effect from it than an almost irresistible sleepiness. He likes to see the sparkling bubbles rise ; and, indeed, few beverages are prettier or pleasanter to the taste than Mrs Ogden's elder-flower wine. It is as clear as crystal, and sparkles like the most brilliant wit.

But we are anticipating everything ; we have jumped from the very fabrication of the roly-poly to the sparkling of the elder-flower, of that elder-flower which never sparkled at Milend, and should not have done so in this narrative, until the pudding had been fully disposed of. The reader may, however, take that for granted, and feel perfectly satisfied that little Jacob has done his duty to the pudding, as he is now doing it to

the nuts and wine. He has a fancy for putting his kernels into the wine-glass, and fishing them out with a spoon, and is so occupied just now, whilst grandmother and uncle Jacob sit patiently looking on.

“Jerry likes nuts,” says little Jacob; “I wonder if he likes wine too.”

“It would be a good thing,” said Mrs Ogden, with her slow and distinct pronounciation—“it would be a good thing if young men would take example by their ’orses, and drink nothing but water.”

“Nay, nay, mother,” said uncle Jacob, “you wouldn’t wish to see our lad a teetotaller.”

“I see no ’arm in bein’ a teetotaller, and I see a good deal of ’arm that’s brought on with drinking spirits. I wish the lad’s father was a teetotaller. But come” (to little Jacob), “you’ll ’ave another glass of elder-flower. Well, willn’t ye now? Then ’ave a glass of port; it’ll do you *no* ’arm.”

Mrs Ogden’s admiration for teetotalism was entirely theoretical. She approved of it in the abstract and in the distance, but she could not endure to sit at table with a man who did not take his glass like the rest; the nonconformity to custom irritated her. There was a curate at Shayton who thought it his duty to be a teetotaller in

order to give weight to his arguments against the evil habit of the place, and the curate dined occasionally at Milend without relaxing from the rigidity of his rule. Mrs Ogden was always put out by his empty wine-glass and the pure water in his tumbler, and she let him have no peace; so that for some time past he had declined her invitations, and only dropped in to tea, taking care to escape before spirits and glasses were brought forth from the cupboard, where they lay in wait for him. The reader need therefore be under no apprehensions that little Jacob was likely to be educated in the chilly principles of teetotalism; or at least he may rest assured that however much its principles might be extolled in his presence, the practice of it would neither be enforced nor even tolerated.

“I say, I wish my son Isaac was a teetotaller. I hear tell of his coming to Shayton time after time without ever so much as looking at Milend. Wasn't your father in the town on Tuesday? I know he was, I was told so by those that saw him; and if he was in the town, what was to hinder him from coming to Milend to his tea? Did he come down by himself, or did you come with him, Jacob?”

“I came with him, grandmother.”

“ Well, and why didn't you come here, my lad ? You know you're always welcome.”

“ Father had his tea at the Red Lion. Well, it wasn't exactly tea, for he drank ale to it ; but I had tea with him, and we'd a lobster.”

“ I wish he wouldn't do so.”

“ Why, mother,” said uncle Jacob, “ I see no great 'arm in drinking a pint of ale and eating a lobster ; and if he didn't come to Milend, most likely he'd somebody to see ; very likely one of his tenants belonging to that row of cottages he bought. I wish he hadn't bought 'em ; he'll have more bother with 'em than they're worth.”

“ But what did he do keeping a young boy like little Jacob at the Red Lion ? Why couldn't he send him here ? The lad knows the way, I reckon.” Then to her grandson—“ What time was it when you both went home to Twistle Farm ? ”

“ We didn't go home together, grandmother. Father was in the parlour at the Red Lion, and left me behind the bar, where we had had our tea, till about eight o'clock, when he sent a message that I was to go home by myself. So I went home on Jerry, and father stopped all night at the Red Lion.”

“ Why, it was after dark, child ! and there was no moon ! ”

“ I’m not afraid of being out in the dark, grandmother ; I don’t believe in ghosts.”

“ What, hasn’t th’ child sense enough to be frightened in the dark ? If he doesn’t believe in ghosts at his age, it’s a bad sign ; but he’s got a father that believes in nothing at all, for he never goes to church ; and there’s that horrid Dr Bardly——”

“ He isn’t horrid, grandmother,” replied little Jacob, with much spirit ; “ he’s very jolly, and gives me things, and I love him ; he gave me a silver horn.”

Now Dr Bardly’s reputation for orthodoxy in Shayton was greatly inferior to his renown as a medical practitioner ; but as the inhabitants had both Mr Prigley and his curate, as well as several Dissenting ministers, to watch over the interests of their souls, they had no objection to allow Mr Bardly to keep their stomachs in order ; at least so far as was compatible with the freest indulgence in good living. His bad name for heterodoxy had been made worse by his favourite studies. He was an anatomist, and therefore was supposed to believe in brains rather than souls ; and a geologist, therefore he assigned an unscriptural antiquity to the earth. In addition to this, he was believed to have been, at least on one occasion, a cannibal. A

curious case of brain-disease had occurred amongst his patients, and when the child that was afflicted with it died, the Doctor removed the brain and took it home with him in his gig, wrapped up in a handkerchief and a newspaper, that he might study it afterwards at leisure. On his arrival he found another patient waiting for him, in whose case he was also specially interested, and quite forgot the little parcel in the gig; but Martha, his servant, found it, and taking it to be calf's brains, of which the Doctor was immoderately fond . . . The reader imagines the rest. He did not study those brains at his leisure, but he *digested* them, with the help of an extra glass of toddy, excusable under the circumstances. Some doctors would have taken an emetic, and others, perhaps, would not have needed one; but Dr Bardly saw no reason for disturbing his internal economy, and simply observed that although the dish had been excellent, it was scarcely a compensation for the hour of pleasant study he had anticipated. Though the laugh was against himself, Dr Bardly could not help telling the story to his friends, and Martha made it at least equally public amongst her own class; so that everybody in the neighbourhood had heard it, and finally it appeared in the newspapers.

“I’m sure it’s that Dr Bardly,” said Mrs Ogden, “that’s ruined our Isaac.”

“Why, mother, Bardly’s one o’th soberest men in Shayton; and being a doctor beside, he isn’t likely to encourage Isaac i’ bad ’abits.”

“I wish Isaac weren’t so fond on him. He sets more store by Dr Bardly, and by all that he says, than by any one else in the place. He likes him better than Mr Prigley. I’ve heard him say so, sittin’ at this very table. I wish he liked Mr Prigley better, and would visit with him a little. He’d get nothing but good at the parsonage; whereas they tell me—and no doubt it’s true—that there’s all sorts of wicked things in Dr Bardly’s museum, and many a bad book in his library. I think I shall ask Mr Prigley just to set ceremony on one side, and go and call upon Isaac up at Twistle Farm; no doubt he would be kind enough to do so.”

“It would be of no use, mother, except to Prigley’s appetite, that might be a bit sharpened with a walk up to Twistle; but supposin’ he got there, and found Isaac at ’ome, Isaac ’ud be as civil as civil, and he’d ax Prigley to stop his dinner; and Prigley ’ud no more dare to open his mouth about Isaac’s goin’s on than our sarvant lass ’ud ventur to tell you as you put too

mich salt i' a potato-pie. It's poor folk as parsons talks to; they willn't talk to a chap wi' ten thousand pound till he axes 'em, except in a general way in a pulpit."

"Well, Jacob, if Mr Prigley were only just to go and renew his acquaintance with our Isaac, it would be so much gained, and it might lead to his amendment."

"Mother, I don't think he needs so much amendment. Isaac's right enough. I believe he's always sober up at Twistle; isn't he, little un?"

Little Jacob, thus appealed to, assented, but in rather a doubtful and reserved manner, as if something remained behind which he had not courage to say. His grandmother observed this.

"Now, my lad, tell me the whole truth. It can do your father no 'arm—nothing but good—to let us know all about what he does. Your father is my son, and I've a right to know all about him. I'm very anxious, and 'ave been, ever since I knew that he was goin' again to the Red Lion. I 'oped he'd given that up altogether. You must tell me—I insist upon it."

Little Jacob said nothing, but began to cry.

"Nay, nay, lad," said his uncle, "a great felly like thee should never skrike. Thy grandmother

means nout. Mother, you're a bit hard upon th' lad; it isn't fair to force a child to be witness again' it own father." With this uncle Jacob rose and left the room, for it was time for him to go to the mill; and then Mrs Ogden rose from her chair, and with the stiff stately walk that was habitual to her, and that she never could lay aside even under strong emotion, approached her grandson, and, bending over him, gave him one kiss on the forehead. This kiss, be it observed, was a very exceptional event. Jacob always kissed his grandmother when he came to Milend; but she was invariably passive, though it was plain that the ceremony was agreeable to her, from a certain softness that spread over her features, and which differed from their habitual expression. So when Jacob felt the old lady's lips upon his forehead, a thrill of tenderness ran through his little heart, and he sobbed harder than ever.

Mrs Ogden drew a chair close to his, and, putting her hand on his brow so as to turn his face a little upwards that she might look well into it, said, "Come now, little un, tell granny all about it."

What the kiss had begun, the word "granny" fully accomplished. Little Jacob dried his eyes and resolved to tell his sorrows. The poor child

had not very much to say, and at his age—though the power of narrating incidents or occurrences is already developed, except that such narratives are more frequently imaginative than accurate—that of explaining the sorrows and distresses of the mind is not yet developed at all, though these distresses may be felt most acutely. A woman, ill used by her husband, will pour floods of narrative and complaint in the ear of her confidential friend—she will expatiate for hours on the delinquencies of the monster to whom a cruel fate has bound her—she will subject all he has said and all that he has done to the most careful and severe analysis—and by processes of elaborate induction, not only arrive infallibly at his most secret thoughts, but even discover motives and intentions of which he himself is not in the least aware. But a child that is ill used by its father cannot ascertain for itself the boundary that separates a just parental authority from tyranny; and though it feels that life is embittered for it by the fear of a capricious and unaccountable power, it cannot make plain to a third person in what the tyranny precisely consists. For tyranny does not consist in the infliction of suffering, however severe, if the punishment is inflicted by rule, and is proportionate to the offence; and the child's

great difficulty is that he is unable to prove the *capriciousness* of his tyrant. If an Oriental despot cuts off a slave's ear in a rage, it is the act of a tyrant; but if a man has his head cut off because he has, after due trial, been found guilty of murder, and judicially condemned in conformity to the laws of his country, we do not call that tyranny. Now, when a child complains of ill-usage, he has not the art to select instances of pure tyranny alone, and does not know how to present them in a sufficiently odious light, but is just as likely, in the confusion of his ideas, and under the general sense of indignation and revolt, to mention some instance in which he has not suffered from an act of tyranny at all, but has merely incurred punishment for some fault. And this is exactly what happened in the present instance.

“Grandmother,” said little Jacob, “father is so—so——”

“So *what*, my lad?”

“Well, he beats me, grandmother!”

Now Mrs Ogden, though she loved Jacob as strongly as her nature permitted, by no means wished to see him entirely exempt from corporal punishment. She knew, on the authority of Scripture, that it was good for children to be beaten, that the rod was a salutary thing; and she at once

concluded that little Jacob had been punished for some fault which in her own code would have deserved such punishment, and would have drawn it down upon her own sons when they were of his age. So she was neither astonished nor indignant, and asked, merely by way of continuing the conversation,—

“And when did he beat thee, child?”

If Jacob had been an artful advocate of his own cause, he would have cited one of those instances, unhappily too numerous during the last few months, when he had been severely punished on the slightest possible pretexts, or even without any pretext whatever; but as recent events occupy the largest space in our recollection, and as all troubles diminish by a sort of perspective according to the length of time that has happened since their occurrence, Jacob, of course, instanced a beating that he had received that very morning, and of which certain portions of his bodily frame, by their uncommon stiffness and soreness, still kept up the most lively remembrance.

“He beat me this morning, grandmother.”

“And what for?”

“Because I spilt some ink on my new trowsers that I'd put on to come to Milend.”

“ Well, then, my lad, all I can say is that you deserved it, and should take better care. Do you think that your father is to buy good trowsers for you to spill ink upon them the very first time you put them on? You’ll soon come to ruin at that rate. Little boys should learn to take care of their things; your uncle Jacob was as kerfle* as possible of his things; indeed he was the kerflest boy I ever saw in all my life, and I wish you could take after him. It’s a very great thing is kerflessness. There’s people as thinks that when they’ve worn† their money upon a thing, it’s no use lookin’ after it, and mindin’ it, because the money’s all worn and gone, and so they pay no heed to their things when once they’ve got them. And what’s the consequence? They find that they have to be renewed, that new ones must be bought when the old ones ought to have been quite good yet; and so they spend and spend, when they might spare and have everything just as decent, if they could only learn a little kerflessness.”

After this lecture Mrs Ogden slowly rose from her seat and proceeded to put the decanters into a triangular cupboard that occupied a corner of the room. In due course of time the apples, the

* Careful.

† Spent.

gingerbread, and the nuts alike disappeared in its capacious recesses, and were hidden from little Jacob's eyes by folding-doors of dark mahogany, polished till they resembled mirrors, and reflected the window with its glimpse of dull grey sky. After this Mrs Ogden went into the kitchen to look after some household affairs, and her grandson went to the stable to see Jerry, and to make the acquaintance of some puppies which had recently come into the world, but were as yet too blind to have formed any opinion of its beauties.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS OGDEN'S desire to bring about a renewal of the acquaintance between her son Isaac and Mr Prigley was not an unwise one, even if considered independently of his religious interests. Mr Prigley, though by no means a man of first-rate culture or capacity, was still the only gentleman in Shayton—the only man in the place who resolutely kept himself up to the standard of the outer world, and refused to adopt the local dialect and manners. No doubt our friend the Doctor was in a certain special sense a gentleman, and much more than a gentleman—he was a man of high attainment, and had an excellent heart. But, so far from desiring to rise above the outward ideal of the locality, he took a perverse pleasure in remaining a little below it. His language was a shade more provincial than that of the neighbouring manufacturers, and his manners

somewhat more rugged and abrupt than theirs. Perhaps he secretly enjoyed the contrast between the commonplace exterior which he affected, and the elaborate intellectual culture which he knew himself to possess. He resembled the house he lived in, which was, as to its exterior, so perfectly commonplace that every one would pass it without notice, yet which contained greater intellectual riches, and more abundant material for reflection, than all the other houses in Shayton put together. Therefore, if I say that Mr Prigley was the only gentleman in the place, I mean externally—in language and manner. If wealth be the standard adopted, the best gentleman in Shayton was a certain cotton-spinner, who had just reached his quarter-of-a-million, and had six illegitimate children, to whom he never gave one farthing—and a first cousin, a paralytic old woman, in a state of utter destitution. If knowledge is the standard, who can be compared to our friend the Doctor? And if moral worth be the standard of true gentlemanhood, as perhaps it may be in the eyes of the angels in heaven, then the best gentleman in Shayton was a poor, pale operative, denying clothes to his back and food to his belly, that he might keep a lot of poor children who had no claim upon him except that

their father had helped him ten years ago, and received, in consequence, a solemn promise on his deathbed that his little ones should not be forsaken.

The living of Shayton was a very meagre one, and Mr Prigley had great difficulty in keeping himself above water; but there is more satisfaction in struggling with the difficulties of open and avowed poverty than in maintaining deceitful appearances, and Mr Prigley had long since ceased to think about appearances at all. The only luxury they clung to at the parsonage was a degree of cleanliness considerably beyond the ideal prevalent in Shayton; and their washings were considered extravagant, and were no doubt heavier than the narrow income warranted. Uncle Jacob used to say that Mr Prigley could not possibly know the luxury of a clean shirt, because he never felt the delightfulness of the transition from a thoroughly dirty one; but Mr Prigley considered clean linen so pleasant in itself as to be beyond the necessity for contrast. In his earlier life he had been a fine swimmer, and passionately fond of that amusement, but there was not a place within many miles of Shayton where he could indulge in it. The love of cold water remained with him, however, and he tubbed

himself, winter and summer, with heroic regularity. He had heard of the pond at Twistle Farm, and during the whole of the last summer had longed to go and bathe in it; but as Mr Ogden never came near the parsonage, a feeling of delicacy had always restrained him.

Soap and water are cheap, and therefore rich people are apt to conclude that "people may *always* be clean;" but when a family is poor, and there are five children besides the parents, it is found in practice that if the household is to be kept up to any strict rule of cleanliness it must be at the cost of considerable sacrifices. The Prigleys could no doubt have managed this more easily if their residence had been situated in the pure air of an agricultural neighbourhood; but in a manufacturing town or large village like Shayton, where a number of tall chimneys are continually filling the air with black smoke that descends in solid specks of carbon like a perpetual rain, this taste of theirs was found to be an expensive one. Now it had happened some time ago that the carpets showed grievous signs of wear, and in fact were so full of holes as to be positively dangerous. They had been patched and mended over and over again, and an ingenious seamstress employed by Mrs Prigley, and much valued by

her, had darned them with variously-coloured wools in continuation of the original patterns, so that (unless on close inspection) the repairs were not very evident. Now, however, both Mrs Prigley and the seamstress, notwithstanding all their ingenuity and skill, had reluctantly come to the conclusion that to repair the carpets in their present advanced stage of decay it would be necessary to darn nothing less than the whole area of them, and Mrs Prigley declared that she would rather manufacture new ones with her knitting-needles. But if buying carpets was out of the question, so it was not less out of the question for Mrs Prigley to fabricate objects of luxury, since her whole time was taken up by matters of pressing necessity—indeed the poor lady could only just keep up with the ceaseless accumulations of things that wanted mending; and whenever she was unwell for a day or two, and unable to work, there rose such a heap of them as made her very heart sink. In this perplexity about the carpets, nature was left to take her course, and the carpets were abandoned to their fate, but still left upon the floors; for how were they ever to be replaced? By a most unfortunate coincidence, Mr Prigley discovered about the same time that his shirts, though apparently very sound and

handsome shirts indeed, had become deplorably weak in the tissue; for if, in dressing himself in a hurry, his hand did not just happen to hit the orifice of the sleeve, it passed through the fabric of the shirt itself, and that with so little difficulty that he was scarcely aware of any impediment; whilst if once the hem were severed, the immediate consequence was a rent more than a foot long. Poor Mrs Prigley had mended these patiently for a while; but one day, after marvelling how it happened that her husband had become so violent in his treatment of his linen, she tried the strength of it herself, and, to use her own expressive phrase, "it came in two like a sheet of wet paper." It was characteristic of the Prigleys that they determined to renew the linen at once, and to abandon carpets for ever.

Shayton is not in France, and to do without carpets in Shayton amounts to a confession of what, in the middle class, is looked upon as a pitiable destitution. Mr Prigley did not care much about this; but his wife was more sensitive to public opinion, and, long after that heroic resolution had been taken, hesitated to put it in execution. Day after day the ragged remnants remained upon the floor, and still did Mrs Prigley procrastinate. Her husband used to say, "Well,

Sally, aren't the carpets taken up yet? I thought our parsonage was to have adopted French fashions by this time, and that the dining-room was to have been a *salle à manger*, and the drawing-room a *salon*, and the parson's study the *cabinet de monsieur*. You needn't think the house will look wretched without carpets; the floors are very good, and I'll stain them like dark oak, and rub some linseed-oil into them, and they'll look as well as a French *parquet*." But though the resolution had been taken in theory, the great step from theory to practice seemed very difficult to Mrs Prigley, and her old patched carpets, even with the holes in them, were dearer to her than any bare boards ever could be, however disguised by Mr Prigley's oak-stain and linseed-oil. So they remained day after day.

Whilst things were in this condition at the parsonage, the conversation took place at Milend which we have narrated in the preceding chapter; and as soon as Mrs Ogden had seen things straight in the kitchen, she "bethought her," as she would have herself expressed it, that it might be a step towards intercourse between Isaac Ogden and the clergyman if she could make little Jacob take a fancy to the parsonage. There was a little boy there nearly his own age, and as Jacob

was far too much isolated, the acquaintance would be equally desirable for him. The idea was by no means new to her; indeed she had long been anxious to find suitable playmates for her grandson, a matter of which Isaac did not sufficiently perceive the importance; and she had often intended to take steps in this direction, but had been constantly deterred by the feelings of dislike to Mr Prigley, which both her sons did not hesitate to express. What had Mr Prigley done to them that they should never be able to speak of him without a shade of very perceptible aversion or contempt? They had no definite accusation to make against him; they did not attempt to justify their antipathy, but the antipathy did not disguise itself. In an agricultural district the relations between the parson and the squire are often cordial; in a manufacturing district the relations between the parson and the millowners are usually less intimate, and have more the character of accidental neighbourhood than of natural alliance. It is difficult for the poorer clergy not to feel a little unconscious jealousy of the enormous incomes netted by men whose education has been confined to writing and arithmetic; and, on the other hand, it is equally difficult for the cotton-spinner, whose signature is a very lamp of

Aladdin, not to feel slightly jealous of the social and intellectual (or at least educational) superiorities of a class of men who in many instances are actually struggling for the very necessaries of life. The contrast between the temporal and spiritual powers is seen here in its very strongest and crudest form ; but the violence of it is greatly mitigated when (as frequently happens in the rising generation of manufacturers) the industrial chief is a highly educated man, and when the clergyman has sufficient private fortune, or a sufficiently comfortable benefice, to relieve him from painful comparisons.

The intercourse between Milend and the parsonage had been so infrequent that Mrs Prigley was quite astonished when Betty, the maid-of-all-work, announced Mrs Ogden as she pushed open the door of the sitting-room. But she was much more astonished when Mrs Ogden, instead of quietly advancing in her somewhat stiff and formal manner, fell forward on the floor with outstretched arms and a shriek. Mrs Prigley shrieked too, little Jacob tried manfully to lift up his grandmother, and poor Betty, not knowing what to say under circumstances so unexpected, but vaguely feeling that she was likely to incur blame, and might possibly (though in some man-

ner not yet clear to her) deserve it, begged Mrs Ogden's pardon. Mr Prigley was busy writing a sermon in his study, or rather learning one by heart that he had written, for he was supposed to preach extempore; and being suddenly interrupted in the midst of what seemed to him an uncommonly eloquent passage on the spread of infidelity, rushed to the scene of the accident in a state of great mental confusion, which for some seconds prevented him from recognising Mrs Ogden, or Mrs Ogden's bonnet, for the lady's face was not visible to him as he stood amazed in the doorway. "Bless me!" thought Mr Prigley, "here's a woman in a fit!" And then came a dim and somewhat unchristian feeling that women liable to fits need not just come and have them in the parlour at the parsonage. "It's Mrs Ogden, love," said Mrs Prigley; "and, oh dear, I *am* so sorry!"

By the united efforts of the parson and his wife, joined to those of Betty and little Jacob, Mrs Ogden was placed upon the sofa, and Mr Prigley went to fetch some brandy from the dining-room. On his way to the door the cause of the accident became apparent to him in the shape of a yawning rent in the carpet, which was dragged up in great folds and creases several

inches high. He had no time to do justice to the subject now, and so refrained from making any observation; but he fully resolved that, whether Mrs Prigley liked it or not, all ragged old carpets should disappear from the parsonage as soon as Mrs Ogden could be got out of it. When Mrs Prigley saw the hole in her turn, she was overwhelmed with a sense of culpability, and felt herself to be little better than a murderess.

“Betty, run and fetch Dr Bardly as fast as ever you can.”

“Please let *me* go,” said little Jacob; “I can run faster than she can.”

So little Jacob bounded out of the parsonage, and ran down the main street of Shayton like a hare before the hounds. Some dirty little boys that were playing at marbles saw him pass, and called out after him, and so raised a hue and cry that was taken up by a straggling population of juveniles. At last half-a-dozen of them closed the path before him, and when he tried to make his way through the ranks of the enemy, our hero dealt several very hearty blows with his small fists, which were returned with equal heartiness; and indeed so irritated did the little mob become, that little Jacob would have had his legs variegated by kicks from their

heavy clogs if a powerful ally had not come to his assistance.

It happened that the battle took place just before Susy Tattersall's shop, which, as everybody in Shayton knows very well (though some strangers in London and elsewhere may not be aware of the fact), is in the main street of the village just before you turn up to the Doctor's. Susy is a strong woman yet; but at the date of the present narrative she was an uncommonly powerful one, and loved and hated as energetically as she drove the scouring-stone along her sanded floor, or wrung out her check aprons on the washing-day. Her trade was of a miscellaneous description. She sold the Manchester papers; she sold shilling novels, and religious biographies, and atheistic pamphlets, and pious tracts; she sold sugar-plums and children's toys, including whips of various descriptions, with whistles and without whistles. She dealt in tarts also. One of her most regular patrons was Master Jacob, who had lots of pocket-money (more than was good for him), and seldom failed to look in at Susy's when he passed that way. The woman had had a little son exactly of Jacob's age, but the child was dead; and every time Susy saw little Jacob, the maternal heart within her said that her own

Isaiah would have been "about such another" if he had lived; so she often kissed our young hero, who rather wondered at these attentions, to which, however, he had no objection, as they were usually followed by gratuitous sugar-plums and tarts. And when the lad's back was turned, and Susy was left alone in her shop, the check apron would go up to the corners of her eyes, and the next customer would wonder what had been the matter. So when the scuffle took place at Susy's door she rushed out, and perceiving that her favourite was surrounded by enemies, threw herself valiantly into the thick of the combat, opening a way with her big red arms, and scattering her foes to the right hand and to the left. The little dirty urchins had all of them a great awe of Susy, and vanished before this stalwart maintainer of the right. She drew little Jacob into her sanctuary of tarts and lollipops, and questioned him in rather an overwhelming manner. So soon as she had gathered that Mrs Ogden had fallen down in the parlour at the parsonage, and that her young friend had been sent to fetch the doctor, she set off with him to Dr Bardly's house. Martha opened the door.

"Eh, Susy! what are you comed about? is somebody noan weel?" and then perceiving Master

Jacob, "What! is there summat wrong at Milend or up at Twistle Farm?"

Without giving Jacob any time to answer, Susy Tattersall whispered in a grave and breathless manner, "Its Mistress Ogden; who's* fa'en dewn i' a fitt at th' parsonage, an' who's 'appen deead by neaw."

Whilst the Doctor and little Jacob are going to Mr Prigley's—the Doctor walking as fast as he can and asking questions, his young friend running by his side and doing what he can to answer them—Susy stops to have a little chat with Martha, and then goes back to her shop, where, to her confusion, five customers are waiting for her. It is very natural that, by way of apology for her absence, she should narrate what she knew of Mrs Ogden's accident, with her own comments. Soon afterwards Mr Isaac rode into Shayton, and just as he was turning into the yard at the Red Lion, one of his tenants, who stood bareheaded in the doorway with a long clay pipe in his mouth, came suddenly forward, beckoned, and in a grave low tone, with an expression of much sympathy, communicated the news that

* "Who" means *she* in Lancashire. The reader is requested to remember this, as Susy would hardly ever say "she" under any circumstances.

Mrs Ogden had just had a fit of apoplexy at the parsonage, and that Dr Bardly was with her, but that it was believed life was not yet quite extinct. About the same time his brother Jacob at the mill received the news that Mrs Ogden had had a severe fall at Mr Prigley's, and that she had broken her arm, but that Dr Bardly had set it, and she was doing as well as could be expected.

Neither of the brothers had been at the parsonage for years, and it was about the last house in Shayton where they would willingly have presented themselves; but fits of apoplexy and broken arms are serious things under all circumstances, and especially when they happen to one's old mother, so of course there could be no hesitation about going to the parsonage now. Isaac galloped thither as fast as his black mare could carry him, and left her to graze at leisure on Mr Prigley's lawn, whilst he thundered at the door with the end of his riding-whip, for there was no knocker, and he was too excited to find the bell. Just as the door was opened Mr Jacob came up, so the two brothers entered at the same time.

The scene in the parlour struck both of them with unspeakable astonishment. There was Mrs Ogden in an easy-chair, sitting as if nothing were the matter with her; whilst Dr Bardly was

telling one of his stories, and the parson was standing with his back to the fire, and laughing much more heartily than a man utterly destitute of capital has any right to do. The parson had a professional disapproval of Dr Bardly because he would not come to church, and especially, perhaps, because on the very rare occasions when he *did* present himself there, he always contrived to be called out in time to escape the sermon; but he enjoyed the Doctor's company more than he would have been willing to confess, and had warmly seconded Mrs Prigley's proposal that, since Mrs Ogden, in consequence of her accident, was supposed to need the restoration of "tea and something to it," the Doctor should stay tea also. The arrival of Isaac and Jacob gave a new turn to the matter, and promised an addition to the small-tea party already organised. After the first moment of surprise at seeing their mother in life and health, with whole bones and no traces of her supposed attack of apoplexy, they told what rumours were already abroad in Shayton; and as Betty was sent to buy a crab for tea, Mr Prigley suggested that she might as well call at Susy Tattersall's and at the Red Lion, and give a true account of the matter. So, what with the false rumours, and the more accurate narrative that

was sent after them, Mrs Ogden became the general subject of conversation in Shayton; and the next Sunday when she went to church all the people stared at her with uncommon interest and perseverance. Poor Mrs Prigley was troubled throughout the service by an unpleasant consciousness that the majority of the worshippers must know by this time that there were holes in the carpets at the parsonage.

It was rather stiff and awkward just at first for Isaac and Jacob when they found themselves actually in the parson's house, and forced to stop there to tea out of filial attention to their mother; but it is wonderful how soon Mr Prigley contrived to get them over these difficulties. He resolved to take advantage of his opportunity, and warm up an acquaintance that might be of eminent service in certain secret projects of his. Shayton church was a dreary old building of the latest and most debased Tudor architecture. There were pillars to separate the nave from the aisles; but these pillars supported no arches, and flat beams rested upon them the whole length of the edifice. The windows were just like the windows in all the old farmhouses about Shayton, being divided by mullions into four or five lights of equal height, with arched tops to them. The

communion-table was in a hole under the organ, with a small window over it just like the others, except that a Shayton glazier had put into it some bits of yellow and blue glass that remained to him after setting up a coloured staircase and passage window in a cotton-spinner's new house. The pulpit stood in the middle of the church in three steps or stages—the lowest for the clerk, the second for reading the service from the prayer-book, and the third and loftiest for the preaching of those sermons in which Mr Prigley supposed himself especially to excel. There was but one gas-lamp for the clerk, and one for the reading of the service ; but there were two for the preaching—more, it may be presumed, to throw light upon the orator's face than upon his manuscript, which, having been learnt by heart, was left in the study at the parsonage, and not generally believed to exist.

Now Mr Prigley had become inoculated with the passion for Gothic architecture ; and the poor old church of Shayton, though it sheltered the inhabitants well enough in their comfortable old pews, seemed to him a base and degraded sort of edifice, unfit for the celebration of public worship. He therefore nourished schemes of reform ; and when he had nothing particular to do, especially

during the singing of the hymns, he could not help looking up at the flat ceiling and down along the pew-partitioned floor, and thinking what might be done with the old building—how it would look, for instance, if those octagon pillars that supported those hateful longitudinal beams were crowned with beautiful Gothic arches supporting a lofty clerestory above; and how the organ, instead of standing just over the communion-table, and preventing the possibility of a creditable east window, might be removed to the west end, to the inconvenience, it is true, of all the richest people in the township, who held pews in a gallery at that end of the church, but to the general advancement of correct and orthodox principles. Once the organ removed, a magnificent east window might gleam gorgeously over the renovated altar, and Shayton church might become worthy of its incumbent.

Mr Prigley was far too wise a man to talk openly of these daring schemes to the Shayton people, who had no more idea, as they were sitting comfortably in the corners of their baize-lined, high-backed pews, what was going on in their parson's head than had the poor doomed old edifice itself. To announce such plans in all their revolutionary magnitude would have been the most effectual

way to hinder them from ever being realised. Mr Prigley determined to emulate the wisdom of the serpent, and proceed with crafty and deep-laid policy. For at least twelve months he had been anxiously watching his opportunity, and now that opportunity had come. It could be proved, on the authority of a local carpenter and a local slater—who, it is to be feared, were scarcely more disinterested than the clergyman himself—that there were rotten beams in the old oak roof of the church, and that the slating was generally in such a bad condition that the rain came freely through it. Large patches of damp could be pointed to on the ceiling; and indeed more than one member of the congregation had amused himself, during sermon-time, in remarking in these patches a curious resemblance to the map of Europe. There was the great mass of Continental country, there were the Scandinavian and Iberian peninsulas, there was the Italian boot, there were even some neighbouring patches which, by a stretch of imagination, might be supposed to stand for the British Islands. From this interesting map, to the great delight of Mr Prigley, distilled in wet weather large drops of water, that fell with a blobbing sound audible over the whole church. All that Mr Prigley regretted was that

these drops chose to fall on the free seats of the poor, rather than into those cosy square partitions where sat the wealthy cotton-spinners and their wives. One old pauper, for instance, sat habitually in a place where the largest drop always regularly fell. The first time that it descended on his poor bald pate he had been much startled, and some little boys in a neighbouring pew had set up an audible titter; but the old man simply took out his pocket-handkerchief—a dark-brown cotton one with white spots—and laid it, all nicely folded as it was, on the summit of his occiput, where, with remarkable steadiness, he ever afterwards maintained it. If that large persistent drop would but have fallen on Mrs Ogden's gorgeous bonnet, it would have been worth twenty pounds to Mr Prigley's meditated subscription.

Now the bare fact, divested of the mercantile exaggerations of the carpenter and slater, and of Mr Prigley's politic ones, was simply this: The oak timber of the roof was for the most part perfectly sound; and as to those beams which were not quite sound, they were still more than equal to the service required of them, having been made originally about four times as thick as they needed to have been. Supposing, however, that it were necessary, which it was not, to take out the par-

tially-decayed beams and replace them, that was not a very serious matter ; and as for the slating, the slates themselves were good, and by simply removing them and putting them on again with new laths, a perfect repair might be effected. Mr Prigley felt that he had a very difficult part to play ; he might work upon the fears of the ladies by representing the roof as positively dangerous, and had indeed already so much alarmed two old maids, the Miss Hewicks, that they sat in church in trembling expectation that the roof would fall in upon them, yet dared not absent themselves, from a dread of public opinion. In this state the Miss Hewicks might be considered ripe for subscribing, and were in fact ready to give any amount within their pecuniary means. But it was not so easy to alarm a set of hard-headed cotton-spinners, who were only too well acquainted with the repairing of roofs, having whole acres of roofs of their own ; and herein lay Mr Prigley's great difficulty. If he had simply desired to put Shayton church into a state of thorough repair, nothing in the world would have been easier—he would have got together the necessary subscriptions in the course of a morning, at any time, by simply calling at five or six counting-houses ; but his projects, as we know, were much more ambi-

tious, and the difficulty was so to arrange matters that out of these repairs to the roof should spring, as it were by a natural and seemingly inevitable growth, the fair fabric of his dreams.

And now, as he saw, by un hoped-for good-luck, these three rich Ogdens in his own parlour, it became Mr Prigley's earnest wish to keep them there as long as possible, and cultivate their acquaintance, and see whether there was not some vulnerable place in those hard practical minds of theirs. As for the Doctor, he scarcely hoped to get any money out of *him*; he had preached at him over and over again, and though the Doctor only laughed and took care to keep out of the way of these sermons, it was scarcely to be expected that he should render good for evil—money for hard language. Nobody in Shayton precisely knew what the Doctor's opinions were; but when Mr Prigley was writing his most energetic onslaughts on the infidel, it is certain that the type in the parson's mind had the Doctor's portly body and plain Socratic face.

Mrs Prigley had rather hesitated about asking the man to stay tea at the parsonage, for her husband freely expressed his opinion of him in privacy, and when in a theological frame of mind, spoke of him with much the same aversion that

Mrs Prigley herself felt for rats and toads and spiders. And as she looked upon the Doctor's face, it seemed to her at first the face of the typical "bad man," in whose existence she firmly believed. The human race, at the parsonage, was divided into sheep and goats, and Dr Bardly was amongst the goats. Was he not evidently a goat? Had not nature herself stamped his badness on his visage? His very way of laughing had something suspicious about it; he seemed always to be thinking more than he chose to express. What was he thinking? There seemed to be something doubtful and wrong even about his very whiskers, but Mrs Prigley could not define it, neither can we. On the contrary, they were respectable and very commonplace grey whiskers, shaped like mutton-chops, and no doubt they would have seemed only natural to Mrs Prigley if they had been more frequently seen in Shayton Church.

It may appear to some critics that in narrating the arrival of Isaac and Jacob at the parsonage, we passed too rapidly to that digression about the church-roof, and, perhaps, even that we had forgotten to describe the moving scene which must have taken place when two affectionate sons, who had heard the most terrible accounts

of their mother's condition, found her in health and safety. But the fact is that there was hardly anything to tell. Isaac said, "Why, mother!" and Jacob muttered, "Her arm's *non* brokken;" and there was no further display of sentiment of any kind. The writer regrets this, but it is not his fault. If Isaac and Jacob had been Frenchmen, and their mother *leur mère*, then there would have been a scene worth dwelling upon. There would have been kisses, and tears, and huggings, and interjections! But Isaac and Jacob had not kissed their mother since they left school, and how were they to begin now, in the presence of Mr and Mrs Prigley and the Doctor?

The young woman who did the "marvellous work of the house," as a great writer called it (and indeed it *was* marvellous how one pair of red rough hands could ever get through it all), had rather exceeded her commission about the crab. Mrs Prigley had told her to get a crab if she could, and "mind it was a fine one;" so as there did not happen to be one of those gigantic monsters in Shayton that day which Betty had wonderingly beheld in the fish-market at Manchester, and which had ever since been to her a crab-ideal, she purchased three of somewhat inferior bulk, which contained, nevertheless, large

quantities of nutriment in their broad bodies, and great terrible-looking nippers. Company at the parsonage was a very rare event, for Mr Prigley saw little, in a social way, of the neighbouring manufacturers; and though the Miss Hewicks came to tea from time to time, they were but ladies, and ladies too of small appetite, so that Betty had no data for the capacity of large gentlemen like the Ogdens and the Doctor, and therefore exaggerated it in her too active imagination. Mrs Prigley quitted her guests a little before tea-time to superintend the arrangements for the feast, and to forward them by her own exertions; and when she saw the three great crabs she scolded Betty, and yet felt a secret satisfaction in being able to display such a plentiful provision without having to account for it to her own conscience.

Indeed it was a very pleasant-looking tea-table altogether. Mrs Prigley, who was a Miss Stanburne of Byfield, a branch of the Stanburnes of Wenderholme, possessed a little ancestral plate, a remnant, after much subdivision, of the magnificence of her ancestors. She had a teapot and a coffeepot, and a very quaint and curious cream-jug; she also possessed a pair of silver candlesticks, of a later date, representing Corinthian

columns, and the candles stood in round holes in their graceful acanthus-leaved capitals. Many clergymen can display articles of contemporary manufacture bearing the most flattering inscriptions, but Mr Prigley had never received any testimonials, and, so long as he remained in Shayton, was not in the least likely to enrich his table with silver of that kind. Mrs Prigley, whilst apparently listening with respectful attention to Mrs Ogden's account of a sick cow of hers (in which Mrs Ogden seemed to consider that she herself, and not the suffering animal, was the proper object of sympathy), had in fact been debating in her own mind whether she ought to display her plate on a mere chance occasion like the present; but the common metal teapot was bulged and shabby, and the thistle in electro-plate, which had once decorated its lid, had long since been lost by one of the children, who had fancied it as a plaything. The two brass candlesticks were scarcely more presentable; indeed one of them would no longer stand upright, and Mrs Prigley had neglected to have it repaired, as one candle sufficed in ordinary times; and when her husband wrote at night, he used a tin bed-candlestick resembling a frying pan, with a tin column, *not* of the Corinthian order, sticking up in the middle of it, and

awkwardly preventing those culinary services to which the utensil seemed naturally destined. As these things were not presentable before company, Mrs Prigley decided to bring forth her silver, but in justice to her it is necessary to say that she would have preferred something between the two, as more fitted to the occasion. For similar reasons was displayed a set of old china, of whose value the owner herself was ignorant; and so indeed would have been the present writer, if he had not recognised Mrs Prigley's old cups and saucers in Jacquemart's 'Histoire de la Porcelaine.'

The splendour of Mrs Prigley's tea-table struck Mrs Ogden with a degree of surprise which she had not art enough to conceal, for the manners and customs of Shayton had never inculcated any kind of reticence as essential to the ideal of good-breeding. The guests had scarcely taken their places round this brilliant and festive board when Mrs Ogden said,—

“You've got some very *'andsome* silver, Mrs Prigley. I'd no idea you'd got such *'andsome* silver. Those candlesticks are taller than any we've got at Milend.”

A slight shade of annoyance passed across the countenance of the hostess as she answered, “It came from Wenderholme; there's not much of it

except what is on the table ; there were six of us to divide it amongst."

"Those are the Stanburne arms on the teapot," said the Doctor ; "I've oftens noticed them at Wendrum 'all. They have them all up and down. Young Stanburne's very fond of his coat of arms, but he's a right to be proud of it, for it's a very old one. He's quite a near relation of yours, isn't he, Mrs Prigley ?"

"My father and his grandfather were brothers, but there was a coolness between them on account of a small estate in Yorkshire, which each thought he'd a right to, and they had a lawsuit. My father lost it, and never went to Wenderholme again ; and they never came from Wenderholme to Byfield. When my uncle Reginald died, my father was not even asked to the funeral, but they sent him gloves and a hatband."

"Have you never been at Wenderholme, Mrs Prigley ?" said Isaac.

"Never ! I've often thought I should like to see it, just once ; it's said to be a beautiful place, and I should like to see the house my poor father was born in."

"Why, it's quite close to Shayton, a great deal nearer than anybody would think. It isn't much more than twelve or fourteen miles off, and my

house at Twistle is within nine miles of Wenderholme, if you go across the moor. There is not a single building of any kind between. But it's thirty miles to Wenderholme by the turnpike. You have to go through Sootythorn."

"It's a very nice estate," said uncle Jacob; and, to do him justice, he was an excellent judge of estates, and possessed a great fund of information concerning all the desirable properties in the neighbourhood, for he made it his business to acquire this sort of knowledge beforehand, in case such properties should fall into the market. So that when uncle Jacob said an estate was "very nice," you may be sure it was so.

"There are about two thousand acres of good land at Wendrum," he continued, "all in a ring-fence, and a very large moor behind the house, with the best shooting anywhere in the whole country. Our moors join up to Mr Stanburne's, and if the whole were put together, it would be a grand shooting."

"That is," said Mr Prigley, rather maliciously, "if Mr Stanburne were to buy your moor, I suppose. Perhaps he might feel inclined to do so if you wished to sell."

Mrs Ogden could not endure to hear of selling property, even in the most remote and hypo-

thetical manner. Her back was generally as straight as a stone wall, but it became, if possible, straighter and stiffer, as, with a slight toss of the head, she spoke as follows :—

“We don’t use selling property, Mr Prigley ; we’re not sellers, we are buyers.”

These words were uttered slowly, deliberately, and with the utmost distinctness, so that it was not possible for any one present to misunderstand the lady’s intention. She evidently considered buying to be the nobler function of the two, as implying increase, and selling to be a comparatively degrading operation—a confession of poverty and embarrassment. This feeling was very strong, not only in Shayton, but for many miles round it, and instances frequently occurred of owners who clung to certain properties against their pecuniary interest, from a dread of it being said of them that they had sold land. There are countries where this prejudice has no existence, and where a rich man sells land without hesitation when he sees a more desirable investment for his money ; but in Shayton a man was married to his estate or his estates (for in this matter polygamy was allowed) ; and though the law, after a certain tedious and expensive process, technically called conveyancing, permitted divorce, public opinion did *not* permit it.

Mr Prigley restored the harmony of the evening by admitting that the people who sold land were generally the old landowners, and those who bought it were usually in trade—not a very novel or profound observation, but it soothed the wounded pride of Mrs Ogden, and at the same time flattered a shade of jealousy of the old aristocracy which coexisted with much genuine sympathy and respect.

“But we shouldn’t say Mister Stanburne now,” observed the Doctor; “he’s Colonel Stanburne.”

“Do militia officers keep their titles when not on duty?” asked Mr Isaac.

“Colonels always do,” said the Doctor, “but captains don’t, in a general way, though there are some places where it is the custom to call ’em captain all the year round. In the old militia times there was a Captain Blackstone in Shayton. You remember him well enough, Mrs Ogden, but he died before Mr Prigley came to the place. He was only a militia officer, but everybody captained him. I suppose Mr Isaac here will be Captain Ogden some of these days.”

“I was not aware you intended to join the militia, Mr Isaac,” said the clergyman. “I am very glad to hear it. It will be a pleasant change

for you. Since you left business you must often be at a loss for occupation."

"I've had plenty to do until a year or two since in getting Twistle Farm into order. It's a wild place, but I've improved it a good deal, and it amused me. I sometimes wish it were all to be done over again. A man is never so happy as when he's very busy about carrying out his own plans."

"You made a fine pond there, didn't you?" said Mr Prigley, who always had a hankering after this pond, and was resolved to improve his opportunity.

"Yes, I need a small sheet of water. It is of use to me nearly the whole year round. I swim in it in summer, I skate on it in winter, and in the spring and autumn I can sail about on it in a little boat, though there is not much room for tacking, and the pond is too much in a hollow to have any regular wind."

"Ah! when the aquatic passion exists in any strong form," said the aquatic Mr Prigley, "it will have its exercise, even though on a small scale. One of the great privations to me in Shayton is that I never get any swimming."

"My pond is very much at your service," said Mr Isaac, politely. "I am sorry that it is so far

off, but one cannot send it down to Shayton in a cart, as one might send a shower-bath."

Mrs Ogden was much pleased to see her scheme realising itself so naturally, without any ingeference of her own, and only regretted that it was not the height of summer, in order that Mr Prigley might set off for Twistle Farm the very next morning. However enthusiastic he might be about swimming, he could scarcely be expected to explore the too cool recesses of the Twistle pond in the month of November—at least for purposes of enjoyment; and Mrs Ogden was not Papist enough to encourage the good man in anything approaching to a mortification of the flesh.

But Mr Prigley relieved her mind by asserting in a very emphatic manner that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see the pond at any time of the year, and that his aquatic passion, like that of Mr Isaac, took various forms, and adapted itself to the season. Mrs Prigley's countenance began to wear an expression of uneasiness, if not positive alarm, for she had hitherto congratulated herself on the very circumstance which her lord regretted—namely, the absence of deep water in the valley of Shayton. There was nothing but a little brook, which in any other region would have clothed itself with all the love-

liness of shady alder, and graceful birch, and broad fern, and blue hyacinth, and trailing pedlar's basket, and a thousand other charms and beauties too long to enumerate, but which in the Shayton valley happened to pass close to the works of an extensive calico-printer, where the refuse of the dyes that made the calico lovely and desirable in the eyes of drapers and their customers produced quite an opposite effect on the poor brook, so that no fish could live in it, and scarcely even the thirstiest of cows would drink of it until it had purified itself by a long pilgrimage, and diluted its dark waters by admixture with the clearer tributaries which joined it.

Little Jacob had been admitted to the ceremony of tea, and had been a model of good behaviour, being "seen and not heard," which in Shayton comprised the whole code of etiquette for youth when in the presence of its seniors and superiors. Luckily for our young friend, he sat between the Doctor and the hostess, who took such good care of him that by the time the feast was over he was aware, by certain feelings of tightness and distension in a particular region, that the necessities of nature were more than satisfied, although, like Vitellius, he had still quite appetite enough for another equally copious repast if only he had

known where to put it. If Sancho Panza had had an equally indulgent physician at his side, one of the best scenes in Don Quixote could never have been written, for Dr Bardly never hindered his little neighbour, but, on the other hand, actually encouraged him to do his utmost, and mentally amused himself by enumerating the pieces of tea-cake and buttered toast, and the helpings to crab and potted meat, and the large spoonfuls of raspberry-jam, which our hero silently absorbed. The Doctor, perhaps, acted faithfully by little Jacob, for if nature had not intended boys of his age to accomplish prodigies in eating, she would surely never have endowed them with such vast desires; and little Jacob suffered no worse results from his present excesses than the uncomfortable tightness already alluded to, which, as his vigorous digestion operated, soon gave place to sensations of comparative elasticity and relief.

The parson's children had not been admitted to witness and partake of the splendour of the festival, but had had their own tea—or rather, if the truth must be told, their meal of porridge and milk—in a nursery up-stairs. They had been accustomed to tea in the evening, but of late the oatmeal-porridge which had always been their breakfast had been repeated at tea-time also, as

the Prigleys found themselves compelled to measures of still stricter economy. People must be fond of oatmeal-porridge to eat it with pleasure seven hundred times a-year; and whenever a change *did* come, the children at the parsonage relished it with a keenness of gastronomic enjoyment which the most refined epicure might envy, and which he probably never experienced. The decoction which in England is supposed to possess the flavour of coffee, and which no foreigner can swallow without mingled astonishment and horror, seemed to these children a drink of exquisite delicacy, though something of its delightfulness may, it is true, be attributed to the treacle with which Mrs Prigley liberally sweetened it. They cared much less for tea, which seemed to them comparatively thin and poor; and such tea as these children tasted, rendered opaque by a cloud of blue milk, was certainly not likely either to injure the nervous system or exhilarate it.

Little Jacob was conducted to the nursery, where he found his young friends in a state of excited expectation. It was understood that this was to be a magic-lantern night. Papa possessed one, which he kept locked up in his study, and displayed only on rare occasions. Mrs Ogden and uncle Jacob were entreated to spend the evening,

and accepted ; but Mr Isaac, who began to feel the necessity for alcohol and tobacco, of which there were no signs at the parsonage, resolved to make his escape, which he did under pretext that old Sarah would be sitting up for him at Twistle, and that the road was long. So he rode off on his mare, which had been duly cared for in Mr Prigley's empty stable, and transferred her in the space of ten minutes to the stable at the Red Lion transferring himself at the same time to the parlour in that house of entertainment—a place redolent with the odours his nostrils best appreciated. Here he would have remained till he was put to bed, if the worthy Doctor had not (only too well) known where to find him, and invited him to smoke his pipe and drink a glass in his own house ; for the Doctor, as we have said, was neither in practice nor precept a teetotaller.

As the magic lantern was supposed to be displayed for the amusement of little Jacob, his grandmother and uncle might partake of the pleasure without any sacrifice of their dignity as grown-up people ; and they found the entertainment quite interesting and delightful, though the only delight they acknowledged consisted in witnessing that of the children. There were five little Prigleys, and it is a curious fact that the

parson's children were the only ones in the whole parish that did not bear Biblical names. All the other households in Shayton sought their names in the Old Testament, and had a special predilection for the most ancient and patriarchal ones; but the parson's boys were called Henry and William and Richard, and his girls Edith and Constance—not one of which names are to be found anywhere in Holy Scripture, either in the Old Testament or the New.

When Mr Prigley had displayed all the slides of his magic lantern, the children returned to the nursery, and the parson made an attempt to sound Mr Jacob Ogden on the subject of architecture by showing him a book of engravings, in which all the English varieties of ecclesiastical Gothic were amply described and illustrated. But Mr Prigley's efforts only resulted in bringing home to his mind the discouraging conviction that his visitor was in a state of total darkness on this subject. Architecture was not *his* business, and he felt under no obligation to burden his memory with the, to him, over-subtle and fanciful differences between Early English, and Decorated, and Perpendicular. The only architecture that he really loved and understood was that of an extensive cotton-mill, with eighty

windows on a side, all exactly alike, and a tall chimney for a tower; and such a mill was to his feeling a finer sight, and a sight that awakened more earnest interest and enthusiasm, than all these churches and cathedrals in Mr Prigley's elaborate engravings. The parson was not a man of cultivated taste; he had that superstitious veneration for Gothic of all kinds which accepts all authentic Gothic as admirable, and cannot discriminate between the good, and the middling, and the positively bad artists who designed the cathedrals of the middle ages; nor was his knowledge very accurate or extensive. But Mr Prigley differed radically and essentially from his guest, and from every other man in Shayton, in having the idea of the beautiful, and some enthusiasm for it. Even the Doctor had not the slightest tincture of this passion, but devoted himself wholly to the pursuit of scientific truth. What Mr Jacob Ogden cared for may be told in a future chapter.

CHAPTER V.

ABOUT a month later in the year, when December reigned in all its dreariness over Shayton, and the wild moors were sprinkled with a thin scattering of snow, little Jacob began to be very miserable.

His grandmother had gone to stay a fortnight with some old friends of hers beyond Manchester, and his father had declared that for the next two Sundays he should remain at Twistle, and not "go bothering his uncle at Milend." Mr Prigley had walked up to the farm, and kindly offered to receive little Jacob at the parsonage during Mrs Ogden's absence ; but Mr Isaac had declined the proposal rather curtly, and, as Mr Prigley thought, in a manner that did not sufficiently acknowledge the kindness of his intention. Indeed the clergyman had not been quite satisfied with his reception ; for although Mr

Isaac had shown him the pond, and given him something to eat, there had been, Mr Prigley thought, symptoms of secret annoyance or suppressed irritation. Little Jacob's loneliness was rendered still more complete by the continued absence of his friend the Doctor, who, in consequence of a disease then very prevalent in the neighbourhood, found his whole time absorbed by pressing professional duties, so that the claims of friendship, and even the anxious interest which he took in Mr Isaac's moral and physical condition, had for the time to be considered in abeyance. We have already observed that Mr Jacob Ogden of Milend never came to Twistle Farm at all, so that his absence was a matter of course; and as he was not in the habit of writing any letters except about business, there was an entire cessation of intercourse with Milend.

It had been a part of Mr Isaac's plan of reformation not to keep spirits of any kind at the farm, but he had quite enough ale and wine to get drunk upon in case his resolution gave way. He had received such a lecture from the Doctor after that evening at the parsonage as had thoroughly frightened him. He had been told, with the most serious air that a doctor knows

how to assume, that his nervous system was already shattered, that his stomach was fast becoming worthless, and that if he continued his present habits, his life would terminate in eighteen months. Communications of this kind are never agreeable, but they are especially difficult to bear with equanimity when the object of them has lost much of the combative and recuperative powers which belong to a mind in health; and the Doctor's terrible sermon produced in Mr Isaac *not* a manly strength of purpose that subdues and surmounts evil, and passes victoriously beyond it, but an abject terror of its consequences, and especially a nervous dread of the Red Lion. He would enter that place no more, he was firmly resolved upon *that*. He would stay quietly at Twistle Farm and occupy himself—he would try to read—he had often regretted that business and pleasure had together prevented him from cultivating his mind by reading, and now that the opportunity was come, he would seize it and make the most of it. He would qualify himself to direct little Jacob's studies, at least so far as English literature went. As for Latin, the little he ever knew had been forgotten many years ago, but he might learn enough to judge

of his boy's progress, and perhaps help him a little. He knew no modern language, and had not even that pretension to read French which is so common in England, and which is more injurious to the character of the nation than perfect ignorance, whilst it is equally unprofitable to its intellect. If Mr Isaac were an ignorant man, he had at least the great advantage of clearly knowing that he was so, but it might not even yet be too late to improve himself. Had he not perfect leisure? could he not study six hours a-day if he were so minded? This would be better than destroying himself in eighteen months in the parlour at the Red Lion.

There were not many books at Twistle, but there *were* books. Mr Isaac differed from his brother Jacob, and from the other men in Shayton, in having long felt a hankering after various kinds of knowledge, though he had never possessed the leisure or the resolution to acquire it. There was a bookseller's shop in St Ann's Square, in Manchester, which he used to pass when he was in the cotton business on his way from the Exchange to a certain oyster-shop where it was his custom to refresh himself, and he had been occasionally tempted to make purchases—amongst the rest, the works of Charles

Dickens and Sir Walter Scott, and the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' He had also bought Macaulay's 'History of England,' and subscribed to a library edition of the British poets in forty volumes, and a biographical work containing lives of eminent Englishmen, scarcely less voluminous. These, with several minor purchases, constituted the whole collection—which, though not extensive, had hitherto much more than sufficed for the moderate wants of its possessor. He had read all the works of Dickens, having been enticed thereto by the pleasant merriment in 'Pickwick;' but the Waverley Novels had proved less attractive, and the forty volumes of British poets reposed uncut upon the shelf which they adorned. Even Macaulay's History, though certainly not less readable than any novel, had not yet been honoured with a first perusal; and as Mr Ogden kept his books in a bookcase with glass doors, the copy was still technically a new one.

He resolved now that all these books should be *read*, all except perhaps the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' for Mr Ogden was not then aware of the fact, which a successful man has recently communicated to his species, that a steady reading of that work according to its alphabetical

arrangement *may* be a road to fortune, though it must be admitted to be an arduous one. He would begin with Macaulay's History, and he *did* begin one evening in the parlour at Twistle Farm after Sarah had removed the tea-things. He took down the first volume, and began to cut the leaves; then he read a page or two, but in spite of the lucid and engaging style of the historian, he felt a difficulty in fixing his attention—the difficulty common to all who are not accustomed to reading, and which in Mr Ogden's case was perhaps augmented by the peculiar condition of his nervous system. So he read the page over again, but could not compel his mind to follow the ideas of the author; it *would* wander to matters of everyday interest and habit, and then there came an unutterable sense of blankness and dulness, and a craving—yes, an all but irresistible craving—for the stimulus of drink. There could be no harm in drinking a glass of wine—everybody, even ladies, might do that—and he had always allowed himself wine at Twistle Farm. He would see whether there was any in the decanters. What! not a drop? No port in the port decanter, and in the sherry decanter nothing but a shallow stratum of liquid which would not fill a glass, and was not worth

drinking. He would go and fill both decanters himself: there ought always to be wine ready in case any one should come. Mr Prigley might walk up any day, or the Doctor might come, and he always liked a glass or two of port.

There was a nice little cellar at Twistle Farm, for no inhabitant of Shayton ever neglects that when he builds himself a new house, and Mr Ogden had wine in it to the value of four or five hundred pounds. Some friends of his near Manchester, who came to see him in the shooting season and help him to kill his grouse, were connoisseurs in port, and he had been careful to "lay down" a quantity of the finest he could get. He was less delicate in the gratification of his own palate, and contented himself with a compound of no particular vintage, which had the advantage of being exceedingly strong, and therefore allowed a sort of disguised dram-drinking. It need therefore excite little surprise in the mind of the reader to be informed that when Mr Isaac had drunk a few glasses of this port of his, the nervous system began to feel more comfortable, and at the same time tempted him to a still warmer appreciation of the qualities of the beverage. His mind was clearer and brighter, and he read Macaulay with a sort of interest,

which, perhaps, is as much as most authors may hope for or expect; that is, his mind kept up a sort of double action, following the words of the historian, and even grasping the meaning of his sentences, and feeling their literary power, whilst at the same time it ran upon many subjects of personal concern which could not be altogether excluded or suppressed. Mr Ogden was not very delicate in any of his tastes, but it seemed to him, nevertheless, that clay tobacco-pipes consorted better with gin-and-water than with the juice of the grape; and he took from a cupboard in the corner a large box of full-flavoured havannahs, which, like the expensive port in the cellar, he kept for the gratification of his friends.

Now, although the first five or six glasses had indeed done no more than give a beneficial stimulus to Mr Ogden's brain, it is not to be inferred, as Mr Ogden himself appeared to infer, that the continuation of the process would be equally salutary. He went on, however, reading and sipping, at the rate of about a glass to a page, smoking at the same time those full-flavoured havannahs, till after eleven at night. Little Jacob and the servants had long since gone to bed; both decanters had been on the table all the evening, and both had been in equal requisition,

for Mr Ogden had been varying his pleasures by drinking port and sherry alternately. At last the eloquence of Macaulay became no longer intelligible, for though his sentences had no doubt been constructed originally in a perfectly workmanlike manner, they now seemed quite out of order, and no longer capable of holding together. Mr Ogden put the book down and tried to read the Manchester paper, but the makers of articles and the penny-a-liners did not seem to have succeeded better than Macaulay, for their sentences were equally disjointed. The reader rose from his chair in some discouragement and looked at his watch, and put his slippers on, and began to think about going to bed, but the worst of it was he felt so thirsty that he must have something to drink. The decanters were empty, and wine would not quench thirst; a glass of beer might, perhaps—but how much better and more efficacious would be a tall glass of brandy-and-soda-water! Alas! he had no brandy, neither had he any soda-water, at least he thought not, but he would go down into the cellar and see. He took a candle very deliberately, and walked down the cellar-steps with a steady tread, never staggering or swerving in the least. “Am I drunk?” he thought; “no, it is impossible that

I should be drunk, I walk so well and so steadily. I'm not afraid of walking down these stone steps, and yet if I were to fall I might hit my forehead against their sharp edges, sharp edges—yes they have very sharp edges; they are very new steps, cut by masons; and so are these walls new—good ashlar stones; and that arched roof—that arch is well made: there isn't a better cellar in Shayton."

There was no soda-water, but there were bottles whose round, swollen knobs of corks were covered with silvery foil, that glittered as Mr Ogden's candle approached them. The glitter caught his eye, and he pulled one of the bottles out. It wasn't exactly soda-water, but it would fizz; and just now Mr Ogden had a morbid, passionate longing for something that would "fizz," as he expressed it in his muttered soliloquy. So he marched up-stairs with his prize, in that stately and deliberate manner which marks his particular stage of intoxication.

"Its good slekk!"* said Mr Ogden, as he swallowed a tumblerful of the sparkling wine, "and it *can* do me no harm—it's only a lady's

* Slake; it is good slake—it slakes thirst well. The expression was actually used by a carter, to whom a gentleman gave champagne in order to ask his opinion of the beverage.

wine." He held it up between his eye and the candle, and thought that really it looked very nice and pretty. How the little bubbles kept rising and sparkling! how very clear and transparent it was! Then he sat down in his large arm-chair and thought he might as well have another cigar. He had smoked a good many already, perhaps it would be better not; and whilst his mind was resolving not to smoke another, his fingers were fumbling in the box, and making a sort of pretence at selection. At last, for some reason as mysterious as that which decides the famous donkey between two equidistant haystacks, the fingers came to a decision, and the cigar, after the point had been duly amputated with a penknife, was inserted between the teeth. After this the will made no further attempt at resistance, and the hand poured out champagne into the tumbler, and carried the tumbler to the lips, with unconscious and instinctive regularity.

Mr Isaac was now drunk, but it was not yet proved to him that he was drunk. His expedition to the cellar had been perfectly successful; he had walked in the most unexceptionable manner, and even descended those dangerous stone steps. He looked at his watch—it was half-past twelve; he read the hour upon the dial, though not just

at first, and he replaced the watch in his fob. He would go to bed—it was time to go to bed; and the force of habits acquired at the Red Lion, where he usually went to bed drunk at midnight, aided him in this resolution. But when he stood upon his legs, this project did not seem quite so easy of realisation as it had done when viewed in theory from the arm-chair. “Go to bed!” said Mr Isaac; “but how are we to manage it?”

There were two candles burning on the table. He blew one of them out, and took the other in his hand. He took up the volume of Macaulay, with an idea that it ought to be put somewhere, but his mind did not successfully apply itself to the solution of this difficulty, and he laid the book down again with an air of slight disappointment, and a certain sense of failure. He staggered towards the doorway, steadied himself with an effort, and made a shot at it with triumphant success, for he found himself now in the little entrance-hall. The staircase was a narrow one, and closed by a door, and the door of the cellar was next to it. Instead of taking the door that led up to his bedroom, Mr Ogden took that of the cellar, descended a step or two, discovered his mistake, and in the attempt to turn round, fell backwards heavily down the stone stair, and lay

at last on the cold pavement, motionless, and in total darkness.

He might have remained there all night, but there was a sharp little Scotch terrier dog that belonged to little Jacob, and was domiciled in a snug kennel in the kitchen. The watchful animal had been perfectly aware that Mr Ogden was crossing the entrance on his way to his bedroom, but if Feo made any reflections on the subject, they were probably confined to wonder that the master of the house should go to bed so unusually late. When, however, the heavy *thud* of Mr Ogden's body on the staircase and the loud sharp clatter of the falling candlestick came simultaneously to her ears, Feo quitted her lair at a bound, and, guided by her sure scent, was down in the dark cellar in an instant, to the alarm of a fat old rat, who, in his hole, scented the canine odour. A less intelligent dog than Feorach (for that was her Gaelic name in the far Highlands where she was born) would have known that something was wrong, and that the cold floor of the cellar was not a suitable bed for a gentleman ; and no sooner had Feorach ascertained the state of affairs than she rushed to the upper regions, to the relief of the old rat in the hole.

Feorach went to the door of little Jacob's cham-

ber, and there set up such a barking and scratching as awoke even *him* from the sound sleep of childhood. Then she repeated the same process at Jim's door, and finally at 'old Sarah's, after which she ran again to little Jacob's room, and finding the door open now, jumped up to her beloved young master, and barked louder than ever. Old Sarah came into the passage with a lighted candle, where Jim joined her, rubbing his eyes, still heavy with interrupted sleep. "There's summat wrong," said old Sarah; "I'm feared there's summat wrong."

"Stop you here," said Jim, "Ill wake master; he's gotten loaded pistols in his room. If it's thieves, it willn't do to feight 'em wi' talk and a tallow candle."

Jim knocked at his master's door, and having waited in vain a second or two for an answer, determined to open it. There was no one in the room, and the bed had not been slept upon.

"Hod thy din, dog," said Jim to Feorach; and then, with a grave, pale face, said, "It isn't thieves; it's summat 'at's happened to our master."

Now, Lancashire people of the class to which Jim and Sarah belonged, never, or hardly ever, use the verb *to die*, but in the place of it employ

the periphrase of something happening. Jim would never have said, "If our master were to die," but he would have said, "If anything happened to our master;" and as he chanced to use this expression now, the idea conveyed to Sarah's mind was the idea of death, and she believed that Jim had seen a corpse in the room. He perceived this, and drew her away, whispering, "He isn't there; you stop wi' little Jacob." So the man took the candle, and left Sarah in the dark with the child, both trembling and wondering.

Feorach led Jim down into the cellar, and he saw the dark inert mass at the bottom of the steps. A chill shudder seized him as he recognised the white inanimate face. One of Mr Ogden's hands lay upon the floor; Jim ventured to touch it, and found it deadly cold. A little blood oozed from the back of the head, and had matted the abundant brown hair. Perhaps the hand may have been cold simply from contact with the stone flag, but Jim did not reflect about this, and concluded that Mr Ogden was dead. He went hastily back to old Sarah. "Master Jacob," he said, "you must go to bed."

"No, I won't go to bed, Jim!"

"My lad," said old Sarah, "just come into your room, and I'll light you a candle." So she lighted

a candle, and then left the child, and Jim quietly locked the door upon him. The lock was well oiled, and Jacob did not know that he was a prisoner.

“Now, what is't?” said old Sarah, in a whisper.

“Master's deead ; he's fallen down th' cellar-steps and killed hisself.”

Old Sarah had been fully prepared for some terrible communication of this kind, and did not utter a syllable. She simply followed the man, and between them they lifted Mr Ogden, and carried him, not without difficulty, up the cellar-steps. Sarah carried the head, and Jim the legs and feet, and old Sarah's bed-gown was stained with a broad patch of blood.

It is one of the most serious inconveniences attending a residence in the country, that on occasions of emergency it is not possible to procure prompt medical help ; and Twistle Farm was one of those places where this inconvenience is felt to the uttermost. Dr Bardly would perhaps on this very account have dissuaded his friend from establishing himself in such a remote and almost inaccessible situation, if he had not felt persuaded that the dangers to Mr Ogden's health of a constant propinquity to beerhouses were much more

to be dreaded than the rare and occasional peril of delay in the arrival of a doctor. Poor Sarah felt the isolation of Twistle Farm in quite a new sense that night ; for people become accustomed to the most lonely places of residence, and it is only when help is urgently needed from the outer world that the sense of loneliness and remoteness is quite effectually brought home to them. When they had got Mr Ogden on the bed, Jim said, " I mun go an' fetch Dr Bardly, though I reckon it's o' no use ;" and he left Sarah alone with the body.

The poor woman anticipated nothing but a dreary watch of several hours by the side of a corpse, and went and dressed herself, and lighted a fire in Mr Ogden's room. Old Sarah was not by any means a woman of a pusillanimous disposition ; but it may be doubted whether, if she had had any choice in the matter, a solitary watch of this kind would have been exactly to her taste. However, when the fire was burning briskly, she drew a rocking-chair up to it, and in order to keep up her courage through the remainder of the night, fetched a certain physic-bottle from the kitchen, and her heavy lead tobacco-pot. She did not attempt to lay out the body, being under the impression that the coroner might be angry

with her for having done so when the inquest came to be held.

The physic-bottle was full of rum, and Sarah made herself a glass of grog, and lighted her pipe, and looked into the fire. She had drawn the curtains all round Mr Ogden's bed; ample curtains of pale-brown damask, with an elaborate looped valance, from whose deep festoons hung multitudes of little pendants of turned wood covered with flossy silk. The movement communicated to these pendants by the act of drawing the curtains lasted a very long time, and Sarah was startled more than once when on looking round from her arm-chair she saw them swinging and knocking against each other still. As soon as the first shock of alarm was past, the softer emotions claimed their turn, and the old woman began to cry, repeating to herself incessantly, "And quite yoong too, quite yoong, quite a yoong man!"

Suddenly she was aware of a movement in the room. Was it the little dog? No; Feorach had elected to stay with his young master, and both little Jacob and his dog were fast asleep in another room. She ventured to look at the great awful curtained bed. The multitudinous pendants had not ceased to swing and vibrate, and

yet it was now a long time since Sarah had touched the curtains. She wished they would give up and be still; but whilst she was looking at them and thinking this, a little sharp shock ran round the whole valance, and the pendants rattled against each other with the low dull sound which was all that their muffling of silk permitted; a low sound, but an audible one—audible especially to ears in high excitement; a stronger shock, a visible agitation, not only of the tremulous pendants, but even of the heavy curtain-folds themselves. Then they open, and Mr Ogden's pale face appears.

“Well, Sarah, I hope you've made yourself comfortable, you damned old rum-drinking thief! D'ye think I can't smell rum? Give me that bottle.”

Sarah was much too agitated to say or do anything whatever. She had risen from her chair, and stood looking at the bed in speechless amazement. Mr Ogden got up, and walked towards the fire with an unsteady pace. Then he possessed himself of the rum-bottle, and putting it to his lips, began to swallow the contents. This brought Sarah to herself.

“Nay, nay, master; you said as you wouldn't drink no sperrits at Twistle Farm upo' no 'count.”

But the rum had been tasted, and the resolution broken. It had been broken before as to the intention and meaning of it, and was now broken even as to the letter. Isaac Ogden had got drunk at Twistle Farm; and now he was drinking spirits there—not even diluting them with water.

After emptying old Sarah's bottle, which fortunately did not contain enough to endanger, for the present, his existence, Mr Ogden staggered back to his bed, and fell into a drunken sleep, which lasted until Dr Bardly's arrival. The Doctor found the wound at the back of the head exceedingly slight; there was abrasure of the skin and a swelling, but nothing more. The blood had ceased to flow soon after the accident; and there would be no worse results from it than the temporary insensibility, from which the patient had already recovered. The most serious results of what had passed were likely, for the present, to be rather moral than physical. Dr Bardly greatly dreaded the moral depression which must result from the breaking down of the only resolution which stood between his friend and an utter abandonment to his propensity. Twistle Farm would no longer be a refuge for him against the demon, for the demon had been admitted, had crossed the threshold, had taken possession.

Mr Ogden was not in a condition to be advised, for he was not yet sober, and, if he had been, the Doctor felt that advice was not likely to be of any use; he had given enough of it already. The parson might try, if he liked, but it seemed to the Doctor that the case had now become one of those incurable cases which yield neither to the desire of self-preservation nor to the fear of hell; and that if the warnings of science were disregarded by a man intelligent enough to appreciate the certainty of the data on which they were founded, those of religion were not likely to have better success.

CHAPTER VI.

MR OGDEN came down-stairs in the middle of the day, and ordered breakfast and dinner in one meal. He asked especially for Sarah's small-beer, and drank two or three large glasses of it. He did not eat much, and used an unusual quantity of pepper. He was extremely taciturn, contrarily to his ordinary habit, for he commonly talked very freely with old Sarah whilst she served him. When his repast was finished, he expressed a wish to see little Jacob.

“Good morning, papa! I hope you are better. Sarah says you were poorly last night when Feorach barked so.”

“Oh, she says I was poorly, does she? Then she lies; I wasn't poorly—I was drunk. I want you to read to me.”

“Must I read in that book Mr Prigley gave me when he came?”

“Read what you please.”

So little Jacob opened for the first time a certain volume which will be recognised by every reader when he begins :—

“‘The way was long, the wind was cold,
The minstrel was infirm and old.’”

“That would be difficult,” said Mr Ogden.

“What, papa?”

“I say, it would be difficult.”

Little Jacob felt rather frightened. He did not understand in what the supposed difficulty consisted, and yet felt that he was expected to understand it. He did not dare to ask a second time for enlightenment on the point, so he stood quite still and said nothing. His father waited a minute in perfect silence, and then burst out,—

“Why, you little confounded blockhead, I mean that it would be difficult for a man to be infirm and bold at the same time! Infirm people are timid, commonly.”

“Please, papa, it doesn’t say infirm and bold—it says infirm and old—sec, papa;” and little Jacob pointed with his finger to the place.

“Then you read damned badly, for you read it ‘bold,’ and it’s ‘old.’ I expect you to read better than that—you read badly, damned badly.”

“ Please, papa, I read it ‘old’ the first time, and not ‘bold.’ ”

“ Then you mean to say I cannot trust my own ears, you little impertinent monkey. I say you read it ‘bold,’ and I heard you.”

An elder person would have perceived that Mr Ogden was ill, and humoured him; and a child of a more yielding disposition would have submitted to the injustice, and acquiesced. But little Jacob had an instinctive hatred of injustice, and his whole nature rose in revolt. He had also made up his mind never to tell lies—less perhaps from principle than from a feeling that it was cowardly. The present was an occasion which roused these feelings in all their energy. He was required to utter a falsehood, and submit to an injustice.

“ No, papa, I said ‘old.’ I didn’t say ‘bold’ at all. It was you that heard wrong.”

Mr Ogden became white with anger. “ Oh, *I* was mistaken, was I? Do you mean to say that I am deaf?”

“ No, papa.”

“ Well, then, if I’m not deaf I have been lying. I am a liar, am I?”

The state of extreme nervous depression, in combination with irritability, under which Mr

Ogden's system was labouring that day, made him a dangerous man to contradict, and not by any means a pleasant antagonist in argument. But he was not altogether lost; he still kept some control over himself, in proof of which may be mentioned the fact that he simply dismissed little Jacob without even a box on the ear. "He deserves a good thrashing," said Mr Ogden; "but if I were to begin with him I should nearly kill him, the little impudent scoundrel!"

The afternoon was exceedingly dull and disagreeable to Mr Ogden. He walked out into his fields and round the pond. He had made a small footpath for his walks, which, after leaving the front-door first, went all round the pond, and then up to the rocks that overlooked the little valley, and from which he enjoyed a very extensive view. There were several springs in the little hollow, but before Mr Ogden's settlement they had contented themselves with creating those patches of that emerald grass, set in dark heather, which are so preciously beautiful in the scenery of the moors. At each of these springs Mr Ogden had made a circular stone-basin, with a water-duct to his pond, and it was his fancy to visit these basins rather frequently to see that they were kept clean and in order. He did so this afternoon, from habit,

and by the time he had finished his round it was nearly dark.

He was intensely miserable. Twistle Farm had been sweet and dear to him because he had jealously guarded the purity of the associations that belonged to it. Neither in the house nor in the little undulating fields that he had made was there a single object to remind him of his weakness and his sin, and therefore the place had been a refuge and a sanctuary. It could never again be for him what it had been; this last lamentable failure had broken down the moral defences of his home, and invaded it and contaminated it for ever. Whatever the future might bring, the event of the past night was irrevocable; he had besotted himself with drink; he had brought the mire of the outer world into his pure dwelling, and defiled it. Isaac Ogden felt this the more painfully that he had little of the support of religion, and few of the consolations and encouragements of philosophy. A religious mind would have acknowledged its weakness and repented of its sin, yet in the depths of its humiliation hoped still for strength from above, and looked and prayed for ultimate deliverance and peace. A philosophic mind would have reflected that moral effort is not to be abandoned for a single relapse,

or even for many relapses, and would have addressed itself only the more earnestly to the task of self-reformation that the need for effort had made itself so strikingly apparent. But Mr Ogden had neither the faith which throws itself on the support of Heaven, nor the faculty of judging of his own actions with the impartiality of the independent intellect. He was simply a man of the world, so far as such a place as Shayton could develop a man of the world, and had neither religious faith nor intellectual culture. Therefore his misery was the greater for the density of the darkness in which he had stumbled and fallen. What he needed was light of some sort; either the beautiful old lamp of faith, with its wealth of elaborate imagery, or the plainer but still bright and serviceable gas-light of modern thought and science. Mr Prigley possessed the one, and the Doctor gave his best labour to the maintenance of the other; but Mr Ogden was unfortunate in not being able to profit by the help which either of these friends would have so willingly afforded.

No one except Dr Bardly had suspected the deplorable fact that Mr Ogden was no longer in a state of mental sanity. The little incident just narrated, in which he had mistaken one word for

another, and insisted, with irritation, that the error did not lie with him, had been a common one during the last few weeks, whenever little Jacob read to him. If our little friend had communicated his sorrows to the Doctor, this fact would have been a very valuable one as evidence of his father's condition ; but he never mentioned it to any one except his grandmother and old Sarah, who both inferred that the child had read inaccurately, and saw no reason to suspect the justice of Mr Ogden's criticism. The truth was, that by a confusion very common in certain forms of brain-disease, a sound often suggested to Mr Ogden some other sound resembling it, or of which it formed a part, and the mere suggestion became to him quite as much a fact as if he had heard it with his bodily ears. Thus, as we have seen, the word "old" had suggested "bold ;" and when, as in that instance, the imagined word did not fit in very naturally with the sense of the passage, Mr Ogden attributed the fault to little Jacob's supposed inaccuracy in reading. Indeed he had now a settled conviction that his son was unpardonably careless, and no sooner did the child open his book to read, than his father became morbidly expectant of some absurd mistake, which, of course, never failed to

arrive, and to give occasion for the bitterest reproaches.

On his return to the house Mr Ogden desired his son's attendance, and requested him to resume his reading. Little Jacob took up his book again, and this time, as it happened, Mr Ogden heard the second line correctly, and expressed his satisfaction. But in the very next couplet—

“His withered cheek and tresses grey
Seemed to have known a better day”—

Mr Ogden found means to imagine another error. “It seems to me curious,” said he, “that Scott should have described the minstrel as having a ‘withered cheek and tresses gay;’ there could be little gaiety about him, I should imagine.”

“Please, papa, it isn't gay, but grey.”

“Then why the devil do you read so incorrectly? I have always to be scolding you for making these absurd mistakes!”

If little Jacob had had an older head on his shoulders he would have acquiesced, and tried to get done with the reading as soon as possible, so as to make his escape. But it was repugnant to him to admit that he had made a blunder of which he was innocent, and he answered,—

“But, papa, I read it right—I said *grey*; I didn't say *gay*.”

Mr Ogden made a violent effort to control himself, and said, with the sort of calm that comes of the intensest emotion,—

“Then you mean to say I am deaf.”

Little Jacob had really been thinking that his father might be deaf, and admitted as much.

“Fetch me my riding-whip.”

Little Jacob brought the whip, expecting an immediate application of it, but Mr Ogden, still keeping a strong control over himself, merely took the whip in his hands, and began to play with it, and look at its silver top, which he rubbed a little with his pocket-handkerchief. Then he took a candle in his right hand, and brought the flame quite close to the silver ornament, examining it with singular minuteness, so as apparently to have entirely ceased to pay attention to his son's reading, or even to hear the sound of his voice.

“Is this my whip?”

“Yes, papa.”

“Well, then, I am either blind or I have lost my memory. My whip was precisely like this, except for one thing—my initials were engraved upon it, and I can see no initials here.”

Little Jacob began to feel very nervous. The

reader may remember that at the beginning of this history he had lost his father's whip, and that the search for it had been unsuccessful. He had consulted a certain saddler in Shayton, a friend of his, as to the possibility of procuring a whip of the same pattern as the lost one, and it had fortunately happened that this saddler had received two precisely alike, of which Mr Isaac Ogden had bought one, whilst the other remained unsold. There was thus no difficulty in replacing the whip so as to deceive Mr Ogden into the belief that it had never been lost, or rather so as to prevent any thought or suspicion from presenting itself to his mind. When the master of a house has given proofs of a tyrannical disposition, or of an uncontrollable and unreasonable temper, a system of concealment naturally becomes habitual in his household, and the most innocent actions are hidden from him as if they were crimes. Some trifling incident reveals to him how sedulously he is kept in ignorance of the little occurrences which make up the existence of his dependants, and then he is vexed to find himself isolated and cut off from their confidence and sympathy.

Mr Ogden continued. "This is *not* my whip; it is a whip of the same pattern that some people

have been buying to take me in. Fetch me my own whip—the one with my initials.”

Little Jacob thought the opportunity for escaping from the room too good to be thrown away, and vanished. Mr Ogden waited quietly at first, but after ten minutes had escaped, became impatient, and rang the bell violently. Old Sarah presented herself.

“Send my son here.”

On his reappearance, little Jacob was in that miserable state of apprehension in which the most truthful child will lie if it is in the least bullied or tormented, and in which indeed it is not possible to extract pure truth from its lips without great delicacy and tenderness. Lying is the natural resource of the weak, and at least as large a share of the blame due to it ought to rest with those who will not endure to hear the actual fact, as with those who have to colour the fact to suit the taste of the tyrant. So if little Jacob lied, I say that the fault was not wholly his, and I forgive him, and I believe that a higher Judge fully forgave him also.

“Have you brought my whip?”

“Please, papa,” said little Jacob, who began to get very red in the face, as he always did when he told a downright fib—“please, papa, that’s

your whip." There was a mental reservation here, slightly Jesuitical; for the boy had reflected, during his brief absence, that since he had given that whip to Mr Ogden, it now, of course, might strictly be said to belong to him.

"What has become of my whip with I. O. upon it?"

"It's that whip, papa; only you—you told Jim to clean the silver top, and—and perhaps he rubbed the letters off."

"You damned little lying sneaking scoundrel, this whip is perfectly new; but it will not be new long, for I will lay it about you till it isn't worth twopence."

The sharp switching strokes fell fast on poor little Jacob. Some of them caught him on the hands, and a tremendous one came with stinging effect across his lips and cheek; but it was not the first time he had endured an infliction of this sort, and he had learned the art of presenting his body so as to shield the more sensitive or least protected places. On former occasions Mr Ogden's anger had always cooled after a score or two of lashes, but this time it rose and rose with an ever-increasing violence. Little Jacob began to find his powers of endurance exhausted, and, with the nimble ingenuity of his years, made use of dif-

ferent articles of furniture as temporary barriers against his enemy. For some time he managed to keep the table between Mr Ogden and himself, but his father's arm was long, and reached far, and the child received some smarting cuts about the face and neck, so then he tried the chairs. Mr Ogden, who was by this time a furious madman, shivered his whip to pieces against the furniture, and then, throwing it with a curse into the fire, looked about him for some other means of chastisement. Now there hung a mighty old hunting-whip in a sort of trophy with other memorials of the chase, and he took this down in triumph. The long knotted lash swung heavily as he poised it, and there was a steel hammer at the end of the stick, considered as of possible utility in replacing lost nails in the shoes of hunters.

A great terror seized little Jacob, a terror of that utterly hopeless and boundless and unreasoning kind that will sometimes take possession of the nervous system of a child—a terror such as the mature man does not feel even before imminent and violent death, and which he can only conceive or imagine by a reference to the dim reminiscences of his infancy. The strong man standing there menacing, armed with a whip like a flail, his eyes

glaring with the new and baleful light of madness, became transfigured in the child's imagination to something supernatural. How tall he seemed, how mighty, how utterly irresistible! When a Persian travels alone in some wide stony desert, and sees a column of dust rise like smoke out of the plain and advance rapidly towards him, and believes that out of the column one of the malignant genii will lift his colossal height, and roll his voice of thunder, and wield his sword of flame, all that that Persian dreads in the utmost wildness of his credulous Oriental imagination this child felt as a present and visible fact. The Power before him, in the full might and height of manhood, in the fury of madness, lashing out the great thong to right and left till it cracked like pistol-shots—with glaring eyes, and foaming lips out of which poured curses and blasphemies—was this a paternal image, was it civilised, was it human? The aspect of it paralysed the child, till a sharp intolerable pain came with its fierce stimulus, and he leaped out from behind his barricade and rushed towards the door.

The lad had thick fair hair in a thousand natural curls. He felt a merciless grip in it, and his forehead was drawn violently backwards. Well for him that he struggled and writhed! for

the steel hammer was aimed at him now, and the blows from it crashed on the furniture as the aim was continually missed.

The man-servant was out in the farm-buildings, and old Sarah had been washing in an out-house. She came in first, and heard a bitter cry. Many a time her heart had bled for the child, and now she could endure it no longer. She burst into the room, she seized Ogden's wrist and drove her nails into it till the pain made him let the child go. She had left both doors open. In an instant little Jacob was out of the house.

Old Sarah was a strong woman, but her strength was feebleness to Ogden's. He disengaged himself quite easily, and at every place where his fingers touched her there was a mark on her body for days. The child heard curses following him as he flew over the smooth grass. The farm was bounded by a six-foot wall. The curses came nearer and nearer; the wall loomed black and high. "I have him now," cried Ogden, as he saw the lad struggling to get over the wall.

Little Jacob felt himself seized by the foot. An infinite terror stimulated him, and he wrenched it violently. A sting of anguish crossed his shoulders where the heavy whip-lash fell,—a shoe remained in Ogden's hand.

CHAPTER VII.

OGDEN flung the shoe down with an imprecation, and the whip after it. He then climbed the wall and tried to run, but the ground here was rough moorland, and he fell repeatedly. He saw no trace of little Jacob. He made his way back to the house, sullen and savage, and besmeared with earth and mud.

“Give me a lantern, damn you,” he said to old Sarah, “and look sharp!”

Old Sarah took down a common candle-lantern, and purposely selected one with a hole in it. She also chose the shortest of her candle-ends. Ogden did not notice these particulars in his impatience, and went out again. Just then Jim came in.

“Well,” said old Sarah, “what d’ye think master’s done? He’s licked little Jacob while* he’s

* Till.

wenly * kilt him, but t' little un's reight enough now. He'll never catch him."

"What! has little Jacob run away?"

"Ay, that he has; and he *can* run, can little Jacob; and he knows all th' places about. I've no fears on him. Master's gone after him wi' a lantern wi' a hoile in it, and auve a hinch o' cannle. It's like catchin' 'a brid wi' a pinch o' salt."

"Little un's safe enough, I'se warrant him."

"We mun just stop quite † till th' ould un's i' bedd, and then we'll go and seech ‡ little Jacob."

In a quarter of an hour Ogden came back again. His light had gone out, and he threw the lantern down on the kitchen-floor without a word, and shut himself up in his sitting-room.

The furniture was in great disorder. The chairs were all overturned, the mahogany table bore deep indentations from the blows of the hammer. Some pieces of old china that had ornamented the chimney-piece lay scattered on the hearth. He lifted up a chair and sat upon it. The disorder was rather pleasing to him than otherwise; he felt a bitter satisfaction in the harmony between it and the state of his own mind. A large fragment of broken china lay close to his

* 'Almost.

† Quiet.

‡ 'Seek.

foot. It belonged to a basin, which, having been broken only into three or four pieces, was still repairable. Ogden put it under his heel and crushed it to powder, feeling a sort of grim satisfaction in making repair out of the question.

He sat in perfect inaction for about a quarter of an hour, and then rang the bell. "Bring me hot water, and, stop—put these things in their places, will you?"

Old Sarah restored some order in the room, removed the broken china, and brought the hot water.

"Now, bring me a bottle of rum."

"Please, Mestur Ogden, you've got no rum in the house."

"No, but you have."

"Please, sir, I've got very little. I think it's nearly all done."

"D'ye think I want to rob you? I'll pay ye for't, damn you!"

"Mestur Ogden, you don't use drinkin' sperrits at Twistle Farm."

Ogden gave a violent blow on the table with his fist, and shouted, "Bring me a bottle of rum, a bottle of rum! D'ye think you're to have all the rum in the world to yourself, you drunken old witch?"

There was that in his look which cowed Sarah, and she reflected that he might be less dangerous if he were drunk. So she brought the rum.

Ogden was pouring himself a great dose into a tumbler, when a sudden hesitation possessed him, and he flung the bottle from him into the fire-place. There was a shivering crash, and then a vast sheet of intolerable flame. The intense heat drove Ogden from the hearth. He seized the candle, and went up-stairs into his bedroom.

Sarah and Jim waited to see whether he would come down again, but he remained in his room, and they heard the boards creak as he walked from wall to wall. This continued an hour. At last old Sarah said,—

“I cannot bide no longer. Let’s go and seech th’ childt;” and she lighted two lanterns, which, doubtless, were in better condition, and better provided with candles, than the one she had lent to Mr Ogden.

They went into the stable and cowhouse (or *mistle* as it was called in that country), and called in the softest and most winning tones their voices knew how to assume. “Little Jacob, little Jacob, come, my lad, come; it’s nobbut old Sarah an’ Jim. Mestur’s i’ bedd.”

They went amongst the hay with their lanterns,

in spite of the risk of setting it on fire, but he was not there. He was not to be found in any of the out-buildings. Suddenly an idea struck Jim.

“If we’d nobbut his bit of a dog, who’d find him, sure enough.”

But Feorach had disappeared. Feorach was with her young master.

They began to be rather alarmed, for it was very cold, and intensely dark. The lad was certainly not on the premises. They set off along the path that led to the rocks. They examined every nook and cranny of the huge masses of sandstone, and their lanterns produced the most unaccustomed effects, bringing out the rough projections of the rock against the unfathomable black sky, and casting enormous shadows from one rock to another. Wherever their feet could tread they went, missing nothing; but the lad was not amongst the rocks. It began to be clear to them that he could not even be in a place of such shelter as that. He must be out on the open moor.

“We mun go and tell Mestur,” said Jim. “If he’s feared about th’ childt, he willn’t be mad at him.”

So they returned straight to the house, and

went to Mr Ogden's room. He had gone to bed, but was not asleep. If he thought about little Jacob at all, his reflections were probably not of an alarming kind. The child would come back, of course.

“Please, sir,” said Jim, “Master Jacob isn't come back, and we can't find him.”

“He'll come back,” said Ogden.

“Please, sir, I'm rather feared about him,” said Jim; “it's nearly two hours sin' he left the house, and it's uncommon cold. We've been seekin' him all up and down, old Sarah and me, and he's nowhere about th' premises, and he isn't about th' rocks neither.”

Mr Ogden began to feel rather alarmed. The paroxysm of his irritation was over by this time, and he had become rational again; indeed his mind was clearer, and, in a certain sense, calmer, than it had been for two or three days. For the last half-hour he had been suffering only from great prostration, and a feeling of dulness and vacancy, which this new anxiety effectually removed. Notwithstanding the violence of his recent treatment of his son—a violence which had frequently broken out during several months, and which had culminated in the scene described in the last chapter, when it had reached the pitch of

temporary insanity—he really had the deepest possible affection for his child, and this paternal feeling was more powerful than he himself had ever consciously known or acknowledged. When once the idea was realised that little Jacob might be suffering physically from the cold, and mentally from a dread of his father, which the events of the night only too fully justified, Mr Ogden began to feel the tenderest care and anxiety. “I’ll be down with you in a moment,” he said. “See that the lanterns are in good order. Have the dogs ready to go with us—they may be of some use.”

He came down-stairs with a serious but quite reasonable expression on his face. He spoke quite gently to old Sarah, and said, with a half-smile, “You needn’t give me a lantern with a hole in it this time;” and then he added, “I wasted all that rum you gave me.”

“It ’ud ’ave been worst wasted if you’d swallowed it, Mestur.”

“It would—it would; but we may need a little for the lad if we find him—very cold, you know. Give a little to Jim, if you have any; and take a railway rug, or a blanket from my bed, to wrap him in if he should need it.”

The dogs were in the kitchen now—a large

mastiff and a couple of pointers. Mr Ogden took down a little cloak that belonged to Jacob, and made the dogs smell at it. Then he seemed to be looking about for something else.

“Are ye seekin’ something, Mr Ogden?”

“I want something to make a noise with, Sarah.” She fetched the little silver horn that had been the Doctor’s last present to his young friend. “That’s it,” said Mr Ogden; “he’ll know the sound of that when he hears it.”

The little party set out towards the moor. Mr Ogden led it to the place where Jacob had crossed the wall; and as Jim was looking about with his lantern he called out, “Why, master, here’s one of his shoes, and—summat else.”

The “summat else” was the great whip.

Mr Ogden took the shoe up, and the whip. They were within a few yards of the pond, and he went down to the edge of it. A slight splash was heard, and he came back without the whip. The weight of the steel hammer had sunk it, and hidden it from his eyes for ever. He carried the little shoe in his right hand.

When they had crossed the wall, Mr Ogden bent down and put the shoe on the ground, and called the dogs. The pointers understood him at once, and went rapidly on the scent, whilst

the little party followed them as fast as they could.

It led out upon the open moor. When they were nearly a mile from the house, Mr Ogden told Sarah to go back and make a fire in little Jacob's room, and warm his bed. The two men then went forward in silence.

It was bitterly cold, and the wind began to rise, whistling over the wild moor. It was now eleven o'clock; Mr Ogden looked at his watch. Suddenly the dogs came to a standstill; they had reached the edge of a long sinuous bog with a surface of treacherous green, and little black pools of peat-water and mud. Mr Ogden knew the bog perfectly, as he knew every spot on the whole moor that he was accustomed to shoot over, and he became terribly anxious. "We must mark this spot," he said; but neither he nor Jim carried a stick, and there was no wood for miles round. The only resource was to make a little cairn of stones.

When this was finished, Mr Ogden stood looking at the bog a few minutes, measuring its breadth with his eye. He concluded that it was impossible for a child to leap over it even at the narrowest place, and suggested that little Jacob must have skirted it. But in which direction—

to the right hand or the left? The dogs gave no indication; they were off the scent. Mr Ogden followed the edge of the bog to the right, and after walking half a mile, turned the extremity of it, and came again on the other side till he was opposite the cairn he had made. The dogs found no fresh scent; they were perfectly useless. "Make a noise," said Mr Ogden to Jim; "make a noise with that horn."

Jim blew a loud blast. There came no answering cry. The wind whistled over the heather, and a startled grouse whirred past on her rapid wings.

An idea was forcing its way into Mr Ogden's mind—a hateful, horrible, inadmissible idea—that the foul black pit before him might be the grave of his only son. How ascertain it? They had not the necessary implements; and what would be the use of digging in that flowing, and yielding, and unfathomable black mud? He could not endure the place, or the intolerable supposition that it suggested, and went wildly on, in perfect silence, with compressed lips and beating heart, stumbling over the rough land.

Old Sarah warmed the little bed, and made a bright fire in Jacob's room. When Ogden came back he went there at once, and found the old

woman holding a small night-gown to the fire. His face told her enough. His dress was covered with snow.

“Th’ dogs is ’appen mistaken,” she said ; “little Jacob might be at Milend by this time.”

Mr Ogden sent Jim down to Shayton on horseback, and returned to the moor alone. They met again at the farm at three o’clock in the morning. Neither of them had any news of the child. Jim had roused the household at Milend, and awakened everybody both at the parsonage and the Doctor’s. He had given the alarm, and he had done the same at the scattered cottages and farmhouses between Twistle Farm and Shayton. If Jacob were seen anywhere, news would be at once sent to his father. Dr Bardly was not at home ; he had left about noon for Sootythorn on militia business, and expected to go on to Wenderholme with Colonel Stanburne, where he intended to pass the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING what remained of the night, it is unnecessary to add that nobody at Twistle Farm had rest. The search was continually renewed in various directions, and always with the same negative result. Mr Ogden began to lose hope, and was more and more confirmed in his supposition that his son must have perished in the bog. Jim returned to Shayton, where he arrived about half-past four in the morning. When the hands assembled at Ogden's mill, Mr Jacob told them that the factory would be closed that day, but that he would pay them their full wages; and he should feel grateful to any of the men who would help him in the search for his little nephew, who had unfortunately disappeared from Twistle on the preceding evening, and had not been since heard of. He added, that a reward of a hundred pounds would be given to any one who would

bring him news of the child. Soon after daylight, handbills were posted in every street in Shayton offering the same reward. Mr Jacob returned to Milend from the factory, and prepared to set out for Twistle.

The sun rose in clear frosty air, and the moors were covered with snow. Large groups began to arrive at the farm about eight o'clock, and at nine the hill was dotted with searchers in every direction. It was suggested to Mr Ogden by a policeman that if he had any intention of having the pond dragged, it would be well that it should be done at once, as there was already a thin coat of ice upon it, and it would probably freeze during the whole of the day and following night, so that delay would entail great additional labour in the breaking of the ice. An apparatus was sent up from Shayton for this purpose. Mr Ogden did not superintend this operation, but sat alone in his parlour waiting to hear the result. There was a tap at the door, and the policeman entered.

“We’ve found nothing in the pond, Mr Isaac, except——”

“Except what?”

“Only this whip, sir, that must belong to you;” and he produced the whip with the steel

hammer. "It may be an important hindication, sir, if it could be ascertained whether your little boy had been playin' with it yesterday evenin'. You don't remember seein' him with it, do you, sir?"

Mr Ogden groaned, and covered his face with his hands. Then his whole frame shook convulsively. Old Sarah came in.

"I was just askin' Mr Ogden whether he knew if the little boy had been playin' with this 'ere whip yesterday—we've found it in the pond; and as I was just sayin', it might be a useful hindication."

Old Sarah looked at the whip, which lay wet upon the table. "I seed that whip yistady, but I dunnot think our little lad played wi' it. He didn't use playin' wi' that whip. That there whip belongs to his father, an' it's him as makes use on it, and non little Jacob."

Mr Ogden removed his hands from his face, and said, "The whip proves nothing. I threw it into the pond yesterday myself."

The policeman looked much astonished. "It's a fine good whip, sir, to throw away."

"Well, take it, then, if you admire it. I'll make ye a present of it."

"I've no use for it, sir."

“Then, I reckon,” said old Sarah, “as you ’aven’t got a little lad about nine year old; such whips as that is consithered useful for thrashin’ little lads about nine year old.”

Mr Ogden could bear this no longer, and said he would go down to the pond. When he had left the room, old Sarah took up the whip and hung it in its old place, over the silver spurs. The policeman lingered. Old Sarah relieved her mind by recounting what had passed on the preceding evening. “I am some and glad* as you brought him that there whip. Th’ sight of it is like pins and needles in ’is een. You’ve punished ’im with it far worse than if you’d laid it over his shoulthers.”

Mr Ogden gave orders that every one who wanted anything to eat should be freely supplied in the kitchen. One of old Sarah’s great accomplishments was the baking of oat-cake, and as the bread in the house was soon eaten up, old Sarah heated her oven, and baked two or three hundred oat-cakes. When once the mixture is prepared, and the oven heated, a skilful performer bakes these cakes with surprising rapidity, and old Sarah was proud of

* “Some and glad” is a common Lancashire expression, meaning “considerably glad.”

her skill. If anything could have relieved her anxiety about little Jacob, it would have been this beloved occupation—but not even the pleasure of seeing the thin fluid mixture spread over the heated sheet of iron, and of tossing the cake dexterously at the proper time, could relieve the good heart of its heavy care. Even the very occupation itself had saddening associations, for when old Sarah pursued it, little Jacob had usually been a highly interested spectator, though often very much in the way. She had scolded him many a time for his “plaguiness;” but, alas! what would she have given to be plagued by that small tormentor now!

The fall of snow had been heavy enough to fill up the smaller inequalities of the ground, and the hills had that aspect of exquisite smoothness and purity which would be degraded by any comparison. Under happier circumstances, the clear atmosphere and brilliant landscape would have been in the highest degree exhilarating; but I suppose nobody at Twistle felt that exhilaration now. On the contrary, there seemed to be something chilling and pitiless in that cold splendour and brightness. No one could look on the vast sweep of silent snow without feeling that *somewhere* under its equal

and unrevealing surface lay the body of a beloved child.

The grave-faced seekers ranged the moors all day, after a regular system devised by Mr Jacob Ogden. The circle of their search became wider and wider, like the circles from a splash in water. In this way, before nightfall, above thirty square miles had been thoroughly explored. At last, after a day that seemed longer than the longest days of summer, the sun went down, and one by one the stars came out. The heavens were full of their glittering when the scattered bands of seekers met together again at the farm.

The fire was still kept alive in little Jacob's room. The little night-gown still hung before it. Old Sarah changed the hot water in the bed-warmer regularly every hour. Alas! alas! was there any need of these comforts now? Do corpses care to have their shrouds warmed, or to have hot-water bottles at their icy feet?

Mr Ogden, who had controlled himself with wonderful success so long as the sun shone, began to show unequivocal signs of agitation after nightfall. He had headed a party on the moor, and came back with a sinking heart. He had no hope left. The child must certainly have died in the cold. He went into little Jacob's bedroom and

walked about alone for a few minutes, pacing from the door to the window, and looking out on the cold white hills, the monotony of which was relieved only by the masses of black rock that rose out of them here and there. The fire had burnt very briskly, and it seemed to Mr Ogden that the little night-gown was rather too near. As he drew back the chair he gazed a minute at the bit of linen; his chest heaved with violent emotion, and then there came a great and terrible agony. He sat down on the low iron bed, his strong frame shook and quivered, and with painful gasps flowed the bitter tears of his vain repentance. He looked at the smooth little pillow, untouched during a whole night, and thought of the dear head that had pressed it, and might never press it more. Where was it resting now? Was the frozen snow on the fair cheek and open brow, or—oh horror, still more horrible!—had he been buried alive in the black and treacherous pit, and were the dear locks defiled with the mud of the bog, and the bright eyes filled with its slimy darkness for ever? Surely he had not descended into *that* grave; they had done what they could to sound the place, and had found nothing but earth, soft and yielding—no fragment of dress had come up on their boat-hooks. It was more endur-

able to imagine the child asleep under the snow. When the thaw came they would find him, and bring him to his own chamber, and lay him again on his own bed, at least for one last night, till the coffin came up from Shayton.

How good the child had been! how brutally Ogden felt that he had used him! Little Jacob had been as forgiving as a dog, and as ready to respond to the slightest mark of kindness. He had been the light of the lonely house with his innocent prattle and gaiety. Ogden had frightened him into silence lately, and driven him into the kitchen, where he had many a time heard him laughing with old Sarah and Jim, and been unreasonably angry with him for it. Ogden began to see these things in a different light. "I used him so badly," he thought, "that it was only natural he should shun and avoid me." And then he felt and knew how much sweet and pure companionship he had missed. He had not half enjoyed the blessing he had possessed. He ought to have made himself young again for the child's sake. Would it have done him any harm to teach little Jacob cricket, and play at ball with him, or at nine-pins? The boy's life had been terribly lonely, and his father had done nothing to dissipate or mitigate its loneliness. And then

there came a bitter sense that he had really loved the child with an immense affection, but that the coldness and roughness and brutality of his outward behaviour had hidden this affection from his son. In this, however, Mr Ogden had not been quite so much to blame as in the agony of his repentance he himself believed. His self-accusation, like all sincere and genuine self-accusation, had a touch of exaggeration in it. The wrong that he had done was attributable quite as much to the temper of the place he lived in as to any peculiar evil in himself as an individual man. He had spoiled his temper with drinking, but every male in Shayton did the same; he had been externally hard and unsympathetic, but the inhabitants of Shayton carried to an excess the English contempt for the betrayal of the softer emotions. In all that Ogden had done, in the whole tenor of his life and conversation, he had merely obeyed the great human instinct of conformity. The majority of men are so constituted that they naturally take the colour of the society about them, and are scarcely answerable as individuals for the conduct they learn from it. They cannot originate a life other than the life they see and mix with. Philosophers may give a higher ideal in books, and the local clergyman,

who has the advantage of being visible in the flesh, may preach a holier and better way, but a man's law is the custom of his class. A few eccentrics may venture to depart from this, and to be disloyal to custom, that they may be loyal to the inward law of conscience, or the doctrines that were preached in Galilee; but it is found in practice that these eccentrics cannot continue to live in the locality whose customs they rebel against, and that sooner or later they have to leave it. The only possible salvation for a Shaytonite was a love of money intense enough to produce a certain form of asceticism. Jacob Ogden had this, and was saved by it—at least from the danger of *delirium tremens*; but Isaac, though he valued his pecuniary independence, had not the passionate desire for wealth which requires a certain strength of imagination. Therefore the slough of drink had been inevitable for him as a Shaytonite, for the only motives which can restrain a Shaytonite from drinking are the conviction that it would interfere with the accumulation of money, and a love of money still stronger than the love of gin. Had he lived anywhere else—had he even lived at Sootythorn—he would have been a different man. Such as he was, he was the product of the soil, like the hard pears and

sour apples that grew in the dismal garden at Milend.

He had been sitting more than an hour on the bed, when he heard a knock at the door. It was old Sarah, who announced the arrival of Mr Prigley and Mrs Ogden. Mr Prigley had been to fetch her from the place where she was visiting, and endeavoured to offer such comfort to her during the journey as his heart and profession suggested. As on their arrival at Milend there had been no news of a favourable or even hopeful kind, Mrs Ogden was anxious to proceed to Twistle immediately, and Mr Prigley had kindly accompanied her.

The reader may have inferred from previous pages of this history, that although Mr Prigley may have been a blameless and earnest divine, he was not exactly the man best fitted to influence such a nature as that of Isaac Ogden. He had little understanding either of its weakness or its strength — of its weakness before certain forms of temptation, or its strength in acknowledging unwelcome and terrible facts. After Mrs Ogden had simply said, “Well, Isaac, there’s no news of him yet,” the clergyman tried to put a cheerful light on the subject by expressing the hope that the boy was safe in some

farmhouse. Mr Ogden answered that every farmhouse within several miles had been called at, and that Twistle Farm was the last of the farms on the moor side. It was most unlikely, in his opinion, that the child could have resisted the cold so long, especially as he had no provisions of any kind, and was not even sufficiently clothed to go out; and as he had certainly not called at any house within seven or eight miles of Twistle, Mr Ogden could only conclude that he must have perished on the moor, and that the thick fall of snow was all that had prevented the discovery of his body.

Mrs Ogden sat down and began to cry very bitterly. The sorrow of a person like Mrs Ogden is at the same time quite frank in its expression, and perfectly monotonous. Her regrets expressed themselves adequately in three words, and the repetition of them made her litany of grief—"Poor little lad!" and then a great burst of weeping, and then "Poor little lad!" again, perpetually.

The clergyman attempted to "improve" the occasion in the professional sense. "The Lord hath given," he said, "and the Lord hath taken away;" then he paused, and added, "blessed be the name of the Lord." But this brought no

solace to Ogden's mind. "It was not the Lord that took the lad away," he answered; "it was his father that drove him away—his damned, cursed father, that the devils in hell are waiting for." Mr Prigley suggested that if the father repented, the devils might wait in vain. "Repented!" said Mr Ogden; "and do I not repent? D'ye think I don't repent because you don't catch me on my knees? Am I not miserable enough, don't I suffer enough, think you? And what sort of a life have I got before me? I am a sort of a murderer; and if they took me and hanged me it would be too good for me. I'd the nicest little lad, and—O God! O God!"

The great agony came over him again, and he flung himself on his breast upon the sofa and buried his face in the cushions. Then his mother rose and came slowly to his side, and knelt down by him. Precious maternal feelings, that had been, as it were, forgotten in her heart for more than twenty years, like jewels that are worn no more, shone forth once more from her swimming eyes. "Isaac, lad," she said, with a voice that sounded in his ears like a far-off recollection of childhood—"Isaac, lad, it were none o' thee as did it—it were drink. Thou wouldn't have hurt a hair of his head." And she kissed him.

It was a weary night at Twistle. Nobody had any hope left, but they felt bound to continue the search, and relays of men came up from Shayton for the purpose. They were divided into little parties of six or eight, and Mr Jacob directed their movements. Each group returned to the house after exploring the ground allotted to it, and Mr Ogden feverishly awaited its arrival. The ever-recurring answer, the sad shake of the head, the disappointed looks, sank into the heart of the bereaved father. About two in the morning he got a little sleep, and awoke in half an hour somewhat stronger and calmer.

It is unnecessary to pursue the detail of these sufferings. The days passed, but brought no news. Dr Bardly came back from Wenderholme, and seemed less affected than would have been expected by those who knew his love and friendship for little Jacob. He paid, however, especial attention to Mr Isaac, whom he invited to stay with him for a few weeks, and who bore his sorrow with a manly fortitude. The Doctor drank his habitual tumblers of brandy-and-water every evening before going to bed, and the first evening, by way of hospitality, had offered the same refreshment to his guest. Mr Ogden declined simply, and the offer was not renewed. For the

first week he smoked a great deal, and drank large quantities of soda-water, but did not touch any intoxicating liquor. He persevered in this abstinence, and declared his firm resolve to continue it as a visible sign of his repentance, and of his respect to the memory of his boy. He was very gentle and pleasant, and talked freely with the Doctor about ordinary subjects; but, for a man whose vigour and energy had manifested themselves in some abruptness and rudeness in the common intercourse of life, this new gentleness was a marked sign of sadness. When the Doctor's servant, Martha, came in unexpectedly and found Mr Ogden alone, she often observed that he had shed tears; but he seemed cheerful when spoken to, and his grief was quiet and undemonstrative.

The search for the child was still actively pursued, and his mysterious disappearance became a subject of absorbing interest in the neighbourhood. The local newspapers were full of it, and there appeared a very terrible article in the 'Sootythorn Gazette' on Mr Ogden's cruelty to his child. The writer was an inhabitant of Shayton, who had had the misfortune to have Mr Jacob Ogden for his creditor, and had been pursued with great rigour by that gentleman. He

got the necessary data from the policeman who had brought the whip back from the pond, and wrote such a description of it as made the flesh of the Sootythorn people creep upon their bones, and their cheeks redden with indignation. The Doctor happened to be out of the house when this newspaper arrived, and Mr Isaac opened it and read the article. The facts stated in it were true and undeniable, and the victim quailed under his punishment. If he had ventured into Sootythorn he would have been mobbed and pelted, or perhaps lynched. He was scarcely safe even in Shayton; and when he walked from the Doctor's to Milend, the factory operatives asked him where his whip was, and the children pretended to be frightened, and ran out of his way. A still worse punishment was the singular gravity of the faces that he met—a gravity that did not mean sympathy but censure. The 'Sootythorn Gazette' demanded that he should be punished—that an example should be made of him, and so on. The writer had his wish, without the intervention of the law.

After a few weeks the mystery was decided to be insoluble, and dismissed from the columns of the newspapers. Even the ingenious professional detectives admitted that they were at fault, and

could hold out no hopes of a discovery. Mr Ogden had with difficulty been induced to remain at the Doctor's during the prosecution of these inquiries; but Dr Bardly had represented to him that he ought to have a fixed address in case news should arrive, and that he need not be wholly inactive, but might ride considerable distances in various directions, which indeed he did, but without result.

Mrs Ogden remained at Milend, but whether from the strength of her nature, or some degree of insensibility, she did not appear to suffer greatly from her bereavement, and pursued her usual household avocations with her accustomed regularity. Mr Jacob went to his factory, and was absorbed in the details of business. No one put on mourning, for the child was still considered as possibly alive, and perhaps his relations shrank from so decided an avowal of their abandonment of hope. The one exception to this rule was old Sarah at Twistle, who clad herself in a decent black dress that she had by her. "If t' little un's deead," she said, "it's nobbut reight to put mysel' i' black for him; and if he isn't, I'm so sore in my heart ovver him 'at I'm fit to wear nought else."

CHAPTER IX.

THE reader may remember that on the night of little Jacob's disappearance the Doctor was absent from Shayton. He had set off that morning for Sootythorn on some business connected with the militia, and as the reader has been hitherto confined within the valley of Shayton and the barren moors that surround it, where, it must be admitted, there is nothing very interesting to be seen, perhaps he would be glad to accompany the Doctor, and take, as it were, the spare place in his gig.

Since the reader will only take that spare place in a spiritual sense, let us hope that he will not be greatly incommoded by a practice of the Doctor's which would be highly inconvenient if he were invisibly present in the flesh. Dr Bardly never could pass an old woman with a bundle, or an old man with a pack on his back, or even a

young woman or a child who had a long way to go, without stopping his grey mare with a low whistle, and ordering the pedestrian in a peremptory tone to "get up and ride." There was especially one old woman who walked three or four times a-week from Shayton to Sootythorn, on some mysterious little peddling business of hers, and who so often profited by the Doctor's gig that the Sootythorn people had standard jokes on the subject. Some said the pair were engaged to be married, others affirmed that the old lady was the Doctor's aunt, and others that she was his grandmother; but the most malicious invention reported that, notwithstanding the poverty of her appearance, she was possessed of considerable wealth, and that the Doctor, who had long been aware of this, had an eye to an inheritance.

Now this last supposition was nearer the truth than the Sootythorn people imagined, except only as to the Doctor's knowledge of the fact. Old Nanny Pickering was a rich woman, but the Doctor honestly believed her to be a poor one. The very fact of her wealth made her life lonely, for she could not trust a servant in a cottage where rolls of five-pound notes were hidden in mattresses and pillow-cases, and old stockings full of gold were stowed away under the thatch.

The only protection that Nanny Pickering trusted in was her hitherto unblemished reputation for indigence, which she took every possible means to extend and maintain. She lived in a tiny cottage, by the side of a small brook, about a mile from the highroad, and entirely concealed from it by a thick wood. She thankfully received alms from farmers and others who had less capital than herself; and as Lady Helena Stanburne proposed to distribute blankets and flannels at Christmas, the Doctor had mentioned Nanny Pickering as a proper object of charity, which gratified Nanny for two very distinct reasons, since it saved her the expense of purchasing a blanket for herself, and kept up her assumed character as a poor woman.

The road from Shayton to Sootythorn passed through a narrow and still beautiful valley, but the solitude of it was interrupted by two prosperous manufacturing villages, which, as they could not become broader, lengthened themselves as they grew richer and more populous, till it required no great stretch of imagination to predict that the turnpike road would one day become a street, and the two towns be united by a living *lien*, like the Siamese twins. At the date of this history there were, however, portions of the road

so effectually shut in on all sides by the steep hills, that the traveller might imagine himself in some secluded valley of the lake district, a hundred miles from factory-smoke. It was in a seclusion of this kind that Nanny Pickering lived, and her figure was the only living object within range of the Doctor's vision as he drove along that portion of the road.

“Now, Nanny, get up, and look sharp!” said the Doctor, who was far from being ceremonious in the manner of his invitations; and Nanny, who had attained by practice consummate precision and agility in the art of climbing into the gig, was by his side in an instant. Dr Bardly, who liked to see people, especially old people, active and prompt, paid his companion a compliment, though compliments were seldom heard from his veridical lips. “Why, Nanny,” he said, “you seem to me to be gettin’ younger and younger; you jump up same as a lass, and you never ail nout as I see on.”

“Folk had need be strong and hearty when they’n to addle* their breading,” replied his companion.

The mare trotted along at her accustomed pace, and there was little conversation between the tra-

* Earn.

vellers; indeed they went a distance of two miles in perfect silence, when the Doctor said,—

“You live very lonesome, Nanny; you should have a bit of a lass to live with ye—somebody as could nurse ye if ye wanted it, or come and fetch me if you were noan so weel, like.”

“I cannot affoord it—I cannot affoord it.”

“Well, but then you should find some other old body, same as yourself, and you might both live together. There’s two or three about Sootythorn, and you might happen find one as you could agree with.”

“Nay, one mistress is enough i’ one house. It’s plenty to have a bad temper o’ one’s own, beout havin’ to bide other folk’s.”

“Well, damn it, then you mun get wed. I see nout else for’t.”

“When they’re gettin’ old,” said Nanny, “and han no brass, it isn’t easy to wed ’em.”

Much facetious conversation ensued on this inexhaustible topic, but as it was conducted by both speakers in the purest Lancashire dialect, which the refined reader probably despises, it will be more prudent not to report it. One might write a dissertation to prove the vigour, and the terseness, and the venerable antiquity of that variety of speech, which ought to be studied as an inde-

pendent idiom, and not confounded with corrupt and vulgar English, like the English of the uneducated Londoner ; but such a dissertation would be written, however eloquently, in vain. The old provincial languages are passing away from the face of the island, and the time is at hand when the pure dialect of Lancashire will have given place to the English of the schoolmaster and the penny-a-liner. This may be in many ways a great gain—it will bring an important population into closer and easier relations with the other inhabitants of the island—but it will not be an unmixed gain; and a thousand pregnant turns of expression, a thousand keen-edged phrases that have been sharpened by the wit of many generations, will be lost for ever to our soft-tongued posterity.

After passing for several miles through narrow gorges, which were sometimes thickly planted with fir-trees, and sometimes walled and buttressed with lofty cliffs of dark-grey sandstone, the Doctor's gig emerged into a wide basin bounded by hills about a thousand feet high, but so gradual in slope that their summit, or at least their sky-line (for it would have been difficult for a pedestrian to fix upon any definite summit), was at least seven miles from the level ground in the valley

in every direction. This sky-line was not particularly interesting or beautiful, for its curves were so little accentuated that, as a local photographer found out when he began to practise the dry collodion process, and to take a series of views in the neighbourhood, they offered scarcely any picturesque variety; but though the inhabitants were not very imaginative, they had imagination enough to feel a grandeur which the scenery here rather suggested than realised, and the basin of Sooty-thorn had a certain reputation. The town was situated very conveniently in the middle of it; and a pleasant trout-stream, which, as it descended from the hills, passed through some rocky dells and ravines, which were not without sublimity when you once got fairly to the bottom of them, supplied many factories with water, and issued from the town, like a country lady from a visit to Manchester, a good deal dirtier than when it entered therein.

As to the origin of the name of the place, the reader is referred to the local antiquarians, of whose acrid controversies the present writer is not competent to judge. The natural interpretation seems to be that some venerable thorn-tree, having been exposed to much coal-smoke, had become visibly blackened by it, and received

the title of the sooty thorn ; but this crude idea may be easily and triumphantly refuted. The town bore its present appellation, or something which has been corrupted into its present appellation, long before the fresh air of the valley was contaminated by factory - smoke. There was a theory that the origin of the name had been a seat in a large thorn-tree, or seat i' th' thorn, hence Seatithorn, and by corruption, Sootythorn ; but a powerful section of the local erudites contemptuously rejected *thorn* altogether, and contended that the final syllable was *horn*, which they proved by analogous instances. A punster declared that the whole question was a thorny one—and as we agree with him, we will leave it. The controversy was much envenomed in consequence of the too decided interpretation given by the artist who painted the new sign at the Thorn Inn—and who, not trusting, as he safely might have done, to the atmosphere of the place for the blackening of his tree, painted it from the first of the intensest sable, foliage and all, not even diversifying that funereal hue with those reflections from neighbouring objects which, as painters affirm, do in nature modify and mitigate every colour in the universe.

Into the yard at this Thorn Inn now entered the Doctor's gig. Mr Garley, who kept the Inn, and owned it, was a man of substance in more senses than one—and perhaps, with an appearance of great cordiality and freedom, one of the very proudest men in the whole place. There are many different varieties of pride, and Mr Garley's variety was perhaps as desirable as any. If, on the one hand, he was convinced that the Thorn was the best inn in Lancashire, if not in all England, at the same time he certainly did his utmost to make it so. He loved good eating, and every form of comfort, and treated his guests in every respect as he wished to be treated himself—a course of conduct which would have been the very realisation of at least one-half of the Christian ideal, if the motives of it had not been the love of reputation and the desire of gain. However, even Mr Garley's defects, his intense self-satisfaction and his love of good living, were to the advantage of his house, and therefore of everybody who frequented it; and our friend the Doctor, who was by no means indifferent to a good dinner, always looked forward with pleasure to the flesh-pots at the Thorn, and was welcomed by its proprietor as a man

who properly appreciated the advantages of his establishment.

“Good morning, Dr Bardley! good morning, sir! you’ve brought the old lady with you this morning, I observe—I saw her getting down in the middle of the street; it’s very kind of you:” and then, with a knowing look and a wink, “If you would like to ask her to dine with you, you can have a private room, you know, sir.”

The Doctor was quite accustomed to this sort of badgering, and rather liked it. But he put on a stern countenance, and said that he hadn’t brought Nanny Pickering to dine at the Thorn, “because he didn’t expect to find a dinner there good enough for her. However, when the militia was fairly agoing, he perhaps might ask her to dine at mess.”

“Colonel Stanburne’s expecting you, Doctor; he’s in the front sitting-room.”

The Colonel was sitting by himself, with the ‘Times’ and a little black pipe.

“Good morning, Dr Bardly! you’ve a nice little piece of work before you. There are a lot of fellows here to be examined as to their physical constitution—fellows, you know, who aspire to the honour of serving in the twentieth regiment of Royal Lancashire Militia.”

“Perhaps I’d better begin with the hofferers,” said the Doctor.

The Colonel looked alarmed, or affected to be so. “My dear Doctor, there’s not the least necessity for examining officers—it isn’t customary, it isn’t legal; officers are always perfect, both physically and morally. Their physical perfection is a consequence of their moral perfection, you know. They are never guilty of those unfortunate—errors and vices which—deteriorate the constitution of privates.”

A theory of this kind came well enough from Colonel Stanburne. He was six feet high, and the picture of health. He brought forth the fruits of good living, not, as Mr Garley did, in a bloated and rubicund face and protuberant corporation, but in that admirable balance of the whole human organism which proves the regular and equal performance of all its functions. Dr Bardly was a good judge of a man, and he had the same pleasure in looking at the Colonel that a foxhunter feels in contemplating a fine horse. Beyond this, he liked Colonel Stanburne’s society, not precisely, perhaps, for intellectual reasons—for, intellectually, there was little or nothing in common between the two men—but because he found in it a sort

of mental refreshment, very pleasant to him after the society at Shayton. The Colonel was a different being—he lived in a different world from the world of the Ogdens and their friends; and it amused and interested the Doctor to see how this strange and rather admirable creature would conduct itself under the conditions of its present existence. The Doctor, as the reader must already feel perfectly assured, had not the weakness of snobbishness or parasitism in any form whatever; and if he liked to go to Wenderholme with the Colonel, it was not because there was an earl's daughter there, and the sacred odour of aristocracy about the place, but rather because he had a genuine pleasure in the society of his friend, whether amongst the splendours of Wenderholme, or in the parlour of the inn at Sootythorn.

The Colonel, too, on his part, liked the Doctor, though he laughed at him, and mimicked him to Lady Helena. The mimicry was not, however, very successful, for the Doctor's Lancashire dialect was too perfect and too pure for any mere ultramontane (that is, creature living beyond the hills that guarded the Shayton valley) to imitate with any approximation to success. If the Colonel, however, notwithstanding all his study and effort, could not succeed in imitating

the Doctor's happy selection of expressions and purity of style, he could at any rate give him a nickname—so he called him Hoftens, not to his face, but to Lady Helena at home, and to the adjutant, and to one or two other people who knew him, and the nickname became popular; and, after a while, the officers called Dr Bardly Hoftens to his face, which he took with perfect good-nature. The first time that this occurred, the Doctor (such was the delicacy of his ear) believed he detected something unusual in the way an impudent ensign pronounced the word *often*, and asked what he meant, on which the adjutant interposed, and said,—“Don't mind his impudence, Doctor; he's mimicking you.” “Well,” said the Doctor, simply, “I wasn't aware that there was anything peculiar in my pronunciation of the word, but people *hoftens* are unaware of their own defects.” But we anticipate.

The modest muse requests that the curtain may fall whilst our friend is examining the recruits. The British militiaman, when clothed in that superfine cloth,—the perfection of whose scarlet dye is the glory of our country and the envy of foreigners,—presents, no doubt, an appearance at once dignified and imposing; but the mass of aspirants, as the Doctor sees them, in

a state of Adamite nudity, offer little to delight the lover of physical beauty, and still less to gratify the feelings of those true patriots whose patriotism consists rather in the desire to improve the condition of their countrymen than in blindly boasting that it does not need improvement. It has been remarked that the animal creation lives, on the whole, in a condition of wonderful cleanliness. The plumage of birds, the fur of quadrupeds, and especially the brilliant iridescent armour of the insect tribes, though each creature has its appointed parasites, are nevertheless kept wonderfully free from all accumulations of consolidated filth. The one dirty animal is man—and *how* dirty he is, nobody can know or imagine, unless, like the Doctor, he has been called upon to inspect the people when divested of those coverings which are at the same time the veil of their impurity and its cause. If they wore no clothes, the rain of heaven would wash them; and the mire of the fresh earth changed every-day, and removed by the first patch of wet grass they walked over, or the first rivulet they waded, would be comparative cleanliness. But we protect ourselves against the natural cleansers, and if we will not use the artificial ones, we become the nastiest of all the creatures of God. The

Doctor, who was not particularly squeamish, acknowledged, after this inspection, that he felt disgusted; and in his conversation with the Colonel he suggested, that so soon as he found himself at the head of the new regiment, the best thing he could do with it would be to march it into some large pond or river, having previously provided every man with three-penny-worth of common soap.

They lunched at the Thorn with the adjutant, a fair-haired and delicate-looking little gentleman of exceedingly mild and quiet manners, whose acquaintance the Doctor had made very recently. Captain Eureton had retired a year or two before from the regular army, and was now living in the neighbourhood of Sootythorn with his old mother whom he loved with his whole heart. He had never married, and now there was little probability of his ever marrying. The people of Sootythorn would have set him down as a milk-sop if he had not seen a good deal of active service in India and at the Cape; but a soldier who has been baptised in the fire of the battle-field has always that fact in his favour, and has little need to give himself airs of boldness in order to impose upon the imagination of civilians. People used to talk about "little Eureton" in a manner

which implied that they did not think very much of him ; and a man who prefers the society of his old mother in the evenings to that of all the wits of Sootythorn assembled round Mr Garley's billiard-table, can scarcely expect to be very popular in that locality. But the fact remained that this little Eureton had been in scenes far surpassing in the sublimity of danger any in which the Sootythorn civilians had taken part ; and in this respect his experience was superior even to that of Colonel Hollinhorpe, a neighbouring gentleman who had been in the army, but seen no active service. So, notwithstanding Captain Eureton's quiet ways, the people of Sootythorn accorded him a certain consideration ; and the boys at the grammar-school looked upon him with deep respect and awe, because on one occasion, when he had asked for a holiday, the headmaster made a speech, and enumerated all Captain Eureton's battles—and the list, it must be admitted, was a considerable one.

“I believe, Dr Bardly,” said Eureton, “that we are going to have an officer from your neighbourhood, a Mr Ogden. His name has been put down for a lieutenant's commission.”

“Yes, he's a neighbour of mine,” answered the Doctor, rather curtly.

“You should have brought him with you, Doctor,” said Colonel Stanburne, “that we might make his acquaintance. He might have gone on with us to Wenderholme this afternoon. I’ve never seen him, you know, and he gets his commission on your recommendation. I should like, as far as possible, to know the officers personally before we meet for our first training. What sort of a fellow is Mr Ogden? Tell us all about him.”

The Doctor felt slightly embarrassed, and showed it in his manner. Any true description of Isaac Ogden, as he was just then, must necessarily seem very unfavourable. The reader will remember that Dr Bardly had been to Twistle that very morning before daylight, and had found Mr Ogden suffering from the effects of a fall down the cellar-steps in a state of drunkenness. The Doctor had that day abandoned all hope of reclaiming Isaac Ogden, and saving him from the fate that awaited him. He had had too much experience of drunkards not to be able to distinguish between those stages of the habit in which reform is still possible, and those stages in which it is not possible; and he had made up his mind to leave Mr Ogden to kill himself in his own way. Mr Ogden was a friend of his, and he was sorry for him; but he was also rather angry

at him, and did not deeply pity him. The road to destruction that Mr Ogden was following was so much frequented by the inhabitants of Shayton, that it seemed their regular turnpike to the grave; and if the Doctor had felt deeply moved about every acquaintance of his who went that way, his mind would have been in a chronic state of profound emotion, altogether incompatible with his duties, and even with his intellectual health.

“I’ve nothing good to tell of Mr Ogden, Colonel Stanburne. I wish I hadn’t recommended him to you. He’s an irreclaimable drunkard!”

“Well, if you’d known it you wouldn’t have recommended him, of course. You found it out since, I suppose. You must try and persuade him to resign. Tell him there’ll be some awfully hard work, especially for lieutenants.”

“I knew that he drank occasionally, but I believed that it was because he had nobody to talk to except a drunken set at the Red Lion at Shayton. I thought that if he came into the regiment it would do him good, by bringing him into more society. Shayton’s a terrible place for drinking. There’s a great difference between Shayton and Sootythorn.”

“What sort of a man is he in other respects?” asked the Colonel.

“He’s right enough for everything else. He’s a good-looking fellow, tall, and well built; and he used to be pleasant and good-tempered, but now his nervous system must be shattered, and I would not answer for him.”

“If you still think he would have sufficient control over himself to keep sober for a month we might try him, and see whether we cannot do him some good. Perhaps, as you thought, it’s only want of society that drives him to amuse himself by drinking. Upon my word, I think I should take to drinking myself if I lived all the year round in such a place as Sootythorn—and I suppose Shayton’s no better.”

There was a good old custom amongst the story-tellers of the East, by which, having narrated a series of events in the direct manner, they narrated them all over again through the mouth of one of their *dramatis personæ*. Thus we might repeat through the mouth of the Doctor the whole story of Mr Isaac Ogden’s life, with an accurate account of his present position with reference to his friends and relations, telling all about his mother and his brother and his little boy, and concluding with a minute description of his singular hermitage at Twistle Farm. This would be in the highest degree convenient to the writer,

who, whenever he felt rather more lazy and stupid than usual, might look back over the pages already in existence, and by their help succeed in producing his diurnal quantum of "copy." But as it may be doubted whether the modern reader would be so tolerant of this practice as his prototypes, the audience of the story-tellers of Bagdad or old Cairo, we are compelled, however reluctantly, to refrain from it, and simply to observe that the Doctor's account of Shayton and the Ogdens need not be reported here, because it contained nothing with which the reader is not already acquainted.

Captain Eureton, who was simple and even abstemious in his way of living, and whose appetite had not been sharpened, like that of the Doctor, by a drive of ten miles in company with Nanny Pickering, finished his lunch in about ten minutes, and excused himself on the plea that he had an appointment with a joiner about the orderly-room, which had formerly been an infant-school of some Dissenting persuasion, and therefore required remodelling as to its interior fittings. We shall see more of him in due time, but for the present must leave him to the tranquil happiness of devising desks and pigeon-holes in company with Mr Bettison, an intelligent joiner at Sooty-

thorn, than which few occupations can be more delightful.

“Perhaps, unless you’ve something to detain you in Sootythorn, Doctor, we should do well to leave here as early as possible. It’s a long drive to Wenderholme—twenty miles, you know; and I always make a point of giving the horses a rest at Rigton.”

As the Doctor had nothing to do in Sootythorn, the Colonel ordered his equipage. When he drove alone, he always preferred a tandem, but when Lady Helena accompanied him, he took his seat in a submissive matrimonial manner in the family carriage. As Wenderholme was so far from Sootythorn, the Colonel kept two pairs of horses; and one pair was generally at Wenderholme and the other in Mr Garley’s stables, where the Colonel had a groom of his own permanently. The only inconvenience of this arrangement was that the same horses had to do duty in the tandem and the carriage; but they did it on the whole fairly well, and the Colonel contented himself with the carriage-horses, so far as driving was concerned.

The Doctor drove his own gig with the degree of skill which results from the practice of many years; but he had never undertaken the government of a tandem, and felt, perhaps, a slight

shade of anxiety when John Stanburne took the reins, and they set off at full trot through the streets of Sootythorn. A manufacturing town, in that particular stage of its development, is one of the most awkward of all possible places to drive in—the same street varies so much in breadth that you never can tell whether there will be room enough to pass when you get round the corner; and there are alarming noises of many kinds—the roar of a cotton-mill in the street itself, or the wonderfully loud hum of a foundry, or the incessant clattering hammer-strokes of a boiler-making establishment—which excite and bewilder a nervous horse, till, if manageable at all, he is manageable only with the utmost delicacy and care. As Colonel Stanburne seemed to have quite enough to do to soothe and restrain his leader, the Doctor said nothing till they got clear of the last street; but once out on the broad turnpike, or “Yorkshire Road,” the Colonel gave his team more freedom, and himself relaxed from the rigid accuracy of seat he had hitherto maintained. He then turned to the Doctor, and began to talk.

“I say, Doctor, why don’t you drive a tandem? You—you *ought* to drive a tandem. ’Pon my word you ought, seriously, now.”

The Doctor laughed. He didn’t see the neces-

sity or the duty of driving a tandem, and so begged to have these points explained to him.

“Well, because, don’t you see, when you’ve only got one hawse in your dog-cart, or gig, or whatever two-wheeled vehicle you may possess, you’ve no fun, don’t you see?”

The Doctor didn’t see, or did not seem to see.

“I mean,” proceeded the Colonel, explanatorily, “that you haven’t that degree of anxiety which is necessary to give a zest to existence. Now, when you’ve a leader who is almost perfectly free, and over whom you can only exercise a control of—the most gentle and persuasive kind, you’re always slightly anxious, and sometimes you’re *very* anxious. For instance, last time we drove back from Sootythorn it was pitch dark—wasn’t it, Fyser?”

Here Colonel Stanburne turned to his groom, who was sitting behind; and Fyser, as might be expected, muttered something confirmatory of his master’s statement.

“It was pitch dark; and, by George! the candles in the lamps were too short to last us; and that confounded Fyser forgot to provide himself with fresh ones before he left Sootythorn, and—didn’t you, Fyser?”

Fyser confessed his negligence.

“And so, when the lamps were out, it was pitch dark ; so dark that I couldn't tell the road from the ditch—upon my word, I couldn't ; and I couldn't see the leader a bit, I could only feel him with the reins. So I said to Fyser, ‘Get over to the front seat, and then crouch down as low as you can, so as to bring the horses' heads up against the sky, and tell me if you can see them.’ So Fyser crouched down as I told him ; and when I asked him if he saw anything, he said he *did* think he saw the leader's ears. Well, damn it, then, if you *do* see 'em, I said, keep your eye on 'em.”

“And were you going fast ?” asked the Doctor.

“Why, of *course* we were. We were trotting at the rate of, I should say, about nine miles an hour ; but after a while, Fyser, by hard looking, began to see rather more distinctly—so distinctly that he clearly made out the difference between the horses' heads and the hedges ; and he kept calling out ‘right, sir,’ ‘left, sir,’ ‘all right, sir,’ and so he kept me straight. If he'd been a sailor he'd have said ‘starboard’ and ‘port ;’ but Fyser isn't a sailor.”

“And did you get safe to Wenderholme ?”

“Of *course* we did. Fyser and I *always* get safe to Wenderholme.”

“ I shouldn't recommend you to try that experiment hoftens.”

“ Well, but you see the advantage of driving tandem. If you've only one horse you know where he is, however dark it is — he's in the shafts, of course, and you know where to find him ; but when you've got a leader you never exactly know where he is, unless you can see him.”

The Doctor didn't see the advantage.

“ Well, well,” answered the Colonel, with an uncommonly sly expression, “ you've got Nanny Pickering to occupy you, and I haven't. You see you're so dull in that gig of yours that you're obliged to have recourse to female society. I know all about it. I was looking out of window at the Thorn when you entered the town, and Mr Garley was in the room, and he told me. I congratulate you, Doctor ; I congratulate you ! They say she's got plenty of tin, and that's the main point. She aint exactly handsome, and she don't look particularly young ; but I suppose a sensible man like you is not affected by these considerations.”

Notwithstanding the loud rumble of the gigantic wheels, the Colonel was aware of an audible giggle on the back seat.

“Fyser,” he said, “I heard you laughing. What were you laughing at?”

Fyser turned round, his face purged of risibility, and respectfully touched his hat. “Beg your pardon, sir.”

“What were we talking about?”

“Didn’t distinctly hear, sir; but I believe you was talkin’ about tandem-drivin’.”

Mr Fyser, who had lost nothing of the allusion to Nanny Pickering, now listened still more attentively, and missed nothing of what followed.

“You’ll perhaps believe me,” said the Doctor, “when I say that I’ve no intention of marrying Nanny Pickering, if I tell you that she hasn’t a penny in the world, and that her name’s down on Lady Helena Stanburne’s blanket-list for this Christmas.”

“Then I *do* believe you, Doctor; but people say she’s a rich woman. You know better, of course; you’re the best possible authority, you know the lady so *very* intimately.”

The reader will have gathered from this specimen of Colonel Stanburne’s conversation that he was a pleasant and lively companion; but if he is rather hasty in forming his opinion of people on a first acquaintance, he may also infer that the Colonel was a man of somewhat frivolous

character and very moderate intellectual powers. He certainly was not a genius, but he conveyed the impression of being less intelligent and less capable of serious thought than nature had made him. His predominant characteristic was simple good-nature, and he possessed also, notwithstanding a sort of swagger in his manner, an unusual share of genuine intellectual humility, that made him contented to pass for a less able and less informed man than he really was. The Doctor's perception of character was too acute to allow him to judge Colonel Stanburne on the strength of a superficial acquaintance, and he clearly perceived that his friend was in the habit of wearing, as it were, his lighter nature outside. Some ponderous Philistines in Sootythorn, who had been brought into occasional contact with the Colonel, and who confounded gravity of manner with mental capacity, had settled it amongst themselves that he had no brains; but as the most intelligent of quadrupeds is at the same time the most lively, the most playful, the most good-natured, and the most affectionate,—so amongst human beings it does not always follow that a man is empty because he is lively and amusing, and seems merry and careless, and says and does some foolish things.

“But I should advise you to get mawid,”* continued the Colonel; “when a fellah’s mawid, he finds out how expensive it is! Now there’s my wife, a good quiet body, that hardly eats anything but a thin slice o’ bread and butter, and yet I don’t hesitate to say that (so far as mere cost, you know, is concerned) I’d rather undertake to keep ten fellahs like Fyser here, who can eat a leg o’ mutton—I would indeed.”

The Doctor replied that he knew some single ladies who lived very handsomely on wonderfully moderate incomes, and that he didn’t think, on the whole, women were so expensive in their habits as men.

“Of *course* they aint, so long as they’re single. If my wife had been an old maid, she’d have lived on thwee hundwed a-year, and I dare say kept a cawidge and pair on it, and subscwibed to chawities, and cut a most respectable figure; but when they get mawid, it’s quite a different thing. Their ideas enlarge, Doctor—their ideas enlarge. A mawid lady don’t seem to spend more upon herself than a single one does—and I must say that in all

* As we give the Doctor’s *hoftens* and the little peculiarities of the Ogdens and others, there is no reason why we should be more indulgent to the Colonel. He never attained to the pronunciation of the letter *r*—at least, in English—but by dint of much perseverance he ultimately conquered that difficulty in French.

that relates to her own personal expenditure my wife is moderate, most moderate; but what I mean is, Doctor, that when a man's mawid, the general expenses of his establishment seem to mount so. When I was a bachelor I used to dine with a mutton-chop and a bottle o' stout, and perhaps a bit of cheese and a potato—and so I daresay my wife would if she were a single woman; but when we're together as man and wife, there is a sort of respect due from me to her ladyship, and from her ladyship to her husband, and so we sit down to a real dinner every day, whether we've an appetite or not. We haven't got a man-cook, but we've got two wonderfully big women-cooks, and they look so strong and so red and so very determined, that, by George! my wife funks them—she does indeed. She's a great deal more afraid of those two blessed females than I ever was of my schoolmasters; and they cook and they cook, and do just whatever they please. And it's not only these women, but it's the number of other women there are about the house, that cost money. It's quite astonishing, Doctor, how they *do* increase and multiply. I believe they breed, and have a special faculty for coming rapidly to maturity, like mushrooms. I'm always meeting some new face on the stairs, and some-

times very pretty faces too, let me tell you, for my wife aint in the least jealous, and she likes to have good-looking people about the house. And then I say, 'Helena, my love, have you been discharging one of the women?' and she looks quite surprised, and says she's discharged nobody, and asks why I ask. Then I say, 'Because I see we've got a new servant;' and then she demonstrates to me in a manner altogether irrefragable that an additional hand was absolutely necessary in some department or other. How many servants do you keep, Doctor?"

"I keep an old woman, and a boy for the stable."

"Well, that's just a nice little establishment. Have you got a copper coal-scuttle?"

The Doctor was a little surprised at this question; but, as it happened, he *did* possess a copper coal-scuttle, and said so.

"And I've no doubt your coal-scuttle is perfectly bright and clean. But when my wife purchased a copper coal-scuttle, about twelve months ago, there wasn't a single creature in the whole house that would clean it. The two fat cooks said they couldn't cook it, and cooking was their business. The scullery-maids said it wasn't a pan. The butler said it wasn't silver, and so

didn't come in under his department; and the grooms said as it didn't belong to horses it was no concern of theirs. The thing never got cleaned at all, and began to look so beastly that, by George! an idea struck me, and I had it electroplated, and sent it into the plate-closet to be cleaned; but the butler wouldn't touch it, and so he left the house, or, as he expressed it, 'sent in his resignation.' So I had the coal-scuttle wrapped up in silver-paper, and put it into the plate-closet, where the new butler found it, and accepted it as a *fait accompli*. But he only lets us use it on state occasions."

By this time they reached Rigton, a little dull village quite out of the manufacturing district, and where it was the Colonel's custom to bait. The remainder of the drive was in summer exceedingly beautiful; but as it passed through a rich agricultural country, whose beauty depended chiefly on luxuriant vegetation, the present time of the year was not favourable to it. All this region had a great reputation for beauty amongst the inhabitants of the manufacturing towns, and no doubt fully deserved it; but it is probable that their faculties of appreciation were greatly sharpened by the stimulus of contrast. To get fairly clear of factory-smoke, to be in the peaceful

quiet country, and see no buildings but picturesque farms, was a definite happiness to many an inhabitant of Sootythorn. There were fine bits of scenery in the manufacturing district itself—picturesque glens and gorges, deep ravines with hidden rivulets, and stretches of purple moorland; but all this scenery lacked one quality—*amenity*. Now the scenery from Rington to Wenderholme had this quality in a very high degree indeed, and it was instantly felt by every one who came from the manufacturing district, though not so perceptible by travellers from the south of England. The Sootythorn people felt a soothing influence on the nervous system when they drove through this beautiful land; their minds relaxed and were relieved of pressing cares, and they here fell into a state very rare indeed with them—a state of semi-poetical reverie.

The reader is already aware that Wenderholme is situated on the opposite side of the hills which separate Shayton from this favoured region, and close to the foot of them. Great alterations have been made in the house since the date at which our story begins, and therefore we will not describe it as it exists at present, but as it existed when the Colonel drove up the avenue

with the Doctor at his side, and the faithful Fyser jumped up behind after opening the modest green gate. A large rambling house, begun in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but grievously modernised under that of King George the Third, it formed three sides of a quadrangle, and, as is usual in that arrangement of a mansion, had a great hall in the middle, and the principal reception-rooms on each side on the ground-floor. The house was three storeys high, and there were great numbers of bedrooms. An arched porch in the centre, preceded by a flight of steps, gave entrance at once to the hall; and over the porch was a projection of the same breadth, continued up to the roof, and terminated in a narrow gable. This had been originally the centre of enrichment, and there had been some good sculpture and curious windows that went all round the projection, and carried it entirely upon their mullions; but the moderniser had been at work and inserted simple sash-windows, which produced a deplorable effect. The same owner, John Stanburne's grandfather, had ruthlessly carried out that piece of Vandalism over the whole front of the mansion, and, except what architects call a string-course (which was still traceable here and there), had effaced every

feature that gave expression to the original design of the Elizabethan builder.

The entrance-hall was a fine room fifty feet long, and as high as two of the ordinary storeys in the mansion. It had, no doubt, been a splendid specimen of the Elizabethan hall; but the moderniser had been hard at work here also, and had put himself to heavy expense in order to give it the aspect of a thoroughly modern interior. The wainscot which had once adorned the walls, and which had been remarkable for its rich and fanciful carving, the vast and imaginative tapestries, the heraldic blazonries in the flaming oriels, the gallery for the musicians on twisted pillars of sculptured chestnut,—all these glories had been ruthlessly swept away. The tapestries had been used as carpets, and worn out; the wainscot had been made into kitchen cupboards, and painted lead-colour; and the magnificent windows had been thrown down on the floor of a garret, where they had been trodden under foot and crushed into a thousand fragments :* and in place of these things, which the narrow taste of the eighteenth century had con-

* Some of the most magnificent specimens of thirteenth-century glass in the world, the windows of the clerestory of the choir at Sens, were removed and put into a garret, and trodden to pieces in this way.

demned as barbarous, and destroyed without either hesitation or regret, it had substituted—what?—absolute emptiness and negation; for the heraldic oriels, sash-windows of the commonest glass; for the tapestry and carving, a bare wall of yellow-washed plaster; for the carved beams of the roof, a blank area of white-wash. The only attempt at decoration was a cornice in plaster-of-Paris, with meagre little festoons sticking on the wall—and a design in the middle of the ceiling, in which the little indescribable things that the festoons were made of were formed into four loops, with four straight ends between them, pointing to the corners of the room. The author of all this ravage had had his portrait taken at full length, and hung in this hall of his ancestors. He was in hunting costume, and looked down upon his handiwork with an air of perfect satisfaction. He had lived and died in the firm belief that he was spending his money usefully, and earning the gratitude of his descendants. Yet if the house had been left to rats, and spiders, and bats, and owls, for the space of a hundred years, they would have injured it less than this human being injured it—this respected proprietor and gentleman. It is not wonderful that men should prefer the beauti-

ful to the picturesque—that they should prefer the art of the days of Pericles to the art of the days of Elizabeth ; but the marvel is that carved oak and tapestry should have been so offensive that they were willing to pay money to be rid of them, and considered mere plaster and white-wash an improvement in art and an advance in civilisation. This condition of mind, so prevalent at the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of this, is by us almost inconceivable, and the only explanation of it which seems in any degree satisfactory or sufficient is perhaps this : Such men as Colonel Stanburne's grandfather may have regarded the decorations of the sixteenth century as we regard its costume—that is to say, as being curious and picturesque, but not suitable for their own use ; and when they destroyed or removed them, it may have been, in their feeling, not so much an artistic improvement as an act in obedience to the dictates of simple common-sense. Her Majesty's state-carriage is very elaborate and magnificent, but one would not care to drive about London in such a carriage as that ; and Wenderholme in its ancient splendour may have seemed to Mr Reginald Stanburne a house no more fitted for modern habitation than a gilded coach seems to us fitted

for modern use. In a word, to preserve these splendours of the past was, it may be presumed, in his eyes a violation of the fitness of things. And we must admit that if his taste had not been either elegant or artistic, it had been at least consistent. He had made his house as much as possible a thing of his own time, and suitable for his own habitation. When he walked through his hall after his alterations, there was no incongruity between the house and the man, between the figure and the background, between such costume as this and such architecture as that. Whereas it is to be feared that in our present love of Elizabethan interiors and Gothic interiors, or at least in our perfect willingness to inhabit them, there *is* something inconsistent with our personal appearance, if not with our habits of life.

The bedroom assigned to the Doctor was as comfortable and as commonplace as his own bedroom at Shayton; and if it had been in his nature to be afraid of spiritual visitants, there was nothing here to excite his imagination. There had been half-a-dozen magnificent old carved beds at Wenderholme, but Mr Reginald Stanburne had consigned them all to a lumber-room, where they still lay in a confused heap,

and now all the rooms had comfortable mahogany four-posters, with curtains of various colours. Mr Reginald had attempted to follow the well-known system, very convenient in smaller houses, of distinguishing the bedrooms by a chromatic nomenclature. There was the blue room, the crimson room, the yellow room, and so on; but there were so many bedrooms at Wenderholme that it had been impossible, amongst the primary and secondary colours, to find a separate name for each of them, and Mr Reginald had been compelled to seek supplementary designations. Thus the room that the Doctor occupied was called Mr Pigott's room—and a tradition lingered in the household that Mr Pigott had been a "London gentleman," who was a friend of Mr Reginald, but that was all that was known about him, and perhaps it would not have been easy for the most persevering and acute inquirer to ascertain anything further. In like manner several other chambers were called after friends of the family who had in former times inhabited them.

The Doctor found Lady Helena in the drawing-room; a little woman, who sometimes looked very pretty, and sometimes exceedingly plain, according to the condition of her health and tem-

per, the state of the weather, and a hundred things beside. Hence there were the most various and contradictory opinions about her; the only approach to unanimity being amongst certain elderly ladies who had formed the project of being mother-in-law to John Stanburne, and failed in that design. The Doctor was not much accustomed to ladyships—they did not come often in his way; indeed, if the truth must be told, Lady Helena was the only specimen of the kind he had ever enjoyed the opportunity of studying, and he had been rather surprised, on one or two preceding visits to Wenderholme, to find that she behaved so nicely. But there are ladyships and ladyships, and the Doctor had been fortunate in the example which chance had thrown in his way. For instance, if he had known Lady Eleanor Griffin, who lived about ten miles from Wenderholme, and came there occasionally to spend the day, the Doctor would have formed quite a different opinion of ladyships in general, so much do our impressions of whole classes depend upon the individual members of them who are personally known to us.

Lady Helena asked the Doctor a good many questions about Shayton, which it is quite unnecessary to report here, because the answers to

them would convey no information to the reader which he does not already possess. Her ladyship inquired very minutely about the clergyman there, and whether the Doctor "liked" him. Now the verb "to like," when applied to a clergyman, is used in a special sense. Everybody knows that to like a clergyman and to like gooseberry-pie are very different things; for nobody in England eats clergyman, though the natives of New Zealand are said to appreciate cold roast missionary. But there is yet another distinction—there is a distinction between liking a clergyman and liking a layman. If you say you like a clergyman, it is understood that it gives you a peculiar pleasure to hear him preach, and that you experience feelings of gratification when he reads prayers. And in this sense could Dr Bardly say that he liked the reverend incumbent of his parish? certainly not; so he seemed to hesitate a little—and if he said "yes" he said it as if he meant *no*, or a sort of vague, neutral answer, neither negative nor affirmative.

"I mean," said Lady Helena, "do you like him as a preacher?"

"Upon my word, it's so long since I heard him preach that I cannot give an opinion."

"Oh! I thought you attended his church.

There are other churches in Shayton, I suppose."

"No, there's only one," said the imprudent and impolitic doctor.

Lady Helena began to think he was some sort of a Dissenter. She had heard of Dissenters—she knew that such people existed—but she had never been brought into contact with one, and it made her feel rather queer. She felt strongly tempted to ask what place of worship this man *did* attend, since by his own confession he never went to his parish church; but curiosity, and the natural female tendency to be an inquisitor, were kept in check by politeness, and also, perhaps, a little restrained by the perfectly fearless aspect of the Doctor's face. If he had seemed in the least alarmed or apologetic, her ladyship would probably have assumed the functions of the inquisitor at once; but he looked so cool, and so very capable of a prolonged and vigorous resistance, that Lady Helena retired. When she began to talk about Mrs Prigley, the Doctor knew that she was already in full retreat.

A little relieved, perhaps (for it is always disagreeable to quarrel with one's hostess, even though one has no occasion to be afraid of her), the Doctor gladly told Lady Helena all about

Mrs Prigley, and even narrated the anecdote about the hole in the carpet, and its consequences to Mrs Ogden, which put Lady Helena into good humour, for nothing is more amusing to rich people than the ludicrous consequences of a certain kind of poverty. The sense of a pleasant contrast, all in their own favour, is delightful to them; and when the Doctor had told this anecdote, Lady Helena became agreeably aware that she had carpets, and that her carpets had no holes in them—two facts of which use and custom had made her wholly unconscious. Her eye wandered with pleasure over the broad soft surface of dark pomegranate colour, with its large white and red flowers and its nondescript ornaments of imitated gold, and the ground seemed richer, and the flowers seemed whiter and redder, because poor Mrs Prigley's carpets were in a condition so lamentably different.

“Mrs Prigley's a relation of yours, Lady Helena,—rather a near relation—perhaps you are not aware of it?”

Lady Helena looked, and was, very much surprised. “A relation of *mine*, Dr Bardly! you must be mistaken. I believe I know the names of all my relations!”

“I mean a relation of your husband—of Colonel

Stanburne. Mrs Prigley was a Miss Stanburne of Byfield, and her father was brother to Colonel Stanburne's father, and was born in this house."

"That's quite a near relationship indeed," said Lady Helena; "I wonder I never heard of it. John never spoke to me about Mrs Prigley."

"There was a quarrel between Colonel Stanburne's father and his uncle, and there has been no intercourse between their families since. I daresay the Colonel does not even know how many cousins he had on that side, or what marriages they made." On this the Colonel came in.

"John, dear, Dr Bardly has just told me that we have some cousins at Shayton that I knew nothing about. It's the clergyman and his wife, and their name is Prig—Prig——"

"Prigley," suggested the Doctor.

"Yes, Prigley; isn't it curious, John? did you know about them?"

"Not very accurately. I knew one of my cousins had married a clergyman somewhere in that neighbourhood, but was not aware that he was the incumbent of Shayton. I don't know my cousins at all. There was a lawsuit between their father and mine, and the two branches have never eaten salt together since. I haven't the least ill-will to any of them, but there's an awk-

wardness in making a first step—one never can tell how it may be received. What do you say, Doctor? How would Mrs Prig—Prigley and her husband receive me if I were to go and call upon them?”

“They’d give you cake and wine.”

“Would they really, now? Then I’ll go and call upon them. I like cake and wine—always liked cake and wine.”

The conversation about the Prigleys did not end here. The Doctor was well aware that it would be agreeable to Mrs Prigley to visit at Wenderholme, and be received there as a relation; and he also knew that the good-nature of the Colonel and Lady Helena might be relied upon to make such intercourse perfectly safe and pleasant. So he made the most of the opportunity, and that so successfully, that by the time dinner was announced both John Stanburne and his wife had promised to drive over some day to Shayton from Sootythorn, and lunch with the Doctor, and call at the parsonage before leaving.

Colonel Stanburne’s conversation was not always very profound, but his dinners were never dull, for he *would* talk, and make other people talk too. He solemnly warned the Doctor not to allow himself to be entrapped into giving

gratuitous medical advice to Lady Helena. "She thinks she's got fifteen diseases, she does, upon my word; and she's a sort of notion that because you're the regimental doctor, she has a claim on you for gratuitous counsel and assistance. Now I consider that I *have* such a claim—if a private has it, surely a colonel has it too—and when we come up for our first training I shall expect you to look at my tongue, and feel my pulse, and physic me as a militiaman, at her Majesty's expense. But it is by no means so clear to me that my wife has any right to gratuitous doctoring, and mind she doesn't extort it from you. She's a regular screw, my wife is; and she loses no opportunity of obtaining benefits for nothing." Then he rattled on with a hundred anecdotes about ladies and doctors, in which there was just enough truth to give a pretext for his audacious exaggerations.

When they returned to the drawing-room, the Colonel made Lady Helena sing; and she sang well. The Doctor, like many inhabitants of Shayton, had a very good ear, and greatly enjoyed music. Lady Helena had seldom found so attentive a listener; he sought old favourites of his in her collection of songs, and begged her to sing them one after another. It seemed as if he

never would be tired of listening. Her ladyship felt pleased and flattered, and sang with wonderful energy and feeling. The Doctor, though in his innocence he thought only of the pure pleasure her music gave him, could have chosen no better means of ingratiating himself in her favour; and if there had not, unhappily, been that dark and dubious question about church attendance, which made her ladyship look upon him as a sort of Dissenter, or worse, the Doctor would that night have entered into relations of quite frank and cordial friendship with Lady Helena. English ladies are very kind and forgiving on many points. A man may be notoriously immoral, or a gambler, or a drinker, yet if he be well off they will kindly ignore and pass over these little defects; but the unpardonable sin is failure in church attendance, and they will not pass over *that*. Lady Helena, in her character of inquisitor, had discovered this symptom of heresy, and would have been delighted to find a moral screw of some kind by which the culpable Doctor might be driven churchwards. If the law had permitted it, I have no doubt that she would have applied material screws, and put the Doctor's thumbs into thumb-screws, or roasted him gently before a slow fire, or at least sent him to church between two

policemen with staves ; but as these means were beyond her power, she must wait until the moral screw could be found. A good practical means, which she had resorted to in several instances with poor people, had been to deprive them of their means of subsistence ; and all men and women whom her ladyship's little arm could reach knew that they must go to church or leave their situations ; so they attended with a regularity which, though exemplary in the eyes of men, could scarcely, one would think (considering the motive), be acceptable to Heaven. But Lady Helena acted in this less from a desire to please God than from the instinct of domination, which, in her character of spiritual ruler, naturally exercised itself on this point. It seldom happens that the master of a house is the spiritual ruler of it ; he is the temporal power, not the spiritual. Colonel Stanburne felt and knew that he had no spiritual power.

This matter of the Doctor's laxness as a church-goer had been rankling in Lady Helena's mind all the time she had been singing, and when she closed the piano she was ready for an attack. If the Doctor had been shivering blanketless in a bivouac, and she had had the power of giving him a blanket or withholding it, she would have

offered it on condition he promised to go to church, and she would have withheld it if he had refused compliance. But the Doctor had blankets of his own, and so could not be touched through a deprivation of blanket. But she might deprive the old woman he had recommended, and at the same time give the Doctor a lesson, indirectly.

“I forgot to ask you, Dr Bardly, whether the old woman you recommended for a blanket was a churchwoman, and regular in her attendance.”

“Two questions very easily answered,” replied that audacious and unhesitating Doctor; “she is a Wesleyan Methodist, and irregular in her attendance.”

“Then I’m—very sorry—Dr Bardly, but I cannot give her a blanket, as I had promised. I can only give them to our—own people, you know; and I make it essential that they should be *good* church-people—I mean, very regular church-people.”

“Very well; I’ll give her a blanket myself.”

The opportunity was not to be neglected, and her ladyship fired her gun. She had the less hesitation in doing so, that it seemed monstrously presumptuous in a medical man to give blankets at all! What right had he to usurp the especial prerogative of great ladies? And then to give a

blanket to this very woman whom, for good reasons, her ladyship had condemned to a state of blanketlessness!

“I quite understand,” she said, with much severity of tone, “that Dr Bardly, who never attends public worship himself, should have a fellow-feeling with those who are equally negligent.”

It is a hard task to fight a woman in the presence of her husband, who is at the same time one’s friend. The Doctor *thought*, “would the woman have me offer premiums on hypocrisy as she does?” but he did not say so, because there was poor John Stanburne at the other end of the hearthrug in a state of much uncomfortableness. So the Doctor said nothing at all, and the silence became perfectly distressing. John Stanburne, whose good-nature and hospitality were both suffering grievously, at last bethought him of an outlet.

“Why, hang it, Helena!” he said, “of *course* he gives her blankets; he’ll give her a bed soon, or half o’ one—he’s in love with her. Everybody at Sootythorn says he’s goin’ to mawy her. You oughtn’t to look so sour at him, Helena—you oughtn’t, indeed; you should congwatulate him on his appwoaching nuptials, you should.

Her ladyship could not resist this. "Why, she's an old woman, and a pauper, and her name's Nanny Pickering!"

"She's not a girl, that's true; but they say she's rich, and that her name will be Bardly in a month or six weeks."

The Doctor vainly endeavoured to defend himself. John Stanburne overwhelmed him with evidence till the victim half believed he was going to marry Nanny Pickering. Lady Helena laughed, and laid aside the black mask and the black inquisitorial robes, and, thanks to John Stanburne's nonsense, went to bed in a more liberal frame of mind. Perhaps this may have been due in part to the fact that she had relieved her conscience by her bitter little speech.

CHAPTER X.

“I SAY, Doctor,” said John Stanburne, when her ladyship was fairly out of hearing, and half-way in her ascent of the great staircase—“I say, Doctor, I hope you don’t mind what Helena says about you not being—you know some women are so—indeed I do believe all women are so. . . They seem laudably anxious to keep us all in the right path, but perhaps they’re just a little *too* anxious.”

The Doctor, who had fully appreciated the kind motive which had suggested the Colonel’s badinage about Nanny Pickering, said he believed Lady Helena meant to do right, but—— and then he hesitated.

“But you don’t see the sense of bribing poor people into sham piety with blankets.”

“Well, no, I don’t.”

“Neither do I, Doctor. There’s a Roman

Catholic family about three miles off, and the lady there gives premiums on going to mass, and still higher premiums on confession. She has won a great many converts; and there's a strong antagonism between her and Helena—a most expensive warfare it is too, I assure you, this warfare for souls. However, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and the poor profit by it, which is a consolation, only it makes them sneaks—it makes them sneaks and hypocrites. Doctor, come into my study, will you, and let's have a weed?"

The "study," as John Stanburne called it, was a cosy little room, with oak wainscot that his grandfather had painted white. It contained a small bookcase, and the bookcase contained a good many novels, some books of poetry, a treatise on dog-breaking, a treatise on driving, and a treatise on fishing. The novels were very well selected, and so was the poetry; and John Stanburne had read all these books, many of them over and over again. Such literary education as he possessed had been mainly got out of that bookcase; and though he had no claim to erudition, a man's head might be worse furnished than with such furniture as that. There was a splendid library at Wenderholme—a big room lined

with the backs of books as the other rooms were lined with paper or wainscot; and when Stanburne wanted to know something he went there, and disturbed his ponderous histories and encyclopædias; but he *used* the little bookcase more than the big library. He could not read either Latin or Greek. Few men can read Latin and Greek, and of the few who can, still fewer do read them; but his French was very much above the usual average of English French—that is, he spoke fluently, and would no doubt have spoken correctly if only he could have mastered the conjugations and genders, and imitated the peculiar Gallic sounds. He had been taught French in his childhood by a German governess—for his mother was anxious that he should learn the best pronunciation, and therefore took care to engage a foreigner—so that when Stanburne went to Paris, the people were exceedingly puzzled, for he was visibly and unmistakably an Englishman, yet he spoke French with an accent so wonderfully German, that the evidence of the ears contradicted the testimony of the eye. But Mrs Stanburne was perfectly satisfied; he spoke French as foreigners in general seemed to speak it, and she listened to him with conscious pride. It had been decided that he was to be taught French first,

and German afterwards, but when the time for beginning the latter had come, the time for the inevitable Latin had come also, and the German governess was dismissed; so that the only advantage John Stanburne had derived from her nationality was that fine Teutonic accent with which his French was ever afterwards adorned.

The society of ladies is always charming, but it must be admitted that there is an hour especially dear to the male sex, and which does not owe its delightfulness to their presence. It is the hour of retirement into the smoking-room. When the lady of the house has a tendency to make the weight of her authority felt (and this will sometimes happen), the male members of her family and their guests feel a schoolboyish sense of relief in escaping from it; but even when she is very genial and pleasant, and when everybody enjoys the light of her countenance, it must also be confessed that the timely withdrawal of that light, like the hour of sunset, hath a certain sweetness of its own. There are subjects to be talked about which cannot politely be talked about in her presence. The scholar wants to talk over the subject of his studies; men of business want to discuss the matters which affect their interests; and men who are addicted to field-sports, or yachting, or

other amusements not always so innocent as these, feel the need of that intercommunication which enhances the pleasures of memory and of hope. It is not simply the cigar which is a necessity. It is (when good) a great luxury—perhaps the greatest of luxuries—but it is not a necessity. The necessity which the smoking-room provides for is that of masculine conversation, without which men cease to be truly men, and which, if they cannot have in their own homes, they must seek in the club, or the alehouse, or the *café*.

“My wife’s always very good about letting me sit here, and smoke and talk as long as I like with my friends, after she’s gone to bed,” said Colonel Stanburne. “You smile because I seem to value a sort of goodness that seems only natural, but that’s on account of your old-bachelorish ignorance of womankind. There are married men who no more dare sit an hour with a cigar when their wives are gone to bed than they dare play billiards on Sunday. Now, for instance, I was staying this autumn with a friend of mine in another county, and about ten o’clock his wife went to bed. He and I wanted to talk over a great many things. We had been old school-fellows, and we had travelled together when we were both bachelors, and we knew lots of men

that his wife knew nothing about, and each of us wanted to hear all the news that the other had to tell ; so he just ventured, the first night I was there, to ask me into his private study and offer me a cigar. Well, we had scarcely had time to light when his wife's maid knocks at the door and says, ' Please, sir, Missis wishes to see you ; ' so he promised to go, and began to look uncomfortable, and in five minutes the girl came again, and she came three times in a quarter of an hour. After that came the lady herself, quite angry, and ordered her husband to bed, just as if he had been a little boy ; and though he seemed cool, and didn't stir from his chair, it was evident that he was afraid of her, and he solemnly promised to go in five minutes. I considered the woman was rude to me, too, by George !—for you know it wasn't exactly polite to do that without a word of apology to me—but she was far too angry to make apologies ; and, indeed, I expected she'd order me to bed too—I did. At the expiration of the five minutes in she bursts again (she had been waiting in the passage—perhaps she may have been listening at the door), and held out her watch without one word. The husband got up like a sheep, and said, ' Good-night, John, ' and she led him away just like that ; and I sat

and smoked by myself, thinking what a pitiable spectacle it was. Now my wife aint like that; she will have her way about her blankets, but she's reasonable in other respects. She's fast asleep by this time; she's a topper to sleep, she is—she'll sleep the clock round; and when I go to bed she just asks what time it is, so I always say eleven o'clock, dear, and it's all right. She believes I go to bed regularly at eleven."

They sat very happily for two hours, talking about the regiment that was to be. Suddenly, about midnight, a large watch-dog that inhabited a kennel on that side of the house began to bark furiously, and there was a cry, as of some woman or child in distress. The Colonel jumped out of his chair, and threw the window open. The two men listened attentively, but it was too dark to see anything. At length Colonel Stanburne said, "Let us go out and look about a little—that was a human cry, wasn't it?" So he lighted a lantern, and they went.

There was a thick wood behind the house of Wenderholme, and this wood filled a narrow ravine, in the bottom of which was a little stream, and by the stream a pathway that led up to the open moor. This moor continued without interruption over a range of lofty hills, or, to speak

more strictly, over a sort of plateau or table-land, till it terminated at the enclosed pasture-lands near Shayton. John Stanburne and the Doctor walked first along this pathway. The watch-dog's kennel was close to the path, at a little green wooden gate, where it entered the garden.

The dog, hearing his master's step, came out of his kennel, much excited with the hope of a temporary release from the irksomeness of his captivity; but his master only caressed and spoke to him a little, and passed on. Then he began to talk to the Doctor. The sound of his voice reached the ears of a third person, who came out of the wood, and began to follow them on the path.

The Doctor became aware that they were followed, and they stopped. The Colonel turned his lantern, and the light of it fell full upon the intruder.

"Why, it's a mere child," said the Colonel. "But what on earth's the matter with the Doctor?"

Certainly that eccentric Doctor *did* behave in a most remarkable manner. He snatched the lantern from the Colonel's hand without one word of apology, and having cast its beams on the child's face, threw it down on the ground, and

seized the vagrant in his arms. "The Doctor's mad," thought the Colonel, as he picked up the lantern.

"Why, *it's little Jacob!*" cried Dr Bardly.

But this conveyed nothing to the mind of the Colonel. What did he know about little Jacob ?

Meanwhile the lad was telling his tale to his friend. Father had beaten him so, and he'd run away. "Please, Doctor, don't send me back again." The child's feet were bare, and icy cold, and covered with blood. His clothes were wet up to the waist. His little dog was with him.

"It's a little boy that's a most particular friend of mine," said the Doctor ; "and he's been very ill used. We must take care of him. I must beg a night's lodging for him in the house.

They took him into the Colonel's study, before the glowing fire. "Now, what's to be done?" said the Colonel. "Its lucky you're a doctor."

"Let us undress him and warm him first. We can do everything ourselves. There is a most urgent reason why no domestic should be informed of his being here. His existence here must be kept secret.

The Colonel went to his dressing-room and brought towels. Then he set some water on the fire in a kettle. The Doctor took the wet things

off, and examined the poor little lacerated feet. He rubbed little Jacob all over with the towels most energetically. The Colonel, whose activity was admirable to witness, fetched a tub from somewhere, and they made arrangements for a warm bath.

“One person must be told about this,” said Dr Bardly, “and that’s Lady Helena. Go and tell her now. Ask her to get up and come here, and warn her not to rouse any of the servants.”

Her ladyship made her appearance in a few minutes in a dressing-gown. “Lady Helena,” said the Doctor, “you’re wanted as a nurse. This child requires great care for the next twenty-four hours, and you must do everything for him with your own hands. Is there a place in the house where he can be lodged out of the way of the servants?”

Lady Helena had no boys of her own. She had had one little girl at the beginning of her married life, who had lived, and was now at Wenderholme, comfortably sleeping in the prettiest of little beds, in a large and healthy nursery in the left wing of the building. She had had two little boys since, but *they* were both sleeping in Wenderholme churchyard. When she saw little Jacob in his tub, the tears came into her eyes, and

she was ready to be his nurse as long as ever he might have need of her.

“I’ll tell you all about him, Lady Helena, when we’ve put him to bed.”

Little Jacob sat in his tub looking at the kind, strange lady, and feeling himself in a state of unrealisable bliss. “You must be very tired and very hungry, my poor child,” she said. Little Jacob said he was very hungry, but he didn’t feel tired now. He had felt tired in the wood, but he didn’t feel tired now in the tub. He looked very nice and very funny in that primitive position; and when it was agreed that he had been sufficiently tubbed, and he stood on the hearth-rug like a little Cupid out of a picture, Lady Helena thought she had never seen anything so beautiful.

Her ladyship was as busy and as kind as she could be. She ordered the Colonel about, and told him where to find the materials for a supper. “But what on earth are we to do for clothes?” said the Colonel; and he looked exceedingly perplexed. He went and opened some old wardrobes, and fished out the oddest old-fashioned little suit imaginable—a suit that he had worn himself twenty-five years before—all of light-blue cloth, resplendent with many buttons; and they aired

this before the fire, and invested little Jacob therewith, who began to feel quite proud of himself, and to count the buttons with great interest. By the time he had counted them all, his supper was ready; and considering that his appetite, which on ordinary occasions was by no means a feeble one, had been sharpened by six hours' wandering on the moor, it will readily be imagined that he did justice to that supper. In fact the Doctor had to stop him; for after eating two immense platefuls of cold beef, he actually asked a third time for pie. Feorach, his dog, also distinguished herself as a beef-eater.

There was a sanctum of the Colonel's in a very out-of-the-way part of the house, whither it was his custom to retreat occasionally into the utmost possible privacy. There was a theory that when John Stanburne had shut himself in this room he was occupied on matters of business, and was not to be disturbed; but, if the truth must be told, he retreated here to indulge in a habit he had acquired in Spain, that of sleeping in the middle of the day. He did not sleep long—half an hour was all he wanted; but that half-hour he *must* have, and if he did not get it he was fit for nothing during the remainder of the day. He was also peculiarly sensitive to noise of all kinds, and had

therefore chosen this retreat as far as possible from the usually inhabited rooms. It was the last of a series of apartments that were hardly ever used, and which had been arranged for a former dowager. The present dowager, John Stanburne's mother, had preferred a separate house; and a nice little house had been built for her, about a mile or a mile and a quarter from the Hall, on a site which had been chosen for its great natural beauty.

In the said sanctum there was a very comfortable couch or divan, on which the Colonel took his daily siesta. He had acquired another taste on the Continent—he liked wood-fires; and as he had a forest of his own close to the house, he could indulge this taste to the utmost. The smell of coal, not perceptible to those who burn it habitually in their houses, is exceedingly perceptible, and often very offensive, to persons who have accustomed themselves to the more fragrant odour of wood; and there are certain other charms about a wood-fire, especially its cheerfulness when flaming, and its capacity, when treated by any one who understands it, of keeping alive for many hours without attention. The Colonel prided himself on his skill, and managed the fire in his sanctum himself, and he managed it

so well that it never went out, even during his absences at Sootythorn and elsewhere.*

“The right place to put the boy to bed in,” said the Colonel, “is my sanctum, of course. Nobody goes there, and the room is perfectly aired; there’s always a fire.”

The little party went up-stairs to this mysterious retreat, but when they arrived there the Doctor exclaimed, “You said there was a fire, Colonel, and there isn’t even a grate—nothing but a heap of white ashes. The room isn’t cold, though.”

The Colonel knelt down and began to remove ashes from the heap. “I covered this fire,” he said, “when I went to Sootythorn this morning, so it’s sure to be alive yet.” The Doctor gazed in much astonishment. He believed that oxygen was necessary to keep fires lighted, and yet this unscientific Colonel shut all the oxygen out; and behold! when he removed the ashes, there were embers which immediately began to glow. The fire-maker added a couple of fresh logs, and in a minute or two there was a bright, merry flame.

“You *are* a clever fellow, Colonel,” said the Doctor.

* English readers who are accustomed to coal-fires may think this exaggerated, and the more so that wood is supposed to go out even more easily than coal. But the Colonel’s way of managing it is very common on the Continent.

“Possibly, my dear Doctor, but not clever enough to invent that dodge. The first inventor of that was some poor woman, centuries ago, who was too lazy to light her fire every morning, and had neither servant nor wood to keep it alive during her absences in the daytime. So she found out the use of ashes, which don’t extinguish, but prevent wasteful combustion. It was not a rich person who found that out, rely upon it.”

Her ladyship fetched blankets and sheets, and the gentlemen went down-stairs again.

“What is your name, my child?” said Lady Helena.

“Little Jacob.”

“But your other name?”

“Ogden.”

His name, therefore, was Jacob Ogden—not aristocratic, decidedly.

“Where do you live?”

“Twistle Farm.”

“And where is Twistle Farm?”

“Near Shayton.”

Her ladyship pushed her interrogations no further for the present, because little Jacob had popped suddenly down on his knees to say his prayers, which both pleased Lady Helena and for the present silenced her.

Little Jacob being fairly put to bed, female curiosity could not wait till the next day, and she sought out the Doctor, who was still with the Colonel in his study. "I beg to be excused, gentlemen," she said, "for intruding in this room in an unauthorised manner, but I want to know all about that little boy."

The Doctor told his history very minutely, and the history of his father. Then he added, "I believe the only possible chance of saving his father from killing himself with drinking is to leave him for some time under the impression that the boy, having been driven away by his cruelty, has died from exposure on the moor. This may give him a horror of drinking, and may effect a permanent cure. There is another thing to be considered, the child's own safety. If we send him back to his father, I will not answer for his life. The father is already in a state of irritability bordering on insanity—in fact he is partially insane; and if the child is put under his power before there has been time to work a thorough cure, it is likely that he will beat him frequently and severely—he may even kill him in some paroxysm of rage. If Isaac Ogden knew that the child were here, and claimed him to-morrow, I believe it would be your duty

not to give him up, and I should urge his uncle to institute legal proceedings to deprive the father of the guardianship. A man in Isaac Ogden's state is not fit to have a child in his power. He has beaten him very terribly already—his body is all bruises; and now if we send him back, he will beat him again for having run away."

These reasons certainly had great weight, but both the Colonel and Lady Helena foresaw much difficulty in keeping the child at Wenderholme without his presence there becoming immediately known. His disappearance would make a noise, not only at Shayton but at Sootythorn, and everywhere in the neighbourhood. The relations of the child were in easy circumstances, and a heavy reward would probably be offered, which the servants at Wenderholme Hall could scarcely be expected to resist, still less the villagers in the neighbouring hamlet. It would be necessary to find some very solitary person, living in great obscurity, to whose care little Jacob might be safely confided—at any rate, for a few days. Lady Helena suggested two old women who lived together in a sort of almshouse of hers on the estate, but the Colonel said they were too fond of gossip, and received too many visitors, to be

trusted. At last the Doctor's countenance suddenly brightened, and he said that he knew where to hide little Jacob, but where that was he positively refused to tell. All he asked for was, that the child should be kept a close prisoner in the Colonel's sanctum for the next twenty-four hours, and that the Colonel would lend him a horse and gig—*not* a tandem.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Doctor had determined to hide little Jacob with Nanny Pickering; and so the next night, about half-past twelve, he and the Colonel harnessed a fast-trotting mare, and little Jacob and his dog were put under the apron. They reached Nanny Pickering's cottage at four o'clock in the morning. She was under the impression that the long-dreaded robbers had at length arrived to take her hidden treasures, and refused to unbar the door. At length the familiar sounds of the Doctor's voice became audible to her, and Nanny let him in. The cottage consisted of two rooms, and little Jacob was lodged in that farthest from the entrance. Here he did not find the luxuries of Wenderholme, and was perhaps at first somewhat unpleasantly impressed by the evident poverty of the place—for children become critical in these things at an exceedingly

early age. However, here for the present he remained, and the Doctor reminded him that if his presence there became known, his father would certainly fetch him. Nanny's cottage and peace were better than Twistle Farm and the long whip, so our hero reconciled himself to his lot. That lot was rendered much easier to him in a day or two, for the Doctor brought him many consolations—books, and playthings, and tarts, and a pot of preserved ginger. Old Nanny was very kind to him, too; and as the Doctor had promised handsome pecuniary compensation, she kept Master Jacob in a manner far exceeding the simplicity of her ordinary fare. The continual presence of the faithful little dog was a relief from the tedium of the situation, and Feorach profited by her confinement, as so many other prisoners have done, in an intellectual, or at least educational, sense; for little Jacob made it his business to teach her so many tricks, that if their imprisonment had lasted many weeks, Feorach would have become the most accomplished dog in Lancashire.

Now Mr Isaac Ogden, whose wretchedness the reader pities perhaps as much as the Doctor did, continued his researches in a hopeless, discouraged, and desultory way, and one day came so

near to a discovery of his son's hiding-place as actually to call at Nanny Pickering's cottage. Nanny was at home, and received Mr Ogden, for whose visit she was very well prepared, with expressions of apparently heartfelt sympathy for his loss; whilst little Jacob, who quite plainly heard his father's voice through the thin wooden partition, sat in fear and trembling, but in perfect silence, for which he had been educated by many less serious games of hide-and-seek. Feorach, though her powers of loving were very considerable, had fortunately concentrated them all on her young master; and though she was perfectly aware of Mr Ogden's presence in the house, it was not difficult to keep her quiet. Indeed it was not in Mr Ogden's nature to encourage the demonstrations of little dogs; and Feorach had learned, by the experience of many unpleasant kicks and hard words, that her attentions were not appreciated by him.

A more welcome visitor was Mrs Ogden, who had been admitted into the secret by the Doctor, and who had hitherto approved of his policy of concealment. It pained her to see her son Isaac in the misery of a bereavement which he supposed to be eternal; but the bright hope, which his present conduct quite fully justified, that this

temporary sorrow and suffering might save him from a doom which had else been inevitable, encouraged Mrs Ogden to persevere in the course which the Doctor still urgently recommended. "We aren't sure of having saved him yet," said Dr Bardly; "we must persevere till his constitution has got past the point of craving for strong drink altogether."

Matters remained in this state until Christmas Eve. Periodical festivals are highly agreeable institutions for happy people, who have the springs of merriment within them, ready to gush forth on any pretext, or on the strength of simple permission to gush forth; but it is difficult for a man oppressed by a persistent weight of sorrow to throw it off because the almanac has brought itself to a certain date, and it is precisely at the times of general festivity that such a man feels his burden heaviest. It may be observed also, that as a man, or a society of men, approaches the stage of maturity and reflection, the events of life appear more and more to acquire the power of colouring the whole of existence; so that the faculty of being merry at appointed times, and its converse, the faculty of weeping at appointed times, both give place to a continual but quiet sadness, from which we never really escape, even

for an hour, though we may still be capable of a manly fortitude, and retain a certain elasticity, or the appearance of it. In a word, our happiness and misery are no longer alternative and acute, but coexist in a chronic form, so that it has ceased to be natural for men to wear sackcloth and heap ashes on their heads, and sit in the dust in their wretchedness; and it has also ceased to be natural for them to crown themselves with flowers, and anoint themselves with the oil of gladness, and clothe themselves in the radiance of purple and cloth-of-gold. No hour of life is quite miserable enough or hopeless enough for the sackcloth and the ashes—no hour of life is brilliant enough for the glorious vesture and the flowery coronal.

A year before, Isaac Ogden would have welcomed the Christmas festivities as a legitimate occasion for indulgence in his favourite vice, without much meditation (and in this perhaps he may have resembled some other very regular observers of the festival) on the history of the Founder of Christianity. But as it was no longer his desire to celebrate either this or any other festival of the Church by exposing himself to a temptation which, for him, was the strongest and most dangerous of all temptations—and as the idea of a purely spiritual celebration was an

idea so utterly foreign to the whole tenor of his thoughts and habits as never even to suggest itself to him—he had felt strongly disposed to shun Christmas altogether,—that is, to escape from the outward and visible Christmas to some place where the days might pass as merely natural days, undistinguished by any sign of national or ecclesiastical commemoration. He had determined, therefore, to go back to Twistle Farm, from which it seemed to him that he had been too long absent, and had announced this intention to the Doctor. But when the Doctor repeated it to Mrs Ogden, she would not hear of any such violation of the customs and traditions of the family. Her sons had always spent Christmas Eve together; and so long as she lived, she was firmly resolved that they always should. The pertinacity with which a determined woman will uphold a custom that she cherishes is simply irresistible—that is, unless the rebel makes up his mind to incur her perpetual enmity; and Isaac Ogden was less than ever in a condition of mind either to brave the hostility of his mother or wound her tenderer feelings. So it came to pass that on Christmas Eve he went to Milend to tea.

Now on the tea-table there were some little cakes, and Mrs Ogden, who had not the remotest

notion of the sort of delicacy that avoids a subject because it may be painful to somebody present, and who always simply gave utterance to her thoughts as they came to her, observed that these little cakes were of her own making, and actually added, "They're such as I used makin' for little Jacob—he was so fond on 'em."

Isaac Ogden's feelings were not very sensitive, and he could bear a great deal; but he could not bear this. He set down his cup of tea untasted, gazed for a few seconds at the plateful of little cakes, and left the room.

The Doctor was there, but he said nothing. Jacob Ogden did not feel under any obligation to be so reticent. "Mother," he said, "I think you needn't have mentioned little Jacob—our Isaac cannot bear it; he knows no other but what th' little un's dead, and he's as sore as sore."

This want of delicacy in Mrs Ogden arose from an all but total lack of imagination. She could sympathise with others if she suffered along with them—an expression which might be criticised as tautological, but the reader will understand what is meant by it. If Mrs Ogden had had the toothache, she would have sympathised with the sufferings of another person similarly afflicted so long as her own pangs lasted; but if a drop of creosote

or other powerful remedy proved efficacious in her own case, and released her from the torturing pain, she would have looked upon her fellow-sufferer as pusillanimous, if after that she continued to exhibit the outward signs of torment. Therefore, as she herself knew that little Jacob was safe at Nanny Pickering's, it was now incomprehensible by her that his father should not feel equally at ease about him, though, as a matter of fact, she was perfectly well aware that he supposed the child to be irrecoverably lost. Mrs Ogden, therefore, received her son Jacob's rebuke with unfeigned surprise. She had said nothing to hurt Isaac that she knew of—she “had only said that little Jacob used being fond o' them cakes, and it was quite true.”

Isaac did not return to the little party, and they began to wonder what had become of him. After waiting some time in silence, Mrs Ogden left her place at the tea-tray, and went to a little sitting-room adjoining—a room the men were more accustomed to than any other in the house, and where indeed they did everything but eat and sleep. Mr Ogden had gone there from habit, as his mother expected, and there she found him sitting in a large rocking-chair, and gazing abstractedly into the fire. The chair rocked regu-

larly but gently, and its occupant seemed wholly unconscious—not only of its motion, but of every other material circumstance that surrounded him.

Mrs Ogden laid her hand upon his shoulder, and said, “Isaac, willn’t ye come to your tea? we’re all waiting for you.”

The spell was broken, and Ogden suddenly started to his feet. “Give me my hat,” he said, “and let me go to my own house. I’m not fit to keep Christmas this year. How is a man to care about tea and cakes when he’s murdered his own son? I’m best by myself; let me go up to Twistle Farm. D’ye expect me to sing songs at supper, and drink rum-punch?”

“There’ll be no songs, and you needn’t drink unless you like, but just come and sit with us, my lad—you always used spendin’ Christmas Eve at Milend, and Christmas Day too.”

“It signifies nought what I used doin’. Isaac Ogden isn’t same as he used to be. He’d have done better, I reckon, if he’d altered a month or two sooner. There’d have been a little lad here then to make Christmas merry for us all.”

“Well, Isaac, I’m very sorry for little Jacob; but it cannot be helped now, you know, and its no use frettin’ so much over it.”

“Mother,” said Isaac Ogden, sternly, “it seems

to me that *you're* not likely to spoil your health by frettin' over my little lad. You take it very easy it seems to me, and my brother takes it easy too, and so does Dr Bardly—but then Dr Bardly was nothing akin to him. Folk says that grandmothers care more for chilther than their own parents does; but you go on more like a stepmother nor a grandmother.”

This was hard for Mrs Ogden to bear, and she was strongly tempted to reveal the truth, but she forbore and remained silent. Ogden resumed,—

“I cannot tell how you could find in your heart to bake them little cakes when th' child isn't here to eat 'em.

The effort to restrain herself was now almost too much for Mrs Ogden, since it was the fact that she had baked the said little cakes, or others exactly like them, and prepared various other dainties, for the especial enjoyment of Master Jacob, who at that very minute was regaling himself therewith in the privacy of Nanny Pickering's cottage. Still she kept silent.

After another pause, a great paroxysm of passionate regret seized Ogden — one of those paroxysms to which he was subject at intervals, but which in the presence of witnesses he had hitherto been able to contend against or post-

pone. "Oh, my little lad!" he cried aloud, "Oh, my little innocent lad, that I drove away from me to perish! I'd give all I'm worth to see thee again, little un!" He suddenly stopped, and as the tears ran down his cheeks, he looked out of the window into the black night. "If I did but know," he said, slowly, and with inexpressible sadness—"mother, mother, if I did but know where his bits o' bones are lying!"

It was not possible to witness this misery any longer. All Dr Bardly's solemn injunctions, all dread of a possible relapse into the terrible habit, were forgotten. The mother had borne bitter reproaches, but she could not bear this agony of grief. "Isaac," she said, "Isaac, my son, listen to me: thy little lad is alive—he's alive and he's well, Isaac."

Ogden did not seem to realise or understand this communication. At last he said, "I know what you mean, mother, and I believe it. He's alive in heaven, and he can ail nothing, and want nothing, there."

"I hope he'll go there when he's an old man, but a good while after we go there ourselves, Isaac."

A great change spread over Ogden's face, and he began to tremble from head to foot. He laid

his hand on his mother's arm with a grasp of iron. His eyes dilated, the room swam round him, his heart suspended its action, and in a low hissing whisper, he said, "Mother, have they found him?"

"Yes—and he's both safe and well!"

Ogden rushed out of the house, and paced the garden-walk hurriedly from end to end. The intensity of his excitement produced a commotion in the brain that needed the counter-stimulus of violent physical movement. It seemed as if the roof of his skull must be lifted off, and for a few minutes there was a great crisis of the whole nervous system, to which probably his former habits may have more especially exposed him. When this was over, he came back into the house, feeling unusually weak, but incredibly calm and happy. Mrs Ogden had told the Doctor and Mr Jacob what had passed, and the Doctor without hesitation set off at once for his own house, where he ordered his gig, and drove away rapidly on the Sootythorn road.

"Mother," said Isaac, when he came in, "give me a cup of tea, will you?"

"A glass of brandy would do you more good."

"Nay, mother, we've had enough of brandy; it will not do to begin again now."

He sat down in evident exhaustion and drank the tea slowly, looking rather vacantly before him. Then he laid his head back upon the chair and closed his eyes. The lips moved, and two or three tears ran slowly down the cheeks. At last he started suddenly, and, looking sharply round him, said, "Where is he, where is he, mother? where is little Jacob, my little lad, my lad, my lad?"

"Be quiet, Isaac—try to compose yourself a little; Dr Bardly's gone to fetch him. He'll be with us very soon."

Mr Ogden remained quietly seated for some minutes without speaking, and then, as his mind began to clear after the shock of the great emotion it had passed through, he asked who had found his boy, and where they had found him, and when.

These questions were, of course, somewhat embarrassing to his mother, and she would probably have sheltered herself behind some clumsy invention, but her son Jacob interposed.

"The fact is, Isaac, the loss of your little un seemed to be doin' you such a power o' good 'at it seemed a pity to spoil it by tellin' you. And it's my opinion as mother's let th' cat out o' th' bag three week too soon as it is."

“Do you mean to tell me,” said Isaac, “that you knew the child was found, and hid him from his own father?”

“Isaac, Isaac, you mun forgive us,” said the mother; “we did it for your good.”

“Partly for his good, mother,” interposed Jacob, “but still more for th’ sake o’ that child. What made him run away from Twistle Farm, Isaac Ogden? answer me that.”

Isaac remained silent.

“Do you fancy, brother Isaac, that any consideration for your feelins was to hinder us from doin’ our duty by that little lad? What sort of a father is it as drives away a child like that with a horsewhip? Thou was no more fit to be trusted with him nor a wolf wi’ a little white lamb. If he’d been brought back to thee two days after, it ’ud a’ been as much as his life was worth. And I’ll tell thee what, Isaac Ogden, if ever it comes to my ears as you take to horsewhippin’ him again, I’ll go to law wi’ you and get the guardianship of him into safer hands. There’d be little difficulty about that as it is. I’ve taken my measures—my witnesses are ready—I’ve consulted lawyers; and I tell you candidly, I mean to act at once if I see the least necessity for it. Little Jacob was miserable for many a week be-

fore you drove him out o' th' house, an' if we'd only known, you would never have had the chance."

"Nay, Jacob," interposed Mrs Ogden, "you're a bit too hard on Isaac; he's the child's own father, and he had a right to punish him within reason."

"Father! father!" cried Jacob, scornfully; "there isn't a man in Shayton as isn't more of a father to our little un than Isaac has been for many a month past. There isn't a man in Shayton but what would have been kinder to a nice little lad like that than he has been. What signifies havin' begotten a child, if fatherin' it is to stop there?"

At last Isaac Ogden lifted up his face and spoke.

"Brother Jacob, you have said nothing but what is right and true, and you have all acted right both by me and him. But let us start fresh. I've turned over a new leaf; I'm not such as I used to be. I mean to be different, and to do different; and I will be a good father to that child. So help me God!"

He held out his hand, and Jacob took it and shook it heartily. The two brothers looked in each other's face, and there was more of brotherly

affection in their look than there had ever been since the dissolution of their partnership. Mrs Ogden saw this with inexpressible pleasure. "That's right, lads—that's right, lads ; God bless you ! God bless both on you !"

The customs of Shayton were mighty, especially the custom of drinking a glass of port-wine on every imaginable occasion. If a Shayton man felt sorry, he needed a glass of port-wine to enable him to support his grief ; but if he felt glad, there arose at once such a feeling of true sympathy between his heart and that joyous generous fluid, that it needed some great material impediment to keep them asunder, and such an impediment was not to be found in any well-to-do Shayton household, where decanters were always charged, and glasses ever accessible. So it was inevitable that on an occasion so auspicious as this Mr Jacob Ogden should drink a glass—or, more probably, two glasses—of port ; and his mother, who did not object to the same refreshment, bore him company.

"Now Isaac, lad, let's drink a glass to mother's good health."

Mr Ogden had not made any positive vow of teetotalism, and though there might be some danger in allowing himself to experience afresh,

however slightly, the seductive stimulus of alcohol, whole centuries of tradition, the irresistible power of prevalent custom, and the deep pleasure he felt in the new sense of brotherly fellowship, made his soul yearn to the wine. "Here's mother's good health. Your good health, mother," he said, and drank. Jacob repeated the words, and drank also, and thus in a common act of filial respect and affection did these brothers confirm and celebrate their perfect reconciliation.

Isaac now began to show symptoms of uneasiness and restlessness. He walked to the front door, and listened eagerly for wheels. "How fidgety he is, th' old lad!" said Jacob; "it's no use frettin' an' fidgetin' like that; come and sit thee down a bit, an' be quite."

"How long will he be, mother?"

Before Mrs Ogden could reply, Isaac's excited ear detected the Doctor's gig. He was out in the garden immediately, and passed bareheaded through the gate out upon the public road. Two gig-lamps came along from the direction of Sootythorn. He could not see who was in the gig, but something told him that little Jacob was there, and his heart beat more quickly than usual.

Perhaps our little friend might have behaved himself somewhat too timidly on this occasion,

but the Doctor had talked to him on the road. He had explained to him, quite frankly, that Mr Ogden's harshness had been wholly due to the irritable state of his nervous system, and that he would not be harsh any more, because he had given up drinking. He had especially urged upon little Jacob that he must not seem afraid of his father; and as our hero was of a bold disposition, and had plenty of assurance, he was fully prepared to follow the Doctor's advice.

Isaac Ogden hails the gig; it stops, and little Jacob is in his arms.

“Please, papa, I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!”

CHAPTER XII.

AND a merry Christmas Eve they had of it. Mr and Mrs Prigley, and all the little Prigleys, received a sudden invitation to Milend to meet little Jacob, whose return to the land of the living was now first made public, and created an immense sensation at the parsonage. They had intended to have a snapdragon at home, but the snapdragon was quite forgotten, and paled its ineffectual fire before the young hero of the evening. "Tell Mrs Ogden we'll go at once," said Mrs Prigley. "Children, put your things on;—and to think that they've found him alive and well. Oh, I *am* so glad!"

The parson put on the least threadbare of his two suits of black, and a white neckcloth of the most dazzling purity. By the time they reached Milend—the parson, and Mrs Prigley, and Harry, and Billy, and Dick, and Dithy, and Conny (for such was the familiar nomenclature of their

family)—the news had spread through Shayton, and there was a little crowd about the gate. Shayton, though an important and increasing place, was not yet a very large one, and little Jacob, being the nephew and heir-presumptive of one of the richest manufacturers there, was perfectly well known to many hundreds of the inhabitants. Beyond this, his disappearance had made him a celebrity, and if he had been seen in Sootythorn, or even in Manchester, a crowd would have collected about him. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that in the metropolis itself he might have created something approaching to a sensation amongst diligent readers of the newspapers. The anxious crowd at the gate made way for the parson and his family; but after the clerical party had disappeared in the house, the foreman of Ogden's Mill was deputed as a spokesman, and boldly knocked at the door. He requested permission to see his master, and was shown into the little sitting-room.

“Please, sir, there's two or three hunthed folk at your gate as wants to see little Jacob. They'll never be satisfied while * they'n† had a seet‡ on him.”

It was considered necessary to exhibit Master

* Until.

† They han = they have.

‡ Sight.

Jacob to this multitude, who hailed him with hearty cheers. In the midst of this ovation, as he was standing with calm dignity like a youthful Prince of Wales, his said dignity was disturbed, in an unforeseen way, by a powerful woman, who rushed at him and seized him in her vigorous arms, and kissed him in an extraordinary manner. The young gentleman felt that he could have dispensed with this demonstration; but so soon as he became aware that his assailant was no other than his old friend Susy Tattersall, dealer in tarts and lollipops, his rising irritation gave way to feelings of a more amiable description, and he kissed old Susy's jolly fat face with a heartiness that won a murmur of approbation from the bystanders. Little Jacob was called out of the house several times that evening, quite like a famous opera-singer, or a minister of state.

It may be a satisfaction to readers who sympathise with children to know that the young Prigleys were not disappointed in the matter of the snapdragon after all; for when little Jacob was asked what amusement he should prefer for the entertainment of his guests, he at once demanded a snapdragon; and Mrs Ogden, always generous so far as her grandson was concerned, and this evening in a state of pleasurable excitement un-

favourable to parsimony, made a far larger and better snapdragon than the little Prigleys would ever have enjoyed at the parsonage. Besides, it is emphatically true of snapdragons, whatever it may be of some other social pleasures, that the more people share them the merrier they are. Mrs Ogden's tranquil courage, worthy of a member of the fire-brigade, met with repeated applause; her mind was certainly cool if her fingers were not. Indeed the fact is, that in her desire to set an example of bravery to the children she burnt herself most painfully, yet such was her stoicism, or her pride, that she suffered no sign of torture to be visible upon her countenance, but contrived to extinguish the flaming spirit with a dignified wave of the hand, which betrayed not the martyrdom she endured.

The true history of our hero's absence was confided to Mr and Mrs Prigley, but a slightly fictitious account was circulated for the benefit of the general public in Shayton. According to this latter version, little Jacob had crossed the moor into Yorkshire, and, after having lost himself, been taken ill, and tended during his illness by some good Samaritan in those parts. It is the peculiarity of all highly - populous regions that small distances are a wide separation; and in the

populous valleys of Lancashire people are more separated from each other by eight or ten miles than they are by sixty in the Highlands. Consequently, when the Shayton people heard that little Jacob had crossed the border into Yorkshire, it seemed to them that he had taken something like a leap into the infinite unknowable, and they asked no further questions.

He made his appearance at church on Christmas Day, and, to the astonishment of the congregation, his father was also seen in the Milend pew. If a man is well to do, and not too flagrantly drunken or immoral, he has only to show himself in a pew to complete his respectability. It was known in Shayton that Mr Ogden had been wonderfully reformed since the disappearance of his son, but this last virtue of being seen at church had hitherto been wanting to the circle of his perfections. Now that he sat there at last, so perfectly neat in his dress, so well brushed and shaven, with a pair of kid gloves on the hands that held the prayer-book—his fine little boy on one side of him, and his old mother on the other—he excited on all sides feelings of the heartiest goodwill. There was nothing wanting in him now—he had attained the ideal. Perhaps, if the truth were known, he did not follow the service very closely,

having, in fact, forgotten the somewhat intricate sequence of the various portions of it ; but when he saw other people turn over the leaves of their prayer-books, he turned his leaves over too, and when they stood up and sat down he was careful to do the same. And indeed, though he may not always have precisely hit upon the right prayer at the right time, it may be doubted whether his service was not as acceptable to God as that of the most practised and accurate ritualist in the whole congregation. For his heart was full of thankfulness and joy, and of longing for a better life.

Mr Prigley's sermon had been simply a Christmas-Day sermon, to begin with, but he had added a passage to it which bore evident reference to the return of little Jacob; and when, to his great surprise, he saw Mr Ogden in the pew along with him, the parson made a farther addition extemporaneously, which was understood by many present, and which was full of good feeling. Indeed, to make allusions of this personal kind from the pulpit, in a quite unexceptionable manner, may be considered a proof of unusual tact and taste. Mr Prigley's words were simply words of joy and welcome, and he was careful to avoid anything which might resemble a reference to Mr Ogden's

past life. The passages about little Jacob were really affecting, and many women in the congregation could not restrain their tears. The most demonstrative or least reticent of these was Susy Tattersall, who sobbed audibly in her accustomed seat; for, though she sold atheistic tracts as she did sugar-plums, for those who enjoyed them, she was a regular attendant at church.

Little Jacob's pony had been sent for, and in the afternoon his father and he rode together up to Twistle Farm. Until the man came for the pony, old Sarah had not the faintest hope that little Jacob was in existence, and the shock had nearly been too much for her. The messenger had simply said, "I'm comed for little Jacob* tit." "And who wants it?" Sarah said; for it seemed to her a desecration for any one else to mount that almost sacred animal. "Why, little Jacob wants it hissel, to be sure." And this (with some subsequent explanations of the most laconic description) was his way of breaking the matter delicately to old Sarah.

The old woman had never spent an afternoon, even the afternoon of Christmas Day, so pleasantly

* The possessive is very commonly omitted in Lancashire. Thus, instead of saying "our John's wife," a Lancashire person, speaking the pure dialect, would say "our John wife."

as she spent that. How she did toil and bustle about ! The one drawback to her happiness was, that she did not possess a Christmas cake ; but she set to work and made tea-cakes, and put such a quantity of currants in them that they were almost as good as a Christmas cake. She lighted a fire in the parlour, and another in little Jacob's room ; and she took out the little night-gown that she had cried over many a time, and, strange to say, she cried over it this time too. And she arranged the small bed so nicely, that it looked quite inviting, with its white counterpane, and clean sheets, and bright brass knobs, and pretty light iron work painted blue. When all was ready, it occurred to her that since it was Christmas time she would even attempt a little decoration ; and as there were some evergreens at Twistle Farm, and some red berries, she went and gathered thereof, and attempted the adornment of the house—somewhat clumsily and inartistically, it must be confessed, yet not without giving it an air of festivity and rejoicing. She had proceeded thus far, and could not “bethink her” of anything else that needed to be done, when, suddenly casting her eye on her own costume, she perceived that it was of the deepest black ; for, being persuaded that the dear child

was dead, she had so clothed herself out of respect for his memory. She held her sombre skirt out with both her hands as if to push it away from her, and exclaimed aloud, "I'll be shut o' *thee*, onyhow, and sharply too;" and she hurried up-stairs to change it for the brightest garment in her possession, which was of sky-blue, spotted all over with yellow primroses. She also put on a cap of striking and elaborate magnificence, which the present writer does not attempt to describe, only because such an attempt would incur the certainty of failure.

That cap had hardly been assumed and adjusted when it was utterly crushed and destroyed in a most inconsiderate manner. A sound of hoofs had reached old Sarah's ears, and in a minute afterwards the cap was ruined in Master Jacob's passionate embraces. You may do almost anything you like to a good-tempered old woman, so long as you do not touch her cap; and it is an undeniable proof of the strength of old Sarah's affection, and of the earnestness of her rejoicing, that she not only made no remonstrance in defence of her head-dress, but was actually unaware of the irreparable injury which had been inflicted upon it.

Jim was as ignorant as his fellow-servant of

the existence of his young master ; and he was destined to experience the shock of a still more startling surprise. He had been out all day in an outlandish little village by the moorside, where he had friends and acquaintances ; and after a festive afternoon, he returned to Twistle Farm, having drunk just about as much as was good for him. It was perhaps rather a fortunate circumstance for Jim that his nervous system had been stimulated by strong ale to the point of "fearing no evil," though perhaps he may not have been precisely prepared to face the devil.* On opening the kitchen-door, he was greeted with a loud bark from Feorach, and beheld Master Jacob warming himself before the kitchen-fire. Jim did not drop from fright, but he quaked from head to foot, and felt exceedingly queer. Beads of chilly perspiration broke out upon his forehead, and he felt at the same time the strongest desire and the most utter incapacity for flight. His uncertainty as to little Jacob's corporeal existence was speedily put an end to by the ghost himself, who ran at his old friend and seized him by both

* " Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
Wi' tippeny we fear nae evil,
Wi' usquebae we'll face the devil ! "

sides of his coat, and fairly climbed up him, thereby giving satisfactory proof of bodily and ponderable substance. If farther evidence had been required, it would have been supplied—at least, to the extent of associative suggestion—by the demonstrative demeanour of Feorach; for though Jim may have been in a state of philosophic doubt or suspension of judgment as to the possibility of human ghosts, he was a decided unbeliever in canine ones.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next time the Doctor met Colonel Stanburne at Sootythorn, he gave such a good account of Mr Isaac Ogden, that the Colonel, who took a strong interest in little Jacob, expressed the hope that Mr Ogden would still join the regiment; though in the time of his grief and tribulation he had resigned his commission, or, to speak more accurately—for the commission had not yet been formally made out and delivered to him—he had withdrawn his name as a candidate for one. The Colonel, in his friendly way, declared that the Doctor was not a hospitable character. “I ask you to Wenderholme every time I see you, and you come and stay sometimes, though not half often enough, but you never ask me to your house; and, by Jove! if I want to be invited at all I must invite myself.” The Doctor, who liked John Stanburne better and better the more

he knew of him, still retained the very erroneous notion that a certain state and style were essential to John Stanburne's happiness; and, notwithstanding many broad hints that he had dropped at different times on the subject, still hung back from asking him to a house where, though comfort reigned supreme, there was little luxury, and not the slightest pretension to gentility. The old middle-class manner of living still lingered in many well-to-do houses in Shayton, and the Doctor faithfully adhered to it. Everything about him was perfectly clean and decent, but he had not marched with the times; and whilst the attorneys and cotton-spinners in Sootythorn and elsewhere had the chairs of their dining-rooms covered with morocco leather, and their drawing-rooms filled with all manner of glittering fragilities, and Brussels carpets with pretty little tasteful patterns, and silver forks, and napkins, and a hundred other visible proofs of the advance of refinement, the worthy Doctor had not kept up with them at all, but lagged behind by the space of about thirty years. He had no drawing-room; the chairs of his parlour were of an ugly and awkward pattern, and their seats were covered with horse-hair; the carpet was cheap and coarse, with a monstrous

pattern that no artistic person would have tolerated for a single day; and though the Doctor possessed a silver punch-ladle and teapot, and plenty of silver spoons of every description, all the forks in the house were of steel! Indeed, the Doctor's knives and forks, which had belonged to his mother, or perhaps even to his grandmother, were quite a curiosity in their way. They had horn handles, of an odd indescribable conformation, supposed to adapt itself to the hollow of the hand, but which, from some misconception of human anatomy on the part of the too ingenious artificer, seemed always intended for the hand of somebody else. These handles were stained of such a brilliant green, that, in the slang of artists, they "killed" every green herb on the plate of him who made use of them. The forks had spring guards, to prevent the practitioner from cutting his left hand with the knife that he held in his right; and the knife had a strange round projection at what should have been the point, about the size of a shilling, which (horrible to relate!) had been originally designed to convey gravy and small fragments of viands, not prehensible by means of the two-pronged fork, into the human mouth! In addition to these strange relics of a bygone civilisation (if, indeed, it *had*

been a civilisation), the Doctor possessed two large rocking-chairs, of the same colour as the handles of his knives. The Doctor loved a rocking-chair, in which he did but share a taste universally prevalent in Shayton, and defensible on the profoundest philosophical grounds. The human creature loves repose, but a thousand causes may hinder the perfect enjoyment of it, and torment him into restlessness at the very time when he most longs for rest. He may sit down after the business of the day, and some mental or bodily uneasiness may make the quiet of the massive easy-chair intolerable to him. The easy-chair does not sympathise with him, does not respond to the fidgety condition of his nervous system; and yet he tries to sit down in it and enjoy it, for, though fidgety, he is also weary, and needs the comfort of repose. Now, the rocking-chair—that admirable old Lancashire institution—and the rocking-chair alone, responds to both these needs. If you are fidgety, you rock; if not, you don't. If highly excited, you rock boldly back, even to the extremity of danger; if pleasantly and moderately stimulated, you lull yourself with a gentle motion, like the motion that little waves give to a pleasure-boat. It is true that the bolder and more emphatic manner

of rocking has become impossible in these latter days, for the few upholsterers who preserve the tradition of the rocking-chair at all make it in such a highly genteel manner, that the rockers are diminished to the smallest possible arc; but the Doctor troubled himself little concerning these achievements of fashionable upholstery, and regarded his old rocking-chairs with perfect satisfaction and complacency—in which, without desiring to offend against the decisions of the fashionable world, we cannot help thinking that he was right.

A large green rocking-chair, with bold high rockers and a soft cushion like a small feather-bed, a long clay pipe quite clean and new, a bright copper spittoon, and a jug of strong ale,—these things, with the necessary concomitants of a briskly-burning fire and an unlimited supply of tobacco, formed the ideal of human luxury and beatitude to a generation now nearly extinct, but of which the Doctor still preserved the antique traditions. In substance often identical, but in outwardly visible means and appliances differing in every detail, the pleasures of one generation seem quaint and even ridiculous in comparison with the same pleasures as pursued by its successor. Colonel Stanburne smoked a pipe, but it was a short

meerschäum, mounted in silver ; and he also used a knife and fork, and used them skilfully and energetically, but they were not like the Doctor's grandmother's knives and forks.

And yet, when the Colonel came to Shayton, he managed to eat a very hearty dinner at one P.M. with the above-named antiquated instruments ; and the only thing that embarrassed him was the want of a napkin—a real want in his case, for his moustache was long and thick ; and though by constant practice he had attained the art of passing beneath it whatever could be held upon a fork, this was not so easy when it was necessary to use a spoon, at which times a napkin, or a substitute for a napkin, became a thing of absolute necessity. The Doctor, who submitted every day to have his nose held between the finger and thumb of a neighbouring barber, was thereby delivered from this inconvenience, and removed all visible traces of soups and creams by simply licking his lips, so that napkins in his opinion were elegant superfluities, and the use of them one of the strange forms and ceremonies of high life. After the celery and cheese, Dr Bardly took one of the rocking-chairs, and made the Colonel sit down in the other ; and Martha brought a fresh bottle of uncommonly fine old port, which

she decanted on a table in the corner that did duty as a sideboard. When they had done full justice to this, the Doctor ordered hot water; and Martha, accustomed to this laconic command, brought also certain other fluids which were hot in quite a different sense. She also brought a sheaf of clay tobacco-pipes, about two feet six inches long, and in a state of the whitest virginity—emblems of purity! emblems, alas! at the same time, of all that is most fragile and most ephemeral!

“Nay, Martha,” said the Doctor, “we don’t want them clay pipes to-day. Colonel Stanburne isn’t used to ’em, I reckon. Bring that box of cigars that I bought the other day in Manchester.”

The Colonel, however, would smoke a clay pipe, and he tried to rock as the Doctor did, and soon, by the effect of that curious sympathy which exists between rocking-chairs (or their occupants), the two kept time together like musicians in a duet, and clouds of the densest smoke arose from the two long tobacco-pipes.

“The regiment is getting pretty well filled up by this time,” said the Colonel. “I’ve got two majors. It don’t much signify, though, what sort of fellows majors are, provided they’re pleasant fellows, you know. I mean, they don’t need

to know very much about military business, and that sort of thing. Eureton's a capital fellow; and when one's got a first-rate adjutant, as I'm sure Eureton will be, things are safe to go on well. Eureton is such an uncommonly quiet man that some people seem to take him for a muff; but he isn't a muff—he's anything but that. He's a very fine fellow, is Eureton—a very fine fellow indeed; and the more I see of him, the more I see reason to congratulate myself on such an acquisition. He's one of those men, Doctor, that have got thorough business habits. I wish I'd business habits. I never had, but I can recognise them and admire them in others. Our list of captains is full—everybody likes to be a captain, and there were plenty of aspirants. There's a small property qualification—two hundred a-year from real estate; but everybody's got two hundred a-year, and if he hasn't, he gets some uncle or aunt to make him nominally a proprietor to that amount. As to lieutenants, we've got some young fellows that I don't know very much about, and there's rather a strong Irish element, and I don't exactly know how all these fellows will get on together; but we must try and make 'em work together as well as we possibly can. Amongst the captains there are two or three men that visit

a good deal with my wife's father. There's a son of a man named Brabazon—he's an earl, you know; and we've the son of a dook, too, a young fellow called Henry Ughtred—Lord Henry Ughtred; he's a son of the Dook of Ingleborough."

The Doctor, as we have already more than once affirmed, had nothing of the snob or parasite in his nature; yet so great is the influence of a title in this country, and so utterly does it upset the solid common-sense of every born Englishman, that the Doctor began to take quite a tender and peculiar interest in these young men, especially in the one last mentioned. He made many inquiries about them, though curiosity was the least of his defects; and he was never tired of listening with the closest attention whilst the Colonel, who knew them pretty well (though not intimately), described them in his way. "What sort of a fellow is he, Harry Ughtred? Well, he's a very decent fellow, rather good-looking; blue eyes and fair hair, and if you look at him with a magnifying glass you may perhaps detect something resembling a moustache." (Here the Colonel complacently pulled the handful of strong brown hair which adorned his upper lip, and which was clearly visible by the naked eye.) "As to the adornments of his mind, I really can't

tell you very much. He isn't exactly a very highly cultivated young man, I should say ; but he was educated at Eton, and used to be able to make Latin verses at one time. In short, you know, he's like scores of other young men—a sort of young swell in general, with nothing very particular or individual. But I don't know very much of him. I've only met him sometimes at my wife's father's; he's a friend of Basenthorpe's, my brother-in-law, but he isn't a friend of mine, only an acquaintance. To tell you the truth, the Ingleborough family are rather too great people for my taste. I daresay they're very pleasant people, you know, and that sort of thing ; but I don't care much to mix myself up with dooks and people of that kind."

"Why, you married an earl's daughter," observed the Doctor.

"True ; but I didn't mawy her *becoz* she was an earl's daughter. I met Helena when I was a young fellow, and she looked so pretty and nice, and she sang so delightfully, that I fell in love with her. She might have made a better match, a much better match in every way ; and perhaps, in point of money, I might have mawid more prudently without going very far from Sooty-thorn ; but we were spooney, Doctor—we were

both of us spooney—and so we got mawid ; and—to tell you a secret which I wouldn't confide to everybody—we're both of us spooney still ; at least I am, though her ladyship has perhaps recovered from that malady by this time."

There was just a little tinge of uxoriousness in John Stanburne ; and, like other men who have that pardonable and amiable weakness, he could never be quite happy for a day without either seeing his wife or talking about her. During their occasional brief separations, when she left him alone at Wenderholme on visits to friends of hers he did not much care about, his old housekeeper would come into the breakfast-room every morning after the post-bag had arrived, and inquire if there were news of her ladyship, and how her ladyship was, and whether her ladyship had borne the journey well, and so on ; and it was John Stanburne's greatest pleasure to answer these questions, and under a hundred pretexts to talk with the old housekeeper about his wife. So, when he had a discreet middle-aged listener like the Doctor, he would talk on the same subject whenever a proper opportunity appeared to offer itself ; and as *tout chemin mène à Rome*, it is found in the practice of conversation that every subject somehow leads ultimately to the central one. It may seem odd

that a man like Colonel Stanburne should talk so unreservedly with a man in every respect so different from himself; but the Doctor's manner invited confidence in more ways than one. He was the best of listeners, and no one who knew him could entertain a doubt of his discretion. Hence he gradually became John Stanburne's most confidential friend; but as even in the frankest natures there always remains a residuum of reserve, so when we say that the Colonel talked unreservedly, the word is to be understood in the sense which is usually attached to it—that is, taken with limitations. If he had talked *quite* unreservedly, and if the Doctor on his part had been absolutely frank in the expression of his private opinion on every matter submitted to him, great evils and great miseries might have been avoided, and a life which was darkened by stormy clouds of trial might have passed in serenity and peace.

It had been announced to the inhabitants of the parsonage that the representative of the house of Stanburne intended to call there that afternoon; and though it would be an exaggeration to state that the preparations for his reception were on a scale of magnificence, it is not an exaggeration to describe them as in every respect worthy of Mrs Prigley's skill as a manager, and her husband's

ingenuity and taste. New carpets they could *not* buy, so it was no use thinking about them ; and though Mrs Prigley had indulged the hope that Mrs Ogden's attention would be drawn to the state of her carpets by that accident with which the reader is already acquainted, so as to lead, it might be, to some act of generosity on her part, this result had not followed, and indeed had never suggested itself to Mrs Ogden, who had merely resolved to look well to her feet whenever she ventured into the parlour at the parsonage, as on dangerous and treacherous ground. Under these circumstances Mrs Prigley gradually sank into that condition of mind which accepts as inevitable even the outward and visible signs of impecuniosity ; and though an English lady must indeed be brought low before she will consent to see the boards of her floors in a condition of absolute nakedness, poor Mrs Prigley had come down to this at last ; and she submitted without a murmur when her husband expressed his desire that "that old rag" on the floor of the drawing-room might be removed out of his sight. When the deal boards were carpetless, Mrs Prigley was proceeding with a sigh to replace the furniture thereon ; but her husband desired that it might be lodged elsewhere for a few days, during which space of

time he kept the door of the drawing-room locked, and spent two or three hours there every day in the most mysterious seclusion, to the neglect of his parochial duties. Mrs Prigley in vain endeavoured to discover the nature of his occupation there. She tried to look through the keyhole, but a flap of paper had been adapted to it on the inside to defeat her feminine curiosity ; she went into the garden and attempted to look in at the window, but the blind was down, and as it was somewhat too narrow, slips of paper had been pasted on the glass down each side so as to make the interstice no longer available. The reverend master of the house endeavoured to appear as frank and communicative as usual, by talking volubly on all sorts of subjects except the mystery of the drawing-room ; but Mrs Prigley did not consider it consistent with her self-respect to appear to take any interest in his discourse, and during all these days she preserved, along with an extreme gentleness of manner, the air of a person borne down by secret grief. An invisible line of separation had grown up between the two ; and though both were perfectly courteous and polite, each felt that the days of mutual confidence were over. There was a difference, however, in their respective positions ; for the parson felt tranquil

in the assurance that the cloud would pass away, whereas his wife had no such assurance, and the future was dark before her. It is true that, notwithstanding the outward serenity of her demeanour, Mrs Prigley was sustained by the inward fires of wrath, which enable an injured woman to endure almost any extremity of mental misery and distress.

We have seen that the Shayton parson had that peculiar form of eccentricity which consists in the love of the Beautiful. He had great projects for Shayton Church, which as yet lay hidden in the privacy of his own breast ; and he had also projects for the parsonage, of which the realisation, to the eye of reason and common-sense, would have appeared too remote to be entertained for an instant. But the enthusiasm for the Beautiful does not wait to be authorised by the Philistines,—if it *did*, it would wait till the end of all things ; and Mr Prigley, poor as he was, determined to have such a degree of beauty in his habitation as might be consistent with his poverty. Without being an artist, or anything approaching to an artist, he had practised the drawing of the simpler decorative forms, and was really able to combine them very agreeably. He could also lay a flat tint with a brush quite neatly, though he could

not manage a gradation. But with simple forms and flat tints it is astonishing how much may be done that is decorative in a very high degree; and our parson, from pure love of this pursuit, had become a fair workman, so as to be able to execute almost anything of this kind that his fancy suggested to him. His projects for the parsonage included a good deal of such labour as this, and they were the more feasible that he would have no wages to pay. When it had been finally decided that carpets could no longer be afforded, Mr Prigley saw that the opportunity had come for the exercise of his talents; but he was far too wise a man to confide to his wife projects so entirely outside the orbit of her ideas. He had attempted, in former days, to inoculate her mind with the tastes that belong to culture, but he had been met by a degree of impenetrability which proved to him that the renewal of such attempts, instead of adding to his domestic happiness by creating closer community of ideas, might be positively detrimental to it, by proving too plainly the impossibility of such a community. Mrs Prigley, like many good women of her class, was totally and absolutely devoid of culture of any kind. She managed her house admirably, and with a wonderful thrift and wisdom; she was

an excellent wife in a certain sense, though more from duty than any great strength of affection ; but beyond this and the Church Service, and three or four French phrases which she did not know how to pronounce, her mind was in such a state of darkness and ignorance as to astonish even her husband from time to time, though he had plenty of opportunities for observing it. And the worst of it was, that any attempt to enlighten Mrs Prigley only irritated her. They had passed thousands of hours together by the fireside in perfect calm and quiet after the children had been put to bed, and if Mr Prigley had been allowed to employ those hours in the education of his wife, she might have been not merely his house-keeper but his companion. Every attempt of this kind had produced unpleasant results, and the husband found that the wife could not endure to be set right on any point, however kindly and delicately. So there had been nothing for it but to leave the lady as she first came to him, and the gulf between them remained for ever impassable. "She has the pride of a duchess," thought the parson, in the sad secrecy of his own breast, "and the education of a maid-servant."

But what *was* he doing in the drawing-room ? He was doing things unheard of in the Shayton

valley. In the days of his youth and extravagance he had bought a valuable book on Etruscan design ; and though, as we have said elsewhere, his taste and culture, though developed up to a certain point, were yet by no means perfect or absolutely reliable, still he could not but feel the singular simplicity and grace of that ancient art, and he determined that the decoration of his drawing-room should be Etruscan. On the wide area of the floor he drew a noble old design, and stained it clearly in black and red ; and, when it was dry, rubbed linseed-oil all over it to fix it. The effect was magnificent ! the artist was delighted with his performance ! but on turning his eye from the perfect unity of the floor, with its centre and broad border, to the old paper on the walls, which was covered with a representation of a brown angler fishing in a green river, with a blue hill behind him, and an equally blue church-steeple, and a cow who had eaten so much grass that it had not only fattened her but coloured her with its own greenness—and when the parson counted the number of copies of this interesting landscape that adorned his walls, and saw that they numbered six score and upwards—then he felt that he had too much of it, and boldly resolved to abolish it. He looked at all

the wall-papers in the shop at Shayton, but the endurable ones were beyond his means, and the cheap ones were not endurable—so he purchased a quantity of common brown parcel-paper, of which he took care to choose the most agreeable tint; and he furtively covered his walls with *that*, conveying the paper, a few sheets at a time, under his topcoat. When the last angler had disappeared, the parson began to feel highly excited at the idea of decorating all that fresh and inviting surface. He would have a frieze—yes, he would certainly have a frieze; and he set to work, and copied long Etruscan processions. Then the walls must be divided into compartments, and each compartment must have its chosen design, and the planning and the execution of this absorbed Mr Prigley so much, that for three weeks he did not write a single new sermon, and, I am sorry to say, scarcely visited a single parishioner except in cases of pressing necessity. As the days were so short, he took to working by candle-light; and when once he had discovered that it was possible to get on in this way, he worked till two o'clock in the morning. He made himself a cap-candlestick, and with this crest of light on the top of his head, and the fire of enthusiasm inside it, forgot the flying hours.

The work was finished at last. It was not perfect; a good critic might have detected many an inaccuracy of line, and some incongruousness in the juxtaposition of designs, which, though all antique and Etruscan, were often of dissimilar epochs. But, on the whole, the result justified the proud satisfaction of the workman. The room would be henceforth marked with the sign of culture and of taste: it was a little Temple of the Muse in the midst of a barbarian world.

But what would Mrs Prigley say? The parson knew that he had done a bold deed, and he rather trembled at the consequence. "My love," he said, one morning at breakfast-time, "I've finished what I was doing in the drawing-room, and you can put the furniture back when you like; but I should not wish to have anything hung upon the walls—they are sufficiently decorated as it is. The pictures" (by which Mr Prigley meant sundry worthless little lithographs and prints)—"the pictures may be hung in one of the bedrooms wherever you like."

Mrs Prigley remained perfectly silent, and her husband did not venture to ask her to accompany him into the scene of his artistic exploits. He felt that in case she did not approve what

he had done, the situation might become embarrassing. So, immediately after breakfast, he walked forth into the parish, and said that he should probably dine with Mr Jacob Ogden, who (by his mother's command) had kindly invited him to do so whenever he happened to pass Milend about one o'clock in the day. And in this way the parson managed to keep out of the house till tea-time. When he came back in the dusk of the evening, it was not without a feeling of nervous anxiety. What would Mrs Prigley say? He knew he had committed a great crime; was it possible that Mrs Prigley would forgive the deed for the beauty of the result? Alas! what hope was there that she would be sensible of the beauty of the result! What did she know of Etruscan art—or any art? She could not tell Gothic architecture from Greek. If you showed her a drawing of the Parthenon, and told her that it was Gothic, she would believe you; if you showed her a Gothic capital, and told her that it was Corinthian, she would equally believe you, and in both cases feel equally indifferent. It was not that Mr Prigley dreaded any criticism, for to criticise, one must have an opinion; and Mrs Prigley, on these matters, had not an opinion. All that Mr Prigley dreaded was the anger of the

offended spouse—of the spouse whom he had not even gone through the formality of seeming to consult.

He was punished, but not as he had expected to be punished. Mrs Prigley said nothing to him on the subject; but when they went into the drawing-room together at night, she affected not to perceive that he had done anything whatever there. Not only did she not speak about these changes, but, though Mr Prigley watched her eyes during the whole evening to see whether they would rest upon his handiwork, they never seemed to perceive it, even for an instant. She played the part she had resolved upon with marvellous persistence and self-control. She seemed precisely as she had always been:—sulky? not in the least; there was not the slightest trace of sulkiness, or anything approaching to sulkiness in her manner—the Etruscan designs were simply invisible for her, that was all.

They were not so invisible for the Colonel when he came to pay his visit at the parsonage, and, in his innocence, he complimented Mrs Prigley on her truly classical taste. He had not the least notion that the floor was carpetless because the Prigleys could not afford a carpet—the degree of poverty which could not afford a

carpet not being conceivable by him as a possible attribute of one of his relations or friends. He believed that this beautiful Etruscan design was preferred by Mrs Prigley to a carpet—to the best of carpets—on high æsthetic grounds. Ah! if he could have read her heart, and seen therein all the shame and vexation that glowed like hidden volcanic fires! All these classical decorations seemed to the simple lady a miserable substitute for the dear old carpet with its alternate yellow flourish and brown lozenge; and she regretted the familiar fisherman whose image used to greet her wherever her eyes might rest. But she felt a deeper shame than belongs to being visibly poor or visibly ridiculous. The room looked poor she knew, and in her opinion it looked ridiculous also; but there was something worse than that, and harder far to bear. How shall I reveal this bitter grief and shame—how find words to express the horror I feel for the man who was its unpardonable cause! Carried away by his enthusiasm for a profane and heathen art, Mr Prigley had actually introduced, in the frieze and elsewhere, several figures which—well, were divested of all drapery whatever! “And he a clergyman, too!” thought Mrs Prigley. True, they were simply outlined; and the conception

of the original designer had been marvellously elegant and pure, chastened to the last degree by long devotion to the ideal; but there they were, these shameless nymphs and muses, on the wall of a Christian clergyman! John Stanburne, who had travelled a good deal, and who had often stayed in houses where there were both statues and pictures, saw nothing here but the evidence of cultivated taste. "What *will* he think of us?" said Mrs Prigley to herself; and she believed that his compliments were merely a kind way of trying to make her feel less uncomfortable. She thought him very nice, and he chattered as pleasantly as he possibly could, so that the Doctor, who had come with him, had no social duty to perform, and spent his time in studying the Etruscan decorations. Colonel Stanburne apologised for Lady Helena, who had intended to come with him; but her little girl was suffering from an attack of fever—not a dangerous fever, he hoped, though violent.

The Doctor, who had not before heard of this, was surprised; but as he did not visit Wenderholme professionally (for Wenderholme Hall was, medically speaking, under the authority of the surgeon at Rigton, whose jealousy was already awakened by our Doctor's intimacy with the

Colonel), he reflected that it was no business of his. The fact was, that little Miss Stanburne was in the enjoyment of the most perfect health, but her mother thought it more prudent to let the Colonel go to Shayton by himself in the first instance, so as to be able to regulate her future policy according to his report. Mr Prigley came in before the visitor had exhausted the subject of the fever, which he described with an accuracy that took in these two very experienced people, for he described from memory—his daughter having suffered from such an attack about six months earlier than the very recent date the Colonel found it convenient to assign to it.

It was, of course, a great satisfaction to the Prigleys that the head of the Stanburnes should thus voluntarily renew a connection which, so far as personal intercourse was concerned, was believed to have been permanently severed. It was not simply because the Colonel was a man of high standing in the county that they were glad to become acquainted with him—there were certain clannish and romantic sentiments which now found a satisfaction long denied to them. Mrs Prigley felt, in a minor degree, what a Highland gentlewoman still feels for the chief of her clan; and she was disposed to offer a sort of

loyalty to the Colonel as the head of her house, which was very different from the common respect for wealth and position in general. The Stanburnes had never taken any conspicuous part in the great events of English history, but the successive representatives of the family had at least been present in many historical scenes, in conflicts civil and military, on the field, on the quarterdeck of the war-ship, in stormy Parliamentary struggles; and the present chief of the name, for other descendants of the family, inherited in an especial sense a place in the national life of England. Not that Mrs Prigley had any definite notions even about the history of her own family; the sentiment of birth is quite independent of historical knowledge, and many a good gentlewoman in these realms is in a general way proud of belonging to an old family, without caring to inquire very minutely into the history of it, just as she may be proud of her coat of arms without knowing anything about heraldry. Nobody who knew the Stanburne family at all could be more ignorant of its history than Mrs Prigley was, all her ideas on the subject being confined to three or four traditions, of which two were in the highest degree doubtful and improbable, and one demonstrably a myth.

Mrs Prigley used to narrate that at some period, the date of which was never given, and under some king, whose name was equally unascertainable, there had lived five daughters of the house, and the king, who greatly admired their beauty, had called them the Five Fair Maids of Wenderholme. The tradition was a pretty one, and Mrs Prigley firmly believed it; but the worst of it was, that the five unknown beauties whom the unascertainable majesty had appreciated were nowhere to be found on the Stanburne pedigree at all; for no representative of the house, during the seven centuries of its existence, had ever succeeded in rearing more than three daughters beyond the age of thirteen years. In the pertinacity with which Mrs Prigley clung to her traditions, and in her total lack of curiosity as to the actual fact, she was but a type of uncritical humanity in general; yet the marvel is ever new how people can care at the same time so much about a particular subject, and so little—how they can feel interest enough to be never tired of repeating what they have heard, and yet not sufficient interest to make them take one step towards inquiry and investigation.

The Colonel, in a very kind and graceful manner, expressed his regret that such near relations

should have been separated for so long by an unfortunate dispute between their fathers. "I believe," he said, "that your side has most to forgive, since my father won the lawsuit, but surely we ought not to perpetuate ill-feeling, generation after generation." Mr Prigley said that no ill-feeling remained; but that though he had often wished to see Wenderholme and its owner, he knew that, as a rule, poor relations were liked best at a distance, and that not having hitherto had the pleasure of knowing Colonel Stanburne, he must be held excusable for having supposed him to be like the rest of the world. John Stanburne was not quite satisfied with this somewhat formal and dignified assurance, and was resolved to establish a more intimate footing before he left the parsonage. He exerted himself to talk about ecclesiastical matters and church architecture, and when Mr Prigley offered to show him the church, accompanied him thither with great apparent interest and satisfaction. The Doctor had patients to visit, and went his own way.

CHAPTER XIV.

COLONEL STANBURNE returned the same evening to Sootythorn on militia business, and on the following day the Doctor travelled in the same direction in his gig. When he came near Nanny Pickering's cottage he felt strongly tempted to go and have a little chat with that lady; not that he had anything very particularly interesting to talk about, but he was under some inciting influence, surely not that of the tender passion. The fact is, the Doctor wanted to smoke, and as there was rather a high wind, he had found it impossible to get a light on the open road.

Nanny was at home, and received her friend with exclamations of welcome and satisfaction. She asked after little Jacob, and heard with interest that he had returned to Twistle Farm. She would go and see him there, she said; she

had taken a great fancy and liking for the lad, as indeed did everybody who knew him.

The horses of medical men acquire a wonderful patience, and will stand perfectly still for an indefinite period. Dr Bardly's horse had this faculty in a very remarkable degree: it would stand for hours and hours, unconscious of the lapse of time; and its owner profited by this as often, I fear, for purposes of gossip as for strictly professional work—for he was a great gossip, and had the art of making himself agreeable to his patients of every order and degree.

The Doctor loved a joke, perhaps he loved it rather too much. His manner of jesting was eminently English; that is, the truly jocular element in a jest seemed to him to lie in the sufficiently frequent repetition of it. It is a part of the affectionate fidelity inherent in our national character to become attached to old jokes as to old friends, and the oftener we hear them the wittier they seem; so that in making a joke, the older it is, the surer is the jester of success, for it can but improve by time. We are just the same in our musical tastes also. We like an air that we have heard thousands of times; we like "God save the Queen" best because we have heard it oftenest, and the nearer an air approaches to

that one in the great quality of familiarity or *accustomedness*, the better its chances of finding favour in our ears.

Now the Doctor's joke with Nanny Pickering, as indeed with very many of his female friends, especially the oldest and ugliest of them, was that everlasting old joke about getting married; and it may be concluded as a matter of course that he returned to it on this occasion. The form given to the jest in this particular instance was, it must be admitted, a peculiarly dangerous one; for the Doctor—with a rashness and temerity which he afterwards saw reason to repent—did not merely joke upon the subject of matrimony in general, but more especially and particularly upon the possibility of a matrimonial alliance between himself and Nanny Pickering. She listened to him for some time in perfect silence, laughing low, and as it were to herself; then suddenly lifting up her eyes and laying her hand on the Doctor's arm, she said with the utmost possible earnestness, "It'll be reight, Doctor; we'll get wed."

The Doctor, in his astonishment, was going to utter I know not what exclamation, but Nanny, apprehensive of some answer unfavourable to her views, laid her hard hand across his lips, and

said, "Answer nothing for five minutes; give me just five minutes afore you speak, and you willn't repent of it after." The Doctor made a sign of acquiescence; and Nanny, proceeding towards the bed, ripped a hole in the mattress with a knife, and drew thence a bundle of bank-notes. She threw them on the Doctor's knee and said, "You count that there, while I seek summat elz." The Doctor mechanically began to count, and Nanny disappeared. She returned shortly with a canvas bag which, from the way the canvas was drawn into narrow little creases by the contents, evidently was extremely heavy. The Doctor soon found out how heavy it was when she laid it on his knee. It was full of gold.

Nanny disappeared again, and this time her absence was longer. By the time she came back the Doctor had counted fifteen hundred and twenty-five pounds in bank-notes, and eleven hundred and thirty-seven pounds in gold. He was literally stupefied. The jokes about Nanny Pickering's supposed wealth had always appeared to him, as the French newspapers say (with a happy mixture of metaphors), a noise denuded of all foundation. He had sincerely believed in the absolute penury of his friend, and now, behold, she was a rich woman! The Doctor was more sur-

prised at this discovery than anybody else would have been. The joke about Nanny's riches had become so general in Sootythorn and the neighbourhood, and had spread itself so widely in Shayton and the other villages, that people had ended by believing it, and Nanny, to her great alarm, became aware that her wealth was known. She now felt that neither her money nor her person was safe in the cottage where she had so long enjoyed uninterrupted peace. She had resolved to leave it and go elsewhere—whither, she knew not, but certainly out of the reach of this dangerous reputation for riches—a reputation which people in other ranks of life are so anxious to acquire, and struggle so painfully to preserve. Nanny Pickering loved her money, but she loved her life still more, and the publishing of her wealth had always seemed to her the sure forerunner of a bloody end. The Doctor's joke had suggested to her mind a realisable plan which would insure her for the future that protection and safety which she needed. She was tired of her lonely life—tired of standing sentinel over her treasure. She did not dare to leave it, and to remain with it was to incur fearful risks. The Doctor would be a good husband, she believed; and though there was, no doubt, a wide social distinction between

them, money was a powerful means of abolishing distinctions of that kind, and she had money.

She returned with other sacks of gold and other bundles of notes, and the sum total fell little short of seven thousand pounds.

“Why, Nanny,” said the Doctor, “and have you been losing the interest of all this money?”

“That’s what’s most plagued me,” said Nanny; “but I never durst go to a bank wi’ it for fear o’ folk knowin’, and I dunnot believe i’ banks—there were ever so many as lost their brass when Sooty-thorn bank broke. Banks breaks, Doctor—banks breaks.”

“Nanny,” said the Doctor, “old folk like you and me has nothing to do wi’ gettin’ wed; but if you’re tired o’ livin’ by yoursel’, I can see no reason why you shouldn’t live a deal more comfortably than you have been doing. If you were just to come and live in Shayton, and put your money out to interest, you’d be very well off, and perfectly safe beside.”

“Well, Doctor,” said Nanny, “we willn’t talk no more just at present about getting wed, but I want to be shut o’ this ’ere brass. It makes me as miserable as miserable now as folk knows on’t. Take it wi’ you—you’ve counted it, I reckon—take it and put it out to interest for me, and rent

me a bit of a house i' Shayton ; you shall pay me th' interest every quarter, an' I'st live on't."

The opportunity of escape was not to be lost, and the Doctor was not slow to seize upon it. "Good-bye, Nanny," said he ; "I'll do all I can for you." He looked out first to see that nobody was in sight, and as the road was quite clear, he carried the money-bags and the rolls of notes to his gig. When Nanny wished him good-bye, he rather dreaded some demonstration of affection, but she did no more than just press his hand in a rather tender manner. Perhaps she expected the Doctor to give her a kiss ; but if she did, I am ashamed to say that that ungrateful man and frigid lover disappointed her.

Instead of going to Sootythorn as he had intended, the Doctor turned back to Shayton, and got Nanny's money safe in his own house. He was not fit for much professional duty that day : he could think of nothing but this money, and the best way of disposing of it. He determined to consult Mr Jacob Ogden on the subject, and he could not have chosen better.

Mr Jacob was not so much astonished at Nanny Pickering's wealth as the Doctor had been. He knew so well how fortunes were made, and had been so much accustomed to observe the wonder-

ful results of extreme economy and constant accumulation, that it did not surprise him to hear of one of those instances of secret hoarding which he knew to be very common in the manufacturing districts. He proposed to purchase, first, a cottage for the capitalist herself at Shayton, and then to invest the remainder in good railway debentures. A nice little cottage was found not far from the Doctor's own residence, and Nanny was installed there in the course of a few days.

A remarkable alteration now became visible in Nanny's habit of life. She, who had always been hitherto the most miserly of women, asked the Doctor for a hundred pounds in ready money, and proceeded to furnish her cottage in a style of perfect comfort and decency. In her person also there was a change not less remarkable. She had been slovenly, and even dirty; she became one of the neatest and tidiest women in all Shayton. She never alluded to what had taken place between her and the Doctor. She never spoke of love; but the Doctor's mind was not at ease. He always feared that the subject might be renewed between them—his peace of mind was gone. He felt that in doing his duty as trustee, by her appointment, of the wealth committed to his keeping, he ought to go and see the lady oftener than

he did ; but there was a great fear on him every time he ventured near that tidy little cottage.

He did go there, however, sometimes, as in duty bound ; and on one of these occasions the lady invited him to tea. She kept a little maid-servant, and the tea was served in quite an unexceptionable manner. There were nice cups and saucers, there was a clean white tablecloth, and there were both tea-cakes and muffins, as well as plenty of buttered toast. Two fresh eggs were boiled for the Doctor, and slices of ham were fried for him. The Doctor would have been truly happy at the little festival if he had not dreaded some allusion to matrimony ; but the nearest hint upon which the lady ventured was this : she inquired what would be the annual income from her fortune, and on being informed that it would amount to £400, she expressed her resignation at being obliged to abandon her calling, whatever that mysterious profession may have been. She then asked the Doctor if he had any intention of giving up his own profession when he got older ; and when he replied that such a decision would be a question of money, Nanny simply inquired whether he thought £400 a - year would be enough for him to live upon. He answered that his present profits did not realise more.

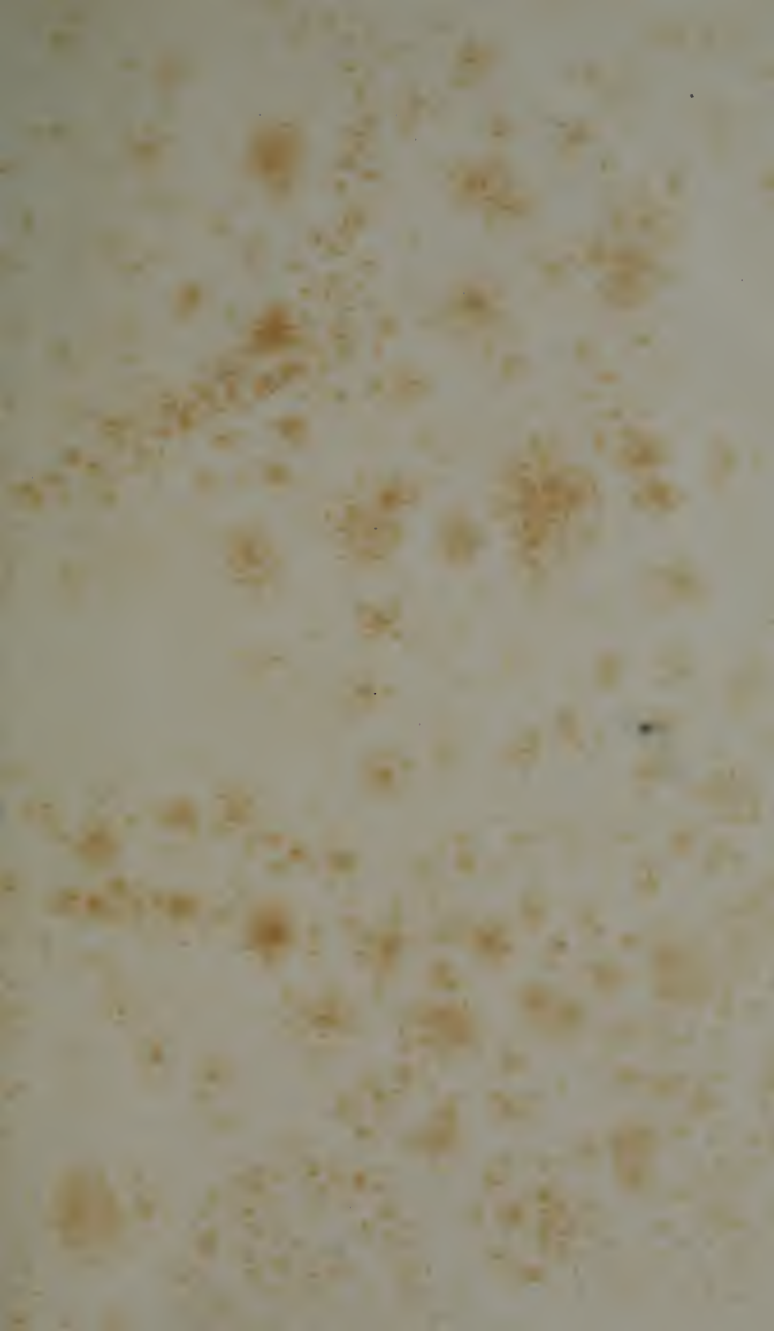
As Nanny made no allusion more direct than this, the Doctor's confidence gradually returned, and he went rather frequently to Nanny Pickering's. From time to time she consigned to his keeping various sums of money which had been due to her, and which considerably augmented her fortune. She really was a rich woman, and a most respectable woman too, in every way. She became quite a personage in Shayton, and began soon to have something like a position in society at her disposal, if she had chosen to avail herself of it.

It will be seen from the preceding narrative how even the great passion of avarice may yield to a passion still more mighty. Nanny Pickering, who, before she knew the Doctor, could not endure the idea of spending even what all consider necessary for the commonest human existence, now spent her money like a gentlewoman. The reader has already divined the good lady's policy. She has made up her mind that there shall be nothing repulsive about her; and if she cannot have the charms of youth and beauty, she will at least have the advantages attainable by her—she will at least be respectable.

She says nothing to alarm her victim; she simply lies in wait for him, that is all. Will he

yield at last, or will he resist unto the end? This, as yet, we know not; but time shall tell. A constant though gentle pressure is now operating on the Doctor's will, and yet he is not fully aware of it. He is as a fish that hardly knows whether the hook is in his mouth or not, so gentle is the pulling. Patience is the great merit of the angler, and this angler possesses it in the supreme degree. She will wait and wait, as long as ever it may be necessary to wait. The Doctor must go and pay her a visit occasionally—common civility commands it; and, besides, he has constituted himself her man of business, and must therefore see her from time to time. The Doctor discharges his duty with perfect exactness; but his conscience tells him that other duties remain which he does *not* discharge. Which of us, alas! is perfect at every point? In the best of characters there is ever some grievous shortcoming, some lamentable deviation and failure from the high standard of the right.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 046417975

