

Paul Clifford, Volume 1.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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PAUL CLIFFORD

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1840.

This novel so far differs from the other fictions by the same author that it seeks to draw its interest rather from practical than ideal sources. Out of some twelve Novels or Romances, embracing, however inadequately, a great variety of scene and character,--from "Pelham" to the "Pilgrims of the Rhine," from "Rienzi" to the "Last Days of Pompeii,"--"Paul Clifford" is the only one in which a robber has been made the hero, or the peculiar phases of life which he illustrates have been brought into any prominent description.

Without pausing to inquire what realm of manners or what order of crime and sorrow is open to art, and capable of administering to the proper ends of fiction, I may be permitted to observe that the present subject was selected, and the Novel written, with a twofold object: First, to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions; namely, a vicious prison-discipline, and a sanguinary criminal code,--the habit of corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man at the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders. Between the example of crime which the tyro learns from the felons in the prison-yard, and the horrible levity with which the mob gather round the drop at Newgate, there is a connection which a writer may be pardoned for quitting loftier regions of imagination to trace and to detect. So far this book is less a picture of the king's highway than the law's royal road to the gallows,--a satire on the short cut established between the House of Correction and the Condemned Cell. A second and a lighter object in the novel of "Paul Clifford" (and hence the introduction of a semi-burlesque or travesty in the earlier chapters) was to show that there is nothing essentially different between vulgar vice and fashionable vice, and that the slang of the one circle is but an easy paraphrase of the cant of the other.

The Supplementary Essays, entitled "Tomlinsoniana," which contain the corollaries to various problems suggested in the Novel, have been restored to the present edition.

CLIFTON, July 25, 1840.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1848.

Most men who with some earnestness of mind examine into the mysteries of our social state will perhaps pass through that stage of self-education in which this Novel was composed. The contrast between conventional frauds, received as component parts of the great system of civilization, and the less deceptive invasions of the laws which discriminate the meum from the tuum, is tempting to a satire that is not without its justice. The tragic truths which lie hid in what I may call the Philosophy of Circumstance strike through our philanthropy upon our imagination. We see masses of our fellow-creatures the victims of circumstances over which they had no control,--contaminated in infancy by the example of parents, their intelligence either extinguished or turned against them, according as the conscience is stifled in ignorance or

perverted to apologies for vice. A child who is cradled in ignominy, whose schoolmaster is the felon, whose academy is the House of Correction,--who breathes an atmosphere in which virtue is poisoned, to which religion does not pierce,--becomes less a responsible and reasoning human being than a wild beast which we suffer to range in the wilderness, till it prowls near our homes, and we kill it in self-defence.

In this respect the Novel of "Paul Clifford" is a loud cry to society to amend the circumstance,--to redeem the victim. It is an appeal from Humanity to Law. And in this, if it could not pretend to influence or guide the temper of the times, it was at least a foresign of a coming change. Between the literature of imagination, and the practical interests of a people, there is a harmony as complete as it is mysterious. The heart of an author is the mirror of his age. The shadow of the sun is cast on the still surface of literature long before the light penetrates to law; but it is ever from the sun that the shadow falls, and the moment we see the shadow we may be certain of the light.

Since this work was written, society has been busy with the evils in which it was then silently acquiescent. The true movement of the last fifteen years has been the progress of one idea,--Social Reform. There it advances with steady and noiseless march behind every louder question of constitutional change. Let us do justice to our time. There have been periods of more brilliant action on the destinies of States, but there is no time visible in History in which there was so earnest and general a desire to improve the condition of the great body of the people. In every circle of the community that healthful desire is astir. It unites in one object men of parties the most opposed; it affords the most attractive nucleus for public meetings; it has cleansed the statute-book from blood; it is ridding the world of the hangman. It animates the clergy of all sects in the remotest districts; it sets the squire on improving cottages and parcelling out allotments. Schools rise in every village; in books the lightest, the Grand Idea colours the page, and bequeaths the moral. The Government alone (despite the professions on which the present Ministry was founded) remains unpenetrated by the common genius of the age; but on that question, with all the subtleties it involves, and the experiments it demands,--not indeed according to the dreams of an insane philosophy, but according to the immutable laws which proportion the rewards of labour to the respect for property,--a Government must be formed at last.

There is in this work a subtler question suggested, but not solved,--that question which perplexes us in the generous ardour of our early youth,--which, unsatisfactory as all metaphysics, we rather escape from than decide as we advance in years; namely, make what laws we please, the man who lives within the pale can be as bad as the man without. Compare the Paul Clifford of the fiction with the William Brandon,--the hunted son with the honoured father, the outcast of the law with the dispenser of the law, the felon with the judge; and as at the last they front each other,--one on the seat of justice, the other at the convict's bar,--who can lay his hand on his heart and say that the Paul Clifford is a worse man than the William Brandon.

There is no immorality in a truth that enforces this question; for it is precisely those offences which society cannot interfere with that society requires fiction to expose. Society is right, though youth is reluctant to acknowledge it. Society can form only certain regulations necessary for its self-defence,--the fewer the better,--punish those who invade, leave unquestioned those who respect them. But fiction follows truth

into all the strongholds of convention; strikes through the disguise, lifts the mask, bares the heart, and leaves a moral wherever it brands a falsehood.

Out of this range of ideas the mind of the Author has, perhaps, emerged into an atmosphere which he believes to be more congenial to Art. But he can no more regret that he has passed through it than he can regret that while he dwelt there his heart, like his years, was young. Sympathy with the suffering that seems most actual, indignation at the frauds which seem most received as virtues, are the natural emotions of youth, if earnest. More sensible afterwards of the prerogatives, as of the elements, of Art, the Author, at least, seeks to escape where the man may not, and look on the practical world through the serener one of the ideal.

With the completion of this work closed an era in the writer's self-education. From "Pelham" to "Paul Clifford" (four fictions, all written at a very early age), the Author rather observes than imagines; rather deals with the ordinary surface of human life than attempts, however humbly, to soar above it or to dive beneath. From depicting in "Paul Clifford" the errors of society, it was almost the natural progress of reflection to pass to those which swell to crime in the solitary human heart,—from the bold and open evils that spring from ignorance and example, to track those that lie coiled in the entanglements of refining knowledge and speculative pride. Looking back at this distance of years, I can see as clearly as if mapped before me, the paths which led across the boundary of invention from "Paul Clifford" to "Eugene Aram." And, that last work done, no less clearly can I see where the first gleams from a fairer fancy broke upon my way, and rested on those more ideal images which I sought with a feeble hand to transfer to the "Pilgrims of the Rhine" and the "Last Days of Pompeii." We authors, like the Children in the Fable, track our journey through the maze by the pebbles which we strew along the path. From others who wander after us, they may attract no notice, or, if noticed, seem to them but scattered by the caprice of chance; but we, when our memory would retrace our steps, review in the humble stones the witnesses of our progress, the landmarks of our way.

Knelworth, 1848.

PAUL CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER I.

Say, ye oppressed by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose,
Who press the downy couch while slaves advance
With timid eye to read the distant glance,
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease
To name the nameless, ever-new disease,
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure,
How would you bear in real pain to lie
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?

How would you bear to draw your latest breath
Where all that's wretched paves the way to death? --Crabbe.

It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents, except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness. Through one of the obscurest quarters of London, and among haunts little loved by the gentlemen of the police, a man, evidently of the lowest orders, was wending his solitary way. He stopped twice or thrice at different shops and houses of a description correspondent with the appearance of the quartier in which they were situated, and tended inquiry for some article or another which did not seem easily to be met with. All the answers he received were couched in the negative; and as he turned from each door he muttered to himself, in no very elegant phraseology, his disappointment and discontent. At length, at one house, the landlord, a sturdy butcher, after rendering the same reply the inquirer had hitherto received, added, "But if this will do as vell, Dummie, it is quite at your sarvice!" Pausing reflectively for a moment, Dummie responded that he thought the thing proffered might do as well; and thrusting it into his ample pocket, he strode away with as rapid a motion as the wind and the rain would allow. He soon came to a nest of low and dingy buildings, at the entrance to which, in half-effaced characters, was written "Thames Court." Halting at the most conspicuous of these buildings, an inn or alehouse, through the half-closed windows of which blazed out in ruddy comfort the beams of the hospitable hearth, he knocked hastily at the door. He was admitted by a lady of a certain age, and endowed with a comely rotundity of face and person.

"Hast got it, Dummie?" said she, quickly, as she closed the door on the guest.

"Noa, noa! not exactly; but I thinks as 'ow--"

"Pish, you fool!" cried the woman, interrupting him peevishly. "Vy, it is no use desaving me. You knows you has only stepped from my boosing-ken to another, and you has not been arter the book at all. So there's the poor cretur a, raving and a dying, and you--"

"Let I speak!" interrupted Dummie in his turn. "I tells you I vent first to Mother Bussblone's, who, I knows, chops the whiners morning and evening to the young ladies, and I axes there for a Bible; and she says, says she, 'I 'as only a "Companion to the Halter," but you'll get a Bible, I think, at Master Talkins', the cobbler as preaches.' So I goes to Master Talkins, and he says, says he, 'I 'as no call for the Bible, --'cause vy? I 'as a call vithout; but mayhap you'll be a getting it at the butcher's hover the vay, -'cause vy? The butcher 'll be damned!' So I goes hover the vay, and the butcher says, says he, 'I 'as not a Bible, but I 'as a book of plays bound for all the vorld just like 'un, and mayhap the poor cretur may n't see the difference.' So I takes the plays, Mrs. Margery, and here they be sure ly! And how's poor Judy?"

"Fearsome! she'll not be over the night, I'm a thinking."

"Vell, I'll track up the dancers!"

So saying, Dummie ascended a doorless staircase, across the entrance of which a blanket, stretched angularly from the wall to the chimney,

afforded a kind of screen; and presently he stood within a chamber which the dark and painful genius of Crabbe might have delighted to portray. The walls were whitewashed, and at sundry places strange figures and grotesque characters had been traced by some mirthful inmate, in such sable outline as the end of a smoked stick or the edge of a piece of charcoal is wont to produce. The wan and flickering light afforded by a farthing candle gave a sort of grimness and menace to these achievements of pictorial art, especially as they more than once received embellishments from portraits of Satan such as he is accustomed to be drawn. A low fire burned gloomily in the sooty grate, and on the hob hissed "the still small voice" of an iron kettle. On a round deal table were two vials, a cracked cup, a broken spoon of some dull metal, and upon two or three mutilated chairs were scattered various articles of female attire. On another table, placed below a high, narrow, shutterless casement (athwart which, instead of a curtain, a checked apron had been loosely hung, and now waved fitfully to and fro in the gusts of wind that made easy ingress through many a chink and cranny), were a looking-glass, sundry appliances of the toilet, a box of coarse rouge, a few ornaments of more show than value, and a watch, the regular and calm click of which produced that indescribably painful feeling which, we fear, many of our readers who have heard the sound in a sick-chamber can easily recall. A large tester-bed stood opposite to this table, and the looking-glass partially reflected curtains of a faded stripe, and ever and anon (as the position of the sufferer followed the restless emotion of a disordered mind) glimpses of the face of one on whom Death was rapidly hastening. Beside this bed now stood Dummie, a small, thin man dressed in a tattered plush jerkin, from which the rain-drops slowly dripped, and with a thin, yellow, cunning physiognomy grotesquely hideous in feature, but not positively villanous in expression. On the other side of the bed stood a little boy of about three years old, dressed as if belonging to the better classes, although the garb was somewhat tattered and discoloured. The poor child trembled violently, and evidently looked with a feeling of relief on the entrance of Dummie. And now there slowly, and with many a phthisical sigh, heaved towards the foot of the bed the heavy frame of the woman who had accosted Dummie below, and had followed him, *haud passibus aequis*, to the room of the sufferer; she stood with a bottle of medicine in her hand, shaking its contents up and down, and with a kindly yet timid compassion spread over a countenance crimsoned with habitual libations. This made the scene,--save that on a chair by the bedside lay a profusion of long, glossy, golden ringlets, which had been cut from the head of the sufferer when the fever had begun to mount upwards, but which, with a jealousy that portrayed the darling littleness of a vain heart, she had seized and insisted on retaining near her; and save that, by the fire, perfectly inattentive to the event about to take place within the chamber, and to which we of the biped race attach so awful an importance, lay a large gray cat, curled in a ball, and dozing with half-shut eyes, and ears that now and then denoted, by a gentle inflection, the jar of a louder or nearer sound than usual upon her lethargic senses. The dying woman did not at first attend to the entrance either of Dummie or the female at the foot of the bed, but she turned herself round towards the child, and grasping his arm fiercely, she drew him towards her, and gazed on his terrified features with a look in which exhaustion and an exceeding wanness of complexion were even horribly contrasted by the glare and energy of delirium.

"If you are like *him*," she muttered, "I will strangle you,--I will! Ay, tremble, you ought to tremble when your mother touches you, or when *he* is mentioned. You have his eyes, you have! Out with them,

out,--the devil sits laughing in them! Oh, you weep, do you, little one? Well, now, be still, my love; be hushed! I would not harm thee! Harm --O God, he is my child after all!" And at these words she clasped the boy passionately to her breast, and burst into tears.

"Coom, now, coom," said Dummie, soothingly; "take the stuff, Judith, and then ve'll talk over the hurchin!"

The mother relaxed her grasp of the boy, and turning towards the speaker, gazed at him for some moments with a bewildered stare; at length she appeared slowly to remember him, and said, as she raised herself on one hand, and pointed the other towards him with an inquiring gesture,--"Thou hast brought the book?"

Dummie answered by lifting up the book he had brought from the honest butcher's.

"Clear the room, then," said the sufferer, with that air of mock command so common to the insane. "We would be alone!"

Dummie winked at the good woman at the foot of the bed; and she (though generally no easy person to order or to persuade) left, without reluctance, the sick chamber.

"If she be a going to pray," murmured our landlady (for that office did the good matron hold), "I may indeed as well take myself off, for it's not werry comfortable like to those who be old to hear all that 'ere!"

With this pious reflection, the hostess of the Mug,--so was the hostelry called,--heavily descended the creaking stairs. "Now, man," said the sufferer, sternly, "swear that you will never reveal,--swear, I say! And by the great God whose angels are about this night, if ever you break the oath, I will come back and haunt you to your dying day!"

Dummie's face grew pale, for he was superstitiously affected by the vehemence and the language of the dying woman, and he answered, as he kissed the pretended Bible, that he swore to keep the secret, as much as he knew of it, which, she must be sensible, he said, was very little. As he spoke, the wind swept with a loud and sudden gust down the chimney, and shook the roof above them so violently as to loosen many of the crumbling tiles, which fell one after the other, with a crashing noise, on the pavement below. Dummie started in affright; and perhaps his conscience smote him for the trick he had played with regard to the false Bible. But the woman, whose excited and unstrung nerves led her astray from one subject to another with preternatural celerity, said, with an hysterical laugh, "See, Dummie, they come in state for me; give me the cap--yonder--and bring the looking-glass!"

Dummie obeyed; and the woman, as she in a low tone uttered something about the unbecoming colour of the ribbons, adjusted the cap on her head, and then, saying in a regretful and petulant voice, "Why should they have cut off my hair? Such a disfigurement!" bade Dummie desire Mrs. Margery once more to ascend to her.

Left alone with her child, the face of the wretched mother softened as she regarded him, and all the levities and all the vehemences--if we may use the word--which, in the turbulent commotion of her delirium, had been stirred upward to the surface of her mind, gradually now sank as death increased upon her, and a mother's anxiety rose to the natural level from

which it had been disturbed and abased. She took the child to her bosom, and clasping him in her arms, which grew weaker with every instant, she soothed him with the sort of chant which nurses sing over their untoward infants; but her voice was cracked and hollow, and as she felt it was so, the mother's eyes filled with tears. Mrs. Margery now reentered; and turning towards the hostess with an impressive calmness of manner which astonished and awed the person she addressed, the dying woman pointed to the child and said,--

"You have been kind to me, very kind, and may God bless you for it! I have found that those whom the world calls the worst are often the most human. But I am not going to thank you as I ought to do, but to ask of you a last and exceeding favour. Protect my child till he grows up. You have often said you loved him,--you are childless yourself,--and a morsel of bread and a shelter for the night, which is all I ask of you to give him, will not impoverish more legitimate claimants."

Poor Mrs. Margery, fairly sobbing, vowed she would be a mother to the child, and that she would endeavour to rear him honestly; though a public-house was not, she confessed, the best place for good examples.

"Take him," cried the mother, hoarsely, as her voice, failing her strength, rattled indistinctly, and almost died within her. "Take him, rear him as you will, as you can; any example, any roof, better than--" Here the words were inaudible. "And oh, may it be a curse and a-- Give me the medicine; I am dying."

The hostess, alarmed, hastened to comply; but before she returned to the bedside, the sufferer was insensible,--nor did she again recover speech or motion. A low and rare moan only testified continued life, and within two hours that ceased, and the spirit was gone. At that time our good hostess was herself beyond the things of this outer world, having supported her spirits during the vigils of the night with so many little liquid stimulants that they finally sank into that torpor which generally succeeds excitement. Taking, perhaps, advantage of the opportunity which the insensibility of the hostess afforded him, Dummie, by the expiring ray of the candle that burned in the death-chamber, hastily opened a huge box (which was generally concealed under the bed, and contained the wardrobe of the deceased), and turned with irreverent hand over the linens and the silks, until quite at the bottom of the trunk he discovered some packets of letters; these he seized, and buried in the conveniences of his dress. He then, rising and replacing the box, cast a longing eye towards the watch on the toilet-table, which was of gold; but he withdrew his gaze, and with a querulous sigh observed to himself: "The old blowen kens of that, 'od rat her! but, howsomever, I'll take this: who knows but it may be of sarvice. Tannies to-day may be smash to-morrow!" [Meaning, what is of no value now may be precious hereafter.] and he laid his coarse hand on the golden and silky tresses we have described. "'T is a rum business, and puzzles I; but mum's the word for my own little colquarren [neck]."

With this brief soliloquy Dummie descended the stairs and let himself out of the house.

CHAPTER II.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendours of that festive place.
Deserted Village.

There is little to interest in a narrative of early childhood, unless, indeed, one were writing on education. We shall not, therefore, linger over the infancy of the motherless boy left to the protection of Mrs. Margery Lobkins, or, as she was sometimes familiarly called, Peggy, or Piggy, Lob. The good dame, drawing a more than sufficient income from the profits of a house which, if situated in an obscure locality, enjoyed very general and lucrative repute, and being a lone widow without kith or kin, had no temptation to break her word to the deceased, and she suffered the orphan to wax in strength and understanding until the age of twelve,--a period at which we are now about to reintroduce him to our readers.

The boy evinced great hardihood of temper, and no inconsiderable quickness of intellect. In whatever he attempted, his success was rapid, and a remarkable strength of limb and muscle seconded well the dictates of an ambition turned, it must be confessed, rather to physical than mental exertion. It is not to be supposed, however, that his boyish life passed in unbroken tranquillity. Although Mrs. Lobkins was a good woman on the whole, and greatly attached to her _protegee_, she was violent and rude in temper, or, as she herself more flatteringly expressed it, "her feelings were unkimmonly strong;" and alternate quarrel and reconciliation constituted the chief occupations of the _protegee's_ domestic life. As, previous to his becoming the ward of Mrs. Lobkins, he had never received any other appellation than "the child," so the duty of christening him devolved upon our hostess of the Mug; and after some deliberation, she blessed him with the name of Paul. It was a name of happy omen, for it had belonged to Mrs. Lobkins's grandfather, who had been three times transported and twice hanged (at the first occurrence of the latter description, he had been restored by the surgeons, much to the chagrin of a young anatomist who was to have had the honour of cutting him up). The boy did not seem likely to merit the distinguished appellation he bore, for he testified no remarkable predisposition to the property of other people. Nay, although he sometimes emptied the pockets of any stray visitor to the coffee-room of Mrs. Lobkins, it appeared an act originating rather in a love of the frolic than a desire of the profit; for after the plundered person had been sufficiently tormented by the loss, haply, of such utilities as a tobacco-box or a handkerchief; after he had, to the secret delight of Paul, searched every corner of the apartment, stamped, and fretted, and exposed himself by his petulance to the bitter objurgation of Mrs. Lobkins, our young friend would quietly and suddenly contrive that the article missed should return of its own accord to the pocket from which it had disappeared. And thus, as our readers have doubtless experienced when they have disturbed the peace of a whole household for the loss of some portable treasure which they themselves are afterwards discovered to have mislaid, the unfortunate victim of Paul's honest ingenuity, exposed to the collected indignation of the spectators, and sinking from the accuser into the convicted, secretly cursed the unhappy lot which not only vexed him with the loss of his property, but made it still more annoying to recover it.

Whether it was that, on discovering these pranks, Mrs. Lobkins trembled for the future bias of the address they displayed, or whether she thought that the folly of thieving without gain required speedy and permanent correction, we cannot decide; but the good lady became at last extremely anxious to secure for Paul the blessings of a liberal education. The key

of knowledge (the art of reading) she had, indeed, two years prior to the present date, obtained for him; but this far from satisfied her conscience,--nay, she felt that if she could not also obtain for him the discretion to use it, it would have been wise even to have withheld a key which the boy seemed perversely to apply to all locks but the right one. In a word, she was desirous that he should receive an education far superior to those whom he saw around him; and attributing, like most ignorant persons, too great advantages to learning, she conceived that in order to live as decorously as the parson of the parish, it was only necessary to know as much Latin.

One evening in particular, as the dame sat by her cheerful fire, this source of anxiety was unusually active in her mind, and ever and anon she directed unquiet and restless glances towards Paul, who sat on a form at the opposite corner of the hearth, diligently employed in reading the life and adventures of the celebrated Richard Turpin. The form on which the boy sat was worn to a glassy smoothness, save only in certain places, where some ingenious idler or another had amused himself by carving sundry names, epithets, and epigrammatic niceties of language. It is said that the organ of carving upon wood is prominently developed on all English skulls; and the sagacious Mr. Combe has placed this organ at the back of the head, in juxtaposition to that of destructiveness, which is equally large among our countrymen, as is notably evinced upon all railings, seats, temples, and other things-belonging to other people.

Opposite to the fireplace was a large deal table, at which Dummie, surnamed Dunnaker, seated near the dame, was quietly ruminating over a glass of hollands and water. Farther on, at another table in the corner of the room, a gentleman with a red wig, very rusty garments, and linen which seemed as if it had been boiled in saffron, smoked his pipe, apart, silent, and apparently plunged in meditation. This gentleman was no other than Mr. Peter MacGrawler, the editor of a magnificent periodical entitled "The Asiaeum," which was written to prove that whatever is popular is necessarily bad,--a valuable and recondite truth, which "The Asinaeum" had satisfactorily demonstrated by ruining three printers and demolishing a publisher. We need not add that Mr. MacGrawler was Scotch by birth, since we believe it is pretty well known that all periodicals of this country have, from time immemorial, been monopolized by the gentlemen of the Land of Cakes. We know not how it may be the fashion to eat the said cakes in Scotland, but here the good emigrators seem to like them carefully buttered on both sides. By the side of the editor stood a large pewter tankard; above him hung an engraving of the "wonderfully fat boar formerly in the possession of Mr. Fatterem, grazier." To his left rose the dingy form of a thin, upright clock in an oaken case; beyond the clock, a spit and a musket were fastened in parallels to the wall. Below those twin emblems of war and cookery were four shelves, containing plates of pewter and delf, and terminating, centaur-like, in a sort of dresser. At the other side of these domestic conveniences was a picture of Mrs. Lobkins, in a scarlet body and a hat and plume. At the back of the fair hostess stretched the blanket we have before mentioned. As a relief to the monotonous surface of this simple screen, various ballads and learned legends were pinned to the blanket. There might you read in verses, pathetic and unadorned, how--

"Sally loved a sailor lad
As fought with famous Shovel!"

There might you learn, if of two facts so instructive you were before unconscious, that

"Ben the toper loved his bottle,--
Charley only loved the lasses!"

When of these and various other poetical effusions you were somewhat wearied, the literary fragments in bumbler prose afforded you equal edification and delight. There might you fully enlighten yourself as to the "Strange and Wonderful News from Kensington, being a most full and true Relation how a Maid there is supposed to have been carried away by an Evil Spirit on Wednesday, 15th of April last, about Midnight." There, too, no less interesting and no less veracious, was that uncommon anecdote touching the chief of many-throned powers entitled "The Divell of Mascon; or, the true Relation of the Chief Things which an Unclean Spirit did and said at Mascon, in Burgundy, in the house of one Mr. Francis Pereaud: now made English by one that hath a Particular Knowledge of the Truth of the Story."

Nor were these materials for Satanic history the only prosaic and faithful chronicles which the bibliothecal blanket afforded. Equally wonderful, and equally indisputable, was the account of "a young lady, the daughter of a duke, with three legs and the face of a porcupine." Nor less so "The Awful Judgment of God upon Swearers, as exemplified in the case of John Stiles, who Dropped down dead after swearing a Great Oath; and on stripping the unhappy man they found 'Swear not at all' written on the tail of his shirt!"

Twice had Mrs. Lobkins heaved a long sigh, as her eyes turned from Paul to the tranquil countenance of Dummie Dunnaker, and now, re-settling herself in her chair, as a motherly anxiety gathered over her visage,--

"Paul, my ben cull," said she, "what gibberish hast got there?"

"Turpin, _the great_ highwayman!" answered the young student, without lifting his eyes from the page, through which he was spelling his instructive way.

"Oh! he be's a chip of the right block, dame!" said Mr. Dunnaker, as he applied his pipe to an illumined piece of paper. "He'll ride a 'oss foaled by a hacorn yet, I varrants!"

To this prophecy the dame replied only with a look of indignation; and rocking herself to and fro in her huge chair, she remained for some moments in silent thought. At last she again wistfully eyed the hopeful boy, and calling him to her side, communicated some order, in a dejected whisper. Paul, on receiving it, disappeared behind the blanket, and presently returned with a bottle and a wineglass. With an abstracted gesture, and an air that betokened continued meditation, the good dame took the inspiring cordial from the hand of her youthful cupbearer,--

"And ere a man had power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of Lobkins had devoured it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion!"

The nectarean beverage seemed to operate cheerily on the matron's system; and placing her hand on the boy's curly head, she said (like Andromache, _dakruon gelasasa_, or, as Scott hath it, "With a smile on her cheek, but a tear in her eye"),--

"Paul, thy heart be good, thy heart be good; thou didst not spill a drop

of the tape! Tell me, my honey, why didst thou lick Tom Tobyson?"

"Because," answered Paul, "he said as how you ought to have been hanged long ago."

"Tom Tobyson is a good-for-nought," returned the dame, "and deserves to shove the tumbler [Be whipped at the cart's tail]; I but oh, my child, be not too venturesome in taking up the sticks for a blowen,--it has been the ruin of many a man afore you; and when two men goes to quarrel for a 'oman, they doesn't know the natur' of the thing they quarrels about. Mind thy latter end, Paul, and reverence the old, without axing what they has been before they passed into the wale of years. Thou mayst get me my pipe, Paul,--it is upstairs, under the pillow."

While Paul was accomplishing this errand, the lady of the Mug, fixing her eyes upon Mr. Dunnaker, said, "Dummie, Dummie, if little Paul should come to be scragged!"

"Whish!" muttered Dummie, glancing over his shoulder at MacGrawler; "mayhap that gemman--" Here his voice became scarcely audible even to Mrs. Lobkins; but his whisper seemed to imply an insinuation that the illustrious editor of "The Asinaeum" might be either an informer, or one of those heroes on whom an informer subsists.

Mrs. Lobkins's answer, couched in the same key, appeared to satisfy Dunnaker, for with a look of great contempt he chucked up his head and said, "Oho! that be all, be it!"

Paul here reappeared with the pipe; and the dame, having filled the tube, leaned forward, and lighted the Virginian weed from the blower of Mr. Dunnaker. As in this interesting occupation the heads of the hostess and the guest approached each other, the glowing light playing cheerily on the countenance of each, there was an honest simplicity in the picture that would have merited the racy and vigorous genius of a Cruikshank. As soon as the Promethean spark had been fully communicated to the lady's tube, Mrs. Lobkins, still possessed by the gloomy idea she had conjured up, repeated,--

"Ah, Dummie, if little Paul should be scragged!"

Dummie, withdrawing the pipe from his mouth, heaved a sympathizing puff, but remained silent; and Mrs. Lobkins, turning to Paul, who stood with mouth open and ears erect at this boding ejaculation, said,--

"Dost think, Paul, they'd have the heart to hang thee?"

"I think they'd have the rope, dame!" returned the youth.

"But you need not go for to run your neck into the noose!" said the matron; and then, inspired by the spirit of moralizing, she turned round to the youth, and gazing upon his attentive countenance, accosted him with the following admonitions:--

"Mind thy kittychism, child, and reverence old age. Never steal, 'specially when any one be in the way. Never go snacks with them as be older than you,--'cause why? The older a cove be, the more he cares for hisself, and the less for his partner. At twenty, we diddles the public; at forty, we diddles our cronies! Be modest, Paul, and stick to your sitivation in life. Go not with fine tobymen, who burn out like a candle

wot has a thief in it,--all flare, and gone in a whiffy! Leave liquor to the aged, who can't do without it. Tape often proves a halter, and there be's no ruin like blue ruin! Read your Bible, and talk like a pious 'un. People goes more by your words than your actions. If you wants what is not your own, try and do without it; and if you cannot do without it, take it away by insinivation, not bluster. They as swindles does more and risks less than they as robs; and if you cheats toppingly, you may laugh at the topping cheat [Gallows]. And now go play."

Paul seized his hat, but lingered; and the dame, guessing at the signification of the pause, drew forth and placed in the boy's hand the sum of five halfpence and one farthing.

"There, boy," quoth she, and she stroked his head fondly when she spoke, "you does right not to play for nothing,--it's loss of time; but play with those as be less than yoursel', and then you can go for to beat 'em if they says you go for to cheat!"

Paul vanished; and the dame, laying her hand on Dummie's shoulder, said,
--

"There be nothing like a friend in need, Dummie; and somehow or other, I thinks as how you knows more of the horigin of that 'ere lad than any of us!"

"Me, dame!" exclaimed Dummie, with a broad gaze of astonishment.

"Ah, you! you knows as how the mother saw more of you just afore she died than she did of 'ere one of us. Noar, now, noar, now! Tell us all about 'un. Did she steal 'un, think ye?"

"Lauk, Mother Margery, dost think I knows? Vot put such a crotchet in your 'ead?"

"Well!" said the dame, with a disappointed sigh, "I always thought as how you were more knowing about it than you owns. Dear, dear, I shall never forgit the night when Judith brought the poor cretur here,--you knows she had been some months in my house afore ever I see'd the urchin; and when she brought it, she looked so pale and ghostly that I had not the heart to say a word, so I stared at the brat, and it stretched out its wee little hands to me. And the mother frowned at it, and throwed it into my lap."

"Ah! she was a hawful voman, that 'ere!" said Dummie, shaking his head. "But howsomever, the hurchin fell into good 'ands; for I be's sure you 'as been a better mother to 'un than the raal 'un!"

"I was always a fool about childer," rejoined Mrs. Lobkins; "and I thinks as how little Paul was sent to be a comfort to my latter end! Fill the glass, Dummie."

"I 'as heard as 'ow Judith was once blowen to a great lord!" said Dummie.

"Like enough!" returned Mrs. Lobkins,--"like enough! She was always a favourite of mine, for she had a spuret [spirit] as big as my own; and she paid her rint like a decent body, for all she was out of her sinses, or 'nation like it."

"Ay, I _knows_ as how you liked her,--'cause vy? 'T is not your vay to

let a room to a woman! You says as how 't is not respectable, and you only likes men to wisit the Mug!"

"And I doesn't like all of them as comes here!" answered the dame,--"specially for Paul's sake; but what can a lone 'oman do? Many's the gentleman highwayman wot comes here, whose money is as good as the clerk's of the parish. And when a bob [shilling] is in my hand, what does it sinnify whose hand it was in afore?"

"That's what I call being sensible and _practical_," said Dummie, approvingly. "And after all, though you 'as a mixture like, I does not know a halehouse where a cove is better entertained, nor meets of a Sunday more illegant company, than the Mug!"

Here the conversation, which the reader must know had been sustained in a key inaudible to a third person, received a check from Mr. Peter MacGrawler, who, having finished his revery and his tankard, now rose to depart. First, however, approaching Mrs. Lobkins, he observed that he had gone on credit for some days, and demanded the amount of his bill. Glancing towards certain chalk hieroglyphics inscribed on the wall at the other side of the fireplace, the dame answered that Mr. MacGrawler was indebted to her for the sum of one shilling and ninepence three farthings.

After a short preparatory search in his waistcoat pockets, the critic hunted into one corner a solitary half-crown, and having caught it between his finger and thumb, he gave it to Mrs. Lobkins and requested change.

As soon as the matron felt her hand anointed with what has been called by some ingenious Johnson of St. Giles's "the oil of palms," her countenance softened into a complacent smile; and when she gave the required change to Mr. MacGrawler, she graciously hoped as how he would recommend the Mug to the public.

"That you may be sure of," said the editor of "The Asinaeum." "There is not a place where I am so much at home."

With that the learned Scotsman buttoned his coat and went his way.

"How spiteful the world be!" said Mrs. Lobkins, after a pause, "specially if a 'oman keeps a fashionable sort of a public! When Judith died, Joe, the dog's-meat man, said I war all the better for it, and that she left I a treasure to bring up the urchin. One would think a thumper makes a man richer,--'cause why? Every man _thumps!_ I got nothing more than a watch and ten guineas when Judy died, and sure that scarce paid for the burrel [burial]."

"You forgits the two quids [Guineas] I giv' you for the hold box of rags,--much of a treasure I found there!" said Dummie, with sycophantic archness.

"Ay," cried the dame, laughing, "I fancies you war not pleased with the bargain. I thought you war too old a ragmerchant to be so free with the blunt; howsomever, I supposes it war the tinsel petticoat as took you in!"

"As it has mony a viser man than the like of I," rejoined Dummie, who to his various secret professions added the ostensible one of a rag-merchant and dealer in broken glass.

The recollection of her good bargain in the box of rags opened our landlady's heart.

"Drink, Dummie," said she, good-humouredly,--"drink; I scorns to score lush to a friend."

Dummie expressed his gratitude, refilled his glass, and the hospitable matron, knocking out from her pipe the dying ashes, thus proceeded:

"You sees, Dummie, though I often beats the boy, I loves him as much as if I war his raal mother,--I wants to make him an honour to his country, and an ixception to my family!"

"Who all flashed their ivories at Surgeons' Hall!" added the metaphorical Dummie.

"True!" said the lady; "they died game, and I be n't ashamed of 'em. But I owes a duty to Paul's mother, and I wants Paul to have a long life. I would send him to school, but you knows as how the boys only corrupt one another. And so, I should like to meet with some decent man, as a tutor, to teach the lad Latin and vartue!"

"My eyes!" cried Dummie; aghast at the grandeur of this desire.

"The boy is 'cute enough, and he loves reading," continued the dame; but I does not think the books he gets hold of will teach him the way to grow old."

"And 'ow came he to read, anyhow?"

"Ranting Rob, the strolling player, taught him his letters, and said he'd a deal of janius."

"And why should not Ranting Rob tache the boy Latin and vartue?"

"'Cause Ranting Rob, poor fellow, was lagged [Transported for burglary] for doing a panny!" answered the dame, despondently.

There was a long silence; it was broken by Mr. Dummie. Slapping his thigh with the gesticulatory vehemence of a Ugo Foscolo, that gentleman exclaimed,--

"I 'as it,--I 'as thought of a tutor for leetle Paul!"

"Who's that? You quite frightens me; you 'as no marcy on my narves," said the dame, fretfully.

"Vy, it be the gemman vot writes," said Dummie, putting his finger to his nose,--"the gemman vot paid you so flashly!"

"What! the Scotch gemman?"

"The werry same!" returned Dummie.

The dame turned in her chair and refilled her pipe. It was evident from her manner that Mr. Dunnaker's suggestion had made an impression on her. But she recognized two doubts as to its feasibility: one, whether the gentleman proposed would be adequate to the task; the other, whether he

would be willing to undertake it.

In the midst of her meditations on this matter, the dame was interrupted by the entrance of certain claimants on her hospitality; and Dummie soon after taking his leave, the suspense of Mrs. Lobkins's mind touching the education of little Paul remained the whole of that day and night utterly unrelieved.

CHAPTER III.

I own that I am envious of the pleasure you will have in finding yourself more learned than other boys,--even those who are older than yourself. What honour this will do you! What distinctions, what applauses will follow wherever you go!

--LORD CHESTERFIELD: Letters to his Son.

Example, my boy,--example is worth a thousand precepts.

--MAXIMILIAN SOLEMN.

Tarpeia was crushed beneath the weight of ornaments. The language of the vulgar is a sort of Tarpeia. We have therefore relieved it of as many gems as we were able, and in the foregoing scene presented it to the gaze of our readers *_simplex munditiis_*. Nevertheless, we could timidly imagine some gentler beings of the softer sex rather displeased with the tone of the dialogue we have given, did we not recollect how delighted they are with the provincial barbarities of the sister kingdom, whenever they meet them poured over the pages of some Scottish story-teller. As, unhappily for mankind, broad Scotch is not yet the universal language of Europe, we suppose our countrywomen will not be much more unacquainted with the dialect of their own lower orders than with that which breathes nasal melodies over the paradise of the North.

It was the next day, at the hour of twilight, when Mrs. Margery Lobkins, after a satisfactory *_tete-d-tete_* with Mr. MacGrawler, had the happiness of thinking that she had provided a tutor for little Paul. The critic having recited to her a considerable portion of *_Propria qum Maribus_*, the good lady had no longer a doubt of his capacities for teaching; and on the other hand, when Mrs. Lobkins entered on the subject of remuneration, the Scotsman professed himself perfectly willing to teach any and every thing that the most exacting guardian could require. It was finally settled that Paul should attend Mr. MacGrawler two hours a day; that Mr. MacGrawler should be entitled to such animal comforts of meat and drink as the Mug afforded, and, moreover, to the weekly stipend of two shillings and sixpence,--the shillings for instruction in the classics, and the sixpence for all other humanities; or, as Mrs. Lobkins expressed it, "two bobs for the Latin, and a site for the vartue."

Let not thy mind, gentle reader, censure us for a deviation from probability in making so excellent and learned a gentleman as Mr. Peter MacGrawler the familiar guest of the lady of the Mug. First, thou must know that our story is cast in a period antecedent to the present, and one in which the old jokes against the circumstances of author and of critic had their foundation in truth; secondly, thou must know that by some curious concatenation of circumstances neither bailiff nor bailiff's man was ever seen within the four walls continent of Mrs. Margery Lobkins; thirdly, the Mug was nearer than any other house of public

resort to the abode of the critic; fourthly, it afforded excellent porter; and fifthly, O reader, thou dost Mrs. Margery Lobkins a grievous wrong if thou supposest that her door was only open to those mercurial gentry who are afflicted with the morbid curiosity to pry into the mysteries of their neighbours' pockets,--other visitors, of fair repute, were not unoften partakers of the good matron's hospitality; although it must be owned that they generally occupied the private room in preference to the public one. And sixthly, sweet reader (we grieve to be so prolix), we would just hint to thee that Mr. MacGrawler was one of those vast-minded sages who, occupied in contemplating morals in the great scale, do not fritter down their intellects by a base attention to minute details. So that if a descendant of Langfanger did sometimes cross the venerable Scot in his visit to the Mug, the apparition did not revolt that benevolent moralist so much as, were it not for the above hint, thy ignorance might lead thee to imagine.

It is said that Athenodorus the Stoic contributed greatly by his conversation to amend the faults of Augustus, and to effect the change visible in that fortunate man after his accession to the Roman empire. If this be true, it may throw a new light on the character of Augustus, and instead of being the hypocrite, he was possibly the convert. Certain it is that there are few vices which cannot be conquered by wisdom; and yet, melancholy to relate, the instructions of Peter MacGrawler produced but slender amelioration in the habits of the youthful Paul. That ingenious stripling had, we have already seen, under the tuition of Ranting Bob, mastered the art of reading,--nay, he could even construct and link together certain curious pot-hooks, which himself and Mrs. Lobkins were wont graciously to term "writing." So far, then, the way of MacGrawler was smoothed and prepared.

But, unhappily, all experienced teachers allow that the main difficulty is not to learn, but to unlearn; and the mind of Paul was already occupied by a vast number of heterogeneous miscellanies which stoutly resisted the ingress either of Latin or of virtue. Nothing could wean him from an ominous affection for the history of Richard Turpin; it was to him what, it has been said, the Greek authors should be to the Academician,--a study by day, and a dream by night. He was docile enough during lessons, and sometimes even too quick in conception for the stately march of Mr. MacGrawler's intellect. But it not unfrequently happened that when that gentleman attempted to rise, he found himself, like the Lady in "Comus," adhering to--

"A venom'd seat
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat;"

or his legs had been secretly united under the table, and the tie was not to be broken without overthrow to the superior powers. These, and various other little sportive machinations wherewith Paul was wont to relieve the monotony of literature, went far to disgust the learned critic with his undertaking. But "the tape" and the treasury of Mrs. Lobkins re-smoothed, as it were, the irritated bristles of his mind, and he continued his labours with this philosophical reflection: "Why fret myself? If a pupil turns out well, it is clearly to the credit of his master; if not, to the disadvantage of himself." Of course, a similar suggestion never forced itself into the mind of Dr. Keate [A celebrated principal of Eton]. At Eton the very soul of the honest headmaster is consumed by his zeal for the welfare of the little gentlemen in stiff cravats.

But to Paul, who was predestined to enjoy a certain quantum of knowledge,

circumstances happened, in the commencement of the second year of his pupilage, which prodigiously accelerated the progress of his scholastic career.

At the apartment of MacGrawler, Paul one morning encountered Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, a young man of great promise, who pursued the peaceful occupation of chronicling in a leading newspaper "Horrid Murders," "Enormous Melons," and "Remarkable Circumstances." This gentleman, having the advantage of some years' seniority over Paul, was slow in unbending his dignity; but observing at last the eager and respectful attention with which the stripling listened to a most veracious detail of five men being inhumanly murdered in Canterbury Cathedral by the Reverend Zedekiah Fooks Barnacle, he was touched by the impression he had created, and shaking Paul graciously by the hand, he told him there was a deal of natural shrewdness in his countenance, and that Mr. Augustus Tomlinson did not doubt but that he (Paul) might have the honour to be murdered himself one of these days. "You understand me," continued Mr. Augustus,--"I mean murdered in effigy,--assassinated in type,--while you yourself, unconscious of the circumstance, are quietly enjoying what you imagine to be your existence. We never kill common persons,--to say truth, our chief spite is against the Church; we destroy bishops by wholesale. Sometimes, indeed, we knock off a leading barrister or so, and express the anguish of the junior counsel at a loss so destructive to their interests. But that is only a stray hit, and the slain barrister often lives to become Attorney-General, renounce Whig principles, and prosecute the very Press that destroyed him. Bishops are our proper food; we send them to heaven on a sort of flying griffin, of which the back is an apoplexy, and the wings are puffs. The Bishop of---, whom we despatched in this manner the other day, being rather a facetious personage, wrote to remonstrate with us thereon, observing that though heaven was a very good translation for a bishop, yet that in such cases he preferred 'the original to the translation.' As we murder bishop, so is there another class of persons whom we only afflict with lethiferous diseases. This latter tribe consists of his Majesty and his Majesty's ministers. Whenever we cannot abuse their measures, we always fall foul on their health. Does the king pass any popular law, we immediately insinuate that his constitution is on its last legs. Does the minister act like a man of sense, we instantly observe, with great regret, that his complexion is remarkably pale. There is one manifest advantage in diseasing people, instead of absolutely destroying them: the public may flatly contradict us in one case, but it never can in the other; it is easy to prove that a man is alive, but utterly impossible to prove that he is in health. What if some opposing newspaper take up the cudgels in his behalf, and assert that the victim of all Pandora's complaints, whom we send tottering to the grave, passes one half the day in knocking up a 'distinguished company' at a shooting-party, and the other half in outdoing the same 'distinguished company' after dinner? What if the afflicted individual himself write us word that he never was better in his life? We have only mysteriously to shake our heads and observe that to contradict is not to prove, that it is little likely that our authority should have been mistaken, and (we are very fond of an historical comparison), beg our readers to remember that when Cardinal Richelieu was dying, nothing enraged him so much as hinting that he was ill. In short, if Horace is right, we are the very princes of poets; for I dare say, Mr. MacGrawler, that you--and you, too, my little gentleman, perfectly remember the words of the wise old Roman,--

"Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur
Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,

Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet."

["He appears to me to be, to the fullest extent, a poet who airily torments my breast, irritates, soothes, fills it with unreal terrors."]

Having uttered this quotation with considerable self-complacency, and thereby entirely completed his conquest over Paul, Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, turning to MacGrawler, concluded his business with that gentleman,--which was of a literary nature, namely, a joint composition against a man who, being under five-and-twenty, and too poor to give dinners, had had the impudence to write a sacred poem. The critics were exceedingly bitter at this; and having very little to say against the poem, the Court journals called the author a "coxcomb," and the liberal ones "the son of a pantaloon!"

There was an ease, a spirit, a life about Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, which captivated the senses of our young hero; then, too, he was exceedingly smartly attired,--wore red heels and a bag,--had what seemed to Paul quite the air of a "man of fashion;" and, above all, he spouted the Latin with a remarkable grace!

Some days afterwards, MacGrawler sent our hero to Mr. Tomlinson's lodgings, with his share of the joint abuse upon the poet.

Doubly was Paul's reverence for Mr. Augustus Tomlinson increased by a sight of his abode. He found him settled in a polite part of the town, in a very spruce parlour, the contents of which manifested the universal genius of the inhabitant. It hath been objected unto us, by a most discerning critic, that we are addicted to the drawing of "universal geniuses." We plead Not Guilty in former instances; we allow the soft impeachment in the instance of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson. Over his fireplace were arranged boxing-gloves and fencing foils; on his table lay a cremona and a flageolet. On one side of the wall were shelves containing the Covent Garden Magazine, Burn's Justice, a pocket Horace, a Prayer-Book, *Excerpta ex Tacito*, a volume of plays, Philosophy made Easy, and a Key to all Knowledge. Furthermore, there were on another table a riding-whip and a driving-whip and a pair of spurs, and three guineas, with a little mountain of loose silver. Mr. Augustus was a tall, fair young man, with a freckled complexion, green eyes and red eyelids, a smiling mouth, rather under-jawed, a sharp nose, and a prodigiously large pair of ears. He was robed in a green damask dressing-gown; and he received the tender Paul most graciously.

There was something very engaging about our hero. He was not only good-looking, and frank in aspect, but he had that appearance of briskness and intellect which belongs to an embryo rogue. Mr. Augustus Tomlinson professed the greatest regard for him,--asked him if he could box, made him put on a pair of gloves, and very condescendingly knocked him down three times successively. Next he played him, both upon his flageolet and his cremona, some of the most modish airs. Moreover, he sang him a little song of his own composing. He then, taking up the driving-whip, flanked a fly from the opposite wall, and throwing himself (naturally fatigued with his numerous exertions) on his sofa, observed, in a careless tone, that he and his friend Lord Dunshunner were universally esteemed the best whips in the metropolis. "I," quoth Mr. Augustus, "am the best on the road; but my lord is a devil at turning a corner."

Paul, who had hitherto lived too unsophisticated a life to be aware of the importance of which a lord would naturally be in the eyes of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, was not so much struck with the grandeur of the connection as the murderer of the journals had expected. He merely observed, by way of compliment, that Mr. Augustus and his companion seemed to be "rolling kiddies."

A little displeased with this metaphorical remark,--for it may be observed that "rolling kiddy" is, among the learned in such lore, the customary expression for "a smart thief,"--the universal Augustus took that liberty to which by his age and station, so much superior to those of Paul, he imagined himself entitled, and gently reproved our hero for his indiscriminate use of flash phrases.

"A lad of your parts," said he,--"for I see you are clever, by your eye,--ought to be ashamed of using such vulgar expressions. Have a nobler spirit, a loftier emulation, Paul, than that which distinguishes the little ragamuffins of the street. Know that in this country genius and learning carry everything before them; and if you behave yourself properly, you may, one day or another, be as high in the world as myself."

At this speech Paul looked wistfully round the spruce parlour, and thought what a fine thing it would be to be lord of such a domain, together with the appliances of flageolet and cremona, boxing-gloves, books, fly-flanking flagellum, three guineas, with the little mountain of silver, and the reputation--shared only with Lord Dunshunner--of being the best whip in London.

"Yes," continued Tomlinson, with conscious pride, "I owe my rise to myself. Learning is better than house and land. 'Doctrina sed vim,' etc. You know what old Horace says? Why, sir, you would not believe it; but I was the man who killed his Majesty the King of Sardinia in our yesterday's paper. Nothing is too arduous for genius. Fag hard, my boy, and you may rival (for the thing, though difficult, may not be impossible) Augustus Tomlinson!"

At the conclusion of this harangue, a knock at the door being heard, Paul took his departure, and met in the hall a fine-looking person dressed in the height of the fashion, and wearing a pair of prodigiously large buckles in his shoes. Paul looked, and his heart swelled. "I may rival," thought he,--"those were his very words,--I may rival (for the thing, though difficult, is not impossible) Augustus Tomlinson!" Absorbed in meditation, he went silently home. The next day the memoirs of the great Turpin were committed to the flames, and it was noticeable that henceforth Paul observed a choicer propriety of words, that he assumed a more refined air of dignity, and that he paid considerably more attention than heretofore to the lessons of Mr. Peter MacGrawler. Although it must be allowed that our young hero's progress in the learned languages was not astonishing, yet an early passion for reading, growing stronger and stronger by application, repaid him at last with a tolerable knowledge of the mother-tongue. We must, however, add that his more favourite and cherished studies were scarcely of that nature which a prudent preceptor would have greatly commended. They lay chiefly among novels, plays, and poetry,--which last he affected to that degree that he became somewhat of a poet himself. Nevertheless these literary avocations, profitless as they seemed, gave a certain refinement to his tastes which they were not likely otherwise to have acquired at the Mug; and while they aroused his ambition to see something of the gay life they

depicted, they imparted to his temper a tone of enterprise and of thoughtless generosity which perhaps contributed greatly to counteract those evil influences towards petty vice to which the examples around him must have exposed his tender youth. But, alas! a great disappointment to Paul's hope of assistance and companionship in his literary labours befell him. Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, one bright morning, disappeared, leaving word with his numerous friends that he was going to accept a lucrative situation in the North of England. Notwithstanding the shock this occasioned to the affectionate heart and aspiring temper of our friend Paul, it abated not his ardour in that field of science which it seemed that the distinguished absentee had so successfully cultivated. By little and little, he possessed himself (in addition to the literary stores we have alluded to) of all it was in the power of the wise and profound Peter MacGrawler to impart unto him; and at the age of sixteen he began (oh the presumption of youth!) to fancy himself more learned than his master.

CHAPTER IV.

He had now become a young man of extreme fashion, and as much _repandu_ in society as the utmost and most exigent coveter of London celebrity could desire. He was, of course, a member of the clubs, etc. He was, in short, of that oft-described set before whom all minor beaux sink into insignificance, or among whom they eventually obtain a subaltern grade, by a sacrifice of a due portion of their fortune.--Almack's Revisited.

By the soul of the great Malebranche, who made "A Search after Truth," and discovered everything beautiful except that which he searched for, --by the soul of the great Malebranche, whom Bishop Berkeley found suffering under an inflammation in the lungs, and very obligingly _talked to death_ (an instance of conversational powers worthy the envious emulation of all great metaphysicians and arguers),--by the soul of that illustrious man, it is amazing to us what a number of truths there are broken up into little fragments, and scattered here and there through the world. What a magnificent museum a man might make of the precious minerals, if he would but go out with his basket under his arm, and his eyes about him! We ourselves picked up this very day a certain small piece of truth, with which we propose to explain to thee, fair reader, a sinister turn in the fortunes of Paul.

"Wherever," says a living sage, "you see dignity, you may be sure there is expense requisite to support it." So was it with Paul. A young gentleman who was heir-presumptive to the Mug, and who enjoyed a handsome person with a cultivated mind, was necessarily of a certain station of society, and an object of respect in the eyes of the manoeuvring mammas of the vicinity of Thames Court. Many were the parties of pleasure to Deptford and Greenwich which Paul found himself compelled to attend; and we need not refer our readers to novels upon fashionable life to inform them that in good society the _gentlemen always pay for the ladies!_ Nor was this all the expense to which his expectations exposed him. A gentleman could scarcely attend these elegant festivities without devoting some little attention to his dress; and a fashionable tailor plays the deuce with one's yearly allowance.

We who reside, be it known to you, reader, in Little Brittany are not

very well acquainted with the manners of the better classes in St. James's. But there was one great vice among the fine people about Thames Court which we make no doubt does not exist anywhere else,--namely, these fine people were always in an agony to seem finer than they were; and the more airs a gentleman or a lady gave him or her self, the more important they became. Joe, the dog's-meat man, had indeed got into society entirely from a knack of saying impertinent things to everybody; and the smartest exclusives of the place, who seldom visited any one where there was not a silver teapot, used to think Joe had a great deal in him because he trundled his cart with his head in the air, and one day gave the very beadle of the parish "the cut direct."

Now this desire to be so exceedingly fine not only made the society about Thames Court unpleasant, but expensive. Every one vied with his neighbour; and as the spirit of rivalry is particularly strong in youthful bosoms, we can scarcely wonder that it led Paul into many extravagances. The evil of all circles that profess to be select is high play; and the reason is obvious: persons who have the power to bestow on another an advantage he covets would rather sell it than give it; and Paul, gradually increasing in popularity and ton, found himself, in spite of his classical education, no match for the finished, or, rather, finishing gentlemen with whom he began to associate. His first admittance into the select coterie of these men of the world was formed at the house of Bachelor Bill, a person of great notoriety among that portion of the elite which emphatically entitles itself "Flash." However, as it is our rigid intention in this work to portray at length no episodical characters whatsoever, we can afford our readers but a slight and rapid sketch of Bachelor Bill.

This personage was of Devonshire extraction. His mother had kept the pleasantest public-house in town, and at her death Bill succeeded to her property and popularity. All the young ladies in the neighbourhood of Fiddler's Row, where he resided, set their caps at him: all the most fashionable prigs, or tobymen, sought to get him into their set; and the most crack blowen in London would have given her ears at any time for a loving word from Bachelor Bill. But Bill was a longheaded, prudent fellow, and of a remarkably cautious temperament. He avoided marriage and friendship; namely, he was neither plundered nor cornuted. He was a tall, aristocratic cove, of a devilish neat address, and very gallant, in an honest way, to the blowens. Like most single men, being very much the gentleman so far as money was concerned, he gave them plenty of "feeds," and from time to time a very agreeable hop. His bingo [Brandy] was unexceptionable; and as for his stark-naked [Gin], it was voted the most brilliant thing in nature. In a very short time, by his blows-out and his bachelorship,--for single men always arrive at the apex of haut ton more easily than married,--he became the very glass of fashion; and many were the tight apprentices, even at the west end of the town, who used to turn back in admiration of Bachelor Bill, when of a Sunday afternoon he drove down his varment gig to his snug little box on the borders of Turnham Green. Bill's happiness was not, however, wholly without alloy. The ladies of pleasure are always so excessively angry when a man does not make love to them, that there is nothing they will not say against him; and the fair matrons in the vicinity of Fiddler's Row spread all manner of unfounded reports against poor Bachelor Bill. By degrees, however,--for, as Tacitus has said, doubtless with a prophetic eye to Bachelor Bill, "the truth gains by delay,"--these reports began to die insensibly away; and Bill now waxing near to the confines of middle age, his friends comfortably settled for him that he would be Bachelor Bill all his life.

For the rest, he was an excellent fellow,--gave his broken victuals to the poor, professed a liberal turn of thinking, and in all the quarrels among the blowens (your crack blowens are a quarrelsome set!) always took part with the weakest. Although Bill affected to be very select in his company, he was never forgetful of his old friends; and Mrs. Margery Lobkins having been very good to him when he was a little boy in a skeleton jacket, he invariably sent her a card to his _soirees_. The good lady, however, had not of late years deserted her chimney-corner. Indeed, the racket of fashionable life was too much for her nerves; and the invitation had become a customary form not expected to be acted upon, but not a whit the less regularly used for that reason. As Paul had now attained his sixteenth year, and was a fine, handsome lad, the dame thought he would make an excellent representative of the Mug's mistress; and that, for her _protege_, a ball at Bill's house would be no bad commencement of "Life in London." Accordingly, she intimated to the Bachelor a wish to that effect; and Paul received the following invitation from Bill:--

"Mr. William Duke gives a hop and feed in a quiet way on Monday next, and _hops_ Mr. Paul Lobkins will be of the party. N. B. Gentlemen is expected to come in pumps."

When Paul entered, he found Bachelor Bill leading off the ball to the tune of "Drops of Brandy," with a young lady to whom, because she had been a strolling player, the Ladies Patronesses of Fiddler's Row had thought proper to behave with a very cavalier civility. The good Bachelor had no notion, as he expressed it, of such tantrums, and he caused it to be circulated among the finest of the _blowens_, that he expected all who kicked their heels at his house would behave decent and polite to young Mrs. Dot. This intimation, conveyed to the ladies with all that insinuating polish for which Bachelor Bill was so remarkable, produced a notable effect; and Mrs. Dot, being now led off by the flash Bachelor, was overpowered with civilities the rest of the evening.

When the dance was ended, Bill very politely shook hands with Paul, and took an early opportunity of introducing him to some of the most "noted characters" of the town. Among these were the smart Mr. Allfair, the insinuating Henry Finish, the merry Jack Hookey, the knowing Charles Trywit, and various others equally noted for their skill in living handsomely upon their own brains, and the personals of other people. To say truth, Paul, who at that time was an honest lad, was less charmed than he had anticipated by the conversation of these chevaliers of industry. He was more pleased with the clever though self-sufficient remarks of a gentleman with a remarkably fine head of hair, and whom we would more impressively than the rest introduce to our reader under the appellation of Mr. Edward Pepper, generally termed Long Ned. As this worthy was destined afterwards to be an intimate associate of Paul, our main reason for attending the hop at Bachelor Bill's is to note, as the importance of the event deserves, the epoch of the commencement of their acquaintance.

Long Ned and, Paul happened to sit next to each other at supper, and they conversed together so amicably that Paul, in the hospitality of his heart, expressed a hope that he should see Mr. Pepper at the Mug!

"Mug,--Mug!" repeated Pepper, half shutting his eyes, with the air of a dandy about to be impertinent; "ah, the name of a chapel, is it not? There's a sect called Muggletonians, I think?"

"As to that," said Paul, colouring at this insinuation against the Mug, "Mrs. Lobkins has no more religion than her betters; but the Mug is a very excellent house, and frequented by the best possible company."

"Don't doubt it!" said Ned. "Remember now that I was once there, and saw one Dummie Dunnaker,--is not that the name? I recollect some years ago, when I first came out, that Dummie and I had an adventure together; to tell you the truth, it was not the sort of thing I would do now. But--would you believe it, Mr. Paul?--this pitiful fellow was quite rude to me the only time I ever met him since; that is to say, the only time I ever entered the Mug. I have no notion of such airs in a merchant,--a merchant of rags! Those commercial fellows are getting quite insufferable."

"You surprise me," said Paul. "Poor Dummie is the last man to be rude; he is as civil a creature as ever lived."

"Or sold a rag," said Ned. "Possibly! Don't doubt his amiable qualities in the least. Pass the bingo, my good fellow. Stupid stuff, this dancing!"

"Devilish stupid!" echoed Harry Finish, across the table. "Suppose we adjourn to Fish Lane, and rattle the ivories! What say you, Mr. Lobkins?"

Afraid of the "ton's stern laugh, which scarce the proud philosopher can scorn," and not being very partial to dancing, Paul assented to the proposition; and a little party, consisting of Harry Finish, Allfair, Long Ned, and Mr. Hookey, adjourned to Fish Lane, where there was a club, celebrated among men who live by their wits, at which "lush" and "baccy" were gratuitously sported in the most magnificent manner. Here the evening passed away very delightfully, and Paul went home without a "brad" in his pocket.

From that time Paul's visits to Fish Lane became unfortunately regular; and in a very short period, we grieve to say, Paul became that distinguished character, a gentleman of three outs,--"out of pocket, out of elbows, and out of credit." The only two persons whom he found willing to accommodate him with a slight loan, as the advertisements signed X. Y. have it, were Mr. Dummie Dunnaker and Mr. Pepper, surnamed the Long. The latter, however, while he obliged the heir to the Mug, never condescended to enter that noted place of resort; and the former, whenever he good-naturedly opened his purse-strings, did it with a hearty caution to shun the acquaintance of Long Ned,--"a parson," said Dummie, "of wery dangerous morals, and not by no manner of means a fit 'sociate for a young gemman of cracter like leetle Paul!" So earnest was this caution, and so especially pointed at Long Ned,--although the company of Mr. Allfair or Mr. Finish might be said to be no less prejudicial,--that it is probable that stately fastidiousness of manner which Lord Normanby rightly observes, in one of his excellent novels, makes so many enemies in the world, and which sometimes characterized the behaviour of Long Ned, especially towards the men of commerce, was a main reason why Dummie was so acutely and peculiarly alive to the immoralities of that lengthy gentleman. At the same time we must observe that when Paul, remembering what Pepper had said respecting his early adventure with Mr. Dunnaker, repeated it to the merchant, Dummie could not conceal a certain confusion, though he merely remarked, with a sort of laugh, that it was not worth speaking about; and it appeared evident to Paul that something unpleasant to the man of rags, which was not shared by the unconscious

Pepper, lurked in the reminiscence of their past acquaintance. Howbeit, the circumstance glided from Paul's attention the moment afterwards; and he paid, we are concerned to say, equally little heed to the cautions against Ned with which Dummie regaled him.

Perhaps (for we must now direct a glance towards his domestic concerns) one great cause which drove Paul to Fish Lane was the uncomfortable life he led at home. For though Mrs. Lobkins was extremely fond of her _protege_, yet she was possessed, as her customers emphatically remarked, "of the devil's own temper;" and her native coarseness never having been softened by those pictures of gay society which had, in many a novel and comic farce, refined the temperament of the romantic Paul, her manner of venting her maternal reproaches was certainly not a little revolting to a lad of some delicacy of feeling. Indeed, it often occurred to him to leave her house altogether, and seek his fortunes alone, after the manner of the ingenious Gil Blas or the enterprising Roderick Random; and this idea, though conquered and reconquered, gradually swelled and increased at his heart, even as swelleth that hairy ball found in the stomach of some suffering heifer after its decease. Among these projects of enterprise the reader will hereafter notice that an early vision of the Green Forest Cave, in which Turpin was accustomed, with a friend, a ham, and a wife, to conceal himself, flitted across his mind. At this time he did not, perhaps, incline to the mode of life practised by the hero of the roads; but he certainly clung not the less fondly to the notion of the cave.

The melancholy flow of our hero's life was now, however, about to be diverted by an unexpected turn, and the crude thoughts of boyhood to burst, "like Ghilan's giant palm," into the fruit of a manly resolution.

Among the prominent features of Mrs. Lobkins's mind was a sovereign contempt for the unsuccessful. The imprudence and ill-luck of Paul occasioned her as much scorn as compassion; and when for the third time within a week he stood, with a rueful visage and with vacant pockets, by the dame's great chair, requesting an additional supply, the tides of her wrath swelled into overflow.

"Look you, my kinchin cove," said she,--and in order to give peculiar dignity to her aspect, she put on while she spoke a huge pair of tin spectacles,--"if so be as how you goes for to think as how I shall go for to supply your wicious necessities, you will find yourself planted in Queer Street. Blow me tight, if I gives you another mag."

"But I owe Long Ned a guinea," said Paul; "and Dummie Dunnaker lent me three crowns. It ill becomes your heir apparent, my dear dame, to fight shy of his debts of honour."

"Taradiddle, don't think for to wheedle me with your debts and your honour," said the dame, in a passion. "Long Ned is as long in the forks [fingers] as he is in the back; may Old Harry fly off with him! And as for Durnmie Dunnaker, I wonders how you, brought up such a swell, and blest with the wery best of hedications, can think of putting up with such vulgar 'sociates. I tells you what, Paul, you'll please to break with them, smack and at once, or devil a brad you'll ever get from Peg Lobkins." So saying, the old lady turned round in her chair, and helped herself to a pipe of tobacco.

Paul walked twice up and down the apartment, and at last stopped opposite the dame's chair. He was a youth of high spirit; and though he was

warm-hearted, and had a love for Mrs. Lobkins, which her care and affection for hire well deserved, yet he was rough in temper, and not constantly smooth in speech. It is true that his heart smote him afterwards, whenever he had said anything to annoy Mrs. Lobkins, and he was always the first to seek a reconciliation; but warm words produce cold respect, and sorrow for the past is not always efficacious in amending the future. Paul then, puffed up with the vanity of his genteel education, and the friendship of Long Ned (who went to Ranelagh, and wore silver clocked stockings), stopped opposite to Mrs. Lobkins's chair, and said with great solemnity,--

"Mr. Pepper, madam, says very properly that I must have money to support myself like a gentleman; and as you won't give it me, I am determined, with many thanks for your past favours, to throw myself on the world, and seek my fortune."

If Paul was of no oily and bland temper, Dame Margaret Lobkins, it has been seen, had no advantage on that score. (We dare say the reader has observed that nothing so enrages persons on whom one depends as any expressed determination of seeking independence.) Gazing therefore for one moment at the open but resolute countenance of Paul, while all the blood of her veins seemed gathering in fire and scarlet to her enlarging cheeks, Dame Lobkins said,--

"Ifeaks, Master Pride-in-duds! seek your fortune yourself, will you? This comes of my bringing you up, and letting you eat the bread of idleness and charity, you toad of a thousand! Take that and be d--d to you!" and, suiting the action to the word, the tube which she had withdrawn from her mouth in order to utter her gentle rebuke whizzed through the air, grazed Paul's cheek, and finished its earthly career by coming in violent contact with the right eye of Duinmie Dunnaker, who at that exact moment entered the room.

Paul had winced for a moment to avoid the missive; in the next he stood perfectly upright. His cheeks glowed, his chest swelled; and the entrance of Dummie Dunuaker, who was thus made the spectator of the affront he had received, stirred his blood into a deeper anger and a more bitter self-humiliation. All his former resolutions of departure, all the hard words, the coarse allusions, the practical insults he had at any time received, rushed upon him at once. He merely cast one look at the old woman, whose rage was now half subsided, and turned slowly and in silence to the door.

There is often something alarming in an occurrence merely because it is that which we least expect. The astute Mrs. Lobkins, remembering the hardy temper and fiery passions of Paul, had expected some burst of rage, some vehement reply; and when she caught with one wandering eye his parting look, and saw him turn so passively and mutely to the door, her heart misgave her, she raised herself from her chair, and made towards him. Unhappily for her chance of reconciliation, she had that day quaffed more copiously of the bowl than usual; and the signs of intoxication visible in her uncertain gait, her meaningless eye, her vacant leer, her ruby cheek, all inspired Paul with feelings which at the moment converted resentment into something very much like aversion. He sprang from her grasp to the threshold.

"Where be you going, you imp of the world?" cried the dame. "Get in with you, and say no more on the matter; be a bob-cull,--drop the bullies, and you shall have the blunt!"

But Paul heeded not this invitation.

"I will eat the bread of idleness and charity no longer," said he, sullenly. "Good-by; and if ever I can pay you what I have cost you, I will."

He turned away as he spoke; and the dame, kindling with resentment at his unseemly return to her proffered kindness, hallooed after him, and bade that dark-coloured gentleman who keeps the _fire-office_ below go along with him.

Swelling with anger, pride, shame, and a half-joyous feeling of emancipated independence, Paul walked on, he knew not whither, with his head in the air, and his legs marshalling themselves into a military gait of defiance. He had not proceeded far before he heard his name uttered behind him; he turned, and saw the rueful face of Dummie Dunnaker.

Very inoffensively had that respectable person been employed during the last part of the scene we have described in caressing his afflicted eye, and muttering philosophical observations on the danger incurred by all those who are acquainted with ladies of a choleric temperament; when Mrs. Lobkins, turning round after Paul's departure, and seeing the pitiful person of that Dummie Dunnaker, whose name she remembered Paul had mentioned in his opening speech, and whom, therefore, with an illogical confusion of ideas, she considered a party in the late dispute, exhausted upon him all that rage which it was necessary for her comfort that she should unburden somewhere.

She seized the little man by the collar,--the tenderest of all places in gentlemen similarly circumstanced with regard to the ways of life,--and giving him a blow, which took effect on his other and hitherto undamaged eye, cried out,--

"I'll teach you, you blood-sucker [that is, parasite], to sponge upon those as has expectations! I'll teach you to cozen the heir of the Mug, you snivelling, whey-faced ghost of a farthing rushlight! What! you'll lend my Paul three crowns, will you, when you knows as how you told me you could not pay me a pitiful tizzy? Oh, you're a queer one, I warrants; but you won't queer Margery Lobkins. Out of my ken, you cur of the mange!--out of my ken; and if ever I claps my sees on you again, or if ever I knows as how you makes a flat of my Paul, blow me tight but I'll weave you a hempen collar,--I'll hang you, you dog, I will. What! you will answer me, will you? Oh, you viper, budge and begone!"

It was in vain that Dummie protested his innocence. A violent _coup-de-pied_ broke off all further parlance. He made a clear house of the Mug; and the landlady thereof, tottering back to her elbow-chair, sought out another pipe, and, like all imaginative persons when the world goes wrong with them, consoled herself for the absence of realities by the creations of smoke.

Meanwhile Dummie Dunnaker, muttering and murmuring bitter fancies, overtook Paul, and accused that youth of having been the occasion of the injuries he had just undergone. Paul was not at that moment in the humour best adapted for the patient bearing of accusations. He answered Mr. Dunnaker very shortly; and that respectable individual, still smarting under his bruises, replied with equal tartness. Words grew high, and at length Paul, desirous of concluding the conference, clenched

his fist, and told the redoubted Dummie that he would "knock him down." There is something peculiarly harsh and stunning in those three hard, wiry, sturdy, stubborn monosyllables. Their very sound makes you double your fist if you are a hero, or your pace if you are a peaceable man. They produced an instant effect upon Dummie Dunnaker, aided as they were by the effect of an athletic and youthful figure, already fast approaching to the height of six feet, a flushed cheek, and an eye that bespoke both passion and resolution. The rag-merchant's voice sank at once, and with the countenance of a wronged Cassius he whimpered forth,--

"Knock me down? O leetle Paul, vot wicked vhidz are those! Vot! Dummie Dunnaker, as has dandled you on his knee mony's a time and oft! Vy, the cove's 'art is as 'ard as junk, and as proud as a gardener's dog vith a nosegay tied to his tail." This pathetic remonstrance softened Paul's anger.

"Well, Dummie," said he, laughing, "I did not mean to hurt you, and there's an end of it; and I am very sorry for the dame's ill-conduct; and so I wish you a good-morning."

"Vy, vere be you trotting to, leetle Paul?" said Dummie, grasping him by the tail of the coat.

"The deuce a bit I know," answered our hero; "but I think I shall drop a call on Long Ned."

"Avast there!" said Dummie, speaking under his breath; "if so be as you von't blab, I'll tell you a bit of a secret. I heered as 'ow Long Ned started for Hampshire this werry morning on a toby [Highway expedition] consarn!"

"Ha!" said Paul, "then hang me if I know what to do!"

As he uttered these words, a more thorough sense of his destitution (if he persevered in leaving the Mug) than he had hitherto felt rushed upon him; for Paul had designed for a while to throw himself on the hospitality of his Patagonian friend, and now that he found that friend was absent from London and on so dangerous an expedition, he was a little puzzled what to do with that treasure of intellect and wisdom which he carried about upon his legs. Already he had acquired sufficient penetration (for Charles Trywit and Harry Finish were excellent masters for initiating a man into the knowledge of the world) to perceive that a person, however admirable may be his qualities, does not readily find a welcome without a penny in his pocket. In the neighbourhood of Thames Court he had, indeed, many acquaintances; but the fineness of his language, acquired from his education, and the elegance of his air, in which he attempted to blend in happy association the gallant effrontery of Mr. Long Ned with the graceful negligence of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, had made him many enemies among those acquaintances; and he was not willing--so great was our hero's pride--to throw himself on the chance of their welcome, or to publish, as it were, his exiled and crestfallen state. As for those boon companions who had assisted him in making a wilderness of his pockets, he had already found that that was the only species of assistance which they were willing to render him. In a word, he could not for the life of him conjecture in what quarter he should find the benefits of bed and board. While he stood with his finger to his lip, undecided and musing, but fully resolved at least on one thing,--not to return to the Mug,--little Dummie, who was a good-natured fellow at the bottom, peered up in his face, and said,--

"Vy, Paul, my kid, you looks down in the chops; cheer up,--care killed a cat!"

Observing that this appropriate and encouraging fact of natural history did not lessen the cloud upon Paul's brow, the acute Dummie Dunnaker proceeded at once to the grand panacea for all evils, in his own profound estimation.

"Paul, my ben cull," said he, with a knowing wink, and nudging the young gentleman in the left side, "vot do you say to a drop o' blue ruin? or, as you likes to be conish [genteel], I does n't care if I sports you a glass of port!" While Dunnaker was uttering this invitation, a sudden reminiscence flashed across Paul: he bethought him at once of MacGrawler; and he resolved forthwith to repair to the abode of that illustrious sage, and petition at least for accommodation for the approaching night. So soon as he had come to this determination, he shook off the grasp of the amiable Dummie, and refusing with many thanks his hospitable invitation, requested him to abstract from the dame's house, and lodge within his own until called for, such articles of linen and clothing as belonged to Paul and could easily be laid hold of, during one of the matron's evening *_siestas_*, by the shrewd Dunnaker. The merchant promised that the commission should be speedily executed; and Paul, shaking hands with him, proceeded to the mansion of MacGrawler.

We must now go back somewhat in the natural course of our narrative, and observe that among the minor causes which had conspired with the great one of gambling to bring our excellent Paul to his present situation, was his intimacy with MacGrawler; for when Paul's increasing years and roving habits had put an end to the sage's instructions, there was thereby lopped off from the preceptor's finances the weekly sum of two shillings and sixpence, as well as the freedom of the dame's cellar and larder; and as, in the reaction of feeling, and the perverse course of human affairs, people generally repent the most of those actions once the most ardently incurred, so poor Mrs. Lobkins, imagining that Paul's irregularities were entirely owing to the knowledge he had acquired from MacGrawler's instructions, grievously upbraided herself for her former folly in seeking for a superior education for her *_protege_*; nay, she even vented upon the sacred head of MacGrawler himself her dissatisfaction at the results of his instructions. In like manner, when a man who can spell comes to be hanged, the anti-educationists accuse the spelling-book of his murder. High words between the admirer of ignorant innocence and the propagator of intellectual science ensued, which ended in MacGrawler's final expulsion from the Mug.

There are some young gentlemen of the present day addicted to the adoption of Lord Byron's poetry, with the alteration of new rhymes, who are pleased graciously to inform us that they are born to be the ruin of all those who love them,--an interesting fact, doubtless, but which they might as well keep to themselves. It would seem by the contents of this chapter as if the same misfortune were destined to Paul. The exile of MacGrawler, the insults offered to Dummie Dunnaker,--alike occasioned by him,--appear to sanction that opinion. Unfortunately, though Paul was a poet, he was not much of a sentimentalist; and he has never given us the edifying ravings of his remorse on those subjects. But MacGrawler, like Dunnaker, was resolved that our hero should perceive the curse of his fatality; and as he still retained some influence over the mind of his quondam pupil, his accusations against Paul, as the origin of his banishment, were attended with a greater success than were the complaints

of Dummie Dunnaker on a similar calamity. Paul, who, like most people who are good for nothing, had an excellent heart, was exceedingly grieved at MacGrawler's banishment on his account; and he endeavoured to atone for it by such pecuniary consolations as he was enabled to offer. These MacGrawler (purely, we may suppose, from a benevolent desire to lessen the boy's remorse) scrupled not to accept; and thus, so similar often are the effects of virtue and of vice, the exemplary MacGrawler conspired with the unprincipled Long Ned and the heartless Henry Finish in producing that unenviable state of vacuity which now saddened over the pockets of Paul.

As our hero was slowly walking towards the sage's abode, depending on his gratitude and friendship for a temporary shelter, one of those lightning flashes of thought which often illumine the profoundest abyss of affliction darted across his mind. Recalling the image of the critic, he remembered that he had seen that ornament of "The Asinaeum" receive sundry sums for his critical lucubrations.

"Why," said Paul, seizing on that fact, and stopping short in the street,--"why should I not turn critic myself?"

The only person to whom one ever puts a question with a tolerable certainty of receiving a satisfactory answer is one's self. The moment Paul started this luminous suggestion, it appeared to him that he had discovered the mines of Potosi. Burning with impatience to discuss with the great MacGrawler the feasibility of his project, he quickened his pace almost into a run, and in a very few minutes, having only overthrown one chimney-sweeper and two apple-women by the way, he arrived at the sage's door.

CHAPTER V.

Ye realms yet unrevealed to human sight,
Ye canes athwart the hapless hands that write,
Ye critic chiefs,-permit me to relate
The mystic wonders of your silent state!

VIRGIL, *_Aeneid_*, book vi.

Fortune had smiled upon Mr. MacGrawler since he first undertook the tuition of Mrs. Lobkins's *_protege_*. He now inhabited a second-floor, and defied the sheriff and his evil spirits. It was at the dusk of evening that Paul found him at home and alone.

Before the mighty man stood a pot of London porter; a candle, with an unregarded wick, shed its solitary light upon his labours; and an infant cat played sportively at his learned feet, beguiling the weary moments with the remnants of the spiral cap wherewith, instead of laurel, the critic had hitherto nightly adorned his brows.

So soon as MacGrawler, piercing through the gloomy mist which hung about the chamber, perceived the person of the intruder, a frown settled upon his brow.

"Have I not told you, youngster," he growled, "never to enter a gentleman's room without knocking? I tell you, sir, that manners are no

less essential to human happiness than virtue; wherefore, never disturb a gentleman in his avocations, and sit yourself down without molesting the cat!"

Paul, who knew that his respected tutor disliked any one to trace the source of the wonderful spirit which he infused into his critical compositions, affected not to perceive the pewter Hippocrene, and with many apologies for his want of preparatory politeness, seated himself as directed. It was then that the following edifying conversation ensued.

"The ancients," quoth Paul, "were very great men, Mr. MacGrawler."

"They were so, sir," returned the critic; "we make it a rule in our profession to assert that fact."

"But, sir," said Paul, "they were wrong now and then."

"Never, Ignoramus; never!"

"They praised poverty, Mr. MacGrawler!" said Paul, with a sigh.

"Hem!" quoth the critic, a little staggered; but presently recovering his characteristic acumen, he observed, "It is true, Paul; but that was the poverty of other people."

There was a slight pause. "Criticism," renewed Paul, "must be a most difficult art."

"A-hem! And what art is there, sir, that is not difficult,--at least, to become master of?"

"True," sighed Paul; "or else--"

"Or else what, boy?" repeated Mr. MacGrawler, seeing that Paul hesitated, either from fear of his superior knowledge, as the critic's vanity suggested, or from (what was equally likely) want of a word to express his meaning.

"Why, I was thinking, sir," said Paul, with that desperate courage which gives a distinct and loud intonation to the voice of all who set, or think they set, their fate upon a cast,--"I was thinking that I should like to become a critic myself!"

"W-h-e-w!" whistled MacGrawler, elevating his eyebrows; "w-h-e-w! great ends have come of less beginnings!"

Encouraging as this assertion was, coming as it did from the lips of so great a man and so great a critic, at the very moment too when nothing short of an anathema against arrogance and presumption was expected to issue from those portals of wisdom, yet such is the fallacy of all human hopes, that Paul's of a surety would have been a little less elated, had he, at the same time his ears drank in the balm of these gracious words, been able to have dived into the source whence they emanated.

"Know thyself!" was a precept the sage MacGrawler had endeavoured to obey; consequently the result of his obedience was that even by himself he was better known than trusted. Whatever he might appear to others, he had in reality no vain faith in the infallibility of his own talents and resources; as well might a butcher deem himself a perfect anatomist from

the frequent amputation of legs of mutton, as the critic of "The Asinaeum" have laid "the flattering unction to his soul" that he was really skilled in the art of criticism, or even acquainted with one of its commonest rules, because he could with all speed cut up and disjoint any work, from the smallest to the greatest, from the most superficial to the most superior; and thus it was that he never had the want of candour to deceive himself as to his own talents. Paul's wish therefore was no sooner expressed than a vague but golden scheme of future profit illumined the brain of MacGrawler,--in a word, he resolved that Paul should henceforward share the labour of his critiques; and that he, MacGrawler, should receive the whole profits in return for the honour thereby conferred on his coadjutor.

Looking therefore at our hero with a benignant air, Mr. MacGrawler thus continued:--

"Yes, I repeat,--great ends have come from less beginnings! Rome was not built in a day; and I, Paul, I myself was not always the editor of 'The Asinaeum.' You say wisely, criticism is a great science, a very great science; and it maybe divided into three branches,--namely, 'to tickle, to slash, and to plaster.' In each of these three I believe without vanity I am a profound adept! I will initiate you into all. Your labours shall begin this very evening. I have three works on my table; they must be despatched by tomorrow night. I will take the most arduous; I abandon to you the others. The three consist of a Romance, an Epic in twelve books, and an Inquiry into the Human Mind, in three volumes. I, Paul, will tickle the Romance; you this very evening shall plaster the Epic, and slash the Inquiry!"

"Heavens, Mr. MacGrawler!" cried Paul, in consternation, "what do you mean? I should never be able to read an epic in twelve books, and I should fall asleep in the first page of the Inquiry. No, no, leave me the Romance, and take the other two under your own protection!"

Although great genius is always benevolent, Mr. MacGrawler could not restrain a smile of ineffable contempt at the simplicity of his pupil.

"Know, young gentleman," said he, solemnly, "that the Romance in question must be tickled; it is not given to raw beginners to conquer that great mystery of our science."

"Before we proceed further, explain the words of the art," said Paul, impatiently.

"Listen, then," rejoined MacGrawler; and as he spoke, the candle cast an awful glimmering on his countenance. "To slash is, speaking grammatically, to employ the accusative, or accusing case; you must cut up your book right and left, top and bottom, root and branch. To plaster a book is to employ the dative, or giving case; and you must bestow on the work all the superlatives in the language,--you must lay on your praise thick and thin, and not leave a crevice untrowelled. But to tickle, sir, is a comprehensive word, and it comprises all the infinite varieties that fill the interval between slashing and plastering. This is the nicety of the art, and you can only acquire it by practice; a few examples will suffice to give you an idea of its delicacy.

"We will begin with the encouraging tickle: 'Although this work is full of faults,--though the characters are unnatural, the plot utterly improbable, the thoughts hackneyed, and the style ungrammatical,--yet we

would by no means discourage the author from proceeding; and in the mean while we confidently recommend his work to the attention of the reading public."

"Take, now, the advising tickle: 'There is a good deal of merit in these little volumes, although we must regret the evident haste in which they were written. The author might do better,--we recommend him a study of the best writers;' then conclude by a Latin quotation, which you may take from one of the mottoes in the 'Spectator.'

"Now, young gentleman, for a specimen of the metaphorical tickle: 'We beg this poetical aspirant to remember the fate of Pyreanaeus, who, attempting to pursue the Muses, forgot that he had not the wings of the goddesses, flung himself from the loftiest ascent he could reach, and perished.'

"This you see, Paul, is a loftier and more erudite sort of tickle, and may be reserved for one of the Quarterly Reviews. Never throw away a simile unnecessarily.

"Now for a sample of the facetious tickle: 'Mr.---has obtained a considerable reputation! Some fine ladies think him a great philosopher, and he has been praised in our hearing by some Cambridge Fellows for his knowledge of fashionable society.'

"For this sort of tickle we generally use the dullest of our tribe; and I have selected the foregoing example from the criticisms of a distinguished writer in 'The Asinaeum,' whom we call, _par excellence, the_ Ass.

"There is a variety of other tickles,--the familiar, the vulgar, the polite, the good-natured, the bitter; but in general all tickles may be supposed to signify, however disguised, one or other of these meanings: 'This book would be exceedingly good if it were not exceedingly bad;' or, 'this book would be exceedingly bad if it were not exceedingly good.'

"You have now, Paul, a general idea of the superior art required by the tickle?"

Our hero signified his assent by a sort of hysterical sound between a laugh and a groan. MacGrawler continued:--

"There is another grand difficulty attendant on this class of criticism.--it is generally requisite to read a few pages of the work; because we seldom tickle without extracting, and it requires some judgment to make the context agree with the extract. But it is not often necessary to extract when you slash or when you plaster; when you slash, it is better in general to conclude with: 'After what we have said, it is unnecessary to add that we cannot offend the taste of our readers by any quotation from this execrable trash.' And when you plaster, you may wind up with: 'We regret that our limits will not allow us to give any extracts from this wonderful and unrivalled work. We must refer our readers to the book itself.'

"And now, sir, I think I have given you a sufficient outline of the noble science of Scaliger and MacGrawler. Doubtless you are reconciled to the task I have allotted you; and while I tickle the Romance, you will slash the Inquiry and plaster the Epic!"

"I will do my best, sir!" said Paul, with that modest yet noble

simplicity which becomes the virtuously ambitious; and MacGrawler forthwith gave him pen and paper, and set him down to his undertaking.

He had the good fortune to please MacGrawler, who, after having made a few corrections in style, declared he evinced a peculiar genius in that branch of composition. And then it was that Paul, made conceited by praise, said, looking contemptuously in the face of his preceptor, and swinging his legs to and fro,--

"And what, sir, shall I receive for the plastered Epic and the slashed Inquiry?"

As the face of the school-boy who, when guessing, as he thinks rightly, at the meaning of some mysterious word in Cornelius Nepos, receiveth not the sugared epithet of praise, but a sudden stroke across the *os humerosve* [Face or shoulders] even so, blank, puzzled, and thunder-stricken, waxed the face of Mr. MacGrawler at the abrupt and astounding audacity of Paul.

"Receive!" he repeated,--"receive! Why, you impudent, ungrateful puppy, would you steal the bread from your old master? If I can obtain for your crude articles an admission into the illustrious pages of 'The Asinaeum,' will you not be sufficiently paid, sir, by the honour? Answer me that. Another man, young gentleman, would have charged you a premium for his instructions; and here have I, in one lesson, imparted to you all the mysteries of the science, and for nothing! And you talk to me of 'receive!--receive!' Young gentleman, in the words of the immortal bard, 'I would as lief you had talked to me of ratsbane!'"

"In fine, then, Mr. MacGrawler, I shall get nothing for my trouble?" said Paul.

"To be sure not, sir; the very best writer in 'The Asinaeum' only gets three shillings an article!" Almost more than he deserves, the critic might have added; for he who writes for nobody should receive nothing!

"Then, sir," quoth the mercenary Paul, profanely, and rising, he kicked with one kick the cat, the Epic, and the Inquiry to the other end of the room,--"then, sir, you may all go to the devil!"

We do not, O gentle reader! seek to excuse this hasty anathema. The habits of childhood will sometimes break forth despite of the after blessings of education; and we set not up Paul for thine imitation as that model of virtue and of wisdom which we design thee to discover in MacGrawler.

When that great critic perceived Paul had risen and was retreating in high dudgeon towards the door, he rose also, and repeating Paul's last words, said,--

"Go to the devil! Not so quick, young gentleman,-- *festinca lente*,--all in good time. What though I did, astonished at your premature request, say that you should receive nothing; yet my great love for you may induce me to bestir myself on your behalf. The 'Asinaeum,' I it is true, only gives three shillings an article in general; but I am its editor, and will intercede with the proprietors on your behalf. Yes, yes; I will see what is to be done. Stop a bit, my boy."

Paul, though very irascible, was easily pacified; he reseated himself,

and taking MacGrawler's hand, said,--

"Forgive me for my petulance, my dear sir; but, to tell you the honest truth, I am very low in the world just at present, and must get money in some way or another,--in short, I must either pick pockets or write (not gratuitously) for 'The Asinaeum. '"

And without further preliminary Paul related his present circumstances to the critic, declared his determination not to return to the Mug, and requested, at least, from the friendship of his old preceptor the accommodation of shelter for that night.

MacGrawler was exceedingly disconcerted at hearing so bad an account of his pupil's finances as well as prospects, for he had secretly intended to regale himself that evening with a bowl of punch, for which he purposed that Paul should pay; but as he knew the quickness of parts possessed by the young gentleman, as also the great affection entertained for him by Mrs. Lobkins, who in all probability would solicit his return the next day, he thought it not unlikely that Paul would enjoy the same good fortune as that presiding over his feline companion, which, though it had just been kicked to the other end of the apartment, was now resuming its former occupation, unhurt, and no less merrily than before. He therefore thought it would be imprudent to discard his quondam pupil, despite of his present poverty; and, moreover, although the first happy project of pocketing all the profits derivable from Paul's industry was now abandoned, he still perceived great facility in pocketing a part of the same receipts. He therefore answered Paul very warmly, that he fully sympathized with him in his present melancholy situation; that, so far as he was concerned, he would share his last shilling with his beloved pupil, but that he regretted at that moment he had only eleven-pence halfpenny in his pocket; that he would, however, exert himself to the utmost in procuring an opening for Paul's literary genius; and that, if Paul liked to take the slashing and plastering part of the business on himself, he would willingly surrender it to him, and give him all the profits whatever they might be. *_En attendant_*, he regretted that a violent rheumatism prevented his giving up his own bed to his pupil, but that he might, with all the pleasure imaginable, sleep upon the rug before the fire. Paul was so affected by this kindness in the worthy man, that, though not much addicted to the melting mood, he shed tears of gratitude. He insisted, however, on not receiving the whole reward of his labours; and at length it was settled, though with a noble reluctance on the part of MacGrawler, that it should be equally shared between the critic and the critic's *_protege_*,--the half profits being reasonably awarded to MacGrawler for his instructions and his recommendation.

CHAPTER VI.

Bad events peep out o' the tail of good purposes.--*_Bartholomew Fair_*.

IT was not long before there was a visible improvement in the pages of "The Asinaeum." The slashing part of that incomparable journal was suddenly conceived and carried on with a vigour and spirit which astonished the hallowed few who contributed to its circulation. It was not difficult to see that a new soldier had been enlisted in the service; there was something so fresh and hearty about the abuse that it could never have proceeded from the worn-out acerbity of an old *_slasher_*. To

be sure, a little ignorance of ordinary facts, and an innovating method of applying words to meanings which they never were meant to denote, were now and then distinguishable in the criticisms of the new Achilles; nevertheless, it was easy to attribute these peculiarities to an original turn of thinking; and the rise of the paper on the appearance of a series of articles upon contemporary authors, written by this "eminent hand," was so remarkable that fifty copies--a number perfectly unprecedented in the annals of "The Asinaeum"--were absolutely sold in one week; indeed, remembering the principle on which it was founded, one sturdy old writer declared that the journal would soon do for itself and become popular. There was a remarkable peculiarity about the literary debutant who signed himself "Nobilitas:" he not only put old words to a new sense, but he used words which had never, among the general run of writers, been used before. This was especially remarkable in the application of hard names to authors. Once, in censuring a popular writer for pleasing the public and thereby growing rich, the "eminent hand" ended with "He who surreptitiously accumulates bustle [money] is, in fact, nothing better than a buzz gloak!" [Pickpocket].

These enigmatical words and recondite phrases imparted a great air of learning to the style of the new critic; and from the unintelligible sublimity of his diction, it seemed doubtful whether he was a poet from Highgate or a philosopher from Konigsberg. At all events, the reviewer preserved his incognito, and while his praises were rung at no less than three tea-tables, even glory appeared to him less delicious than disguise.

In this incognito, reader, thou hast already discovered Paul; and now we have to delight thee with a piece of unexampled morality in the excellent MacGrawler. That worthy Mentor, perceiving that there was an inherent turn for dissipation and extravagance in our hero, resolved magnanimously rather to bring upon himself the sins of treachery and malappropriation than suffer his friend and former pupil to incur those of wastefulness and profusion. Contrary therefore to the agreement made with Paul, instead of giving that youth the half of those profits consequent on his brilliant lucubrations, he imparted to him only one fourth, and, with the utmost tenderness for Paul's salvation, applied the other three portions of the same to his own necessities. The best actions are, alas! often misconstrued in this world; and we are now about to record a remarkable instance of that melancholy truth.

One evening MacGrawler, having "moistened his virtue" in the same manner that the great Cato is said to have done, in the confusion which such a process sometimes occasions in the best regulated heads, gave Paul what appeared to him the outline of a certain article which he wished to be slashingly filled up, but what in reality was the following note from the editor of a monthly periodical:--

SIR,--Understanding that my friend, Mr.---, proprietor of "The Asinaeum," allows the very distinguished writer whom you have introduced to the literary world, and who signs himself "Nobilitas," only five shillings an article, I beg, through you, to tender him double that sum. The article required will be of an ordinary length.

I am, sir, etc.,

Now, that very morning, MacGrawler had informed Paul of this offer, altering only, from the amiable motives we have already explained, the sum of ten shillings to that of four; and no sooner did Paul read the

communication we have placed before the reader than, instead of gratitude to MacGrawler for his consideration of Paul's moral infirmities, he conceived against that gentleman the most bitter resentment. He did not, however, vent his feelings at once upon the Scotsman,--indeed, at that moment, as the sage was in a deep sleep under the table, it would have been to no purpose had he unbridled his indignation,--but he resolved without loss of time to quit the abode of the critic. "And, indeed," said he, soliloquizing, "I am heartily tired of this life, and shall be very glad to seek some other employment. Fortunately, I have hoarded up five guineas and four shillings; and with that independence in my possession, since I have forsworn gambling, I cannot easily starve."

To this soliloquy succeeded a misanthropical revery upon the faithlessness of friends; and the meditation ended in Paul's making up a little bundle of such clothes, etc., as Dummie had succeeded in removing from the Mug, and which Paul had taken from the rag-merchant's abode one morning when Dummie was abroad.

When this easy task was concluded, Paul wrote a short and upbraiding note to his illustrious preceptor, and left it unsealed on the table. He then, upsetting the ink-bottle on MacGrawler's sleeping countenance, departed from the house, and strolled away he cared not whither.

The evening was gradually closing as Paul, chewing the cud of his bitter fancies, found himself on London Bridge. He paused there, and leaning over the bridge, gazed wistfully on the gloomy waters that rolled onward, caring not a minnow for the numerous charming young ladies who have thought proper to drown themselves in those merciless waves, thereby depriving many a good mistress of an excellent housemaid or an invaluable cook, and many a treacherous Phaon of letters beginning with "Parjured Villen," and ending with "Your affectionot but melancholy Molly."

While thus musing, he was suddenly accosted by a gentleman in boots and spurs, having a riding-whip in one hand, and the other hand stuck in the pocket of his inexpressibles. The hat of the gallant was gracefully and carefully put on, so as to derange as little as possible a profusion of dark curls, which, streaming with unguents, fell low not only on either side of the face, but on the neck and even the shoulders of the owner. The face was saturnine and strongly marked, but handsome and striking. There was a mixture of frippery and sternness in its expression,--something between Madame Vestries and T. P. Cooke, or between "lovely Sally" and a "Captain bold of Halifax." The stature of this personage was remarkably tall, and his figure was stout, muscular, and well knit. In fine, to complete his portrait, and give our readers of the present day an exact idea of this hero of the past, we shall add that he was altogether that sort of gentleman one sees swaggering in the Burlington Arcade, with his hair and hat on one side, and a military cloak thrown over his shoulders; or prowling in Regent Street, towards the evening, _whiskered_ and _cigarred_.

Laying his hand on the shoulder of our hero, this gentleman said, with an affected intonation of voice,--

"How dost, my fine fellow? Long since I saw you! Damme, but you look the worse for wear. What hast thou been doing with thyself?"

"Ha!" cried our hero, returning the salutation of the stranger, "and is it Long Ned whom I behold? I am indeed glad to meet you; and I say, my friend, I hope what I heard of you is not true!"

"Hist!" said Long Ned, looking round fearfully, and sinking his voice; "never talk of what you hear of gentlemen, except you wish to bring them to their last dying speech and confession. But come with me, my lad; there is a tavern hard by, and we may as well discuss matters over a pint of wine. You look cursed seedy, to be sure; but I can tell Bill the waiter--famous fellow, that Bill!--that you are one of my tenants, come to complain of my steward, who has just distrained you for rent, you dog! No wonder you look so worn in the rigging. Come, follow me. I can't walk with thee. It would look too like Northumberland House and the butcher's abode next door taking a stroll together."

"Really, Mr. Pepper," said our hero, colouring, and by no means pleased with the ingenious comparison of his friend, "if you are ashamed of my clothes, which I own might be newer, I will not wound you with my--"

"Pooh! my lad, pooh!" cried Long Ned, interrupting him; "never take offence. I never do. I never take anything but money, except, indeed, watches. I don't mean to hurt your feelings; all of us have been poor once. 'Gad, I remember when I had not a dud to my back; and now, you see me,--you see me, Paul! But come, 't is only through the streets you need separate from me. Keep a little behind, very little; that will do. Ay, that will do," repeated Long Ned, mutteringly to himself; "they'll take him for a bailiff. It looks handsome nowadays to be so attended; it shows one had credit once!"

Meanwhile Paul, though by no means pleased with the contempt expressed for his personal appearance by his lengthy associate, and impressed with a keener sense than ever of the crimes of his coat and the vices of his other garment,--"Oh, breathe not its name!"--followed doggedly and sullenly the strutting steps of the coxcombical Mr. Pepper. That personage arrived at last at a small tavern, and arresting a waiter who was running across the passage into the coffee-room with a dish of hung-beef, demanded (no doubt from a pleasing anticipation of a similar pendulous catastrophe) a plate of the same excellent cheer, to be carried, in company with a bottle of port, into a private apartment. No sooner did he find himself alone with Paul than, bursting into a loud laugh, Mr. Ned surveyed his comrade from head to foot through an eyeglass which he wore fastened to his button-hole by a piece of blue ribbon.

"Well, 'gad now," said he, stopping ever and anon, as if to laugh the more heartily, "stab my vitals, but you are a comical quiz. I wonder what the women would say, if they saw the dashing Edward Pepper, Esquire, walking arm in arm with thee at Ranelagh or Vauxhall! Nay, man, never be downcast; if I laugh at thee, it is only to make thee look a little merrier thyself. Why, thou lookest like a book of my grandfather's called Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy;" and faith, a shabbier bound copy of it I never saw."

"These jests are a little hard," said Paul, struggling between anger and an attempt to smile; and then recollecting his late literary occupations, and the many extracts he had taken from "Gleanings of the Belles Lettres," in order to impart elegance to his criticisms, he threw out his hand theatrically, and spouted with a solemn face,--

"Of all the griefs that harass the distrest,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest!"

"Well, now, prithee forgive me," said Long Ned, composing his features,

"and just tell me what you have been doing the last two months."

"Slashing and plastering!" said Paul, with conscious pride.

"Slashing and what? The boy's mad. What do you mean, Paul?"

"In other words," said our hero, speaking very slowly, "know, O very Long Ned! that I have been critic to 'The Asinaeum.'"

If Paul's comrade laughed at first, he now laughed ten times more merrily than ever. He threw his full length of limb upon a neighbouring sofa, and literally rolled with cachinnatory convulsions; nor did his risible emotions subside until the entrance of the hung-beef restored him to recollection. Seeing, then, that a cloud lowered over Paul's countenance, he went up to him with something like gravity, begged his pardon for his want of politeness, and desired him to wash away all unkindness in a bumper of port. Paul, whose excellent dispositions we have before had occasion to remark, was not impervious to his friend's apologies. He assured Long Ned that he quite forgave him for his ridicule of the high situation he (Paul) had enjoyed in the literary world; that it was the duty of a public censor to bear no malice, and that he should be very glad to take his share in the interment of the hung-beef.

The pair now sat down to their repast; and Paul, who had fared but meagerly in that Temple of Athena over which MacGrawler presided, did ample justice to the viands before him. By degrees, as he ate and drank, his heart opened to his companion; and laying aside that Asinaeum dignity which he had at first thought it incumbent on him to assume, he entertained Pepper with all the particulars of the life he had lately passed. He narrated to him his breach with Dame Lobkins, his agreement with MacGrawler, the glory he had acquired, and the wrongs he had sustained; and he concluded, as now the second bottle made its appearance, by stating his desire of exchanging for some more active profession that sedentary career which he had so promisingly begun.

This last part of Paul's confessions secretly delighted the soul of Long Ned; for that experienced collector of the highways--Ned was, indeed, of no less noble a profession--had long fixed an eye upon our hero, as one whom he thought likely to be an honour to that enterprising calling which he espoused, and an useful assistant to himself. He had not, in his earlier acquaintance with Paul, when the youth was under the roof and the _surveillance_ of the practised and wary Mrs. Lobkins, deemed it prudent to expose the exact nature of his own pursuits, and had contented himself by gradually ripening the mind and the finances of Paul into that state when the proposition of a leap from a hedge would not be likely greatly to revolt the person to whom it was made. He now thought that time near at hand; and filling our hero's glass up to the brim, thus artfully addressed him:--

"Courage, my friend! Your narration has given me a sensible pleasure; for curse me if it has not strengthened my favourite opinion,--that everything is for the best. If it had not been for the meanness of that pitiful fellow, MacGrawler, you might still be inspired with the paltry ambition of earning a few shillings a week and vilifying a parcel of poor devils in the what-d'ye-call it, with a hard name; whereas now, my good Paul, I trust I shall be able to open to your genius a new career, in which guineas are had for the asking,--in which you may wear fine clothes, and ogle the ladies at Ranelagh; and when you are tired of glory

and liberty, Paul, why, you have only to make your bow to an heiress, or a widow with a spanking jointure, and quit the hum of men like a Cincinnatus!"

Though Paul's perception into the abstruser branches of morals was not very acute,--and at that time the port wine had considerably confused the few notions he possessed upon "the beauty of virtue,"--yet he could not but perceive that Mr. Pepper's insinuated proposition was far from being one which the bench of bishops or a synod of moralists would conscientiously have approved. He consequently remained silent; and Long Ned, after a pause, continued:--

"You know my genealogy, my good fellow? I was the son of Lawyer Pepper, a shrewd old dog, but as hot as Calcutta; and the grandson of Sexton Pepper, a great author, who wrote verses on tombstones, and kept a stall of religious tracts in Carlisle. My grandfather, the sexton, was the best temper of the family; for all of us are a little inclined to be hot in the mouth. Well, my fine fellow, my father left me his blessing, and this devilish good head of hair. I lived for some years on my own resources. I found it a particularly inconvenient mode of life, and of late I have taken to live on the public. My father and grandfather did it before me, though in a different line. 'T is the pleasantest plan in the world. Follow my example, and your coat shall be as spruce as my own. Master Paul, your health!"

"But, O longest of mortals!" said Paul, refilling his glass, "though the public may allow you to eat your mutton off their backs for a short time, they will kick up at last, and upset you and your banquet; in other words (pardon my metaphor, dear Ned, in remembrance of the part I have lately maintained in 'The Asinaeum,' that most magnificent and metaphorical of journals!),--in other words, the police will nab thee at last; and thou wilt have the distinguished fate, as thou already hast the distinguishing characteristic, of Absalom!"

"You mean that I shall be hanged," said Long Ned, "that may or may not be; but he who fears death never enjoys life. Consider, Paul, that though hanging is a bad fate, starving is a worse; wherefore fill your glass, and let us drink to the health of that great donkey, the people, and may we never want saddles to ride it!"

"To the great donkey," cried Paul, tossing off his bumper; "may your _ (y)ears _ be as long! But I own to you, my friend, that I cannot enter into your plans. And, as a token of my resolution, I shall drink no more, for my eyes already begin to dance in the air; and if I listen longer to your resistless eloquence, my feet may share the same fate!"

So saying, Paul rose; nor could any entreaty, on the part of his entertainer, persuade him to resume his seat.

"Nay, as you will," said Pepper, affecting a nonchalant tone, and arranging his cravat before the glass,--"nay, as you will. Ned Pepper requires no man's companionship against his liking; and if the noble spark of ambition be not in your bosom, 't is no use spending my breath in blowing at what only existed in my too flattering opinion of your qualities. So then, you propose to return to MacGrawler (the scurvy old cheat!), and pass the inglorious remainder of your life in the mangling of authors and the murder of grammar? Go, my good fellow, go! scribble again and forever for MacGrawler, and let him live upon thy brains instead of suffering thy brains to--"

"Hold!" cried Paul. "Although I may have some scruples which prevent my adoption of that rising line of life you have proposed to me, yet you are very much mistaken if you imagine me so spiritless as any longer to subject myself to the frauds of that rascal MacGrawler. No! My present intention is to pay my old nurse a visit. It appears to me passing strange that though I have left her so many weeks, she has never relented enough to track me out, which one would think would have been no difficult matter; and now, you see, that I am pretty well off, having five guineas and four shillings all my own, and she can scarcely think I want her money, my heart melts to her, and I shall go and ask pardon for my haste!"

"Pshaw! sentimental," cried Long Ned, a little alarmed at the thought of Paul's gliding from those clutches which he thought had now so firmly closed upon him. "Why, you surely don't mean, after having once tasted the joys of independence, to go back to the boozing-ken, and bear all Mother Lobkins's drunken tantrums! Better have stayed with MacGrawler, of the two!"

"You mistake me," answered Paul; "I mean solely to make it up with her, and get her permission to see the world. My ultimate intention is--to travel."

"Right," cried Ned, "on the high-road,--and on horseback, I hope."

"No, my Colossus of Roads! no. I am in doubt whether or not I shall enlist in a marching regiment, or--Give me your advice on it! I fancy I have a great turn for the stage, ever since I saw Garrick in 'Richard.' Shall I turn stroller? It must be a merry life."

"Oh, the devil!" cried Ned. "I myself once did Cassio in a barn, and every one swore I enacted the drunken scene to perfection; but you have no notion what a lamentable life it is to a man of any susceptibility. No, my friend, no! There is only one line in all the old plays worthy thy attention,--

""Toby [The highway] or not toby, that is the question.'

"I forget the rest!"

"Well," said our hero, answering in the same jocular vein, "I confess I have 'the actor's high ambition.' It is astonishing how my heart beat when Richard cried out, 'Come bustle, bustle!' Yes, Pepper, avaunt!-

""A thousand hearts are great within my bosom.""

"Well, well," said Long Ned, stretching himself, "since you are so fond of the play, what say you to an excursion thither to-night? Garrick acts."

"Done!" cried Paul.

"Done!" echoed lazily Long Ned, rising with that *_blase_* air which distinguishes the matured man of the world from the enthusiastic tyro,--"done! and we will adjourn afterwards to the White Horse."

"But stay a moment," said Paul; "if you remember, I owed you a guinea when I last saw you,--here it is!"

"Nonsense," exclaimed Long Ned, refusing the money,--"nonsense! You want the money at present; pay me when you are richer. Nay, never be coy about it; debts of honour are not paid now as they used to be. We lads of the Fish Lane Club have changed all that. Well, well, if I must!"

And Long Ned, seeing that Paul insisted, pocketed the guinea. When this delicate matter had been arranged,--"Come," said Pepper, "come, get your hat; but, bless me! I have forgotten one thing."

"What?"

"Why, my fine Paul, consider. The play is a bang-up sort of a place; look at your coat and your waistcoat, that's all!"

Our hero was struck dumb with this *argumentum ad hominem*. But Long Ned, after enjoying his perplexity, relieved him of it by telling him that he knew of an honest tradesman who kept a ready-made shop just by the theatre, and who could fit him out in a moment.

In fact, Long Ned was as good as his word; he carried Paul to a tailor, who gave him for the sum of thirty shillings--half ready money, half on credit--a green coat with a tarnished gold lace, a pair of red inexpressibles, and a pepper-and-salt waistcoat. It is true, they were somewhat of the largest, for they had once belonged to no less a person than Long Ned himself; but Paul did not then regard those niceties of apparel, as he was subsequently taught to do by Gentleman George (a personage hereafter to be introduced to our reader), and he went to the theatre as well satisfied with himself as if he had been Mr. T---or the Count de --.

Our adventurers are now quietly seated in the theatre; and we shall not think it necessary to detail the performances they saw, or the observations they made. Long Ned was one of those superior beings of the road who would not for the world have condescended to appear anywhere but in the boxes; and, accordingly, the friends procured a couple of places in the dress-tier. In the next box to the one our adventurers adorned they remarked, more especially than the rest of the audience, a gentleman and a young lady seated next each other; the latter, who was about thirteen years old, was so uncommonly beautiful that Paul, despite his dramatic enthusiasm, could scarcely divert his eyes from her countenance to the stage. Her hair, of a bright and fair auburn, hung in profuse ringlets about her neck, shedding a softer shade upon a complexion in which the roses seemed just budding as it were into blush. Her eyes, large, blue, and rather languishing than brilliant, were curtained by the darkest lashes; her mouth seemed literally girt with smiles, so numberless were the dimples that every time the full, ripe, dewy lips were parted rose into sight; and the enchantment of the dimples was aided by two rows of teeth more dazzling than the richest pearls that ever glittered on a bride. But the chief charm of the face was its exceeding and touching air of innocence and girlish softness; you might have gazed forever upon that first unspeakable bloom, that all untouched and stainless down, which seemed as if a very breath could mar it. Perhaps the face might have wanted animation; but perhaps, also, it borrowed from that want an attraction. The repose of the features was so soft and gentle that the eye wandered there with the same delight, and left it with the same reluctance, which it experiences in dwelling on or in quitting those hues which are found to harmonize the most with its vision. But while Paul was feeding his gaze on this young beauty, the

keen glances of Long Ned had found an object no less fascinating in a large gold watch which the gentleman who accompanied the damsel ever and anon brought to his eye, as if he were waxing a little weary of the length of the pieces or the lingering progression of time.

"What a beautiful face!" whispered Paul.

"Is the face gold, then, as well as the back?" whispered Long Ned, in return.

Our hero started, frowned, and despite the gigantic stature of his comrade, told him, very angrily, to find some other subject for jesting. Ned in his turn stared, but made no reply.

Meanwhile Paul, though the lady was rather too young to fall in love with, began wondering what relationship her companion bore to her. Though the gentleman altogether was handsome, yet his features and the whole character of his face were widely different from those on which Paul gazed with such delight. He was not, seemingly, above five-and-forty, but his forehead was knit into many a line and furrow; and in his eyes the light, though searching, was more sober and staid than became his years. A disagreeable expression played about the mouth; and the shape of the face, which was long and thin, considerably detracted from the prepossessing effect of a handsome aquiline nose, fine teeth, and a dark, manly, though sallow complexion. There was a mingled air of shrewdness and distraction in the expression of his face. He seemed to pay very little attention to the play, or to anything about him; but he testified very considerable alacrity, when the play was over, in putting her cloak around his young companion, and in threading their way through the thick crowd that the boxes were now pouring forth.

Paul and his companion silently, and each with very different motives from the other, followed them. They were now at the door of the theatre.

A servant stepped forward and informed the gentleman that his carriage was a few paces distant, but that it might be some time before it could drive up to the theatre.

"Can you walk to the carriage, my dear?" said the gentleman to his young charge; and she answering in the affirmative, they both left the house, preceded by the servant.

"Come on!" said Long Ned, hastily, and walking in the same direction which the strangers had taken. Paul readily agreed. They soon overtook the strangers. Long Ned walked the nearest to the gentleman, and brushed by him in passing. Presently a voice cried, "Stop thief!" and Long Ned, saying to Paul, "Shift for yourself, run!" darted from our hero's side into the crowd, and vanished in a twinkling. Before Paul could recover his amaze, he found himself suddenly seized by the collar; he turned abruptly, and saw the dark face of the young lady's companion.

"Rascal!" cried the gentleman, "my watch!"

"Watch!" repeated Paul, bewildered, and only for the sake of the young lady refraining from knocking down his arrester,--"watch!"

"Ay, young man!" cried a fellow in a great-coat, who now suddenly appeared on the other side of Paul; "this gentleman's watch. Please your honour," addressing the complainant, "_I_ be a watch too; shall I take up

this chap?"

"By all means," cried the gentleman; "I would not have lost my watch for twice its value. I can swear I saw this fellow's companion snatch it from my fob. The thief's gone; but we have at least the accomplice. I give him in strict charge to you, watchman; take the consequences if you let him escape." The watchman answered, sullenly, that he did not want to be threatened, and he knew how to discharge his duty.

"Don't answer me, fellow!" said the gentleman, haughtily; "do as I tell you!" And after a little colloquy, Paul found himself suddenly marched off between two tall fellows, who looked prodigiously inclined to eat him. By this time he had recovered his surprise and dismay. He did not want the penetration to see that his companion had really committed the offence for which he was charged; and he also foresaw that the circumstance might be attended with disagreeable consequences to himself. Under all the features of the case, he thought that an attempt to escape would not be an imprudent proceeding on his part; accordingly, after moving a few paces very quietly and very passively, he watched his opportunity, wrenched himself from the gripe of the gentleman on his left, and brought the hand thus released against the cheek of the gentleman on his right with so hearty a good will as to cause him to relinquish his hold, and retreat several paces towards the areas in a slanting position. But that roundabout sort of blow with the left fist is very unfavourable towards the preservation of a firm balance; and before Paul had recovered sufficiently to make an effectual bolt, he was prostrated to the earth by a blow from the other and undamaged watchman, which utterly deprived him of his senses; and when he recovered those useful possessions (which a man may reasonably boast of losing, since it is only the minority who have them to lose), he found himself stretched on a bench in the watchhouse.

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