

1844

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LEONARD AND GERTRUDE.

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POPULAR STORY,

Written originally in German;

TRANSLATED INTO FRENCH,

AND NOW ATTEMPTED IN ENGLISH;

WITH THE HOPE OF ITS BEING USEFUL

TO

ALL CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY JOSEPH GROFF,
NO. 75, SOUTH SECOND-STREET.

.....
ROBERT CARR, PRINTER.
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1801.

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WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

IF I knew any Person whom I more respected, to him I would have inscribed this little Volume. I was much struck by its original merit, and have spared no pains to render it acceptable to the English Reader. Of that merit, it may have lost a considerable portion in my hands; and I confess it is not without some latent hopes of supplying my own deficiencies, that I have ventured to affix a name to my Book, which is, I think, never coupled but with what is good and virtuous.

Your faithful Friend and Servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

FROM ITS INSTITUTION

TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY JOHN DESHAUNES

ESQ. OF THE SOCIETY

AND

BY JOHN HENRY

DE LA BECHE

ESQ. OF THE SOCIETY

AND

BY JOHN

WILKINSON

ESQ. OF THE SOCIETY

AND

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AND

LEONARD AND GERTRUDE.

CHAP. I.

A Man whose natural disposition is good, but who nevertheless involves his Wife and Children in distress.

THERE lived in the village of Fineshade, an honest mason, by name Leonard, his wife's name Gertrude. They had five children, whom he could very well have supported by his labour; but, unfortunately, he allowed himself to be decoyed to the alehouse, and when once there, he behaved like a madman. In every village there are a set of cunning rascals, who have wit enough to take advantage of the good-humoured and unwary, and to drink at their expence: Leonard was a man of this character; and when once they had inveigled him to drink, they easily cheated him of his wages at play. The poor fellow was miserable the next day when he reflected that he had squandered in gambling the money which should have provided bread for his wife and family; he trembled at the idea, and unable to support their presence, he would wander from his house to hide his tears.

Gertrude was one of the honestest and most industrious women in the parish, and yet she, and her fine rosy children, ran the risque of being starved; Leonard might be arrested for debt, they might be deprived of their cottage, separated from one another, driven from place to place, and lose the very means of subsistence and every comfort; for no other reason but because the father got drunk. The tender mother and wife was grieved to the heart, at a misfortune which appeared to her so near and so inevitable. If she went to cut grafs for their cow, to fetch hay, or to scour her dairy which was always as clean as hands could make it; every object brought to her remembrance the cruel reflection, that Garth, cottage, dairy, every thing upon which they depended for support, might be soon lost; and when her little ones flocked round her, it redoubled her affliction, and she could not refrain from tears. She had hitherto shed them in secret, determined to hide them from her little ones: but the last Wednesday before Easter, her husband having stayed out later at night than usual, she could no longer restrain herself, and they saw the tears running down her cheeks. Ah! mother! they exclaimed all together, you are crying, and at the same moment they all clung round her. Distress and anguish were painted in every face. The sighs, the lamentations, and the floods of tears that bathed the faces of the children, as they crowded round their mother, conveyed even into the mind of the infant at the breast, the first sentiment of grief it had ever experienced. So lively an expression of fear and affliction which it had never before witnessed, caused it to fix its little eyes immoveably upon its mother for the first time without smiling, and that quite overpowered her. She sobbed aloud, her children, even the babe she held at her breast, were drowned in tears; it was one general

burst of lamentation, when Leonard half opened the door.

Gertrude had hid her face in the covering of the bed, which prevented her noticing the opening of the door. The children did not see their father was coming in, their attention being confined to their weeping mother. One was smothering her hand with kisses, another had its arms clasped round her, a third laying hold of her petticoat, and in this situation Leonard surpris'd them. The Almighty beheld the affliction of the wretched, and put an end to their distress; a glance of compassion lighted upon Gertrude, drowned in her tears, and He himself willed that Leonard should witness a scene which rent his heart, and made him tremble from head to foot. Pale as death, he could scarce articulate—Heaven and Earth! what is the matter? This exclamation brought the mother and children to their recollection; they perceived their father standing before them, and immediately dried their tears. They exclaimed, Here's father! and even the infant acknowledged his return. Thus when a boundless torrent, or a devouring flame ceases its ravages, consternation and dismay give place to calm and sober distress.

Gertrude tenderly loved her husband, and his presence was at any time sufficient to soften her most violent sorrows. On the other hand Leonard began to recover from his first surpris'e. Tell me, my Gertrude, what occasioned the shocking scene I have just witnessed.—Oh! my friend, said she, dark care has taken possession of my heart, and when you are away it has double hold on me.—I know too well answered he, the true cause of your tears! unhappy wretch that I am. Gertrude had sent away the children, and then Leonard hid his face in her bosom, and was unable to utter a word. She was as little

able to speak, but reclined upon her husband, who wept and sobbed, with every mark of the most violent agitation. At last, exerting all her courage, she began to conjure him not to expose their children any more to so terrible a destiny. Gertrude was a religious woman, and she placed her trust in God. Before she began to speak, she had silently offered up more than one prayer, for her husband and her children. She found her heart sensibly relieved, and said, Leonard, put your trust in God, and in his tender mercies, and determine to conduct yourself—

Ah! Gertrude, Gertrude, interrupted her husband, who could only sigh and weep.—Yes, my friend, continued she, take courage, trust in the kind father of all mercies, and all will end well yet. It makes my heart bleed to give you uneasiness, and I would willingly have kept you ignorant of my sorrows. You know I could live with you upon bread and water, and often have I laboured till midnight, while the rest of the world slept, to earn bread for you and our children. But, O my Leonard, if I could even have smothered my grief, till our affairs had become desperate; till we should have been torn from one another, and have been obliged to abandon our children, should I have acted like a good wife and an affectionate mother? Till now, these dear innocents are full of gratitude and love towards us; but, when we behave to them no longer like father and mother, alas! their affection, that honest goodness of heart upon which I found all my hopes, will be irrecoverably lost. And, only think, my dear husband, think one moment how wretched it would make you, to see your poor Nicholas without any place to shelter himself in, obliged to have recourse to service;—that poor boy who already talks with such ardour of liberty, and is so proud of those ewes he calls his own. What! if that dear child, and our

other darlings should be reduced through our fault to want the necessaries of life, and forgetting what we have already done for them, should only retain a painful recollection of their parents; could you support it? Tell me, could you bear to see your Nicholas, your James, your Louisa, your Jenny desolate? Just Heaven! driven from their native home, and obliged to seek their bread amongst strangers! For my part I could not survive it.

An oppression at her heart prevented her from saying more, she could only shed tears. Leonard was not less afflicted. What shall I do, wretch that I am! how shall I extricate myself? my situation is even more deplorable than you suspect. Gertrude! my dear Gertrude!——He could utter no more, but wrung his hands, and sobbed, and groaned with despair.

"Beware, said Gertrude, how you doubt the providence of the Almighty. Whatever you have upon your mind, let me know it, conceal nothing, and perhaps our joint efforts may find some remedy for our misfortunes.

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CHAP. II.

An example of a Woman with courage enough to execute a good resolution, and in so doing, finds her Landlord a benefactor and real father.

IT grieves me to the heart, my dear Gertrude, to reveal the full extent of my wretchedness, which must increase your affliction, but there is a necessity for it. I still owe to Collins the steward 3l. 15s.

and he is more a brute than a man towards his creditors. What a wretch I am that I ever became entangled with him! if I stay away from his alehouse, he threatens to arrest me; and when I am there, he never leaves me a farthing in my pocket. You must attribute our misfortune solely to his voracity.

But, my friend, said Gertrude, why don't you go directly to our landlord? You know he has always shewn himself a father to his tenants, and that the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed, are sure of finding in him a protector. Depend upon it, you will obtain from him the advice and assistance you want. I neither can nor dare go, answered he. What could I do against the steward? he has assurance enough to invent and maintain the most audacious falsities, and is so very plausible, and so very cunning, when he wants to vilify his enemy that I should not even be heard. For my part, said Gertrude, I never was before a justice, but I think if necessity and misfortune obliged me, I should not be at all afraid to speak the truth, be it to whom it would; my dear Leonard, don't be afraid, think of your wife and children, and go.—I tell you again I cannot, I dare not; moreover I am not quite blameless. Collins will very deliberately call the neighbours to witness that I am but a raffling fellow. I am too conscious of it myself, Gertrude, and how dare I alledge any thing against him? Not a man in the parish would dare to say what he really thinks for fear of him, although they know he has artfully drawn me into the extravagances I have committed. It is true, were he in my power, and I thought I could succeed, I would complain with all my heart; but, consider a moment, suppose I should miscarry as it is too probable, what would be the consequence? what have we not to expect from a man of his malicious temper?—But, my good friend, replied Ger-

trude, what will be the consequence if you are quiet? we must be inevitably ruined! Leonard, think of your family, make haste to put an end to a state of torment which we can no longer endure. Go, I tell you, or I must be obliged to go myself.—No, Gertrude, I absolutely cannot find courage. If you think you can, in the name of God lose not a moment; go to Sir James, and tell him every thing. Yes, answered she, I am determined to go. But her anxiety kept her waking all night; she passed it in tears, and supplications to Heaven which helped to confirm her resolution to have recourse to her landlord.

The sun was hardly risen when she began her journey, carrying with her the infant she nursed; and having walked six long miles she arrived at the Hall. Sir James was already risen, and seated under a shady lime which grew near the house, from whence he discovered Gertrude and her child, and could trace in the countenance of the former the impression of her grief and her tears.—What is your pleasure, good woman? who are you? said he, in a voice so gentle and so encouraging, that it gave her confidence.—My name is Gertrude, please your honour; please you, Sir, Leonard the mason's wife of Fineshade.—I know you to be a good industrious woman, and I have remarked your children amongst all the others in the village; they appear civiler, and better taught than the rest; they seem to be better taken care of, and yet they tell me you are very poor. But what service can I render you, my good woman?—My gracious master, replied she, my husband has long owed near four pounds to Mr. Collins, and he is a man without mercy. He, it is, who seduces my husband to play, and leads him into every ruinous excess; besides, he has him so much in awe, that he is afraid to leave the alehouse,

although he squanders away almost all his wages every day, and leaves his children to starve; five children who sometimes want a morsel of bread. Unless your honour will condescend to advise us, and to take us under your protection, we must be ruined, we shall be inevitably reduced to beggary. I know the extent of your goodness to the widowed and the fatherless, and that has given me the boldness to appear before you, and to lay open the misery of our situation. I have brought with me the small sum I have been able to save for my little ones, which I freely offer you; if your honour will but shelter my husband from the resentment of the steward, till such time as he has paid him every thing.

Sir James had for some time suspected Collins, which made him more readily believe the complaint well founded, and the request reasonable. A cup of tea happened to be poured out before him: he told her to help herself. You have been fasting long, said he; take this, and give some of the milk to that fine child.—She was all confusion, but made an effort to obey: his affability and kindness brought tears into her eyes.

After a short silence, Sir James desired to be informed of all the particulars of his steward's conduct, and of her wretchedness for some years in consequence of it. He listened with the greatest attention, and at last interrupted her by saying how much he was astonished at her being able to save the little pittance which belonged to her children. Sir, said she, it was often very difficult; but I thought it my duty to consider the money not my own, but as a deposit left by a dying man for the support of my family in emergencies. I always thought it so, and if I was sometimes obliged to encroach upon that fund to keep my family from starving, I never could be

easy till by labouring later at night, I had earned sufficient to replace it.—But did you find that so easy, Gertrude? Oh! your honour, when the mind is firmly fixed upon an object, it is capable of greater efforts than were at first supposed. And besides, I fancy God Almighty assists the honest endeavours of the poor. A rich gentleman, like you, enjoying every thing in abundance can hardly believe how far with God's aid we can make a virtue of necessity.

Sir James was more and more pleased with her simplicity and honesty, and having asked her many other questions, concluded by desiring to see the children's savings. She directly took out of her pocket five little packets neatly folded in paper, and laid them on the table. The name of the owner was written on each, with a memorandum of what had been at any time borrowed, and the manner and time of the repayment. Sir James read over the superscriptions with great attention. Gertrude blushed and excused herself saying, they were there by mistake: but he smiled, and continued reading, while the poor woman stood before him so confused, that her heart visibly palpitated. She was really modest and humble, and was distressed at any thing that might be supposed to look like vanity. Sir James remarking her confusion upon the discovery of the memorandums which she had forgotten to separate, was struck with the dignity of a pure mind, which shrinks from observation, and is ashamed when its virtues meet the glare of day. He immediately determined to exceed the request, and go beyond the expectations of a woman, upon whose merit he could set a just value, and who appeared to him not to have her equal amongst a thousand.

In folding up each of the little parcels, he added something to it of his own. My good woman, said he, carry to your children their little treasure: I will

take care to set apart 3l. 15s. to satisfy the steward's demands. Return to Finesthade; I have some business there to-morrow, and upon my arrival, I will so order matters as to put it out of Collins's power to give you further uneasiness.

Gertrude was so overjoyed it took from her the power of utterance: she could scarce say, sobbing and stammering, God Almighty bless your honour: and dropping a low courtesy, set off upon her return home, her child in her arms, impatient to throw herself into those of her husband, and to make him a partner in her happiness. She hurried as fast as she could, and till she reached the cottage never ceased returning thanks to God, mingled with tears of gratitude and hope. Leonard saw her coming, and could read in her eyes, the contentment of her heart. You are soon back, said he immediately; you have been well received at the Hall.—Who could have told you so already, my love?—I see it in your eyes, my good friend; you cannot counterfeit. No, I cannot; nor would I, if I could, conceal from you one moment the good news I bring. And she began to relate to him, word for word, the fatherly kindness of Sir James, with what confidence he had believed every thing she had said, and the kind terms in which he had promised them his protection. She then distributed amongst her children Sir James's present to each, and clasping them in her arms by turns, with more heartfelt joy than she had done for weeks before, commanded them to include their honoured patron, whenever they offered up their prayers for their father and mother. The noble gentleman interests himself in the well-being of all the neighbourhood; he interests himself for you; and if you are honest and industrious, you may be as sure he will love you, as you are now sure your father and I love you.

Since that time Leonard's children have never failed, morning and evening, in praying for their parents, to include Sir James Grant, the Father of the country.

This was a day of sincere rejoicing and thanksgiving to the mason and his wife, wherein they made new determinations, and took fresh measures to establish order in their household, to watch, with greater anxiety the education of their children, and to guide them by their example, in the paths of virtue and religion. Leonard felt his courage revive, and towards evening Gertrude prepared for him his favourite supper: they sat down cheerfully together, impatient for the morrow which was to make them rejoice in the substantial effects of Sir James Grant's fatherly protection. On the other hand the Baronet was not less impatient to signalize the day by an act of benevolence; opportunities for which he was forever seeking, as the means of affording himself the most substantial pleasure and happiness.

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CHAP. III.



A Monster in the human shape.

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THE same evening Collins the steward happening to go to the Hall for orders, Sir James told him he should go to Fineshade the next day, and give final orders for the rebuilding of the church. Your Honour then, has no more work for your own mason.—I am not thinking of him, replied Sir James; but you have Leonard in the village, a good work-

man, and I shall be very glad to give him this job: why have you never recommended him?—I never dared, answered the steward, making a low bow, recommend so very poor a man to be employed in your honour's buildings.—Is he an honest man? tell me, may I trust him?—Oh! yes, your honour you may; he is only too honest.—They tell me his wife is an industrious woman; but is she not a little talkative, hey?—Indeed, Sir, I know no harm of her; she is a very hard-working woman, and no gossip that I ever heard. Very well; remember to be in the church-yard to-morrow about nine o'clock, and we will settle this matter.

The steward took his leave and went away, rejoiced at what he had just heard. He began already to think how he could best pluck the poor mason, and calculated beforehand the share he should have in the gains from the new employment. He strutted along, and the moment he arrived at the mason's door he knocked. It was just dark: Leonard and Gertrude were at table, talking over the remains of their supper.

Upon hearing the steward's voice, Leonard immediately concluded he was come with some evil intention: he was afraid he would remark their supper which he pushed away, and trembling opened the door, while Gertrude encouraged him, and bid him recollect that Sir James had promised to stand his friend. Collins entered, and had his nostrils immediately saluted by the savoury smell of the dishes they had hid: no hound could shew a finer nose. However he assumed a good humoured look, and said, though a little sneeringly, Oh, ho! my friends, you have been feasting charmingly! At this rate it is no wonder if you forget the alehouse, hey, Leonard?—He, poor fellow, quite pale, and his eyes cast down, knew not what to say. Gertrude

wished he might be damned, if he knew what possessed these people. Leonard was not a little agitated by this scene, but the steward was ready to choke.

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CHAP. IV.



“Birds of a feather, flock together.” You may know a man by the company he keeps.

IT was near midnight; but no sooner had Collins reached home, than late as it was, he sent for two of Leonard's neighbours, desiring them to come to him immediately. They got up, dressed themselves, and hurried through a very dark night to the steward's house. After all the questions he could think of, relating to what had past within the few last days at Leonard's, he did not get the information he wished. This put him out of all patience, and mistaking the object of his fury, discharged it upon them.

Ah! scoundrels! said he, if one expects to find one's end in employing such rascallions, it is certain disappointment: but I warrant I'll be a match for you. Is it for this that I have connived at your thefts and depredations? When I have seen you come home loaded with wood stolen from Sir James's hedges, and have seen your cows scores of times in his honour's meadow without saying a word; is this the return you make me? As to you, Penrose, you know I was privy to your perjury, and kept your secret; and did you think I should be satisfied with a couple of loads of bad hay? I have

not forgotten it. And, as for you, Carlton, you old sinner, you who cheated your brother's children of the garth you now possess; it is to much purpose I saved you from the gallows, if this is the return you make.

This address staggered the two fellows..... Why? Mr. Collins, what would you have us do? There is no such thing as contenting you, though we slave night and day— Oh! poor innocent rascals, you can do nothing, you know nothing to be sure. I cannot speak for vexation; but cost me what it will, I am determined to find out what has been going on this last week at that beggarly mason's: there is some deep secret I am sure. And so saying he stamped about like a madman.

Penrose began now to recollect himself; Harkye, Collins, harkye; I verily think I can quiet you, it is just come into my head. Yes, Gertrude was out all day on Thursday, and towards night, their little Louisa chattering by the well, was full of Sir James Grant, and how good a gentleman he was; my life for it, Gertrude has been at the Castle. The evening before we heard nothing but sobs and roaring in the house, and now they seem quite happy and cheerful.

The steward immediately adopted this idea; but it made him storm more than ever. He uttered the most horrible imprecations; he abused his Honour for listening to the tale of every idle vagabond, and vowed vengeance against Leonard and Gertrude.

But, harkye, comrades, said he, to his two rogues, mum's the word; I must smile upon these wretches, till I see the time to bite. Watch carefully, and bring me word of every thing that passes at their house, and depend upon it I'll make you amends; you know I am never ungrateful. Then taking

Penrose a little on one side; he said, have you any guess who stole those flower-pots that were missing t'other day? You were seen going towards the next town with almost an afs's burthen on your back: what had you got?

Who?——I——I——I had, I ——!

No matter, no matter, said Collins; only serve me truly, and it shall be the better for you.

It was almost morning when our two neighbours went home. Collins threw himself upon his bed, and tumbled about restless for an hour: he ruminated projects of revenge; sometimes he dozed, and in the agitations of his mind, he grated his teeth, beat the devil's tattoo, and the moment the day dawned he started up.

After mature consideration, Collins resolved to call again upon Leonard, and to submit to the irksome necessity of telling him, that he had recommended him to Sir James to rebuild the church. He accordingly went in search of him, putting the best face upon the matter he was able.

Leonard and Gertrude had passed this night more comfortably than many of the preceding ones; their first care was to implore the benediction of Heaven upon the day that promised the protection of their good landlord. This act of devotion served to calm their minds, and spread an air of serenity and content over their countenances, when the steward arrived. Their satisfaction was too visible for his peace: he was stung to the quick; and the wicked wretch felt his choler boil within him. He contrived however to smother it; with an appearance of kindness he bid them, Good day, and addressing himself to Leonard, he said, We looked a little shy at each other yesterday, but I hope that is at an end. I have some good news for you: I had

been at the Castle, where amongst other things the rebuilding of the church was talked of. Sir James enquired a good deal about you; and I did not fail to tell him that I thought you equal to the job: and I don't doubt but you will have the preference. So you see, we can assist each other; and it may be as well in future, not to give such easy way to passion.—But Sir James has already agreed with his own mason; you said so at the vestry meeting long ago. I thought so then, but I was mistaken; he only gave the plan, and I have no doubt he made that a good job. If they should give you the same latitude, you may make money by handfuls. Now, friend Leonard, you can no longer doubt of my goodwill.

The poor fellow, delighted with so good a prospect, thanked the steward with all his heart. But Gertrude, whose suspicion was roused, was less rejoiced: she thought she discovered in Collins's ill-disguised rancour, and under his affected smiles, nothing but ill-will.

As he went away, he told them, Sir James Grant would be in the village in about an hour—We have known that ever since yesterday, said the little Louisa, who stood by her father—This little circumstance vexed the steward; but he pretended to take no notice: while Gertrude, who imagined he was already calculating upon the plunder of her husband, felt uneasy.

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CHAP. V.

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The Steward finds a Talking-mate.

EXACTLY at nine o'clock, Sir James arrived. He was soon surrounded by a crowd, anxious to see their good landlord, and they followed him to the church-yard.

Have you nothing to do, you fellows, or is it holiday to-day, that you swarm in this manner? said the steward, in a rough voice to those who had got the nearest. He was in hopes of dispersing them, as he was always jealous lest they should overhear the orders he received.

Sir James, aware of what he aimed at, said aloud, No, no, let them alone: I like to see these good folks about me: and besides, I have a mind that they should know what are my intentions respecting the church: why do you drive them away?

Upon this Collins bowed to the ground, and hastened to call them back—Here, neighbours, return; his honour will suffer you to approach him....Have you seen the estimate for the building? said Sir James, Yes, your honour, said the steward—Do you think Leonard is equal to the execution of it, at that price?—Certainly, your honour—Then lowering his voice, he said; considering he lives upon the spot, he might afford to do it something cheaper—But Sir James took no notice of it. I must have given this price to my own mason; and if there is any thing to be gained by the job, I shall be very glad that Leonard should have the benefit

of it. Let him be called; and pray remember, that whatever assistance the other would have derived from my woods or magazines, is intended to be allowed to him.

When they went in search of the mason, he was just gone to the other end of the village: so Gertrude resolved to go herself to Sir James, and tell him at once her uneasy suspicions. Upon sight of the wife instead of the husband, returning with the messenger, Collins turned as pale as death—What's the matter? said his master: ar'n't you well?.... O, nothing, your honour, nothing at all; only I got no sleep last night—I should have thought as much from your looks: and so saying, he fixed his eyes upon him so stedfastly that the conscious steward turned as red as fire—Then turning to Gertrude, and bidding her good day, in a gentle voice, Sir James asked what was become of her husband? but no matter, tell him to come to me at the Castle; I shall let him the rebuilding of the church.

Gertrude was for a moment silent; almost ashamed to speak before so many people—You say nothing, Gertrude: I mean to let him the work, at the same price my own mason would have taken it; and you make no answer: I thought it would have given you pleasure, my good woman.

O yes, your honour, to be sure it would; only the church is so very near the public-house.

At these words the whole assembly fell a laughing; but wishing to conceal it from the steward they turned away from him, and directly towards Sir James. Collins, perceiving that this did not escape his master, turned fiercely to Gertrude, and asked her what she had to say against his house?—How does it concern you, Collins? said Sir James; her discourse was not addressed to you. Explain yourself, my good Gertrude; what's your objection

to the church being so near the alehouse? —Dear! your honour, because my husband is too easily persuaded to take a cup, and I am afraid when he comes to work every day so near temptation, O dear me! he never will be able to resist.—But why can't he keep out of the house, if he is so easily tempted!—Ah, Sir, hard work is dry work; and when he will be constantly within hearing of the persuasion, or the mockings of tipplers, some offering him liquor, and others challenging him to drink; I am afraid my poor husband will be drawn in: and then if he should contract new debts, we should be utterly undone.—If your honour did but know how a poor man may involve himself in a single night, in such places as these, so as perhaps never to be his own man again.

I know it but too well, answered Sir James; and I am so affected by what you told me yesterday, that I am determined in the presence of all these good people, to put a stop this very day to these shameful impositions.—Then, turning suddenly to the steward, he said sternly, and with a look that almost went through him; How comes it, Collins, that poor men are first inveigled into your house, and then imposed upon, and pillaged?

Pale, and confounded, the steward answered, Never, your honour, never in my life did I hear the like, and ever since I became steward.—Here he was obliged to wipe his forehead, which ran down in streams: he coughed, he was almost choaked. Then continued, It is very astonishing—

You seem sadly confused by a very simple question, said Sir James; but tell me, is it true that you extort money from these poor people, and that when once they get within your clutches, they never can extricate themselves, short of ruin to themselves and families?

No, certainly, your honour; but this is what one always gets by shewing kindness to such beggarly varlets. I might have foreseen it: this is always the return they make, this is their payment.

Never mind talking of payment now, Collins; all I want to know is, whether what this woman has told me, is true or false—Nothing can be more false, your honour; I can bring a thousand witnesses.....One will be enough; but consider a moment, Collins: you remember you told me yesterday, that this Gertrude was a good honest woman, industrious, and nothing of a gossip.

I don't know—I—I—I—I recollect.—You asked me—I did—I did, think her so,——

He could hardly breathe.—You are too much agitated, to give me the information I want: I must apply to these two honest men before me; and so saying, he called to two elderly countrymen, distinguished by their honest and attentive countenances, and said, Pray tell me, my good friends, is it true that unfair means are taken in the alehouse, to decoy men first, and then to cheat them?

At this question the two men looked at each other, without making any answer. But Sir James encouraged them, saying, Don't be afraid, speak the honest truth openly.—It is certainly too true, Sir, said the eldest of the men, but (continuing in a low voice only heard by Sir James) what end can it answer to poor men like us to complain of the steward?—That's enough, my good old man, said Sir James, and turning to Collins he said, It was no part of my intention to inquire into this matter today; but I am determined to rescue my poor tenants from every species of oppression, and I have long thought it improper that the public-house should be kept by my steward. I'll settle this matter on monday. As for you, Gertrude, you may

tell your husband to come to me at the Castle; and you may make yourself easy, I'll stand between him, and all danger from the alehouse.

Sir James then settled some other business, and returned home by way of the neighbouring forest. His steward accompanied him, and as it was late when they set forward, the night was far advanced when he got back to the village. As he approached his own house, and saw no lights burning, his heart misgave him, more especially as all was quiet. In fact, his alehouse was seldom free from toppers in an evening, and every window was used to shine from the numerous candles upon every table, and the riot was heard from one end of the street to the other. He was alarmed at so unusual a silence, and throwing open the door in a rage, he bawled out, What's all this about? what has happened that nobody is here?—His wife was sobbing in a corner. What you're come at last? said she. You little know what has happened! All your enemies in the village are upon their high horses, and there is not a soul has dared to come and drink a pint of beer. Every one is convinced you were seized in the forest, and have been carried prisoner to Castle Grant.

Like a mad bull secured by cords, whose eyes flash fire, and who exhausts himself in vain efforts to regain his liberty: so Collins, almost mad with rage, stamped and stared about, vowing vengeance against his master, and abusing all the nobility and gentry in a body.

So then, said he, as soon as his fury would allow him, so we are all to be cheated of our rights: he will only grant a licence according to his own nonsensical whims, and he will put down my poor house, which time out of mind has been attached to the stewardship. There was a time when I ruled

the roast in the village ; but now this monkey of a landlord chuses to poke his nose every where, and gives himself the airs of a parish schoolmaster amongst his scholars. By this means every rascalion thinks himself at liberty to insult a man in office ; because Sir James Grant, forsooth thinks proper to listen to every idle complaint. We officers lose all our authority, and must sit in our chance, like the meanest vassal amongst them, while he alters old-established laws, according to his fancy, and reduces us to mere cyphers.

Thus did this wretch run on in invectives against the good and wise Sir James Grant, construing all his actions into faults, and meditating schemes of vengeance, till, quite weary and worn out, he fell asleep.

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CHAP. V.



Genuine Village Tittle-tattle.

COLLINS was stirring with the lark, and in order to appear unconcerned at what had passed the preceding evening, he placed himself at the window, and began to whistle and sing.

His neighbour Williams called to him across the street ; What are your customers come so early, that you seem so gay ? smiling inwardly as he asked the question.

All in good time, friend Williams, said the steward ; and continued to sing :

So I tipp'd him the grog, and he swigg'd it,
Which set the old coger agog.

And he swigg'd, and Dick swigg'd, and Ben
 swigg'd, and we all swigg'd,
 And swore there was nothing like grog.

Then taking a match to light his pipe;—Won't
 you come in, and take a mug this morning?

Williams. It's too early; besides I'll wait till
 you have more company.

Collins. You're always cracking your jokes;
 but believe me the fun of yesterday won't be so
 much amiss. Let a bird fly ever so high, it must
 come down at last.

Williams. All that may very well be; my bird
 has been a long time upon wing: but perhaps our
 birds are not of the same feather. Will you be of
 the party, steward? they are calling me to breakfast.
 So saying, Williams shut his window.

This rogue is rather crusty, muttered Collins;
 and shook his head with vexation, till his very hair
 was ruffled, and his cheeks trembled. I shall have
 the devil to do, to wipe away this infernal adven-
 ture of yesterday: but, courage, let us see what a
 mug of ale will do. For new work, new measures.
 To-day's saturday, and woolly knaves get shorn to-
 day; I'll away to the barber's, and see what a pot of
 beer will do amongst them. They'll take my word
 ten times, for once they believe the parson.

Encouraged by this reasoning, he bid his wife fill
 his pouch with tobacco—not such as I use, but
 some mundungas, good enough for such rif-raff.
 And harkye, when the barber's boy comes for some
 beer, send some of that heady stuff, with half a glass
 of brandy in every pint. He went out, but recol-
 lecting himself, he came back; d'ye hear, wife!
 there may be some knaves in our company; I may
 as well be upon my guard: when I send for some old
 ambēr, send me a mug of water, coloured with li-

quorice, or rather, bring it yourself.—So saying, away he went.

He had not reached the barber's, when he met Nichols and Raikes, chatting under the elm before the school-house.—Where's Mr. Steward going in his saturday jirkin? said Nichols.

Steward. I am going to get shaved.

Nichols. Indeed! what on a saturday morning?

Steward. It's true, that does not often happen.

Nichols. No, and for the most part, your time for shaving, is during morning service on a sunday.

Steward. Once or twice, perhaps.

Nichols. Once or twice? You're talking of the two last sundays, surely? For since our minister had your dog turned out of church, you have never appeared there.

Steward. Are you mad, Nichols, with your nonsense? We must all live, eat our daily bread, and forgive our enemies. It is very long since I thought no more about that silly business of my dog.

Nichols. I should be sorry to trust you, were I the parson.

Steward. I tell you again, you are mad, Nichols. Why wouldn't you trust me pray? But come let us to the barber's: perhaps there will be some beer going on, or some other fun.

Nichols. Truly, he would be in a pretty scrape with you, if he allowed beer to be drunk at his house!

Steward. I am not so very interested a man as you take me for; and besides, you know they're going to take away my licence! But, my cocky, we're not come to that yet; and he who ventures to interfere with my rights may chance to bring an old house about his ears.

Nichols. Very likely: but I think matters have not gone quite so smooth with you since the young

Squire professed a new creed from his grandfather.

Steward. 'Tis true, he has not quite so easy a swallow as the old man.

Nichols. I could almost think they were of quite a different faith.

Steward. Aye marry, the old man was a better christian than this.

Nichols. No doubt his first article of faith was, "I believe in thee my steward!"

Steward. Very well; and the second?

Nichols. I can hardly tell you off hand; but something in this way: "I believe every thing thou tellest me, Collins: and not a word from any body else."

Steward. You ought to be our curate, Nichols; for you not only explain the belief, but you can make a new one for us.

Nichols. No not I; they would not let me: or if they would, I should make it so very plain, children might understand it, and then there would be no need of a parson.

Steward. We had better remain as we are, Nichols: the old belief is good enough: in trying to mend, we often spoil.

Nichols. A good maxim enough, but not always true; and I think there will be an exception in our young Squire, if we may form any judgment from the way he has begun with you.

Steward. You had better draw your conclusions from others, or mind your own business. For my part, I care little about this new sprig of a Squire; somebody will be uppermost.

Nichols. Right, right. But still it was a black day for you, when the old gentleman was put under ground last summer.

Steward. I have had my harvest, Nichols; that's enough for me. Let others take their turn.

Nichols. True enough, you have profited wonderfully. But if matters should go a little cross; the attorney, the bailiff, and the vicar, were all your debtors you know.

Steward. Mere scandal: there was not a word of truth in it.

Nichols. Aye, so you pretend at present; and still you sued out a writ against two of them, because they would not pay you.

Steward. How came you to know that, you rascal?

Nichols. Oh! I know more than that; I know your tricks in Roughwater's affair, when you lay hid amongst the straw upon your belly, under his window till two o'clock in the morning; that you might over-hear all that passed between him and his lawyer. You know I was the watch that night, and you let me drink at free cost for a week, to make me hold my tongue.

Steward. Thou art a rogue for saying so; it's all a lie, and I'll make thee prove thy words.

Nichols. Oh, as to proof, that matters little now; but you know well enough I speak truth.

Steward. Aye, aye, you do well to flubber over the business; you can bring no proof.

Nichols. Why the devil himself must have suggested the thought of hiding yourself amongst the straw; and then when you had got at all they had to say, it was an easy matter with the attorney's aid, to alter your deposition.

Steward. Why you talk like a madman.

Nichols. Like a madman? If when it came to be tried, the attorney had not new modelled your deposition, Roughwater would have had his close still; and neither Doughty, nor Jerom would have been forsworn.

Steward. You understand just as much of justice, as our schoolmaster does of Hebrew.

Nichols. Why if this matter were Hebrew, you could explain it to me. Have you not more than twenty times joked about "your very humble servant" the attorney?

Steward. Very well; but for all that, he never did what you pretend: though I agree, he was as cunning as the devil himself. God be with him; come Michaelmas, it will be just ten years since he went to heaven.

Nichols. To the devil, you mean.

Steward. For shame, for shame; you should never speak ill of the dead.

Nichols. That's true enough; or else I would just mention that pretty writing he drew up, to cheat Thomas's children.

Steward. You seem so knowing he must have made a confession to you on his death-bed.

Nichols. Whether he did or not, you see I know a thing or two.

Steward. Well, well, I gained the cause; if you could know that I had lost it, I should have had some reason to be sorry.

Nichols. No, I know you gained it; and I know by what means too.

Steward. Perhaps you do, perhaps you don't.

Nichols. Heaven protect us poor fellows from attorneys' pens; that's all.

Steward. You're right; pens should only be in the hands of honest men, who have made their fortunes: that would be much better. But as there are many other abuses which want a remedy, friend Nichols, we must e'en content ourselves as we are.

Nichols. Mr. Steward, that puts me in mind of a fable, I once heard a pedlar tell. The man came from Cornwall, and there were above twenty of us

at dinner : when he said some hermit had composed a book of fables, where the whole world was described; and that he knew them by heart from the beginning to the end. We begged he would relate one; and he told us this, that your observation makes me remember.

“ A Ewe was complaining one day how hard it was that the wolf, the dog, and the butcher, should be such inveterate enemies of all her race. A Fox, who was prowling about the sheepfold, overhearing her, said : We should be perfectly satisfied with the admirable order so perceptible in every thing here below ; if things were otherwise, all would go from bad to worse.—I can easily believe that, said the Ewe, so long as the fold is well guarded ; but if once you could get your nose into it, that maxim would no longer have any truth for me.”

“ Nobody dare pretend to say that there should be no wolves, nor foxes, nor other voracious animals : but still nobody will dispute that it is a great happiness for poor sheep, that there are strong folds, into which they cannot penetrate, and moreover vigilant shepherds, and hardy dogs to protect them.”—“ May a merciful God protect my cottage,” added the Pedlar ; “ it is surrounded by too many of these voracious animals, and we have but few shepherds.—Eternal Father ! Thou knowest the cause of this ; it becomes us to be silent.”

“ Yes,” said his companions, “ speech was not given us to complain :” and they added this prayer ; Blessed Jesus ! Son of God ? help us now, and for evermore, Amen.”

A few reflections at the end of this preachment, not being so exactly according to the steward's taste; he pretended that the barber's shop would be more comfortable, as it was rather cold: and as he could not persuade our villagers to accompany him, he took a hasty leave, saying, Bye, bye, neighbours.

Nichols and Raikes continued to chat on. The latter said to the other, You have given him salt to his meat.

Nichols. I wish it had been peppered too, and had burnt his throat.

Raikes. You dared not have said as much a week ago.

Nichols. Nor would he have answered so mildly a week ago.

Raikes. That's true too: he is become as tame as my cur dog was, the first time he was muzzled.

Nichols. When the measure's full, it will run over; and what has always been truth, will still be truth, in spite of the steward and his two acres of good land.

Raikes. But if they would make thee steward, with half an acre; what think'st thou?

Nichols. Out, you dolt.

Raikes. But now you, who think yourself so wise; what would you do? I'll bet you a pint you'd close at the first offer; you'd get your cloak on quickly, and your servant, Mr. Steward.

Nichols. Think you so?

Raikes. Aye, marry do I.

Nichols. Come we are losing our time: farewell, Raikes.

Raikes. Good-bye, Nichols.

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CHAP. VII.

The Steward shews a Trick of his Trade.

UPON entering the barber's shop, the steward, contrary to his usual custom, saluted the barber, his wife, and all the customers; even before he had taken his seat, or cleared his throat with two or three hems. In general he used to flounce down into a chair, and after a few coughs, he would condescend to say, "Good-day."

The company returned his compliments rather sneeringly, and replaced their hats much sooner than common. A thriving trade, master barber, said Collins, to break the ice; I wonder how one pair of hands can get through so much business.—The barber, the most silent of his trade, was not over ready to make any answer; but as the steward had never failed for many sundays past, to come during service to be shaved; and had cracked his jokes upon him in a most unmerciful manner; he thought this a good opportunity to retaliate a little, and said, Mr. Steward, you should not wonder that with two hands and much labour, one has small profits; but the wonder is, that with two hands that do nothing one should get rich.—You are right, barber; try the experiment: this is all you have to do—Place your hands one upon the other, in a certain position; and observe certain rules, and money will come tumbling down the chimney in a heap.—No, said the barber, taking fresh courage; the way is, to put on a steward's cloak, and repeat these few

words: "I say, it is so;—I take my oath it is so:" and then, holding up three fingers, and pronouncing "Abracadabra," the money bags are filled directly.

Upon this Collins burst out into a violent fury, telling the barber with many imprecations, that he was a master conjurer, and that fellows of his trade had always some dealings with the devil.—The poor shaver was fain to draw in his horns, he repented of the attack he had made upon the furious steward, and went on lathering one of his customers.—The steward rose, as the other sunk: This gentleman, said he, gives himself fine airs: he will scarce condescend to give one an answer. Behold his elegant jacket, made after the last fashion; large buckles in his shoes, and his Sunday shirt with ruffles to it. His hands are as delicate as a lord's, with a smart leg like a dancing-master.

These were old jokes, and produced no effect upon the company, who loved and respected the barber. There was only Pudsey, who was a little tickled by the idea of the dancing-master's leg, because he had lately seen him, and thought there was a resemblance. But unluckily he was at that moment under the barber's hands, and his sudden laugh cost him a deep cut in his upper lip. The company shook their heads with displeasure, and old Hallet, taking his pipe out of his mouth, said, "Can't you let the barber alone, Mr. Steward?"

This exertion of courage inspired the rest, and there was a general murmur of, "Poor Pudsey! what a gash he has got! If this work is to go on, let them be shaved who will."

The steward said he was very sorry for what had happened, and would make amends. "Boy, go to my house, and fetch three gallons of the best ale: it will heal all sores, I warrant." At the sole mention of ale, all was quiet in an instant; and yet some

amongst them could hardly think Collins was in earnest.

Buckthorne, who sat quietly in the corner, explained the riddle, by saying that ale was fallen in price, since the meeting of the day before in the church-yard.—The steward pretended not to hear this; but displayed his tobacco-pouch upon the table. The first who asked him for a pipe, was Grigg the fidler: and then the others followed one by one, till the shop reeked like a dunghill. The cunning steward had filled his pipe with choice tobacco from his private pouch, and paced pensively up and down the room. He was uneasy to observe the discontented air of the barber, and his customers in a disposition so ill suited to his intended projects.

This is a cold climate, said he to himself; if I cannot warm it I shall be disgraced. This thought made him go in search of the maid, and he gave her two-pence to put some more wood on the fire; so that in a few minutes the shop was like an oven.

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CHAP. VIII.



Once begun is half achieved.

AT this moment the muzzy ale arrived. Hollo! Mr. Barber, let's have some glasses. The order was obeyed in an instant. Glasses were brought, and the whole company crowding round the jugs, were helped by the steward.

Good-humour was soon restored, and even old Hallet's four phiz was cleared up. Pudsey's cut lip was forgotten—why could not the fool sit still?

Their tongues soon became oiled, and as it always happens in a jolly set,

They squabble and dispute,
 They drink and roar aloud,
 All talkers, none are mute,
 None hear, in all the crowd.

They only agreed in their commendations of the steward, and in abusing the poor mason Leonard. At one table he was a rogue; at another a thief. Some remarked, that from the habit of getting drunk every day, he suddenly affected the saint. One said it was plain enough to see why the pretty Gertrude, and not her husband, went to the Castle. Another had seen him with a woeful long face, dreading the steward's resentment.

This discourse was to Collins what mud is to a mangy sow. But still he was very circumspect and wary.

Neighbour, said he to one of the church wardens as he filled his glass, you were amongst those who overhauled my accounts; did not the mason there owe me 3l. 15s? Well, it is above six months since, and he has never paid me one farthing: I have never said a word to him about it, and perhaps I shall never get a shilling.

Not one shilling, depend upon it, was the universal cry, as they drank off their glasses.

Collins, quietly taking out his pocket-book, produced Leonard's note. "You see, gentlemen, I speak truth." They all very wisely looked at the note as if they could have read it, and then with one voice roared out, "That scoundrel mason!"

Just then Grigg the fidler, who had hitherto been silent, too much occupied by his ale to speak, wiped his mouth upon his sleeve, got up with his

glafs in his hand, raifed it above his head and roared out, " Long life to Master Steward, and confufion to his enemies." Then toffed off his glafs, got it filled again, drank it, and fung:

A rafcal fo loofe
 Who his neighbour wou'd noofe,
 Tho' a coach he may keep
 Merits nought but a whip.
 Whip him, neighbour, whip him well,
 Whip him till the truth he tell.

That rogue ne'er will mend,
 Who tells tales of his friend ;
 Tho' he gain e'er fo faft
 He'll be hang'd up at laft.
 Whip him, &c.

Huzza! the Steward for ever. Down with the
 Mafon!

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CHAP. IX.



Parish Business.

LESS noife, Master Grigg, lefs noife ; faid Collins: that will do no good. I fhould be very forry to do Leonard any injury ; I forgive him with all my heart ; he has been driven by want to do what he has done ; but I am forry we have no protection for our rights.

At thefe words all the men pricked up their ears, and were filent. Some of them fhoved their glaffes

on one side, and were all attention to the danger that threatened their rights.

I am sinking fast into years, said the steward, and my loss can't be great, for I have no family: but for you, my good neighbours who have lads growing up; you should for their sakes, attend to your privileges.

O dear, aye, our privileges and our common rights, cried all the toppers: you are steward, let the people say what they will, and you ought to prevent encroachments.—Certainly, neighbours, the parish has a right to a public-house; it is a privilege of the greatest importance, and we must not submit to have it put down.

Here he rather overshot his mark; for some of the men whispered, that he had never troubled himself about the rights of the parish till they affected him; and now he wanted to draw them in to fight his battles.

Most of them however raged, and swore they would immediately call a parish meeting. The riot increased; so that a few of the most reasonable amongst the company agreed to keep quiet till their courage was out.

The steward kept quite sober; he drank nothing but the liquorice water that his wife had brought him; being determined to take advantage of the fermentation he had endeavoured to excite. You all know, said he, what battles old Collison used to have with the wicked great grandfather of our present Squire. I have heard my grandfather repeat a favourite saying of his, over and over again. "When landlords pay their court to the riff-raff of the parish, God help the parish rights; their only object is to divide and conquer, and to make themselves absolute masters of every thing."—Neighbours, he wants to wring all our noses. The steward's right!

he wants to muzzle us all. Yes, my friends, when your parish officers have no longer any authority, you are just like an army with its retreat cut off. Our landlord is as cunning as the devil: you would not think so to look at him; but for all that, he's not the man to stir a step without some advantage. If you knew him only half as well as I do, I need say no more: but a word to the wife, you have seen enough to prevent your trusting him too far.

Bitterbeer, who was in the steward's secret, and who had received his cue, now opened. Do you think then, Master Collins, we don't see what the Squire's driving at? he wants so fell ale himself.

What you've found it out, have you?—Aye, as sure as God's alive; but he's mistaken. Our children shall have a licenced public-house as we have had.

Why, said Bitterbeer, if it comes to this pass, he'll be felling ale at five shillings the pot; and then our children will blame us.

Nay, now you go rather too far, Bitterbeer, said the steward; how can he raise it to five shillings?

Why not? said the other; the blacksmith and the wright have raised their prices enough to frighten one; and coals are ten times dearer than they were fifty years ago. What can you say to that? When once there is a monopoly, there is no saying where things will stop; and if the Squire gets to felling ale, we shall see, what we shall see. It's already dear enough, considering how bad it is.

You're not so far wrong, said Collins; we are oppressed to death, and that makes every thing dear.

But we will bear it no longer, roared they all: and now began a scene of riot and confusion, which it is impossible to describe.

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CHAP. X.

The Barber's dog springs the Steward's mine.

OUR friends were by this time pretty well elevated, and Grigg the fiddler more than all the rest. He was seated next the steward; but suddenly starting up, he insisted upon getting out; and while they made room for him, he gave a reel, fell across the table, and overturned Collin's mug, who swept away the liquor with his hand, as fast as he could, lest they should discover his trick.

The dog of the house (no doubt very thirsty) began to lap the water that was spilt on the floor; which soon took the attention of one of the by-standers, who had witnessed the waste of what he thought most excellent liquor, with extreme concern. Quite astonished, he called out, a miracle! a miracle! and asked the steward whether it was common for dogs to drink ale?

What's so uncommon in that? you blockhead, said Collins; and made him a sign to hold his tongue, at the same time gently kicking him under the table. With the other foot, he darted a violent stroke at the dog, which however took no other notice than growling a little, and lapped on.

The steward was quite confounded; for by this time all the company were leering and looking at the dog. At last the barber's wife, who was picking up the fragments of the pitcher, smelt at them, and being convinced it had contained nothing but

water, called out, "Upon my word this is a very dirty trick."

By degrees the murmur became general; and on every side was repeated, "There is some hidden mischief under this:" and the barber said aloud, "Steward, your fine ale was nothing but water."

Can it be? cried the company: what rogue's trick are you meditating now, Collins, that you have drank nothing but water?

The steward, all in confusion, said, he had not been very well of late, and was obliged to nurse himself.—This excuse did not serve, however; the murmur grew louder, and they all exclaimed, There was some dog's trick at the bottom of it.

Some amongst them now found out, that the ale had *muzzied* them more than so small a quantity should have done. Two of the most respectable amongst them, got up, and paying the barber his due, said, God keep you, neighbours; and went out.

What, are you off in such a hurry, gentlemen, said the steward; are those your manners?—We've something else to do—And away they went.

The barber, who followed them to the door, said, he wished the steward had taken his leave instead of them; he has some deep design, as well with his ale, as his water.—So we think, or we should not have been in such a hurry to go.—I cannot endure, said the barber, this boozing in my house.—Why do you allow of it then? If I were you, said one of the elders, I would turn them all out at once.—So I would, replied he, if I dared!—If you dared! what, I warrant you, things are not as they have been; and it is hard if you may'nt be master in your own house.—Well, said the barber, I'll follow your advice: Farewell, neighbours.

What whim have those wise acres got in their heads now? said Collins.—Whim! replied the barber; why they are no better pleased with this riot than I am; and I wish these drunken bouts were acted any where but in my house.—Well done, Master Barber! what you're upon your high horse?—Perhaps I may, Mr. Steward; but I like peace and quietness.

As this dispute was likely to disturb our toppers; one said, come we will make less noise: and another, we'll behave ourselves; trifles should not be thought much of by old friends. Let's have another tankard, Collins, roared out Grigg.—With all my heart, neighbours; and I have a room at my house at your service, without troubling Master Barber.—A good riddance, said the barber.

But all this time, what becomes of our parish rights? said the elder Bitterbeer, who was a little rocky.—Let every honest man follow me, said the steward, in a haughty tone; and then in a low voice —“The devil take them all.” He left the room, clapping the door after him with such violence; that the house shook again.

What a rude fellow! said the barber.—Rude enough, echoed the countrymen.—There is some mischief under all this, said young Wrangham; I'll go none to the steward's—Nor I, said Hoskins.—Nor I, faith, said Fox; I have not so soon forgot what passed yesterday morning: I was close by Sir James and him, and I saw then by his looks, he was meditating mischief.

One now looked at another, as undetermined what to do; but most of them resolved to stay away. There was only Bitterbeer, Grigg the fidler, and two others of the same sort, who set off with the mugs in their hands to the alehouse.

During this time, Collins had placed himself at

a window that looked down the street towards the barber's; and as nobody appeared for some time, he fell foul of himself.—I am a pretty *Bitch!* a mere dunderpoll! Twelve o'clock has just struck, and I am no forwarder than I was. My beer's gone; I'm their dupe; and they are laughing at me for a fool. I have been chattering with them like a baby; and have been hail fellow well met with them all. It might have gone down, if I had really cared about them or the parish: or if I had contrived to make them believe so. If I had kept my fiddles well in tune, I could have made them dance according to my own fancy: but in the old Squire's time, I had no occasion to keep upon terms with them, and cared no more about them than about the ashes in my pipe. Ever since I was steward, I have led them all by the nose; and I had no better sport than to dupe and domineer over them as I liked: I hope I shall again. But I have taken the wrong road; a man in my place, ought not to put himself upon a level with these fellows; consulting one, and saluting another, just as if we were upon the same footing. Too much familiarity breeds contempt. No, no, I must keep my distance: trust only such as I can depend upon, and consider all the rest as inferior animals. A shepherd never takes counsel of his flock; and yet I have been fool enough to do so.

As he concluded his reasoning, the toppers arrived with the mugs.—What only you four? said the steward; won't those other scoundrels come?—Not a soul of them, said Bitterbeer.—Why, our business is not so very trifling, said Collins.—Far from it, said Grigg.—I should like to know what they are talking about just now said the steward; Grigg, go back and fetch the other mugs.—They are all here, said he.—No matter, you fool: go and

rummage every where: and when, with all your seeking, you have found nothing; get yourself shaved. But don't let a syllable escape you. If you bring me back any news worth hearing, I promise to drink with you till to-morrow morning.— And you, Wilcock, go and find Leonard's head man; that Joseph: tell him (but mind nobody sees you) to come to me when he leaves work at noon.

Very well, master; but a good draught of beer now, would not be amiss before I set out; it would make me run like a lamp-lighter, and I should be back in the twinkling of an eye.

The steward ordered each of 'em a pint; and while the wife drew some ale for the other two, he retired into the next room. ↵

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CHAP. XI.

Well concerted Roguery.

SAD, and sorrowful, the steward was considering of some plan to concert with Joseph when he came. "The fellow's a rogue I am sure, and as cunning as the Devil. Many a pot of beer has he scored up to his master, that he never earned. I had better be open with him. He'll perhaps suspect me else. There's twelve o'clock! I will offer him as far as thirty shillings, and if I can gain him, the church will be down again in less than a month. What are thirty shillings! It's no such mighty matter."

Just then he saw Wilcock returning, and a little behind him Joseph; for they had agreed not to come in together for fear of suspicion.

You're welcome, Joseph, said the steward, as he opened the door; does your master know you are here?—Master's gone to the Castle, and was not to be back till noon; if I am at work again by one, he will know nothing of the matter.—That's well, Joseph. I want to speak a word to you; come into this back parlour, we shall be quieter there.

This said, the steward led the way; and having locked and bolted the door, he bid him sit down to table, where upon a clean cloth there was set nice salt-fish and potatoes, some mutton chops, ale, and bread and cheefe.

You may chance to lose your dinner, so see if you can make shift to dine upon what I have.—Aye, marry can I, and he fell to.—Now, master Steward, let me know what I can do to serve you.—All in good time: take a draught of ale. Here's to you, Joseph: come sup 't up. Will you taste this salt-fish? it should be good. Come, man, make no ceremony. I doubt whether you get any such with your master.—That's true enough; but times will mend: his Honour has given him a good job.

Surely you are not such an ass as to think so! If you consider a moment it cannot be. He is not workman enough for the job: he never was employed in any large building, and his whole dependence is on you, Joseph.—I can't say nay to that; there may be something in it.—I assure you, I have always thought so; and that's why I sent for you. You can do me a great service.

You need only say the word, Master Steward: here's to you.—Much good may it do you, my good lad: help yourself to some of these chops. I should like to see the foundation of the church laid of stones out of the white quarry.

Joseph. Odds niggs, master! not for the world. I see you know nothing of our business. That

stone will never do; it's little better than chalk.

Steward. Why, man, the stone's none so bad; I have seen it used an hundred times. It's a good stone, Joseph; and I should be glad to see the quarry opened again.

Joseph. No, no, master; it will never do.

Steward. But if you could make it serve, it should be the best day's work you have had of one while.

Joseph. The walls would not stand six years.

Steward. What nonsense you talk! have done, have done.

Joseph. I'll be sworn it's very true for all that. There are two quicksprings close to the spot, and several cowhouses constantly oozing out: the chalk would perish directly.

Steward. And what then? Does it concern you much whether the church stands six years, or six hundred? Perhaps you think the Squire can't afford to build it up again? Only do you as I tell you, and you shall have as much ale as you can swigg.

Joseph. That's all very well; but suppose the Squire should find out, that the stone's good for nought.

Steward. How should he know any thing about the matter? But that's not what I am talking about.

Joseph. He's more knowing than folks think: but still you should understand him better than I do.

Steward. Aye, sure! and I tell you, he knows no more about it than my old shoe.

Joseph. I begin to think so too. The stone has a good outside, and does very well for many things.

Steward. Tip us your hand. Get your master to build of that stone, and you shall have fifteen shillings worth of ale.

Joseph. That sounds well! I wish I had it.

Steward. The devil take me if I jest: if you can bring it about, I'll pay you in hard money upon the nail.

Joseph. Done, then, master; there's my hand; it shall be done as you say, and a fig for the Squire.

Steward. One word more, Joseph: I have by me a fine composition, to make mortar bind as hard as iron. I have never tried it; and I would rather make the first essay any where but in a building of my own, because these mountebank fellows that sell such drugs, are often rogues.

Joseph. Well, give it to me; I can pass a little of it into some coin of a cottage.

Steward. A coin indeed! no, that will be no trial: I must have it used in some great building. Could'nt you mix it up with the lime for the church, Joseph?

Joseph. What? does it require a deal of this stuff?

Steward. About two pounds to a ton, I fancy.

Joseph. Is that all? that's a trifle.

Steward. You'll oblige me then?

Joseph. I will, master.

Steward. And you'll keep the secret if it should fail?

Joseph. It will not fail, I warrant; but you may be sure I shall say nought about it.

Steward. You may come to me then, whenever you want any of the stuff; and you may be always sure of a good mug of ale, over and above our bargain.

Joseph. I'll not fail, master; but it has struck one, I shall be late.

So, tossing off his mug, he said, "Thank ye, master; your servant."—You are heartily welcome, my honest lad, replied the steward; and remember fifteen shillings.—You need not doubt me, master.

So saying, Joseph set his chair in its place, took a parting swigg, and repeating, You need not doubt me, went away.—Since you must go, said the steward, good-bye to ye, Joseph: remember the bargain.

As Joseph returned to his work, he said to himself: “This is a strange scheme of the steward’s, with his stone, and his lime mixture! One seldom tries experiments upon such high buildings as steeples: but I shall get my beer; and I’ll take care to get it beforehand too; and then I shall know what I am about.”

On the other hand the Steward said: “Come, this goes as well as can be; I have saved fifteen shillings out of thirty, because he did not know how to make a bargain. I feel quite happy that things are likely to do so well. We should never despair. How I long to see the wall above ground! Patience! Oh! oh! my good Leonard; your wife is a most notable body! but I shall have you on the hip shortly.”

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CHAP. XII.



The joys of a well-regulated Family.

Leonard who had been very early at the Castle, was already returned home. His wife had been bustling about, to get the saturday’s work done, before he got back: she had combed her children, mended their clothes, and put every thing in order; and without interrupting their other business, she had taught them two new verses of a

psalm. You will sing it, said she, to your father, as soon as he comes in. And the good children were delighted to learn, because they thought it would please him.

As they went about their work, they learnt it without much trouble, as their mother sung it, and had soon got it perfect.

When Leonard appeared, his wife received him with the greatest tenderness, and then they all began to sing this psalm.

O blessed God, still while I live,
 With all my voice I'll praise thy name :
 And every day new verses give,
 To celebrate thy glorious fame.
 No joy so great, my heart can know ;
 Perhaps e'en Thou my song wilt hear ;
 Far hence, regret, and care, and woe ;
 My trust's in God, I've nought to fear.

Penetrated with delight, pure and tranquil, a tear dropped from Leonard's eyes, when he heard the united voices of his wife and children.

God Almighty bless you, my children, my dear children, and you also, my treasure, said the honest man with much emotion.—O my love, said Gertrude, to love peace, to do good, and be content with a little, is paradise upon earth.—If such happiness is still in store for me, that tranquillity of heart, which I think I begin to enjoy, I owe it all to you, my dear Gertrude. I will be grateful to you till the last moment of my existence ; and even when we are dead and gone, these children will remember you with thankfulness. Ah ! my dear little ones, obey your mother in every thing, if you wish to be good and happy.—O Leonard, how you delight me ! replied Gertrude.—And well I may, my

love, said he; our landlord has been so good to me:—I thank God for it, my good husband.—Certainly, there is not such another man in the world, wife; and I was a sad baby when I was afraid of going to him.—Yes, my dear Leonard, experience makes us wife: but tell me, I pray you, every thing, just as it happened.

So saying, she took her knitting, and sat down by him.

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CHAP. XIII.

A proof of Leonard's love for his Wife.

Leonard. YOU sit down with your work as regularly, as you do on a Sunday when you take your bible: I suppose you think I have a great deal to tell you?

Gertrude. Yes, I must have the whole story.

Leonard. Just as if I could recollect every circumstance. By the bye, Gertrude, it's Saturday, and you have not much time.

Gertrude. Only look about you.

She smiled; and he said, What! have you already finished your Saturday's work?—Father, said Louisa, she has been hurrying herself to get all done; and I and Jenny have helped her. Is not every thing as it should be?

Leonard. Nothing can be better.

Gertrude. Come then, begin your story.

Leonard. Sir James went so far as to ask me, what was my father's name? what part of the vil-

lage I lived in? and even the number of my house.

Gertrude. Oh! that's not the way to tell your story: I am sure he did not begin so.

Leonard. Why not, my dearest?

Gertrude. First, you made him a low bow; and he bid you, Good-day. Tell me exactly how he did?

Leonard. You're a little witch; but for all that you're right: I began at the wrong end.

Gertrude. You see now, my little husband.

Leonard. Well then; the moment he saw me, he asked me if I had got the better of my fears? I made him my best bow and said, I hope your honour will forgive me. He smiled, and ordered me a mug of ale.

Gertrude. Aye, now, this is a beginning something like. And I warrant you tossed off your ale in a minute.

Leonard. O no! wife, I was as coy as a bride, and would not touch it. But he was not so satisfied—"I know you have no objection to a draught of ale; so help yourself."—Yes, your honour, said I; and I drank a little to his health. And all the time he looked so hard at me, that I thought I should have dropped the mug.

Gertrude. O what a thing conscience is! it was at your finger's ends, my friend: but you took courage at last.

Leonard. Yes, and pretty soon; he was so courteous. Said he, a hard-working man may be allowed to like a draught of ale; and I see no harm in it: but the misfortune is, when, without moderation, he goes to the excess of drinking away his understanding, and not only forgets his wife and family; but has no thought of what is to become of himself in his old age. Such conduct is a real misfortune, Leonard.—You may well think this

was a thunder-stroke upon me, wife. But I kept my head up pretty well, and told him, that by a succession of unlucky circumstances, I had been by degrees involved in that misfortune so far, as not to know how to extricate myself; and God was my witness, I had never during all the time, taken one drop of liquor that had done me good.

Gertrude. How could you find courage to be so bold?

Leonard. His honour was so very gracious.

Gertrude. What said he after?

Leonard. He said, it was the greatest misfortune that could happen to a poor man, that when once he began to go wrong, he was sure to fall into the company of bad fellows, whom he should avoid as he would the plague. I could not help sighing as he said this; and I think he remarked it, for he said, in a tone of voice full of pity: If one could but persuade such unhappy men, before they learn it to their cost, that it is a great point gained, a sort of good fortune even if they should drink more than they ought; if they can avoid the company of these blood-suckers. After a little pause, he said, It makes my heart bleed when I think how many poor wretches are wasted by misery and want, merely because they have not resolution, or understanding enough to make their situation known to those who would be able, and willing to assist them. You, yourself would have been answerable to God, for allowing yourself to be entangled by the steward, and for having exposed your wife and children to hunger and beggary, for want of coming to ask my advice. Think of the situation you and your family would have been in, if your wife had not had more sense and resolution than you.

Gertrude. And he said all this before he asked where you lived, and the number of your house?

Leonard. Are you deaf, you monkey?

Gertrude. So you had a mind to keep this part a secret?

Leonard. I fancy I should have done better to keep it a secret still; you'll be so vain of having had more courage than me.

Gertrude. Think you so, my good man? So I shall so long as you are happier for it: but go on with your story.

Leonard. He then catechized me about building the church. It was very happy for me, that I had not forgot what I had learnt when I was young: I was obliged to calculate the number of yards, to an inch; how many tons of lime, and how many carts of stone and sand.

Gertrude. And you was not out in a cypher?

Leonard. No dove, as luck would have it.

Gertrude. God be praised.

Leonard. Amen, with all my heart.

Gertrude. Then every thing is settled?

Leonard. Just as it should be. Guess what he gave me in advance: (he shook the money in his pocket) Oh! dame, it is a long time since I could cheer you with this sweet sound. (She sighed.) Don't sigh now, my Gertrude; we'll live sparingly, and save some money: and I hope we shall never want any more, as we have done.

Gertrude. I hope God in his mercy will help us.

Leonard. Yes, and many more besides us: only think, Gertrude, Sir James has fixed upon ten of our poorest cottagers with families, to help as labourers, at twenty-pence a day. I wish you had seen how carefully he made his choice!

Gertrude. Oh! tell me every thing, my dear man.

Leonard. I must recollect a bit.

Gertrude. Aye, do try to recollect.

Leonard. Well then, he first got a list of every poor man in the parish who had children, how many, and their ages; then, what were their means of subsistence, and their resources. Then he selected such as wanted work the most, and who had the greatest number of children; and he said to me two or three times, if you know any honest man like yourself, who is in difficulties, point him out to me. I directly mentioned Roughwater of the hill; and now he will be sure of bread for a year at least.

Gertrude. You did well not to think of your potatoes.

Leonard. Poor fellow! I could not bear him ill-will. You know, my dear Gertrude, how very wretched he is: it's only two days since I surprised young Roughwater at our potatoe heap again; but I took no notice: it really pitied me to see him. He was the very picture of misery and famine; while—blessed be God for it, we have so far never wanted a belly-full.

Gertrude. Thou art a good soul for thinking so; but theft never prospers: when once a man begins to steal, he is never good for any thing afterwards.

Leonard. I believe that: but when one is gnawed by hunger, and one sees meat before one; when one thinks that there will be more wasted than one is disposed to take; and that it is a food of which even the pigs get abundance; you must own it requires an uncommon degree of honesty, not to help oneself.

Gertrude. That is all very true: but a poor man should use every effort to avoid theft, or he will be inevitably miserable.

Leonard. My dear life! let us put ourselves in his place: and then think who could expect us to resist.

Gertrude. God could! He teaches the poor man his duty, and gives him strength enough to fulfil it: it is by the trials of want, and the sufferings of his wretched situation, that he prepares him for the great victory over himself. The rich have other trials. Believe me, Leonard, God grants his aid to the poor man in secret, and gives him strength to support all his sufferings, beyond what he thinks, till he makes the experiment. And if he does conquer and his conscience remain clear, he experiences an undefinable joy, which those who have had no trials can never know.

Leonard. I am not so blind, my dear woman, but that I have seen the confidence you have placed in God, and your resignation to him even in our greatest want. But there are few who support their trials like you; and, I fear, there are a great many who, pressed as I have been by want and misfortune, have, like me, lost all courage. And that makes me think that the pressure of hunger is difficult to resist. I wish work was more plentiful, and then poor men would not have such temptations to go wrong.

Gertrude. O my dear husband! you are mistaken. There is always work enough to be had. But there are other things necessary to make men happy; and as well with the rich as the poor, all content depends upon the mind. Adversity is the school where content is to be learnt. Few men, who have never known misfortune, are good men: the heart must be softened by sufferings, to make it constant, firm, patient, and wise: and experience teaches us, that calamities are almost necessary, for how few men are there, who are capable of supporting uninterrupted good fortune! if the mind is influenced by tumultuous passions, it little signifies

what are our circumstances, or whether we have work or not. There's rich old Wrangham, who has every thing he need wish for, is never out of the public house: but for all that, he is not a bit happier than the poor Neatherd, who scarce knows what the comfort of a mug of ale is.

Leonard sighed, and after a moment's silence, Gertrude said; have you been to see whether the men are at their work? I must tell you, that Joseph was seen again to-day, sneaking into the ale-house.

Leonard. That vexes me: no doubt the steward had sent for him. And his behaviour was very odd; for just before I came in, I went to see how the men were going on, and he was that moment come from Collins's. What he said surprised me; and I think, could not be his own invention.

Gertrude. What said he?

Leonard. Why he would have it, that the chalk-stone was the fittest for building the church: and when I told him that the large cobbles, of which there are plenty, were much better, he said I knew nothing about the matter, and should never be any thing but a dunce: that a wall built of white stone, would be much handsomer. At first I supposed he said what he really thought; but upon reflection, it seemed rather odd, that without any preface, he should begin talking about the stone: and if it is true, that he has just been with the steward, there is certainly a snake under the grass. The white stone is soft and perishable, and is good for nothing for our work. If this should be a snare now, that Collins has set for me!

Gertrude. At all events, Joseph is a man not to be trusted: so be upon your guard.

Leonard. Oh! never fear! besides Sir James has particularly ordered me not to use white stone.

Gertrude. And why?

Leonard. He said, that as there were quick-springs and cowhouses constantly sipping wet, very near the foundation; there would be great danger of the soft stone perishing and giving way.

Gertrude. Indeed!

Leonard. Nothing more sure: and I remember once working at a building a good way from hence, where such stone was employed: and we were obliged to renew the foundation, almost immediately.

Gertrude. I wonder how he came to know any thing about it.

Leonard. I was surpris'd myself; but he knows all about it. He asked me where the best sand was to be had: and I mentioned the sand-bed, at the bottom of the hill near the mill. But he said, it was a long way to lead, and all up hill; we must spare both our men and our horses, as much as we can. Is there no other sand?—I told him there was a very fine bed of sand a little above the church: but as the ground was private property, we should have to pay for the hole we made, as well as for the road to fetch it by.—Never mind, he said; that will be better than leading it so far.—But I must tell you another thing: while we were talking about the sand, a servant came and said, one of the neighbouring gentlemen was come to wait upon him: so I thought it right to say, I would not detain him any longer, but would call again another day.—No, my good friend, said he, smiling; I like to put an end to an affair, and it is only when I am quite at leisure that I pay attention to these visits. You reckoned without your host, when you thought you would escape: that is rather too much in the old style of disorder, which I hope is now at an end; when you were ready to quit your work, and the most essential business on every fool's errand.

Wife, I was quite dumb founded, and scratched my head like a fool. I had better have bitten a piece of my tongue off, than have talked of calling another day.

Gertrude. You deserved a little rebuke.

As she said these words, they heard somebody calling before the door, hallo, hallo! Is nobody at home?

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CHAP. XIV.

An interested Visit.

Leonard opened the door. Dame Cacklethorp, a notorious gossip, the churchwarden's son's wife; and daughter to the steward's deceased brother, courtesied to them both as she entered, and said in a low voice, I suppose you'll hardly condescend to do a little job for a neighbour now!

Why not, neighbour? is there any thing at present I can do for you?

No, nothing; I'd only a mind to know, in case of accident.

You are very provident, dame Cacklethorp; is there any such great fear that I should deny you?

I don't know; times change, and so do tempers.

That may be; but you can never want a hand, that can set an oven.

Gertrude, who listened, without saying a word; set about cutting some slices of rye bread for the porridge.

That is but coarse bread, said Cacklethorp; but it will soon mend its colour, now that your good man is become Mr. Mason of the Castle.

How you talk, neighbour! I shall be very well contented if I should never have any worse.

White bread is better though, said the gossip, and you can never want it. You'll be a fine lady some day, and your husband Mr. Steward; and perhaps we poor folks shall fare the worse for that.

Leonard. What's the meaning of these sneers? I hate people to talk by halves; truth and plain dealing for my money.

Cacklethorp. Well then, I'll speak out, if you like it better. My husband is the churchwarden's son, and I fancy ever since there was a church at all, there is no instance of those immediately belonging to it, being left out of employ, when there was any thing to do about it.

Leonard. What more?

Cacklethorp. What more? Why the steward has got a list of twelve of the most beggarly fellows in the village to be employed as labourers, and amongst them there is not one, that properly belongs to the church.

Leonard. But, neighbour, what is that to me? Did I make the list?

Cacklethorp. You might not write it perhaps; but you advised it, I fancy.

Leonard. That's a good joke! I should like to see myself advising Sir James.

Cacklethorp. Come, come, we know very well you have been often sneaking to the Castle lately; you were there no longer ago than this very morning. If only you had represented things as they used to be, we should have had no change.

Leonard. You've got upon a wrong scent, Mrs. Cacklethorp, I assure you: our landlord is not

a man to go on in the old beaten track, when he thinks a new road will do better.

Cacklethorp. So it seems.

Leonard. And moreover he wished to give employment to those who stood most in need of it.

Cacklethorp. That is to say, he has a mind to make friends amongst beggars and rascallions.

Leonard. Every poor man is not a rogue, Mrs, Cackle: you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Nobody knows what may be his own lot, as long as he lives.

Cacklethorp. I know that; and that's what vexes me: one does not like to be neglected.

Leonard. That's another affair; but recollect that you have a nice bit of land; that you are boarded at your father's table; that your husband earns more than any other man in the parish; and that you never need be uneasy about your daily bread.

Cacklethorp. Very pretty talking; but it makes one's heart ache, to know one's right, and see a dog come and run away with it.

Leonard. For shame, Cackle: to talk of dogs, when you mean honest folks. Take care; you may chance to find one that can bite a little. But after all, if you think you are put upon; you walk well, and you can talk well; why don't you go, and make your complaint, where you can have redress?

Cacklethorp. I thank you kindly for your advice, Mr. Mafon.

Leonard. Faith, I can give you no better.

Cacklethorp. I may find a time perhaps to be even with you: so your servant Leonard.

Leonard. Farewell, dame Cacklethorp: is there any thing else I can do to serve you?

This said, she went away, and Leonard joined his workmen.

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CHAP. XV.

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Too much obscurity: the Steward gets well off.

LEONARD had scarce left the Castle, before Sir James sent his gamekeeper Nimble, with the list of the labourers to the steward, charging him to give them notice. The list was delivered the same day; but instead of being directed as usual, "To the worthy and discreet Mr. Collins, the Steward; this was simply addressed to "Collins the Steward at Fineshade."

What has this rascally quill driver of a secretary been about? said Collins, as he read the direction. I'll teach him how to direct to me in this manner.

Speak with a little more caution, said the gamekeeper: his honour wrote the address himself.—I know better, replied the steward; this is the hand of that little sneaking secretary.—You'll get yourself into a scrape, Master Collins, said Nimble; I was close by his honour, and I saw him write the direction with his own hand.—I am confoundedly mistaken then, Nimble, answered the steward: the word slipped off my tongue. But take no notice: come in and drink a draught of ale.—You had better be a little more cautious another time: I am no mischief-maker, or else I could make you repent it. So saying, he followed the steward into the house, took a good swig, and went his way.

The steward then opened his note, and having read the list, he exclaimed; Did ever man see

such a set of raggamuffins! may I die but I'm stupefied; not one of my fellows amongst them except Michael Naggs. No chance now of overcharging him a single day's work; and what's almost as bad, I must go and give these fellows notice: but there's no help for it now. I may however put a spoke in the wheel: I'll go instantly and give them notice, and tell them to go on monday morning to the Castle, to thank his honour. He knows none of these fellows; and when they appear before him, all rags; one without shoes, another without a hat; I shall wonder if he does not make a choice that will suit me a little better.

While these thoughts passed in his mind; he dressed himself, and cast an eye upon the list, to see how he could make his round by the shortest road. He determined to go first to Roughwater of the hill, although he was not the nearest. But he had long avoided to go near him: ever since he had by a piece of roguery cheated the father of his close, the misery of the son stung his conscience.

Let me get quit of this wretch first, said he; and he was soon standing before the window.

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CHAP. XVI.

*Peace! For in this house a Soul is passing to
Eternity!*

JUST at this time Roughwater of the hill was surrounded by his four children. He had lost his wife about three months before: and now his

mother, extended upon a mattress, was at the point of death.

She had been begging her son to gather a few dry leaves, to thicken the quilt; for she was quite cold.

Roughwater. I will go, mother, when these sticks are burnt.

Mother. Have you then any wood left? I thought it had been all gone; for I knew you could not leave me and the children, to go and cut any. O my dear son, I am sadly in your way.

Roughwater. Nay, dear mother, do not say so; you're not in my way; you wring my heart. Oh! gracious heaven! that I could but supply you with what is necessary. You suffer hunger and thirst without complaining: it kills me to see you.

Mother. Be easy, my child: my sufferings, thanks be to God! are supportable. That good God will release me soon; and my last blessing shall bring down a reward for all your kindness to me.

Roughwater. O mother! I never felt the excess of want so severely as at this moment. I can give you no food; I can do nothing for you: alas! your end is hastened for want of nourishment.

Mother. So near death as I am, one wants but little, my son; and that little our Heavenly Father bestows. I bless his mercy that he gives me strength to support my last moments.

Roughwater. Do you think then there is no hope, mother? (He wept).

Mother. No, my good son, certainly not; I feel I am going.

Roughwater. Heaven have mercy on me!

Mother. Be comforted, Roughwater: (he sobbed aloud) I am going to a better place. You were my joy in your infancy, my consolation in my old age; and now, I thank God! you will close my eyes. I am

going to my Creator: I will pray for a blessing on you: and you shall prosper for the time to come: Keep me in your mind, my child: every suffering, when it is passed, contributes to our happiness. I derive consolation from my past sorrows, and I think of them with not less pleasure, than the blessings I have enjoyed. I thank a merciful Providence, for the prosperity of my early life, that happy time! that spring of our days! which prepares the fruits that autumn must bring forth: then comes the penury of winter. Then, deprived of every leaf, the tree presents the image of death! and to that man who sees its approach without fear, the misfortunes of life assume an appearance of importance, while all human felicity is forgotten like a dream. Think of thy mother, my son; and thou shalt be happy in spite of thy present misery.

Roughwater. O my mother! my dear parent! my tender friend!

Mother. Attend to me, my son: I have had ever since yesterday a weight upon my mind, which I must shake off.

Roughwater. Alas! what is it, mother?

Mother. Yesterday I saw your John hide himself behind my bed, and eat some roasted potatoes, which he had in his pocket. He gave some to the other children, who also eat them in secret. *Roughwater!* those potatoes could not be ours; for if they had, the child would have thrown them upon the table, and boldly have invited every body to partake of them. Nay, he would have brought me one, as he has done an hundred and a hundred times before now. How has my heart been touched, when he has come skipping along with both hands full, and with a heart as open as his face, he has said, "You must eat some too, grandmother." Oh! *Roughwater!* if that dear child should turn out

a thief! This thought has distracted me ever since yesterday. Where is he? call him, that I may speak to him.

Roughwater. How unhappy I am!

He hastened out to look for the child, and brought him to his mother's bed-side.

With the greatest difficulty she raised herself so as to sit upright, and turning towards the boy, she clasped her feeble arms round him, and rested her head upon his shoulder.

John, all in tears, asked what was her pleasure? You won't die then, grandmother? pray, grandmother, don't die.

Yes, my child, she said, in a broken voice, I must die, and very soon.

Oh! dear! no, pray don't.

Her breath failed the good old woman, and she fell back in her bed.

The father and son burst into tears.—She soon recovered enough to say, I am better now that I am laid down.—And the boy cried out, then you'll not die, grandmother?

Mother. Don't distress yourself, my good child; I die most willingly: I am in hopes soon to meet a good and tender father. If you knew, my Johnny, how I rejoice to think I shall soon be with him, you would not cry so.

John. I'll go with you, grandmother, if you die.

Mother. No, my love, you must not die now, unless it be God's pleasure; you must live many years, and be a good honest man: and when your father grows old and infirm, you must support and comfort him. Won't you Johnny? won't you obey him in all things, and make a good man. Promise me that you will, my good child?

John. Yes, grandmother; I will be very good and dutiful to my father.

Mother. Johnny, our Father which is in heaven, and before whom I shall very soon be, sees, and knows every thing that we do and promise here below. Tell me, my child, don't you believe he does?

John. Yes, I do believe he does.

Mother. How comes it then, that you ate again yesterday in secret, behind my bed, potatoes that you had stolen?

(John, falling upon his knees), O pardon me, grandmother, and I promise never to do so again, as long as I live.

Mother. You did steal them then.

(John sobbing), Y——s.

Mother. Where did you get them?

John. From the m—as—on's.

Mother. You must go to him then, and ask his pardon.

John. Oh! no, no; pray, grandmother, indeed I dare not.

Mother. You must indeed, my child; in order that you may remember it, and never do so any more. Make no reply, but go directly; and I charge you, if you are ever so hungry, never take the smallest thing that belongs to another person. God never forsakes the poorest of his creatures; and will reward you in proportion to your sufferings. My dear Johnny, though you should be perishing with hunger, and should not know where to get a morsel to eat, trust in God; but on no account steal.

John. No, indeed, grandmother, I never will again, though I should be starved to death.

Mother. Well then, God bless you, and protect you from all evil! So saying, she pressed him to her heart, and bathed him with her tears. Then added, now get you away to the mason, and beg his pardon:

Roughwater, do you go with him; and tell the mason, that almost with my last breath I ask his forgiveness, and am sorry I cannot make him any other amends: Tell him, I will pray to God to bless them all, and to make the little they possess to prosper. I pity them with all my heart: they are hard set to live; and if it was not for that good Gertrude, who almost slaves herself to death, they could never bring up their family. My dear son! I am sure you will give them a couple of days work, to make them amends.

That I will with all my heart, my good mother.

Just as he said this, the steward appeared, and tapped at the window.

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CHAP. XVII.



The noble effort of an expiring Woman.

THE sick person knew Collins by his manner of coughing and spitting.

Heavens! said she, it is the steward! He is certainly come to be paid for the last broth you were so good as to give me.

Roughwater. I beseech you, mother, don't be uneasy; I will pay him in days works, and I will help him as much as he can wish, in harvest.

Mother. Alas! I am afraid he will not wait.

(Roughwater went to the door to speak to the steward, and the poor woman said to herself with a sigh) Ever since our unhappy lawsuit (God forgive him, poor mistaken man!) I have never been able

to look at him, without a secret horror. I am sorry he should come and disturb my dying thoughts, by the sound of his well-known cough. But perhaps the Almighty wills it, to enable me, by giving him an unqualified pardon, to divest my mind of all resentment, and even to pray for him at this awful moment. Then, gracious God! if, as I think, thou didst permit him to gain an unrightful cause, I beseech thee pardon him.

Just at this moment the steward raised his voice so loud, that she heard him.

O gracious! he is angry with my poor son; and perhaps, all on my account.

Collins speaking still louder, she fainted away. John ran to call his father, and being extremely frightened, he cried out, Father, make haste and come, for I verily believe poor grandmother is quite dead.

The father excused himself to the steward and hurried into the house, while Collins muttered: "It is of great importance, truly, that the old witch is dead at last."

She, however, soon came to herself, and as she opened her eyes, she said, He was angry, my son; he won't have patience then?

Roughwater. It was not so, mother; he brought good news: but are you better?

Yes, she said, with a look of doubt; but I am afraid that man could have nothing good to tell you. You think to make me easier by concealing your own sorrows; but I heard him threaten you.

Roughwater. No, indeed, mother, no; he came to tell me I was appointed one of the labourers to work at rebuilding the church, and that I was to have twenty-pence a-day.

Mother. God be praised for it! but is it really true?

Roughwater. Every word is true; and there is work for more than a twelvemonth.

Mother. Then I die, almost without a pang. Merciful God! how great is thy loving-kindness! continue it, I pray thee, towards him and his. And, Oh! my dear son, trust stedfastly in him, and never forget that

If with true reverence and fear you pray,
God's blessed help is never long away.

She was silent a moment, and then said: I think I have not much longer to last; my breath grows every minute shorter and shorter. We must part, my son: come and receive my last blessing.

At these words, Roughwater, who trembled from head to foot, fell on his knees by the bedside, and with his hands clasped, and his uplifted eyes streaming with tears, he remained speechless.

Take courage, my dear son, said his worthy mother; and think of that happier world, where we shall meet again, never to part. The pang of death will last but an instant. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

Roughwater, having a little recovered himself, besought his mother to bless him. "If it were God's pleasure, I would be content to die with you, my blessed parent."

The good old woman, raising her eyes to heaven, pronounced these words.

"Hear my prayer! O eternal Father! and bless my child; the dear, and only one thou ever

“gavest me: and whom I have loved as my own
 “foul.—My son, may God, and our Saviour, ac-
 “company you in all your steps: and as he blessed
 “Isaac and Jacob for the love of their father Abra-
 “ham; may he shower down blessings upon you ac-
 “cording to my prayer, and confirm my benedic-
 “tion; so that you may prosper in all you undertake,
 “enjoy his goodness, and glorify his holy name.”

Attend, now, my son, to what I think will be my last words. Bring up your children to well regulated industry; that if it should be their lot to be poor, they may still have courage, and persevere in the right way. Teach them to place their whole trust and confidence in God; to be so united in love one to another, that whether their lot be good or bad, they may participate in it. Pardon Collins with all your heart; and as soon as I am dead and buried, go and tell him, that in my last moments, I bore him no ill-will; but that if my prayers are heard, he will be happy, and will have time to know himself, and repent before he is called away.

Here she paused a moment, and then said: My son, give me my two bibles, my prayer-book, and a paper you will find in a little box under my neck handkerchief.

Having got them, she desired the children might be called. They came all in tears, and knelt round their grandmother's bed.

Mother. Dry your eyes, my darlings! Your Father which is in heaven will bless you, and prolong your lives. You are as dear to me as my heart's blood; and it grieves me to leave you in such distress. But trust in God, in every occurrence of your lives; and he will befriend you more than is in the power of any earthly father or mother. Think sometimes of me, my dear children: it is true I

have nothing to leave you ; but I have ever loved you tenderly, and I think I have had your love. These two bibles, and this prayer-book, are almost all I possess in the world : but do not consider them as of little importance. Thousands of times in my sorrows, and my misfortunes, they have been to me a comfort and support. Let the word of God be your consolation and delight : let your lives be passed in acts of kindness one towards another : be sincere, faithful, courteous, and obliging to every body ; and you will live happy and contented. Roughwater, keep the large bible for Barbara ; and the smaller one for John. Let the two younger ones draw lots for my prayer-book. Alas ! my son, I have no token of remembrance for you ; but I think it is not wanted : you will never forget me. Johnny, come here ; give me your hand, and promise me once more, never to take what belongs to another.

John. No, indeed, grandmother ! pray believe me ; I never will steal any thing again, from any body. (He sobbed aloud.)

Mother. Yes, I will believe you ; and I will pray God to strengthen your good resolutions. Look, my children, I put into your father's hands a paper, which was given me by a clergyman with whom I lived in service. When you are old enough, read it ; think of me, be good and happy.

The paper in question was a certificate from a clergyman in the neighbourhood, testifying : That the within-named Catherine, had lived with him ten years ; and had, after the death of his wife, brought up his family, of which she had almost the sole direction. That she had acquitted herself with as much care and good management, as his deceased wife could have done. For these services, he gives her his sincere thanks : he considers her almost as a

mother to his children; and he will never, while he lives forget, her good and faithful services. During the ten years she had saved a decent sum, which she gave her husband on her marriage; with which she had bought the clofe, that the steward had cheated them of.

When she had given the paper to her fon, she said: I have ftill two good shifts; don't use either of them for my funeral; I have referved an old one on purpose. You must make use of my petticoat and my two aprons, for the children, as foon as I am dead.

A little afterwards, she said: Roughwater, pray take particular care of Barbara's health; the poor child is full of humours. Endeavor to keep them all clean and neat, and make them drink a decoction of dandelion and elderflowers every year, to purify the blood. If you can, keep a she-goat for them in summer; Barbara is big enough to tend it. I am forry to leave you fo defolate; but keep a good heart, and do whatever you can: the building of the church will be a main help to you. May the Almighty protect you!

She was filent.—The father and the children remained fome time longer upon their knees, repeating all the prayers they could fay by heart. Then Roughwater getting up, said: he would now go and fetch fome leaves, to ftuff the quilt. But his mother said the room was become warmer, and that he had better go with John, to ask the mafon's pardon.

Roughwater beckoned to Barbara, as he went out, and charged her to keep a good watch over her grandmother. If any thing new happens, fend Fanny to me; she will find me at Leonard's.

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CHAP. XVIII.

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Pardon is obtained for the theft; and Death finishes his work.

ROUGHWATER took his son by the hand; and away they went. There was only Gertrude at home; who saw them as they approached the house: and she perceived the father had tears in his eyes.

Gertrude. What's the matter, neighbour Roughwater? Why those tears? And Johnny crying too! Tell me what ails you.

Roughwater. Ah! Gertrude, I am very unhappy on many accounts; but I am come now to ask your pardon, because this little boy has been stealing some of your potatoes again. His grandmother saw him eating them yesterday, and he has owned it: so if you can, pray forgive him! My good mother is at the point of death! Alas! she has just been taking leave of us: I am weighed down by misery and sorrow. She too hopes you'll forgive her, Gertrude: and I will make you amends as soon as it is in my power. I will give you two days works whenever you chuse. Pray, forgive us; the poor child was almost starved to death.

Gertrude. Oh! Roughwater! pray say no more! Come here, my dear John; kiss me, and promise me never to steal any thing again. No boy had ever a better grandmother: endeavour to be as good and as honest as she has been.

John. O pray forgive me, Mrs. Gertrude. I never will steal again; indeed I never will.—He dropped upon his knees, and sobbed.

Gertrude. That's my good child; I do forgive you; never do so again. You are too young to know, how wretched it will make you if you do. Whenever you are hungry, come to me; and if I have any thing to give you, you shall have it with all my heart.

Roughwater. I thank heaven! I am going to have work; and I hope the poor child will never be driven by want, to do so any more.

Gertrude. It made both my husband and me very happy, that Sir James thought of you.

Roughwater. It made me the more happy, because my good mother has had this consolation before she died. Tell Leonard, I will never slight my work, morning nor night; that I will do as much as ever I can; and that, for all your goodness, I am determined he shall pay himself for the potatoes out of my wages.

Gertrude. Pray, Roughwater, say no more about them: I am sure my husband will never consent. Thank God! we are ourselves less pinched than we were, since this job fell out. You say, your mother's so very bad, I must go and see her directly.

So saying, and having slipped some dried fruit into John's pocket, and again charged him never to steal any thing; they went out together.

On the road, Roughwater gathered some dry leaves under a walnut tree; Gertrude helped him; and they hastened to the sick woman's room.—Gertrude took her hand, kissed her, and burst into tears.

Mother. You weep, Gertrude: I have most cause; have you forgiven me?

Gertrude. Oh! don't talk of forgiveness, dear Catherine. Your sufferings affect me; but still more the goodness of your heart, and your pious care. But your goodness will not be without its reward: God will certainly bless these children for your sake, excellent woman!

Mother. But have you forgiven us, indeed.

Gertrude. Pray, Catherine, have done; what would I not give, to be able to do you any service?

Mother. You were always good, Gertrude; heaven reward you! I shall soon know the end of all my sufferings. Come here, my dear John; did you ask her pardon? and did she grant it you?

John. Yes, grandmother, she is so good; see how she has stuffed my pockets!

I grow very faint, said Catherine. You're sure you asked her pardon heartily?

John. Yes, indeed, with all my heart.

Mother. This faintness grows upon me, and my eyes fail. I ha—ve no—t ma—ny minutes to live. Gertrude, I have a last request to make you—may I? but this unhappy child—has robbed you,—yet if I dared—Gertrude,—when I am dead—as soon I shall be—these poor children—so forlorn—no mother— (She drew her hand from under the quilt, her eyes closed, and reached it towards her)—may I—may I hope—obey her—Joh— (She expired.)

Roughwater thought she had fainted; and charged the children not to make the least noise: perhaps said he she sleeps. Oh! if it might please God to restore her.—But Gertrude saw it was all over, and told him so.

At this information, it is impossible to describe the desolation of the family.

Reader, I stop, that we may together shed tears of compassion upon the lot of man ; who, amidst the dust of the earth, prepares for eternal life ! while others, perhaps, blessed with every luxury that the heart can desire, perish amidst pomp and show, and fall without giving a hope of salvation !

Weigh well, O man, the real value of life, as thou fittest by thy expiring brother.—And thou ! who holdest the poor in contempt, or who bestowest on them thy mistaken pity : tell me, if he who dies in the manner we have just witnessed, could be called unhappy in any state of life ?

But I have done : I presume not to teach you : but I could wish, that you would of your own accord, open your eyes, and looking around you discover, in what good and ill, true prosperity and adversity consist in this world.

Gertrude consoled the mourning Roughwater as well as she could : she repeated his worthy mother's last wish, which he had been too much absorbed in grief to attend to.

Roughwater took her hand, and shed tears upon it. O what a loss, said he, have I sustained ! never man had such a parent ! but, Gertrude, shall she have prayed in vain ?

Gertrude. Mine must be indeed a hard heart if she could. No, my good neighbour, I will do every thing in my power to supply the place of a mother to your children.

Roughwater. God in his mercy bless you, Gertrude.

Gertrude turned towards the window to hide her tears. She sighed, and taking the children one by one in her arms, she kissed and wept over them. Then having settled every thing as well as she could for the funeral, she returned to her own cottage :

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CHAP. XIX.

Good Spirits are precious in Adversity: Despondency is good for nothing.

FROM Roughwater's house, where he called the first; the steward went to Jeremy Benson's. He found him splitting logs, by his wood heap, singing and whistling. He no sooner saw the steward, than opening wide his eyes, he called out, "If you are coming for money, Mr. Collins, you may stay away; I have not got a single farthing."

Collins. Why you are singing like a lark, in a sunny morning: you surely can't want money.

Benson. If crying would fill my belly, I would sing no more: but pray now what is your business?

Collins. Only to tell you that you are to be employed as labourer at the church, and to have twenty-pence a-day.

Benson. Oh! Collins, you are bantering me!

Collins. No, indeed, I am serious; and you must go on monday morning to the Castle, to thank Sir James.

Benson. If, indeed you are in earnest, a thousand thanks to you, Mr. Steward; and it was not for nothing, that my heart was so light when I saw you coming.

Collins smiled, and left him, saying, "In all my life I have never known so much content as this fellow enjoys, without a rag to his a——back."

Benson ran into the house to his wife.—“Hallo! courage for ever! God is always good, wife. I am to work at the church.

Wife. A likely tale! a good deal of water will run under the bridge before that happens. You have always full hopes, and an empty belly.

Benson. I shall not want bread, when I get my wages.

Wife. But where are the wages to come from?

Benson. Our squire is a good pay-master: the money is safe enough.

Wife. Are you joking now; or are you really going to have work?

Benson. The steward is this moment gone: he came to tell me to go on monday morning with the other men who are to be employed, to thank his honour for his goodness: so you see it cannot fail.

Wife. If this is true, I'll thank God on my knees, that he is pleased to let me have a prospect of comfort before I die.

Benson. I promise you, you shall have a bushel of comfort; I am as lively as a bird. Now never look cross again when I come skipping into the house; for I promise you, the moment I receive my wages, I will bring them to you, every farthing. I should never be happy, if I did not think the time would yet come, that I shall hear you say: “Well, mine's a good man after all.” If your little *nest-egg* is almost wasted in my unlucky hands; dont lay all the blame to me, and with God's help, you shall never want again.

Wife. Your good-humour keeps up my spirits; but I am always afraid you are but a rattle-cap.

Benson. Can you say that I ever neglect my work, or squander my money foolishly?

Wife. I can't say you do; but then you never

care a farthing when we have nothing to eat in the house.

Benson. Would crying make bread?

Wife. For my part, I'm of a different sort; and my spirits fail with my means.

Benson. Pluck up courage, wife! never despair: and I'll warrant things shall go better than they have done.

Wife. But what will you do for a coat, to go to the Castle in?

Benson. Never mind; I'll go in this ragged as it is: you are always so full of care!

So saying, he returned to his logs; and worked away till sun-set.

In the mean time, the steward went on to Hofkins's, who was out; but he found his neighbour Herald, and desired he would tell him. He then went on to John Martindale's.

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CHAP. XX.



Foolish Curiosity leads to Want.

THIS man was sitting before his door, watching the passers by; and the moment he saw the steward, though still at some distance, he said to himself, "This is something new." Then bawling as loud as he could, he said, "Which way now, Mr. Steward? I seldom see you in my neighbourhood!"

Steward. But now you are going to see me at your house, Martindale.

Martindale. I did not expect so great an honour. But tell me, Collins, how goes the mason's wife? is her tongue as glib as it was two days ago in the church-yard! She's a very witch; is n't she, Collins?

Steward. Take care how you talk: you are one of her husband's labourers.

Martindale. Have you no other news for me, but such nonsense as that?

Steward. Nonsense or not, I come here by Sir James's orders to give you notice.

Martindale. But how came this windfall to me?

Steward. I fancy it came while you were asleep.

Martindale. I shall be awake enough if it is true: however, at what time must I go to work?

Steward. I should almost think in the morning.

Martindale. Indeed! and leave work at night perhaps? How many are there of us, Mr. Steward?

Steward. Ten of you.

Martindale. I should like to know who they are: pray tell me.

Collins mentioned their names; and after every name, the other repeated half a dozen others.—“And is not so—and so, one?” And thus he went on, till the steward quite tired, said, “I can stay no longer, Farewell.”

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CHAP. XXI.

Envy and Ingratitude.

UPON quitting Martindale, the steward went to Gabriel Grindstone; whom he found

stretched his whole length upon a bench by the fire, smoaking his pipe; his five children sitting round it, almost naked; and his wife spinning at a little distance.

The steward in two words, told him his errand; and Grindstone, taking his pipe out of his mouth, said: "This is the first good luck I ever had in my life."

Steward. There are others in the list, who have not usually better fortune than you, Grindstone.

Grindstone. Is my brother one.

Steward. No.

Grindstone. Who are the others then?

Steward. See the list.

Grindstone. My brother's a much better workman than either Roughwater, Benson, or Mattison, without saying any thing of that hypocrite Crooks. By my faith, there is not one amongst the ten, myself excepted, that is half so good a hand as he is. Can't you contrive to have him put down, Collins?

That's more than I can tell, said the steward; and away he went.

The wife, who till now had sat quietly spinning, no sooner saw the steward's back turned, than she unburthened her mind as follows:

"You are thankless both to God and man Gabriel. Kind Providence comes to your assistance, to lessen your extreme misery; and the only return you make, is to abuse your neighbours, because they partake of your good fortune."

Grindstone. Mighty good fortune, truly! I shall earn a few pence as well as they; and that only, by working like a slave!

Wife. But till now you've earned nothing.

Grindstone. Well, and I've had nothing to do.

Wife. And your children nothing to eat.

Grindstone. What have I had more than they?
Here the wife ceased, and burst into tears!

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CHAP. XXII.

Remorse of Conscience, is not cured by specious arguments.

AS the steward was going from Grindstone's to Crooks's, he met John Doughty. If he had been aware of him, he would have kept out of his way; for ever since Roughwater's affair, they had not been cater cousins: they had always felt embarrassed in each other's company. But this meeting was unexpected; they turned upon each other at the corner of a lane.

"It's you, is it?" said one: "Aye," said the other.

Steward. I never see you now-a-day's: have you forgotten the money you borrowed?

Doughty. I have no money now; and I think I paid too dear for that you lent me.

Steward. There was no doubt of this kind when you got it: but this is the way people always return kindnesses.

Doughty. A pretty kindness truly! I have never known a moment's happiness since your kindness!

Steward. What nonsense, John! you only swore to the truth.

Doughty. Aye, so you always say; but my heart tells me I am forsworn.

Steward. No, Doughty, upon my soul you are mistaken. You only swore to what was read to you, and there was nothing written but what you know was true. You know I read it over to you a matter of an hundred times; and you always said, "Yes, I can swear to that." What can be fairer, and honefter than that? What signifies then these qualms of conscience so long after? But it is the money you owe me that sticks in your gizzard; and you think to stop my mouth by these complaints.

Doughty. No, Collins, you're out there, not but that if I had the money I should be most happy to pay it; that I might never hear your name mentioned again. My heart came into my very mouth, when I met you just now.

Steward. Why I think the man's mad, with his nonsense, (said Collins, much agitated.)

Doughty. For a long time I thought the matter was as you stated it; but yet there was something went against my mind; and I could not help thinking that the old Squire was deceived.

Steward. What have you to do with the Squire? You only swore to what you heard read.

Doughty. True, but his sentence was given, as he understood the matter.

Steward. If the Squire was a fool, what's that to you? He had the writing before him; if he had any doubt about it, he ought to have had it altered.

Doughty. Oh! I know well enough, you have an answer always ready; but I am not the less tormented for all that; and when I think of taking the sacrament, it drives me almost mad. Oh! Collins! If I had only kept out of your debt, or if I had never known you, or if it had pleased God that I had died the moment we met, I should never have taken this terrible oath.

Steward. In the name of goodness, Doughty, don't go on at this rate; what nonsense! You know I took every precaution; I asked the curate as plain as I could speak when you were by: "Must John swear to any thing but what is written? tell him for he does not seem clearly to understand it."—— Do you remember what he said?

Doughty. Yes, but that very thing——

Steward. Did not he say in so many words; Doughty must not swear to a word more than is written?—Were not those his very words?

Doughty. Yes, but it is that very thing, his having said——

Steward. What! that very thing; why surely that's enough?

Doughty. No, Collins; I will explain myself. The curate owed you money, as well as me: and you know what a toper he was, how he frequented the ale-house: what comfort can I have from what such a man would say?

Steward. What signified his conduct? You know he preached very well.

Doughty. Nay, I know nothing about that; but this I know, he was a man without morals.

Steward. What's that to you?

Doughty. Oh! it is in this, as in every thing else; when once a man is known to be without principles, and without religion, it is pretty plain his conscience will stick at nothing. So that I fear your good-for-nothing curate has lulled me asleep, and involved me too deep in this rascally affair.

Steward. Away with such thoughts, Doughty; you only swore to what was perfectly true.

Doughty. I long wished to think so; but it is in vain: I can deceive myself no longer; my heart revolts at it. Unhappy Roughwater! Let me go

where I will, he is always present to my mind. Poor man! how many sighs he utters, while he accuses me as the cause of all his misery, and of the state of beggary to which he is reduced! Then his wretched children, pale and haggard; those sweet little angels that were so fresh and blooming, look now more like gypsies: and it is my oath that has occasioned it all.

Steward. The close was not as I tell you; it was fairly proved; and besides, what does it signify now? Roughwater is going to have plenty of work.

Doughty. What care I for that! Oh! if I had not sworn, it would have been nothing to me whether he was rich or poor.

Steward. Think no more about it, man.

Doughty. Oh! Collins! if I had broken open his house, and robbed him of all he was worth, I think my soul could have better endured it. Oh! steward! what have I done? Alas! alas! Passion-week is just here—the Holy Sacrament.—O that I were buried an hundred feet under ground!

Steward. For Heaven's sake, Doughty, consider you are in the public street: how you rave! Supposing any body should see you! and after all, it's merely nonsense of your own. I tell you once again; you swore to nothing but the truth.

Doughty. Nonsense or not, if I had not taken that oath, Roughwater would have had his close still.

Steward. But it was not you that adjudged the close to me; so what signifies who is the owner of it?

Doughty. Indeed it would have signified little to me who owned it, provided I had not taken a false oath. But, the Lord have mercy upon my soul! that concerns me too much.

Steward. Cannot you be persuaded that you are not forsworn: I tell you, what you swore to was true.

Doughty. But there was a double meaning in the words. The old Squire understood them one way, and I another; and I did not tell him so. You may say what you please; I know that my own conscience tells me I am a Judas, a traitor; that my oath, by whatever name you may chuse to call it, was a perjury.

Steward. I really pity you, John; you talk such nonsense. But you are not well; you look like a ghost: and when one is weakened by sickness, one takes strange fancies. Compose yourself, my good neighbour; come to my house, and we will have a mug of ale together.

Doughty. No, Collins, I have no desire; nothing will ever more give me pleasure in this world.

Steward. Be composed, I tell you again; think no more about it till you are quite well. Then you will be convinced that right was on my side. I will give you up your note too; that will set your mind more at ease.

Doughty. No, steward, no; keep your note: I'll pay the debt, if I eat my own fingers. I could not bear to take money, which I must consider as the price of another's man's misery. If you have imposed upon me; if the curate has deceived me; perhaps, God in his mercy may pardon me, for I little thought matters would have turned out as they have done.

Steward. Here, Doughty, take your note! See, I tear it before your face; and I take upon my own conscience, the justice of my cause; so be easy.

Doughty. Take upon yourself what you please, steward; I'll pay the debt, as sure as I live. After

to-morrow I'll sell my Sunday coat, and you shall have your money.

Steward. Think better of it put away such silly thoughts, in the name of goodness. But I must be going.

Doughty. I thank God he is gone; if he had staid longer, I should have lost my wits.

The steward was no sooner alone, than the recollection of what had just passed, made him groan, in spite of his efforts, to suppress it.

I only wanted this, said he, to finish me; I had had a pretty good dose before.

In a few minutes, however, his courage rather revived, and he went on saying, "I pity that poor fellow: how he torments himself! and all without reason: for it is no concern of his, how the Squire construed his oath. Who the deuce would ever swear at all, if the sense was always to be scrutinized so severely. I know many a one, and they too amongst those who ought to know better, who swear, just as they think the thing ought to be, and think no more about it; while a poor fellow like Doughty, fancied the matter was as he said, and is unhappy because they have given a different interpretation to his words.—But after all, I wish I could drive away these thoughts, they are a fore thorn in my side. I must get home, and drink a good dram."—Which was no sooner said, than done.

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CHAP. XXIII.

A Hypocrite, and his wretched Wife.

HE set forward again, in search of Judas Subtle. This was a perfect faint to look at; you would take him for patience itself personified; gnawed inwardly by excessive suffering. He always bowed as profoundly to the barber, the steward, the miller, and to every new comer, as to the parson himself. There was not in the parish a more regular church-goer, not only on a Sunday, but whenever there was service: and in so doing the hypocrite not only found food for the soul, but pretty often for the body; for he always contrived to go last out of church, and to attract the attention of the clergyman, who not seldom asked him to partake of his pittance. He had worse luck with the methodists: he wished to be received amongst them; but as he also wished to be well with the other party which was more numerous, they would have nothing to say to him. His mortified air, his studied duplicity, his pious demeanor; which in other circumstances would have recommended him, were all thrown away upon them: they would have no half converts. Besides these exterior and known qualifications; he had for his family, private ones, which we must now expose. Without farther ceremony then we must declare, that with his wife and family, he was a very devil. At times, when they were reduced to the greatest want, he would have some tit-bit for himself; and if he could

not get it, every thing went wrong. He would complain that his wife neglected the children, or some other part of her duty. If he had nothing else to find fault with, he would pretend that his youngest child, only three months old, frowned at him; and he would give it a smart slap upon its hand, to make it mind him, as he chose to say. His wife happened upon this occasion to say to him one day, "Are you mad?" and he answered her with a violent kick, which sent her first against the door, and then upon the ground, with two large cuts on her head.

The devout creature, was alarmed at her situation, thinking the wounds might tell tales; and, as every hypocrite, when he is afraid of being unmasked, can bend, and twist himself into a thousand shapes; Subtle begged his wife upon his knees, not only to forgive him, but not to say a word of what had happened.

She, poor soul, consented; and bore the anguish of her wounds with patience, telling the barber who came to dress them, and the neighbours who inquired after her, that she had wounded herself by falling from a stool. She did not gain universal belief. Poor woman! Alas! she ought to have known from dear bought experience; that a hypocrite is a stranger to gratitude; that he never keeps his word; and that her husband would have no respect for his. But what am I saying? she knew all this perfectly well; but she considered her children, and was very sure nothing could alter his disposition but the immediate interposition of the Almighty; and that any complaints she might make, would answer no other end than, perhaps, to excite the compassion of her neighbours, who might say: "She's a worthy good woman, and deserves a better fate." "It's hard she should suffer so much."—

She bore all with patience, relying upon God's goodness, and hoping that in the end these trials would be carried to account.

O Eternity! whenever the time shall come for thee to unravel the mysteries of Providence, and the happiness of those who have passed the furnace of adversity, and have been found pure! O Eternity! what a glorious triumph wilt thou prepare for those, who in the kingdom of God, shall receive the reward of their patience and their wisdom, which were held in so little esteem by the ignorant and short-sighted of this world.

Long before his wife was cured, Subtle had forgot the cause of her malady, and behaved to her just as usual: he vexed and tormented her every day, and took all enjoyment from her life.

A quarter of an hour before the steward called, the cat had unfortunately overturned the lamp, which was out of the reach of every other accident, and had spilled a few drops of oil. Upon this he attacked his wife with his usual fury, calling out: "You infernal b—tch! why didn't you take better care? You may now sit in the dark, and light your pipe with cow cazonas as you can, you beastly fool!" His wife wept, without saying a word, and her children sobbed around her.

In the midst of this scene, the steward knocked at the door.—In the name of every thing that's good, said Subtle, be quiet, be quiet I say this instant. What shall I do? Collins is at the door!

Then wiping the children's eyes with his handkerchief, he said, if any one of you dare but to sob, I'll flea you alive.

He then went to the door, and with a most profound bow, and a smile, he said: what are Mr. Steward's commands?

The steward explained in two words what he was come about; while the other listening whether all was quiet within doors, and hearing no noise, said, "do me the favour to walk in, Mr. Steward; I am anxious to impart this excellent news to my dear wife."

The steward went in, and heard *Subtle* say, "here's Mr. Collins, who has brought me charming news; he says I am to be employed at the building of the church, which is indeed a favour I can never sufficiently acknowledge."

Heaven be praised! said the wife. But she could not suppress a sigh.

Is your wife unwell? said the steward.

Subtle. Unhappily, she has been ailing for a long time, Mr. Steward.—And so saying he cast a look at his wife, as if he would eat her up alive.

Steward. I can't stay; I hope you'll soon be better, dame *Subtle*.

Subtle. God keep you company, Mr. Collins: will you have the goodness to thank his honour in my name, for the favour he has conferred upon me; if I don't take too great a liberty.

Steward. You'll have an opportunity of doing that yourself.

Subtle. That's very true, Mr. Steward: I was to blame to ask so great a favour of you. I will go one of these days to the Castle on purpose, as I am in duty bound.

Steward. All the others go on monday morning; and I fancy you may go at the same time.

Subtle. No doubt of it Mr. Steward: yes, most certainly. What made me mention it was, that I did not know the others were to go.

Steward. Farewell, *Subtle*.

Subtle. Mr. Steward, I return you my most humble thanks.

Steward. You have no need, you have no need.

As Collins walked away, he said to himself: "If that fellow is not one of the greatest rogues on earth, I am much mistaken. Who knows but he may be the very man I want, to circumvent the mason? but there's no trusting to a hypocrite: I had better fettle with Michael Naggs; he is a professed villain."

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CHAP. XXIV.



A well-regulated Mind; the seat of Joy and Gratitude.

THE steward's next visit was to young Bitterbeer; who no sooner heard the news, than he gave a great jump for joy: like a fawn following its dam to the flowery meadows in the first days of spring.

Bitterbeer. I must go and tell my wife, that she may rejoice with me: no, I won't: I'll stay till to-morrow. To-morrow it will be just eight years since we were married: it was on the nineteenth of March; I remember it as well as if it were only yesterday. We have had some troubles, but a great many joys also; I thank God for both. To-morrow then, the moment she wakes, I'll tell her. Oh! I wish to-morrow was come! I fancy I see her first laugh, and then cry; then hug me in her arms, then her children: she will be out of her wits with joy. Oh! if to-morrow were but come! I'll kill the pullet for the feast, without telling her of it. She'll

be a little sorry ; but she will be very glad. For my part, I have no scruple, and no pity ; as the occasion is so very great. Yes, I am determined to boil the pullet : I'll stay at home, and enjoy the whole day with my wife and children. No, I won't ; I'll go to church in the morning with my wife ; and we shall enjoy ourselves much more, after having thanked God for all his goodness to us.

Thus passed young Bitterbeer's private conversation ; overjoyed at the good news the steward had brought him, and scarcely able to keep it to himself. But the moment the day dawned, he executed all his plans.

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CHAP. XXV.



Two Knaves.

NEXT comes Michael Naggs. As soon as he saw the steward, he made him go secretly to the back of the house ; and when he came, he said : what the devil brings you here ?

Steward. Good news.

Naggs. A likely story ! you are the very man they would fix upon to bring one news of a wedding, a dance, or any other merry-making.

Steward. It's nothing bad, however.

Naggs. What is it ?

Steward. You're to enlist in a new company.

Naggs. What, what ? lets have it.

Steward. You are to be coupled with Roughwater, and Grindstone, and Crooks, and Trickerman.

Naggs. Are you mad? what am I to do with all those fellows?

Steward. You are to help to build Fineshade church, and the wall that is to be round it.

Naggs. You're joking!

Steward. Not I, faith.

Naggs. But who can have picked out all the blind, and lame of the parish?

Steward. That most noble and wise master of mine, Sir James Grant.

Naggs. What is he turned quite fool?

Steward. Marry, I know not.

Naggs. One would almost suppose so.

Steward. Perhaps it's all the better: the lighter the wood, the sooner turned; or according to the proverb: "If all fiddles are made of the same stuff, they must be in tune." But I must away: come to my house to-night; I have something to say to you.

Naggs. I sha'nt fail; but where are you going now?

Steward. To the grove, to Trickerman's.

Naggs. That's a likely fellow for work! one must be worse than mad to think of employing him. I doubt whether he has had either spade or pickaxe in his hand this whole year; and he has almost lost the use of one side.

Steward. Never mind: remember to come to my house to-night. Farewell.—He went to Trickerman's.

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CHAP. XXVI.

Poverty, Pride, and Meanness.

THIS man was once at his ease, and carried on a little trade ; but he had been ruined for some time, and only subsisted upon the secret charity of the rector, and the assistance of some rich relations. But his pride had never forsaken him, amidst all his misery ; and he took extreme care to hide his poverty from every one but those, to whom it was his interest to make it known.

When he saw the steward approach, he trembled from head to foot ; he could not turn paler, he was already as yellow as a quince. He gathered up in a hurry the rags that were scattered up and down, and stuffed them beneath the quilt. He then shoved his half-naked children into an adjoining room, where the snow and the rain beat in, as all the windows were broken ; charging them not to make the least noise. “Get in, you little animals ; and let me not hear one word of complaint : the air will harden you.”

Children. But we shall be starved to death, father.

Trickerman. Get, in you little vermin, this instant, I say.

He then pushed them all in, and shut the door. He ushered the steward into the room they had just quitted.

The steward delivered his message, and the other asked him, if he was intended as overseer of the rest.

Steward. Coxcomb! no, certainly; you are to be a labourer.

Trickerman. Hey day! Mr. Collins.

Steward. If you don't like the employment, you need not accept it, you know.

Trickerman. To say the truth, I am not used to such rough work; but as it is for the advantage of the parish, and to oblige our good rector, I am willing to undertake it.

Steward. Most certainly the parish will be extremely rejoiced; and I have no doubt but the Squire will send you his most particular thanks.

Trickerman. I don't expect that; but I certainly would not work days-works for every body.

Steward. I suppose you have abundance of every thing you want.

Trickerman. I thank God! yes, I want for nothing.

Steward. I am glad of it: but where are your children?

Trickerman. They are gone to dine with their aunt.

Steward. Indeed! I thought I heard some voices, complaining in the next room.

Trickerman. No; they are all out:

Just at this moment the children murmured louder, and the steward opening the door without ceremony, discovered them almost naked, exposed to the wind, the rain, and sleet, which beat in at the window, and had so starved them, they could hardly speak.

He turned to Trickerman, and said: Is this where your children dine? Thou hypocritical savage! this is not the first time that insufferable pride of thine has reduced thee to these infernal shifts.

Trickerman. For heaven's sake, Mr. Collins, don't tell any body: I shall be exposed to the tittle-tattle of the whole village. I beseech you, sir, keep the secret, or I shall be the most wretched of men.

Steward. What! have you so entirely lost all feeling, that you keep them still in that miserable kennel! Don't you see they are almost perishing with cold? I should be ashamed to shut my dog into such a hole.

Trickerman. Come out, things! but, Mr. Collins, let me beg of you not to tell any body.

Steward. And after this, you will have the impudence to go to the rector's, and play the puritan.

Trickerman. O pray! Mr. Steward, don't betray me.

Steward. This is too bad! and you pretend to be a faint; rather acknowledge you are a devil. Do you hear? you are a devil! there is not a worse fellow existing. By the bye; how came you to tell the rector the story of the battle? no one else could have told him. You passed by my door exactly at noon, at the very time it happened; and after so devout an errand, I saw you return very piously to your own house.

Trickerman. No, upon my word; I take heaven to witness, I never said a word about it.

Steward. How dare you say so?

Trickerman. I swear it is not true; I wish I may never stir from this spot, if I said a word about it.

Steward. I'll take you before the rector; and we'll then see if you will persist in denying it. I know more about the matter than you suspect.

(*Trickerman* stammering) I know—I—I—I—I could—I have not.—It was not me who spoke first.

Steward. What a bare-faced liar you are! I never

yet met with your equal. But we understand each other now.

So saying, he left him, and went directly to the rectory.

The rector's maid-servant was highly entertained by the account of the pious hypocrite, and promised to tell the whole story to her master.

The steward maliciously hoped, that in consequence of this discovery, the rector would withhold the weekly stipend he gave the miserable Tricker-man: but in that he was mistaken, for it was bestowed, not on account of any known merit in the man, but merely to prevent his perishing from want.

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CHAP. XXVII.



An industrious Girl, but undutiful to her Parents.

THERE remained only one visit to make. Plainspring had not been summoned. He was a middle-aged man, not fifty; but very infirm. Poverty and care had ruined his health, and at this time, he was in particular affliction. His eldest daughter had engaged a service in the next village, and she had just been shewing him her fastpenny. The poor father was thunderstruck at this news, for his wife was upon the point of lying-in, and Susan was the only one of all his children, capable of assisting him in the management of the house.

The father, with tears in his eyes, begged she

would carry her hiring-penny back, and stay with him, till her mother was brought to-bed.

Susan. No, I won't; if I miss this place, I shan't so easily get another.

Father. I'll go with you all the country over, but I'll get you a place; only stay till your mother's up again.

Susan. It's full half a year to the next hiring time, and who knows whether I shall get a place to suit me so well? One word for all, I'll not stay.

Father. You should recollect, Susan, all I have done for you. Think of your early youth; and don't abandon me in my need.

Susan. Will you engage, father, that I shall get as good a place?

Father. How can you hope to prosper in deserting your poor father and mother, when they want you so much? Don't go, my dear Susan; for Heaven's sake, don't go. Your mother has one apron left, that she prizes very much, because her god-mother, who is dead and gone, gave it her as a keep-sake: you shall have that, if you will but stay.

Susan. I'll have nothing; neither your rags nor your presents: I can earn as good for myself, and I must not waste the best of my time at home. If I were to stay ten years, I should still be without a bed, or a shift.

Father. But your fortune does not depend upon the next six months: only stay till your mother's on foot again, and after that I'll not try to keep you.

Susan. No, father, I'll not hear of it.

She turned from him, and ran away to a neighbour's house. The father remained overcome with uneasiness and disappointment.

Father. What course can I take? How can I tell my wife what has happened? But it is all my own fault: I have spoiled the girl. Seeing her disposed

to work and be industrious, I have thought of nothing else. I have never taught her the duty she owes her parents, and my wife has told me a hundred times, that whenever she taught the other children any thing, she did it with such ill-humour and so awkwardly, that they never learnt. My constant answer was: "but see how hard she works; it must be the other's fault if they do not learn: you must not blame Susan." Now I see what all her industry, without any other good quality comes to. There is no dependence upon a mind that wants feeling, and the sentiments of nature. Oh! if her mother did but know she was going! how shall I break it to her?

While he was saying this, the steward came upon him unawares.

Steward. What is this you want to tell your wife?

Plainspring. Oh! Mr. Steward, is it you? I did not see you. What I want to tell my wife, alas! — is; that our Susan has hired herself out, just at the time we most want her. But pray, what is your business with me?

Steward. Perhaps it will make you some amends for the loss of Susan.

Plainspring. Marry, I stand sorely in need of it.

Steward. You must know then, you are appointed to work at the church, at twenty-pence a-day; that will be some help to you.

Plainspring. Merciful Heaven! is it possible?

Steward. Yes, Plainspring, it is just as I say.

Plainspring. God's holy name be praised! (It was too much for him: a giddiness seized him.) I must sit down: this sudden change from grief to joy, overcomes me.

He sat down upon a log of wood, and leaning his head against the wall, almost fainted.

Steward. You dont't seem equal to any sudden shocks.

Plainspring. Particularly, as I have eat nothing to-day.

Steward. And it's late too.

So saying, the Steward walked away.

The poor wife saw all that past, and was very uneasy.

Wife. Bad luck never comes single! My poor man has been out of forts all day; why, I know not. And just now I saw Susan go into our neighbour's swinging her arms, as if all was not right: and now, to mend the matter, here's the steward come: What can all this mean?—There is not upon earth, a more wretched woman than I am! I am well turned forty, and still I have a child every year; and at the same time, I see nothing all around me but want, and every cause of uneasiness.

She ceased: when her husband having a little recovered himself, came in, with a greater expression of satisfaction on his countenance, than he had shewn for a long time before.

Wife. You pretend to hide it; but do you suppose I dont't know the steward has been with you?

Husband. He has: but he has been the messenger of excellent news.

Wife. What can that be?

Husband. Sit down, and I'll tell you all about it.

He then told her how Susan had distressed him; when just at the height of it, this news came and brought him comfort. He then eat a morsel, which he had not stomach to do before; and both he and his wife joined in their grateful thanks to a merciful God, who had sent them comfort in their greatest distress. They now also gave their cheerful consent to Susan's leaving them.

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CHAP. XXVIII.

Easter-eve, passed in riot at Collins's.

THE steward, tired with his walk, and choaking with thirst, hastened home. It was already late, and it was near an hour's walk from Plainspring's to his own house. In the course of the day, his confidential friends had spread the report, that the adventure of the day before had not at all affected him; but that he was gayer, and in better humour than common.

This news drew many to the house towards evening; but they came, as it were, upon tiptoe. However as the night grew darker, they grew bolder; and towards seven o'clock, the tables were filled as usual.

So have I seen, in the cherry season, if some Peter gunner chanced to kill a poor blackbird, all the rest fly away, and seem to warn each other of the danger. At length, one bolder than the rest, returns to the delicious repast; and if he finds the coast clear, he gives a chirp, and is soon joined by his companions. The luscious juice soon drowns all remembrance of alarm; and they feast, as if nothing had happened.—So it was with our toppers: The steward's supposed disgrace had kept them away; but the remembrance of that was forgotten, and they came again in crowds to the alehouse.

I must stop here one instant to remark, that all mischief, nay even the greatest crimes are carried

to the highest pitch, when knaves are associated together, and when the ringleaders are of hardened character. Such villains are seldom wanting where liquor is going forward; and it is very easy to conceive, that lessons of vice are more readily learnt, in such schools; than are lessons of virtue, in places, where no lure is held out, but the simple charms of innocence, and well-regulated conduct. But enough of this.

The peasants, assembled at the steward's, yearn with love to him, because his ale is good. One remarked that Collins was a hearty fellow, and swore he would not easily meet his match: Another found out that the Squire was a mere child, and that the steward had muzzled his grandfather. A third declared it was a most flagrant act in him, to think of depriving the parish of its alehouse, an undisputed privilege ever since the time of Noah, and before Abraham.

No, said one of the most fiery, may I perish if he does: if the devil himself should take his part, I vote for opposing it; let us call a meeting to-morrow.

What need of that? said another; Collins has so far given his enemies as good as they brought; and I warrant he is a match for this fine Squire, and his notable mason.—So they chattered.

The steward's wife enjoyed this discourse, and helped them plentifully to ale; never forgetting however to score it up in the next room.

About this time Collins arrived; and his heart bounded within him, to see his tables surrounded by his best customers.

Steward. Neighbours, I thank you kindly that you have not forgotten me.

Peasants. Forgotten you! Master Steward;

Why should that be? here's to you, and heartily. (A loud shout.)

Steward. Less noise if you please, my friends; we must keep a good name: consider it is Easter-ve?—wife, that the shutters next the street.—I think, neighbours, we should be better in the back parlour; is there a fire there, dame?

Wife. Yes, a very good one.

Steward. Well then take up your mugs, and let us go there.

So saying, each man takes his pot and his uncheon; the wife takes the cards and the dice, and they retreat into the back room, so retired, that a murder might be committed in it, and no one would be the wiser.

Steward. So, now we may defy listeners, and the black gentleman's spies: (meaning the rector, and his emissaries the church wardens, whose duty it was to prevent any excess at so holy a time.) Mercy on me, I am as dry as tinder; give me a mug of ale.

His orders were soon obeyed; when fiddler Grigg took occasion to ask him, if it was the same sort of ale, that dogs were so fond of? you'll be cunning if you catch me again, Collins: what the devil was in the wind?

Steward. Nothing, indeed: I had not breakfasted, and had no mind to drink; that was all.

Grigg. That's all in my eye, Collins; I don't believe a word of it.

Steward. Why not?

Grigg. Why? because the ale you gave us had some devilish mixture in it.

Steward. Who dares say so?

Grigg. I dare, you old rogue. I smelt the mugs as I brought them from the barber's; and they were enough to poison one. I did not perceive it while we were drinking; but when I came to spell,

and put together, I found there must be some fly reason for your generosity.

Steward. I know no more about the ale my wife sent, than the child unborn: you talk like a fool.

Grigg. Pray, do you happen to recollect the fine sermon you made us, about the rights of the parish? perhaps that was done without thinking, as one takes a quid of tobacco.

Steward. Come, have done, Grigg: you never got your licks, which you deserved, for overturning my pitcher. What I want to know now is, what passed at the barber's after I came away.

Grigg. Do you remember your promise, steward?

Steward. What promise?

Grigg. That I should drink scott free till morning, if I brought any news worth knowing.

Steward. But no news, no beer.

Grigg. Agreed: dame, bring me a full pot.

The ale being brought, Collins seated himself beside the fiddler; who told him a long paddy noddy, part true and part false; which put the steward quite out of patience.

Steward. Why, you lying rascal! do you take me for a buzzard, that I am to swallow all this trumpery?

Grigg. I swear, Collins, I tell you nothing but truth; and I wish I may go to the devil, if I have invented a word.

Steward. So be it.—But I see there's Michael Naggs; I have something to say to him.

The steward led Michael to another table; and calling for some beer, they had the following conversation.

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CHAP. XXIX.

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Two Knaves well met.

Steward. ARE you too amongst the wicked; I thought that since you were become one of the elect, to rebuild the church; you were suddenly become faint, like our butcher, who was converted upon ringing the bell at noon for the sexton.

Naggs. No, steward; my conversion will not be so sudden: but if once I should turn, I'll ne'er come back again:

Steward. If ever that happens, I should like to hear your confessions.

Naggs. I'll find some other audience.

Steward. Why so?

Naggs. You'd double mark the score of my sins, as you have done the score of my ale, with your infernal chalk.

Steward. It would go hard with you then.

Naggs. If I must confess, it shall be to some charitable person, who will endeavour to lighten my faults; not one like you, who will make them blacker than they really are.

Steward. But I can forgive sins.

Naggs. Aye! those of your debtors' book.

Steward. Just so; and a heavy account it is. I remit very few:—But a way might be found to make me use a sponge without payment.

Naggs. Indeed, master! I would fain learn that secret.

Steward. It may be learnt. (Here he made him a sign; and they retired to a dark corner of the room, behind the chimney.) This will perhaps turn out a lucky visit for you.

Naggs. It could not come at a better time; I am sadly in want of a bit of good fortune.

Steward. O no doubt; but if you mind your hits, there's money to be got now without fear.

Naggs. What must I do?

Steward. You must try to get into the mason's good opinion, and appear poor and half-starved.

Naggs. Marry, that's no hard matter.

Steward. I would have you now and then divide your morsel amongst your children, which will make you appear tender-hearted; and mind to have them follow you up and down, barefoot, and in rags.

Naggs. That I can do too.

Steward. Then, when you have got the best name of all the ten labourers, your real service must begin.

Naggs. And pray what is that?

Steward. You must do every thing you can underhand, to excite suspicion and quarrels amongst the men; put every thing into confusion, and set the Squire and the mason together by the ears.

Naggs. That won't be so easy a matter.

Steward. Perhaps not, but it will be very profitable.

Naggs. That out of the question; it seems to me the kind of advice that a knave would give, and a fool follow.

Steward. Always remember, that there is much to be gained.

Naggs. I must have five shillings hard money down upon the nail, or I won't engage.

Steward. You grow more saucy every day, Michael! the work I want you to do, has much profit in it, and little trouble; and yet you expect to be paid beforehand.

Naggs. I am deaf, steward. You want me to play the rogue to serve you, and I am very willing: I promise secrecy and pains, but I must have earnest. Five shillings, without bating one farthing, and those in hand, or you may seek another chap.

Steward. You cunning rascal! you think I can't do without you: there are your five shillings.

Naggs. Now all goes on straight: give me your commands.

Steward. I should think now, it would be nice amusement for you, to steal some of the scaffolding in the night; and perhaps, knock some of the window mullions down, when the building is a little forward. Then cords, and tools, and such little matters, might easily be made away with, and would serve to forward the undertaking marvelously.

Naggs. Nothing more easy.

Steward. Then couldn't you, some of these nights, slip a few planks down the hill into the river? they would swim away nicely, and get to sea in no time. You could easily manage that.

Naggs. All this I am equal to, as you shall soon see. And to remove all danger, I'll hang a great white dog I have to one of the poles in the church-yard; that in case the watch, or any of the neighbours should be disturbed by the noise; they may take it for a ghost, and decamp with a flea in their ears.

Steward. You master villain! the thought's worth a million.

Naggs. I must manage it so: it will be a preservative against that hempen neckcloth, which I don't much fancy.

Steward. Right enough: but there's one thing you must be sure to remember; if any plans, or bills, or any other papers belonging to the Squire,

should fall into your hands, be sure to make away with them.

Naggs. I'll not fail.

Steward. And then contrive to manage so with your noble companions, that they may waste as much time, and do as little good as possible. And then, whenever the Squire, or any of his people come; contrive to have things at fixes and sevens as much as you can, and take a sly opportunity of making them remark it.

Naggs. I'll do every thing in my power; I understand very well what you are aiming at.

Steward. Above all, you and I must seem to be upon bad terms.

Naggs. I understand you.

Steward. We must fall out now directly: for there may be some sly varlet upon the watch here now, who will report that he saw us sitting amicably together in a corner.

Naggs. That's very right.

Steward. Take a good draught or two; and then I'll pretend to be settling my accounts with you, which you must dispute: I'll fly into a passion; you must abuse me; and then I'll have you turned out of the house.

Naggs. An excellent plan (having finished his ale:) now then begin.

The steward, after having muttered some calculations, said in a loud voice: "I tell you again, there's four-and-two-pence remaining unpaid."

Naggs. Think again, Mr. Collins.

Steward. I swear I don't remember it. Wife, did Michael pay you four-and-two-pence last week?

Wife. No, as I hope for mercy, not a farthing.

Steward. That's very odd; give me my day-book. There's monday—nothing paid Michael.

Tuesday nothing. Wednesday—didn't you say it was on Wednesday?

Naggs. Yes.

Steward. Well, see yourself; there's Wednesday—and see, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; and not one word of your four-and-two-pence.

Naggs. The deuce is in it, but I'm sure I paid it.

Steward. Softly, softly, Master Michael; I take great care to have every thing put down.

Naggs. What care I for your puttings down? I swear I paid it, and that's enough.

Steward. It's false.

Naggs. You scoundrel, what do you mean by saying I lie?

Steward. Take care what you say gallows-bird!

Some of the peasants now interfered, calling out: "He has abused the steward; we heard him."

Naggs. It's false; but I insist upon it, I paid him honestly.

Peasants. What? you villain! do you pretend you did not abuse him, when we all heard you?

Steward. Turn the scoundrel out of doors.

Naggs. (Seizing a knife.) Let every man who values his life, keep his distance.

Steward. Take the knife from him.

They crowd round him, take the knife, and turn him into the street.

Steward. I am glad the rascal's gone: I verily believe he only came as a spy from the mason.

Peasants. As sure as a gun; it's very well he is off.

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CHAP. XXX.

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More Weeds from the same Soil.

HALLO! Dame! more beer! It shall be all paid in harvest; half an acre for every pot.

Steward. But you must pay me sooner.

Topers. Not a day sooner; but better measure.

The steward set down with them, and drank an ocean upon the strength of the half acre for a pot.

They now all began to talk together: At every table there was a confused clamour of oaths and imprecations, indecency, abuse, and boastings.— They relate their tricks and rogueries; the hard things, and the hard knocks they have given and received; the debts they have disowned; and the fools they have made of their creditors: the causes they have gained by perjury, and cheating; the mischief they have done: priding themselves upon every species of wickedness, and exaggerating their achievements, though there was no cause. They related their cunning shifts to cheat the late Squire, and how often they had robbed his woods, his corn-fields, and his tythes; how their wives acted poverty, and taught it their children; holding a prayer-book in one hand, as soon as the Squire appeared, and hiding a pot of ale under the bed with the other.

They then boasted of the cleverness of their children: how one helped the father to impose on the mother, and how such a girl assisted her mother in throwing dust in the husband's eyes. They ap-

plauded these feats, and remembered to have done as much when they were young themselves.

Then came the story of poor Hanger; who was unluckily caught committing one of these acts, and was cruelly led to the gallows.—Do you remember, said one, how devoutly he prayed? So, I dare say, his soul would be saved. He did not confess every thing by a good deal; but he would not have been hanged, if it had not been for an unchristian parson.

He was just beginning with the parson, when the steward's wife beckoned to him that somebody wanted him.

Steward. Wait till they have done hanging the man.

Wife. No, no; it's Joseph that wants you.

Steward. Well, well, keep him out of sight; I'll come directly.

Joseph had slipped into the kitchen; but as there was so much company in the house, Mrs. Collins thought he might be seen: so she put out the candle, and said to him: "Pull off your shoes, and follow me very softly into the room below; my husband will be there in a minute."

Joseph, taking his shoes in his hand, followed her on tiptoes. The Steward soon joined them.

Steward. What brings you here so late, my good lad?

Joseph. Nothing very particular; only I wanted to tell you that every thing is settled about the stones.

Steward. I am very glad to hear it, Joseph.

Joseph. Master was talking about the walls to-day, and prated something about cobbles, and such things; but I gave little heed, and told him without ceremony he was a blockhead, that he knew nothing of the matter: that a wall built of chalk would be as smooth and even as a glass. He had

not a word to say against it: so I advised him by all means to use chalk.

Steward. Then it's all settled?

Joseph. Certainly: we agreed upon it then; and on monday the quarry is to be opened.

Steward. But the labourers are to go to the Castle on monday.

Joseph. They'll be back by noon; and the day shan't finish without some of the lime being mixed with your powder: you may be as sure of that, as if it was already made up.

Steward. Nothing can be better: How I wish it was in the walls! I have the money I promised you ready, Joseph.

Joseph. I should like to have a little of it now, master.

Steward. Come to me on monday as soon as the quarry is opened; the money shall be ready for you.

Joseph. Do you think then I am telling you lies?

Steward. No, indeed, Joseph; I am far from doubting you.

Joseph. Find me then half-a-guinea directly, in part of payment of the money you promised me: I want to pay the shoemaker for a pair of new half-boots; to-morrow's my birth-day, and I have no mind to borrow of Leonard.

Steward. I can't conveniently let you have it tonight; but come on monday, in the evening.

Joseph. I see how much you believe me! and one may well say, "promising and performing are two things." I thought I could have depended upon you, better than this comes to, Mr. Collins.

Steward. You may be sure of your fifteen shillings.

Joseph. O that's all in my eye.

Steward. Can't you stay till monday?

Joseph. Master Steward, it's as plain as the sun at noon-day, that you don't believe me; and I'll tell you what I think: as soon as the quarry is once opened, I may go whistle for my money.

Steward. That's rather faucy, Joseph; do you think I mean to break my word?

Joseph. I'll hear no more; if you won't pay me this instant, our bargain's off.

Steward. Would'nt five shillings do for you at present?

Joseph. No, I must have my half guinea: but then you may depend upon my serving you through thick and thin.

Steward. Well, if it must be so, it must: but now mind you keep your word.

Joseph. If I don't, you may call me the greatest rogue that ever existed.

(The steward speaking to his wife.) Give Joseph half-a-guinea.

(His wife to him apart). Think what you are about.

Steward. Don't talk, but do as I bid you.

Wife. Why, what nonsense this is! consider a little; you are half fuddled; you'll repent to-morrow.

Steward. Not another word; but pay him down half-a-guinea, I tell you.

The wife went grumbling, and fetched the money; which she threw down before her husband in a pet, and he gave it to Joseph, saying: now you're not going to take me in?

Joseph. How can you suspect me, Mr. Collins?

He took his leave, chuckling over his money as he went.

Joseph. Well, I have got my wages in part: and they are safer in my hands, than in that old rogue

of a steward's box. But I am too cunning for him: now that I have touched the cash, Leonard may use what stone he will; little I care.

The wife, in the mean time, was bursting with rage. She sat and sulked over the fire by herself; and would not go into the room to the topers till midnight was passed. On the other hand, Joseph was no sooner gone, than Collins began to repent of his folly in having paid him in such a hurry, but when he rejoined his jolly companions, he forgot his cares in the scene of riot; and sat drinking and roaring, till twelve o'clock had struck. At last the hostess came in, and told them it was more than time for them to get away, for that Easter-day was begun.

Easter-day! exclaimed the drunkards; some yawning, some stretching their arms, and getting up one by one.

You might have seen them staggering backwards and forwards, to get to the door; holding by the tables, and the wall.

I beg, said the wife, you will go out one by one; and let us have no noise, or we shall be all fined by the rector.

Peasants. We had better stay, and drink the money here.

Wife. No, no; get away. If you should meet the watch, don't fail to let him know he'll find a luncheon, and a good draught of ale here, if he will call.

They were scarce gone, before the watch called under the window: "Past one o'clock." The wife went to the door with some ale, and begged him not to mention how late he had met the company going from the alehouse. This done, she helped her drunk and half-asleep husband to bed.

REMARK. When the two or three lines which are now omitted, were read to a youth under ten years of age; he exclaimed, "That's very wrong:"—I kissed the child, and effaced them directly.

Amiable boy! if you can but preserve that delicacy of sentiment, and that innocent blush which at present colours your cheeks: that which now only adds a charm to your tender age, will be your glory and your happiness, at a more advanced period of your life. But if in your commerce with the world, and in the impetuosity of your passions, hurried by the gush of ardent blood, you should sacrifice this sweet and modest simplicity; if the vivacity of your eyes cannot be checked, and they cease to be cast down with shame, at the sight of any thing indelicate: if those cheeks should cease to blush at the mention of an indecency: then, my young friend, you may weep at the recollection of this circumstance. Then, perhaps, your only shame will be in the remembrance of it.

Just now, I asked myself this question; how far may a moral writer, who is himself really moral, be allowed to proceed in the description of vice?

May I be allowed to describe with my pen, what Hogarth and others have not scrupled to describe with their pencils?—I have blushed when the thought has occurred to me, and have looked around me, jealous lest any one should suspect I had entertained it. At the same time I can examine the painter's design, in company with another man of the most respected character, and feel no shame. Surely then the tongue and lips must be more inti-

mately connected with the heart, than the hands are. That art, which by the aid of the hand and the pencil, paints vice, and describes without shame, and to the life, all the baseness of it; does not corrupt the mind in an equal degree, as when the mouth is employed in the same hateful office. In so saying, I am not writing the panegyric of our poets and painters of voluptuous subjects; but the reverse. And if I am rightly understood, I think I have discovered an interesting truth, in an age when the passion for trifling pictures to amuse the fancy is carried to so high a pitch; instead of selecting subjects more worthy of a rational mind.

Dame Collins, still on the fret, kept grumbling about the half-guinea, and her husband's folly; while he, snoring and snorting, soon lost all recollection of every thing. At last sleep overtook her: and in this pious manner they prepared for the devotion of the day. Happily for me, I shall have little to say of either of them for some time to come. I return to Leonard and Gertrude.

And so the world goes.—In one place, close to some stinking hole, may be seen a garden, smiling in the variety of its hues: and perhaps in the middle of an enamelled meadow, spangled with sweets, an offensive dunghill. And what is perhaps more strange, the flowers, and sweets of life would lose many of their charms, but for the contrast.

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CHAP. XXXI.



A good Mother, preparing for the Solemnity of a very Holy Day.

GERTRUDE, alone with her children, was meditating on the events of the past week, and on the sacredness of the morrow. Wrapt up in her occupations, she prepared the supper, and laid her own, and husband's Sunday clothes in order, that her devotions might have no interruption. This settled, she ranged her fine family round the table, to hear them say their evening prayers. Upon this occasion she never failed to remind them of their faults, and recalled to their recollection such of the events of the past week, as were likely to instruct them, and purify their little hearts. On this day in particular, which had been marked by God's peculiar goodness to them, she wished to impress with force upon their tender minds, such a remembrance of his general mercy, as that they should not soon forget it. The children observing a respectful silence, held up their hands as if to pray, while she spoke to them as follows.

I have some happy news to tell you, my dear children: your good father has had a job given him this last week, which will be more profitable than his ordinary work. We may hope, my darlings, that in future we shall gain our daily bread with more certainty than heretofore: Children, thank God for his goodness to us; and remember the time when I was obliged to stint your meals. How heart-

breaking it was for me, when I could not give you a sufficiency! but the good God knows his own time; and that it is necessary for you, my dears, to be enured to poverty, patience, and moderation in your wants; rather than to be brought up in affluence. You may believe me when I tell you, that it too often happens to those who live in the abundant gratification of all their desires, to forget God, and neglect their duty. Take care, therefore, always to keep in remembrance, the state of poverty and distress from which, I hope, we are now relieved. If we should now see better times, children, remember to have compassion upon those who are in want; and bearing in your minds what you have yourselves suffered from hunger, compassionate the sufferings of your neighbour, and cheerfully bestow upon him whatever superfluity you may have.— May I not hope that you will attend to what I say, my darlings?

Children. Oh! yes, mother; indeed you may.

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CHAP. XXXII.

The Delights of Benevolence.

Mother. NICHOLAS, tell me who you know, that is in the greatest want.

Nicholas. Little Roughwater, mother: you were at his father's yesterday; and I think he must be almost starved, for I saw him eating the grass that was heaped up in the stable.

Mother. Will you sometimes give him your luncheon?

Nicholas. That I will, this very day if I may.

Mother. Well, I give you leave.

Nicholas. O how happy I am!

Mother. And you, Louisa; who will you give yours to?

Louisa. I can't recollect just at this moment, who I would give it to.

Mother. What? do you know no child who suffers from hunger?

Louisa. Plenty, mother.

Mother. Then why do you say, you don't know who you would give it to? your consideration is always so well-timed, Louisa!

Louisa. Now I do know.

Mother. Who then?

Louisa. To Barbara Trickerman; I saw her yesterday picking up some rotten potatoes off the steward's dunghill.

Nicholas. I saw her too; and I felt in all my pockets, but I had not a crumb of bread left. I wished I had had my luncheon, half an hour later:

Gertrude asked all the other children the same question, and they all rejoiced to be allowed to give their shares to some poor child. Their mother let them indulge the thought awhile; and then said: Enough of this for the present, children; think now of the fine things our good Squire gave you!

Children. O yes! those nice new shillings and six-pences! will you let us look at them, mother?

Mother. First, say your prayers; and then I will.
—This caused a general scream of joy.

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CHAP. XXXIII.

*Prayer should be accompanied with religious
Attention.*

Gertrude. YOU'RE too riotous, children. If you would accustom yourselves to consider that every good thing you possess comes from God; your joy would be mingled with respect, and would not be so tumultuous. I like to rejoice with you, and as much as you can do my dears; but if, either in joy or sorrow, we allow ourselves to be hurried away by excess; we lose that evenness of mind, which is so necessary to the good government of the heart. Nobody can be quite happy, unless he possesses that evenness of mind; and there is no means so likely to obtain it, as the frequent contemplation of the power of God. You must never fail to pray to him morning and evening: that will use you to think of him at other times. And, whether we thank him for blessings received, or implore blessings to come; the reverence the act of prayer does, or ought to inspire, will prevent our running into wild excesses, either of grief or joy. Remember also, that when you pray, you should endeavour as much as possible, to quiet your minds, and humble yourselves before your Maker. Consider a minute; if you have reason to thank your earthly father for any kindness he has shewn you, you do it not in a boisterous manner; you express yourselves in few words, and by gentle carresses; and if you feel very thankful, the tears stand in your eyes.—So it

should be, my dears, with respect to God. And if you feel sensible of, and grateful for any mercy shewn you, you ought to bend with the lowest submission, and in few words, and with your eyes in tears, you should return sincere thanks to your heavenly Father. The effect of prayer, my children, ought to be, to keep up in your hearts a warm and lasting sentiment of gratitude and benevolence, to God and towards man: and when we really pray as we ought to do, our minds naturally take a turn towards goodness; and then God will bless us, and good men will love us for ever.

Nicholas. Sir James Grant will love us too if we are good, as you told us yesterday, mother.

Mother. Yes, my boy; he is a worthy pious gentleman: and I pray Heaven to render him all the kindness he has shewn us. I hope, Nicholas, that you will deserve that he should love you when you grow up.

Nicholas. I will do every thing he would have me; and obey him in every thing as I would my father and mother, because he is a good man.

Mother. That's a good boy; think always so, and you will be sure to be beloved.

Nicholas. If I could get to speak to him once.

Mother. Why, what have you to say to him?

Nicholas. I would thank him for those nice shillings and six-pences.

Fenny. You surely would not be so bold!

Nicholas. Why not?

Fenny. I am sure I could not.

Louisa. Nor I.

Mother. Pray, why, girls, could you not?

Louisa. I could not help laughing.

Mother. What! laugh: are you not ashamed of yourself, to confess before-hand that you would behave so like a fool: If you were not so great a

rattle-brain, such a thought could not have entered your head.

Jenny. I should not laugh; but I should be sadly frightened.

Mother. Child, he would take you by the hand, and smile upon you as your father does, when you have done something to please him: you would not be afraid then?

Jenny. No, certainly, not then.

Jonathan. No more should I.

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CHAP. XXXIV.



Maternal Advice that goes directly to the Heart.

NOW for other business, children: how have you passed the last week? (She looked at them all round.) Jenny, have you been a good girl this week?

Jenny. No, mother, you know I neglected my little brother.

Mother. It might have gone very hard with him, Jenny: there have been instances of children thus left alone, being suffocated. Only make it your own case: suppose yourself shut up in a room by yourself, without any thing to eat or drink, and that nobody came to you when you cried? When infants are left to themselves, they cry themselves into such fits of passion, as to make them suffer for the remainder of their lives. I shall never be able to leave the house a moment with comfort, if I can't be certain you will never do so any more.

Fenny. You may depend upon it mother, I never will.

Mother. Indeed, I hope, my dear, you will never give me such another fright.—Pray, Nicholas, how have you passed the week?

Nicholas. I don't think I have done any thing bad, mother.

Mother. You forget then; that on monday you threw your brother James down?

Nicholas. I did not do it on purpose, mother.

Mother. Indeed! it would have been a pretty story if you had. Are you not ashamed to make me such an answer?

Nicholas. I beg pardon, mother; I'll never do so again.

Mother. If when you grow up, you should be as inattentive, as you are now, to whatever comes in your way, you'll be made to repent it. Even amongst children, the giddy ones are always getting into scrapes; and your thoughtlessness, my dear Nicholas, makes me tremble for what may be your fate.

Nicholas. I'll try to be more careful, mother.

Mother. Pray do, my good'boy; for you will otherwise be sure to be unhappy.

Nicholas. My good and dear mother, I know it is true; and I will try to be better.

Mother. Now, Louisa, what have you to say?

Louisa. As for this week, I do think I have been very good.

Mother. Are you sure of it?

Louisa. Indeed, mother, as far as I can recollect: I assure you, if I knew any thing I would tell you.

Mother. I observe, Louisa, that you always use as many words, even when you have nothing to

say ; as another would, who had much of importance to reveal.

Louisa. Have I said any thing wrong now, mother ?

Mother. You have used too many words for your matter. I have told you an hundred times, that you have no discretion. You never think before you speak : but so long as you can but chatter, you think that enough. What occasion was there for you to tell the steward the other day, that you knew Sir James was to be here ?

Louisa. I am sorry for it, mother.

Mother. How often must you be told not to meddle with what does not concern you ? and particularly before strangers : and still that tongue of yours can never be quiet. Suppose now, for instance, there had been some particular reason why your father would not have had it known that Sir James was to come here, and you had got him into some difficulty by telling it ?

Louisa. I should have been very unhappy : but neither he nor you said I was not to mention it.

Mother. O, very well ; I will take care to caution him when he comes in, that in future when he has any thing to tell us, he must always begin by saying : “ Louisa may tell this to all the neighbours, and publish that at the market-cross ; but about this, and this, and this, she must not say a word.” So that you may know exactly what you may chatter about.

Louisa. Pray forgive me, mother : I did not mean so.

Mother. Let me tell you then once for all ; never to put in your word, when the subject does not concern you. But I am afraid my talking is to no purpose ; and that nothing but severity will make you remember ; so take notice, the next time you chat-

ter out of season, I will use the rod. (At the mention of the word rod, tears came into Louisa's eyes.) Unreasonable talking, my dear Louisa, may produce a world of mischief; and I must break you of the habit, cost me what it will.

In this manner she lectured them all round; not excepting even the little James.—“You must not call out for your porridge with such eagerness; for if you do, I shall make you wait the longer, or perhaps give you a smaller share.”

This done, the children said their evening prayer, and finished by the one Gertrude had taught them for saturday: which will be found in the following chapter.

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CHAP. XXXV.

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A Prayer for Saturday-night.

HEAVENLY Father! thy goodness is manifest to all mankind; and more particularly to us, upon whom thou hast showered thy benefits.

Thou providest abundantly for all our wants, and from Thee proceed the daily bread, and every other good thing, which our dear father and mother administer so kindly to us. Bless them for the pleasure they take in doing us good: for though they teach us to thank thee for their kindness to us, and tell us that without their knowledge of thee and thy works, they would love us less; yet we beseech thee bless them. They teach us to revere the name of Jesus Christ, for that he has taught us to know,

and to love thee, O heavenly Father. And we are persuaded that they only, who walk in his ways, and obey the precepts he gave us while upon earth, can be faithful servants to thee, or be capable of fulfilling their duties to their children, or their fellow-creatures. Our good parents impress upon our minds a love of that Saviour, who in his heavenly care for mankind, pointed out the road to temporal and eternal happiness; and having lead a life of suffering, finally shed his blood upon the cross for our redemption. They have told us, that thou O God, did'st raise him from the dead, and hast seated him on the right-hand of thy throne, to partake of thy glory: that his heavenly love is still towards mankind, and that he wishes our salvation. We are affected to the inmost of our hearts, when we think of the goodness of Christ Jesus; and we desire nothing so much, as to learn to live so as to deserve his love, and that he should receive us into his heavenly kingdom.

O gracious Father of Heaven! we poor children, who now offer up our prayers to thee, are brothers, and sisters of the same family: grant we beseech Thee, that our mutual love may last for ever; and that no thought contrary to the welfare of each other, may ever enter our minds. All that we can do, we will do for the ease of our dear parents; we will watch to keep each other out of harm-way, that they may follow their avocations without anxiety on our accounts. This is all we can at present do in return for their goodness to us. Do thou reward them, O God, as we cannot; and teach us to love and obey them, till those latter days when it shall please thee to call them to enjoy the reward of their faithful services.. Most merciful and omnipotent Father! impress our minds during the holiness of to-morrow, with a particular sense of all

thy goodness, and the loving-kindness of Jesus Christ our Lord; and let us not forget our duty to our parents, and benefactors; but penetrated with the humblest submission to thee, O God! and gratitude to them; we may so live as to be allowed the delightful hope of inheriting thy blessed kingdom for ever.

We thank thee, O heavenly Father! that it has pleased thee to lessen the cares of our parents this week, in providing a means of subsistence for us all, more certain than heretofore. We bless thy holy name, that thou hast been pleased to establish over us a landlord who is a father to his tenants, and succours them in their distresses; but more particularly that it has pleased thee to direct his benevolent kindness to us. We earnestly desire to grow up in obedience to thee, and affection to him: that in all things we may do what is agreeable to thee, and useful to him who has been so good to us.

Here Nicholas stopped, and Gertrude made each of them read the part that particularly applied.

Louisa. Pardon, O God! I beseech thee, the faults that an evil habit has led me to commit: teach me to keep a guard upon my tongue! let me be silent, when silence becomes me; and when I do speak, let it be with modesty and upon reflection.

Nicholas. Preserve me, O Lord God! for the future, from my natural impetuosity; and teach me to be attentive to every thing I do, and to all that surrounds me.

Fenny. I am very sorry, Good God! that I so imprudently left my little brother; by which my dear mother was so frightened. I hope I shall never do so any more.

Mother. O Lord! hear our prayers, and pardon us. Pity us, and have mercy upon us.

Then Nicholas repeated the Lord's Prayer, and little Jenny lisped out "Receive me, O Lord! into thy holy protection, as well as my dear father and mother, brothers and sisters, our good landlord, and all our neighbours."

Gertrude, having given them her blessing, concluded her pious office with the following imitation of a psalm.

Restrain our acts, O mighty Lord,
 When prosperous we are ;
 And in our sorrows, help afford,
 From thy auspicious care.
 Prosper the works of my poor babes,
 And make their labours thrive ;
 Keep them from paths where vice enslaves,
 And save their souls alive.

This act of devotion was followed by a few minutes silence; which will always be the case, when minds have been in earnest.

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CHAP. XXXVI.

More maternal Advice, accompanied by real Piety and Devotion towards God.

LOUISA interrupted the silence. "Now, mother, you'll let us see our pocket-pieces."

Mother. Yes, I will; but still, Louisa, you are the first to speak. (Nicholas, crowding to get near-

er to see the money, squeezed his little brother so as to make him cry.)

Mother. Nicholas, I am ashamed of you: in the very same half hour that you promised to be more attentive, you are as giddy as ever.

Nicholas. Indeed, I am very sorry; I never will do so again.

Mother. You said so just now in your prayer to God; I am afraid you were not in earnest.

Nicholas. Yes, mother, indeed I was; if you knew how sorry I am, you would forgive me.

Mother. I am also very sorry, my dear, to be obliged to punish you least you should forget again. You must go to bed directly, without any supper.

So saying, she took him by the hand, and led him into the room where his bed was. The other children were confounded, and very unhappy because poor Nicholas was to have no supper.

Mother. Why will you oblige me, my dears, to use rigour? I would much rather manage you by gentle means.

Children. Pray, mother, let Nicholas come back again.

Mother. No, my dears; I must break him of that thoughtlessness.

Jenny. We shall not see our money to-night then; we must not see it without poor Nicholas.

Mother. Jenny, you are a good child, then you shall see your money to-morrow, altogether.

When she had given them their supper, she put them to bed; where she found Nicholas still crying.

Mother. Be more upon your guard in future, my child, my dear Nicholas.

Nicholas. O my dear, dear, good mother, pray forgive me, and kiss me before you go: I don't care about my supper.

Mother. God bless you, my dear child, (kissing him :) but, O Nicholas, pray be more thoughtful.

The child threw his arms round his mother's neck, and again imploring pardon, sobbed out, he would really be very good.

The mother blessed them all, and went into the other room.

She was quite alone. Her solitude was cheered by the feeble light of a little lamp that stood upon the table: her heart was as light as goodness could make it, and she raised her thoughts in gratitude to her Maker, with not less fervency because she was silent. Her mind turned upon the goodness of God, with so much devotion, that she almost fancied herself in his presence; and at last, the idea possessed her so entirely, that she insensibly dropped upon her knees, and raised her eyes streaming with tears towards heaven. Her heart had been softened by the repentant tears Nicholas had shed; and his sobs for forgiveness, still vibrated on her ears.

The tears of repentance are not without sweetness: and those of remorse for having afflicted the good, are not without honour, even to a man. Such, were those shed by a repentant son, for having given pain to the best of mothers. Perhaps the Almighty may deign to look down with benignity upon scenes such as these. Perhaps the effusions of Gertrude's soul might be grateful even to Omnipotence: certain it is, that though her eyes were wet with tears, her bosom glowed with extatic happiness.

Her husband entered, while she was still kneeling.

Leonard. What! crying, my love? what can that be for to-day? your eyes are red and swelled.

Gertrude. My dearest husband, these are the sweetest tears I ever shed: my heart was big with

gratitude to God for his mercy so lately shewn us. I wished to thank him; but I could not speak: I dropped down on my knees, and fell a-crying: but I think I never returned him thanks so earnestly before.

Leonard. O Gertrude! that I could soften the obstinacy of my heart, and adore God as fervently as you do: I most certainly wish to be good, and to renew my duty and gratitude to my Creator; but I cannot do it with the same humility that you do, nor can I accompany my prayers with crying.

Gertrude. Oh! if your heart is thoroughly well-disposed, the manner signifies but little: some are of weak, some of stronger minds; but the essential thing is to be in earnest. My dear Leonard, God cares little whether I fall upon my knees, or burst out a-crying; but he expects a firm determination to be faithful to him, and benevolent towards our fellow-creatures. One man is more easily moved than another; but that is no more in the eye of God, than the different motions of his meanest reptiles. Approach God in the sincerity of your heart, and his mercy is such, that he will always be found.

Leonard had now a tear standing in his eye: he tenderly embraced his wife, and reposed his head on her bosom, while she pressed her cheek to his. They remained for some time in that position, absorbed in an extacy too delightful for words, and that no words can describe. At length Gertrude recollected that her husband had not supped, and proposed to make it ready.

Leonard. No, my Gertrude; my heart is too full of joy to allow me to eat: but do you get your supper.

Gertrude. I have no desire to eat neither; I'll tell you what we'll do: Let me carry our supper to poor Roughwater: he has lost his mother to-day.

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CHAP. XXXVII.

No Supper ever gave so much Delight.

Leonard. SO the poor soul is at last released?

Gertrude. Yes, thank God! I wish you had seen how she died. Only think, that while she lay on her death-bed, she found out that the little boy had been at our potatoe heap again; and she would make him and the father come and ask pardon. She insisted upon it too, that we should forgive her, because she could not make us any amends; and the poor man promised in the most earnest manner to make it up to you by as many days-works as you would require. You may think how this affected me. I hastened to the poor dying woman! but I cannot express to you with what extreme anxiety she asked me whether I had forgiven them: and when she saw how much I was affected, she recommended her grand-children to my care, but with the utmost diffidence. She seemed to wish to put it off till the last moment; but when she thought death pressed upon her, then in a manner which marked the tenderest affection for her children, she made her request, and expired. But you should have seen with what tranquillity she breathed her last: no expression of mine, no description can give you an idea of it.

Leonard. Let us go directly.

Gertrude. O, come with me.

When they got to the house, they found Rough-water weeping over his dead mother; and they

heard John calling to his father from the next room, and begging he would give him a morsel of bread: or, if not, a raw potatoe, or any thing.

Roughwater. Alas! my poor boy, I have nothing to give you; only be quiet till to-morrow: I have not a morsel of any thing in the world.

John. O dear! how hungry I am! I cannot get to sleep I am so hungry.

Leonard and his wife opened the door in the midst of this complaint; and setting down their supper, begged *Roughwater* to call his son to partake of it before it was quite cold.

Roughwater. O heaven! what can equal my shame! John, these are the same neighbours whose potatoes you stole, and of which I ate a part.

Gertrude. Pray have done, *Roughwater*.

Roughwater. I am ashamed to look you in the face, after what we have done to you.

Leonard. Come, *Roughwater*, eat your supper.

John. Pray, father, begin: I can wait no longer.

Roughwater. Say your prayer first, John.

The daily food I eat and drink,
 Merciful God, I owe to thee,
 In all I do, in all I think,
 Still let me know sobriety.

After this grace poor John fell to, half crying, half laughing; such was the excess of his hunger.

May the Almighty render it to you an hundred-fold, said the father; while tears were mingled with every mouthful.

They eat only a part of the supper, reserving the remainder for the other children; who were already asleep; and then John repeated the following grace after meat.

Thou feedest every living thing;
Let all unite thy praise to sing.
But chiefly man enjoys thy care,
And only man can thank by prayer:
Receive then kindly, mighty Lord!
Such thanks as our poor lips afford.
As I in stature grow, and sense,
I'll make a better recompence.
My days to thee shall be consign'd,
Nor ought but thee possess my mind.

Roughwater would have again thanked his kind
neighbour, but tears choaked his utterance.

END OF PART THE FIRST.

LEONARD AND GERTRUDE.

Part the Second.

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CHAP. XXXVIII.

*The exquisite Sensations of a Mind, that does good,
for the love of Virtue.*

Leonard. YOU are not happy Roughwater: is there any thing we can do to serve you? pray speak.

Roughwater. No: at present I want nothing. I thank you.

They perceived, however, that while he spoke, he could hardly suppress the grief that overcharged his heart: Extremely affected by his unhappy situation, both Leonard and Gertrude looked at him, and in the tenderest manner said: "But you sigh, neighbour: what is it that afflicts you?"

John. O do tell them, father, do tell them: they are so good!

Gertrude. Come, Roughwater, consider us as friends; and tell us every thing you have upon your mind: if we can assist you, you may be sure we will:

Roughwater. How can I tell you!—well—then I must. I have neither shoes, nor stockings to put on; and to-morrow I must follow my mother to the grave; and the day after I must go to the castle!

Leonard. My good man, how could you afflict yourself for such a trifle? why did'nt you speak out? I both can and will assist you.

Roughwater. Oh! gracious heaven!—what? can you, after every thing that has passed, place confidence in me? can you believe I will restore what you lend me without injury, and with the most heart-felt thanks?

Leonard. O never talk of thanks! and be assured that so far from doubting your honesty, I would trust you with ten times as much if it were in my power; but the misfortunes and distresses you have so long suffered, have broken your spirit, and made you diffident.

Gertrude. Yes, Roughwater, muster up your courage; rely upon the goodness of God, and the assistance of your neighbours; then your heart will be lighter, and you will the more easily get out of difficulties.

Roughwater. Indeed, I ought to trust more in the Almighty, for his mercy is too apparent in your goodness, for me to doubt it; but he must reward you, I cannot.

He put his hands to his face to hide his emotion.

Leonard. Good! honest man!

Gertrude. I should like to take a last look at your poor mother.

They took a candle to the bedside, and Leonard, Gertrude, Roughwater, and the child, contemplated her placid countenance for a considerable time, with tears in their eyes: then covering up her face again, they took leave of each other without uttering a word.

As the mason and his wife were returning home, Leonard said: "Such an excess of misery almost tears my heart? not to be able to go to church!—to be so dispirited as not to be able to implore God's

assistance to procure work!—not even to be able to thank him when it is procured!—and that, for want of proper clothes to appear in his Holy Temple!”

Gertrude. Most certainly it is shocking: but if this poor fellow had to reproach himself as being the cause of all this misery, his mind could not stand it; he would go distracted.

Leonard. O how true that is! if I should hear my children crying out for bread, without any to give them; and I was conscious it was my own fault, I should certainly go mad! and yet—I have been within the verge of it.

Gertrude. We must confess we were in great danger once.

She said this as they passed by the ale-house door, from whence proceeded a confused noise of oaths and imprecations. Leonard's heart beat while he was still at some distance: but as he came nearer, he began to tremble; and he shuddered with horror. Gertrude looked at him with an expression of pity; which he returned with one of excessive tenderness.

Leonard. What bliss it is, when I compare the peaceful evening I pass in thy blessed company, with what I used to pass in that den of drunkennes!

Gertrude was so affected she could not speak: she raised her eyes full of tears of thankfulness to heaven. He joined her in this pious emotion, and for a time they stood motionless. The moon was at the full: they considered it with fixed attention; while its bright, but gentle lustre seemed to be a pledge that God approved the tender sentiments which occupied their minds.

As soon as they reached home, Gertrude looked out some shoes and stockings for Roughwater, which Leonard immediately carried him; and when got back again, they joined in a prayer of preparation for the holy ceremony of the next day;

and retired to enjoy such rest as is the accompaniment of health and honest hearts. The next morning, being risen before day-break, they returned their grateful thanks to God; and having read the history of the Passion, and the institution of the Holy Sacrament, they continued to praise the Almighty till the sun rose. They awakened their children at the usual time; and having joined them in their morning hymn, they went to church.

A quarter of an hour before the church-bell rang, the steward quitted his uneasy bed; sought in haste for the key of the chest that held his Sunday gear, and not finding it, stamped and swore, forced the lock, dressed himself, and repaired to church; where he seated himself in the most conspicuous place.

When he put his face to his hat, to seem to pray: he held it so, that he could cast a glance on both sides over the whole congregation. Immediately after, the clergyman appeared, and having performed the service with the most impressive devotion, he mounted the pulpit, and delivered the following discourse.

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CHAP. XXXIX.



A Sermon.

MY children! that man who feareth the Lord, and walketh with uprightnefs of heart, and devotion in his presence! walketh in the light. But he who forgetteth God in all his actions, walketh in darkness. Be not deceived: there is but one good, and that is God.

Whence cometh it, that you seem to walk blind-fold, and by chance? you have no father, but God alone. Beware of man; lest he teach thee that which is unwholesome!—Happy is the man, who hath the Almighty for his father! who shunneth evil, and hateth iniquity: for the wicked man shall know no peace and the iniquitous man is caught in the net which he himself hath spread. Woe shall be the lot of him who injureth his neighbour; and when the cries of the poor whom he hath oppressed, ascend to heaven, let him tremble!

Evil to him who in winter assists the poor, with the hope of double recompense, in the long days of labour: who offereth him to drink in the thirsty time of hay, that he may be paid two-fold in the time of harvest. Evil to that wretch, who seduceth the poor man from the culture of his field, so that he leaveth it barren, and his children cry for bread!

Evil to the impious man, who lendeth money to the poor that he may enslave them: that he may hold them under his yoke, and have their labour without reward: who extorteth a heavy interest from them, and compelleth them to bear a false testimony that he may invade his neighbour's right.

Evil to him who assembleth the wicked in his house: who concerteth with them snares to betray the righteous; making them forget God, their wives and their children, and expend in vile disorder the wages of their toil, so that their families perish.

No less evil to him, whose ears are open to the seductions of the wicked; and who in his madness squanders the bread of his children. Evil to that man whose wife calls to Heaven, because the milk dries in her breasts for want of food, and her infant perishes: while she consumes herself in tears

because the work of her own hands, cannot earn it bread.

Evil to that unnatural father, who gambles away the money that should have taught his son a trade.

When the son grows up, will he not say; Thou wast no father to me; thou taughtest me nothing that I ought to know, neither will I assist thee in thy old age.

Evil to him who saith the thing that is not, who perverteth truth and equity: he shall surely come to confusion. Evil to him who obtaineth the widow's field, and the orphan's house by fraud; for God is above him: He will avenge the cause of the poor and the distressed, and he will hold their oppressors in abomination.

Evil to him whose house is stored with goods unjustly acquired. He may exult with the false spirits acquired by the intoxicating draughts, pressed from the labor of the poor: he may look without pity, and with contempt upon the wretch who loads his granary, while he sheds bitter tears of want and suffering. He may spurn from him with insult the creeping servant, who only begs as a loan, the tenth part of what is justly his due.—Let such a man harden his heart as he will, he can never know one moment of real tranquillity.

No, it can never be, even upon this earth; the man who grinds the face of the poor, can never know peace. Let his situation be what it will; let him be sheltered from every danger; let him be above the reach of justice; responsible to no one: let him even be supreme judge himself, possessed of power to throw the poor innocent man into prison and to dread nothing from his resentment: were he the arbiter of life and death, and the inflicter of punishments, he could never know peace.

That man, whose pride trampleth on the humble; who layeth snares for the unfortunate, and lessens the possessions of the widow; is a wretch more wicked than the highwayman, or the thief, whose life is forfeited to the law. But such a man knows no repose of conscience: like another Cain, loaded with the weight of a brother's blood, his soul is ever in torment: he may wander from place to place in search of comfort, but there is no comfort for him. In drunkenness and debauchery, impudence and wickedness, hatred and disputes, fraud and deceit, indecency and oaths, abuse and invective, in scandal and evil-speaking; he may try to forget conscience, but it will be in vain. The thoughts of God's vengeance will still intrude; of that God, who will seize him like a powerful warrior, and hurl him to that hell whose torments will never cease.

How different is the state of that man, who hath not evil in his heart; who is clear of the guilt of impoverishing his neighbour, and whose stores are not increased by injustice!

Happy is he whose mouth speaketh peace, and whose eye is mild and gentle; who is followed by the blessings of the poor, and for whom the widow implores God's rewards. Happy is the man who is at peace with Heaven, and in charity with all mankind. Happy, O ye faithful, come and enjoy the repast provided for you by the God of charity. The Lord, your God, is your Father also: he presents you a pledge of his love, which will be a cordial to your hearts: and you will find the peace of your minds increase in the same proportion with your love of God and your charity towards men who are your brethren.

But for you who know not charity, and whose every act demonstrates that you have not God in

your hearts; you, who acknowledge not that man is the care of the Almighty; and your own brother: why do you profane this holy place? You, who will oppress the poor to-morrow, as you did yesterday; what do you here? Will you partake of the bread and wine, the symbols of the body and blood of our Saviour; and declare you are but one with him, and that you have but one heart, and one mind for your brethren who are his members? —Ah! quit this sacred place; retire from this feast of love! Far hence! avoid.—Your presence is oppressive to the poor; you destroy the peace of our Lord's Supper, and give a bitterness to the poor man's privileged moment of enjoyment, from the apprehension that to-morrow he will become your victim. Be not so spiteful: let him enjoy this hour of peace and consolation without alloy: remove your hateful form from before his eyes; that form which makes him tremble, and shakes the heart of the poor orphan when he beholds it!

But why do I warn you? I spend my breath in vain. You will never quit the place where you think you can torment: your delight is to see the poor sufferers tremble; and you hope, because you want it yourselves, to deprive others of their peace of mind. But you shall be mistaken: I will bestow my pains upon the virtuous of my flock, and think no wicked man is here.

My dear brethren, you who are poor but honest drive from your remembrance all the ways of the wicked; think no more of them than if they had no existence upon earth:

God! whose benignant and all-seeing eye
 Surveys this nether world from Heaven on high
 Gives to the just, delight without alloy,
 But from the wicked man removes all joy.

This fatal truth the impious foon will know
 When God's revengeful arm shall bend his bow.

Keep the Almighty always in remembrance, and trust in him; so shall your present adversity and your sufferings, in the end prove blessings. If God is with you, fear not what man can do against you. But still be upon your guard against the insidious ways of the wicked: let your sufferings, your wants, your losses be what they will: submit to them, rather than have recourse to men who know not what compassion is. The promises of the hard-hearted man, are vain lies; and his help is only a lure to decoy you into his power.

Suspect the smiles of the wicked man; he flatters you to betray you: reject his offered support; it is a rotten prop that will let you fall. Avoid him, but fear him not. Be stedfast in the way of truth, like the great oak, that no storms can disturb. Look but at the forest; where the lesser trees seem for a time obscured by their overpeering neighbours; yet they grow, and flourish, and in time get strength to resist oppression. The same sun nourishes them both, the same dews refresh their leaves; and the time will come when those lords of the forest, which require so much support; oppressed by their own weight, must fall to the ground, and then decayed and forgotten, they will help to strengthen their weak neighbours whom they once despised.—Trust then in the Lord; his succour is never wanting to those who trust in him.

The fury of the Most High will overtake the impious man: then will he envy the poor, and those he has oppressed; and he will say, "Why am I not like one of them?"—Again therefore I say to the sufferer, put your trust in God; rejoice that you know him, and are allowed to be partakers of that feast of

charity which he has himself instituted. If you partake of it with hearts disposed to benevolence; you will find the burthens of the world lightened, and your strength to support them increased. Rejoice in the knowledge you have of that God who is himself charity: cherish a disposition to it in your hearts; for without it, you will become like one of those, whose snares I caution you to avoid. Bless the goodness of our Lord, for the institution of his Holy Supper; and that amongst the innumerable of his elect, he has deigned to admit you to partake of it. Glorify him for the revelation of his charity; it is the redemption of the world, and the tie that unites him to his creatures. Without charity man is without God; and what is man, wanting those things? can the mind of man conceive any thing so abject? For my part I cannot.

Happy then are they who seek the Lord, whose charity exalts them from brutes to men, from darkness to light; from death to everlasting life! again I say, happy are they who know God; and I beseech you, my brethren, to pray for them who are without his knowledge; that they may be enlightened by the truth, and partake of your joy.—My children, approach the table of the Lord. Amen.

Having finished his sermon, the good rector began to administer the sacrament. Collins, being the principal man of the village, assisted in handing the cup; and when the ceremony was concluded, and the benediction given, every one retired to his own home.

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CHAP. XL.

The Excellence of the Sermon proved by its Effect.

THE steward was highly offended at the rector's pointed discourse against the wicked. His rage boiled to such excess, that he could not contain it; and that very day which almost all the parish set apart for serious devotion, was profaned by invectives, and horrible imprecations-against the priest. He was no sooner returned from the communion-table, than he assembled the worthy companions of his drunken excesses; who hastened to obey his summons, and joined him in his impious abuse. He opened by saying, "I cannot endure these damned pointed, and injurious sermons."

Bitterbeer. You are right; and it is a sin and a shame, that the parson should preach them, particularly on a day so holy as this.

Steward. The pitiful thump-cushion knows I cannot bear it, and that's his only reason. It must be fine fun for him to deal his hateful jargon to the right and left upon subjects he does not understand, so as to disgust one, and almost drive one to despair.

Bitterbeer. Most certainly, the gentleness of our Saviour and his Apostles never abused any one in the New Testament.

Grigg. What do you mean by that? He has used stronger terms than ever our parson did.

Bitterbeer. That's not true, Grigg.

Grigg. You are an afs, Bitterbeer. What think you of "Blind Guides; Serpents; Generation of Vipers?" You might have read this in your bible.

Peasants. What he fays is very true: there is abuse in the Testament: but then, they never talked of lawfuits, nor false oaths; and besides, it was most likely to other sorts of men from our steward.

(*Other Peasants.*) Aye, no doubt; quite other sorts of men.

Grigg. That I believe, or I think they would not have dared to say so much. Think of what I am going to tell you.—One day a certain Ananias—yes, I am right; that was his name:—he fell down, and died upon the spot; and so did his wife: only because they told a lie!

Peasants. But is that true, Grigg? Only for telling a lie?

Grigg. As true as I sit here.

Bitterbeer. One must own it is a fine thing to know the bible.

Grigg. I may thank my father who is dead and buried for that; but in other respects, Heaven pardon him, he was no great saint. He wasted all the money he got with my mother, to the last penny: but there are blacker matters than that against him; he was thought to be nearly connected with that Hanger, who ended his days at Tyburn. Those are blots that remain in a family for two or three generations: but as for the bible, he knew it as well as any parson of them all, and would make his children learn it too; there was no avoiding it.

Bitterbeer. I have often wondered, that knowing so much as he did, he could be such a good-for-nothing fellow.

Peasants. Aye, that comes of learning.

(*Ferom*;—a traveller who chanced to be in the alehouse for refreshment). I am amused, gentlemen, at your surprize. If learning always made men honest, we should have nothing but honest lawyers and attornies;—with all respect be it spoken.

Peasants. Marry, that's very true; nothing can be truer.

Ferom. You may depend upon it; there is a very wide difference between knowing what is right to be done, and doing it. He who professes only to know, is very apt to forget how he should act.

Peasants. You say very right: without practice one unlearns very fast.

Ferom. It's very natural it should be so; for idleness is the root of all evil. What can be more tiresome than a man, who for want of something else to do, gets a habit of prating, without understanding himself, or making any one else the wiser. Only take notice, and you will always find that those fellows who affect such a deal of wisdom, which they have found in the news-papers, and who sometimes mix scraps from the bible; only make a noise, without much meaning. If one should ask them about husbandry, the education of one's children, about any art or trade; or if one should ask their advice in any difficulty; they would be quite lost, and have nothing to say. It is only amongst idle fellows like themselves, at alehouses, merry-makings, and so forth; that they can find any hearers: there they are in their place; but their only merit consists in a continued babble of nonsensical stories, without sense or meaning. And yet this is carried to such a pitch, that you see houses filled with honest countrymen, whose ears are tickled by these fellows of sound without sense, and they take them for so many Solomons.

Bitterbeer. This gentleman talks very well, Grigg; and he has described your father to a shaving. That's the very man in every particular: he was as mere a fool, if you talked to him about cultivation, or fencing, or stock, as man could see; and he was as idle as a drone. But at the alehouse, in a winter's evening; or in the church-yard after service was over, he would talk like a book, about all sorts of things. About Jesus Christ, and the Witch of Endor; and then about Mother Shipton, and Humphries and Mendoza, and the Herring Fishery, and Mr. Pitt and Lord Nelson. Let him talk of what he would, he always found listeners; till at last he failed a little too near the wind, and his credit failed him.

Ferom. It was high time.

Bitterbeer. Yes, he pigeoned us a long time: we used to pay his score for the lies he could tell.

Ferom. It would have been better for him, if you had let him thirst a little.

Bitterbeer. Yes, by my faith; if he had not quenched himself at our expence, he would not have had so near a sight of the gallows, and would have taken to work perhaps.

Ferom. So that your kindness ruined him.

Peasants. There never was a greater truth.

Ferom. There is no good to be learnt from these idle story-tellers: it is all time thrown away, particularly if they profanely talk of the bible.

Hoskins. It was on account of one of these stories, and I verily think out of the bible, that my father gave me such a dressing as I shall never forget. I staid to listen to it, instead of fetching up the cows.

Ferom. He served you very right: it is our duty to do what the bible bids us, and it only belongs to the parson to explain such parts as we could not

otherwise understand. The bible is an edict, a commandment: suppose the justices were to issue an order for your parish to ballot in all haste for so many men to the militia, in time of invasion, and the French at your doors: what would be the consequence, if, instead of obeying, you were to take the order to the alehouse, and discuss each sentence word by word?

Bitterbeer. The consequence? why we should deserve to have the French come and set fire to our houses, and burn our families.

Ferom. It is much the same with those who only read the bible, that they may talk of it at the public-house.

Grigg. This is all very well: but if we don't read it, how can we know our duty?

Ferom. It is one thing to read it for instruction; and another, for the purpose of prating about it at every lane end.*

Bitterbeer. But tell me, my good friend, how comes it that people say, learning can never do hurt? It seems from what you have said, that there is danger in knowing too much.

Ferom. Most certainly, comrade; if it makes you neglect what is more essential. Learning should be only conducive to good acts; and when one studies, merely for the sake of talking about it,

* There may be some, who may wonder at this serious turn of thought, in confirmed vagabonds: but, I believe, there are times, and circumstances, which bring such thoughts home to the minds of such men, with as much force, as to any of my readers. There are moments, when they talk and judge with seriousness, as well as with much simplicity and good-sense. Those who think that a disorderly and drunken countryman, has no returns of solid reflection, are I think deceived. His reason forsakes him only when he has drunk too much; and that was not as yet the case with the present company.

it unhinges one from all useful employments. All science, and the application of it may be compared to a trade. A shoemaker, for instance, ought to work at his trade; it is his livelihood: but he ought to study the quality, and the value of leather, to enable him to turn his work to the best account, so with every thing else. To execute is the essential, but it is necessary to understand, in order to execute well. Thus every one ought to regulate his thirst of knowledge, by the use it may be of to him.

Bitterbeer. I now think I begin to understand you. When one's head is too much charged with usefess knowledge, it prevents one's attending to one's work, which is the first of all things.

Ferom. Just as you say: every man should turn his mind, and all his care, to what concerns him the most: at least that's my way. I keep no bees; therefore I don't trouble myself about which is the best sort of hive: and till I possess an orchard, I shall care little about the management of fruit-trees. But I have a little land, that requires a great deal of improvement; therefore I consider with all my might, how I can make the greatest quantity of manure. So I think, if every man only minded his own business, things would go on better than they do. The proverb says, "The good cow thrives, with master's eyes." A man soon learns a deal, if he is only resolved to learn well; but if he grasps too much, he loses all. If he plants his learning by little and little, and regularly in his head, it stays there; but if he crowds it with a pack of stuff about politics, and the meaning of dreams, and the lucky and unlucky numbers in the lottery: his head's like our Molly's drawers, all rags and tatters, and nothing worth.

Bitterbeer. This is, however, all that most of your talkers know.

During this discourse, the steward sat croodling over the fire: he was chilly, and absent. He attended to little of what passed; and if he now and then put in a word, it had not much meaning. Entirely wrapped up in his own thoughts, he forgot to push about the can; and that made the stranger's and Bitterbeer's dialogue so long. Perhaps also he had no mind to deliver his thoughts before a man he did not know; and so waited till he had finished his snack, and his pint of ale, and was gone away: for the moment the door was shut, he ran off the following rant, in a breath; as if he had been studying it during his reverie.

Steward. This parson will always have it that we grind the poor. Now the devil take me, if I don't think they should be what he calls ground; for without that, there would be nothing like order in the world: there would be no poor left. Let us look where we will, from the prince to the peasant; from the court of Kings-bench to our vestry-meeting; the only object is self-interest. Every man jostles his neighbour; and it is catch who catch can. The late rector sold ale as I do, only underhand; and though he took no money, he was paid in hay and corn, and whatever he could get; as well as, as much as he could get. The stronger oppresses the weaker all the world over; and it is my own case to be ground sometimes. If a man wishes to get a little up in the world, he must look sharp to the main chance; or he may have his teeth pulled out of his head. Our parson does not know the poor as he calls them, as well as I do; or he would not trouble himself so much about them: and I am not sure that he cares so much about them either; he has only a mind to find fault with his betters, and get us by that means all under his thumb. But he'll not so easily trap me: the poor are a pack of

rif-raff, and if at any time I want half a score scoundrels, I shall soon find eleven amongst them. I should like to have my rents brought to me every quarter-day, without any trouble; I could then play the hypocrite, as well as another. But mine's a very different case. I must live by hard labour, and must pick up my miserable stipend as I can get it; and I must look sharp too, or I should soon want a piece of bread. I'll bet any money, that if I was to shew the least compassion to those fellows, I should never get a farthing.—There's scarce an honest man in the world.

Thus ended this fine harangue; not however without violent efforts: for his conscience told him every word the rector said was true: there was no end to his extortion: he might be called the leech of the parish. It was in vain he pretended to justify himself; every body saw how uneasy he was: for he could not sit still, but paced about from one end of the room to the other.

After a short silence, he began again. “That cursed sermon this morning, has quite overfret me: I don't know what ails me, but I am unwell. Is it so very cold neighbours? I am quite shivering.”

Peasants. No, it is not cold at all: but it was plain enough to see at church that you were not well; you looked as pale as death.

Steward. Aye, indeed, did you notice it? I was not at all well.—I think I am feverish.—I am so depressed, I must get some liquor. Let us go into the back room, while they are at church.

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CHAP. XLI.

The Topers are discovered.

ONE of the churchwardens, who lived at no great distance from the ale-house; and whose duty it was to check all disorder on a Sunday; had observed Bitterbeer, and Grigg, and some others of the same kidney, dropping in one by one between morning and evening service; and was extremely concerned and scandalized at it. He recollected that he was in duty bound to make such practices known to the minister: and accordingly he set a person he could depend upon, to watch whether these men returned home before the service began, or whether they continued at Collins's. Just when the bell put in, he went to the rectory, to report the precaution he had taken; and made Samuel Truman go with him, who had been appointed to watch. The rector was very much hurt at this account, but said little; which made the churchwarden suppose he was thinking of his sermon. At length, turning to Samuel, he said: "You're sure those men are still at the ale-house?"

Samuel. Most certainly, your reverence; for from the moment the churchwarden set me to watch, till the bell began to ring, nobody came out of the house but Mrs. Collins; and she is gone into the church.

Rector. So you're sure they are still there?

Samuel. Quite sure, sir.

Rector. It's a melancholy thing, that on a day so sacred as this, there should happen a circumstance to unhinge my thoughts, and make me so uneasy.

Churchwarden. I hope your Reverence is not displeas'd at what I have done; I thought it was my duty.

Rector. I know it was, and I am much oblig'd to you: but let us take this opportunity to reflect, that in fulfilling our lesser duties, we must not neglect the more essential. Let us go to the church, and pray to God to keep us out of temptation; that we may avoid committing the fault that I am deploring.

After a moment's pause he added: "No; there is no overlooking so scandalous an act of debauchery: Indulgence in this case, would be to encourage vice."—So saying, he proceeded to the church.

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CHAP. XLII.



The morning Discourse continued.

IN continuing the History of the Passion, the rector took these words for his text, (13th Chapter of St. John, 27th Verse.)

The general tenour of his discourse, was the treachery of Judas; on which he enlarged with so much zeal and animation, that the pulpit almost shook under him; he had never spoken with greater energy. Amongst other things, he said, that they who resorted to the alehouse, immediately af-

er the communion service was over, for the purpose of drinking and gambling; were in no respect less wicked than Judas: and that their end would be like his.

So very pointed a discourse engaged the attention of the whole congregation: they were quite astonished. But it was soon whispered about, that the alehouse was full of the most worthless fellows in the village. Immediately all eyes were fixed upon the steward's empty seat; and then were turned towards his wife, who could not help remarking it, and was so confused she could not lift up her head.

The moment the service was over, she quitted the church; but a buzzing murmur followed her; and there were some who got upon the grave-stones, and pointed after her. At last the noise became almost too great for the solemnity of the occasion.

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CHAP. XLIII.



The Gang disturbed.

POOOR Dame Collins, overwhelmed with confusion, hastened home. She threw her prayer-book down upon the table, amongst the mugs and glasses, and began sobbing aloud. Her husband and his crew would know what ailed her.

Wife. You shall soon know: I wonder what business you have here guzzling such a day as this; a pack of fellows as you are?

Steward. What! is that all?

Peasants. Why, dame? how comes it you have only just found it out?

Steward. I thought at least she had lost her purse, with all her money in it.

Wife. Yes, you're finely cockahoope: but if you had been at church you'd lower your tone.

Steward. Come don't bellow like a bull, but tell us what's the matter.

Wife. The matter! why somebody has certainly been telling the parson these fellows were drinking here in service-time.

Steward. What infernal villain has been telling him now?

Wife. You great fool! Do they come down the chimney then? Don't they come fauntering down the street, with their pipes in their mouths, directly before the churchwarden's door? They are good enough to see. The parson took a rare swing, I can tell you; and I was pointed at by almost every body in church.

Steward. Now here's another trick this plaguy parson has served me!—What possessed you to come here to-day, you drunken rascals?

Peasants. It was none of our fault; you sent for us.

Steward. I am afraid I did: I found myself I don't know how, and I could not bear to be alone.

Wife. Let it be how it will, it's a great shame: but hark ye, fellows; get away every man of you out of the back-door as fast as you can: and try if you can't get home before they are come away from the church: and then when they see you standing, every man before his own door, they'll think the parson has been mistaken. The psalm can't be over yet, but be quick.

Steward. Yes, away with you; quick, quick; the thought's worth a million.

They were no sooner gone, than she began to tell him every thing that had happened. How the parson had talked of the devil entering into the heart of Judas ; how he was hanged ; and how all those who took to drinking and gambling as soon as they had taken the sacrament, would be served in the same manner. He was so in earnest, that he thumped the cushion till he made me tremble again ; and I thought verily I should have fainted away.

At this recital, the steward quite alarmed, remained motionless, and unable to utter a word : but he sighed deeply, in spite of his pride which had hitherto supported him under the apprehension of the disgrace he could not help dreading. His wife asked him several times what he sighed for ; but she could get no answer. He paced about the room for some time ; and at last said in a low voice : “ What will all this end in ? What will become of me ! ”—Having tried in vain to quiet his disturbed mind, he told his wife to fetch him a composing powder ; and, said he, If I am not better to-morrow, I’ll be let blood.—Having taken the powder, he found himself a little more calm.

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CHAP. XLIV.



The Effects of an evil Conscience.

COLLINS now began to tell his wife the fate he had had at church.

Steward. I went, as I hope to be saved, without any rancour in my heart ; and I had prayed to God

to forgive me my sins: but when the parson began his sermon, he overturned all my pious thoughts; and instead of them, shocking ones came into my head, even during the communion-service. I could not raise my mind to heaven, nor even utter a sigh in the way of supplication: my heart was hardened, nay petrified as it were. I can neither describe, nor shall I ever forget the look he gave me. The judge who passes sentence upon a criminal, and delivers him to the executioner, has not so terrible a look. I shall never forget the glance of his eye: a cold sweat stood upon my forehead; and when I held out my hand to take the bread he offered me, it trembled like a leaf. I had no sooner swallowed it, than I felt my whole bosom burn with rage against the parson; my teeth gnashed together, and I did not dare look up at him. At that moment I was possessed with the most horrid thoughts: I thook with fear, as I have sometimes done upon the appearance of repeated terrible flashes of lightning: and I found it as impossible to drive away these thoughts, as it is impossible to avoid seeing the lightning when it flashes. I suffered martyrdom while I was assisting in administering the cup, and twenty times I thought it would have slipped out of my hand, it thook so. Amongst others, who should present himself but that rascal Joseph, in a pair of new half-boots; not daring to look me in the face: so much for my half guinea. I almost foamed with rage, to think I should never see my money again. Then came Gertrude, with her eyes raised towards heaven, and then cast upon the cup; never once looking at me, any more than if I had not been there. She hates me, curses me, I have no doubt; and wishes me at the devil: and yet she never once looked at me. After her came Leonard, who cast his eyes upon me with humble-

ness expressed in them; as if he had said: "Collins, have pity upon me, and spare me!" and yet that fellow would willingly see me hanged. Next came Michael Naggs, shaking with fear as much as I did. Think, wife! what I must have suffered! I trembled least, in order quite to complete my misery, John Doughty should have appeared: if he had, it would have been all over with me; I had as much as I could carry already. When I got back to my seat such a cold shivering came upon me, I could not hold my book open; and then it came into my head, that Sir James was at the bottom of all this, and a fresh fit of fury seized me. I vowed vengeance; and such thoughts came into my head as I never entertained before: such as I am afraid to mention even to you; I tremble when they recur to my imagination. I will tell you one of them: I thought I would displace the great boundary-stone of the manor, and roll it down the hill; nobody but me knows it is there, nor what is the use of it.

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CHAP. XLV.



A Wife tells her Husband truths, but a year too late to have effect.

DA^ME Collins was extremely affected by what her husband had told her; but she could give him no comfort, and was silent. He had discontinued speaking sometime before she had courage to open her mouth: but at length she determined to unburthen her mind.

Wife. I have been suffering the pangs of death all the time you have been speaking. You must absolutely cut off all connection with those fellows: things are taking a wrong turn, and we are growing old.

Steward. You are very right; but I am afraid it is not so easy a matter.

Wife. Easy or not, you must resolve to do it.

Steward. Ah! you little know how deeply I am involved, and how much they know.

Wife. You know more against them; they are all rogues, and will be afraid to peach: clear your hands of them at once.

Collins sighed; and his wife continued:

They do nothing but eat and drink at your expence; and when you get fuddled with them, they lead you by the nose. Think only how Joseph tricked you out of your half guinea, no longer ago than yesterday. I did all I could to make you hear reason; and you know how you received it. Besides that, I miss five shillings out of your waistcoat pocket; and no memorandum of it any where. How is it possible we should go on so? If, added to these bad bargains, you reckon the expence we live at, you will find we spend more than we earn; and yet you will persist in living with these vagabonds, and all for what? because your devilish pride won't let you give them up. One while you make a fellow say just what you bid him; and you make another hold his tongue when he ought to speak; and what better are you for it? They eat you up alive; and at the same time, if they could play you a dog's trick, you may be sure they would with all their hearts. There was a time when you could have managed these varlets, as you had had a mind; but it is no longer so: and you may rely upon it, you will bring on ruin in your old age, if

you don't shake them off. We are in a very bad way; for no sooner is your back turned, than the men quit their work, and ask for liquor; and I have no authority to deny them.

During this harangue, the steward never said a single word: he sat opposite his wife, in mute astonishment. At length he arose, walked into the garden, from the garden to the orchard, then to the stable. Agitated by care and uneasiness, he could find no peace any where. He stopped a short time in the the stable, and uttered what follows.

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CHAP. XLVI.

The Effusions of a wicked Mind.

Steward. **A**LL I have just heard, is but too true: but what can I do? I can never weather the storm that threatens me!

He then began railing at Sir James Grant, as if he had been the cause of all his uneasiness: and afterwards at the rector, because he had touched his conscience by his sermon. Next, the idea of removing the boundary-stone recurred to him.

Steward. I think I'll not meddle with that cursed stone; but if I should, the Squire would lose one-third of his domain. Yes, certainly; if Casserbury boundary was to be carried straight, instead of making the great angle it does at that stone, he would be finely cut off. But I think I'll not meddle with it.—But after all, it may not be a boundary. There is no mark of any kind upon it; and

nobody remembers its being placed there, though there is certainly a tradition that it has been there for ages.

He now returned to the house; and taking down his register, he seemed to calculate, and then write, then turn over the leaves; then untie some papers, roll them up again; read again, lock up his book, and pace with hasty steps up and down the room. Then he muttered something indistinctly, about the stone having no number, nor mark.

Steward. I just now recollect to have heard, that one of Sir James's ancestors was supposed to have encroached upon the manor of Cafferbury; and who knows but this is the very place? It seems very likely on account of that great angle; for there is none other like it any where: and the stone has no mark like the others. If this part does really belong to another manor; so far from being wrong, it is only justice and my duty, to have it restored to its right owner.—But then I may be mistaken.—No, I'll have nothing to do with it. I must remove it in the night, and it's very heavy: besides, I should have to roll it a matter of sixty yards before I could get it to the top of the hill.—If I could bury it now! and so hide it forever!—but it would take a deal of doing. I can't work at it in the day-time; it is so near the road, every stroke of a pick-axe would be heard, and for going there in the night, I must needs say I am afraid. I should be frightened at every thing that stirred:—if a hare should but run past me, I should take it for a ghost, and be scared out of my senses. And who knows but there may be such things as ghosts? and I know no place more likely to see one, than near the boundary. No, I had better not have any thing to do with it.——How comes it; that there should be so many people, who neither believe in ghosts,

nor in the devil? The old attorney did not believe a word about it; and the late rector had not too much faith. As for the attorney, he has told me an hundred and an hundred times, in all companies; that when once we were dead, it would be all over with us, just as with a dog or a horse. That was his belief; and his actions corresponded with it, for he would stick at nothing.—Who knows but he was right?—Oh! if I could but once bring myself to think so in earnest; I'd watch for this fine Squire at the corner of some hedge, blow his brains out, and then go and set fire to the parson's house.—But it is all in vain: I have no hope of ever bringing myself to such a belief; there are too many proofs to the contrary; and I am convinced that those who pretend to it, only half persuade themselves, to escape the horror that would attend their dread of future punishment.—Conscience! you speak too plain for me; I cannot shake you off:

I see the piercing eye of God
 Both night and day on high;
 And shake at his terrific rod,
 That damns my perjury.

No, I will have nothing to do with the stone; it may stay to all eternity for me.

His agitation now increased: he shuddered at the thought of God's judgment, which had taken possession of his mind. He could not rest quiet in one place; but seemed to wish to fly from his own reflections. He hurried into the street, and asked the first person he met, what kind of weather? which way was the wind? whether he remembered a great blight about three years before? and then scoured away without waiting for an answer. He next picked up a couple of his toping companions, and offer-

ed to treat them with ale, if they would but bear him company. He sat with them till bed-time; then took another calming powder: and so finished the account of one of the most sacred days, in the whole year.

CHAP. XLVII.

The Joys of a well-spent Sabbath.

I rejoice to quit thee for some time, O house of misery and terror! my mind was oppressed, a dimness clouded my eyes, my temples beat, and my whole frame felt the effect of the horror thou inspirest! I leave thee for a time, most execrable house! and as I approach the peaceful residence of love and virtue; I find my faculties, and the tranquillity of my mind restored.

When Leonard and his wife went to church in the morning, they left their children at home; who had remained quietly repeating their prayers, or singing such psalms as they knew, till their return. It was Gertrude's custom to make them repeat these lessons on a Sunday evening. She had left a particular charge with Louisa, the eldest girl, to look carefully after her little brother James. She could not have given her an employment more to her mind; and every time she took the infant up to quiet him, or to put his cradle in order, she fancied herself a great woman, and a most notable nurse. She would then dandle him in her arms, till the little monkey crowed with delight; and indeed, the early sensibility displayed by an infant, must

ive pleasure to every feeling mind. To see it extend its little sprawling hands with inadequate efforts, to catch sometimes a lock of her hair, sometimes her nose; and then bound with all its elasticity upon her knee. The gay Sunday handkerchief next attracted his attention, till the charms of bo-peep with Nicholas and Jenny behind the sister's hair, made him scream with pleasure. Then the little disputes, who shall care for him most; and the jealousies, who he loves best; which are always terminated by Louisa, who will admit of no competitor. Her care for him indeed deserved the preference; for she anticipated all his wants, and always found means to divert the threatened cry. She would toss him up into the air, as high as she could reach; and then let him sink almost to the ground: she would sometimes hide his face with her hand, to save him from the others; efforts which never failed to charm him. As interesting a part as any of this scene, was to see the infant's joy the moment its mother appeared: it stretched out its little arms, and almost escaped from its young nurse, who with difficulty restrained it. These events, so delightful to the children, were renewed every Sunday and holiday while the parents were at church; a sweet recreation for young minds well regulated, pleasing to the Supreme Being, and emblematical of the innocent pleasures of their future lives so long as they continue to be good and virtuous.

Gertrude found, upon her return home, the fullest reason to be satisfied with her children's conduct; and, on their part, they experienced the sweet delight of receiving the unrestrained commendations of their parents. They hung round their father and mother with almost clamorous affection. Nothing could surpass the delight that both Leonard

and Gertrude felt from their careffes; a delight heightened by the folemnity of the duty they had juft been performing, as it had ferved to foften and prepare their minds for the moft exquisite part of domeftic felicity. A recollection of the many fundays he had fuffered himfelf to be deprived of this innocent happinefs, would now and then obtrude itfelf upon Leonard's mind, and force a tear into his eye; but the furrounding fcene would foon difpel them, and leave him completely contented. The Almighty, who permits fuch enjoyment to his creatures, perhaps contemplates it with pleafure; and confers it as a foretafte of that blifs, which the good will know in a fuperior degree, when they inherit his everlafting kingdom. If parents would confider the reward it is in the power of children to beftow upon them for this care, they would never neglect their duty; and it would be well for them to reflect at the fame time, on the agonizing pangs fuch a neglect may give birth to.

With their hearts overflowing with benevolence to their young ones, thefe good parents converfed with them upon fubjects fuitable to the facred day. They explained to their infant minds the general goodnefs of God, and fome of the particular circumftances of the Paftion of our Saviour. They attended with modeft filence: and the morning paffed away with as much fatisfaction as if they had been at fome fhew. In the afternoon the parents went again to church. As they paffed by the alehoufe on their road thither; Leonard remarked to his wife, the air of confternation that appeared in Collius during the morning fervice.

Leonard. I never faw any thing equal to it! the fwat ran down his face during the whole of the communion-fervice; did not you take notice of it? his hand trembled as he prefented the cup.

Gertrude. No, I did not observe it.

Leonard. I really felt for him; he was in such terrible agitation. If I had dared, I would have said aloud, "Collins, don't bear me ill-will!" I wish an opportunity may offer for me to convince him, that I bear him none.

Gertrude. May God reward you, my dear husband, for this good disposition towards him; a proof that your heart is right. And I would wish you by all means, to do the steward any service that may be in your power. But yet, Roughwater's poor famished children, and many others, cry out for vengeance against him; and it will surely overtake him.

Leonard. Poor wretch! I cannot help pitying him. It is plain enough to see, notwithstanding the riot that is continually going on at his house, that he is worn away by care.

Gertrude. My good man! I believe you may depend upon it; that when a person quits the path of a virtuous and quiet life, he may bid farewell to happiness.

Leonard. If I have learnt any thing from experience, it is the truth of what you have just been saying. Whatever of wickedness, the most zealous of Collins's associates have been able to accomplish, either by force or by fraud, has never been able to procure them one hour's satisfaction.

By this time they had reached the church; and they were extremely affected by the zeal and enthusiasm, more than common, with which the good rector delivered his discourse upon the treachery of Judas.

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CHAP. XLVIII.

Thoughts on the habit of Wickedness.

GERTRUDE had heard the rumour that ran in the church, of the alehouse being full of drunkards; and told Leonard, who could scarce believe it.

What! said he, during divine service, and on a sacrament sunday!

Gertrude. Certainly, it is almost too shocking to think of; but there are no bounds to the excesses of a disorderly life. (Leonard's recollections made him sigh.) I shall never forget the description our rector gave us of sin, a long time ago, in one of his sermons preparatory to the sacrament: he compared it to a lake, that was gradually increased by the rain. The increase was imperceptible, he said; and still it proceeded every day, and every hour. The water rose more and more, and the damage its overflowing would occasion, was as great, as if it should be caused by a sudden tempest. Some few men were prudent enough to examine their banks and their drains, in time to ward off the evil effects: but the greater part took no concern till the inundation began; and then if they escaped immediate destruction, they ran about spreading the alarm, but too late to be of any service. So it is, said the rector, with the progress of sin.—I am still young, but I have had occasion an hundred times to remark the truth of the good man's comparison. When a man once gives way to a habit of wicked-

ness, his heart becomes gradually hardened, and he pays no attention to the progress of corruption, till it begins to exceed all bounds, and he is hurried away to endless perdition.

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CHAP. XLIX.

Children of various dispositions, with lessons suitable to them.

THE foregoing conversation lasted till they reached home. The children again flocked round them; and they all clamoured to repeat the week's lesson, professing to have it quite perfect.

Gertrude. How happens it that you are in such a hurry to-day? have a little patience.

Children. O but, mother, if we say our lessons well, you will let us do what we will with our suppers: won't you? You said yesterday you would.

Gertrude. Come, let us hear the lessons.

Children. And after, mother!—

Gertrude. Well, well; if you are quite perfect.

The children began and repeated what they had learnt, without missing a word; and that finished, their mother gave them their bread, and their bowls of milk with the cream upon it, because it was Sunday. She then retired to a seat at a little distance, to give her infant its supper; and while it hung at her breast, she listened with pleasure to the other children's schemes for the distribution of theirs. Not one of them would venture to taste the bread, nor to dip it in the milk: they were

overjoyed, and compared their different portions, each exulting in having the biggest. They finished the milk by itself; and then Nicholas tripping to his mother, and shewing her that he had not touched his bread, asked her to give him a bit for himself.

Gertrude. You have got your share, my dear, already.

Nicholas. Yes, but I intend to give it to Jack Roughwater.

Gertrude. You are not obliged; you may eat it if you will.

Nicholas. No, I'll not eat a mouthful; but you'll give me a little bit more, mother.

Gertrude. Indeed I will not.

Nicholas. And why?

Gertrude. Because you seem to suppose it is time enough to think of the poor, when you have filled your own belly.

Nicholas. And that's your only reason?

Gertrude. Is not that enough?—Well now; what will you do with your bread?

Nicholas. I'll give it every morsel to Jack. I know, poor fellow! he is sadly hungry; and I can wait very well till breakfast to-morrow.

Gertrude. I am afraid poor Jack will have no breakfast.

Nicholas. No, poor lad! I am afraid not.

Gertrude. Think then, my boy, what poverty is! and learn to despise that heart, that will not retrench something from its abundance, to relieve the wants of others. (Tears came into Nicholas's eyes, and Gertrude questioned the other children.) Louisa, shall you give away your bread?

Louisa. Certainly, mother.

Gertrude. And you, Jenny?

Jenny. Every crumb of it.

Gertrude. And you, Jonas?

Jonas. Yes, I think so.

Gertrude. You are good children: but tell me; how do you mean to set about it? There is a manner in every thing; and one may sometimes do away the merit of a good act, by an aukward method. Tell me, Nic, how shall you give your bread?

Nicholas. I'll run as hard as I can, and call Jack; and I'll hold the bread in my hand, that he may get it sooner than if I had to pull it out of my pocket. Let me go directly, mother.

Gertrude. Wait a bit, my man. How do you mean to do, Louisa?

Louisa. O quite different from Nic: I'll call Barbara into a sly corner, with the bread under my apron; and then I'll give it her when nobody sees me, not even her father.

Gertrude. And how will you do, Jenny?

Jenny. How can I tell where I shall find Tom? I'll give it him just as it happens.

Jonas. Don't ask me, mother: I'll tell you afterwards; it will make you laugh.

Gertrude. Well, Mr. Mischief, you are a wise-acre; we shall see how it turns out.—Now you may go, my dears: but I must give you one caution; distribute your bread as secretly as you can, for fear your charity should be taken for ostentation.

Nicholas. Then I must put my bread in my pocket?

Gertrude. I think you had better.

Louisa. I said I would hide mine at first; didn't I mother?

Gertrude. You are always cleverer than any body else, you know, Louisa. I wonder I forgot to compliment you upon it before. (Louisa blushed and

was silent.) Now get you gone, children; and remember what I have said to you.

Away ran Nicholas as hard as he could scamper; and came panting for breath to Roughwater's cottage: but unluckily John was not before the door. He coughed, and whistled, and called; but John neither came to the door, nor appeared at the window.

What must I do now? said he; if I go and give him the bread in the house, they will see me: I must go and call him out.

John, with his father, and the other children, were seated round his grandmother's coffin; the lid of which was not yet closed, though she was to be buried in two hours. The poor man wished to see as much of her as he could. They were talking, and weeping together, over the constant affection she had shewn them while she lived; and were lamenting that her last moments had been made uneasy by the knowledge of John's theft. He was endeavouring to make amends, by protesting he would never do so any more, even if he should die of hunger.

Nicholas opened the door, and seeing the dead body, he was frightened and ran away. Roughwater thought it might be some message from Leonard, and followed the child, calling out, What do you want, Nic?

Nicholas. Nothing, nothing; it was Jack I wanted, but he is saying his prayers.

Roughwater. No, my boy; if you want him, I'll send him to you.

Nicholas. Pray do then; I want to speak to him.

Roughwater. But can't you come in? It's cold here out of doors; and Jack does not like to quit his grandmother: come into the house.

Nicholas. No, Roughwater, I can't go in: let him come to me here before the door.

Roughwater. With all my heart. Here, Johnny, step to the door a moment; here's one want's you.

John. Who is it? I have no mind to go out at present.

Roughwater. Never mind; go: you may be back in a minute.

When he went to the door. Nicholas beckoned him to go a little apart, as if he had something to say to him; and then slipping the bread into his hand, he took to his heels. John thanked him, and called after him to beg he would thank his father and mother. But Nic, turning and running upon his heels, made signs with his hand; and told him not to say a word to any body: then disappeared like a shot.

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CHAP. L.

The habit of doing evil, dulls the joy of doing good.

LOUISA marched very deliberately to the upper end of the village, in search of Barbara Trickerman. She found her at the window. She beckoned to her, and Barbara slipped out of the house; but not unperceived by her father, who followed her, and hid himself behind the great door of the barn. The children, not suspecting he was there, chattered away.

Louisa. Do you see, Barbary? I have brought you some bread.

She took it with trembling haste.

Barbara. You are very good, Louisa; but how came you to think of bringing me bread?

Louisa. Because I love you, Barbara; and we can spare it now, because father is got into better work.

Barbara. And so is mine.

Louisa. Yes, but he is only a day-labourer.

Barbara. What does that signify? he'll get wages enough.

Louisa. I am afraid you are often hungry.

Barbara. O dear me! yes: but I should'nt mind, if I thought we should be better off now.

Louisa. What had you for dinner?

Barbara. I darn't tell you.

Louisa. Why not?

Barbara. If my father should get to know, he would————

Louisa. Do you think I am going to tell him then?

Barbara. There then look. (She pulled the remains of a raw turnip out of her pocket.)

Louisa. My goodness! nothing but that?

Barbara. No, indeed! and we've had nothing else these two days.

Louisa. And you darn't tell any body; nor ask any of your neighbours————

Barbara. Hush! for Heaven's sake! if my father should hear us, he would so give it me!

Louisa. Eat up your bread then, before you go into the house.

Barbara. Yes, I will; for I must go in directly.

She had scarce swallowed the first mouthful, when the sly Trickerman, opening the little door of the barn, said, "What are you eating there, my dear?"

The child, frightened to hear her father's voice, gulped the bread, and said, "Nothing—nothing at all father."

Trickerman. Nothing! you little minx! I'll teach you. And you, Miss Louisa! what do you mean by coming here with your scraps, to teach my children to tell lies about what they get to eat? That little gipsy Barbara knows we had some as nice eggs and bacon for dinner as ever was seen.

Louisa scampered away a good deal faster than she came; while Trickerman hauled poor Barbara in by the arm; and her screams overtook her friend before she was out of hearing.

Jenny found Thomas at the door of his mother's house, and said, "Will you have a bit of bread?"

Thomas. That's what I will, if you have got any.

Jenny. There! take it; you are very welcome. Good bye!—She returned home.

Jonas kept fauntering about Michael Nagg's house, in hopes of seeing Judith appear; who at last came running to him. "What are you doing there, Jonas?"

Jonas. I've a nice bit of fun for you.

Judith. I'm glad on't. What is't?

Jonas. Will you do whatever I tell you, Judith?

Judith. What must I do?

Jonas. Only open your mouth, and shut your eyes.

Judith. O yes, to be sure! you'll put something nasty into my mouth.

Jonas. No, I won't indeed.

Judith. Come then; but now don't play me a trick. (She opened her mouth very wide, and only half shut her eyes.)

Jonas. That's not fair; you cheat.

Judith. Now then, but none of your tricks.

He crammed the bread into her mouth, and then ran away as fast as he could.

That's very odd! said Judith.

Jonas, on his return home, related all that had passed, in hopes of exciting the laugh he had promised himself; and he was not disappointed.

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CHAP. LI.



A good action, be it ever so trifling, seldom fails to produce a happy effect.

JUDITH'S father had witnessed their child's play from the window, and knew who Jonas was: The sight affected him.—“What an infernal fellow must I be!” said he: “I have sold myself to the steward to betray Leonard who finds me work: and to crown all, here his little boy, like a little angel, brings bread for my child.—If it please God, I'll make him a better return than I intended. Ever since yesterday that Collins presented me the cup, I cannot think of him without a sort of horror; he looked so like a villain!”

So spoke Michael Naggs; and he passed the rest of the evening, in reflecting seriously on his past conduct.

When Leonard's children were all assembled at home again, they busied themselves by relating all that had passed, with great glee; all, except Louisa, who discovered uneasiness, under her assumed appearance of joy.

Gertrude. Something has happened to you Louisa, I am sure.

Louisa. What could have happened mother? I'm sure Barbara seemed delighted with her bread.

Gertrude took no more notice at the time: but heard her children their prayers, and put them to bed. She and her husband read for an hour afterwards in the bible, discoursing upon what they read: and thus concluded the Sunday evening, with as much innocent delight, as it was possible for mortals to experience.

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CHAP. LII.

The earliest hour of the Morning, is too late for what should have been done over-night.

VERY early in the morning, Leonard was roused by somebody calling at his door, and got up instantly. It was Nimble the gamekeeper, who, as he bid him, good-morrow; told him he had brought Sir James's order for the workmen to begin getting stone directly: he said, he ought to have delivered it the night before; but that he had forgotten it.

Leonard. According to what I was told, the steward ordered all the labourers to go this morning to the Castle; but as it is still very early, I may be yet in time to stop them: I'll go and tell them directly.

Grindstone lived almost next door; and he went first to him. But after knocking for some time at the door, he could make nobody hear. At last, a journeyman, who lodged under the same roof, looked out of the window, and told him that Grindstone was gone above half an hour before, with several

other men to the castle. The steward sent to him yesterday evening after supper, to tell him, and the others, to set off before four o'clock; that they might be back again by noon.

The gamekeeper was vexed at this report; and said it was plaguy unlucky.

Leonard. What is to be done?

Gamekeeper. Don't you think that I could overtake them yet?

Leonard. From the top of Gomershow, you can see them a mile and an half off; and if the wind's that way, they may hear you shout.

Away ran the gamekeeper to the top of the hill; and though he could see them, he could not make them hear: they kept marching on, and were very soon out of sight.

The steward, who was also upon the road to the castle, was not so far advanced; he heard the gamekeeper's shouts: and seeing his gun-sparkle in the sun, which was just rising, came back to know what was the matter. Nimble told him, that a very violent head-ach had prevented his telling the mason over-night, that it was Sir James's wish for the men to begin getting stone the first thing in the morning.

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CHAP. LIII.



The more faulty a Man is, the more fault he finds.

Steward. **Y**OU worthless rascal! what a scrape have you got me into now?

Gamekeeper. Why there's no such great harm done, master Collins; and without being a conjuror, who could have supposed those jolly fellows would have begun their march so early? Was it by your order?

Steward. What do you mean by that, you rascal? Do you intend that I should bear the blame of your confounded negligence?

Gamekeeper. No; but I should be glad of an excuse for myself.

Steward. It's plaguy unlucky.

Gamekeeper. That's exactly what I said, when I found they were gone.

Steward. I'm not in a joking humour just now, thickhead!

Gamekeeper. No more am I: but what's to be done?

Steward. Think a little, numskull!

Gamekeeper. It's rather more than half an hour too late for me to think to any purpose.

Steward. Stop a bit: one should never despair. I have just thought of a plan. You have nothing to do, but declare positively, that you delivered the order last night to the mason's wife, or to one of the children. They'll not be believed when they deny it, if you only keep steadily to your story.

Gamekeeper. I don't like that scheme, Collins; there's danger in it.

Steward. It cannot fail, if you are but firm. But upon second thoughts, I have hit upon another plan, that will do better.

Gamekeeper. What's that?

Steward. You must go back to Leonard's; and seeming to be very uneasy, you must tell him that you are in a terrible scrape for having neglected to deliver Sir James's order, and that it requires only

a word from him to set every thing right. That he has nothing to do but to tell his honour, he received the order over night; but as it was funday, he thought there would be no harm in putting off telling them till this morning; and then they were gone. Leonard runs no risk in so doing; and it will set all strait.

Gamekeeper. There's something in that; I think it will answer.

Steward. It cannot fail.

Gamekeeper. Well, your servant, Mr. Collins; I have some other letters to deliver: but I'll not fail to call at Leonard's by-and-by. Your servant.

Steward. Now will I go to the Castle: and tell the story as we have settled it: and if it should fail, I'll swear Nimble told me so.

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CHAP. LIV.



Labour Lost.

UPON their arrival at the Castle, the workmen had seated themselves upon a bench against the barn-wall; waiting till they were called for, or till the steward should come and introduce them, which he had promised.

Martin, the footman, saw them first, and said to them: "Well, my good friends; what did you please to want? My master thinks you are at work at the church."

Workmen. The steward told us, we were to come and thank his Honour for the job he has given us.

Martin. It was never worth while; and I don't think he will be very well pleased: but I'll go and tell him you are here.

Sir James ordered them in directly, and asked them very good-humouredly, what brought them to the Castle?

They told him; and then mumbled with much confusion, a few words of thanks; which he interrupted, by asking, who had ordered them to come?

They answered, the steward; and again attempted their thanks.

Sir James. It was not my intention, that you should have come. Go back again, my honest friends: keep steadily to your work; and I shall be very glad, if this job should prove of service, in extricating any of you out of your difficulties. Tell Leonard to begin getting stone to-day without fail. Farewell, my friends.

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CHAP. LV.

An Hypocrite and a Knave, become sworn Friends.

AS the workmen returned towards the village, they said one to another: "This Squire of ours, is really a good sort of man."—So would the other have been, said Roughwater; if he had not been misled by a pack of designing rogues, who got about him.

Bitterbeer. My father has told me an hundred times, that when he was young, there could not be

a better landlord; till some how or other, Collins got to him and quite changed his nature.

Martindale. And then all his good intentions were perverted, or only calculated to enrich the steward, who led him by the nose like a muzzled bear.

Grindstone. Think of that rascal's sending us trotting about the country on a fool's errand, without so much as coming to excuse himself!

Plain-pring. It is like one of his tricks.

Grindstone. And a dog's trick it is.

Crooks. Whatever you may say neighbours, the steward is a good sort of a man; and I know no business we have to canvass all his actions.

He spoke this very loud, because he saw Collins coming, creeping along a hollow road very near them: nobody else saw him.

Grindstone. The devil take the fellow, say I: you may plaister him as you will; I keep all my praises for Sir James.

Just as he said this, the steward appeared from behind a hedge, and said: "Good morning, neighbours! How comes it, that you are singing the Squire's praises so highly?"

Grindstone. O! because he received us so good-humouredly; that's all.

Steward. But I think that was not all you said, Grindstone.

Grindstone. Yes, I think it was.

Crooks. Are you not ashamed, Grindstone, to deny what you had said a moment before?—He was not the only one, Mr. Collins, who had been complaining that you had left us in the lurch: but, for my part, I said it was not for us to judge, what reasons a man in your situation might have for your actions: and then Grindstone said, I might com-

mend you if I would, but that he would keep all his praises for the Squire.

Steward. So then it was me and my fine master, you were comparing together: a good joke!

He affected to laugh.

Some of the other men murmured against Crooks; and said that Grindstone had not spoken with any bad intention.

Steward. There's no harm done, neighbours; I am not angry: Every one knows "that we should praise the bridge that carries us well over."

So saying, he shook Crooks cordially by the hand; and only asked, if Sir James seemed angry.

Men. No, not at all: he only told us to get back directly, and set to work to-day.

Collins desired they would tell the mason so, with his compliments; and that the mistake was of no consequence. He then left them.

While this was going on, the gamekeeper had been using every persuasion in his power, to engage Leonard to say, he had received Sir James's order over-night: and the mason, who was good-humour its own self, was very desirous to oblige him; but he could do nothing without consulting his wife.

Gertrude. I don't like to say any thing that is not strictly true; and I dare venture to say, the steward has made no scruple of excusing himself, in this manner already. If you will take my advice, you will tell the story just as it happened, if any questions are asked; but if Sir James should say nothing about it, you may let them go their own way, provided nobody suffers by it.

Leonard. Well then, so be it, Nimble.

While they were yet together, the workmen returned from the Castle.

Leonard. I am surpris'd to see you so soon back.

Men. We might have spared ourselves the trouble of going, for that matter.

Leonard. Was his honour angry?

Men. Not at all: he was very kind and affable; and only told us to get back as soon as we could, and to fall to work.

Nimble. You see, Leonard, you run no risk; but I and Collins do.

Roughwater. Mr. Collins sent his service to you, Leonard; and bid us tell you, that the neglect was without any bad consequence.

Leonard. Had he seen Sir James when you left him?

Roughwater. No; we met him as he was going.

Leonard. Then he knew nothing but what you had told him?

Roughwater. I think he could not know any more.

Nimble. I depend upon your promise, Leonard.

Leonard. Yes, as my wife explained it to you; but no otherwise.

So saying, he sent the men away; begging they would be back and at work, as soon as ever they had dined. He then looked out the tools he should want; and having got his own dinner, he went to meet his labourers.

Gertrude called after him: "God Almighty prosper your undertaking, my good man!"—And I sincerely join with her, in praying God to bless the enterprize.

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CHAP. LVI.

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The plot thickens: the Steward's nails are pared.

SIR James made Collins wait a long time before he sent for him in: and when he came, he spoke crossly to him, saying: "Pray, what good reason could you have for sending those poor men trotting over here, without any orders?"

Steward. I thought it was my duty, Sir, to send them to thank you for your goodness to them.

Sir James. Your duty (I am sorry you do not know it better) is to do whatsoever is conducive to my advantage, and that of my tenants; and not to send a number of poor men upon an idle errand, to learn to pay compliments, without benefit to them, or any satisfaction to me.—But that is not my present business: I sent for you to let you know, that for the future I shall not let my stewardship, and the alehouse go together.

Collins was thunderstruck at this sudden resolution, which came quite unexpectedly upon him.

Sir James. You may choose which ever of the employments you prefer, and I give you a fortnight to determine; but you shall not keep them both.

The steward had by this time recollected himself sufficiently to thank him for the delay.

Sir James. I should be sorry to hurry any man into a determination of importance, and out of compassion to your age, I will make my determination

as easy to you as I can; but the two functions must not go together.

The steward, a little encouraged by his softened tone of voice, said: "Will it please your Honour to consider, that in your grandfather's time they always went together; and that it is no uncommon thing in other places."

Sir James. You have heard my determination, and it will not be changed.

So saying, he took out his almanack, and bid him remark; that in reckoning from the present day the 20th of March, the fortnight would expire on the third of April; on which day he expected his answer. At present, continued Sir James, I have no further service for you.—And so left him.

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CHAP. LVII.



The rage of a Villain.

THE steward, quite stupefied, and his heart almost bursting set forward on his return home. He was so overcome by what had just passed, that he knew nobody that he met about the Castle.

There was at the end of the avenue, a large lime tree, with a seat round it; and thither Collins had proceeded without well knowing how he got there: and there he sat down.

Steward. Where am I?—What ails me?—Can it be so?—Without assigning any cause of complaint!—Without any proof?—Merely because it is his will and pleasure, forsooth!—and I must

give up either the stewardship or the alehouse!— This exceeds all bounds.—I doubt whether he can do it.—He dare not take the stewardship away, without giving any reason; and as for the good will of the house, I bought that.—But still I am afraid if he seeks causes of complaint, against me he will not be much at a loss to find them for amongst all those rascals whom I have assisted so often there is not one I can depend upon.—What must I do? a fortnight is long enough to do plenty of mischief in; if I can only keep up my spirits.—That scoundrel mason is at the bottom of all this.—My spirits flag sadly.—

Just at this moment he recollected his brandy-bottle, and took it off at one draught.

A murderer, who has heard himself proclaimed on every side, and has just passed the limits of the jurisdiction that has power over him, does not feel more relieved, than did the steward, upon the application of this specific. It restored to him his courage and his villany.

Steward. Upon my life a most famous cordial! A moment ago, I thought I was going to be swallowed up alive: and now I feel as if I could take Master Trowel and this miserable Squire, and crack them together, as I would two walnuts. How lucky that I did not forget my cordial! Without it I should have sneaked home like a drowned rat.

After this speech, his courage restored, and his spirits mounting; he boldly set forward on his walk, brandishing his knotted cudgel, and scarce deigning to return the salutation of any one he met. He was wrapped up in his own self-consequence; and thought himself as good as any Squire in the land. To finish the picture; you must suppose a tolerable allotment of double chin, a pair of fierce, staring eyes, broad shoulders, and a portly belly, supported upon two stout bowed legs. Such was the figure of our monster!

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CHAP. LVIII.

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A suitable Comparison.

CLOSE by the steward's side marched his faithful Turk, which snarled upon the least sign from his master, and was ready to fly at, and tear any man to the ground, at the word of command. This huge dog was the terror of the ragged throughout the whole neighbourhood; just as his master was of the poor, who once got within his clutches. The tremendous beast marched close beside him, with the same apparent haughtiness, and——

But I disdain to carry on my comparison; even between such a man and a dog.

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CHAP. LIX.

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A Doubt resolved.

IT is wonderful, after the horrors of the preceding evening, and the alarm of the morning; how the steward could still continue so arrogant. An unexperienced man may wonder; but any one a little read in human nature will know, that pride will spring again in a haughty mind, in proportion to

the humiliation it has received. As long as things go quietly, the passions are not agitated; but the moment they are roused, they go fuming on, acknowledging no bounds: and if I may be allowed to mean a comparison, they are like butter melted in a saucepan, which boils till the vessel is too small to contain it, and it sets every thing in a flame around.

I hope it will not appear strange, that when once Collins had found a remedy for his fears, at the end of the avenue; he should return to all his accustomed pride and insolence. Besides, till the application of this copious dram, he had latterly lived more temperately, and his nerves were in some degree restored to the state in which nature had given them; for he would have been a man of courage, if he had not been a villain. But an evil conscience spoils the best faculties of man.

In a word, I relate things as I have seen and heard them: should any of my readers pronounce them improbable, I am sorry for, but can stop no longer to explain them.

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CHAP. LX.



A Digression.

THE steward would have acted a much wiser part, if he had broken his brandy-bottle at the foot of the lime-tree; and had returned to his master, to lay before him the whole of his situation. If he had told him that he was far from rich; that

he had considerable debts owing to him, and owing by him; that he could not make a livelihood without uniting the two employments; and had he promised to conduct himself with rigid honesty towards every body; I am very sure, a man of Sir James's humanity would not have been so very rigorous.

But one of the misfortunes of the wicked is; that vice obscures their reason to such a degree, as to prevent their adopting such measures as would be most for their interest. They stumble on as if they were blind, and hasten their own destruction. On the other hand, men of virtue, and upright conduct seem to possess their judgment in cases of difficulty, and can often extricate themselves from misfortune. One great reason is, that the virtuous man humbles himself before God; and implores that aid, in comparison of which all human wisdom is nothing worth. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, is his support, and his compass, in every action of his life; and not only contributes to his well-being in this world, but prepares him for the joy of that which is eternal.

How different is it with the sinner! One vice hurries on another; his understanding seems of no avail; he despises the path of simplicity and virtue, which leads to peace; but follows the intricate, crooked path of iniquity, which leads to misery and despair. Hence it happens, that in the midst of his supercilious ostentation, he never knows a moment's peace. His pride prevents his acknowledging any error; and if he should find himself in difficulties, and want assistance, he prefers to obtain it by fraud, or to extort it by violence; rather than condescend to supplication. His perverted judgment is his only guide; and he rejects with disdain the soothing, still voice of his celestial Father; which says, "Submit to me my son; and no longer mis-

take that apparent rigour, which only chastises to amend." No, this voice he will not hear; but vaunting in his own powers, he says: "By my right hand and my understanding will I extricate myself."—Hence comes it, that the latter end of the wicked man is so full of horror.

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CHAP. LXI.



The Author's Exhortation.

EVER from my youth upwards, I have reflected more and more upon the different situations of the good man, and the sinner. I have advanced from youth to old age, in the same village. I have seen my early companions attain manhood, and become fathers and grandfather's; and, except seven, who are still living, all the others have dropped into the grave before my eyes. Gracious Father! thou knowest when my last hour is to be, when I must follow them to the tomb.

My strength diminishes every day; but my confidence in thy mercy increases. This life is like the flower of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow withers away! O Lord! the supreme Arbiter of our fate! thy mercy is without limit to those who walk in thy ways; therefore my soul trusteth in thee, and abhorreth the ways of the wicked, which lead to destruction.

Children of my native village! my friends! let me assure you that there is no peace for the wicked man, no prosperity for the evil-doer: and

let this assurance guide you to piety and virtue. I have seen some children who have despised their parents, and set no store by their affection. All such, without one single exception, have come to an unhappy end.—I knew the father of the wretched Hanger; I once lived under the same roof with him, and have had many opportunities of seeing how that unnatural son used to afflict and torment his father; and I shall never forget the bitter tears he shed for that unhappy son, when he was upon his death-bed. I saw that son laughing at his father's funeral; and I wondered at God's forbearance, that he should let such an unnatural creature live? What followed? He married a woman with a large fortune, and became one of the richest men in the parish; but, proud as he was wicked, he demeaned himself as if he had no superior upon earth. One short year afterwards, I saw this supercilious Hanger follow his wife to the grave with terrible howlings; because he was obliged to restore her fortune to her family to the last penny. He was thus, in one instant, reduced to beggary. Rather than apply to labour, he had recourse to theft; and he ended his days at the gallows.

Children of my native village! I was convinced by experience, that the end of the wicked man is nothing but horror!

But I have also witnessed that blessings and peace are inmates of the good man's cottage. He thoroughly enjoys whatever he possesses; he is content with a little, and liberal to his poor neighbour, if that little is more than he absolutely wants. Labour and contentment of mind are his lot; he is satisfied with his own, and covets not the possessions of another. Pride never disturbs his repose; nor does envy embitter his frugal meal: he enjoys the perfection of health, and passes his days in joy. By

such a man the necessaries of life are more easily attained ; because he applies to labour with all his heart ; gives no ear to the allurements of vice, but exerts himself the more when he reflects, that his toil secures the well-being of the treasures he has left at home—his wife, and his smiling babes. If some clouds should obscure his felicity, God's mercy is at hand to dispel them ; and even in the midst of the severest sufferings, he contemplates the joys of that Kingdom which shall have no end.

Children of my native village ! O my dear friends ! I have witnessed the last hour of many a poor but virtuous man ; and I have never yet seen one, who at the hour of death lamented his poverty, or the misery he had suffered. All, without exception, blessed God for the thousand proofs they had had of his paternal goodness. O-children of my native village ! hold fast to piety, and to the innocence with which you were born. I know from experience that fraud, and deceit, have but a very short reign. Collins, and his associates, were always more cunning than us : they knew a thousand tricks of which we had no idea. Buoyed up by a high opinion of themselves, they fancied simple, honest men were only sent into the world to be their dupes. They have for a time revelled in the spoils of the widow and the orphan ; and they have persecuted such as have not submitted to their authority. But their triumph is almost at an end. The God of mercy has heard the groans of the oppressed. The tears of the mother who lamented to see her family perish, and the seduction of her husband into the paths of vice, have not been shed in vain. The almighty has frowned, and the wicked shall vanish from before his face.

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CHAP. LXII.

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The Horrors of an evil Conscience.

AS soon as John Doughty had parted from the steward, after their conversation on saturday-night; he went home: but a troubled conscience followed him. The thought of having perjured himself destroyed his peace; and he threw himself, with cries of despair, upon the ground. He passed the night, and the whole of funday, in transports of despair; tearing his hair, beating himself against the wall, and without taking any food. He was heard to exclaim, "Oh! oh! the close! Oh! poor Roughwater! I feel a fire that burns my entrails; there is a whole legion of devils within me. Oh! wretch that I am, what will become of my poor soul!"

In this manner he ran howling up and down: the horrors of his conscience still pursuing him, and his cries expressing the horrible torment he endured. Worn out at length by this violent agitation on funday night he got some rest, and the next morning, finding himself a little easier in his mind he resolved no longer to brood over his disturbing thoughts, but to reveal every thing to the rector. He then made up his funday clothes into a bundle together with every thing he had of value; meaning to sell them, and pay the steward with the money produced; and then set off with a packet under his arm to the rectory.

When he reached the court, he stopped, and thought to have returned. Then he went forward again; again stopped, threw his bundle into the porch of the house, and stamped about like a madman.

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CHAP. LXIII.

Utter Despair may be prevented by reasonable Advice.

THE rector, who witnessed his extravagant gestures from the window, hastened to him, and said: "What ails you, Doughty? What's the matter? Come into my room, if you have any thing you want to reveal."

He allowed himself to be led; and the rector spoke to him in the most gentle and soothing manner. He plainly saw there was something upon his mind; and besides the report of the village had reached him, that Doughty was raving about his perjury. This tender treatment calmed his spirits by degrees; and at last he said, "Oh! Sir, I believe I have perjured myself, and I am in despair. I can no longer endure the reproaches of my conscience; and I will submit with pleasure to any punishment that may be inflicted upon me; provided, I may hope that God will at last forgive me."

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CHAP. LXIV.

The Blessing of a good Parish Priest.

Reclor. IF you feel a sincere repentance of your fault, do not fear but God will pardon you.

Doughty. But can I indeed hope, my reverend master! that after a crime so atrocious as mine, God will pardon me, and receive me into his grace?

Reclor. When God has led a sinner to feel a sincere repentance of his crimes, and most ardently to implore forgiveness; he has already pointed out the road to that forgiveness, and has given hopes of his spiritual grace. Be convinced of this, my friend; and if contrition has taken hold of your heart, doubt not of its being acceptable to God.

Doughty. But how shall I know that he accepts my repentance?

Reclor. You may know by paying a strict attention to yourself; and if you find it proceeds sincerely from the heart, you may then be sure it is accepted: because the Scriptures assure us that a sincere repentance is never rejected.—Harkye, Doughty; suppose a man to have encroached upon his neighbour's field, and that he afterwards repents of it: If, before his neighbour is aware of the encroachment, he not only restores the land, but adds a little of his own; I can have no doubt but God will accept that as a sincere repentance. But, on the other hand; if he should not restore what he hath

taken, or if in making the restoration, he has still some eye to his own advantage, and wishes to keep the transaction secret: If he only considers his own credit, and is not guided by a principle of justice to the person he has injured; then I consider his repentance a jest, and that the foolish man only deceives himself.—Apply this to yourself, Doughty: If the sincere wish of your heart, is to repair the injury you have done, to retrieve your reputation, and to make your peace with the Almighty; if you have no other design, but are ready to do, and to suffer whatever may be necessary to make the amplest amends, comfort yourself; your repentance is in earnest, and will certainly be acceptable to God.

Doughty. Ah! Sir, I am willing to do any thing that may be required of me, and to submit to the severest punishment; if I may but be relieved from the load that presses upon my heart. Oh! Sir, it is insupportable! Let me go where I will, the thought of my crime follows me, and torments me beyond endurance.

Rector. Take comfort my friend; conduct yourself for the time to come, with openness and honesty, and your mind will certainly regain its peace.

Doughty. O Sir! my reverend master! if I could but hope so!

Rector. Take comfort, I tell you: Place your confidence in that merciful Being, who is the God of repentant sinners: and determine to do every thing you can to make amends. The greatest evil attending your perjury, is the deplorable state to which it has reduced poor Roughwater: but I hope when you have revealed all the circumstances to Sir James Grant, he will assist in restoring the poor man to his right.

Doughty. Ah! poor Roughwater! the thought of him distracts me: And do you think, Sir, Sir James can help to get him his clofe again?

Rector. I can't be quite fure: the steward will do every thing in his power to invalidate your de-
position; but on the other hand, I am fure Sir James will exert himself to the utmoft, to do juftice to the poor man.

Doughty. Oh! If it can but be brought about!

Rector. I moft fincerely wifh it may; and I have great hopes of it: but at all events, it is equally neceffary for the re-
pofe of your confcience, that you fhould reveal every thing you know to Sir James.

Doughty. That I moft undoubtedly will, and with all my heart.

Rector. You are in the right road; and I am much pleafed to fee you determine fo readily: it is the only way to reftore tranquillity to your mind. I muft at the fame time acknowledge, that your confeffion will expofe you to public fhame, to prifon, and perhaps to fevere corporal punifhment.

Doughty. All that is nothing, my kind, reverend Sir! in comparifon of the terrors of my confcience, and the dread of being for ever deprived of the grace of God!

Rector. You have fo proper an idea of your unhappy fituation, that it gives me real joy. Pray heartily to God, (who has infpired you with fuch thoughts) that he would be graciously pleafed to confirm you in the right way; and with his affiftance you will be able to fupport every trial you may be put to, with humility and patience. Let what will happen, if you will only place confidence in me, I will affift you to the very beft of my ability.

Doughty. O my good, dear Sir, how charitable you are to a poor finner like me!

Rector. God himself, my friend, is to us the essence of comfort and charity, in all he does for us; and I should be a very unworthy servant of so merciful a master, if I could treat a fellow-sufferer with harshness, let his crimes be ever so enormous.

Such was the kindness and paternal affability with which the good rector talked to Doughty; who shed a torrent of tears, and was for a time unable to utter a word. At last he broke silence, and said: "Sir, I have still something else to tell you."

Rector. What is it? my friend.

Doughty. Ever since this unhappy affair, I owe the steward twenty shillings. It is true, he offered the other day to tear my note, but I will not be beholden to him: I am resolved to pay the debt.

Rector. You are perfectly right: and I would advise you to do so, before any thing is said to Sir James.

Doughty. I left a bundle in your entry, with my Sunday coat, and some other few things; which I think may be worth altogether about twenty shillings: I must give them in pawn. And I hoped, perhaps, you would not be offended, reverend Sir, if I asked the favour of you to lend me the money upon them.

Rector. I never meddle in such transactions, and I have unwillingly refused many a man who has applied to me upon similar occasions; but your's is an extraordinary case, and I will oblige you.

So saying, he furnished him with the money; bid him carry it immediately to the steward, but by no means to leave his bundle.

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CHAP. LXV.

Delicacy of Sentiment, is not always confined to the higher Orders of Society.

DOUGHTY, trembling with anxiety, took the twenty shillings, thanked the rector over and over again; but positively refused to take the bundle.

Rector. Well then, (smiling) I must send somebody to your home with it, if it is too heavy for you.

Doughty. Oh! dear, good Sir, pray keep it, till I can repay you your money.

Rector. No, my friend; I have no uneasiness about it. Go, and attend to things of greater importance. I will write immediately to Sir James, and to-morrow you shall carry the letter.

Doughty. I thank you a thousand times, dear worthy Sir; but I dare not take the money, unless I may leave the bundle; indeed, I dare not.

Rector. I desire you would say no more about it; but go directly to the steward's, pay your debt, and come here to-morrow morning about nine o'clock.

Doughty quitted the parsonage in a very different state from that in which he entered it, and went directly to the steward's.

Not finding him at home, he paid the money to his wife; who asked him how he became so rich all of a sudden?

Doughty. No matter how: but God Almighty be thanked! I've paid my debt.

Wife. Why! has any body asked you to pay it

Doughty. Oh no! but that was so much the worse.

Wife. You talk very strangely, Doughty; what is the matter with you? You're wonderfully altered of late.

Doughty. If I am, I think I need not tell you the reason; for if you don't know it now, you soon will. But see if the money is right, for I can stay no longer.

She counted the money, and found it right.

Doughty. Be sure now to give it to your husband: your servant, Mrs. Collins.

Wife. Well, if you must go in such a hurry, good bye to you, Doughty.

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CHAP. LXVI.



Superstition depends upon Education.

AS the steward was returning from the castle, he stopped at the Swan at Newbybridge. His spirits being already raised by his brandy-bottle, he made no scruple to drink and chatter with some countrymen he found there. He talked of the suits he had gained; of the influence he had over the late Squire; and how, by means of that influence he had kept all the country in subjection; but that now, every thing was turned topsy-turvy. He then gave his dog a mess, that would have satisfied the hunger of a labouring man; and observing one of the company, who seemed to eye the meal with envy;

he said with a sneer, "What! I warrant now you would have no objection to such a dinner yourself? Poor Turk! thou art heartily welcome, my honest fellow!"

After this he continued to boast, and to drink till evening.

About this time the Squire's old woodman arrived; who, upon his return from the castle, called in to take a draught of ale. The steward, who never could bear to be alone when it grew dark, proposed to bear him company to the village. "With all my heart," said the other, "provided you set off directly; but I am in pursuit of a wood-stealer, and cannot stay a minute."

I am ready now, replied the steward.—So saying, he finished his liquor, paid his reckoning; and they went away together.

As they walked along, the steward asked his companion, whether he was not afraid of meeting ghosts in the woods at nights.

Woodman. What makes you ask such a question?

Steward. Why? because I think there must be a good deal of danger.

Woodman. What an old fool you must be! You, who have been steward these thirty years, to take such fancies! I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself!

Steward. That may be: but I protest I don't know whether to believe in ghosts or not. It's very certain, however, that I never saw one.

Woodman. Harkye; since you talk so openly; I have a mind to give you some information: but remember now, I shall expect a pot of beer in return.

Steward. Marry, and you shall have it; or even two instead of one, if you talk to the purpose.

Woodman. I have been now a woodman forty years; and I was scarce four years old when

my father first made me follow him to the woods. He had always a terrible collection of stories of ghosts and hobgoblins, which he used to relate to the countrymen in the alehouses, merely to frighten them from going amongst the woods at night: But to me he used to hold a very different language. As he intended that I should be one day a woodman like him, he used to point out the absurdity of such tales, and laugh me out of the belief of them: He used also to take me with him through the woods, in the darkest nights, and in the worst season of the year, when the wind howled, and made every thing shake about us. If he saw any fire, or the least glimmering of light, or if he heard any noise; away he used to go directly to the spot, taking me with him through bog, through briar, over hedge and ditch; and when he came to the spot, whence the noise, or the light proceeded, if he found a company of gypsies, or some poacher, or wood-stealer; he would roar out in the most terrible voice he could assume: "Fly rascals; get away as fast as you can, or you are all dead men." And in this manner, he would set them all running helter-skelter, even if there had been twenty of them, leaving their pots and their pans and all their baggage behind them; that you would have thought they had seen him at the head of a troop of horse. Sometimes the noises we heard only proceeded from some animal, many of which will at times utter unaccountable sounds. And for the lights, which were enough to terrify those unaccustomed to them, they often proceeded from nothing but the phosphorous of rotten wood. In the whole course of my life, I have never seen any thing more frightful than what I have just mentioned: but it is for my interest to make my neighbours believe in ghosts and witches; for I am growing old, and I am

very willing to be excused from trotting through the woods in cold, stormy nights, in pursuit of such as may be disposed to destroy the game, or rob the woods.

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CHAP LXVII.



Wicked thoughts restrained by foolish Fears.

THE woodman was by this time arrived at the cross road that led to the forest; so he parted with the steward, who continued his walk to the village, ruminating upon what he had heard.

Steward. He has been a woodman for forty years, and never saw a ghost; and does not believe there is such a thing. And I like a great fool! am so much afraid of them, that I dare not be alone a quarter of an hour in the night; for it would take me no more time to remove the stone. Like a real thief, and a rogue he wants to take away my licence; and that confounded stone, that I almost think I can see from where I am, is, perhaps, no boundary after all: I really don't believe it is.—But even supposing it is; he has no more right to his land, than I have to my alehouse.—Nothing but the devil himself could have put it into his head to deprive me by force of my right; and if he has no scruples about injuring me, why should I hesitate about this cursed stone? I only want a little courage: But I cannot go at night; and if I go by day, I am sure to be seen.

Talking in this manner, he reached the top of Gomershow; from whence he could plainly dis-

cover the mason and his labourers, getting up the large loose stones, that were scattered up and down. The day was almost spent; but they still kept working with great perseverance; and such an appearance of industry, was gall to the steward's wicked heart.

Steward. There seems to be a general combination against me: all my plans seems thwarted! And now, to add to my uneasiness, I shall be obliged to pass close by that rascal Joseph, without daring to say any thing to him.—But that will be impossible; I had rather wait here till they leave work, which they must do soon.

He sat down; but getting up again directly, he said: “ I cannot bear the sight of them, even at this distance; I'll go behind the hill.—O that cursed Joseph!”

He went a few paces back, and then sat down where he could not see them.

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CHAP. LXVIII.



The glory of the setting Sun, has no charms for the wicked Man.

THE sun, just before it disappeared, cast its last rays upon the bank where Collins sat. The plains, and the foot of the hill, were already in the shade.—Who can describe the glory of a setting sun, in a bright and calm evening!—Even Collins confessed its power; but he exhibited no other signs of

it, but a silent and stupid astonishment as it disappeared behind the mountains.

“Now all is dull, and night assumes her reign: darkness overshadows my soul, and not a ray remains to cheer it!”

This sentiment passed in the steward's mind: and was succeeded by such a panic, that his teeth chattered, and he trembled from head to foot; instead of recommending himself humbly to that Power, who could protect him from every danger, and at whose command the sun recommences its bright career. Unhappy wretch! Miserable state of wickedness!

The village clock had given the signal of retreat to the workmen, each of whom retired to his own home: and Collins followed at a distance.

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CHAP. LXIX.



The Way to obtain Good-will.

DURING the first day's work, Leonard had contrived to conciliate the good-will of his fellow-labourers. He wrought with them the whole day, and worked harder than any-body. He fixed upon the hardest stones to move, and let no difficulty check him. Many of the workmen were unused to the business; but he pointed out to them the readiest way to set about it, and never expressed the least impatience at their awkwardness. The expressions of fool and blockhead never escaped him; though to be sure there were many occasions where they

might have been applied without injustice. His patience and his industry encouraged his fellows; and all went on swimmingly.

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CHAP. LXX.



Man is not always uniformly wicked.

MICHAEL Naggs, was one of the most intelligent amongst the workmen, and had happened to be almost all the day near Leonard; which had given him an opportunity of remarking the extreme kindness with which he had treated every one, even the most untoward. This Michael, who was at the bottom a thief, and a confirmed vagabond, was nevertheless so affected by the mason's goodness, and gentleness; that he could not find in his heart to play the rogue with so good a man! As for Crooks, and the pious Trickerman, they were not perfectly satisfied, that no distinction should be made between the workmen; and that even the worthless Michael should be treated with kindness. And Grindstone muttered, that the man was a fool for employing any but such handy fellows as himself and his brother; for that with such hands the work would be done in half the time. Most of them, however, were grateful to Leonard for his gentleness and good example; and some offered up a secret prayer to the Father of all mercies, who had placed a master over them, whose heart was capable of pity towards the ignorant and helpless.

Michael could not support the recollection of the contract he had entered into the saturday before with the steward; so he whispered the mason as they returned from work, and told him he had a secret to reveal.

Well then, said the other, go home with me.

As soon as they arrived at the cottage, he told him how the steward had bribed him with five shillings into a plot against him.

Leonard was quite confounded, and Gertrude could scarce recover from her grief and astonishment.

This is most scandalous work! said the husband:—Most abominable! said the wife.

Naggs. Don't let it disturb you, master; nor you neither mistress: for I protest I cannot find in my conscience to do either of you any harm; and you may depend upon it I never will.

Leonard. Thank you, Michael; but I cannot think what possesses the steward! I am sure I never did him any harm.

Naggs. Why, he is a very devil; and it is not in the power of man to conceive what a savage he is, when he is angry, and wants to be revenged.

Leonard. I tremble almost, at the bare mention of his name.

Gertrude. And I am almost sick.

Naggs. Come, don't be children; his courage is almost out.

Leonard and Gertrude. God be praised! God Almighty be thanked!

Naggs. Harkye: we will arrange this matter as is most agreeable to you. If you have a mind, I will persuade the steward that I am still faithful to him; and either to-morrow, or the day after, I can take away some of the tools, and carry them to him. Then, Leonard, you can go to the Castle, and ob-

tain an order to search all the houses ; and when you get to Collins's, march boldly into the back chamber, and there you will be sure to find what you are in search of. But you must take special care to be sudden in your motions : for if you don't get admittance the moment you knock, all will be lost : for he is so cunning, he is capable of conveying the things away, where we should never find them ; and if you hesitate a moment, you will get into a fine scrape. But if you will take my advice, you will employ some other person in this business, for you are too mild and gentle to execute it well.

Leonard. I don't know as to that ; but I am sure I should not like to engage in it.

Gertrude. I think, Michael, it is more our duty to thank God, that he has been pleased to deliver us from the danger that threatened us, than to contrive snares to catch the steward, and revenge ourselves.

Naggs. It is no more than he deserves ; so don't have any scruples.

Gertrude. I am afraid we are not proper judges of what he deserves ; but there is one thing certain, that vengeance does not belong to us ; and we must follow the road that we know to be right.

Naggs. I cannot help confessing the truth of what you say, Gertrude ; any more than I can help admiring the command you have over yourself. Let us leave him then to the punishment he will meet with, and have nothing more to do with him. For my part, I am determined to tell him I am no longer the man for his purposes ; and would return him his money, but unluckily I have spent ten-pence of it : and I know not whether it would be better to take him these four shillings and two-pence, (pulling them out of his pocket) or to wait till the end of the

week, when I shall have my wages, and can pay him all together.

Leonard. I'll lend you the ten-pence with all my heart.

Naggs. If you would be so good, I should be delighted to have done with the fellow at once: I wish to carry him his money this moment; for I assure you, master, ever since yesterday, at the Holy Sacrament, this affair has been a load upon my heart. I was miserable to feel engaged in so wicked a plot; and when your little Jonas came in the evening, and gave his supper to my child, my conscience smote me with double violence; that I should injure so good a man. I never saw much of you before to-day, Leonard: but I could not help remarking when we were at work together, how kindly you behaved to all the labourers, advising one, and assisting another; and I felt conscious that I could never hope for salvation, if I returned evil for so much good. (Here the tears came into his eyes.) You may believe me or not, as you like.

Leonard. I do believe you, my friend; and I hope you will always be a good man.

Naggs. With the help of God, I hope I shall.

Gertrude. Do, good Michael; and be sure you will find your account in it, both here, and hereafter.

Leonard. Do you wish then to return the money to-night?

Naggs. Certainly, if I can.

The mason gave him the ten-pence; and begged he would return it without anger or reproach.

Gertrude. And don't tell him that we know any thing about the matter.

Naggs. I will cut the business as short as possible. I will go directly, and shall soon have done. Farewell, Gertrude; good-by, Leonard: a thousand thanks to you, I wish you both a good night.

Leonard. Talk to him in the same manner. Good night, Michael.

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CHAP. LXXI.



The Plot Thickens.

WHEN Collins got home, he found his wife alone in the room. This gave him an opportunity of venting all the rage he had been brooding over the whole day. Upon the road, at the Castle, and in the public-house; it would have been imprudent to discharge his bile: he was too cunning to expose the secrets of his mind before witnesses. A steward who cannot govern his passion, is quite unfit for his office: and in this respect our rogue was very perfect. He could assume the mask most perfectly; and in his cups, his familiar conversation, and his squabbles, he could disguise the envy, hatred, malice, and resentment that agitated him. But, no sooner was he returned home; if, by good or ill fortune he chanced to find no stranger, he would give way to all the fury, which was become more violent, in proportion as he had taken pains to suppress it.

His wife, who sat crying in a corner of the room, conjured him, in the name of every thing sacred, to moderate his passion; alledging that it would only serve to irritate the Squire, if he should chance to hear of it, and would induce him to continue his persecutions to the utmost.

Steward. I defy him! I know his malice will have no bounds: I know he will never stop till he

has totally ruined me ; villain, scoundrel, and infernal dog as he is !

Wife. Gracious Heaven ! have mercy upon me ! How you rave ! Are you quite mad ?

Steward. Have I not reason ? Do you know that in a fortnight he means to take away my licence, or depose me from the stewardship ?

Wife. I know it very well : all the village knows it already ; for the Squire's clerk told it to the foreman, and he has been telling the story to whoever had a mind to hear it. I did not know any thing about the matter, till I went to water the cows : and then I did not meet a creature but what laughed in my face. At last I met Margaret, and she told me the whole story. But this is not all : for John Doughty has brought back the twenty shillings. Where he could have got them I can't tell ; but I suspect Sir James is at the bottom of it all ; and I tremble at the horrible black storm that is brewing over our heads :

Here she burst into a fresh flood of tears.

Collins was thunderstruck at his wife's words—
 “ *Doughty has brought back his twenty shillings !* ”
 He remained for a time motionless ; his eyes haggard, his mouth a-jar, looking with vacancy upon his wife. At last he cried out, “ Where is the money ? where are the twenty shillings ? ”

His wife placed them on the table before him, in a broken glass ; and he fixed his eyes for some time upon it, without touching it.

Steward. That comes none from the Castle. The Squire never pays in money of different sorts, as that is, I am very glad it does not come from the Castle. But still there is some mystery in all this ! You should not have taken the money : why did you ? You should have questioned him well, and have found out where the money came from.

Wife. I did think of doing so; but he would not top: and I doubt whether you yourself could have made any thing of him, he was so short and crusty! I had not time to say a word.

Steward. Every thing conspires against me: I know not which way to turn myself. I am quite confounded: give me a mug of beer.

The wife placed the liquor before him; while he overborne by fury, stamped up and down the room, puffed and blew, then drank; and at last said, "I am determined to ruin the mason, that's flat: aye, if it should cost me ten pounds to do it, or more, Michael's the lad for that? and then I'll attack the boundary stone."

Just as he spoke, Michael knocked at the door. Collins, who was in a state to be frightened at every noise, trembled.

Who can it be that comes so late! And he ran to the window to see.

Open the door, cried Michael.

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CHAP. LXXII.

The Steward has not one shift left.

THERE never was any thing happened more fortunately! said Collins; as he opened the door. "Good evening, Michael: you are right welcome: what good news do you bring?"

Naggs. Nothing material; I am only come to tell you—

Steward. You don't pretend to stand talking at

the door: I shan't go to bed yet awhile. Come in, and sit you down.

Naggs. I must go back directly, Collins; I only came to tell you that I am extremely dissatisfied with our saturday's bargain.

Steward. High day! this is a pretty story! Courage, man; you have no reason to repent.— But if I have not given you quite enough, I can easily mend the matter. Only come in without so much entreaty; and we shall soon be agreed.

Naggs. No, not for fifty pounds, Collins! There, take your five shillings back again.

Steward. Not I indeed: you took them, and you must keep them. Come, Michael, don't be a simpleton: you shall have no cause to repent of your bargain. And I tell you once more, if five shillings are not enough, you have nothing to do, but to come with me into the house, and——

Naggs. I can stay no longer, Collins: there's your money.

Steward. I'll be d——n'd if I take it at present; now I have sworn it: so come in without more ado.

Naggs. If that's all, can easily step in. (He went in the house.) Now I am in your room; and there is your money upon the table. Good night, Master Collins: fare you well.

So saying, he slipped out of the room and disappeared.

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CHAP. LXXIII.



The Landmark.

COLLINS remained for a time speechless: his eyes rolled in his head; he foamed at the mouth; he trembled; he stamped about: and at last called to his wife: "Bring me the brandy-bottle: it is resolved: I'll go this instant."

Wife. Where then? where do you mean to go in this dark night?

Steward. I will go: I am resolved nothing shall stop me. I'll remove the stone. Give me the brandy.

Wife. For Heaven's sake, think what you are about!

Steward. No matter; go I will, that's flat.

Wife. It is so dark, you cannot see your hand before you! It's almost midnight; and besides it's Holy Week, when the devil is more mischievous than common.

Steward. In for a penny, in for a pound: give me my bottle, and I'll be off.

So saying, he took a pickaxe, a spade, and a gavel upon his shoulder; and notwithstanding the darkness, he hurried away towards the mountain, in order to remove the stone that marked the boundaries of the lordship. He was already heated with liquor, and inflamed with rage, which made him valiant. Still at the motion of every leaf, and at every sound, he shuddered: but pressing forward,

he reached the boundary, and began immediately to hack, and dig round it to get it loose.

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CHAP. LXXIV.



Darkness, and the night, ill suit an evil Conscience.

WHILE he was thus occupied, he heard a noise that alarmed him ; and all of a sudden a black man appeared behind him amongst the bushes. His figure shone amidst the darkness of the night, and a flame proceeded from his head. It immediately occurred to the steward, that it must be the devil in person : and thereupon throwing down his tools, and leaving his hat, and his empty brandy-bottle upon the ground, took to his heels, without ever looking behind him, roaring for mercy.

The apparition was nothing but Barwell the poulterer, who was returning from his village round, where he had been buying eggs. The basket which he carried upon his head, was covered with a black goatskin ; and he had tied his lanthorn upon his head, to guide his steps.

The cock-merchant, or poulterer, knew the steward's voice, and concluding he was about some mischief, had a mind to frighten him. " The rogue takes me for the devil," said he, " I'll encourage the belief."

At the same instant he put his basket upon the ground, and making a bundle of the tools, and his own ferreled stick ; he set off after Collins trailing them upon the stony road with a terrible noise ; and

bawling out in the hoarfeft voice he could affume :
 “ Phe, Phoa, Phum. You are mine. I have you,
 Collins !”

The poor fteward ran with all his fpeed, roaring
 out in a moft lamentable manner: “ Help! mur-
 der! For God’s fake help I am a dead man!
 Watch! The devil is at my heels, and will carry
 me away !” The poulterer ftill followed him, with
 his Phe! Phoa! Phum! Collins! I have you! You
 can’t efcape Phe! Phoe! Phum!

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CHAP. LXXV:



The Village alarmed.

THE watch heard the noife from the moun-
 tain, and could even diftinguifh the words ; but he
 was feized with a panic, and began knocking at fe-
 veral of the windows, and calling out: “ Rife, rife,
 neighbours ; get up direftly, for there is a moft ter-
 rible hurly-burly on the mountain. One would
 fwear the devil was flying away with the fteward.
 Hark ! how he roars, help! help!—And yet it is
 very odd ; for he muft be at home all the time : it
 is not above two hours fince I faw him there.”

As foon as about ten of them were affembled, and
 had lighted fome torches, and well loaded their
 guns ; they refolved to proceed towards the place
 from whence the noife proceeded. But firft, each
 furnifhed his pocket with a piece of new bread, and
 a prayer-book ; to ferve as a charm againft the
 devil’s power.

These precautions taken, they began their march; stopping at the steward's house, to be resolved whether he was really at home, or not. His wife, who in the utmost consternation, waited the issue of his expedition to the mountain, was extremely alarmed at the bustle she heard in the village, and at the appearance of a troop of countrymen armed with guns and torches, knocking at the door. She exclaimed, with the greatest anxiety, "What, in the name of Heaven, brings you here?"

Send your husband here directly, said they.

Wife. Alas! he is not at home: but for God's sake tell me what's the matter?

Peasants. The worse luck's his, if he is not in the house.—Hark! you may hear him crying for help, as if the devil was at his heels!

This said, they went forward, the wife following; of whom the watch inquired what Collins could be doing on the mountain at that time of night? It is not more than two hours since I saw him at home.—She answered not one word; but sobbed piteously, while the steward's great dog chained in the yard kept a continued barking.

As soon as the poulterer saw the troop approaching, to rescue the poor frightened Collins, and heard the dog barking so furiously; he thought it prudent to decamp. So turning round, he slipped as quietly as he could to the spot where he had left his basket, placed it upon his head, and continued his journey.

In the mean time, Cawthorne, who had advanced before the rest, and who thought this might be a false alarm of the devil; seized the steward, who still kept roaring, a little rudely by the arm; and asked him, why in the name of fortune he kept making such a noise?

Oh! spare me! spare me! Good devil! pray spare me this time!—For his fear had got such possession of him, that he neither heard nor saw any thing.

What are you quite beside yourself, Collins? Don't you know your neighbour Cawthorne? See, there's your wife too?

While he was speaking, the rest of the company kept carefully examining on every side, to discover whether the devil was not hid in some corner. Those who held the torches raised them up and down, and turned them in every direction while each put his right hand into his left coat pocket to touch the new bread and the prayer-book. By-and-by, as nothing appeared, the champions began to take courage: some of them even felt disposed to laugh, and asked the steward if the devil had scratched him with his claws, as he was all over blood.

(He had scratched himself with briars in his hurry.)

But others said very seriously, that it was no time to joke, as they had all heard the terrible noise.

Poo! said Cawthorne, it has been nothing but some poacher, or some stroller, who had a mind to play the steward and us a trick; for the moment I appeared, the lamentable cry ceased; and I saw the figure of a man hurry back towards the mountain as fast as he could. I am quite vexed I did not follow him at first; and we are all a pack of fools for not slipping Collins's dog, and bringing him with us.

Peasants. Why you are doating, Cawthorne. It was not a bit like a human voice: there was a horror in it that went to one's very heart, and made one's blood run cold. A whole cart-load of iron bars trailed along the stony road, would not have made half so much noise.

Cawthorne. I won't dispute the matter with you, neighbours; and I confess my hair stood an end at

first : but nothing shall persuade me I did not see a man running away towards the mountain.

Peasants. What then? do you suppose the devil can't take the form of a man if he likes it?

While this was going on, the steward, who heard not one syllable of what they said, kept striding on towards his own house, where he entreated his neighbours to pass the night with him; and they desired no better than to stay guzzling till morning.

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CHAP. LXXVI.



The Pastor goes to the Alehouse.

THE bustle of the night had roused the whole village; and the parsonage had not escaped the general disturbance. The rector alarmed lest some unhappy accident had happened, informed himself about the affair, and received terrible accounts of the apparition which had occasioned such a commotion. It immediately occurred to him, that he could make some use of the steward's fright; and accordingly went, late as it was, to the alehouse. The moment he appeared, there was a clearing of all the mugs; and the peasants starting up, saluted him, one and all with, "Welcome, Reverend Doctor!"

Rector. Many thanks to you, my good neighbours: and I am very glad to see you are so ready to lend your assistance, when any accident happens: it bespeaks a very good disposition in you.

Peasants. It is no more than our duty, an't please your Reverence,—we wish you a very good night.

Rector. I wish you the same with all my heart, my friends. I have one word more to say; and that is, to beg you will be cautious how you represent this unlucky business; for it has always a bad appearance to make much a-do about a thing that may turn out to be nothing in the end; or at least, very different from what one supposes. Nobody as yet knows all the circumstances; and I need not tell you how easily one is deceived by the darkness of the night.

Peasants. What you say is very right, reverend Sir: we will be mindful of it.

They were, however, no sooner out of the house, than they said: “A good well-meaning chuckle-head that; who never believes what he does not see.”

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CHAP. LXXVII.



Pastoral Solitude.

I HAVE heard, Collins, said the rector, that some unpleasant accident has happened to you; and I am come to offer you every consolation in my power. Tell me faithfully, and as if you were speaking to your friend, what it is.

Steward. I am a miserable wretch: Satan himself came to carry me away.

Rector. What do you mean? Where did this happen?

Steward. There, upon the top of the mountain.

Rector. But did you really see any person? and did any person lay hands on you?

Steward. I saw him, with my very own eyes:— He was a huge black man, with his head all on fire; and he followed me quite to the foot of the mountain.

Rector. How comes your face all over blood?

Steward. Because I fell down amongst the thorns and briars, just where the hill is the steepest, and tore myself terribly.

Rector. No one laid hands on you then?

Steward. No; but I saw him with these two eyes, for all that.

Rector. Very well, so be it; let that matter rest for the present. I cannot well comprehend what it all means; but be it what it will, it is of no great importance. But there is one thing absolutely certain; and that is, that there is an eternity, *which will prove an abyss of torment to the wicked, but is for them inevitable.* And it is no wonder, considering your age, and the sort of life you have led; if the dread of this eternity should at times alarm, and make you miserable.

Steward. Alas! Sir,—my alarm and misery have taken such hold of me, that I know not where I am. In the name of Heaven, pray tell me, what can I, what ought I to do, to escape from Satan's claws? I feel as if I was already in his power.

Rector. Collins, forbear to torment yourself with such absurd fancies, and to utter words that have not common sense. You are still possessed of your understanding: make a proper use of it: act according to the dictates of your conscience, and seize the opportunity of making all the amends in your power both to God and man. In so doing, I will soon convince you, that the devil will have no power over you.

Steward. Oh! dear Sir! what can I do to enable me to return to the grace of God?

Rector. You must sincerely repent of your sins; correct your way of life; and if you have at any time unjustly possessed yourself of a neighbour's goods, you must restore them.

Steward. All the world thinks, Sir, I am very rich; and I protest solemnly, I am very much otherwise.

Rector. That is little to the purpose: but you know you obtained Roughwater's clove by fraud. I have good reason to suppose that Doughty and Matthew took a false oath; and I will let you have no rest, till you restore the poor fellow what is justly his due.

Steward. For Heaven's sake, good, dear Sir, have pity upon me.

Rector. The kindest pity I can shew you, is to make you do that which is right in the sight of God and man.

Steward. And so I will, Sir; indeed I will.

Rector. Will you then restore to Roughwater his clove?

Steward. Oh! mercy on me!—Yes I will indeed.

Rector. Do you own that you came unfairly by it?

Steward. O Lord! have mercy upon me!—^{Wh^o}—Yes, I do own it: but I shall be a beggar, if I am obliged to give it up.

Rector. You had better beg your bread, than unjustly retain what does not belong to you. (The steward here uttered a profound sigh.) But tell me now, I beseech you, what business could you have upon the mountain at so late an hour?

Steward. For Heaven's sake, Sir, do not ask me:

I cannot, I cannot indeed tell you. Have pity upon the state I am in, or I am undone forever.

Rector. I am very far from wishing to compel you to reveal any thing against your will. If you have any thing upon your mind, and you can bring yourself voluntarily to confess it; I will give you such advice as you might expect from a father: but if you feel an insurmountable repugnance, it will be your own fault if I am unable to give you advice upon an occasion, where perhaps you stand the most in need of it. Moreover, as I promise not to reveal any secret you may entrust me with, without your consent, I see no advantage you can have in keeping the secret.

Steward. But may I be quite certain you will never mention any thing I tell you without my leave?

Rector. Most certainly, Collins: I give you my solemn promise.

Steward. Well then. Pray God forgive me!— I went to remove the boundary-stone of the lordship.

Rector. Gracious Heaven! And what could induce you to behave so, to a worthy good landlord, who never did you any injury?

Steward. Why, Sir, you may perhaps have heard, that he threatened to take away from me, either the alehouse or the stewardship; and that drove me to despair.

Rector. Unhappy, mistaken man! He intended you no ill; but had determined, if you gave up the stewardship with a good grace, to make you a handsome recompence.

Steward. No; is it possible!

Rector. Nothing more certain; for it was he himself who told me so. He was shooting last Saturday upon the moor, and there I met him as

I was going to Dr. Dean's at Finestee. He then told me in so many words, that he intended young Wrangham for the stewardship; but as he was in good circumstances, he should condition with him to allow you twelve pounds a-year for your life out of his salary, in order that you might have no reason to complain.

Steward. O mercy! if I had but known that, I never would have acted as I have done.

Rector. Your fault has been, that you have lost all confidence in the Almighty, which you should never do; even although you cannot immediately discover in what manner his universal goodness acts. You ought also to suppose that a real good man, like your landlord, will never do any thing that approaches towards injustice; although the recompence may not always exactly keep pace with your expectations. By encouraging such a disposition, you will conduct yourself with due deference towards your superiors; and probably by that means secure them as your friends, if ever you should stand in need of their assistance.

Steward. The Lord help me! what a wretch I am! why had I not some idea of what you tell me?

Rector. What is done, you know cannot be undone: but what is your present determination?

Steward. I protest I do not know. If I confess every thing, I must be utterly undone.—What do you advise me to do, reverend Sir?

Rector. I must repeat what I have already said—I will not force a confession from you. I shall only simply give you my advice; which is, in every thing to follow the rule of rectitude and truth: it can never mislead you. Sir James Grant is of a merciful disposition; and you are conscious you are to blame. After all, you must determine as you think proper: but were it my case, I should cer-

tainly throw myself upon his clemency. I know very well how difficult a task it is; but I also know that you can have no peace of conscience, till you have confessed your crimes, and made all the reparation in your power. (Here the steward uttered a deep groan, but said not a word.) I would wish that it should be your own free determination: but yet the more I think of it, the more I am convinced, that your wisest way will be to throw yourself upon the mercy of Sir James. I must also observe to you that, of which you have no doubt yourself, that he will endeavour to discover what could have drawn you at so late an hour to the mountain.

Steward. Good Heavens! it just now comes into my mind, that I left my spade, my pickaxe, and other things, close to the stone, which I had almost dug up; and they alone will be sufficient to discover the whole affair! You can have no idea, reverend Sir, of the horror that possesses my mind!

Rector. If those poor tools, which it would be very easy to collect, and hide still before day-break, give you so much uneasiness; consider how many other circumstances there may be, which may lead to a discovery: and if you obstinately persist in your silence, think what a store of misery you are laying up for yourself: you will never know a single day of peace. Your conscience can never be at rest, till you have unburthened your mind.

Steward. I am afraid too, that God will never pardon me, till I confess my crime.

Rector. Since you have a self-conviction of this truth, how can you hesitate? And I can venture to assure you, that you can never return to his grace, while you are conscious of an unrepented and unavowed crime.

Steward. Must I then make an unreserved confession?

Rector. Fear not, but that God will visit you with his grace, if you follow the dictates of your conscience.

Steward. Well then, I am finally resolved; I will confess every thing.

As soon as he had come to this determination, the rector repeated for his penitent, the following prayer.

“Heavenly Father! accept we beseech thee our praises, and our penitence. Thou hast stretched out thy hand to a sinner; and that hand, although strewing nothing but mercy, and compassion upon his head, has been construed by his fears, into an act of displeasure. But it has made an impression upon his hitherto insensible heart; and has opened his eyes to the truth, against which he has been till now, blind and hardened. O Thou! pure essence of mercy and compassion! accept the sacrifice of his confession, and do not withhold from him thy forgiveness. Accomplish we beseech Thee, the work that thou hast begun; and receive him amongst the number of thy lost sheep, found again. Great God! thou knowest how frail we are; and thou hast compassion upon those who truly repent. We bless thy holy name for this fresh instance of thy kindness; and we pray thee to hold this miserably penitent steadfast in thy ways, that he may secure the eternal peace of his own soul, and serve as an example to those of his unhappy fellow-creatures who have strayed from them.”

The steward felt penetrated with cordial comfort, and shed a torrent of the only pleasant tears he had ever known. “O worthy minister! of a merciful God,” said he; “I will prostrate myself before his throne, and do every every thing that you advise. By these means I hope to obtain the

pardon of God, and establish the peace of my own soul."

The minister added some words of comfort, and then retired.

It was already five o'clock in the morning; but he would take no rest till he had written to Sir James Grant; which letter he intended should accompany that of the preceding evening. They were couched in the following terms.

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CHAP. LXXVIII.

Two letters from the Parson to the Squire.

SIR JAMES:

TWO circumstances of so much importance, have lately come to my knowledge, that I thought I could not do better than recommend the bearer of this, John Doughty, to make this confession before you, as before his judge. He is persuaded in his own mind, that the oath he and Matthew took ten years ago, in the affair between Roughwater and the steward, was a false oath. It is a most deplorable case; and is heightened by many serious circumstances, in which your late clerk, and my deceased predecessor had a share; which will, I fear, excite much scandal, when they come to be divulged. I derive one great consolation from it, however: I am in hopes one of the poorest of my parishioners the unfortunate Roughwater; who, with his family, has suffered so much from the injustice

that has been done him, will be restored to his rights. I am led to suppose that the steward's audacity, which seems to gain fresh strength every day, and his utter contempt of every thing that ought to be held sacred, will soon meet with the punishment they deserve. As for the poor, miserable Doughty; I humbly, but earnestly implore for him, all the favour that the sacred rights of justice will admit of, when administered by one of its servants, so generous, and compassionate as you are.

My wife presents her respectful compliments to Lady Grant, and my children to the young ladies. We all return you many thanks for the fine flower-roots you have been pleased to send to ornament our poor little garden. I dare answer for it, no pains will be spared in the cultivation of them, as my little ones are passionately fond of flowers.

I have the honour to remain,
 With the greatest respect,
 Your very humble
 and obedient Servant,
 WILLIAM SHEPLEY.

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SECOND LETTER.

SIR JAMES:

SINCE I closed the Letter that accompanies this, in which I disclosed to you, as was my duty, Doughty's affair; Divine Providence, which orders every thing for the best, has, in a very incomprehensible manner, confirmed my hopes respecting Roughwater, and my suspicions of the steward.

The whole village was alarmed last night, by a very unusual noise; and I was indeed at first afraid

some unhappy accident had happened. When I came to inquire into the affair, I was informed that the steward had been pursued by the devil, who wanted to fly away with him; that they had heard him calling out for help from the top of the mountain; and that every person in the village had heard the terrible din the devil made during the pursuit. I am sorry to say I could hardly help laughing at this ridiculous account: but I received every moment fresh informations of the terrible story; and at last there came some who told me, that the steward was returned to his own house, accompanied by a troop of his neighbours who had rescued him: but that the devil had handled him so severely, they were afraid he would never recover it. It is true, this dismal tale did not make much impression upon me; but it had upon them: and it was necessary something should be done. Moreover I thought the steward's pride might be a little humbled by the event; and unwilling to lose so favourable an opportunity, I hastened to his house.

I found him in a most deplorable condition. Nothing could persuade him that the devil had not been at his heels; and even after all the insight I have been able to get into the affair, I have not been able to develope the mystery. It appears very certain that nobody touched the steward; and that the wounds upon his head, which are of little consequence, were occasioned by a fall. It appears also, that the moment any help came, the devil ceased his roarings, and took to his heels. But I must proceed to what is more essential.

The steward, extremely humble, and terribly frightened, has confessed to me two most iniquitous transactions; and has consented that I should impart them to you. The first, in confirmation of

what Doughty told me the evening before is, that he led your grandfather into an error respecting Roughwater's clofe, and that he holds it by an unjust title. The second is, that it was his intention to displace the boundary-stone of your lordship, this last night; and that he was actually at work about it, when this astonishing adventure happened to him. I must beg to intercede for this poor miserable creature, who really seems sincerely penitent, and is completely humbled.

Circumstances being thus altered, I shall charge William Crooklove with these letters, instead of Doughty, as I first intended. I shall hope for your directions in this affair when he returns; and am,

With the utmost respect,

Your very faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM SHEPLEY.

Fineshade, 21st March, 1782.

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CHAP. LXXIX.



The Poulterer's Deposition.

WILLIAM CROOKLOVE lost no time in delivering his letters at the Castle; but Barwell was there before him, and had related the whole of his adventure to the Baronet, without forgetting the smallest tittle. Sir James seated in his arm chair, had heard it all with repeated bursts of laughter at the steward's panic, and the Phe, Phoa, Phum of the pretended devil. Lady Grant, who was not

yet risen from her bed in the next room, hearing the poulterer's loud Phe, Phoa, Phum, and her husband's reiterated peals of mirth; called out, "For Heaven's sake, my dear Sir James, what are you laughing at? Do come here, and tell me what's the matter."

Barwell, said Sir James, my wife has a mind to hear you counterfeit the devil; wait a few minutes till she slips on her clothes; she will be here directly.

As soon as the lady appeared, the poulterer began his part again; and described minutely how he had pursued the steward to the bottom of the hill, till he was stopped by the appearance of the villagers, with their torches and arms; upon which he thought the wisest thing he could do, was to decamp, and regain the mountain, as speedily, and with as little noise as possible.

Both Sir James and his lady laughed till the tears ran from their eyes; and as soon as they could compose themselves sufficiently, they ordered the poulterer a draught of strong beer; charging him not to mention what had happened to any creature living for the present.

Soon after William arrived with the letters from the rector. The Baronet was affected at the recital of Doughty's contrition, and at his grandfather's imprudence; while poor Roughwater's sufferings extremely hurt him: but the rector's prudent conduct in the affair, afforded him real pleasure. He gave the letters to his Lady to read; saying at the same time, "That rector of our's is really a most worthy character: no man living could have acted with more circumspection and humanity."

When Lady Grant had read the letters she exclaimed, "What a shocking history is this of

Doughty's! But I hope, my love, you mean to restore Roughwater his clofe. Pray lofe no time: and if the difhoneft steward fhould prove refractory, he will deferve to be punifhed with the utmoft feverity. He is really fo bad a man, he deferves no pity."

Sir James. I fhall have him hanged certainly.

Lady. Nay, now, you are only joking: I know you would not occafion the death of a fly, if you could help it.

Sir James. Have you really fo good an opinion of me, my Fanny? I hope I deferve it; as I hope always to deferve your love.

So faying, he left her to go and anfwer the rector's letters.

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CHAP. LXXX.



Sir James Grant's Answer.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

I HAD heard the whole of the steward's adventure, from the very devil who had put him into fuch a panic, about half an hour before I received the favour of yours. The demon is no other than the honeft poulterer Barwell, whom you know very well. I fhall have the pleafure of telling you the whole ftory to-day; which I have no doubt will highly amufe you. I fhall wait upon you by-and-by, as I intend to affemble the village upon the fubject of the boundary-ftone: and I will endea-

your at the same time to laugh them out of the belief of devils and hobgoblins. It is a comedy, in the performance of which, I must beg your assistance. Perhaps it will be the first you were ever at in your life; and the idea of taking a part may startle you: but upon the whole you very likely have had no loss, and your ignorance of such scenes, may have been the means of preserving to you a greater portion of that benevolence, which is your greatest ornament.

I send you a few bottles of my best wine: if it were ten times better, it would only be the more suitable for you; and serve more effectually to prove my gratitude to you for affording me an opportunity of repairing my poor grandfather's fault. We will drink a glass this evening to his memory. He was in his heart a very worthy man, although his easy temper sometimes exposed him to the imposition of knaves, who got about him, and took advantage of it.

Accept my sincere thanks for the pains you have taken in Roughwater's affair: rest assured he shall have all justice done him. I hope, that after to-day, he will never think of my grandfather but with pleasure. I am most extremely hurt to hear of his sufferings; and I will do all in my power to put an end to them, and to convert them into joy and content. I think it a duty incumbent upon children, to repair, to the utmost of their ability any errors their parents may have committed. If there are any who suppose, that the office of a judge, is free from those situations which may occasion remorse, they are woefully mistaken. And this certainly should induce every man who is elevated to such distinguished pre-eminence, to deliberate with the utmost caution, before he passes sentence; and above all, to keep his mind perfectly free from every species of prejudice and partiality.—But I

am prêaching to you, who know all this ten times better than I do.

My wife and children present their best respects to you and yours: they have added a few more to the roots they sent before; and seem really happy in an opportunity of shewing any civility to persons of whom they think so highly, as they do of you all. Farewell till I see you, my worthy friend: and do let me beg now, that you will not bustle from room to room, to see that every thing is in the most perfect order; and don't prepare a great feast, as if you thought it was our wish to eat you out of house and home. If you should treat us with ceremony, I will visit you no more, although it would be my wish to do so frequently.

Once more accept my thanks for your humane care; and believe me to be, with the sincerest affection,

Your faithful friend,

JAMES GRANT.

Castle Grant,

21st March, 1782.

P. S. My wife has just told me, she is determined to make one at the poulterer's comedy; so that you may expect a coachful.

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CHAP. LXXXI.



The good Cow-keeper.

AS soon as Sir James had dispatched William Crooklove, he went into his farm-yard; where he selected one, out of fifty cows, as a pre-

sent for Roughwater. Having so done, he told his cow-keeper, to give her a belly-full, and then to send a labourer with her to Fineshade; and there to put her up in the stable at the parsonage till he got there.

The man said, scratching his head: "Please your Honour, it is my duty to do whatever you command me; but amongst all these fifty cows, there is not another I am so dearly fond of. She is so young, so handsome, and in such fine condition! And besides, she is just now in full milk."

Sir James. You are an honest fellow; and I am pleased to see your attachment to your cattle. I am also pleased that I have made so good a choice. I wanted to pick out the very best, as she is intended for a poor man who wants comfort: so don't grudge her, my good Frank: it will cheer his heart.

Frank. It's perfect murder, your Honour: a poor man can never keep such a cow as that, and she will be quite wasted. Oh! dear me! I shall never be able to bear to see her starved. If she should not get a belly-full, I must go every day myself to Fineshade, and carry her salt and hay.

Sir James. Honest fellow! But never fear! the person for whom she is intended will have a very good close for her, and plenty of fodder.

Frank. If she should but be well taken care of; and since we must part, I can't help it.

Sir James. Don't be uneasy; she will be in good hands.

This said, the man prepared to obey his orders; muttering to himself though, all the time, what a pity it was, that his master would send away the best cow he had. He could not help giving her the bread intended for his own breakfast, and a good portion of salt. He then told the labourer to put on his Sunday coat, and one of his best shirts; to comb

his hair, and to clean his shoes ; for that he was to lead Primrose down to Fineshade. The labourer obeyed him punctually.

In the mean time, Sir James meditated very seriously on the sentence he should pass upon the steward ; in like manner as a parent, who is compelled to shew some severity towards a refractory child, considers only its benefit, and almost weeps as he inflicts the punishment. As he feels more disposed to pardon than reprove, and would more willingly gain its affection by kindness, than enforce obedience by stripes : So Sir James, who felt the necessity of administering impartial justice, sighed, when he considered how heavy that justice must fall upon the poor delinquent. Thus disposed, he prepared to handle the scales.

Lady Grant and the children, in order that they might be the sooner ready, hastened the dinner-hour.

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CHAP. LXXXII.

Faithfulness to the Master, produces kindness to the Children.

LITTLE JAMES, the eldest child, who had been to the coachman twenty times to beg him not to be too late, had no sooner swallowed his dinner, than he hurried to the stable, calling out : “ Robin, we’ve dined, we’ve dined ; put to this moment, and bring the coach to the door.”

You little story-teller, said Robin, it is impossible they can have dined yet, for it is only a few minutes since the bell rang.

What do you mean by calling me names, you old bald-pate? said James.

Wait a bit, you little rogue: I'll teach you to call me bald-pate. I'll go and trim the horses, and then they can't be ready in less than two hours; and if that won't do, I'll tell your papa that Hector has got the cholic: and then he'll go in the chaise, and there won't be room for you.

No, pray don't replied James: have done now, Robin: don't trim the horses, and I'll love you dearly, and never call you old bald-pate any more.

Come kiss me then, Jemmy: give me a good hearty smack, or I'll take my scissors directly.

Nay now, that I will not, said the child; you have got such a nasty hard beard.

Well then, poor Hector's going to be taken ill.

Well, come then, replied James; I will give you a kiss. But then you shall promise to be ready in a minute.

Heaven bless thee! thou sweet child!—Come now, I'll be ready before you can get your hat on.

And in fact he was at the door in the twinkling of an eye. Little James had not been in the carriage five minutes, before he fancied it was too hot, and begged he might sit upon the box with Robin: to which his father consented, charging the coachman to take good care of him.

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CHAP. LXXXIII.

*The Master's approbation, encourages honest
Workmen.*

ROBIN's horses were in good condition, and the smallest crack of his whip made them bound away. They soon reached the village: when Sir James alighted from the carriage, to see what preparations had been made for the church. He found every man in his proper place; and as many stones already got up, as could be expected in so short a time. He commended their regularity and their address, in such proper terms, that they could not help observing—that if they had either neglected their work, or done it ill, he would have been sure to find it out.

Leonard was secretly delighted; because he reflected that he should have less occasion to find fault, now that his work-fellows were convinced that their neglect would be discovered without his complaining of it. Sir James desired the master mason, would tell him which was Roughwater, who was distinguishable enough from his pale, emaciated appearance; and who was just at that moment straining himself to remove an enormous large stone.

I would not have any man, said Sir James, in a loud voice, exert himself beyond his strength. And Markye, Leonard, be so good as to order each of these honest men a good draught of ale, to drink

the King's health, as soon as they leave work this evening.

Having so said, he proceeded on his road to the parsonage.

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CHAP. LXXXIV.



A meeting between a good Parish-Priest, and a benevolent Squire.

SIR JAMES saw the worthy rector a long way off, coming to meet him, and immediately hastened forward, that he might shorten his walk. "My good friend," said he, "the weather is not fine enough to have tempted you out this afternoon, and I am sorry that ceremony should: besides you have been so much occupied of late, that I am sure you need not take any unnecessary trouble. But come, let us return to the house, that I may tell you the story of the poulterer; and then to business for I am impatient to have done that I may have a comfortable hour's chat with you afterwards."

His first step was to send for young Wrangham. "I intend," said he to the rector, "to have a seal put upon all the steward's papers; by which means I shall discover who are in his debt; for they shall be opened in my presence."

Rector. This will be a good way also, Sir, for you to become acquainted with many of your tenants.

Sir James. I am in hopes by this means to remedy many of the bad practices of the village, if I can but once make the inhabitants understand what inevitable destruction men run into, who allow themselves to be drawn in, to contract the smallest debt with a person of so usurious a disposition as this Collins. I think, my good Sir, the existing laws do not provide sufficiently against this evil.

Rector. I am afraid, Sir, it is an inconvenience, beyond the reach of the legislature: the paternal interference of benevolent landlords is the most likely remedy.

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CHAP. LXXXV.



Great Guilt, but Great Compassion.

DURING this conversation, young Wrangham arrived.

Sir James. Wrangham, it is my intention to depose my steward: but although I am persuaded that he has behaved extremely ill, I have some reasons for wishing him to retain a part of his salary, as long as he lives. You are at your ease, Wrangham; and if I should bestow the stewardship upon you, I have little doubt but you would agree to pay Collins twelve guineas a-year out of your profits, in consideration of his age.

Wrangham. If your Honour should think me worthy of the place, I will conform in this, as in every thing else, to your directions.

Sir James. Very well, Wrangham; come to me to-morrow morning at the Castle, and we will settle this business. And now, my friend, I would have you go with my clerk, and the constable; and put a seal upon all Collins's papers and accounts, without the exception of one, if you can help it.

The three commissioners lost no time in the execution of their orders, but sealed up every thing they could find.

Dame Collins was very anxious to pass a sponge over the board, where several reckonings were scored up in chalk; but Wrangham prevented her, and made the clerk write down every thing he found there.

One article engaged their attention particularly. "Saturday the 18th, paid Joseph the mason's journeyman, half a guinea in ready money."

What was this for? demanded they of Collins and his wife. But they could get no answer: and so they returned to the parsonage, where they laid before Sir James the copy from the board; and his curiosity was excited by the article of the half guinea, as much as that of his commissioners had been.

They said they had inquired about it, but could get no information.

Well, said Sir James, we shall perhaps find means to make them speak. As soon as Nimble comes, do you, constable, go with him: and bring both Collins and John Doughty before me.

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CHAP. LXXXVI.

The good Parish-Priest confirms his character.

AT the first word the rector heard of this new complaint against Collins, he slipped away from the company, and hastened to the steward's house.

What, said he, in the name of wonder, is this half guinea you have given to Joseph? You will increase your difficulties if you do not make a full confession; for Sir James is extremely exasperated against you. Upon this, the steward in the utmost confusion, acknowledged every thing that had passed between him and Joseph. And then the rector hurried back to make his report to Sir James, painting in the strongest colours the steward's contrition; and entreating him to shew all the indulgence his justice would admit of.

Sir James. Do not make yourself uneasy on his account, my worthy friend, You shall find me as compassionate as you can wish.

He sent immediately to have Joseph seized; and they brought him bound just at the same time that Collins and Doughty arrived.

Collins trembled like a leaf; but Doughty seemed absorbed by his own thoughts, and though afflicted, yet patient. As for Joseph he gnashed his teeth, and said in a low voice to Collins: "You d——n'd rascal, you are the cause of all this."

Sir James had them all conducted into a ground-floor room of the parsonage; and there, in the

presence of Wrangham, the constable, and Nimble, they underwent a separate examination; and the clerk having taken them down in writing, they were conducted to the foot of the large tree on the village green, where the parish meetings were usually held: and then Sir James ordered the church-bell to be rung, to assemble all the inhabitants.

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CHAP. LXXXVII.



A stout heart never sees Ghosts.

PRAY, Mr. Shepley, give me a glass of wine, said Sir James, before I attend this meeting; for I find I shall want all my resolution, to enable me to assume that appearance of firmness which is necessary to make an impression upon my audience, if you will allow me to say so to you, my good friend; who I am persuaded feel, and are able to execute what I allude to, much better than I can. I think, whoever has occasion to address assemblies of the lower orders of mankind, should endeavour to acquire an air of confidence and an appearance of feeling what is said; which often produces more effect, even than the matter delivered.

I agree with you entirely, Sir, replied the rector; but it is difficult for every body, and in the power of very few, to acquire that sort of popular oratory, which alone can make an impression upon ordinary minds.

Sir James. I will take you as my example, my worthy friend; for nobody understands it better; and I will copy your paternal conduct in every thing that relates to your parishoners, which nobody performs so well.

Rector. Sir, you confound me by your too favourable opinion: I only strive to do my duty.

Sir James. I say nothing but what is strictly true: but I will spare your modesty. Let us now conclude; the bell has ceased ringing, and I am impatient to begin our comedy, hoping it will be the means of rooting out some weeds of superstition.

Rector. I wish it may, for it is an evil of considerable magnitude, and often does away the impression of such useful instruction, as one would wish to inculcate. In some instances its power is so great, and renders the minds, over which it has influence, so timorous as to prevent their exertion in circumstances which are most essential to their well-being. Moreover it warps the imagination, so that the person who is under its influence sees every thing through a false medium; and what is still worse, it often hardens the heart, and makes it proud and refractory. The simplicity of uncorrupted nature, is disposed to take every impression of truth and virtue: it is like soft wax that may be moulded into any form. On the contrary, the stupidity of superstition is like brass, the form of which cannot be altered without the aid of fire and steel. and since you have entered upon the subject of a vice that so materially interrupts the doctrine it is my particular duty to teach; you will perhaps allow me to enlarge upon it a little.

Sir James. I make it my particular request that you would, my dear Sir: it is a subject that very much interests me.

Rector. Man, in his undepraved nature, knows

but few things, till they are arranged in good order in his head; and they all tend to his well-doing and advantage. He does not pique himself upon understanding what is out of his province, and the knowledge of which it can answer no end to attain. On the other hand, a mind under the influence of superstition has no distinct idea of any thing: it assumes importance upon the supposed knowledge of what it does not comprehend, and then dignifies the chaos with the appellation of Divine inspirations; and the shadows of science without consistence, it calls wisdom, light from above. Ingenuous simplicity is governed by reason, forms no opinion without due reflection, examines every thing with attention and composure, is open to conviction; and upon such subjects as are of essential importance, it employs a quiet and modest zeal, full of gratitude to such as are willing to assist it in its pursuit. Superstition, on the contrary, maintains its opinions in opposition to common sense. It never exerts itself but in extravagancies; but when so occupied, it hurries on with a determined and turbulent spirit. Ingenuousness is mild, modest, virtuous, and religious. Superstition is furious, overbearing, corrupt, and often profane.*

Sir James. What you say is confirmed by a thousand pages of history; and it requires but very little experience and knowledge of the world to be convinced that hardness of heart and superstition are inseparable companions, and that the consequences of it are always hurtful and bitter. But it is time for us to attend the assembly: I intend to make an attack upon this hateful enemy of reason,

* It is imagined our rector (one of the worthiest of men) had upon this occasion, a desire to make a little display of his learning before his patron, and had got out of his depth; for we confess we do not quite understand him.

and if I can, destroy the ramparts it has raised in the village of Fineshade.

Rector. I wish you success with all my heart: hitherto my sermons and all my precepts have gained but little ground.

Sir James. I have no hopes of producing any effect by force of words; all my hopes rest upon the poulterer and his chicken-basket, his lanthorn, his pickaxe, and his spade.

Rector. I have sanguine hopes of your success; and I have no doubt but one event of this kind, will produce more effect than volumes of the purest eloquence.

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CHAP. LXXXVIII.



Ghosts of a new Fashion.

WHILE the gentlemen were discoursing as above, the villagers were assembling round the tree. The events of the preceding evening, and the imperfect accounts many of them had heard, made them flock in crowds.

The alarming appearance of the devil, had excited a wonderful commotion; and many of them having met in the morning, to settle what should be done upon similar occasions, they had resolved unanimously to oppose the parson, if ever he should presume again to preach doctrine that tended to shake their belief in ghosts. They proposed that Hardiman, one of the elders of the village, should

make a ſpeech upon the occaſion. But this was oppoſed by young Wrangham, who ſaid it would be a diſgrace to them all to have their ſentiments explained by an old villain, who ſtarved his children to death, and never ſcrupled to commit any ſpecies of iniquity.

We all know, replied his neighbours, that he is a ſad hypocrite, and a moſt covetous dog: beſides we are not ignorant of the life he leads with his maid-ſervant, who is no better than himſelf. He is notorious alſo for being a moſt ſhamefaced liar; and nobody encroaches more upon his neighbour's property, or is ſo apt to miſtake his neighbour's land for his own in harveſt-time. But at the ſame time, nobody can talk as he does, and there is not another man in the whole pariſh who is a match for the parſon in a point of religion. If you know any other man, half ſo capable, who is willing to undertake it, well and good.

Wrangham knew of nobody; ſo they called Hardiman, and ſaid, "Harkye, neighbour, you are the man that we muſt pit againſt the parſon. As ſoon as the Squire comes to the meeting, you muſt not fail to make our complaint againſt the rector, on account of his incredulity; and to beg that he will order a day of prayer extraordinary, becauſe the devil has appeared in perſon."

Upon this occaſion they were far from being unanimous. Some of the poorer amongſt them were on the rector's ſide; for he was a kind friend to them: but the rich men bore him no good will, particularly ſince he had hinted in one of his ſermons, that they were very wrong in oppoſing Sir James's wiſh, that they ſhould give up an indifferent common field as a cow paſture for the cottagers.

Hardiman accepted the commiſſion without much heſitation. "I could have wiſhed," ſaid he,

“to have had a little more notice ; but I will go and study a speech directly.”

This arrangement had been made in the morning ; and when the hour of meeting came, and they were almost all assembled, they were surpris'd and confounded that Hardiman did not appear.

I think I can explain the mystery, said Nic Airy ; he is waiting for a deputation of his townsmen to fetch him in ceremony.

What's to be done ? said the others ; we must e'en comply with his ridiculous whims ; he'il perhaps not come without it.

Whereupon they dispatched three of their number, who brought him directly. As soon as he arriv'd, he told a large company of the men who were standing together, in the most solemn and pompous manner ; that he had meditated a most excellent speech, and that they would have every reason to be satisfied with him.

In the mean time Sir James had concerted a signal with the poulterer ; who, as soon as he display'd a white handkerchief, was to appear with all his apparatus, and relate his story. He then, accompanied by the rector, and followed by his secretary, proceeded to the assembly. As soon as he appeared, they all pulled off their hats, and welcomed his Honour and the Doctor.

Having thanked them for their civility, Sir James desired they would all take their places, that the meeting might be conducted with regularity.

Lady Grant, with Mrs. Shepley and the children, had seated themselves upon the wall of the church-yard, from whence they could see and hear all that pass'd.

Sir James then ordered the prisoners to be brought forward one by one ; and made the secreta-

ry read aloud their confessions, which they confirmed in the presence of the whole assembly.

After which, the steward was ordered to kneel down and receive his sentence, pronounced by Sir James in the following words:

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CHAP. LXXXIX:



The Sentence.

UNHAPPY man! I am most extremely sorry to be obliged to inflict upon you, at your age, such a punishment as your crimes deserve. It may not be improper here to remind you, and to inform my honest neighbours assembled upon this occasion, that I should not have undertaken to pass judgment upon you and your fellow-prisoners, unless it had been at the particular request of you all, expressed in this paper which I hold in my hand, and which has received your separate signatures. It is very pleasing to me to reflect, that you could have had no inducement to take such a step, but from a supposition that my sentence would be more mild, than that which would have been inflicted upon you, had you appealed to the laws of your country, and the common routine of justice. It is a flattering testimony of the opinion you have of my paternal affection for you all; an opinion that I will endeavour to strengthen by every means in my power, as I will strive to convince you that nothing is more dear to me than the opportunity of doing you good,

nothing more painful than the necessity of inflicting punishment.

Collins, you have exposed yourself to the punishment of death! The law does not make any comparison between the life of a human being, and a poor man's clove; but the crime of perjury involves so many evils to the well-being of society, that the punishment of it has been fixed by legislators the most severe possible. The test of an oath is the only means by which we ignorant mortals can try the truth of our fellow-creatures; and if that test is violated, the consequences are dreadful, but so obvious that I need not enlarge upon them. For these reasons, you have incurred the penalty of death. But, in consideration of your age, and because part of your crime has been to my particular prejudice, I will spare your life.—This then is your sentence.

You shall be taken this day: accompanied by all such as think proper to witness your disgrace, with a chain upon your leg, to the spot from whence it was your intention to remove the boundary-stone; and there you shall replace every thing in the state in which you found it. After that you shall be committed for a fortnight to the house of correction; during every day of which confinement, our worthy rector will visit you, in order that you may reveal to him every circumstance of your life from your earliest recollection; by means of which, the origin of your wickedness and depravity of heart may be discovered. I will myself endeavour to trace the causes to their source as far as I am able, and expose them as a warning to my other tenants.

The first Sunday after your enlargement the rector will read your confession to the whole parish assembled; wherein your crooked ways, your extortions, your cruelty to, and oppression of the poor, your injustice and your disorderly life, will be expo-

fed. I will upon that occasion, endeavour to caution the inhabitants of this lordship, against the insidious arts of men of your description, which occasion the unhappiness of so many families.

If I thought there was so much good-sense and virtue in the parish, as that people would for the sake of their own temporal well-doing, as well as for the hope of eternal happiness, follow the path of rectitude without being frightened into it by the dread of punishment; I would most willingly remit you the remainder of your sentence. But it will not be: men will not pursue the only road to real happiness, without being forced into it; and I am therefore obliged to make an example of you.

The beadle has orders to take you to the place where the stocks stand, to-morrow morning; and there, having tied your hand to a post, as high as he can make it reach, he is to stain the three first fingers of your right hand with a black die, which I have given him, that can never be washed off.

I would, however, have it understood, that no person is to add to the weight of this part of your sentence, by scoffs and bitter jests; but that whoever thinks proper to attend, is to behave with proper decency, and stand with his hat off during the ceremony.

As soon as Sir James had done with Collins, he condemned John Doughty to be imprisoned for a week. As for Joseph, as he did not belong to the parish, he ordered him to be sent out of it immediately; telling him that so long as he contented himself to keep away, he need not fear any other punishment, but that he would prosecute him if he returned.

Whilst all this was going on, the good old Maltwell, who revered and loved the rector, told him privately of the plot that was carrying on

against him by means of Hardiman; and that he must be prepared to defend himself against a charge of incredulity. The rector thanked him heartily for his caution; and told him smiling, that he hoped the affair would end better than he expected.

Nothing could happen more lucky, said Sir James, when he heard of it; and since they have a mind to open the comedy themselves, let them begin.

He had scarce pronounced these words, when the orator arose and pronounced the following discourse.

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CHAP. XC.



Hardiman's Oration.

MAY it please your Honour, that I should be permitted in the name of the inhabitants of your faithful village of Fineshade, to relate a circumstance, which appears to them and to me a real case of conscience?

By all means, said Sir James: pray who are you? and what is the business in question?

My name is James, Christopher, Frederic Hardiman, one of the elders, and ringer of Fineshade, aged sixty-six.—Be it known to this honourable assembly, that I have been chosen by the most respectable of the villagers, to be the organ as it were, or the tongue, or the lips of the whole parish; because, as it should seem, there is no other person so capable of speaking for them as I am.

Let us come to the point, Master James, Christopher, Frederic Hardiman, Elder, and Ringer of Fineshade, said Sir James, rather to the confusion of the orator, who piqued himself upon the elegance of his preamble.

He began again, however, with another, please your Honour: The tradition we have received from our forefathers has taught us, that the devil, and his imps, appear very often, and in various shapes to us mortals: and as it is very plain that we have very good reasons for believing what we have been taught, because we have never doubted them; so we take the liberty, God willing, to inform your Honour that our parson, Heaven pardon him, is of a different opinion. We are also a little afraid that your Honour thinks as the parson does; but as in things of this serious nature, we must obey God rather than man; we hope with all submission that your Honour will pardon us if we request that you will oblige the parson to teach our children for the future, in the same manner we have been taught about the devil; and that you will not permit him to speak slightly of ghosts and spectres: because we believe firmly in them, and are resolved to live and die in that belief. And we also humbly beg, that a day of fasting and prayer may be speedily proclaimed; when we may by our devout supplication, and repentant tears, do away the effects of this culpable disbelief, which is every day gaining ground, and which will before long bring upon us the anger of Heaven.

Sir James and the rector found it difficult to keep their countenances during this discourse; but they listened with patience till the end. It was received by the rest of the assembly with the greatest applause; and they thought of sending the same man back to his house, with an hundred attendants, whose ar-

rival they had scrupled to honour with three. On every side they rose by tens and twenties, calling out, "Yes, your Honour, these are our real sentiments, as you have heard fully declared by our Elder."

Some of the poorer sort, who had a real affection for the rector, were quite confounded, and very uneasy on his account. "It is a thousand pities," they whispered one to another, "that he will be so blind, and not believe as others do, he is so good a man!"

But there was no one hardy enough to undertake his defence, although they were very unhappy to see his enemies triumph.

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CHAP. XCI.



The Landlord's Reply.

SIR James now rose, put on his hat, and casting a steady but rather a severe look upon the assembly, he spoke as follows.

My friends, you might have spared the trouble you have given your orator, in this ridiculous business. The thing itself, this mighty apparition of the devil, is quite a mistaken notion; and your rector is one of the wisest and best men in the world. You ought to blush at an attempt to lower his character, by means of a poor silly fellow, like this conceited old Hardiman. If you had the respect for his excellent and wholesome doctrine that you

ought to have, you would become more reasonable: you would abandon your belief in these old woman's stories, and not persist against the opinion of every man of understanding, in maintaining sentiments which are void of common sense.

Here twenty of them called out at once, that it was well known the devil had appeared only the very last night, and wanted to fly away with the steward.

Sir James. My good friends, depend upon it you are mistaken; and I will undertake to make you ashamed of your folly, before the day is over. But I will persuade myself that there are some amongst you, who are more reasonable. Tell me, Wrangham, are you one of those who believe in this foolish story of the devil?

How should I know, your Honour? said Wrangham.

This answer did not satisfy many of the men; and one of the elders who stood at some distance, told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, to speak so against his conscience. Several others contented themselves by saying, that twenty people had heard the noise, and they could not be deceived in that.

Sir James. I know very well that many of you heard a noise; you might call it a howling, a holabaloo, or what you please; but why must it follow that the noise was made by the devil? Is it quite impossible that one or more men might have a wish for sport's sake, to frighten the steward, who was upon the mountain at a very unusual hour? The forest is scarce ever free from some passengers, and the high road is very near the place where he was at work, so that I think it full as likely that some man had a hand in this as the devil.

Peasants. Ten or twenty men together, could not have made so horrible a din as that we heard; and you would have been ready enough to own it too, your Honour, if you had been there. No human voice was ever heard equal to it.

Sir James. I don't know, the night deceives one; and when once one is possessed by fear, things seem to take a ten times more horrible appearance than they really have.

Peasants. But it is impossible so many of us could be mistaken; so what needs saying so?

Sir James. I must still maintain, that you were certainly mistaken.

Peasants. We hope no offence, your Honour; but we know who is mistaken now.

Sir James. I think I could almost bring proof positive to the contrary.

Peasants. We wish your Honour would.

Sir James. It will not be very difficult.

Peasants. Ho! now you are mocking us, Sir.

Sir James. No, indeed, I am not. I can, if you chuse it, keep my word, and am willing to try, provided you all consent to give up the common field to the cottagers, if I bring sufficient proof that one single man made all the noise that has alarmed you so much.

Peasants. Oh! Sir, that is impossible.

Sir James. Will you have the proof?

Peasants. Yes, your Honour; and we will stake two fields instead of one, that you cannot prove it.

Upon this a murmur ran through the assembly, and ten men spoke at a time: "We had better be careful how we engage ourselves."

"He can just as soon prove it," said others, "as he can prove that the devil lives in Heaven." "We have nothing to fear." "He'll be obliged to draw

in his horns." "We'll stake the common field."
 "He can bring no proof."

(*Peasants to Sir James.*) Come, your Honour, now for your proof. If you can convince us, as you say, that one man produced all that clatter we heard last night, we will give up the field, but not else.

Sir James then held up his white handkerchief, as was agreed upon with the poulterer: and at the same time requested a few minutes patience of the assembly, till he settled his plans.

The men began to titter on every side; and called out: "Till to-morrow morning, if your Honour please."

Sir James made no answer to this triumphant sneer; but very soon the attention of the assembly was engaged by loud peals of laughter, which proceeded from the church-yard, through which the poulterer was advancing, decked out in his devil's garb, and roaring out his devil's jargon.

The countrymen now thought the demon was really at hand, when they heard this outlandish cry; and saw a person approach with a basket upon his head, and a lanthorn upon that. They did not know who it was, for he had disguised himself.

What is this mad fellow come to do? said they, with his lanthorn in broad day-light?

It is only Barwell the poulterer, said Sir James: what do you come here for, my friend?

Barwell. I have something to tell your Honour, if you will give me leave.

Sir James. By all means.

Upon this he put down his chicken-basket, and related as follows.

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CHAP. XCII.

The Poulterer's Address.

MAY it please your Honour, and his Reverence the Rector, and the rest of the assembly. Here are the pickaxe, the spade, the brandy-bottle, the pipe and the broad-brim'd hat, belonging to Mr. Collins the steward; all which he abandoned upon the mountain, near the boundary-stone; at the time I surpris'd him when he was about his fine work, and when frightened out of his wits, I chased him to the bottom.

Peasants. So you would make us believe it was you who made all that noise; but we know a trick worth two of that: pray teach your grandmother to suck eggs. Please your Honour, this won't do; we must have better proof.

Sir James. Wait a little: you see he has got a lanthorn. Perhaps he will throw more light upon the subject: only be silent till he has done.

Poulterer. It would be more mannerly if you would hear me out; and the sooner I begin, the sooner I shall have done. One thing you may be sure of; that when they write the history of Fine-shade, they will set you down as a company of conjurers, for there is not one word of truth in this fine story of the devil and the steward. 'Twas I who scared him, I myself I, poulterer to his Honour Sir James; who you now see standing before you, with

my chicken-basket, and this bran new black goat-skin, which I put upon it yesterday-morning, because it rained when I fet out, and I had tied my lanthorn upon it, just as you saw me when I came here. I had put quite a fresh candle into it before I left Sherburne, that it might light me the better in those bad roads, and because the night was very dark. At eleven o'clock I was still at the public-house at the said Sherburne, as the landlord can witness, as well as a dozen fellows who were there likewise. It struck twelve by Fineshade church, just as I got to the top of the mountain; and there within half a stone's throw of the high road, I heard some one swearing and working; and I soon knew it to be the steward by his voice, and his short cough. I could not at first imagine what had brought him to such a lonely place, at such a time of night; but I soon fancied he was digging up some treasure, and thought if I made haste I should come in for my share. So I hurried to the place from whence the noise came; but I fancy Master Steward had (contrary to his custom) taken a cup too much; for what does he do, but take me, poor miserable sinner as I am, for the devil in person. I then saw what he was really about; which was to remove the boundary-stone: and as I perceived he was horribly scared, I thought there could be no harm in keeping it up a little. So I gathered together all his tools, as fast as I could, and made a bundle of them with my own ferreled stick; then set off after him, trailing them along the stony road, and bawling out with all my might, Phe, Phoa, Phum—I have you.—I was not above a gun-shot from my man; when I saw you all coming silently along to his assistance, with your torches, your guns, and your pitch-forks. As I did not think it right, to put a troop of honest men to flight with my noise,

as I had done the steward, I stopped short, and turning about, got back as quietly as I could with my booty; and there taking up my chicken-basket, I proceeded peaceably homeward. Just at a quarter past two, our watch passed me, asked me what labourer's tools I had got upon my basket. I forget exactly what answer I made him; but as I did not intend to tell any body what had happened, till I had told the whole story to his Honour, I made some evasive answer, and I was with Sir James before six o'clock this morning. And now, my cocks, how could I have invented all this story, and collected these tools before day-break this morning, if all I have been telling you had not been strictly true?

Upon this, several of the company began to scratch their heads; and some sneered at the whole story.

One piece of advice I have to give you, continued the poulterer, most careful watch, and you wiseacres and elders of the parish; if ever the devil should trouble you again, let loose one or two of your stoutest dogs, and I warrant they'll soon bring him to bay.

So saying he ceased, and a confused murmur ran through the whole assembly.

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CHAP. XCIII.



The Comedy is for the benefit of the Poor.

“BY jingo, it has been just as he says.”

“Every tittle agrees.” “What a pack of fools we were!”

Cawthorne. Now did'nt I propose to follow the knave at the time? All I am sorry for is, that we staked our common field.

“Thank God! we poor fellows are the better for it.”

“Aye, that's the deuce an all.”

Lady Grant. The introducing the common field was a master-piece.

Mrs. Shepley. I think the whole was a master-piece.—“Why it would move a stone to pity; all our faith is overturned: what's to become of our ghost stories now?” “Phe, Phoa, Phum!”—I have you, Collins! I have you! Ha! ha! hee!

Rector. I have never yet seen any thing that appeared to make such an impression on their minds.

Collins. Is all this a dream? or am I really awake? So there was no devil in the case; and I am to be disgraced in the presence of the whole parish. But the most extraordinary thing is, that my mind should be so humbled! I feel neither anger, nor resentment; and yet my disgrace is to be public!

This was all that could be distinctly heard, amidst the general murmur.

After a little time Sir James arose, and said smiling: “What day would you wish me to appoint, my friends, for the fast, on account of the apparition of the devil?” Then, taking a more serious tone; he said: “You may believe me, that the ancient, and only true belief is, to love and reverence God, to do that which is right; and to fear nobody. All your idle stories of ghosts and hobgoblins, serve no other purpose than to warp the understanding, and destroy your courage. Nothing now remains to be done, but to settle the division of this miserable common field that you have made such a rout about: and as I am convinced it will be for the advantage of all parties, as well those who give,

as those who receive it; you will not wonder that I have been so much bent upon it. I have ordered some liquor to be brought, that you may drink to the King's health; and wish better fortune to such of the poor amongst you, as have but a small share in the ground you have given up. When you reflect that it is all that they possess of the good things of this world; and as you, none of you, can tell how soon you or your children may become poor, you will no longer grudge what you have given up.

Sir James now dismissed the assembly; and calling Roughwater to him, he desired he would be at the parsonage in about a quarter of an hour. He then joined the ladies, and they went thither all together.

The rector was full of his encomiums on Sir James's humanity and address. "I shall never again presume," said he, "to recommend any body to your mercy: for I see you have nothing to do, but to follow the dictates of your own heart; to be as kind and compassionate, as in justice you ought to be."

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CHAP. XCIV.

Chiefly consisting of Compliments.

SPARE me, my good friend, said Sir James, and don't spoil me by praises which I have not merited. I endeavour to do what I conceive to be my duty: I have not yet had much experience, but I hope as I grow older, to understand it and perform it better. I am very happy that the sentence I have

pronounced meets with your approbation ; but I am not to learn that in the whole of this affair, you have much more merit than I have : that your prudence, and paternal care had prepared every thing, so that there was nothing left for me to do, but to determine the punishment.

Rector. Nay, Sir, now you are spoiling me.

Sir James. No, indeed ; I say nothing but what I think, and what you know to be true. It would be unjust and ungrateful in me to say less. You have employed the greatest judgment and circumspection, in endeavouring to reverse an improper determination, into which my late grandfather was led by some dishonest men. It has pleased Heaven to make you the means of restoring every thing to rights ; and I should commit an offence to Heaven if I did not express my gratitude to you for it. As a more substantial proof of my approbation, I must beg you to accept the small clove that joins upon your premises, called cowslip-green, and which I think cannot fail to be an agreeable acquisition to you. Here is the deed of conveyance which I had prepared yesterday ; may you live long, and happily, to enjoy it.

At the same time Lady Grant presented his wife with the finest and largest nosegay of flowers that had been seen at the rectory for many years, begging her to wear it in remembrance of the late Baronet.

She accepted it with many thanks ; and it was not till the next day, that she discovered under the ribbon that tied them together, a very handsome pearl necklace.

As for the good rector, he was almost choaked with tears of gratitude, and could hardly speak.

No compliments, my worthy friend, said Sir James.

The other could just get out: "Sir, you have a heart that would do honour to a Prince:"—and that was all.

Sir James. Spare me, my good Sir; let me flatter myself that you are my friend: Give me your hand as a token that you think me worthy to be your fellow-labourer in endeavouring to render all who surround us, more virtuous and more happy. In future I hope to see you much oftener than I have hitherto done. May I not promise myself that I shall? You know my carriage cannot be so well employed, as in conveying you to the castle; and I hope you will often make that use of it.

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CHAP. XCV.



The Child repairs the injury done by his Parent.

ROUGHWATER now appeared. Sir James offered him his hand, and said: "My poor friend, my grandfather did you an injury, when he adjudged away your clove. It was a misfortune both for you and for him, though yours was the greatest; because he was ignorant of the wrong he had done you. He was imposed upon by designing men; and I must endeavour to dispose you to forgive him.

Roughwater. Forgive him, your Honour! I always knew very well it was not his fault.

Sir James. And did you never bear him a grudge in your heart?

Roughwater. Sir, I protest to you, that in the height of my suffering, at the first; when the loss of

my cloſe was the moſt grievous to me, I never allowed myſelf to entertain a thought againſt his old Honour, becauſe I knew he was not to blame.

Sir James. Is that really true, Roughwater?

Roughwater. It is, ſo help me God! And how could I blame him? I knew that the ſteward had procured falſe witneſſes to ſwear away my right; and what could the poor old gentleman do, againſt ſuch an appearance of evidence? I believe he pitied me in his heart, for he never failed ever after, to give me ſomething whenever he met me; and all the great holidays he uſed to ſend me bread, and meat, and ale. I hope God has rewarded him for what he did for my poor family: I verily think that without his aid, we ſhould have periſhed with hunger.

Tears ſtood in the poor man's eyes as he ſpoke.

Ah! your Honour, continued he, if the good old gentleman had but deigned to talk to us poor folks as you do, ſuch things would never have happened; but he was ſurrounded by a pack of leeches, who would never let the truth come near him.

Sir James. We muſt endeavour to forget all that has paſſed, Roughwater: the cloſe is again your's. I have had the ſteward's name effaced from the title, and your's put in: and I moſt ſincerely hope you will long enjoy it with comfort.

(*Roughwater*, trembling and ſtammering.) It is not in the power of ſo poor a man as I am to thank you as I ought; but if your Honour could ſee my heart, you would know it thanked you.

Sir James. You owe me no thanks, my honeſt friend; the cloſe belongs to you by an undisputed right.

The poor man could contain himſelf no longer: he burſt into tears, and ſobbed aloud.

Now I feel, ſaid he, the effects of my poor dear mother's laſt bleſſing. (He ſobbed aſreſh.) She

died only last friday, your Honour; and upon her death-bed, she said, "You will prosper, Roughwater! Think of me when I am gone, my child; I will pray God to bless you."—O Sir! she was the best of mothers: I shall never cease to lament her loss.

Neither Sir James nor the rector could restrain their tears.

Good, and honest man, said the latter, the blessing of Heaven is evidently upon you, as a recompence for your filial piety.

Roughwater. No, worthy Sir; I owe it all to my mother; to the most tender, the most religious, the most patient of mothers!

His tears burst out afresh.

Sir James. How deserving of pity is this poor man! to have been so long deprived of what justly belonged to him, and which he seems so justly to have merited!

Roughwater. My sufferings are at an end now, your Honour; and all that we endure of misery in this world, is but the kindness of God, when once we have surmounted it. The greatest uneasiness I feel now, is not to be able to thank you as I ought for all you have done for me; first, in giving me employment about the church, which was such a consolation to my mother before she died: and now, in restoring me my close. I never can hope to express half what I feel. Alas! if my poor mother had but lived to see all that has happened to me, perhaps she could have thanked you.

Sir James. Excellent man! Thy good mother will enjoy thy prosperity in a better place!—But your grief, and your tender piety had almost made me forget to tell you, that the steward is to clear you of all expences, and to pay a sum of money for the time he has held the close.

Rector. Will you permit me, Sir, to say a word or two to Roughwater.—The situation of the steward at present is very embarrassed. There is no doubt but he owes you a recompence, and interest for the use of your clofe; but I think you have enough of compassion, not to call him to a rigorous account, which might reduce him to beggary in his old age. I promised him in his distress, to solicit for him as much mercy as I could obtain; and I accordingly implore your's towards him, Roughwater. Have pity then upon the wretched man!

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CHAP. XCVI.



A noble example of forgiveness of Injuries.

Roughwater. **I** HOPE, Reverend Sir, you do not doubt it. As for interest and costs, they are quite out of the question; and if the steward should ever become poor, I hope I can say it with as much truth, as I wish it to be void of boasting, that I will do my duty towards him, as I would towards any other man. Nay, Sir, to prove that I am in earnest, I will tell you what I will do: the clofe is large enough to maintain three cows, winter and summer; now two will be quite enough for me, and indeed much more than I could ever have hoped for: I will with all my heart give up the third part to the steward, for the remainder of his life.

Rector. Your determination is very noble, and becoming a good christian. I have no doubt but the Almighty will make to prosper the part you retain.

Sir James. It is certainly a very noble proposal: but I think we should be cautious how we take him at his word. His heart is now opened by the sudden effect of unhopèd-for prosperity.—I applaud your determination most exceedingly, my honest friend; but I would recommend it to you to reflect upon it for two or three days; at the end of which, you may do it with infinite credit to yourself, and without fear of repenting of your generosity.

Roughwater. I am but a poor man, your Honour; but not so poor in spirit as to repent of a promise I have made in favour of an unhappy fellow-creature.

Rector. You had better take Sir James's advice: the sacrifice you have already made of the costs, and interest, is enough for the present. If hereafter the steward should be in want, and after having seriously reflected, you can determine upon the act of generosity, you know you can do it at any time.

Roughwater. I think I am not afraid of my resolution, an't please your Reverence.

Sir James. Now, Roughwater, I wish to see you this day, perfectly gay and happy. Had you rather stay with us, and get your supper at the rectory, or go home to your children? In either case I have taken care, that you should have a plentiful meal.

Roughwater. Sir, you are much too good to me: but if I might be permitted, without offence, I had rather go home, for I have nobody to look after my children. Alas! I have buried my wife some time since, and I have laid my poor mother beside her only two days ago.

Sir James: Well then, go home; and may the good God protect you! When you go out, you will find a cow in the rector's stable, which I make you

a present of, that you may remember my grandfather with pleasure, and be quite happy with your children. I have also ordered a large load of hay to be led to your house from Collins's; it is your due: you will find it before your door. If either your house, or your stable want any repairs, you are welcome to cut the necessary timber out of my woods,

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CHAP. XCVII.



The acknowledgments of a grateful Heart.

THIS unexpected flow of blessings, quite deprived the poor man of the power of utterance. He tried to stammer out a few words of thankfulness, but in vain: however that attempt spoke more eloquently for him, than any words could have done.

I understand perfectly, said Sir James, all you would say, and that you wish to return me a thousand thanks. Give me your hand, worthy, honest man: and now get away to your children, resting assured, that if I can in any thing contribute to their happiness, or your's; I will do it, with the most sincere satisfaction.

Roughwater took his leave, and drove his cow home.

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CHAP. XCVIII.

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An interesting Scene.

THE foregoing scene had drawn tears from the eyes of all the spectators, particularly from the ladies and the children; and a silence of some minutes ensued, after Roughwater's departure.

Lady Grant at last said, "What can equal the joy of an evening, passed as this has been! This earth, and the contemplation of the smiling beauties of nature, are a never-ending source of happiness; but the exquisite delight of performing a good action, surpasses every other enjoyment."

Sir James. How true that is! my dearest love; and how like you the remark!

Rector. My emotion must stand in lieu of the thanks I would willingly return; for the delightful spectacle you have afforded us: but indeed my heart thanks you, my dear Sir. I have never, in the whole course of my life, seen a more striking example of true nobleness of heart in all its purity, than in this honest Roughwater: and I think it must be a satisfaction to you, Sir, as it is to me, to meet with it in an order of men, where, from education it was the least to be expected.

In the mean time, the rector's wife was alternately pressing her children, whose eyes were red with weeping, to her bosom, She said nothing; but the look of expression, and the tear which stood in her eye, plainly pointed out what passed in her

heart. In a few minutes, the children proposed to their mother, to carry their supper to Roughwater's children. Mrs. Shepley looked at Lady Grant to know how the proposition was received. "Let us go with them," said the Lady: and the gentlemen declared they would not be left behind.

Sir James had ordered a cold loin of veal to be put up in the coach, for the purpose; and Mrs. Shepley added a most excellent soup: all of which, Martin was ordered to carry to the poor man's cottage. All the lower people of the village, old and young, men, women, and children, were assembled before the door, to admire the great load of hay and the fine cow.

Martin had scarce deposited his load, when the company arrived; and were grieved to find scarce any thing but the four bare walls of the house, and the children ragged, and bearing the appearance of hunger and wretchedness.

Sir James felt with fresh force the fatal effects of hasty judgment; and there was not one of the company whose heart did not bleed at the sight of so much misery.

Can you believe, said he to the Ladies, who he saw were distressed at the scene before them; that this noble fellow, has proposed of his own accord, to give up one third of the produce of his field, to the very man who has been the occasion of this scene of distress for the last ten years; and that for his life?

Lady Grant. We overheard all that passed; but this poor man, with all the children, must not be allowed to part with a single penny, particularly in favour of such a worthless, good-for-nothing.

Sir James. And will you venture, my Love, to check the impulse of a generous heart, which is exalted, perhaps by the immediate influence of the

Almighty, to a pitch of generosity, which you could not witness without tears?

Lady Grant. Oh! no indeed; be it far from me to entertain such a thought again. Let him give all that he has, if he feels the disposition, for God will never forsake so good a man.

At the end of this little dialogue, Sir James desired Roughwater would give the children their supper; when little John made his father a sign, and said in a low voice; "May'nt I carry a bit of this fine meat to Gertrude?"

Roughwater. You shall, my good lad; but wait a bit.

Sir James, who overheard the name of Gertrude, asked Roughwater what the boy had been saying?

Upon which he told the whole story of the potatoes; of his mother's last moments; of Leonard's and Gertrude's extreme kindness to him; and concluded by saying, "Sir, these very shoes and stockings that I have on at this moment, I owe to Leonard's goodness: and as this is a most blessed day to me, I cannot sit down with comfort to such a feast, unless I invite those worthy people to share it with me."

I should tire my readers, were I to dwell upon the encomiums the company bestowed upon the poor man's gratitude: were I to express their admiration of the benevolence of a poor mason's wife, or to recount the tears they shed at the relation of the pious mother's last moments. I find it is more than I can do, to describe little John's ecstasy, when he was told he might fetch Leonard and Gertrude.

They however soon arrived, with their children; for Sir James had sent a servant to back John's invitation; without which, their modesty would hardly have permitted them to appear. I find it difficult

also to describe the tender shoots of benevolence which appeared in the mason's children; each, heaping from his own plate, that of his little neighbour, with every good morsel that was distributed to them; and then seeming to wish to read in their eyes, the joy they hoped to inspire. But I think the most pathetic touch of all, was to see these poor little ragged children clinging round the modest Gertrude, as if they would devour her; one eagerly grasping her hand, another wishing to appropriate to itself that smile which shone with benignity upon them all.

Sir James and his Lady contemplated this interesting scene as long as they could: but it grew late, and they were obliged to tear themselves away. But the impression of so much misery relieved, and put beyond the reach of want, gave them a sensation of delight that kingdoms could not purchase.

Nothing was said when they parted; tears supplied the place of words. But they were no sooner out of sight, than there burst out a clamour of blessings upon them, that could not fail to find their way to Heaven.

Sir James ordered his coachman to drive very slowly, till they were clear of the village.

The rector and his family returned home with hearts bounding with contentment.

Leonard and Gertrude staid with Roughwater and his children till near nine o'clock, and surely it would be impossible to find a happier groupe.

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CHAP. XCIX.



Joyful Prospects.

WITHIN the last week, there has been a talk in the village, that Gertrude is likely to bring about a match between Roughwater and her particular friend Wrangham's sifter. Sir James has expressed his approbation; and there seems little doubt of the brother's and sifter's consent, as the man has shewn himself so very worthy, and his field is worth at a moderate valuation, at least five hundred pounds.

As for Leonard, his building succeeds beyond his most sanguine hopes; and he rises in the good opinion of Sir James Grant every day.

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CHAP. C.



Conclusion.

I FORGOT to mention that the poulterer did not go without his reward; for Lady Grant, perceiving him upon the road, as they returned home in the evening, reminded her husband of the

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share he had had in the plot of their comedy: so he ordered the coachman to stop, and called him saying, "Barwell, my wife thinks it very hard you should have played the devil for nothing; so here's a guinea for you."

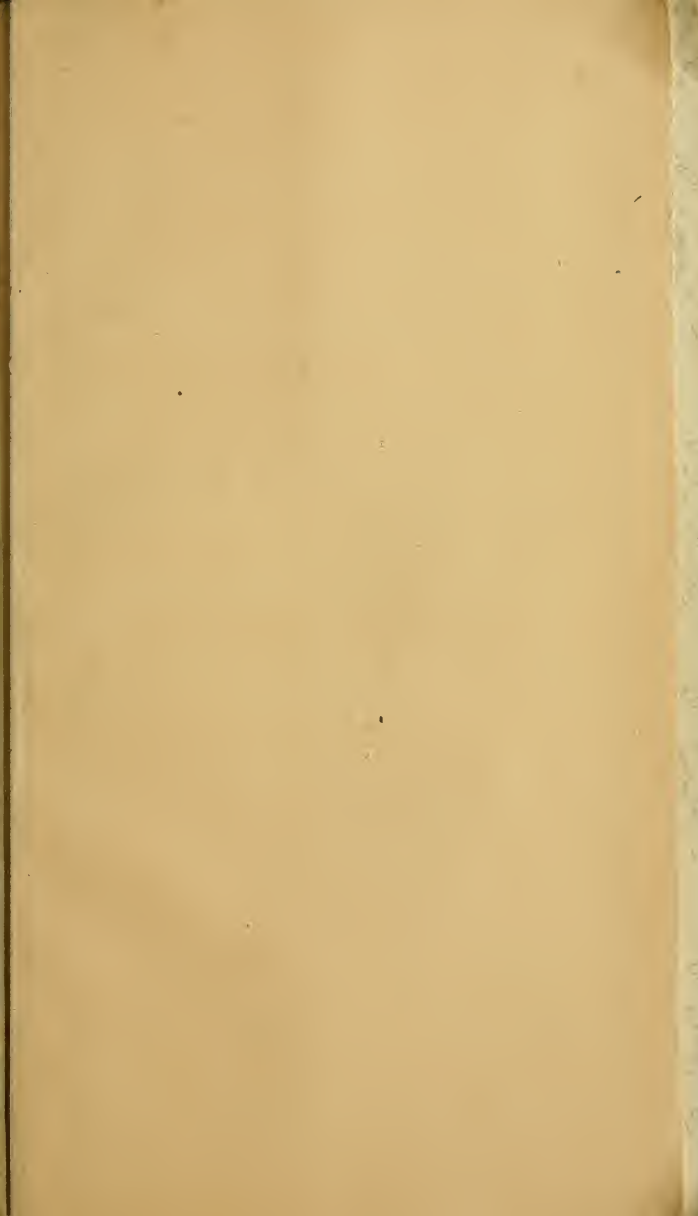
I most humbly thank your Honour; and I should be very glad to play the devil every day upon the same terms.

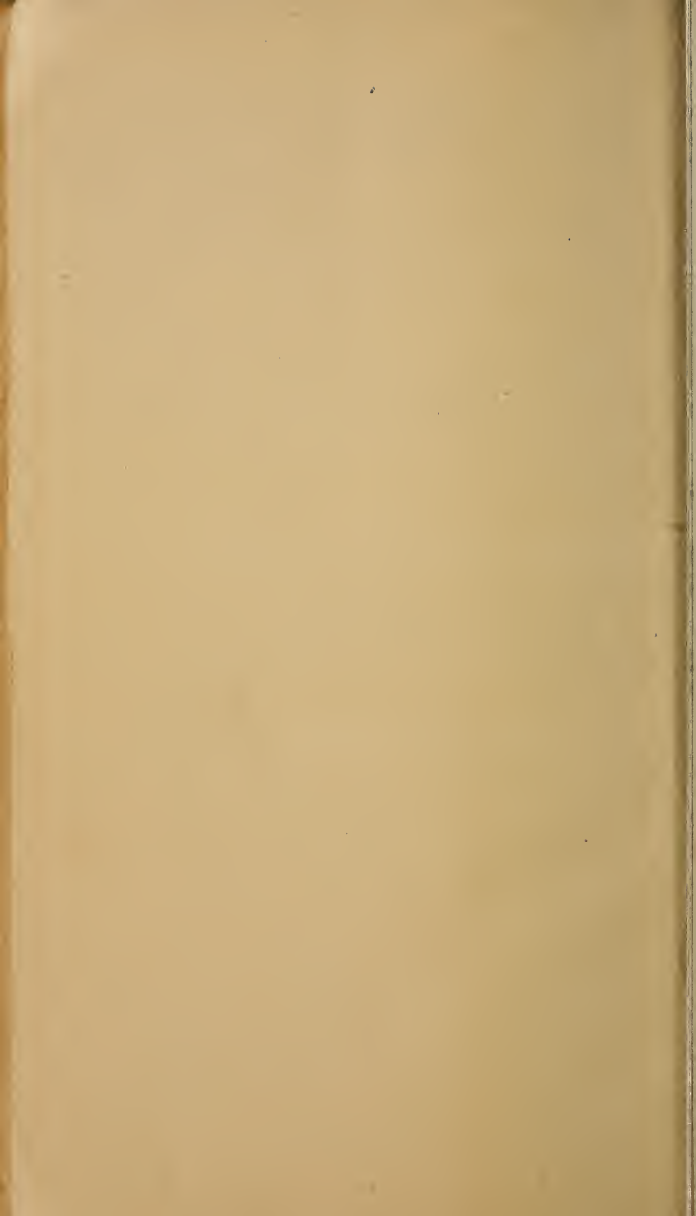
Sir James. Provided you were sure the dogs were safe tied up.

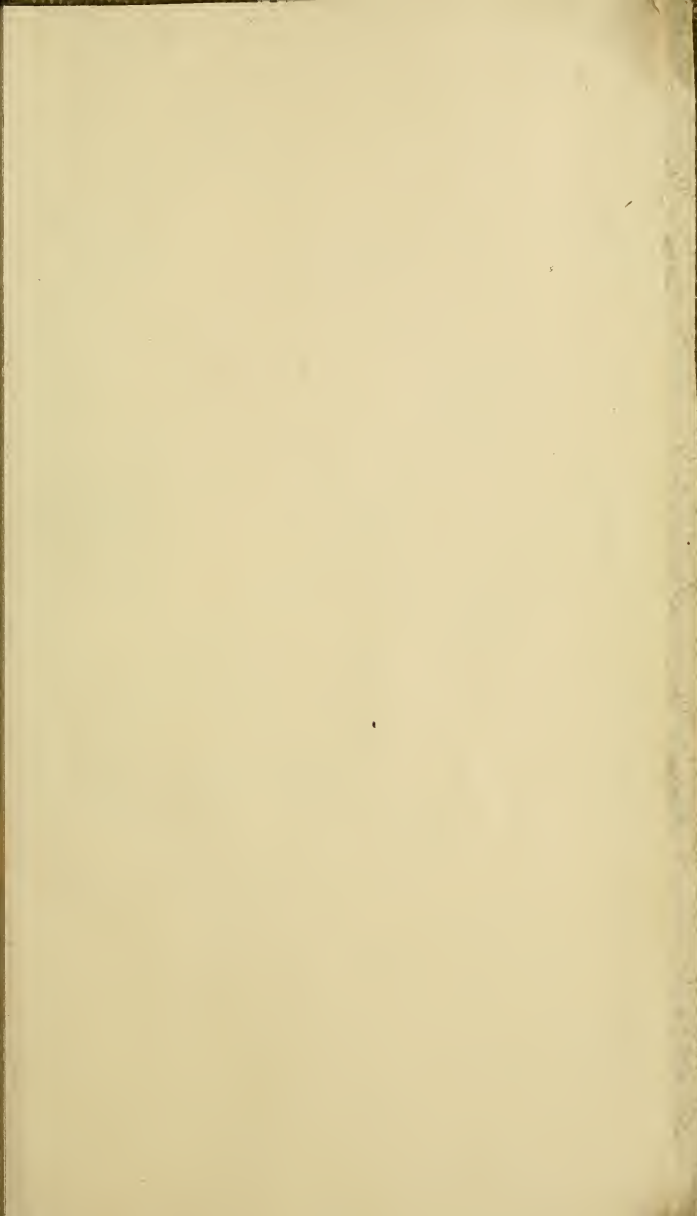
Barwell. For that matter, yes, your Honour.

This said, the coachman cracked his whip, and the forrels were at home in an instant.

THE END.







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