# OLIVE MORETON

BY MISS MULOCK

FRONTISPIECE

Cola relieves a fellow Countryman.

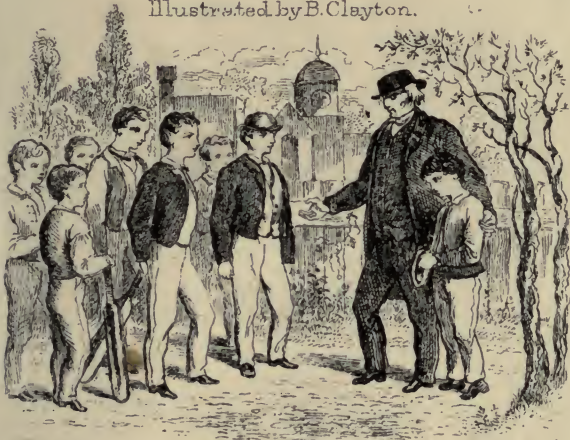
GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES.

# COLA MONTI:

## A TALE FOR BOYS,

BY THE AUTHOR OF JOHN HALIFAX GENTLEMAN;
RHODA'S LESSON. A LIFE FOR A LIFE; THE OGILVIES, ETC.

Illustrated by B. Clayton.



The New Pupil. Page.

LONDON
DEAN & SON LUDGATE HILL.

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# COLA MONTI;

## A Tale for Boys.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

NEW EDITION, REVISED.

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LONDON: DEAN & SON, LUDGATE HILL.

No one possessing common sensibility can read the book without a thoughtful brow and glistening eye.—Chambers Edinburgh Journal.

An exceedingly well told tale, which will instruct boys of all ages.—English Churchman.

# PREFACE

## TO THE REVISED EDITION.

In revising, after seventeen years, this, the second book she ever wrote, the author is fully aware of its faults;—faults of youth, inevitable and irremediable. Still, she is not ashamed of it. And she trusts it may even yet do some little good to some few boys—if only as illustrating a truth, which she believes in now as firmly as she did then—that "God helps those who help themselves."

# CHAPTER I.

## THE NEW PUPIL.

"HERE is a new schoolfellow for you, my boys," said Dr. Birch, as he entered the playground, where his "limited number of pupils" were assembled, leading by the hand the last addition to the flock.

Now Doctor Birch, in spite of his unfortunate name, was the very best of pedagogues. He was by no means an old man, for his doctor's honours had come very early upon him. A tall, awkward frame; a face which could look severe, and ugly too, at times, though it was very pleasant when he smiled; and an accent from which the strong Northumbrian burr never had vanished, spite of all his learning, complete the description of the good doctor.

The boy at his side was about twelve years old, at least you would have thought so by the face: but the figure was small, slight, and delicate. His clear skin, of a pale olive, had none of the ruddy glow which mantled on the cheeks of the other boys; and his large dark eyes wandered restlesly from one to the other of the frolicsome group, whose game of leap-frog had thus been interrupted.

"Now, boys, be kind and considerate to this little fellow," said Doctor Birch. "He has never been to school before, and he is a stranger. Never mind, my young friend, you'll soon get acquainted with them all," continued he, as he patted the child's crisp black curls, and strode off out of the play ground with his careless shambling gait.

The "little fellow" stood timidly in the midst of his new playfellows, who gathered round him like a swarm of bees.

"Well, young one!" said the biggest boy, the dux of the school, "now to business. "What's your name?"

"Niccolo Fiorentino del Monti."

"Eh! Nick what?" cried the inquirer, opening his eyes wide.

"Niccolo Fiorentino del Monti," repeated the new comer, drawing himself up with a slight gesture of pride; and dwelling on the soft liquid Italian syllables, as if he thought the name both honourable and beautiful.

All the boys set up a loud laugh.

"Why, what a strange fish of a foreigner the old doctor has caught!" cried one.

"My little fellow, we shall have to teach you English," said another, taking the child by the arm. But Niccolo angrily shook off the rough touch; and the warm Italian blood rushed to his dark cheek, as he answered with a foreign accent, but distinctly enough to be understood:

"Thank you, I can speak your tongue; my mother taught me: she came from your country."

"Oh! she was an Englishwoman, was she?" said Woodhouse, the dux, and in-

quisitor-general over all new boys. "And I suppose she married some poor Italian fiddler?"

"My father was no fiddler," answered Niccolo, his black eyes flashing fire. "He was a Count, and his family were princes once. They lived in a beautiful *palazzo;* my nurse Mona used to show me the walls. I come of the noble family of the Monti."

"Bravo! my little prince!" cried Morris, laughing immoderately. "And, pray, how happened it that your small lordship came over here?"

"Because my father died, and — But I will not answer any more questions: you are very cruel to me, you rude English boys, *ragazzacci Inglesi,*" answered the poor little fellow, falling back, in his distress, upon his own language.

"I suppose *rag* — what's the rest of it? —means *rascal;* and I should like to know how any imp of a foreigner dare call me 'rascal.' Mind what you're about, my

young prince," said Morris, flourishing his stick very near little Niccolo's head. The other boys looked on, not daring to interfere with one who, by his cleverness and fighting capabilities, had got to be dux in the schoolroom, and tyrant in the playground. At last, one of the latter comers, who did not stand so much in fear of him, took hold of Morris's arm.

"Come, come, Woodhouse, you are playing the same game with this young fellow that you did with me a month ago; and I must say it's rather cowardly, considering he is so small."

"Don't interfere, my lad," said the big boy, with a patronising air. "I am the king of the school, as you well know. You have not forgotten the thrashing I gave you, Archibald McKaye? Walk off, will you? and let me finish off this frog of a Frenchman."

"I am no Frenchman! I am an Italian! and that is far better than a great ugly bad Englishman, like you!" cried Niccolo,

boldly; ending his speech with a torrent of angry appellations in his native tongue.

Morris was now thoroughly getting into a passion; and the uplifted stick would have fallen heavily on the child's head, had not Archibald caught it, and turned it aside.

"Won't you hear reason, Morris, and let that boy alone?" he said.

"Hear reason! hear reason from you! you long, solemn-faced Scotch fellow, with a tongue as harsh as a crow! You preach reason to me! Get away, or I'll thrash you again!"

"Try!" said Archibald, quietly: while a faint murmur of "Shame! shame!" rose up from some of the boys; and Niccolo crept behind his brave defender, and peeped over McKaye's shoulder at the king of the school.

"Do you mean to say you'll fight me again?" said the latter, somewhat surprised at the boy's resolute attitude.

"Yes, if you don't treat this lad civilly.

I don't see why he should be bullied because he happens to be a foreigner, and a stranger."

"A *sthranger* indeed!" said Morris, mimicing Archibald's accent. "And so you intend to fight his battles, because he is a *sthranger*, like yourself?"

"Yes," again said Archibald. He was always a quiet boy, and one of few words. But there was a firmness and determination in his manner, that showed, when once roused, he was not soon willing to yield. The two lads took off their jackets, and prepared for a regular combat, schoolboy fashion, to settle the point, *vi et armis;* which seems the only way in which boys can settle their disputes, and will do as long as the world lasts. Before they commenced, McKaye turned round to the others.

"Now, fellows, you all see what I am fighting for: just doing for this youngster what some of you should have done for me when I came; instead of which, you all

set to work abusing me. Woodhouse beat me once; we'll see if he does this time: but either way, I have got the right on my side. Now, my lad, set to as soon as you like."

Archibald shook back his fair curling hair, threw his spare but active figure into a posture of defence; and looked what he was — a fine, bold young mountaineer, from the land of Wallace and of Bruce.

The boys formed the circle, and "Bravo, Morris!" "Try it again, Mac!" showed the deep interest they took in the combat. It was a trial of right against might; and many of those who had suffered from Morris's overbearing character were only deterred, by the doubtful issue of the battle, from showing how strongly they felt with the only one who had dared to oppose justice to tyranny.

Meanwhile the little Italian crept aloof, and wondered if all English welcomes were like this, and whether English boys always

fought in this fashion. The poor little fellow's thoughts went back to his own sunny garden, where he used to sleep away the day under the orange trees, with the clear sky of Rome above him, and his nurse besides him, with her soft Italian ditties, and her stories of the ancient glory of the Monti. Then he woke from this reverie to find himself in the dull playground, with its high walls shutting out everything but the cold grey English sky.

The fight terminated as fights do not always — the right won. Archibald's skill and steadiness were more than a match for Morris's weight and size — especially as he kept cool, and Morris lost his temper. The latter was laid prostrate on the ground. Half of the boys raised a cry of triumph and congratulation to the victor; the others, still too much afraid of their fallen enemy, maintained a doubtful silence. McKaye picked up his adversary, saw that he was not hurt, and then was well content to let

him retire with a few obsequious friends to wash his face, and remove all traces of the battle before meeting the doctor's eye.

"Your man has won, my little fellow," said one of the boys, clapping Niccolo on the shoulder. "O be joyful! you're safe now from Morris Woodhouse. Mac has fought it out for you. Are you not much obliged to him?"

"I am, indeed I am," cried the young Italian; and, warm and impassioned in all his impulses, he ran to Archibald, seized his hand, kissed it, and poured forth a stream of grateful thanks.

But Archibald, turning very red, drew his hand away: he saw the other boys beginning to laugh, and a natural shyness caused him to dislike being made the subject of such passionate gratitude.

"There, that will do, my boy; you need not say so much; I only fought for you because you were too little to fight for yourself. Only mind not to vex Morris another time."

The warm-hearted Italian shrunk back, with the tears standing in his eyes. He did not speak to McKaye again until the dinner-bell had rung, and all the other boys had rushed into the house. Archibald stayed behind, rubbing the mud from his jacket, when Niccolo crept up to him, and offered to assist.

"What, little one, is that you?" said McKaye. "Come, then; you may as well help to set me to rights again."

"I should have come before, but that I thought you were angry with me."

"Angry! Oh, no! Only I did not quite like being made a fool of before the boys with your kissing my hand. We don't do it here: but I suppose it was only your Italian fashion."

"I cannot do anything right," sighed the poor child. "Ah! England is a strange place. I shall never be happy here."

"Oh, but you will in time, when you have got accustomed to us all. I had to go through just the same; for I am a

stranger, like you, as, I dare say, you heard Morris say. The mean fellow, he is always taunting me with my country and my tongue, as if a Scotsman were not as good as an Englishman every inch: ay, and better too," said Archibald, compressing his lips, and clenching his hands, in ill-concealed indignation. "But, come, little fellow; this does not much interest you, so we'll go in to dinner."

"I am afraid," murmured Niccolo, shrinking back.

"Pshaw! What are you afraid of? Morris won't eat you. Come."

But the child still hung back, and at last burst into tears.

"Oh, I wish I were in my own dear Italy! I am so miserable," he sobbed. "Oh that I could go home!"

There was something in the boy's desolate condition that touched Archibald's heart. He thought of his far-off home, which he dearly loved, and felt compassion for the poor Italian thus alone in a strange

land. He laid his hand on Niccolo's shoulder, and his tones lost their schoolboy roughness, and became as gentle as any girl's.

"Do'nt cry, there's a good fellow, do'nt now! I'll take care of you. We are both strangers here; and we'll both fight our way together. Come, we shall be excellent friends, I know."

Niccolo dried his tears, and looked gratefully in the face of the elder boy.

"There, now, that's right," said McKaye. "And be a man, do! Nobody's good for anything that isn't a real man! Cheer up, my wee fellow. And, by the bye, what shall I call you? I'll never remember that long, fine sounding name of yours."

The other smiled. "My nurse used to call me Nicoletto, and Nicolettino. Is that too long?"

Archibald shook his head: "I am afraid it is. Besides, the boys will laugh at it, and call you Nick, and Old Nick; but you don't understand this I see," added he,

laughing. "Well, can't you think of another name? You seemed to have plenty of names to spare."

"My father always called me Cola; and I like that name best too."

"Cola, Cola. Aye, that will do very well. And now, friend Cola, let me give you one piece of advice: Say as little as you can about your father the count, and the princes your ancestors, and all that sort of thing; you will only get laughed at for it here. I think I have myself as long a pedigree as most people, and am rather proud of it too; but I never talk about it; and you had better do the same. That is the first thing for you to remember; and I'll tell you a few other things by and bye. Now let us go in to dinner."

## CHAPTER II.

### AT SCHOOL.

It is astonishing what an effect one good example has sometimes. When Cola, as we shall henceforth call him, was again left in the power of his new schoolmates, during the hour between supper and bed-time, no one attempted to ill-treat him, or ventured more than a few harmless jokes at his queer accent and manners. True, these jokes were very annoying to the boy, who was alike proud and shy, and had been brought up as the only son of a noble family, always treated with respect. More than once he looked appealingly at his protector McKaye; but Archibald seemed not disposed to extend his championship further than was absolutely required. He

quietly left Cola to make his own way with the boys, and find his own level; which was indeed the wisest course for both the protector and the protected.

Morris Woodnouse sat sullenly aloof. His authority had been shaken for the first time, and he felt proportionably humbled. The "king of the school" trembled on his throne. Some few stings of conscience mingled with his vexation; for Morris was not on the whole a bad boy, only he had that love of power which seems inherent in the nature of boys and men, and often degenerates into the most insufferable tyranny. Yet there were some few in the school who rather liked him than otherwise; for he had in him a careless generosity, and, moreover, being a rich man's son, had wherewithal to exercise it. The lovers of cake and playthings always stood by Morris Woodhouse; and those quiet-tempered boys who would give way to anybody, declared that he was a tolerably good fellow, so long as you did not con-

tradict him. These gathered round their fallen master, and made a little conclave, while the more sturdy and independent sided with McKaye. Thus the school bade fair to become divided into two distinct factions. So engrossing was this warfare that nobody thought of playing off on young Cola the usual tricks which mark the reception of the "new boy." Consequently the Italian crept into his bed without finding the blankets sewed up, or a furze bush for his bed-fellow, or any of those agreeable contrivances for making a new-comer as miserable as possible, which usually take place on the first night at school.

It was a great and painful change to the young foreigner, from the pleasant southern home, of which he dared not speak, to the restraints of an English school. The long hours of study were irksome to him beyond expression; more especially as he then felt acutely his own ignorance. His class-fellows were the

very youngest boys; and Cola's idle and desultory habits seemed to forebode that it would be a long time before he got above them. Every day he cried over the easiest lessons; and then the other boys laughed at him, and his hot southern blood boiled over, and he got into battles without end.

Sometimes, in his distress, Cola would go to his old friend Archibald. But McKaye had lessons enough of his own; though diligent and hardworking, he was not a quick boy, and it annoyed him to be disturbed.

"Get some one else to help you, Cola," he would say. "Why don't you go to Morris? He always does his work quickly, and has plenty of time to spare."

But Cola would rather have endured Dr. Birch's cane every day of his life, than have been indebted to Morris for anything under the sun. All the fierce hatred of his Italian nature was concentrated against the boy who had first insulted him. Long after the feud had been healed, and the

result of Archibald's battle only remained in the better behaviour of Woodhouse towards his schoolmates, Cola nourished wrath in secret, and lost no opportunity of showing it.

And with these bad feelings were united others, which might almost be said to take their rise in the best emotions of his nature. The more Cola loved Archibald the more he hated Morris. These two boys seemed made to be rivals in everything. McKaye's steady perseverance kept pace with Morris's talents; and while the latter was first in the class, Archibald always contrived to be second. The same rivalry extended to the playground, where Woodhouse for the first time found an opponent equal in strength and activity to himself. Strange to say, while the whole school was divided by partisanship, the two leaders got on very well together; and though rivals, bore no personal dislike to each other. The reason of this was probably because McKaye was what boys call,

"a quiet sort of a fellow," who did not much care to get the upper hand, provided he was not trampled upon; and moreover, because Morris's natural good temper was not proof against the frank open way in which this war of emulation was carried on by Archibald.

But all this did not hinder the others from many a "row" on the subject of their two companions; for there is nothing boys like so well as fighting. They must fight; for a good cause, a bad cause, and no cause at all. And of all these young belligerents, Cola Monti was the warmest. Every triumph of Archibald over Morris gave him the keenest satisfaction; every wrong done to his friend, he felt like an insult to himself. Passionate in all his emotions, the Italian would have done anything in the world to injure Morris, or to serve Archibald.

McKaye took all this torrent of affection with the quietness of his nature. It was pleasant to find all his books arranged, his

room in order; and his garden attended to. Now and then he thanked his little friend with a good-humoured smile and a kindly word. But all the under-currents of the young Italian's feelings were quite incomprehensible to him: indeed he never sought to penetrate them.

Thus the half-year passed, and the midsummer holidays drew near, with the examination, which formed the grand epoch at Dr. Birch's establishment. So important indeed was it, that we must give it a new chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### COLA MONTI'S REVENGE.

"At what are you working away so hard, Archy?" whispered Cola to his friend, as he came into the schoolroom, in the dusk of the evening, and found McKaye in the midst of his books, trying to make the most of what little light there was. "Do come; we are having such a capital game at prisoners'-base."

"I can't! really I can't! Now do go away, there's a good lad, and leave me to finish this Greek exercise. You know it is for the examination to-morrow."

"I thought you had done all your work?"

"Yes, this is the last page of the

book: I must finish it. Here, fetch me that Lexicon, and be off with you to play!"

Cola brought the book: but instead of going away, he sat down quietly on a form opposite, and watched the anxious countenance of Archibald, who was at work so hard, that he hardly seemed to notice his presence.

"It's no use, I can see no longer, and my head aches badly enough," McKaye said at last, throwing himself back, despondingly.

"How much have you left undone?" said Cola.

"Only one line: I can do that to-morrow morning."

"Then come out and play?"

But Archy stretched himself wearily on the bench. "No, no! I am so tired; and my head is quite stupid with thinking about to-morrow. I wonder, Cola, how I shall stand at this Greek examination! There's Forster, and Williams, and Campion."

"They are all below you, as every one acknowledges."

"Yes, all but Morris Woodhouse. Ah! he is sure to get the best: he is so clever. And yet, I have worked so hard; and I did want to gain the Greek prize: it would please my father very much. Well, well, it cannot be helped."

Cola, as he sat in the twilight, clenched his small hands, and knitted his brows; the very idea of Morris's gaining such a triumph was scarcely endurable. "Archy," said he, "how do you know that? how can you be sure that Morris will get it?"

"Because the doctor is so particular about Greek exercises, and Woodhouse's are always so good: that will be the turning point, as all the boys say."

And just at this moment, the quiet schoolroom was entered by a troop of merry lads, riotous with the prospect of approaching holidays.

"What, not done yet, McKaye!" cried one.

"I've done all my work!" "And I!" "And I!" echoed several others.

"Now for it, let us see which is the best, Morris or McKaye!" said another boy, pulling about the Greek books. "Here's McKaye's exercise. Now, Morris, let's have yours."

"I have a good deal to do at mine yet," answered Morris, carelessly.

"Ah! that's just like you! you always leave everything to the last."

"Because nothing gives me any trouble. I can do in five minutes what would take McKaye an hour," said Woodhouse, with a smile of conscious superiority, which made Archy bite his lips in vexation, and brought a throng of violent feelings to the bosom of Cola, the more so as it was literally true.

"Well, well! out with your exercise-books, and let us compare them," was the universal cry.

So hard had McKaye worked, that, as far as the boys could judge, there was

little to choose between the two, especially in the point which struck their attention most, and about which they knew the doctor was very particular — the clearness and distinctness of the Greek characters, and the neatness of the whole.

"Well — except that Woodhouse is the dux, and has been longest at school, I should think the doctor would be puzzled to decide," acknowledged Forster, one of Morris's own adherents: "it's 'neck and neck,' as the jockeys say."

"But Morris's exercise is not done yet," interposed one on McKaye's side. "If he should fail, you are sure of the prize, Archy."

"Don't trouble yourselves, my lads," said Morris, loftily: I am quite satisfied about the matter myself."

"Well, take your books, fellows, and let us leave the affair to the doctor," observed one of the wisest of the group, who saw that the discussion was likely to become warm.

"I shall leave mine here, and get up half an hour earlier than usual to finish it," said Morris, tossing the exercise book down carelessly and walking away, the very picture of self-satisfaction. He had too good an opinion of his own merits to feel any anxiety about his success. While McKaye spent the evening until bedtime, in arranging his books, and poring over everything with pale and anxious looks, his rival laughed and whistled, and betted on the different competitors beneath him, with the most perfect self-confidence.

There were many sleepless eyes that night in the various dormitories where the doctor's young flock were ranged. Each had a tiny room to himself, so that all conversation on the one grand subject ceased with the time of retiring to rest; otherwise the important matter of the examination might have been talked over until daylight.

But of all these restless young hearts, none beat so violently as that of Cola.

Gifted by nature with a quality peculiar to his countrymen, — one which in a good cause is called acuteness, in a bad one, cunning, — the Italian revolved within his mind every conceivable plan for effecting the downfall of his enemy, and the consequent triumph of his friend. Accustomed from his childhood to hear revenge talked of as a virtue, especially when exercised on behalf of one both dear and injured, Cola never thought for a moment that he was doing anything wrong in thus scheming. When at last he hit upon a plan which seemed likely to serve his purpose, he leaped out of bed and danced about for joy, so that the wakeful Archibald called to him from the next room to know what was the matter.

As soon as day began to peep, Cola rose, dressed himself, and crept noiselessly down to the schoolroom. It cost him a world of pains to unfasten the shutters without making any sound to disturb the family: but he succeeded. Then he

hunted in the dim light for the exercise-books which had been left the night before; and seizing Morris's, he jumped out of the low window, and ran like lightning through the garden, to a paddock belonging to the house, where there was a small pond.

The young conspirator had laid his plans with a skill and ingenuity worthy of an older head. He found a heavy stone, took some strong twine out of his pocket, and carefully fastened the stone and the book together; then he deliberately sank them both to the bottom of the pond.

As Cola saw the book disappear, he clapped his hands and set up a shout of delight. If it had been poor Morris himself, instead of his exercise-book, that had sunk beneath the deep waters, the revengeful boy would almost have done the same.

"Archibald, *caro, carissimo mio,*" he murmured in his Italian tongue, which he invariably used when excited, "it is for you, all for you!"

And then a rustling in the bushes, pro-

bably of some early bird, startled him; he fled back to the house, carefully fastened every thing just as he had found it, and crept into bed again, just as the first sunshine of a midsummer morning lighted up his room.

Morris, with his usual heedlessness, did not rise until there were but a few minutes left of the half-hour which he had allowed himself to finish the exercise. Then the book, of course could not be found. He searched everywhere, he blamed everybody, — except himself, — but all to no purpose. Some of the most good-natured of the boys helped him to look for the missing book; but others only jested with him; and not a few felt inwardly glad that his self-assurance was thus brought low.

Meanwhile, Cola stood silent and aloof, his triumphant eye alone showing how keen was his delight in the scene. Only once he crept quietly up to Archibald, who sat finishing the last line of his task, without taking heed of what was going on.

"Archy, dear Archy!" whispered he; "do you hear? you will win now. Are you not glad?"

"Hush!" said McKaye, when he comprehended the state of affairs. "Don't be so ungenerous, Cola." And he went up to Morris, and tried to assist in the search; but the other repulsed him angrily.

"Don't come here with your sanctified face," cried Woodhouse, "I know you are glad, heartily glad; as I should be, if I were in your place. Be off with you!"

Archibald's face flushed, and he turned back. If Cola had then asked him, "Are you glad!" it would have been harder to answer, "No."

The breakfast-bell rang, and all was over with poor Morris, for immediately afterwards the examination began. There was no hope for the unfortunate dux in Doctor Birch's angry brow: the schoolmaster at once attributed the loss of the book to carelessness, Morris's one unconquerable fault. It annoyed him; for

he was proud of his clever pupil, whom he had expected to do credit to the school. But there could be no doubt that the prize was justly McKaye's.

"It might have been yours still, even had Woodhouse not lost his book," said the candid master, as he examined the carefully written tasks before him. "You have done very well, McKaye, and deserve your prize,—that is, to a certain extent; but I wish the contest could have been quite on fair ground."

"Are you not happy now?" whispered the little Italian to his friend, when McKaye went away with his prize. "Look at Morris: see, he is white with rage. Oh how glad I am he is beaten at last! Are you not glad, Archy?"

There was a look on McKaye's face that was not like perfect happiness. He was alike too honest and too proud to be quite contented with a doubtful triumph, a success on sufferance. And when the boys gathered round to see his prize, there was

a jeering smile in the countenances of some of Morris's friends, that vexed Archy much. He answered Cola rather roughly —

"Don't teaze me, Cola. I am not glad; and revenge is very dishonourable. I don't want to be talked to. Do run away and play. You see all the rest are going."

Cola looked at him with a mixture of surprise, anger, and wounded feeling; but he did not speak until they were both alone in the schoolroom. Then he said,—

"You are angry, you send me away; and yet you do not know what I have done for you."

"Nonsense, my boy: I think you are more pleased at being revenged on Morris, than at my getting the prize."

Cola drew up his slight small figure, and a world of passionate feeling flashed from his dark, brilliant, Italian eyes.

"You are right, Archy. I am glad to be revenged: every one is — in my country. If I had had Morris in Rome, I a man,

and he too; we would have fought, and I would have killed him."

Archibald turned away in disgust. His calm temperament felt only horror at finding such notions in a boy so young. "I tell you what, Cola: if you do not take care, you will come to be hanged."

"Hanged!" cried the excited boy. "And you, Archy, you talk so, when I did it all for your sake?"

"All! What?"

"I was determined you should have the prize, and not Morris; so I tied a stone to the book, and sank it in the pond."

"Sank it in the pond? How dared you do such a thing? Are you not ashamed of yourself."

"Not in the least. I loved you, and I hated him; so I did what was right, and I got what I wanted."

Archibald, utterly confounded by the boy's confession, and by the sudden revulsion it occasioned, sank down on a seat, and remained for several minutes without

uttering a word. It was a trying position for the poor boy to be placed in. He had struggled so hard to win this prize, he knew that he deserved it; and yet every honourable feeling rebelled against keeping that which had been gained by a mean trick. Then, on the other hand, if he declared the truth, it would heap disgrace and punishment upon Cola, who had erred chiefly through love of him. While Archibald's reason condemned the act, his heart whispered that it was not so bad after all. No one would ever know it; it would please his father so much to see the bright silver inkstand, as a token of his son's diligence. While McKaye's thoughts took this turn, he lifted up his eyes to the so-longed-for treasure: they rested on the doctor's favourite motto, which he had caused to be engraved on it —

"*Ante omnia veritas:*" "Truth above all things." It went to the boy's heart with conviction irresistible.

"It is of no use, I cannot keep it," cried he; and without another look at his prize, he rushed out of the room. Cola heard his steps along the hall, his tremulous knock at the doctor's study door, and felt that all was over. The plan of revenge had failed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DETECTION.

In the afternoon the boys were startled from their holiday sports by a general summons to Dr. Birch's study. All went with considerable surprise: Cola in fear, anger, and mortification. For a long time he could not believe that Archibald had really betrayed him; and in his ardent nature, the feeling of wounded affection almost overpowered his hatred towards Morris.

"Young gentlemen," said the schoolmaster, in his gravest tones, "I have sent for you to speak about a story which has reached my ears, concerning the Greek prize. You all know it was given to Archibald McKaye, in consequence of

Morris Woodhouse's book having been lost; thereby leaving Archibald, as second boy, the sole competitor. Now McKaye, with an honesty and generosity which I am sure you will respect as much as I do, tells me that the book was lost intentionally; in fact, taken by another schoolfellow, who desired to injure Woodhouse. The name of this boy McKaye has entreated me not to enquire: nor do I wish to know; not for the sake of the culprit, but out of regard to the generous scruples of Archibald. Now, young gentlemen, what I wish to say is this: that as honesty justice, and truth, are above all things, I have accepted McKaye's resignation of his prize. Although it cannot be given to Woodhouse, it will remain in my hands for competition at the next half-year. And as to the unknown culprit, who stands among you, I make no enquiries, leaving him to the reproaches of his own conscience. But I shall carefully watch the conduct of every one of you; and

wherever I find cause, shall visit with the severest punishment."

This speech, the longest that Doctor Birch was ever known to make, was listened to in dead silence: the boys looked at one another in wonder and suspicion.

"I did not do it, sir!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" cried several of them.

"Silence!" answered the master's sonorous voice. "I want no confessions, I accuse no one; but I wish all of you to know, and Woodhouse especially, how much I respect McKaye; and how I consider such an act as this far more creditable to him than winning a Greek prize. Now, gentlemen, retire."

The boys were about to obey, when a knock came to the study-door: it was a lad from the village, who said he had something to communicate to the Doctor.

"Very well. Go out, young gentlemen," said the schoolmaster.

"Please, sur," interposed the lad, grinning, "it's about them I comed to speak.

One on'em has lost a book, I reckon; I've found it." And he laid on the table, still fastened to the stone, and thoroughly saturated with water, the very exercise-book — Morris's — which every one knew well.

Cola trembled like an aspen, and could have wished to sink through the floor — anywhere out of the doctor's piercing eye, which, in his excited fancy, seemed to single him out as the guilty one. In the fervour of his gratitude he had crept up to Archibald; and now, in his alarm, he hid himself behind the sturdy frame of his friend.

"Where did you find this, young man?" was the doctor's inquiry.

"At the bottom of the pond in your field, sur. I was there this morning, bird-nesting, please your honour, which I hope you won't take ill, as I didn't mean any mischief."

"Go on," said the doctor.

"And there I seed one of your young gentlemen coming with something in his

hand; and he tied it to a stone and flung it into the water. Then he talked some gibberish, and scampered off. I thought somehow he might be mad, so I fished the bundle up again, and brought it here."

The doctor gravely untied the string, and found it to be indeed the lost book. "Are you sure that it was one of the young gentlemen at my house?"

"Aye, sur, sure enough; for there he is," cried the lad; and his finger pointed out Cola.

Boiling with anger, the Italian rushed at the village-lad, and shook his tiny fist in his face.

"Poor young gentleman!" said the fellow. "I were sure he were gone mad."

Nobody else stirred, until Archibald went up to the master, and said, in a trembling voice: —

"Oh, sir, since chance has caused you to find out this, pray remember your kind promise, and do not punish Cola. He is disgraced enough."

"He is indeed," said Doctor Birch, as he saw how all the boys had moved away from Cola, and "sneak," "cheat," "pitiful fellow," were murmured on every side.

"It now only remains to decide about the prize," added the schoolmaster, as he examined, as well as he could, the wet leaves of the book.

"Let Morris have it, sir, of course," said Archibald; and the boys, generally, seconded the request. But Morris declined.

"I'll do as the doctor pleases, but really I'd rather not take it. We'll have another try next half, Archy. You are a regular good fellow, and I'm very much obliged to you: shake hands!" And he gave his former rival such a hearty gripe that it made Archibald's eyes water.

"Gentlemen," at last said Doctor Birch, "the inkstand shall be given to nobody; but shall be placed on the school-room mantle-piece, as a memento and a warning to you all."

"Bravo, that's quite right; thank you,

sir," cried the boys, hardly restrained by the sacred atmosphere of the doctor's study, from expressing their feelings in a downright schoolboy hurrah.

"Stay a moment, boys," said the pedagogue, in his sympathy, relaxing for a moment from the air of gravity which he always thought it necessary to assume in his study. Then resuming his severe look, he called, "Niccolo Monti."

Trembling, crimson and pale by turns, the boy moved to his master's chair. His anger had sunk into the deepest shame and sorrow.

"Niccolo Monti," said the doctor, "if I were to punish you, I should break my word, which I never do; and besides, I should inflict pain upon that good honest boy, McKaye. Your only excuse is, that you did this partly out of affection for him. But in any case, deceit is a sin, and revenge is one still greater. You have escaped punishment; but I command you to ask pardon of Morris

Woodhouse for having so shamefully injured him."

The angry spirit of old shone in Cola's eyes, and he stood immoveable. But Morris, whose unlooked-for success had softened his heart, showed a kindness and generosity that astonished every one.

"Come, Cola," he said, "you need not ask my pardon; I am not at all vexed with you now; you are only a little fellow compared with me; you could not do me much harm. I'll treat you better in future; and then perhaps you won't hate me so much. Shake hands, will you?"

And another of Morris's rough grasps was bestowed on his younger adversary. It touched Cola's quick feelings more than any punishment.

"Thank you, Morris," said he, in a low remorseful tone, and then rushed upstairs and shut himself up in his own little room.

## CHAPTER V.

### HOLIDAYS AT SCHOOL.

It was a fortunate thing for Cola that, immediately after the examination which had brought him to such shame, his school-fellows dispersed for the holidays. The only two who were to remain at Doctor Birch's, were those whose homes were so far distant, Archibald and Cola. To the former it was a sore disappointment, when he received the news that another year must pass before he would again see Scotland. He had longed so after it, as the summer grew; and many a time had he talked to Cola and his other play-mates, of all the sports he expected, mountain rambles, shooting, and fishing; and galloping over the free heather on his little

Shetland pony. Poor Archibald! and he had to give up all this for a month spent in the formality and dullness of Doctor Birch's academy, to which he had been sent by a rich English uncle. But his own father was a poor Highland laird. The journey north was an impossible expense; and he was well aware that the dear mother whose pride he was, and the gentle sister, who longed to hear "English news" from brother Archy, would be as disappointed as himself. So he tried to forget it, and to look quite contented, when the rest of the boys were merrily going home.

Every one seemed sorry to leave him, and Morris Woodhouse, as he galloped off with his father's groom behind him, said he would soon come and fetch his former rival to spend a day or two with him at Westwood Park. Archibald thought this promise was not likely to be fulfilled; but he thanked Morris, and felt glad that at all events there was no enmity between them now. And then, when all the boys

were gone, McKaye went back to the deserted schoolroom. It looked dull and dark and miserable.

"Four long weeks in this place! whatever shall I do with myself?" sighed Archibald.

His sighs were echoed from the darkest corner; and there, crouched down out of sight, sat poor Cola. No one had noticed or spoken to him. He felt thoroughly desolate; and when he lifted up his head, there were the marks of two large tears down his cheeks. Archy saw that there was one person in the world more miserable than himself. With sudden impulse, he went up to the boy.

"Come, Cola, my lad! brighten up! I am not going home neither. But since it cannot be helped, we must try to make ourselves content. I am sure my mother is very sorry not to see me; and I dare say yours is too."

"No! she is not!" cried Cola, passionately. "She does not want me to come to her, and I don't wish to go."

Archibald looked somewhat surprised. "I thought that you were very fond of your mother, as all good boys ought to be."

"Yes: but I hate her now, because she has gone and married a stranger with a horrible Russian name; and she says I must not come home. Home! I have none now! Oh, if I could only meet that man she has married! Do you know what we do in Italy to those whom we hate, and who have injured us?"

"Give them a horsewhipping!" suggested Archibald.

"No!" cried Cola, with his eyes glaring. "But we wait quietly, in the night, and stab them, and throw them into the river. That was what my great grandfather —"

"Then your great grandfather was a very wicked man: and I will not have anything to say to you, if you talk in that way, you little ruffian!" said Archy, as he walked away.

Cola was softened in a moment. His

angry mood changed. He took Archibald's hand, and promised to think no more of such things. Then McKaye spoke to him quietly and gravely on the wickedness of revenge. First, as being a great sin; and also as bringing its own punishment upon the head of the avenger himself.

"Cola," said he, "I'll tell you a story which my father once told me, when I had been wishing to have my revenge on a fellow who spoiled my fishing-rod on purpose to vex me. There was once a bad man, who hated almost every body, except an only son, of whom he was very fond. Well, he had one enemy, whom he hated most of all, for some injury done many years ago; and one day he laid wait for him behind a hedge, to shoot him; but just as he cocked the pistol, it caught in the hedge, and went off. And who do you think it killed? Not his enemy; but his own son, who was walking quietly along the road. And so, said my father, when he had told me this, 'never wish for

revenge! for, depend upon it, the punishment always comes.'"

Cola turned pale. Archy had not said anything about the incident of the book: but the Italian knew that it was in his mind; and he felt ashamed at having again shown the evil feeling that was so deeply rooted in his mind. Archibald saw that his words were not thrown away; and, willing to change the current of the boy's thoughts, he proposed that they should stroll down the village: and off they set together.

It was strange to observe how much the calm and equable temper of McKaye influenced the impulsive disposition of Cola. Though opposite in many things, they seemed to agree, as Foster, the wit of the school, observed, "like a dove-tailed joint." The one bond of union was probably, as Archibald had at first said, in their both being strangers. But now being left quite alone, their characters blended and harmonized; and their pur-

suits necessarily grew much the same. Their characters, also, became mutually improved. Cola's warm openheartedness tempered Archibald's reserve; and Mc Kaye's steady good sense guided the wild impetuosity of the younger boy.

The two friends contrived to spend the holiday time without half the dullness they expected. There were the long rambles in the fields, where Archibald, country-born and country-bred, showed to Cola many wonders, of which the boy never dreamed in his stately *palazzo* at Rome; the quiet sunny afternoons spent over some pleasant book, which the elder read, and explained wherever Cola's imperfect English failed; the garden stroll in the twilight, a time for confidential walks and talks about many subjects, which had been almost forbidden in the school at large, so terrible is ridicule to boys. But now Cola ventured to talk about his old home, and his nurse Mona, and all the wonders of beautiful Rome, especially its pictures and

its statues. Upon these the enthusiastic boy dwelt with an earnestness which would have shown to a more acute observer than Archibald the bias of his mind, though still so young.

But though McKaye did not enter into all Cola's feelings, he felt a natural curiosity to hear about far countries; and was interested and pleased in listening to his young companion. After a while, Cola even took courage to talk about the subject which had excited the mirth of his schoolfellows; and many a tale did he tell Archibald, of the ancient honours of the Monti family. The boy was a true Italian even in his pride. In this, McKaye felt most sympathy with the "little fellow," (as he still called the small-limbed delicate boy,) for he was proud enough himself — like most Scotchmen. Many an hour was spent over such talk by the two boys; so different, and yet alike; for each — one in his Northern, the other in his Southern home — had been brought up in equal

solitude, with ideas of life and of the world more speculative than real.

Still, in all these conversations, the difference of character showed itself. While Cola recounted with delight the history of those great men who had, either as soldiers, statesmen, or poets, shed a glory on their ancient name, Archibald spoke of those sterling honest men, in whom Scottish records abound, who had fought for the right, either with hand or tongue, or pen, or perhaps all three; and of those others, born in lower rank, who had worked their way to success solely by their own energy and strength of purpose.

"After all," Archibald would say, when they had held a long discussion on this topic, "I don't know but that to set to work for oneself, and rise to be something great on one's own account, is better than having a long string of dead ancestors."

So spoke Archibald's good common sense; but it was hardly to be expected that two such young heads should settle

clearly a point which has puzzled many a wise and greyhaired one.

However, with all this talk, Cola and Archy passed the holidays without any quarrelling, and with very little dulness. Once the Italian was left to his own resources, for Morris actually remembered his promise, and came to fetch his old foe to visit him. But, somehow, McKaye never felt quite comfortable in the large splendid house; perhaps his pride fancied that there was a good deal of ostentation in his schoolfellow's hospitality, and he returned with pleasure to school, and to Cola's joyful welcome.

Thus almost before they thought the month had gone by, the holidays were over: the Doctor came back from his London trip, and by degrees all his young flock were gathered around him. School-business began again; there were some new faces, and there was much for the old pupils to hear and relate; so that Cola and the exercise book were entirely for-

gotten. A great change had come over the boy: he had learned to think and to reason, whereas before his only guides were his feelings. He had acquired a measure of self-control, and in every way was different from the "new boy," who, six months before, had been by turns abused and ridiculed. In short, as Archy told him, he was growing to be "a man."

## CHAPTER VI.

### SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS OF COLA AS A CARICATURIST.

When Cola Monti had been a year at Dr. Birch's, he had contrived to make for himself a good position in the school. He had not fought his way to this, as most boys are obliged to do, never being good at fighting; but he had gained it by his quick talents, his readiness to oblige, and his frank, cheerful temper. True, all these good qualities did not shine forth at once; but brightened by degrees. When his laziness was once conquered, the boys, aye, and Dr. Birch too, found out that the little foreigner bade fair to be quite as clever as Morris Woodhouse. And when, no longer repressed by ill-usage, his naturally blithe temper showed itself, the rest acknow-

ledged that there was not a merrier fellow in the school than Cola Monti.

In time he became universally liked, even more so than his steady friend Archibald. Every one respected the sensible, persevering, honest Scottish boy; but all chose the merry Cola for a playmate or a confidant. Archibald looked on all this, and felt right glad. He liked Cola heartily; and the regard he had shown to the poor friendless boy remained constant to the pet of the school. And it was requited by Cola with the most unbounded affection. General favourite as he now was, he never forgot the old times when Archy was his only defender; and perhaps McKaye too thought, with a little justifiable self-complacency, that he had himself been the first upholder and counsellor of the boy who had now so many friends.

One day, Cola's schoolfellows made a discovery, which raised the young Italian at once to the height of popularity.

"What are you about, King Cole?" said Forster, trying to peep over his slate: *Cola*, by a natural school-boy transition, had degenerated into this nickname, which was thought most ingenious and applicable to such "a merry old soul" as the little Italian. "You have not done your sums yet?"

"Oh, yes, I have!" answered Cola. "I'm only amusing myself now."

"Let me see?"

"Wait a minute, and you shall," he whispered; "that is, as soon as the Doctor has left the school-room."

And that very desirable event having taken place, Cola turned the slate round, and showed Forster a capital caricature of himself. Indeed, so like was it as to features, that, but for the irresistibly comical expression, it could hardly be called a caricature, Forster being a remarkable ugly boy, though his good temper and wit atoned for his plainness.

There was a general burst of laughter

and applause; for we all like to quiz one another, though it is a different matter when the joke is directed against one-self. However, Forster stood it out as well as he could.

"Bravo, King Cole! you're a dangerous fellow," cried he. "Come, try your hand again; give us a specimen of Jacob Lee."

"Stand up, Lee, and let him see you," was the cry; and Jacob, a shy, stupid boy, with a long nose and lanky hair, was placed to be sketched, amid shouts of laughter. Another and another followed: heads of all kinds were added, each minute garnishing the long rule-of-three sum with curious marginal oddities. At last Cola grew more daring.

"Stand off, boys," he said, "and I'll draw the old Doctor for you."

This was irresitible; and when the Doctor stood out in relief from the slate, in all his peculiarities,—his stiff collar, his upright hair, and his spectacles, the likeness was such that the boys gave a

general hurrah. So much noise did they make, and so intent were they, that no one heard the door open, until the original of the portrait looked over Cola's shoulder, and beheld — himself!

It was a terrible moment in school-boy annals. The Doctor looked, frowned, glanced round at the young rebels, then again at the slate. Whether it was that natural vanity made him feel rather pleased to see the only likeness of himself which had ever been taken, or whether Cola's sketch had less of caricature than nature, it is impossible to say; but Dr. Birch smiled — absolutely smiled! He was a good-tempered man, and the boys knew it; they took advantage of it sometimes, the naughty fellows! So the smile gradually went round, until it became a laugh, and the schoolmaster could not help laughing too.

"So this is the way you amuse yourselves, boys," said he at last. The culprits knew his ire was not very great,

The young Caricaturist.

or else he would have said, "gentlemen." One and all they begged forgiveness.

"Please, Sir, we did not mean any disrespect; and isn't it a good likeness?"

"Silence! Let me hear no more of this," said Dr. Birch as gravely as he could. "And Cola Monti, another time, make game of your schoolfellows, if you choose, but not of your master."

So the Doctor went away; but from that time the popularity of Cola was established more than ever. His talents were in constant requisition: every quaint head, every oddity of expression, was made the subject of his pencil, and gradually the slate was cast aside for the dignity of paper and chalk. All the boys in their turn underwent the ordeal of having their peculiarities brought to light, all except Archibald McKaye. No persuasion could induce Cola to make a caricature of his friend; he always found some excuse or other to put it off. At last, the boys

teazed him, and said Archy's face was beyond his skill.

"Give me ten minutes, and you shall see," answered Cola.

Archibald looked surprised, and rather vexed; for one of his weaknesses was, that he could not bear to be laughed at; however he took his station. Cola finished the sketch, but it was no caricature; it was a capital likeness of Archibald's thoughtful head, with the curling hair, and the calm, serious eyes.

"Why, Cola, you ought to be an artist," cried the boys, when they saw it.

Cola smiled, and his eyes kindled. "I will try!" he said in his own heart, and from that day he drew no more caricatures.

There was a person who came to the school every week, to give lessons to some of the boys. He was a poor country drawing-master; poor, in every sense, having no idea of art beyond making pencil sketches of cottages, that looked always tumbling down, children with im-

mense heads, and ladies with hands no larger than their noses. But even the slight instruction that he could give, it was impossible for Cola to obtain.

"Why don't you learn of Mr. White?" the boys were always asking him. And Cola was too proud and too sensitive to let them know, that, beyond the payments to Doctor Birch, his mother, or rather, her avaricious husband, would expend no other money on the fatherless boy. But by observation, and by casual inquiries of the other boys, Cola learnt the manner of handling the chalk, and much other useful information. Besides, his naturally correct eye aided him more than bad teaching would have done, so that he probably lost nothing from missing the advantages he envied so much.

After a while, there came some further help. One of the boys brought the intelligence that a print shop had been set up in the village. This was indeed a novelty to all: to Cola it was glorious

news. He carried in his memory faint impressions of the pictures which he had seen in his childhood, in the great city of Art. Many and many a time had he talked to Archibald of the marvellous paintings in the Vatican, and the Sistine chapel. He could not understand them then; but he now knew they were wonderful and beautiful. He read about them in some stray books which had found their way to the school, and tried hard to arrange and give form to these faint memories of childhood. With these exceptions, the boy had no guide whatever, for the worthy doctor had not a picture or an engraving in his house. Therefore the print shop was quite a godsend to young Cola.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COLA MONTI MEETS A FELLOW-COUNTRYMAN.

As soon as the half-holiday came round, Cola and Archibald set off to look at the new attraction in the village. One or two of the rest went with them, for Cola's drawings had quite "set the fashion," as is not unusual in schools, where, if one leads, several others are sure to follow. Hence, chalks and sitters had lately been at a premium; and many atrocities in art, — round eyes, and crooked noses, had been perpetrated by the younger lads, who must try to imitate their elders. Moreover, the keeper of the printshop was quite surprised to see so many schoolboys stopping at his window daily.

Cola went with a heart which expec-

tation caused to beat faster than usual. The day boarders had brought him descriptions of all the pretty chalk heads which had taken their fancy,—those one sees in every print window. Cola almost knew by heart their accounts of the shepherd-boy with his pipe; and the girl kissing her parrot; and the old man with a beard, and a long knife which he held over a young girl. Opinions were divided as to whether the latter was meant for Jephthah, or Virginius, or Agamemnon; indeed, there had been three pitched battles on the subject already.

But the print which charmed Cola was none of these. It was an engraving of Raphael's Holy Family, that exquisite oval which represents the Virgin, Child, and St. John, and is called the "*Madonna della Sedia*," the Madonna of the chair, because the great artist painted it from a beautiful peasant-woman whom he saw sitting at her cottage-door, with her children beside her.

"Ah, I know this — I remember this!" said the young Italian, while his eyes glistened with delight. "One like it used to hang at the foot of my bed when I was a little child, and nurse Mona always said her prayers before it every night."

"That was very wrong, Cola," observed the serious Archibald.

Cola did not hear him, he was so absorbed. "How beautiful — how beautiful it is!" he said softly. "Look, Archy, at the child's tiny feet and the hands; I must learn how to draw a hand."

"What an odd striped shawl the Virgin wears! It's just like some of the patterns in our mill," cried one of the boys, who came from Manchester.

Cola's lip curled. "He sees only a shawl, when there is such a face! Jacob Lee, you will never be a painter."

"I don't want to be one," said Jacob Lee. "I had rather by half manage father's cotton-mill."

The boy-artist — he was an artist in his

soul already — turned away. It grated on his mind to hear such words, and he could hardly hide his sovereign contempt for the speaker. As they walked homeward, it took all Archibald's good sense and right judgment to argue the point satisfactorily, and prove to the enthusiastic Cola that a man might be a very excellent man in his way, mithout any feeling for Art at all; and that a good master of a cotton-mill might make quite as useful a member of society as a great painter. Archibald was always a long-headed boy; and he thought himself bound to act as Mentor to the young Italian. On the other side, Cola invariably listened with patience and deference, even if his companion was occasionally rather prosy.

Cola and Archy had walked together a little in the rear of the others, when on approaching the school-gates, they saw their playmates tanding in a group.

"Cola, Cola, come here! We want you," was the cry.

Cola ran forward, and saw that they were collected round a poor organ-boy, one of those wandering minstrels who are so common in London streets, and are now and then met with far down in the country. The poor fellow lay on the ground, with his eyes half closed and his head leaning on his organ. He was not asleep, but seemed thoroughly exhausted. His brown cheek was thin and wasted, and his poor meagre hands seemed, as the phrase runs, "nothing but skin and bone."

"We have spoken to him, and he does not answer," said one of the boys. "You must take him in hand, Cola, for he is very likely a countryman of yours."

Cola's heart throbbed wildly; he leaned over the poor boy, and said some words to him in Italian. The little foreigner, half-fainting as he was, caught them; he started, looked round as if he were dreaming, and his eyes fell upon Cola, who spoke to him again. Never was there such

a change as that which came over the poor boy's face. It was positively lighted up with rapture. He took Cola's hand and kissed it. "*Io moro di fame*," was all he could say; and when Cola repeated in English, that the lad was dying of hunger, there was a rush for great lumps of holiday cake, which the famished Italian devoured with avidity.

"This will never do for a poor fellow who is starving," said McKaye. "Run, Cola, and beg the cook to give us a good slice of bread and a bowl of milk; that is much the best for him."

The restoratives succeeded, and in a few minutes the boys had the gratification of seeing their protégé sit up and look around him.

"Now, Cola, ask him what his name is, and where he comes from, and all about him," cried they. Delighted with this adventure, Cola, excited by the old home memories which the picture he had just seen had first awakened, spoke again; his

lips trembling over that long-unuttered and well-beloved native tongue. He soon learnt that the boy's name was Giuseppe Fontana; that he had been going through the country with his organ, when he fell sick of a fever, and had never been well since; that he had walked a long way that day with his organ at his back: but no one would listen to his playing, or give him a halfpenny, so that he could get no food, and had sat down on the road-side utterly exhausted.

None of the boys doubted the poor Italian's tale; indeed it was sufficiently proved by his appearance, which was worn and wretched in the extreme. And when he looked up and began to speak, the most suspicious observer might have seen that there was no deceit or imposition in that open child-like face, made prematurely old by suffering.

"Ask him if he has got a father, and why he does not go back to Italy," said one of the boys to Cola.

"I am an orphan, and have no brothers and sisters," answered Giuseppe, mournfully. "I shall never go back to Rome, *bella Roma*, beautiful Rome, where I was born, and where my father died."

Cola's dark eyes filled with tears. "I come from Rome too!" he answered in Italian; "and my father is dead also. You must stay here, and let me help you, little Giuseppe, if that is your name. I wish I were a man, that I could take you to be my little servant; and we could talk of home together, and you should never be hungry any more."

The organ-boy's reply was a torrent of grateful thanks, uttered in his own expressive, though quite untranslateable speech. But the beloved Italian tongue fell like music on Cola's ear, and he responded with equal volubility.

Absorbed in the delight of finding a countryman, he never noticed that the afternoon was closing in; and that, one by one, the boys had gone away to their

play; doubtless finding this long conversation in a foreign language not quite so interesting as they expected. No one was near except Archy, who sat quietly on a stone, fashioning a long ash shoot into a walking stick. Suddenly the supper-bell rang, and Cola began to wonder what he could do with his protégé, who was not able to walk two miles to the village, and, moreover, had no money to pay for a night's lodging when he got there.

Cola ran to Archibald in distress, and asked what he was to do.

"I thought you would come to this," said McKaye, smiling; "so I waited quietly until you had done talking in that queer tongue of yours. It is n't half as fine as Greek or Gaelic. But come, my boy, don't look cross; we must see what we can do for your new friend."

This was a difficult matter to decide. Cola with his warm feelings, thought of bringing in the organ-boy, and giving him his own supper; and even requesting

Doctor Birch to let him sleep with him in his own room. Archibald shook his head.

"Just like you, Cola; but it won't do. In the first place, though the boy does come from Rome, and you, of course think him all that is good,—very natural too,—you cannot make every body else think the same."

"Oh, Archy! how unkind! I am sure he is a good honest boy," expostulated Cola.

"I dare say he is, but the Doctor may not think so; and any how, his having had the fever would frighten every body. No, no! Cola, we must not bring him into the house."

"What! and let him sleep in the open air, these cold autumn nights? He will die!"

Archy thought for a few minutes. "I'll tell you what we'll do, Cola. We will make him a bed in the barn at the bottom of the field. The coachman will give us some straw, and a rug; or if he

does not like to lend that, the boy is welcome to my old plaid. Thus you can manage without offending the doctor, or getting yourself into trouble."

"Thank you! thank you, dear Archy; there is nobody like you!" cried Cola.

"'Tis only a bit of common sense," said the other. "Now go and tell the lad what we are going to do with him."

Giuseppe was full of thankfulness; but when he rose up to walk, his limbs sank under him.

"Poor fellow!" said McKaye, compassionately, "how weak he must be! Well, never mind: he is but a light weight, I'll carry him." Which he did as easily as if he were an infant. Indeed, Giuseppe seemed little more than a child, like many others of his class, whom one sees wandering about, doomed to hardship at an age when rich men's sons are considered scarce out of babyhood. The two friends made a comfortable couch for the poor little stranger, placed the organ he-

side him, and left him to sleep. But before Cola went to bed, he crept down to the barn with a great piece of bread and cheese, which he had saved from his own supper. The boy was fast asleep.

"It will do for his breakfast when he wakes," said Cola to himself, and went back hungry, but happy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PLAN, AND HOW IT SUCCEEDED.

NEXT morning, Cola's first thought was, as might be expected, his young protégé. He found Giuseppe sitting up with a cheerful face, eating his bread and cheese; and not looking by any means so weak and palid as he had done the night before. Nothing could equal the delight and gratitude of the poor organ-boy when he beheld his protector. His brown eyes seemed fairly running over with tears of joy.

"I have hardly done anything for you, my poor Giuseppe!" said Cola, in answer to his fervently-expressed gratitude.

"Yes, you have, *Signorino mio;* except for you, I would have died in the road.

But that was what my mother said to me before I went away to England, and I never saw her again. 'Seppi,'—she always called me little Seppi,—'be a good boy, and tell the truth, and do not steal, though you are ever so hungry; then God will be sure to send some one who will be kind to you.' And so He sent *il Signorino* to bring me food, and keep me from dying."

Struck by the simple but earnest piety of the poor orphan, Cola felt determined not to lose sight of him, but to help him in every way. In his warm-hearted resolutions, the young Italian never thought how little a school-boy of fourteen can do. Many a plan had floated through his brain already, but they were all vague and unsatisfactory. In the midst of a brilliant scheme to keep Guiseppi in the village, and educate and teach him English, Cola suddenly remembered that his pocket-money amounted to just ten shillings per annum, and that, at the present moment,

his purse contained the large sum of three half pence.

In the midst of these cogitations, while his little friend watched his countenance with the most intense anxiety, Cola saw Archibald coming to the barn.

"This is good-natured of you, Archy," said Cola. "You must thank him too," he added, in Italian, to the organ-boy, "for he carried you here on his back, and has done much for you."

Giuseppe uttered an outburst of Italian thanks; but it was evident that his warmest feelings were with his own countryman, whom he watched unceasingly.

"Now, Cola, what do you intend to do with your new pet?—worse than your unlucky rabbits."

Cola looked puzzled and uncomfortable. "I have been thinking, and thinking, but I cannot fix upon anything. Do help me, Archy!"

"Well, in the first place, I do not see that the lad can stay here much longer,

because he must want food, and I do not think it quite fair to levy secret contributions on the Doctor's larder,"—here he looked at the fragments of the bread and cheese.

"I did not steal that," murmured Cola, blushing. "It was my own supper."

"Bravo, my little generous fellow!" said McKaye, clapping him on the shoulder; "but you yourself will get as thin as a maypole, if you go on feeding such a fine bird with your own meals after this fashion. No! we must think of something else. Ask him what he intends to do."

Cola held a short conversation with his protégé, and then explained that Seppi wished to travel back to London before winter, but that his organ was broken and out of tune, so that nobody would listen to his playing, and therefore he could only get on by begging his way from town to town.

"He says he never begged in his life, and he feels ashamed," added Cola; and

Archibald was convinced of the truth, when he saw large tears on the crimson cheeks of the little Italian.

"Poor fellow!" he said. "If we could subscribe to get him a new organ. Some of the lads have money to spare, which otherwise they would only waste in sweetmeats. I thought I heard Morris Woodhouse offering you a half-crown for this same boy last night."

"Yes; but I did not choose to take it."

"Cola, Cola! that was a bit of your foolish pride," said the young mentor, shaking his head. "Morris meant kindly, and you were wrong not to accept it. But let us know what a new organ would cost."

"Five pounds, Seppi says."

"Ah! we shall never get that, so we must give up the idea. But come, it is breakfast-time now. I think your Seppi might stay here till afternoon, and meanwhile some plan may come into our

heads. 'When there's a will there's a way.'"

This was one of Archy's wise saws, which he constantly brought out, and, to his credit be it said, as constantly acted upon. In the present case he was not long before he proved the truth of the axiom.

"Cola, I've a thought," said he, when the boys were taking their formal noonday stroll, under the Doctor's guidance, a sway so easy that it allowed a fine opportunity for conversation, to each couple which filed before him. "Cola, I've a thought."

"What about?"

"Your little Italian, of course. Look here; we'll go to business in a systematic manner. We want money, which neither of us have got; the question is how to get it. I cannot help thinking that those little drawings which you are always spending your time over, would please the farmers' wives about here, and perhaps

some people would give a shilling or so for two or three of them. Now you cannot go up and down the country selling them, but Seppi could; and, perhaps, in time, he might get enough money to buy another organ."

"Archy, Archy, how clever you are!" cried Cola, in delight.

"Not at all; only when a fellow has a talent — which I think you have in this sketching fancy of yours, I like to find out to what use it can be put, and make the most of it."

"Oh! this is charming; I have plenty of heads and figures already done. There is Quintus Curtius leaping in the gulf, and Romulus with the wolf, and King John signing Magna Charta, and your own Mary Queen of Scots —"

"Stop a minute," said McKaye, laughing. "We must arrange our plans a little more systematically. These sort of sketches will hardly do for farmers' wives, who never heard of Romulus or Quintus

Curtius in their lives. No! I think if you did a few pretty heads of babies, and coloured them with red cheeks and golden hair, or drew an old woman feeeding chickens, or the doctor's chesnut horse, these would be much more likely to attract the kind of purchasers we want to please."

Poor Cola looked rather crestfallen; this was by no means his taste in Art, but he saw the good sense which dictated Archibald's advice, and was soon persuaded that he was right.

"Then there is another thing that we must consider," went on McKaye, "the drawings will want frames. We cannot buy them, therefore we must make them. I can cut all sorts of toys in wood, and I don't see why I could not make a picture-frame. At all events there is nothing like trying, and I'll try to-day."

"Excellent! excellent! How thoughtful you are, Archy! And, I dare say, the carpenter at the lane-end would give you

a few pieces of wood, because you cured his lame dog, you know."

"Very likely he might. And then, Cola, by this plan you would see your little countryman every now and then, when he came to fetch more drawings, and you might have a talk with him about Rome, and all that sort of thing."

No one knew what a kind heart lay hid under the quiet exterior of the reserved Scottish boy; no one but Cola Monti.

The plan was tried, and it succeeded. A few sketches, such as Archibald thought most likely to please, were soon done by Cola in his best style. Mc Kaye's skilful hand made very respectable wooden frames; and little Seppi, being properly instructed, set off on his expedition. He had another means of getting on too; he could sing a few of his native ditties, for music seems to come instinctively to the Italians. Many an English mother,

who bought one of his pretty pictures to hang over the fire-place in the best room, gave the little foreigner his dinner or his breakfast, for the sake of his merry song.

Thus for many months this project went on successfully. Seppi travelled far and wide, and carried on quite a flourishing trade with the fruits of Cola's skill. Sometimes, he even got as much as half a crown for one sketch; and as he always brought to Cola's keeping every farthing that he did not want, there soon mounted up a little sum. But Seppi did not now wish to buy an organ; he could not have borne to lose sight of his young countryman, for whom he had conceived the strongest attachment; so the trade of the little wandering picture-dealer still went on.

Cola, encouraged by success, exerted his utmost efforts to improve. His drawings became more correct and finished; and, from a mere amusement, his pencil grew his chief occupation when not engaged

in lessons. Every book that he could light upon, connected with Art, was indeed a treasure; and by daily study of nature, he was gradually forming himself for his future destiny, before he was yet out of boyhood.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SCHOOL-DAYS OVER.

As one half-year passed after another, Cola Monti grew to be a tall, clever youth. Gradually, the school changed, and new faces were seen, filling the places of the old ones. Morris Woodhouse went to college, and Doctor Birch talked with great pride of his favourite pupil's success. Archibald McKaye had steadily worked through his schooldays, and had left for a merchant's office in London. But, as he said to Cola when they parted, "A man must work at something, or other, all his life through; and the sooner he makes up his mind to it the better."

Cola himself began to have many anxious

thoughts about his future; for there was no hint of his leaving school, and he had only seen his mother once, or twice. Often and often, when Archibald talked of his own happy home, did the lonely boy feel his heart ready to break, for he had no one to love him or care for him, except the poor Italian boy, to whom he had been so kind.

He still kept up the practice of his beloved Art; and sometimes, during the long holidays, which he spent at school alone, vague dreams of being a painter one day, made him feel happy for the time, and less down-hearted as to the future.

When Cola was seventeen, his mother died. Then her husband refused any longer to defray the expenses of his step-son's education; and young Monti was in fact turned upon the world, quite destitute. Doctor Birch's kindness, however, interfered; he proposed that Cola should still stay with him, as a sort of usher, to teach. It was a life strongly opposed to the youth's

own fancy, for Cola had not the steadiness and above all the patience, necessary for a teacher. But he fully appreciated the kindness of his old master, and bravely set to work to do his best.

His best was by no means wonderful, for his heart was not in it; and moreover his daily duties engrossed his time so much, that the drawing and painting languished. Still Cola persevered, for he remembered his friend Archibald's saying, "that every man must work," and many men, too, at duties they did not like. Mc Kaye's boyish friendship had not diminished, and when his letters came occasionally, telling of a close London office, and a room in the attic of a London house, looking down upon a noisy street, Cola breathed the fresh country air, and thought that, after all, his lot was not so hard as Archy's.

Nevertheless, when Seppi came to see his "young master," as he persisted in calling Cola, he was grieved to notice how pale and melancholy that dear master looked. Seppi

had good news to tell, having sold all the pictures, and brought back a handful of silver to be put in the treasure-box. Cola's heavy eyes hardly brightened even at the success.

"But I have something else to tell to *il Signor carrissimo*,—the dearest master," continued the Italian. "I met one day in the fields an odd-looking gentleman, who was making drawings, like you;—only they were not half so pretty," said Seppi in an affectionate parenthesis, which made Cola smile.

"Well, what of that? I suppose he was an artist."

"Very likely, *Signor;* but he spoke to me in Italian, and a noble gentleman I soon found him to be, though he was an Englishman. I showed him the pictures, and he praised them very much."

"Did he, did he?" cried Cola, his face lighting up with pleasure.

"Yes, indeed, and he asked me who painted them; for whoever it was, he would

become a great artist in time. You see, Signor, I remember his very words to tell you afterwards. And then seeing him so kind, I told him all about you, and how good you had been to me; and he tore off a leaf from his book, and wrote this, which he desired me to give to you."

Cola seized the letter, which ran thus —

"I know nothing of you, sir, except what the boy Giuseppe Fontana has told me; but if you are the artist who painted the water-colour sketches I have just seen, I would advise you to come to London, if you can, and study regularly the noblest profession under the sun. I will, if I find you worthy, do all in my poor influence to advance you. My name and address are—"

It was the name of a first-rate artist, whose fame had reached even to the obscure village, which had so long been Cola's only home. The youth's heart beat with the wildest joy.

"To go to London; to be an artist! oh, how happy it would be!" cried he. But

immediately his countenance fell, for he remembered that he had no money, and it was utterly impossible for him even to get to the metropolis without being dependent on charity. The letter fell from his hand, and he sat down disconsolate.

The Italian boy crept to him. "Will the Signor tell poor Seppi what there was in the gentleman's note to make him look so happy for a minute and then so sad?"

Cola told him.

'And why should not the Signor go to London and be a great artist?"

"Ah, Seppi, you do not understand these things. It would take money, a great deal too, and I have none at all." Cola covered his face with his hands, and felt that it would have been a relief to cry, were he not ashamed to be so little of a man.

Seppi went to the money-box; it was one of Archy's handiwork, with a little slit at the top, just large enough to push in shillings and half-crowns. To this receptacle, month after month, had been committed the small

savings which Seppi did not want, and which Archibald prudently advised should be kept for him "against a rainy day." The boy seemed now determined to get at his property, for he took his knife and cut the slit into a large round hole, through which the treasure within poured in a silver stream. Seppi showed his white glistening teeth in a smile the broadest ever known, and his black eyes seemed dancing in his head, as he filled his cap with the silver coins, and laid it beside Cola on the table. "See, the Signor has plenty of money, and he can go to London as soon as he likes."

"Oh, Seppi! but it is not mine. I meant it for you."

Cola was long proof against the earnest entreaties of his humble friend, that he would take his money, the fruit of his own handiwork. At last he saw that Seppi was becoming deeply pained by his refusal, and Archibald's often-used argument against false pride rose to his memory. On the other hand, all the pleasure and success of a

life which had been his highest ambition seemed spread out before him,—while to let the kind offer of the artist (whom we shall entitle Mr. Crome,) remain unnoticed, appeared almost folly. Cola could not give up all for a mere scruple of pride at receiving a favour from an inferior, whose greatest pleasure it was to bestow it. He took the boy's rough hand in his.

"Seppi, my good Seppi, you shall lend me the money, since you are so kind, and we will go to London together."

And so they did, as master and man, and not so utterly unprovided either, for the good Doctor Birch, when he heard the story and read the artist's letter, not only advised his young usher to go, but was fully impressed with the idea, which had only lately unfolded itself to his mind, that his late pupil might become a great man some day. Partly out of this fancy, but chiefly from real kindness, the doctor actually took a number of Cola's sketches, and added to his

stock another ten pounds to help him on when he got to London.

So the two set out on their journey, bravely and hopefully. And they were right; for the grand secret of success is a determination to let nothing thwart us in striving for it. Cola certainly had not any Whittington-like notions of London streets being paved with gold, and did not expect to find there a fortune ready made; but he argued, sensibly enough, that surely he could work in town as he had done in the country, only with ten times more advantages. As for little Seppi, he thought, in his simplicity, that if the worst came to the worst, he could take to organ-playing again for himself and his dear Signor.

## CHAPTER X.

### BEGINNING THE WORLD.

It was five years since Cola had been in a large town of any kind. London he had never seen in his life. He unconsciously looked forward to it, in that sort of mysterious curiosity with which country people always regard the unknown metropolis, as a grand place, very delightful, and rather wicked. Something too was added by the quick southern imagination of the youth, and his faint childish memories of Rome, the only city he ever knew.—Rome, with her stately palaces and gorgeous churches, the queenly capital of the South, seated on her seven hills.

Thoughts like these passed through the

boy's mind, when he found himself whirled through the midland counties in a second-class railway-carriage, for that was the very unromantic way in which the new aspirant for fame went to London to seek his fortune. Seppi sat with him, but the little organ-boy treated his young master with the most deferential respect, and never spoke, unless he was addressed first. At the commencement of their journey, Cola had talked to him a great deal in their native language, much to the astonishment and suspicion of a cross-looking old lady opposite, who wondered what strange fellow-passengers she had got, and how a nice respectable young gentleman should be on such friendly terms with a shabby little Italian boy. She kept glancing angrily at Seppi, and Seppi returned the compliment, even though he did feel rather shy and uncomfortable in his new position. So there was a petty warfare maintained between them during great part of the journey; and peace seemed further off than ever, when the old lady, who sat in

the sheltered back-seat, persisted in having the window open, though the chilly air of a thorough wet day pierced to the very bones of the poor little thinly-clad foreigner opposite.

"Change seats with me, Seppi; I'm older and stronger than you," cried his good-natured master, after a vain expostulation with their cross neighbour.

But it was not likely that Seppi could consent to anything of the sort; he would have sat to be frozen to death, rather than even suffer his dear Signor's hands to get chilly. So he protested that he did not feel at all cold; and meanwhile his poor little nose grew bluer and bluer, and the rain beat in, and hung in large drops on his thin jacket, until his cheerful face began to lengthen considerably, and his master grew thoroughly miserable. This was rather a gloomy commencement of their adventures, and it made Cola feel that if independence has its pleasures, it has also its responsibilities.

"Seppi, how I wish we had a cloak or a rug of some kind! what a pity we never thought of buying one!" was his uncomfortable reflection.

"We could not buy everything,—that is, the Signor could not, with the little money he had; and if he is not cold, why Seppi is quite satisfied," was the organ-boy's answer, as he rolled himself up in a corner, and showed his white teeth, with an apparently contented smile, though, poor fellow, they were chattering in his head all the while.

Cola Monti then experienced, for the first time since he had begun to think and feel—not as a boy, but as a man—how bitter it is to be poor. The next minute he learned how much bitterer it is to be proud as well. Following Seppi's eyes, he saw them rest wistfully on a rug that lay beside him, the property of a great bluff farmer, who dozed away at the further end of the carriage: he determined to beg the loan of it, the very next time the farmer opened his eyes. But

ere then pride whispered in the youth's ear, "Don't, Cola Monti! It is demeaning yourself. Remember how gruffly the fellow answered you, when you made a civil remark on starting; think how he muttered something about these vagabonds 'o' furriners.' Don't trouble yourself to ask anything of him."

Cola hesitated, looked at his poor shivering companion, and then, to use an expressive phrase, "put his pride in his pocket." He had to button it up close, though, or it would have crept out again. At the next station the farmer woke up.

"Sir," said Cola, turning very red, and speaking hastily, "if you don't want that nice warm railway-rug, would you have any objection to lend it?"

"Take it—choke theeself in it, only dunna bother me," grumbled the farmer, turning round again for another nap.

"Thank you, sir, but I don't want it for myself; 't is for this poor little fellow here;—he is so cold!"

"Eh, what, him there? noa, noa, you're welcome to it yersel', young feller, for you looks like a gentleman, though you are a furriner, but I canna give it that dirty little beggar."

"He is not dirty, and he's no more a beggar than yourself," was the indignant reply that rose to Cola's lips. But he swallowed his wrath: Archy had taught him that lesson. "I beg your pardon, sir, but you are mistaken," he said, as quietly as he could. "Take the trouble to look at him, and you will see that, though his clothes are poor, they are quite clean; and he is no beggar, he is my little servant."

"And pray, young sir," asked the farmer, now thoroughly awakened, and rather amused than otherwise at the spirit of the boy, "pray what may you be yersel'?"

"Just what you said—a gentleman," was the somewhat lofty answer.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! What a deal of pluck he has!" cried Cola's fellow-traveller, bursting into the uproarious laugh

which seems peculiar to English farmers. "Dunna be savage, my fine feller," he added, seeing the youth's brow darken. "No offence, no offence; ye may tak' t' blanket and welcome, for that grand footman o' yourn; only mind he do n't steal it, that's all. Ha, ha!" And he very unceremoniously threw the disputed article over the carriage to Cola, who felt strongly inclined to throw it back again in his face. But the impulse was resisted, and next moment poor shivering Seppi rejoiced in the warm covering.

The cross old lady wondered how some people could be imposed upon by the brazen faces of some other people; "but that was always the way in which these foreigners coaxed John Bull out of everything."

"I tell'ee what, ma'am," said the farmer, whose generosity was roused by opposition, "a French chap feels cold just as much as an Englisher, 'specially if he be a little 'un. If you 've ever a little Jacky or Billy o'yer own at whome, (which I dunna think is the

case, or you'd not be so cross-grained,)" this was said in a half-audible aside, "ye wunna grumble at my doin' a good turn to this here lad. Come, young 'un," continued he, roused still more by the old lady's contemptuous toss of the head, "tak' a drop o'sommat to keep thee warm."

And he produced a bottle for Seppi's benefit, who, faint, tired, and cold, took a few sips, and then made drowsy by the dose, and also by the motion of the carriage, fell comfortably asleep in the corner. His burly protector soon did the same, and Cola was left to his own meditations.

He did not feel quite so hopeful as he had done a few hours before, when crossing fifteen miles of open country, which lay between Doctor Birch's house and the nearest railway-station, in that worthy pedagogue's own chaise. Then it was a lovely fine morning; but it had changed, as June mornings will do, into a wet cheerless day, almost like winter. This, perhaps, had no slight effect on Cola's mind, for in common

with all sensitive temperaments, he was very susceptible to the influence of weather. And, besides, as the first excitement of the journey passed away, and a weariness crept over him, he began to feel the natural sensations of one who has for five years, night after night, gone to sleep under the same roof, and now wanders from it, quite uncertain where he shall this evening take his rest. The vague project—"seeking one's fortune in London"—resolved itself into small realities, not quite so pleasant, and for the moment he almost wished himself back in the Doctor's school-room, hearing his class drone over their eternal *io sono*, *tu sei*, *egli è*,

But such a brave spirit as Cola's could not long think thus. Soon he drove away all disappointment and determined to be happy. Many a man has become moderately content from this very resolve. Try it, my young friends, when you are inclined to despond; set resolutely before you all the good fortune that your condition affords,

and in most cases you will find that if it does not outweigh, it at least equals the bad.

Cola did so. If on this miserable wet day he was going to London, a lad only seventeen, an orphan, having in that great city but two friends, one of whom he had never seen—still, on the other hand, he was young, healthy, had had a good education, and was acknowledged to possess talent in his beloved Art: there was his faithful little servant to watch over his comforts and cheer him in every way; and in his pocket lay twenty pounds and the letter of Mr. Crome. Things were not looking so very black, after all.

Besides, every mile—no every twenty miles, for in the lightning-railway one only counts by scores—brought him nearer to the welcome of Archibald M'Kaye. Cola had not told his friend of this proposed journey, intending to surprise him with the meeting; and perhaps withheld partly from a slight doubt whether the ultra-prudent

Archy would not consider the expedition rather a wild-goose chase, and therefore expostulate a little.

"But when I am really there, he will be so glad to see me! yes, I know he will!" mused Cola; "and then I can talk so much better than I can write, and explain all. He does not know much about Art, or care much for it; but he is a dear, good, sensible fellow, is Archy McKaye. How glad I am he lives in London!"

And in anticipating over this meeting, and the somewhat more formidable one with the great unseen artist, Cola found the train had reached Harrow, which he knew was not far from their journey's end. He felt a feverish excitement, and could not help peering restlessly out of the carriage window. It was close down now, thanks to the burly farmer's interference. The drizzly misty evening only revealed the straggling outskirts which lie between Willesden and Euston-square. There could hardly be a less imposing entrance into the city: it

seems like creeping into London the back way. Cola distinguished small half-built streets, work-sheds, brickfields, here and there a garden, until gradually the houses became thicker; and though no city could be seen in the distance, there rose up the cloud of smoke and fog which perpetually overhangs the great metropolis.

"Tell me, Seppi, for you have been here before, tell me, is that London?" cried Cola to his young companion, who now, refreshed by his long sleep, began to rub his eyes and look about him.

"*Si, Signor*, yes, master, it is indeed," answered the little Italian. "Is it like what the Signor expected?"—Seppi always addressed Cola in the third person, the customary Italian form of showing respect to a superior.

"Not quite."

"I knew it, I knew it: a smoky, disagreeable, ugly city, is this *Londra*, and not at all so fine as *bella Roma*." Then recollecting himself, Seppi added, "But I

will not speak ill of it, if *il Signorino mio* makes his fortune there, as indeed he is sure to do; and then, perhaps, when he is a great artist, he will take poor Seppi with him to see *bella Roma* once more."

"We will never be parted; you shall go with me wherever I go, my dear little friend," cried Seppi's master affectionately; and then the simultaneous rousing of their sleepy fellow-passengers, and the call outside for "Tickets ready, gentlemen," betokened that they had come to their journey's end. Soon the train stopped: out jumped the burly farmer, having acknowledged the thankfully restored rug with a careless nod, though he made no allusion to stealing it now. Out scrambled the cross old lady, after hunting under both seats for various small packages, and vociferously accusing Seppi of having sat down upon a bandbox, which had been under her own feet the whole time. At last Cola and his protégé alighted also, and found themselves on the platform in Euston-square.

There was little doubt of their being in London now. Such a confusion!—Omnibuses rattling, cabmen shouting, porters jostling to and fro, clamorous passengers hunting for luggage in every possible place but the right one, and finding every one's property except their own. No wonder the scene bewildered our two young foreigners, for even Cola knew English manners and customs only through the medium of Doctor Birch's academy. He and Seppi stood together beside their small box, like two lost sheep in the crowd. Attacked on every side by inquiries concerning omnibuses, cabs, and porters, Cola only shook his head; he really could not tell where to go or what to do. He wished he had written for Archy to meet them, but wishing was useless now.

At length his shoulder was brushed by the stout farmer.

"What, my young furrineering gentleman, not gone yet? you'll be turned out directly to mak' ready for another train.

No stopping and wondering in a place like Lon'on, I reckon."

Cola looked very disconsolate, and Seppi too.

"What's t' matter? hast got na money?" asked the blunt but good-natured farmer.

Cola's cheek crimsoned: "Of course I have, sir! but it is late, and I do n't know where to go for the night; I never was in London before. Is there any inn to which you can direct me?" asked he, with a rather dignified air, for he remembered he was seventeen, and it was necessary to put off the boy and assume the man.

"Direct 'ee lad? Oh, aye, to some hundreds, where they'll fleece thee in a pretty fashion. What made thy feyther send thee to Lon'on all by thyself? I would n't ha' done it by my Dick!"

Tears started to Cola's eyes. "Nor would my dear father, if he were alive," he murmured.

"What! that's it, is it? Poor lad, I 'm

sorry for thee!" said the other, with compassionate interest in his great rough face. "Gie us thy hand, I'll tak' thee where thee can stop the night; ay, and that young Flibbertigibbet too," he added, seeing Cola looked hesitatingly towards his little servant. "I 'am not afeard of either o' yees stealing anything now. Come along."

And in a few minutes more, the young adventurers were hoisted on the top of an omnibus, beside their new acquaintance, who took them to an inn near Mark-lane, where he invariably put up. Unaccustomed to travelling as both boys were, they felt heartily glad to eat their bread and cheese supper, and then escape from the noisy crowd of farmers to a small attic; too tired to do anything but go to sleep. Cola crept into the little bed; while Seppi, unused to more luxurious habits, gathered himself up in a ball, something like a young hedgehog, and lay down at his master's feet. Both were soon asleep—to use a favourite ex-

Arrival in London.

pression at Doctor Birch's—"as sound as a top."

This was Cola Monti's first night in London

## CHAPTEP XI.

### AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW LIGHT.

Cola woke the next morning, dreaming that he was at school again, and that somehow or other his class was all composed of great stout farmers, who would persist in repeating their Italian verbs with a strong Staffordshire accent. The dream vanished under the influence of a bright sunbeam that crept through the small uncurtained window, and just reached his nose. In London, the good-natured sun is more partial to attic windows than to any other, and it made Cola's tiny room quite cheerful. From thence he looked, not at the street, which lay many feet below, but skywards, where, above the tops of the houses, he

could see the great dome of St. Paul's lifting itself up, grand and giant-like, with its ball and cross glistening in the clear light of early morning.

This was the first sight that struck Cola in London. His artist-eye appreciated it to the uttermost. The numberless streets below seemed so solemn and quiet, lying in the shadow of the scarcely risen sun; and though even now the sounds of life were beginning to stir, they were but faint as yet, while over the dark and half-awakened city watched its great temple, already illuminated with the sunbeams. It was a scene that Cola never forgot, and never will while he lives.

He stood several minutes at the window, and then crept quietly to bed again, for it was too early to rise, and he did not want to disturb the heavy slumbers of poor tired Seppi. But he himself could not go to sleep again; his heart was too full. He lay thinking many deep and serious thoughts, such as perhaps would never come into the

head of a youth of seventeen, unless placed in Cola's situation.

My dear boy-readers, you who have a father to guide you, a mother to love you, and perhaps many other family ties to make you a pleasant home, I dare say you think it would be a fine thing to find yourself in such an independent position, with no one to restrain or command you—ready for any adventure. Would not you like it very much, instead of being under the rule of tutors abroad, or when at home obliged to submit to "the governor?" And yet, if you once tried the experiment, I doubt if you would not soon find out, as Cola did, that it is a desolate thing to be one's own master.

Cola had a vague notion that living at inns was expensive, and that even twenty pounds would not hold out for ever. He thought he ought to try to get settled somewhere that very day, even before he allowed himself to go and see Mr. Crome. Perhaps he also wished to delay this momentous

visit, which, delicious in the distance, grew formidable as the time drew near. But how, in this wide London, was he to set about finding a temporary home?

"I wish I knew where to go, or that I had somebody to advise me," he sighed. And then he thought of sensible, friendly Archy McKaye. "That's it!" cried the boy, jumping out of bed; "the best thing I can do is to go to Archy."

He dressed himself with a light heart, and then woke Seppi. They both soon descended, and after losing their way once or twice in the large old rambling inn, sat down in the commercial room and breakfasted. Then Cola, taking upon himself all the responsibilities of his position, called for the bill; but the kind-hearted farmer had paid it an hour before,—and disappeared—without word or message.

"I'll never judge people by their outside appearance again," thought Cola, repentantly. "And if ever I catch myself indulging in

foolish pride, I'll smother myself—or it, which will perhaps be the best plan."

So, having begun the day with these two excellent resolutions, and left his box at the inn, not without a hope that when he came to fetch it, he might light upon the good farmer, and have an opportunity of paying the warm thanks he owed, Cola set out for the office where Archy spent his time from nine till five every day. Seppi, who followed his master like his very shadow, was not left behind; and indeed young Monti could not have threaded his way through the strange, bustling, bewildering city streets, but for the guidance of his little servant.

"And is this where you used to go about playing your organ, Seppi? I wonder the noise did not drive you crazy," said Cola, as they passed the Bank, and entered Cheapside, which seemed insufferably close to the country boy. "Oh! what a disagreeable place London is! at least this end

of it. How did you manage to breathe here, my poor little fellow?"

"It was much worse where I lived," answered Seppi, with a shudder. "The Signor has not seen St. Giles's: ah! the horrible place! And that cruel master, who sent us out every morning with our organs—we, poor lads!—and thrashed us and starved us at night, if we did not bring back money enough. What a miserable life it was! But the noble generous Signor took me out of it, and I will bless him every day until I die," gratefully murmured the little Italian in his own language, which indeed he generally spoke; only we put his conversation in English, lest our readers might require an interlinear translation.

So talking, master and man came to Bread-street, Cheapside, where M^cKaye's address was.

"M^cBean, M^cCulloch, and M^cGillivray, all Macs," said Cola, laughing, as he read the name on the door. "We're right, I

know; Archy's countrymen always hold together."

He entered a little dark office, on the ground-floor of what seemed an immense warehouse. There was no one there, but a dry, dusty-looking old man, perched behind a high desk. Cola went boldly up to him, and asked to see Archibald M^c^Kaye.

"Is it the new laddie ye're speering for? Ye're a *freend* o'his, may be," was the answer, in Scotch so broad, that, accustomed as he was to Archy's northern speech, Cola could hardly make it out. And the cautious questioner eyed him over from head to foot, apparently thinking such a tall, handsome, gentlemanly youth rather a novel customer in Bread-street.

"I want to see Mr. Archibald M^c^Kaye," persisted Cola; "can you tell me where he is?"

"I dinna just ken, and I canna waste precious time in hunting out our office laddies. Ye'll find him somewhere up

there;" and the old clerk lifted one thumb in the direction of the ceiling, and buried his spectacled nose again in his large ledger.

The quick-tempered Italian felt half vexed, but he turned to ascend the mouldy old staircase; Seppi still followed. At the top of the first flight he saw, in the dim light—it never seemed to be clear day-light at Bread-street—a figure buried among a heap of rolls of carpets. He repeated the inquiry for Archy McKaye.

The individual addressed, cleared at a bound a score of carpets, and stood before him.

"Why, Cola Monti, what in the name of fortune brought you here?" reached the boy's ear in the most gleeful tones of Archy's very own voice, otherwise Cola would never have believed that it was really his old friend.

McKaye certainly looked a queer figure. He had grown taller than ever—quite a man indeed; but he was very thin, and his

clear fresh complexion had become pale and sodden. He was without his coat, and all covered with the dust and dirt of this—a wholesale carpet warehouse. At another time Cola would have laughed heartily at the odd appearance of his old schoolmate, but now his affectionate heart could only prompt the warm hand-grasp, and the cry—

"Archy, dear Archy, is it really you?"

"Why, I suppose it is, though I don't look much like myself, you mean," said McKaye, perhaps rather annoyed for the moment at being found in such a trim; "but you know, my good fellow, I'm a man of business now. Everybody works here. I'm not a bit ashamed of myself," said he resolutely, as he knocked the dust off his clothes.

"Indeed you need not; I am only too glad to see you anyhow, and anywhere," Cola joyfully cried.

"To be sure; so am I. Now, Cola sit down here," and he hauled a roll from the

heap, "and tell me what on earth you have come to London for."

The explanation was given as shortly and lucidly as possible. Archy looked wondering—doubtful; but except an unconscious "Hem!" once or twice, he said nothing to discourage his friend's bright hopes; he was too kind-hearted. And besides, he felt keenly how pleasant it was to look on a familiar face in this wide desert of London. But ere Cola's story was quite ended, there was a loud call above for "McKaye."

"Business before pleasure! I can't stay with you longer, Cola," said he, rising hastily. "Come and see me to-night at home—that is, where I lodge; I don't call it home. Mind you come! but I forgot,—you will never know your way." And he proceeded to give minute directions for finding a certain street in Islington.

"Oh, Seppi will make it out," answered Cola.

"What, my old friend Seppi! you hav'n't

brought him with you? Come out, my little fellow, and let us have a look at your brown face!" cried Archy, dragging the Italian from the dark corner where he had submissively kept aloof.

"Seppi very glad to see English Signor; poor Seppi never forget kind Signor *Inglese*," stammered the organ-boy, pulling his black curly forelock, in acknowledgment of the recognition.

"Thank you, little Seppi; only you make a slight mistake as to the country: I don't think I am any more of an Englishman for living in London," said Archy, proudly enough to satisfy even the heart of the old father at Aberdeen, who had sacrificed so many time-honoured family prejudices, before his own good sense and that of his excellent boy triumphed at last, and the descendant of no one knows how many great M'Kayes became clerk in a merchant's warehouse.

They went down the dark creaking staircase: "I dare say you think this a di

miserable place, Cola; and yet 'tis a great firm, this of ours: every merchant in London knows our three Macs. Their word or bond is as good as the Bank of England. But you don't understand commerce."

"Not quite," was the smiling answer. "Well, Archy, I suppose, some of these days, you will be a great merchant too."

"I will try. It is a grand thing to be rich; that is, when one makes a good use of it,—our family is so large, and we have always been so awfully poor, that——Yes! I'll work night and day but I'll be a great merchant some time." And as McKaye spoke, there was in his quiet resolute tone and firmly set lip an earnest of that strong patient energy which, soon or late, always carries out its end.

Yet, as Cola made his way up the close dingy street, and thought of the little back office, the ledger, and the carpets, his mind, cast in a totally different mould, revolted from the idea of a lifetime, a whole precious lifetime, spent in such scenes.

"Archy may be right; he always is," said the young Italian to himself; "but I would rather be an artist, after all."

## CHAPTER X.

### HELP IN SEASON.

Monti,—we ought to give him his surname occasionally, as he is growing a man now,—had a whole day before him, with nothing to do. This was very irksome, for his morning's reflections had wound him up to such a high pitch of enthusiastic energy,—and Cola's energy was generally two-thirds composed of impulse, which must begin at once to expend itself. He found it really hard to have to wander idly about London for the space of six hours; more especially as mere outward sight-seeing was not his element. An inveterate sight-seer is generally a man all eyes and no brains.

Cola bethought himself of a place, which

to him contained all the riches of London—the National Gallery. Thither he went, still followed by his ever-faithful attendant. And it is but just to say, that while many a fine young gentleman would have felt considerably annoyed at having to walk through London streets, accompanied by the poor little Italian, in his clean, but shabby suit of velveteen, Cola Monti never experienced the slightest mortification on this head. He was at once too humble and too proud.

I shall not enlarge upon the feelings of the boy-artist, when he beheld for the first time this grand collection of paintings. He had seen many in his childhood; but the memory of them was growing dim. He looked on these with the sensations of one blind, who re-enters a long-forgotten world with his eyes opened. He began to understand and to feel what Art really was. This new sense dazzled and overwhelmed him; his heart beat wildly, he trembled, and, fairly subdued with emotion, he sat

down in the darkest corner he could find, turned his face away into the shadow, while the tears rose, large and silently, to the long lashes, and dropped on the arm which he raised to hide them.

Now, my dear readers, I dare say nine out of ten of you think Cola Monti a very foolish fellow—a girl, a "cry-baby," &c. &c. The reason is, you do n't understand him you nine excellent fellows, who will, I trust, grow up respectable members of society. But the tenth of you may be what Cola was—a genius. The boy's feeling was perfectly sincere and true to nature; that is, to the nature of genius. But fully to comprehend the workings of a mind like his, requires one of similar character and power. If you are disposed to laugh at him, or any one like him, think that possibly the fault may be with your own selves. And even taking the contrary argument, remember that the wise man, while condemning, pities; *it is the fool only who scoffs.*

Cola was roused by a whisper from Seppi.—

"*Signor mio carissimo*, look there, at that little old gentleman! it is the very artist whom I saw, who wrote the letter. Speak to him; he has not seen me, but he has been looking at the Signor for a long time."

And indeed he had. Cola felt that this very minute the keen but kindly gray eyes were reading him through and through. He grew hot and cold; he could hardly breathe. At last, with a desperate courage he went up to the artist, and spoke as he never would have spoken but for the excitement of the last ten minutes.

"Sir, Mr. Crome, forgive me if I am too bold, but you are a great artist, and I would give everything in this world to become one. Did you really mean what you told me in this letter?"

The old painter looked at the paper, recognised it with a smile, but with no outward manifestation of surprise, for he

was a gentleman of sedate, polished manners; a court artist. Then he glanced at the youth, noticed the quivering lip, the kindling eye, put his hand out cordially, but still composedly, and said,

"Yes, my young friend, I really did. Are you come to London to prove the truth of both my offer and my prophecy?"

Cola could scarcely murmur a few inarticulate thanks.

"Well, young gentleman," said the considerate painter, "wait here half-an-hour, and I will come and have some talk with you." And he moved away with a footstep as silken soft as his voice and smile. It really gave him pleasure to find the youth whose beautiful features and intellectual head had attracted his artist-eye, was the same unknown draughtsman whose productions had struck him during his country tour.

Mr. Crome was no enthusiastic philanthropist, only a kind-hearted sensible man. He had not the slightest intention of per-

forming any grand feat of generosity towards Cola, such as adopting or instructing him. He had almost forgotten the letter, written under an impulse of good-natured appreciation; but when it was again brought to his memory, he determined to keep his promise, and give the young artist all the encouragement he could. Perhaps this determination would have been less warm, had not Cola's personal appearance and manners interested him, for Mr. Crome was a gentleman of refined taste. Even his Art was with him less an enthusiasm than a genteel profession, which brought him under the gracious notice of royalty and nobility.

In half-an-hour the same bland smile and low voice came to charm Cola's inmost heart. "We cannot talk here, my young friend; will you accompany me to my house?"

The boy joyfully assented; Seppi, ever thoughtful and respectful, whispering that he would wait for his dear Signor in the gallery. Ere Cola could believe in the

reality of his good fortune, he stood in that paradise of his dreams, an artist's studio.

The room was hardly such as he could have pictured the sacred spot where Michael Angelo or Raffaelle worked. It was a luxurious, elegant apartment, adorned to please the taste of wealthy sitters. It contained many portraits, a few historical pictures, and casts of celebrated statues. The former Cola did not notice much, but over the two latter his eyes lingered with unspeakable delight. Gazing on them, he felt his soul expand; his countenance brightened, his tread grew firmer, and his timidity passed away. The boy of genius had found his true element at last.

Mr. Crome watched his new acquaintance with curiosity and interest. By degrees he drew out all Cola's little history, and the interest deepened more and more.

"I am glad you are an Italian," said he. "I love Italy: I spent many years there in my youth, and painted many pictures too. Look here!" and he showed Cola one or

two Neapolitan and Roman scenes, so vividly pourtrayed that the youth almost wept at the childish memories they brought. The artist was flattered, nay, touched. He laid is hand on Cola's shoulder, and said warmly,—

"My dear boy, you are of the right sort. You will make a painter. Now sit down, and let us see how we are to set about it. To what branch of Art would your taste lead you?"

"To the highest: I want to paint great historical pictures," cried the boy, enthusiastically.

Mr. Crome shook his head. "It will not do in these days: your high Art painters are always in poverty. Try a little lower: begin, as I did, by portrait-painting."

Cola's countenance fell. "I do not like that half so well. It is hard to waste time in reproducing ugly faces, when one longs to paint ideal beauty." And then Cola stopped, confused, for he remembered the

portraits around the room, and one even on the easel.

The court-artist looked nettled. "It must be done, though, unless you prefer to starve. You talk, my good sir, like all young artists; but you will lower your tone by and by, and think it no disgrace to tread in the footsteps of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence."

"Indeed I do not, now," answered Cola, humbly. And then he had tact enough to make no more apologies, but let the conversation change of itself.

Mr. Crome spoke of various ways in which he could assist the fortunes of the young artist, promised to give him introductions to several friends, among whom were names so high in Art, that Cola was ready to dance with joy. He also threw out a few good-natured hints as to the proper course of study, advised him to go to the British Museum, and draw from the antique; and promised to give him the necessary recommendation, when he should

be competent enough to enter as a probationer at the Royal Academy.

"And, remember, I shall always be happy to see you here, *Signor del Monti;* you must allow me to refresh my tongue by the long-disused Italian," said the artist, with a courtly but pleasant smile. "Still, on the whole, I would recommend you to waive that sweet-sounding name, and be plain Mr. Monti."

"I will do all you tell me, kind, generous friend," cried Cola, in a wild impulse of gratitude. And when Mr. Crome's aristocratic-looking footman closed the door after him, the boy walked down Berners-street, his heart beating almost deliriously with hope and joy. Oh! how bright, how glorious the future looked!—To be an artist, to lead a life among all beautiful things, perhaps to rise to fame! He would not have exchanged destinies with the richest young noble in the kingdom.

If those who are celebrated in Art or Literature, who, like Mr. Crome, have

reached "the top of the tree," would only think how little it costs them to stretch out a helping hand to those young strugglers who are trying to climb after them!—Even by a few kind words, what a great deal of happiness they have in their power to bestow!

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FIRST STICK IN THE NEST.

It was like passing out of light into darkness, when, a few hours after leaving Mr. Crome, Cola found himself in the little back-parlour of ——— street, Islington, where Archibald had directed him. In his anxiety, he was a little before the appointed hour, and was not much surprised, when informed by a dirty slipshod servant, that "Misther M'Kaye was not come in." So he and the ever-attendant Seppi sat down to wait, very unceremoniously as the maid evidently thought.

The time was that dullest and most melancholy hour in London, about sunset, and the room faced the east. To Cola it ap-

peared the gloomiest he had ever seen in his life, the dirtiest it certainly was. He thought Bread-street quite delightful in comparison, for that was merely a house of business, while this was the pretence of a home. A very bare and dreary home it looked; just the walls, carpets, chairs, and table, without books, prints, newspapers, or work. The only sign of its being inhabited was a solitary ink-stand, with both bottles empty, two stumps of pens, and an inch of red sealing-wax.

There were a few knocks at the door, and several young men came in successively, stared at Cola and Seppi, and then disposed of themselves in various ways. Some took out books and tried to read by the dim light; others lounged about, talking, or drummed on chair backs. All seemed alike dull, weary, and dispirited. At length M$^{c}$Kaye's voice was heard in the hall, and the hearty welcome and warm greeting between the youths brought back to both their old school-days at Doctor Birch's.

"You must stay for tea: I can ask any visitor I like: not that I trouble Mrs. Jones much in that way, though," said Archy, laughing. "She's the mistress of the house," he added in an explanatory aside. "All these are young fellows who board here, like myself, clerks, medical students, and such like. A queer set though; I don't see much of them, which is a comfort. But here's Mrs. Jones."

And at the same time as tea and candles, (or more properly speaking, *the* candle,) there entered the cross old lady of the railway-carriage, looking as cross as ever. Cola glanced at Seppi, who had as usual crept into the darkest corner he could find, so that he escaped even the sharp eye of Mrs. Jones. She recognised Cola, however, which did not make her tone the milder, when in reply to Archy's polite introduction, she observed:—

"Very happy to see any friend of any gentleman here; on the usual terms, of course, Mr. M'Kaye."

"Of course," repeated Archy, somewhat hastily: he did not want his friend to know that this hospitality cost him half-a-crown. Cola's only impediment to accepting it was Seppi's being with him.

"What, that little fellow here? Really, Cola, do you always intend to carry him about with you in this way?" was McKaye's amused remonstrance.

And hereupon Mrs. Jones having discovered her old enemy, insisted upon it that he should quit the parlour for the kitchen. Cola's indignation was fast rising, and a warfare threatened to break forth, when Seppi put an end to it, by creeping out at the hall-door, having just darted the fiercest lightnings of his black eyes at Mrs. Jones, and whispered that he would wait for his "dear Signor" in the street,

"Let him go," said Archy, mildly, as Monti wanted to follow. "The lad will be much happier there. And, Cola, I think you are hardly wise in taking Seppi out of his proper sphere. He is a good little

fellow, and you owe him much; but one should always take care to pay even debts of gratitude in suitable coin. I must read you a lecture upon this subject, just as I used to do at school. You'll not be vexed, Cola?" And the frank pleasant smile of old, lit up Archibald's face, driving thence all the care-wrinkles and the dust of Bread-street, and showing him, as he was, a fine, stalwart young Scotsman, clear-eyed, clear-headed, and clear-hearted.

Cola acquiesced cheerfully, for his friend had still the same unfailing influence over him. When tea was over, McKaye took him up to his own bed-chamber, where they could converse unreservedly and in quiet. There, by the light of a beautiful full moon, for candles were never plentiful at Mrs. Jones's, the two youths talked together over all their plans, hopes, and fears.

Archibald listened to the relation of the day's adventure, and his cautious disposition tempered Cola's rather too sanguine anticipations.

"Mr. Crome seems good and kind, and you ought to be very much obliged to him. I dare say he will help you a great deal: still, Cola, you must trust chiefly to yourself. I don't know much about Art, but it strikes me that you will have years of hard work and close study before attaining eminence."

"I know I shall," answered Cola; "nevertheless I am not afraid. I'll begin courageously."

Here Archy put in the all-important question, "How!"

"I don't exactly see, but Mr. Crome will show me the way; perhaps find me a sitter for a portrait—anything to make a beginning. He told me to go to him again next week."

"My dear Cola, suppose you begin your plans a little sooner than next week. Where are you going to-night?" persisted his matter-of-fact adviser.

Cola did not know. He had never thought about that. Poor boy! He had

been all day in a bright happy dream; it seemed almost cruel of Archy to wake him.

"You must live somewhere," said McKaye; "suppose you were to come and live here. Mother Jones is not so bad as she looks; she does not cheat, though she is rather stingy. And it would be pleasant for us to be together; would n't it, old friend?"

But there were two great impediments to this—the weekly sum that Archibald paid, looked serious to one whose whole stock in life consisted of twenty pounds. And then, what was to be done with Seppi?

"It won't do, Archy; they would not take the poor lad in here, and I cannot part with him. Nothing shall make me do it," cried Cola, resolutely, as if expecting some opposition.

But McKaye was too right-minded to attempt anything of the kind. He saw clearly that Cola's reason was a just and true one. "No, no; you must not give up that noble-hearted faithful little fellow, and

so you and Seppi must set up together on your own account. Let me think how to manage it."

Archy did think; and his thoughts were as sensible as ever, and as regularly resolved themselves into deeds. The consequence was, that before ten o'clock that night, the two young adventurers were installed in a comfortable room over the way—half parlour, half bed-chamber.

"It is best to begin with little," observed the prudent Archy, as he looked round. "You have all here you want, including a window to the north, which you always told me was indispensable for an artist: I thought of that, you see."

"You think of everything, good, kind Archy! What a comfort you are to me!"

"Am I? Well, I can return the compliment, Cola. The sight of that brown face of yours has really done me good. One gets so weary, and dull, and cross, in this hard-working London life, far away from home! I'm glad you are come, little King

Cole, as that queer fellow Forster used to call you. Do you remember the day you took his likeness and mine?"

"Yes, indeed," and Cola laughed merrily.

"They've got that sketch of me at Aberdeen now, and think so much of it! Won't it be a valuable production some of these days, when people talk of the celebrated artist, Niccolo Monti?"

"And of Sir Archibald M^cKaye, the greatest merchant in England."

"In Scotland, you mean: I'm not going to stay here longer than I can help. We Scotsmen never do. We make our money anywhere we can—and then we go and spend it at home. Well, good night, Cola."

"And good night, Archy." The two friends shook hands laughingly; but the eyes of both were moist, and there was a trembling seriousness in both hearts. They felt that they were no longer boys, but had entered together the responsible duties of manhood.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE STORY OF SIX MONTHS.

—Which, my dear reader, seems a little time to look back upon, especially counting it, as you probably do, from holidays to holidays,—from Midsummer to Christmas. But it seemed very different to the solitary youth, struggling for daily bread amidst the whirl of London; always finding that same daily bread very hard to get, and sometimes not getting it at all. If you could have seen Cola three months after the evening described in our last chapter, you would hardly have recognized the boy. He seemed to have grown ten years older. Poor fellow! if any one now speaks to him of that sad

time, he shakes his head with a serious look, and ejaculates,

"Thank God, it is all over!"

But we must not pass by this period quite so quickly, though we shall not dilate upon it—it is too full of pain. Still, one may draw from Cola's experience the moral which he himself also drew; *viz.* that there is no fortune so hard but that it can be overcome in time, and with patience and perseverance.

Let it not be thought that Mr. Crome failed in his kindliness. He did all he promised; gave Cola introductions,—now and then a little employment, and advice continually. But he was a man of the world; a court-painter. His time and thoughts were too fully occupied to allow of more than those passing kindnesses, which great people can so easily show to little ones. Perhaps, too, he had known no struggles in his own youth, or if he had they were forgotten. Whenever Cola came to Berners-street, Mr. Crome was always

glad to see him: many times he even thought of him spontaneously, and invited him to his house, to meet other guests likely to be of use to a struggling artist. And when he saw the graceful, gentlemanlike youth moving in his well-thronged drawing room, making acquaintances among the rich and celebrated—that is, evening party acquaintances—Mr. Crome never thought of the poor, one-roomed lodging at Islington, the long dinnerless days, occupied in study which brought little pleasure, because no money, or spent in vain search after work that would procure the bare necessaries of life.

Cola Monti thus learned the indispensable lesson—that every young man who wishes to make his way in the world must trust to *himself alone*. Friends he may have; the more the better, and they may help him a great deal, provided he will help himself at the same time. Cola depended too much on the influence and aid of Mr. Crome, and other celebrated artists, to whom the former

had introduced him. These gentlemen praised his numerous designs, which were indeed remarkable for fertility and poetic fancy. They spoke well also of his sketches for oil-paintings. One or two of the most candid gently hinted that he wanted freedom of hand, and correctness in drawing, and advised long study from the antique before he attempted to paint pictures. But still these were all "words, words, words;" the young artist found no work, and consequently earned no money. And every day the twenty pounds was dwindling into shillings, and still there were two growing youths to be clothed, lodged, and fed; himself and his faithful Seppi.

What Cola would have done without the latter during this period, it is impossible to say. The little Italian was as good a housekeeper as a girl: it was he who looked after all the minor details, which his master would have entirely disregarded. Many a time, in his dejection, Cola never noticed the empty cupboard, and regarded as little

the sudden manner in which it was filled. Perhaps the mystery would have been explained, if in his evening strolls by lamplight, the usual resource of all poor weary-hearted London dwellers, he had chanced to meet a little Italian boy, who went singing from street to street, through frost, and fog, and rain, gaining many stray pence, and even silver, through his sweet voice and simple manners.

But Seppi never told his young master of these night adventures, for he knew it would have wounded deeply Cola's proud and generous spirit, to think that even yet he was under obligation to the little organ-boy whom he had rescued from misery. How much fruit had that one kind deed brought forth! What a mere trifle seemed to have influenced the young artist's destiny! But so it often is, when we look back upon the mysteries of life. Only one thing we know, that "as we sow so shall we reap" in the end, whether the seed be good or evil.

And what had become of Archy M'Kaye all this while? He knew not the extent of Cola's troubles, for the Italian was too proud to unfold them to a friend, who was himself struggling so hard. Perhaps he thought, likewise, that Archibald's character was too different from his own to enable him fully to sympathize with the keen sufferings of a sensitive and disappointed heart. But in this he somewhat misjudged Archibald M'Kaye.

The friends did not see much of each other, for Archy was at business all day, and every day too; there being no holidays known at Bread-street, except Christmas-day and Good-Friday. And week after week found Cola plying his crayons at the British Museum; drawing every day, from an early hour until the light faded. In the evenings he tried to make little sketches to sell at small print-shops; but they were rarely taken; and when he had a whole heap of them on his hands, undisposed of, it made him too dispirited to go on working.

Still he mechanically continued drawing at the Museum; now and then painting some small portrait; but he began to smile bitterly at all his day-dreams of being a great artist. He found it much easier to starve. And this was the history of Cola's first six months in London.

## CHAPTER XV.

HOW A BRIGHT MORNING WALK PRODUCED A BRIGHT THOUGHT.

"WHAT, Cola, in bed still, this sunny Christmas morning!" said Archibald, as he entered his friend's lodging.

"I do n't see why I should get up," was the answer. "The Museum is shut, so I can't go there as usual. I like staying in bed, it is so still and quiet, one can doze and forget the world and its cares."

The disconsolate, weary tone revealed to Archy much that he had before only suspected. Besides, the dreary aspect of the fireless room, and the melancholy look of the pale sallow face that lay on the pillow, confirmed the tale.

"Seppi, why do n't you make haste and

light the fire?" said Cola, rather sharply. Then, recollecting himself: "Oh, I forgot; the lad is gone out for breakfast, if he can get it. You'll excuse this, M^c^Kaye; all the world knows a poor artist is no Crœsus," he added with a bitter laugh.

Archy would not notice it. "Come, Cola," he said cheerfully, "try and get up without a fire: you know the old rhyme—

'Early to bed and early to rise,
Is the way to grow healthy, wealthy, and wise.'"

"I shall never attain to the two latter; so I care little about the first. The longer one lives, the more trouble one has; and perhaps it is best to cut the matter short at once," replied the poor youth, whose state of mind was really pitiable. M^c^Kaye penetrated it at once, and like a true friend went silently to work, in order to remedy it. This time he abstained from reading Cola a lecture; he knew it would not do. The boy needed to be roused and cheered, not argued with; and the only way was to draw him out of himself and his miseries.

"Cola, my dear fellow, this will never do; I can't be left to spend a dull Christmas-day all by myself, at Mother Jones's. Here is as bright a winter-day as ever shone out of the sky, and I want to enjoy it with you. Let us both take a run out into the country, up to Highgate or Hampstead. I'll give you a Christmas dinner, in some nice quiet roadside inn, and we'll walk home by star-light. There's a first-rate plan, eh! my boy?"

"You are very good, but I should only bore you. Let me stay here, Archy, and rest."

"Well I call that rather too bad, after I have planned the excursion all this week! Why, it would have been delicious, just like our holidays together at the old doctor's! However, if you will spoil my pleasure, you must. Only, I'll not be driven out alone. I'll not stir an inch all day," said Archy, settling himself very composedly on one chair, with his feet on the other. "Now, you ill-natured fellow, go to sleep

again, if you like; I'll call you at dinner-time."

Cola, miserable as he was, could not help laughing. "Don't abuse me so, Archy; but indeed I am very dull and unhappy." The laugh ended in a heavy sigh, and he put both his hands over his face.

M'Kaye rose up and took them away gently. "Why did you not tell your friend Archy this, long before now? Isn't he as good as an elder brother to you, scoldings included? Come, now, be a good fellow and get up; and we'll talk over the misery; it will not look so black out in the open country as here. And we'll find some way to get out of it, may be," said Archibald affectionately.

Cola obeyed him like a child. They stayed until Seppi came in and prepared breakfast, of which M'Kaye pretended to partake heartily, though he was not in the least hungry. And indeed the frugal, almost nauseous meal, was enough to drive hunger away, In another hour he and

Cola were strolling arm-in-arm up the Highgate-road.

There is hardly a more beautiful walk anywere near London than this same road. It looked so cheerful in the clear frosty morning, with its hawthorn and rose-hedges all besprinkled with crimson-berries, the ground crisp and pleasant underfoot, and overhead the bluest of winter skies. And then, at every turn of the winding and hilly road, came small beautiful "bits," as Cola, in artist-phrase entitled them;—tiny fragments, of landscape, not grand indeed, but very charming and refreshing, especially to one who for months had looked on nothing but bricks and mortar.

Cola's spirit rose. He leaned against the stile that leads from the hill nearest to Highgate, down a green meadow slope, to the Cemetery. He breathed the fresh morning air, and drank in with a painter's eye and soul the view before him. The full, bounding heart of youth beat once more in his bosom, and his eyes almost overflowed.

Archy stood still beside him, watching in glad silence the change that had come over the careworn face.

"How pleasant this is!" cried Monti at last. "I begin to think the world is not so wretched after all; I have a great mind to give it another trial. Don't smile, Archy," continued he; "but if you knew what miserable wicked thoughts I have had of late"—

"Why so?"

"Because I am disappointed in all I attempt. It is very hard to wait day after day, and have no chance of anything but starvation; and sometimes Seppi and I have not been so far off that already."

"My poor Cola, and I never knew it!"

"Of course not, and you would not have known it now, only I am so down-hearted and foolish, and you are so kind."

"This will never do, my dear lad; I can't stand by and see you breaking your heart and pining away in this quiet composed fashion, until you give me the satisfaction

of finding you a comfortable home out there," answered McKaye, pointing to the Highgate cemetery before them, and making a desperate attempt at comicality, which he generally did when much affected. "Just throw some light on the subject, will you? let me into your matters a little. We can hold a cabinet-council very conveniently on this stile. Begin, my boy!"

And partly with seriousness, partly by a little harmless jesting, Archibald succeeded in arriving at the true state of affairs. He walked on thoughtfully for a little, and then said,—

"Cola, it strikes me you are on the wrong tack. Instead of waiting until people find you employment, (I beg your pardon for applying the term to such a grand thing as Art,) you ought to look for it yourself. Don't trust any longer to these great folk; stand up boldly on your own account. You are a very clever fellow, and I 'll never believe but that such talent as yours will make its way."

"Much obliged to you, Archy, for your good opinion; but how am I to convert talent into money? I am not yet skilful in painting; nobody would buy my daubs, and it torments me even to have to disgrace myself by selling such rubbish, when, with a little experience, I might do something creditable. What am I to turn to, in order to find bread, while I work out the powers which I feel I have within me?"

"That is just what I have been considering. Now, here is my plan. You know all the world is mad for illustrated books, and I am sure I have seen designs of yours enough to paper a room. (Don't look so vexed, dear Cola, you know my ways.) With your fertile imagination and ready hand, why not turn wood-draughtsman?"

"Wood-draughtsman!" echoed the young artist, rather surprised, and perhaps a little humiliated.

"Yes; it is an excellent profession, and will serve until better times come. Besides, you might keep on with the painting still."

"But I know no Art-publishers; and have no introductions."

"Who cares for introductions? My dear fellow, stand on your own feet; trust to your own talents. Never fear but they will find their proper level. Go from one publisher to another, as a youth like you may do without lowering the dignity of Art. Take your portfolio under your arm, and your own genius will be your best introduction. For you have genius, Cola, and I know and feel it, though I do laugh at you sometimes. You'll get work, never fear. Take my word for it, that a clever fellow like you need never starve, if to his talent he only adds a little common sense, so as to show him how to use it. People will find out his value, and treat him kindly too; for the world, like a certain other individual of whom I do n't think it proper to speak, is by no means as black as it's painted."

Cola laughed merrily. "You are a wise fellow, Archy, though your wisdom comes

out chiefly in a joke. I'll think over what you say."

"And act upon it, Cola?"

"I will; there's my hand as a pledge. I feel brave already—could face all the Art-publishers in London. Let me see; to-morrow is Saturday; and these English people eat and drink so much on Christmas-day, that they are never thoroughly awake the day after. But on Monday I will set about your scheme. Dear Archy, how much lighter you have made my heart!"

They took the homeward walk by starlight, as M^c^Kaye had planned, and the quiet beautiful night drew their hearts nearer together. Their talk comprehended the deepest feelings of both; Cola's hopes of the future, with all his artist-dreams;—and the far-off cottage near Aberdeen, whither all the strong home-affections of the young Scotsman ever turned.

"You shall go there some time, Cola," said Archy. "I long to show you my father and mother, and the five boys—and my little

sister Jessie. She's grown a woman now though. You shall take all their likenesses in a family group. But by then you will have got far above portrait-painting, and be working at grand historical pictures, with figures ten feet high—*à la* Michel Angelo."

Cola's cheerful laugh again rang through the clear frosty air. He had recovered that lost talisman, without which youth—especially youth allied with genius—cannot long exist. He could once more walk through the world erect, for he had hope in his bosom.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE ARTIST AND THE PUBLISHER.

In spite of all his brave resolutions, Cola felt somewhat out of his element, and decidedly uncomfortable, when he found himself trudging along on the wettest of wet December mornings, prepared for the first time to make of his beloved and revered Art a marketable commodity. This circumstance was not quite pleasant to him; it seemed to the enthusiastic young artist rather degrading to have to go and ask for work, like a bricklayer's labourer. For though conscious of his own personal humility, Cola had a strong sense of the dignity of his Art; and in those days our great painters had not yet lent their hands—

and worthily too—to elevate public taste, proving by their own example that real genius ennobles whatever it touches.

"I wonder what Mr. Crome, Mr. ——, or Mr. —— would say, if they saw me now, and knew the business I was about!" thought Cola, feeling half ashamed. "And yet one must have bread, and it is really no disgrace for an artist to be a wood-draughtsman."

Nevertheless, when the youth found himself within the precincts of one of those great publishing houses, which were then beginning to set the fashion of illustrated works, he was oppressed by that curious mixture of pride and timidity which marked his character. During the half-hour that he had to wait the important interview, his courage was gradually oozing out at his finger ends. He clutched his portfolio with a nervous grasp; his shyness, as is not unfrequently the case with persons of similar temperament, taking the form and outward manifestations of extreme vanity, he fancied

that all the eyes of all the publisher's clerks were directed upon him, in curious and contemptuous inquiry. And then his pride sinking through various gradations to the most perfect self-distrust, he began to think himself quite incompetent for even the branch of Art he had a few hours before felt disposed to contemn, and but for the shame of flying from those six pair of optics, he would certainly have made a precipitate retreat.

"Mr. —— will see you now," was the dread summons, and Cola stood in the presence-chamber, his portfolio under his arm. The youth of genius was now brought for the first time into an atmosphere of business. It positively froze him; he quailed beneath the questionings of the piercing little eyes, which silently awaited his explanation. It came with a trembling hesitation and a total and pitiable want of self-confidence, that apparently did not argue much in the young artist's favour with the lofty personage he addressed.

"Have you drawn much on wood? and what houses have employed you?" were the first questions most natural, and most courteously asked, but which struck poor Cola with dismay. His negative replies brought back merely an impressive "hem!" but no other observation of any kind.

Monti opened his portfolio; and the publisher turned over, with a hand of most business-like carelessness, the fruits of many a long evening of artist dreaming. "Patient Griseldis," "Undine," "Hyperion," were scanned with glances whose calm indifference was almost more disagreeable than the critical eye of a connoisseur. Not a word either of praise or blame escaped this polite individual; he shut the book and returned it.

"I am sorry, sir, but our arrangements for the season, with regard to illustration, are already completed; good morning!"

It was well for Cola that his energy and determination, though not easily roused, when once fairly wound up, sustained him

for a long time. Still, he was in a frame of mind very much akin to desperation, when, after two or three disappointments, he entered the door of the last Art-publisher on the list which the far-seeing Archibald had enumerated.

"Well, young man, what do you want?" was the straightforward question of this personage, an ugly, blunt-spoken man. But there was a touch of good-nature in his roughness that made it infinitely more promising than the terrible politeness of the first one.

Cola went through the form of explanation, now become stereotyped in his memory with painful vividness.

"Humph! a young artist; can't find bread by oil-painting, so condescends to wood—isn't that it?"

Cola did not approve of this form of phrase, and, colouring deeply, said so.

"Well, never mind mere words. Don't lose your temper. Show me your drawings."

He examined the treasure-laden portfolio

for a long time, and, as Cola fancied, with the air of a man who knew something about it. The youth felt his heart warm to the ugly face—over which an unmistakeable expression of interest, if not satisfaction—seemed gradually to creep. But the charm was well-nigh dispelled, when the publisher turned suddenly round, saying,—

"Young man, I dare say you think yourself a genius!"

Cola, much confused, drew back.

"Well, well, never mind, for I happen to think so too. Give me your hand."

The young artist responded to the grasp, his cheek varying from red to pale and his lip almost quivering at this unexpected kindness.

"I like this, and this; only there's a leg out of drawing, and here's a rather awkward *pose*. You see I know something about the matter, though I am no painter myself," said this worthy individual, who came to prove to the almost despairing Cola, that even the world of publishers owned a few

men with shrewd common sense and kindly hearts. "How long have you practised wood-drawing?"

"I have never yet tried it, sir."

A grimace passed over the ugly face, not improving its beauty. "I see you don't know much of the world, young man. In our business, and I suppose in nearly every other, the usual way of trying to get on, is by never acknowledging that you are ignorant of anything. Excuse me, but, though I like you all the better for your candour, it is rather comical that you should come and ask me for employment here, when you have never touched a block in your life. Do you know what wood-drawing is?"

"I suppose, like any other kind of drawing."

"Not at all; it is a craft of itself, requiring regular learning and plenty of practice, before you can get the knack of it. Look here,"—and he touched one of Cola's designs,—"you have a free hand; you sketch boldly; but such a bit as this fine cross hatching would drive an engraver crazy."

And then, with a patience and clearness that did equal credit to his good nature and his acquaintance with the subject, he explained to Monti the peculiarities of wood-drawing; the necessity for firm, sharp outline, simple forms, and careful, not too elaborate work, with other technicalities which are indispensable in making pencil and graver unite together to produce a perfect whole.

"That's the reason the drawings of some of our cleverest artists look atrocious when engraved," said he, "because these big fellows will not have the patience to acquire what they consider a lower style. They stand up for their crotchets, and the engravers for theirs, till it comes to a regular battle. I wonder how the world would get on, if people did not try to accommodate one another now and then! There's a maxim for you, young gentleman, if you are not above following it; and so you have a lesson in wood-drawing and ethics at once."

"Thank you very much for both, sir," answered Cola; but his tone, though grateful,

was desponding; and he began to refasten his eternal portfolio with a heavy sigh.

The good-natured publisher noticed it. "What! faint hearted at your age? really, my young friend, why do you pull such a long face on the matter? I hope I have said nothing to discourage you."

"You have said everything kind, I am sure; but there seems little chance for me, as of course I cannot ask you to employ me, when I am quite incompetent to the work."

"But that is no reason why you should remain incompetent, and I am not aware that I have dismissed you yet; so put down your hat, and re-seat yourself." Cola obeyed.

"In plain English," pursued he of the nice, good, ugly face, leaning that ill-favoured visage on his hands, and bringing it to a level with Cola's beautiful and now pale countenance. "In plain English, I have such droves of small artists tormenting me—young, self-conceited cubs, would-be geniuses — that a quiet simple-mannered

youth, who seems to have the real thing in him, and no sham, is quite a relief. I like you. I would help you if I could; only you must first learn how to help yourself. Will you take some blocks, and practice, until you can draw on wood well enough to suit me? It will take time and patience, but it would be worth your while, for the profession is profitable, and growing more so every day."

Cola joyfully assented, his grateful heart beaming in his eyes.

"And now, just as a matter of form, or rather because I should like to know a little more about you, tell me your name, and whether you are a stranger here, or have acquaintances among London artists?

The youth mentioned Mr. Crome, and one or two others of his friends—men of sufficient celebrity to astonish the publisher.

"Why did you not mention this before? it might have been of use to you. Any other young man would have had these great names perpetually on his tongue. and

have introduced himself everywhere by means of them."

The young Italian drew up his slight figure with a just pride in himself and in his Art. "If I am worth nothing in myself, I doubt if I should be made of more value by hanging on the skirts of other people."

"Bravo, Mr. Monti! You are quite right in the main," was the involuntary exclamation of the worthy publisher, as he rose to end the interview. "And that sort of feeling is the right feeling; which I wish your fellow-artists were sharp enough to see. Talent always finds its level, when it is balanced by hard work and common sense besides. Only you must not get too high and haughty, until you are strong enough to stand alone. And now, take your blocks, go and try your best, and success to you! Good morning."

"Well," thought Cola, as with a lightened heart he turned homeward, "if this is what Archy calls 'working one's way,' and 'standing on one's own feet,' I think I have

made a good beginning. It seems to me that getting on in the world is like tramping through a bed of nettles; put your feet out boldly, and you'll not get much stung."

This fine poetical and moral sentiment brought Cola's walk, — as it does our chapter, — to a very appropriate termination.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HIGH ART STUDIES.

It required every grain of patience Cola could muster—and unfortunately, like many another genius, he possessed this necessary commodity in homœopathic quantities—before he could succeed in becoming a tolerable good wood-draughtsman. He had wonderful fertility in design, and an imagination that almost carried him away; but these required to be tamed down before they could be of much use to him in the new handicraft, to which he had devoted his pencil for a season.

Besides, the whole tendency of his mind was for what Archibald gaily entitled, "the grand style and Michel Angelo." He could

not bear to descend from the sublime of a gigantic drawing—the Theseus or the Gladiator, for instance—to the ridiculous of some small tail-piece in a child's book. He liked to dash away with charcoal or crayon, "not sketching, but building a man," as the Academy pupils said of Fuseli; and the pencil refinements of wood-drawing were to Cola at first not only disagreeable but almost impracticable. It would perhaps reflect but little credit on the young artist's evenness of temper, were I to relate how many spoiled blocks he sometimes sent whirling across the room, vowing that he would starve sooner than torment himself with such contemptible work.

But if he caught sight of Seppi's thin face, as the lad quietly picked up these missiles, Cola was always mollified and calmed at once. Sometimes in his fits of anger or despondency, he began to talk and think, as most other young and sensitive minds do, that life is a weary burden, and he did not care how soon he died. But

then the gentle loving face of his little countryman was a silent monitor, proclaiming the truth,—which these despairing misery-mongers sometimes forget,—that no one can go out of the world without leaving some one to mourn; and if we would fain die to please ourselves, we have no right, by such a summary exit, to inflict pain on other people.

This doctrine was preached over and over again by Archy M^c^Kaye, in his own dry, half-serious, half-comical manner, which often touched Cola sensibly, when a grave discourse would have been utterly thrown away. And since that Christmas-day ramble the sympathy between the two friends seemed to have increased more and more, not only in kind feeling,—for there it never failed,—but even in taste. Cola's little room, which now began to look a great deal more cheerful under the influence of his improved fortunes, was perpetually visited by Archibald; and the young artist had no longer any reluctance in showing all he did, and in

talking over all he thought. Indeed, as he often said jestingly, he was educating Archibald into a future picture-buyer and connoisseur.

As for the young painter himself, he pursued his noble and beautiful Art with an energy and enthusiasm worthy of it and of himself. He suffered nothing to allure him from it—no idleness, no youthful pleasures; and in his Art-studies he was daunted by no dfficulties. Archibald often laughed when he found the poetical and imaginative Cola plunged in the mysteries of some dry work on painting, or making careful anatomical drawings, as if the human skeleton were as interesting a subject for the pencil as the Apollo Belvidere. It was indeed a beautiful and touching thing to see how every energy of his young and ardent mind was directed to the *one* pursuit, which engrossed all its powers. But such is always the case with true geuius—for genius is work.

It was curious sometimes to notice the

amusing expedients to which Monti was obliged to resort, in the furtherance of his artistic studies. McKaye walked in one evening, and found him working away at the home-manufactured easel; the workmanship of the same friendly hand whose mechanical ingenuity had fabricated many a picture-frame in the old school-days. Seppi, wrapped in a comical sort of blanket-drapery, reclined in a grand attitude on the table, holding the candle above his head, and thus serving at once as a model and chandelier. Archibald could not help smiling at the artist and his sitter; but the former was so absorbed that he merely nodded his head, with a "Well, Archy!" Seppi looked as solemn as a judge, lest he should, by any change of limb or feature, annoy his dear Signor, whom he verily believed to be the greatest painter that ever lived.

Archibald looked over his friend's shoulder, at the studies which Cola was making for a picture which he had continually in his mind. Seppi figured there

under all characters, and in every variety of drapery. He was a useful individual, and truly his place was no sinecure.

"I'm getting on, you see," said Monti. "I shall begin the picture soon,—when the days are longer, and the Academy is closed. It would not do to give up studying there, you know. That good old soul, E——, was quite right when he advised me to draw well before I tried to paint. Stand out of the light, please, Archy! for I must finish this. I might never get such a grand bit of drapery again. Keep still, Seppi!"

And on dashed the charcoal, while M^c^Kaye sat watching the wonderfully free hand of the young artist.

"How goes on the wood-drawing, Cola!" inquired he, after a little.

"Oh, do n't talk about it, there's a good fellow!" answered the other, with an uneasy shrug. "I've been working away every night this week: I will have a little rest, now, I hope."

But that very minute came a knock at

the door, and a parcel from Mr.——; the same good, ugly-looking publisher, who now gave Cola regular employment. It contained half-a-dozen small blocks, which were immediately wanted for an illustrated edition of Goody Two-Shoes.

Michel Angelo himself could not have cast them down with an air of more sublime indignation than did Cola Monti!

"Now that is too bad! is it not, Archy? When my mind is full of the picture, and I want a little leisure to work it out, to have to do these contemptible things! I'll write to Mr. ——, and give them up altogether. I wonder what he means by sending me such nonsense to illustrate! This is the third baby-book I have had: it is a disgrace to an artist!"

Archibald had at first felt strongly inclined to laugh; but when he saw how seriously annoyed his friend appeared, he changed his mind.

"My dear fellow," said the grave young Scotsman, "I don't consider it any disgrace

at all. The grand thing is not what a man does, but how he does it. I would advise you to take this commission, and execute it to the best of your power."

"Nonsense! anything is good enough for such a mean task."

"I don't agree with you there. Never sink your genius down to the level of your work, but elevate the work by your genius. Put as much talent as ever you can into these ugly little wood-blocks. Why, Cola," and Archy's face relaxed into its pleasant irresistible smile, "your very particular friend, Michel Angelo, would have made, with a burnt stick and the side of a wall, a grander work than some modern artists could accomplish with yards of canvas and oceans of paint. See if you cannot do the same in your small way. Try and be the Michel Angelo of wood-designers."

Cola laughed, in spite of himself. "Bravo, Archy! your Aphorisms on Art would rival Hazlitt's: where did you learn it all—at Bread-street?"

McKaye did not look in the least offended, he knew Cola too well. "I was not born at Bread-street, remember!" said he, quite glad to see that his words had calmed the storm a little. "That is only the work-a-day half of me which is kept among the carpets; the other half, and the best, belongs to the Highland hills. I gathered up all my wisdom there. And besides," added he more seriously, "I think I am all the better, dear Cola, for having you near me, to keep me from sinking into a regular money-getting city fellow, and to put me in mind of the higher and more beautiful things of life. My dull plodding existence would be duller still, if I had not an artist for my friend, even though he is a wild young genius, like Cola Monti."

—"Who storms and rages, and will not listen to reason on any account whatever, for which he is heartily ashamed of himself, Archy," cried the other, with a hearty hand-clasp that atoned for all.

"But, who is yet the best fellow in the

world; which fact is ready to be maintained in single-combat against any individual who denies the fact, by his old friend, quiet, steady-going Archibald McKaye. But come," added the young Scotsman, "here we are keeping poor Seppi in his grand attitude, and one can't lie long as a wounded warrior without getting the cramp; besides, a small piece of blanket-drapery is not quite so warm as coat and trousers. Make haste, Cola! finish your study, and then see how much of your beloved High Art you can put into Goody Two-Shoes."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING THAT PROSPERITY HAS ITS DANGERS.

Cola's fortunes improved slowly, but surely. He migrated from the shabby lodging at Islington two miles further north, where his favourite Hampstead breezes could blow in at the rose-scented window of his little painting-room;—for he had arrived at the dignity of two rooms, with a closet for Seppi. This same faithful attendant had risen in the world along with his master. Seppi's velveteen jacket had given place to good plain attire, and his clear boy's voice was no longer heard singing in the dark wintry streets. He was acquiring an education too, commenced at the Italian school,

which that good man, Joseph Mazzini, first established for his poor wandering countrymen; Cola, in his few leisure hours, completing the work thus began, and making quite a clever well-informed youth of his little servant.

During this long weary probation of deep poverty, the young artist had never known what it was to have a shilling to spend, on any intellectual amusement: books, picture-galleries, theatres, all those harmless recreations, which to a mind of his stamp are almost indispensable, were wholly unattainable. Now he began to enjoy a few of them, with that intense appreciation and delight, which, in a nature highly sensitive and finely moulded, is much keener than in ordinary characters. But all his pleasures were taken in moderation; and even sober Archy M^cKaye, who cared little about such things himself, merely shook his head once or twice at first. and then acknowledged there was no harm in a little amusement now and then.

"Only remember, work before play!" was his gentle admonition, repeated perhaps a degree oftener, as the spring of Cola's second year in London advanced, and the young artist was busily engaged on that important work—his first Academy Picture. It was indeed the grand crisis of his life, as he and Archibald well knew; and when the painting advanced, its progress formed the chief topic of conversation with them both. Archy was almost as anxious as his friend, and Cola often laughingly told him he was getting quite a critic and connoisseur in Art. Indeed, the two schoolmates were assimilating more and more, and as neither made any other warm friendship, theirs grew into an almost brotherly affection.

At last, to alter the even current of their lives, came chance, in the shape of a third old school-mate.

Cola and Archy were riding from the city together, in that very unromantic conveyance, an omnibus. It was after the hour when city-people throng in such num-

bers from their little dens of offices to the welcome air even of Islington and Camden Town, consequently our two friends were the only passengers. However, a third soon came in;—a youth who was evidently trying his utmost to seem a man, by means of the most stylish dress possible, a small apology for a moustache, apparently zealously cultivated, a cane, and an eye-glass. This latter he used to scan his fellow-passengers with an air of careless indifference, which soon changed to undisguised surprise.

"'Pon my life, that's odd! Shake hands, old fellow! for I'll bet anything you are the very identical Archy M^cKaye."

"And you're Morris Woodhouse! who would have thought of meeting you here?" was the cordial answer, "Why, here are three of us, old school-fellows: don't you remember Cola Monti?"

"What! is that my old enemy, little King Cole? Give us your paw, my boy! How you are altered!"

And a hearty greeting passed between the youths; for at all times one is glad to meet old school-mates, and revive old associations. Then they began to talk; Morris rattling away, with a curious mixture of his former boyish frankness, and his newly-acquired college affectations.

"Came up from Cambridge to see the old governor, who took it in his head to be near going off, like this," and Woodhouse snapped his fingers. "But he changed his mind—got better; so I left him, and ran up here, to see a little of town-life before the vacation's out. It don't signify much to the governor; he's quite childish now."

Archy looked surprised and rather disgusted; but the hopeful "only son and heir" went on describing, with great gusto, the pleasures of a college-life, as it presents itself to young gentlemen of large expectations. Still there was a ready wit and talent about Morris Woodhouse, that made him a most amusing companion: Cola, especially, was attracted by his dashing and

clever chat, for it could hardly be called conversation.

"And now, my lads, how goes the world with you?" said Morris, pausing for the first time to think about some one beside himself. "You have turned merchant, as I hear, M^cKaye; given up Latin and Greek for ledger and counting-house. Pleasant, is n't it?" And the young collegian made a half-contemptuous grimace.

"I do n't like it, but it must be done," answered Archibald, steadily and unmoved. "I work very hard at Bread-street, and I'm not ashamed of it either."

"Oh, no! of course not," said Morris, a little confounded. "And King Cole, what have you turned to? Made any nice little arrangements with the counts, your cousins, and the princes, your ancestors, eh?"

"I am an artist," replied Cola, somewhat proudly, and with a heightened colour.

"Well, I never! So that was the end of your sketching and caricaturing! Who 'd

have thought that Dr. Birch would have turned out a genius from among his lads. And you have really joined the tribe of seedy-looking fellows; with long hair and turned-down collars, as I hear all artists described?"

"I trust I do not come under the category," said Cola; and though somewhat vexed, could not help smiling.

"No; I don't see that you do, exactly," cried Woodhouse, elevating his eye-glass. "Good-looking young man, dark hair, close and curly, black neckerchief; but what a one it is! Why, Monti, you'd be hunted out of college for sporting such a rag! De—cidedly ungentlemanly!" and the fashionable youth returned to his affected drawl, which, to Cola's quick sense of the ludicrous, was really amusing.

"I hope I shall never make a fool of myself by dressing either like a would-be artist or a dandy; being too poor for the latter, and having a hearty contempt for the former," observed he. "One does not

measure a fellow's genius by the length of his hair; and when a man takes extraordinary care of the outside of his head, it is generally a sign that he has little or nothing in the inside of it. That is not my remark, however; 't is one of Archy's wise saws," continued Monti, with a glance at his friend, who was preparing to alight at the end of his own street.

But Woodhouse put in a cordial objection to their parting thus, and invited both of his old acquaintances to dine with him.

"We'll do it in style. I've capital claret at my lodgings, and cigars, real Havannas, and Meerschaums too: which do you smoke, King Cole?" said the youth, with the careless, independent air of one who thought himself quite a man, and a man of fashion too.

"I don't smoke at all; I should not like it, I fancy," answered the simple-minded Cola. At which Morris cast up his eyes, and rubbed his incipient moustache

with his cane, in a silent expression of compassionate wonder.

"Well, you'll both come; we'll manage to make a night of it, somehow or other: perhaps drop in at the Opera, which opens to-night. I've got tickets."

"That will be delicious," cried the enthusiastic Italian, to whom a pleasure so rare conveyed delight inexpressible. "You will come, Archy; only this once!"

But Archy had to be at Bread-street by nine: his quiet regular habits were not easily broken in upon;—also, he was not very much fascinated with the society of Morris Woodhouse, and never cared to visit the Opera. A friendly discussion ended in his bidding adieu to both the others, and taking his way to the dull abode of Mrs. Jones. Only, as he jumped out of the omnibus, he managed to whisper to his friend—

"I say, Cola, take care of yourself: don't forget the picture!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A TIME OF DARKNESS.

THE picture did indeed stand a chance of being forgotten, or at least neglected. Cola tried to set to work again on the next day, but it was in vain; he was too tired to paint. He had come home at three in the morning; not indeed after any excesses, for Cola's nature was too refined and pure to allow him ever to become either a glutton or a wine-bibber. But he had supped with Morris after the Opera, and then had to walk home three miles, through a bleak March night. He reached his lodgings, his brains still dizzied by the fumes of cigars, and his frame thoroughly chilled and exhausted with bodily fatigue, after mental

excitement. He scolded poor Seppi for having gone to sleep and let the fire out, and then went wearily to bed. He rose, not as was his custom, with the lark, that sang merrily over the Highgate fields, but with the baker's cart, that never came until twelve, A.M. The picture had little attractions this morning.

He sat before it; the palette, which Seppi regularly set, getting dryer and dryer. His head ached, his hand was unsteady; he found fault with what he had already done, and yet felt too stupid to improve it. At last he began to think it was no use working that day, and would turn out for a walk. But before he had summoned the resolution necessary to take hat and gloves, a visitor came in: it was Morris Woodhouse.

"Really, old fellow, how knocked up you look! How d'ye feel, eh? As if you had eaten an apple-dumpling, and it had got into your head?"

Cola laughed, though he experienced a

slight sensation of shame. But this was less on account of his last night's exploit, than of its effects. He felt annoyed that he could not stand dissipation as well as the other could.

"Come, do 'nt be a girl; you 'll get used to this sort of work in time," said Morris, with a patronizing air. "On with your hat, and we 'll take a run down the river, to Richmond, just to freshen you up."

The proposal sounded most welcome to the poor jaded boy. It was a lovely spring morning; the banks of the river would look beautiful. Besides, argued Cola to himself, an artist must study nature in the open air as well as paint at home; so it would not be throwing away a day.

But he did contrive to throw away the day, nevertheless, and the next day too; for the repetition of late hours entailed the sacrifice of that precious morning freshness in body and mind, without which intellectual labour is but vain, or else pursued with a struggle and effort that risks both health

and peace. Then Sunday came, with Archibald to dinner, as usual; but that true and steady friend looked gravely at the small progress made in the picture, and Cola resolved that on Monday morning he would "turn over a new leaf."

This metaphorical performance is one more easily talked of than done, especially to a youth of Cola's temperament—energetic in great things, but feeble and vacillating in the smaller affairs of life. He found the "leaf" to stick very much; and at last he determined not to try to turn it over at all, until Woodhouse was gone. Every day the young collegian talked of being off to Cambridge, and it was not worth while vexing him by refusing the continual amusements which his somewhat reckless generosity provided for his schoolmate.

Seven days passed—fourteen:—it was the last week in March, that week of all weeks to the artist brotherhood. Our poor Cola sat before his unfinished picture in

perfect despair. Morris had at last gone, and, the whirl of amusement over, the young painter had time to think what it had cost him.

A year's prospects, perhaps the good fortune of a life-time, thrown away for one short season of pleasure! He hated, despised himself; he would have wrung his hands, and wept like a child, only he was not alone; Archibald stood behind, with an expression of deep regret on his calm, serious face.

"It is no use lamenting, Cola," he said, kindly; "you must try again next year. The picture could not be finished now, if you were to work ever so hard."

"But it *shall* be finished!" cried Cola, almost frantically. "I will do it, if I die over it!"

M^c^Kaye shook his head. "My dear Cola, judging by the rate at which you used to paint, it would take two or three weeks' work, and you have only ten days before the day of sending in to the Academy."

"I can make them twenty, by adding the nights. Don't thwart me, Archibald; don't, if you ever cared for me in your life!" he added, pleading with a touching emphasis. "I have been a fool, an idiot! I know I have, but I will make up for it. The picture must be finished, or it will drive me mad!"

And it was finished. Night and day Cola worked; allowing himself only an hour or two for sleep, and scarcely taking any food. His wild and desperate energy sustained him to a degree almost miraculous. Under the influence of this terrible excitement, his powers seemed redoubled; he painted as he had never painted before. Archibald, evening after evening, walked up from Islington, not to talk or reason,—he dared not do that in Cola's present state,—but to sit quietly in the painting-room, watching his labours, and at times encouraging them with a few subdued words of praise, which Cola sometimes scarcely

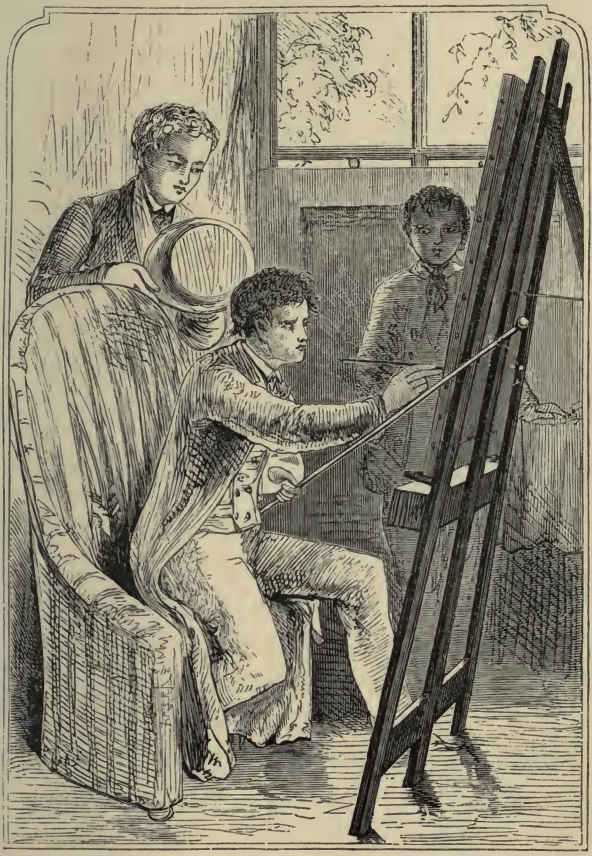
heard. Even M'Kaye was astounded by the almost marvellous way in which, day after day, the picture advanced to completion beneath the young artist's hand; and as he looked he could not but acknowledge that there is nothing in this world so strong, so daring, so all-powerful as genius.

The first Monday in April came—there were but four-and-twenty hours left; Tuesday—there were but twelve! Seppi stood by with the untasted dinner, his bright black eyes continually filling with tears. He dared not even speak to his young master, who with wild and haggard looks, was painting still.

The clock struck six, as Cola's now trembling hand put the last stroke to his picture, and sank on a chair.

"It will do now, I think; it will not disgrace me at least."

"No, indeed it will not, dear Cola! It is a beautiful picture," whispered the gentle, encouraging voice of Archy, who had come



M'c Kaye was astounded by the almost marvellous manner in which the picture advanced to completion.

p. 202.

direct from Bread-street, hither. "And now, do have some dinner, or, what will be better for you, some tea."

"No, no, I can't eat; we shall lose the time; the Academy will be shut. Seppi! I must have a cab, and go there at once."

Archibald saw resistance would have been vain and cruel, so he quietly suffered his friend to step into the cab, and followed him. All the long ride to Trafalgar-square, Cola did not utter a single word, but sat motionless, with his picture in his arms. M^cKaye offered to hold it; but the other rejected his aid with a slight motion of the head. At last Cola relinquished the darling first-fruits of his genius, with a look something like that of a mother parting from a beloved child, and then sank fainting into his friend's arms.

That night Cola Monti was in a brain-fever.

## CHAPTER XX.

### JOY AT LAST.

THE poor young artist lay ill for several weeks. Indeed, during the whole of April, he never awoke to a clear consciousness of what was passing around him. His overtasked brain seemed to settle into a dull torpor; he made no inquiries about his picture, and appeared to have forgotten all concerning it. Perhaps, in some respects, this state of oblivion was fortunate, as it saved him from that racking suspense which would at any time have been torture to his sensitive mind.

Cola was well-cared for during his illness; how could it be otherwise, with Seppi

for nurse and servant, and Archy for a friend? They both watched over him with unceasing affection, the former hardly taking rest either night or day. At length the poor invalid was able to be carried down stairs in M^c^Kaye's strong arms, Seppi following after, bearing half-a-dozen unnecessary pillows, and almost weeping with joy.

It was a lovely evening, at the close of April, and the little room, half-parlour half-studio, looked very pleasant, China-roses peeping in at the window, and between the casts which adorned the mantelpiece, Seppi had placed glasses full of spring flowers. He had taken care, too, to arrange the various legs, and arms, and *torsi* of plaster, in what he considered excellent order, and the long-disused easel was placed in one corner.

Cola looked at it, then round the room, and again at his beloved easel. He laid his head, feeble as a child's, on Archy's shoulder, and burst into tears.

After this evening, his strength returned rapidly. He was very gentle and patient; did not express much anxiety about his picture; indeed, he seldom spoke of it, until the opening of the Exhibition. Then he grew less calm, and asked Archibald, not restlessly, but with a sort of child-like longing, when he would let him try to get as far as the Academy.

"I know you cannot go, Archy, now that you stay so late at Bread-street. And, indeed, I hardly hope or expect that the picture will be in; it would be more happiness than I deserve; I who made myself ill so wickedly, and have given you and poor Seppi so much care and trouble. But still I should like to know."

"You shall know, dear Cola; you shall go as soon as ever you are well enough. Be content till then." And with a gentleness beautiful to see, Archy soothed his friend, who looked up to him in everything with patient dependence.

Two or three days after, M^c^Kaye entered,

his bright countenance looking brighter than ever.

"I shall take you a drive this morning, Cola," he said, cheerfully. "Those excellent old souls at Bread-street have given me a holiday, and we'll spend it in style. I have a cab at the door, so make haste and get ready. And Seppi need not muffle you up quite so much as he does for those lazy noon-day daunderings up the road; you are getting stronger now, you know."

"How kind of you, Archy; and to bring a carriage too!"

"Not quite so grand a one as Sir Archibald McKaye is to drive you in some of these days, But we'll have a foretaste of the pleasure now, so jump in."

They drove round the parks, the fresh May breeze bringing a faint colour to the young artist's cheek. But when they entered London streets and stopped at the Academy, Cola grew pale, and trembled. Archy, kind, considerate Archy, strange

to say, did not seem to mind his agitation in the least.

"Be a brave fellow, Cola, and hope for the best!" he whispered, with a cheerful countenance, as he drew the feeble arm through his, and led his friend on.

"Tell me, Archy, do you know"—— murmured poor Cola.

"I won't tell you anything at all; you shall find it out for yourself," was the smiling answer.

They entered one of the smaller rooms, and there, hung in a very good light,—his precious picture looked down upon the bewildered Cola.

"You cut quite a dash among the miniatures; and be very thankful that you are kept out of the octagon-room—the Black Hole that you used to talk so much about. Well, are you not ready to get up and dance a Highland reel?—a tarantella, I mean. I could, I assure you," cried Archy, trying in his usual fashion to hide with a joke the

strong emotion under which Cola laboured, and from which he himself was not free.

They found a seat, for the poor fellow could neither stand nor speak. Thither, a few minutes after, came the gliding step and low voice of Mr. Crome, who was full of praises and congratulations.

"I have some news also, perhaps better than these empty encomiums," said the rich court artist. "Allow me to introduce you to a gentleman who will purchase your picture, and commission a companion to it. And though you are still a youth, let me once more have the pleasure of prophesying, that I know no artist more likely to rise to eminence than my friend Nicolo Monti."

"What do you say to this, Cola?" cried Archibald, as they were again alone, driving homewards.

Cola folded his hands together. "Thank God! thank God!" was all he said.

The words consecrated—and will consecrate—his whole life.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE STORY'S END, BUT THE REAL LIFE'S BEGINNING.

I HAVE few words more to say, for Cola Monti is still young, and it takes many years of patient and laborious study of Art, before the most talented youth can become a great painter. But he is steadily following in the track which so many noble men, perhaps the noblest on earth, have trod before him.

He neglects no study that may perfect his powers and render him truly great, remembering that the culture of genius should end but with life. You may still see, drawing at the Museum, a slender,

graceful young man, with a beautiful Italian countenance. Look on his drawing-board, and you will find his name—a name already known in art, though he does not disdain to let it rank among the humblest students,—"Nicolo Monti." He has wisely dropped the long word "*Fiorentino*," as well as the aristocratic *del*, thinking it nobler to be a great artist than to count his descent from Italian princes. But perhaps he may compromise the matter a little when he goes to Rome next year, with the ever-faithful Seppi.

If you were to fellow the young artist home, you would find him in the same pretty cottage, somewhere near Highgate. It is all his own now, though; for he is prosperous in his circumstances, and proves, rather to Mr. Crome's annoyance, that a man may paint great historical pictures, and not starve. Almost within sight of the artists's pleasant home is that of the young merchant, Archibald M^cKaye is rising fast in the world, as he was sure to do; and

amidst all his well-earned prosperity, he carries in his bosom the same true Scottish heart, beating calmly, silently,—but how warmly, those whom he loves and who love can tell!—none better than Cola Monti.

The two friends did take the projected Highland journey,—though not until last year,—and the grand family group was then really painted. Every one considered it a great work; all but the artist, who was never satisfied that he had done justice to any of the heads, especially to sweet Jessie's. It is a valuable and dear-loved picture now, for the revered old father has been since gathered to his fore-fathers. Archibald is going to fetch his mother and sisters to live with him at Highgate. But it is just possible that this excellent domestic arrangement may not hold out longer than Cola's return from Rome.

And now let us leave them both—Archibald and Cola,—leave them to work out the bright future which is before each. They will tread diverse paths, one walking calmly,

nobly, and perseveringly, along the beaten track of life; the other pressing on toward that high destiny which will make him famous in his day, and remembered after death with that renown which so many men are willing even to die for. Let them go on their way, for each is greatly to be honoured. One is the man of Industry; the other the man of Genius.

THE END.

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