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Harriet Martineau, ***Illustrations of Political Economy, vol. 6 (Messrs. Vanderput and Snoek, The Loom and the Lugger Parts 1 & 2)*** [1834]

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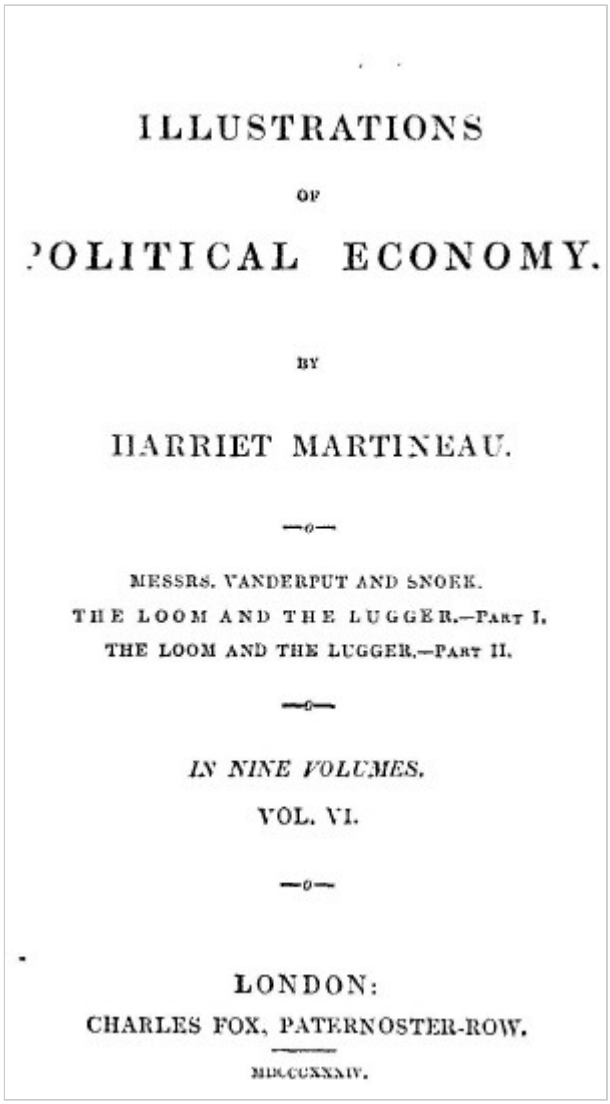

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

—o—

MESSRS. VANDERPUT AND SNOEK.

THE LOOM AND THE LUGGER.—PART I.

THE LOOM AND THE LUGGER.—PART II.

—o—

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

—o—

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PREFACE.

In planning the present story, I was strongly tempted to use the ancient method of exemplification, and to present my readers with the Adventures of a Bill of Exchange, so difficult is it to exhibit by example the process of exchange in any other form than the history of the instrument. If, however, the transactions of Messrs. Vanderput and Snoek should be found to furnish my readers with a pretty clear notion of the nature and operation of the peculiar kind of currency of which this Number treats, I shall readily submit to the decision that the present volume has little merit as a specimen of exemplification. Though the working of principles might be shown in this case, as in any other, it could not, I think, be done naturally in a very small space. If I had had liberty to fill three octavo volumes with the present subject, an interesting tale might have been made up of the effects on private fortunes of the variations in the course of the Exchange, and of the liabilities which attend the use of a partial and peculiar representative of value. As it is, I have judged it best to occupy a large portion of my confined space, in exhibiting a state of society to which such a species of currency is remarkably appropriate, in order that light might be thrown on the nature and operation of bills of exchange by showing what was being done, and what was wanted by those who most extensively adopted this instrument into their transactions.

In case of any reader questioning whether Dutchmen in the seventeenth century could advocate tree trade, I mention that the principle has never been more distinctly recognized than at a remoter date than I have fixed, by countries which, like Holland, had little to export, and depended for their prosperity on freedom of importation. Every restriction imposed by the jealousy of those from whom they derived their imports was an unanswerable argument to them in favour of perfect liberty of exchange. As their herrings and butter were universally acknowledged to be the best herrings and butter in existence, and yet were not enough for the perfect comfort of the Dutch, the Dutch could not resist the conclusion, that the less difficulty there was in furnishing their neighbours with their incomparable herrings and butter, in return for what those neighbours had to offer, the better for both parties. The Dutch of the seventeenth century were therefore naturally enlightened advocates of free trade.—Whether their light has from that time spread among their neighbours equally and perpetually, my next Number will show.

Messrs. VANDERPUT & SNOEK.

Chapter I.

MOURNING

During the days when the prosperity of the United Provinces was at its height, that is, during the latter half of the 17th century, it could hardly be perceived that any one district of Amsterdam was busier than another, at any one hour of the day. There was traffic in the markets, traffic on the quays, the pursuit of traffic in the streets, and

preparation for traffic in the houses. Even at night, when the casks which had been piled before the doors were all rolled under shelter, and dogs were left to watch the bales of merchandize which could not be stowed away before dark, there was, to the eye of a stranger, little of what he had been accustomed to consider as repose. Lights glanced on the tossing surface of the Amstel, as home-ward-bound vessels made for the harbour, or departing ships took advantage of the tide to get under weigh. The hail of the pilots or the quay-keepers, or of a careful watchman here and there, or the growl and bark of a suspicious dog, came over the water or through the lime avenues with no unpleasing effect upon the wakeful ear, which had been so stunned by the tumult of noon-day as scarcely to distinguish one sound from another amidst the confusion.

One fine noon, however, in the summer of 1696, a certain portion of the busiest district of Amsterdam did appear more thronged than the rest. There was a crowd around the door of a handsome house in the Keiser's Graft, or Emperor's-street. The thickly planted limes were so far in leaf as to afford shade from the hot sun, reflected in gleams from the water in the centre upon the glaring white fronts of the houses; and this shade might tempt some to stop in their course, and lounge: but there, were many who were no loungers flocking to the spot, and making their way into the house, or stationing themselves on the painted bench outside till they should receive a summons from within.

The presence of one person, who stood motionless before the entrance, sufficiently explained the occasion of this meeting. The black gown of this officer, and his low cocked hat, with its long tail of black crape, pointed him out as the Aanspreeker who, having the day before made the circuit of the city to announce a death to all who knew the deceased, was now ready to attend the burial. He stood prepared to answer all questions relative to the illness and departure of the deceased, and the state of health and spirits of the family, and to receive messages for them, to be delivered when they might be supposed better able to bear them than in the early hours of their grief. Seldom were more inquiries addressed to the Aanspreeker than in the present instance, for the deceased, Onno Snoek, had been one of the chief merchants of Amsterdam, and his widow was held in high esteem. The officer had no sooner ended his tale than he had to begin it again;—how the patient's ague had appeared to be nearly overcome; how he had suffered a violent relapse; how the three most skilful French apothecaries had been called in, in addition to the native family physician; how, under their direction, his son Heins had opened the choicest keg of French brandy, the most precious packages of Batavian spices in his warehouse, for the sake of the sick man; how, not withstanding these prime medicaments, the fever had advanced so rapidly as to prevent the patient from being moved even to the window, to see a long expected ship of his firm come to anchor before his own door; how he seemed to have pleasure in catching a glimpse of her sails through the trees as he lay in bed; but how all his endeavours to live till morning that he might hear tidings of the cargo, had failed, and rather hastened his end, insomuch that he breathed his last before dawn.

Among the many interrogators appeared a young man who was evidently in haste to enter the house, but wished first to satisfy himself by one or two questions. He wore the dress of a presbyterian clergyman, and spoke in a strong French accent.

“I am in haste,” he said, “to console my friends, from whom I have been detained too long. I was at Saardam yesterday, and did not hear of the event till this morning. I am in haste to join my friends; but I must first know in what frame the husband,—the father,-—died. Can you tell me what were the last moments which I ought to have attended?”

The officer declared that they were most edifying. The patient's mind was quite collected.

“Thank God!” exclaimed M. Aymond, the divine.

“Quite collected,” continued the officer, “and full of thought for those he left behind, as he showed by the very last thing he said. He had most carefully arranged his affairs, and given all his directions in many forms; but he remembered, just in time, that he had omitted one thing. He called Mr. Heins to his bed-side, and said, ‘my son, there is one debtor of ours from whom you will scarce recover payment, as I never could. Meyerlaut has for many months evaded paying me for the last ebony we sold to him. Let him therefore make my coffin.—Stay!—I have not done yet.—You will, in course of nature, outlive your mother. Let her have a handsome coffin from the same man; and if it should please Heaven to take more of you, as our beloved Willebrod was taken, you will bear the same thing in mind, Heins, I doubt not; for you have always been a dutiful son?’”

“This is the way Heins told you the fact?” asked Aymond. “Well, but were these the last,—the very last words of the dying man?”

Heins had mentioned nothing that was said afterwards; so the divine pursued his way into the house with a sad countenance. Instead of joining the guests in the outer apartment, he used the privilege of his office, and of his intimacy with the family, and passed through to the part of the house where he knew he should find the widow and her young people. Heins met him at the door, saying,

“I knew you would come. I have been persuading my mother to wait, assuring her that you would come. How we have wished for you! How we——”

Aymond, having grasped the hand of Heins, passed him to return the widow's greeting. She first stood to receive the blessing he bestowed in virtue of his office, and then, looking him calmly in the face, asked him if he had heard how God had been pleased to make her house a house of mourning.

“I find dust and ashes where I looked for the face of a friend,” replied the divine. “Can you submit to Heaven's will?”

“We have had grace to do so thus far,” replied the widow. “But whether it will be continued to us when——”

Her eyes filled, and she turned away, as if to complete her preparations for going forth.

“Strength has thus far been given according to thy day,” said Aymond. “I trust that it will be “thus bestowed for ever,” And he gave his next attention to one whom he was never known to neglect; one who loved him as perhaps nobody else loved him,—Heins's young brother, Christian.

Christian had suffered more in the twelve years of his little life than it is to be hoped many endure in the course of an ordinary existence. A complication of diseases had left him in a state of weakness from which there was little or no hope that he would ever recover, and subject to occasional attacks of painful illness which must in time wear him out. He had not grown, nor set a foot to the ground, since he was five years old: he was harassed by a perpetual cough, and in constant dread of the return of a capricious and fearful pain which seldom left him unvisited for three days together, ami sometimes lasted for hours. When in expectation of this pain, the poor boy could think of little else, and found it very difficult to care for any body; but when suffering from nothing worse than his usual helplessness, his great delight was to expect M. Aymond, and to get him seated beside his couch. Aymond thought that he heard few voices more cheerful than that of his little friend, Christian, when it greeted him from the open window, or made itself heard into the passage,—‘Will you come in here, M. Aymond? I am in the Wainscoat parlour to, day, M. Aymond.’

Christian had no words at command this day, He stretched out his arms in silence, and sighed convulsively when released from the embrace of his friend.

“Did I hurt you? Have you any of your pain today?”

“No; not yet. I think it is coming; but never mind that now. Kaatje will stay with me till you come back. You will come back, M. Aymond

When the pastor consented, and the widow approached to bid farewell to her child for an hour, Christian threw his arms once more round Aymond's neck. His brother Luc, a rough strong boy of ten, pulled them down, and rebuked him for being so free with the pastor; and little Roselyn, the spoiled child of the family, was ready with her lecture too, and told how she had been instructed to cross her hands and wait till M. Aymond spoke to her, instead of jumping upon him as she did upon her brother Heins. Christian made no other reply to these rebukes than looking with a smile in the face of the pastor, with whom he had established too good an understanding to suppose that he could offend him by the warmth of an embrace.

“I am sorry you cannot go with us, my poor little Christian,” said Heins, who had a curious method of making his condolences irksome and painful to the object of them. “I am sorry you cannot pay this last duty to our honoured parent. You will not have our Eatis-Fation in looking back upon the discharge of it,”

“Christian is singled out by God for a different duty,” observed the pastor. “He must show cheerful submission to his heavenly parent while you do honour to the remains of an earthly one.”

Christian tried to keep this thought before him while he saw them leaving the room, and heard the coffin carried out, and the long train of mourners, consisting of all the acquaintance of the deceased, filing away from the door.—When the last step had passed the threshold, and it appeared from the unusual quiet that the crowd had followed the mourners, Christian turned from the light, and buried his face in one of the pillows of his couch, so that Katrina, the young woman who, among other offices, attended upon him and his little sister, entered unperceived by him. She attracted his attention by the question which he heard oftener than any other,—‘the pain?’

“No,” answered the boy, languidly turning his head; “I was only thinking of the last time———” Either this recollection, or the sight of Katrina's change of dress overcame him, and stopped what he was going to say. The short black petticoat, measuring ten yards in width, exhibited its newness by its bulk, its plaits not having subsided into the moderation of a worn garment. The blue stockings, the neat yellow slippers had disappeared, and the gold fillagree clasps in the front of the close cap were laid aside till the days of mourning should be ended, While Christian observed all this, contemplating her from head to foot, Katrina took up the discourse where he had let it fall.

“You were thinking of the last time my master had you laid on the bed beside him. It will always be a comfort to you, Christian, that he told you where he was departing.”

“He did not tell me that,” said the boy; “and that is just what I was wondering about. He said he was going, and I should like to know if he could have told where.”

“To be sure he could. He was one of the chosen, and we know where they go. So much as you talk with the pastor, you must know that.”

“I know that it is to heaven that they go, but I want to know where heaven is. Some of them say it is paradise; and some, the New Jerusalem; and some, that it is up in the sky among the angels. But do all the chosen know where they are going?”

Certainly, Katrina believed. The dying believer was blessed in his hope. Christian was not yet satisfied.

“I think I shall know when I am dying,” said he. “At least, I often think I am dying when my pain comes in the night; but I do not know more about where I am going then than at other times.”

Katrina hoped his mind was not tossed and troubled on this account.

“O, no; not at all. If God is good to me, and takes care of me here, he will keep me safe any where else, and perhaps let me go about where I like. And O, Kaatje, there will be no more crying, nor pain! I wish I may see the angels as soon as I die. Perhaps

father is with the angels now. I saw the angels once, more than once, I think; but once, I am sure."

In a dream, Katrina supposed.

"No, in the broad day, when I was wide awake. You know I used to go to the chapel before my cough was so bad; as long ago as I can remember, nearly. There are curious windows in that chapel, quite high in the roof; and I often thought the day of judgment was come; and there was a light through those windows shining down into the pulpit; and there the angels looked in. I thought they were come for me, unless it was for the holy pastor."

"But would you have liked to go?"

"Yes: and when the prayer came after the sermon, instead of listening to the pastor, I used to pray that God would send the angels to take me away."

Katrina thought that if Christian had lived in another country, he would have made *a.* fine martyr.

"I don't know," said the boy, doubtfully. "I have thought a great deal about that, and I am not so sure as 1 used to be. If they only cut off my head, I think I could bear that. But as for the burning,—I wonder, Kaatje, whether burning is at all like my pain. I am sure it cannot be much worse."

Katrina could not tell, of course; but she wished he would not talk about burning, or about his pain; for it made him perspire, and brought on his cough so as to exhaust him to a very pernicious degree. He must not talk any more now, but let her talk to him. He had not asked yet what company had come to the funeral.

Christian supposed that there was every body whom his father had known in Amsterdam.

Yes, every body: and as there were so many to drink spirits at the morning burial, her mistress chose to invite very few to the afternoon feast. Indeed her mistress seemed disposed to have her own way altogether about the funeral. Every body knew that Mr. Heins would have liked to have it later in the day, and would not have minded the greater expense for the sake of the greater honour.

"I heard them talk about that," said Christian. "My mother told Heins that it was a bad way for a merchant to begin with being proud, and giving his father a grand funeral; and that the best honour was in the number of mourners who would be sure to follow an honest man, whether his grave was filled at noon or at sunset. My mother is afraid of Heins making a show of his money, and learning to fancy himself richer than he is."

Katrina observed that all people had their own notions of what it was to be rich. To a poor servant-maid who had not more than 1000 guilders out at interest———

“But your beautiful gold chain, Kaatje! Your silver buckles! I am sure you must have ten pair, at the least.”

“Well, but, all this is less than many a maid has that has been at service a shorter time than I have. To a poor maid-servant, I say, it seems like being rich to have I don't know how many loaded ships between China and the Texel.”

“They belong as much to Mr. Vanderput as to us, you know. Is Mr. Vanderput here today?”

“To be sure. He is to be at the burial-feast; and Miss Gertrude——.”

“Gertrude! Is Gertrude here?” cried Christian, sitting up with a jerk which alarmed his attendant for the consequences. “O, if she will stay the whole day, it will be as good as the pastor having come back.”

“She crossed from Saardam on purpose. She will tell you about the angels, if any body can; for she lives in heaven as much as the pastor himself, they say.”

“She is an angel herself,” quietly observed Gertrude's little adorer. Katrina went on with her list.

“Then there is Fransje Slyk and her father. He looks as if he knew what a funeral should be, and as grave as if he had been own brother to the departed. I cannot say as much for Fransje.”

“I had rather have Fransje's behaviour than her father's, though I do not much like her,” said Christian. “Mr. Slyk always glances round to see how other people are looking, before he settles his face completely.”

“Well; you will see how he looks to-day.

These are all who will stay till evening, I believe, except Mr. Visscher.”

“Mr. Visscher! What is he to stay for? I suppose Heins wants to talk to him about this new cargo that came too late. O, Kaatje, I never can bear to look through the trees at that ship again. I saw the white sails in the moonlight all that night when I lay watching what was going on, and heard Heins's step in and out, and my mother's voice when she thought nobody heard her; and I could not catch a breath of my father's voice, though I listened till the rustle of my head on the pillow startled me. And then my mother came in, looking so that I thought my father was better; but she came to tell me that I should never hear his voice any more. But O, if she knew how often I have heard it since! how glad I should be to leave off hearing it when I am alone——.”

Poor Christian wept so as not to be comforted till his beloved friend Gertrude came to hear what lie had to say about those whom he believed to be her kindred angels.

Heins was missed from the company soon after the less familiar guests had departed, and left the intimate friends of the family to complete the offices of condolence. Heins was as soon weary of constraint as most people, which made it the more surprising that he imposed on himself so much more of it than was necessary. All knew pretty well what Heins was, though he was perpetually striving to seem something else; and his painful efforts were just so much labour in vain. Every body knew this morning, through all the attempts to feel grief by which he tried to cheat himself and others, that his father's death was quite as much a relief as a sorrow to him; and that, while he wore a face of abstraction, he was longing for some opportunity of getting out upon the quay to learn tidings of the ships and cargoes of which he was now in fact master. The fact was that Heins was as much bent on being rich as his father had been, but he wanted to make greater haste to be so, and to enjoy free scope for a trial of his more liberal commercial notions. For this free scope, he must yet wait; for his partner, Mr. Vanderput, was as steady a man of business, though a less prejudiced one, than the senior Snoek had been; and then there was Mrs. Snoek. She was not permitted, by the customs of the country, to meddle in affairs relating to commerce; but she knew her maternal duty too well not to keep an eye on the disposal of the capital which included the fortunes of her younger children. It was to be apprehended that she would be ready with objections whenever a particularly grand enterprize should demand the union of all the resources of the firm. Some liberty had, however, been gained through the obstinacy of the fever which would not yield to French brandy and Oriental spices; and there were many eyes upon Heins already, to watch how he would set out en his commercial career.

Some of these eyes followed him from his mother's door to the quay, and back again, when he had concluded his inquiries among the captains. It was remarked that there was, during the latter transit, a gloom in his countenance which was no mockery.

On his re-appearance in his mother's parlour, the cause was soon told, first to his partner, next to his mother, and then (as there were none but intimate friends) to all present. The result of the communication was an outcry against the English, as very troublesome neighbours, while the widow's first thought was of thankfulness that her husband had died without hearing news which would have caused him great trouble of mind.: Heins appealed to all who understood the state of Dutch commerce, whether Great Britain had not done mischief enough long ago, by prohibiting the importation of bulky goods by any ships but those which belonged to the exporting or importing country.

“That prohibition was evidently aimed at us Dutch,” observed Vanderput. “We were carriers to half the world, till Great Britain chose that we should no longer carry for her. She might punish herself in that manner, and welcome, if she could do so without punishing us; but it is a serious grievance,—difficult as it now is to find an investment for our capital,—to be obliged to lay by any of our shipping as useless.”

“We did all we could,” said Heins piteously. “Since we could not carry the produce of the East and West into the ports of Great Britain for sale, we brought it here, that the British captains might not have far to go for it. But it seems that Great Britain is

jealous of this; for there is a new prohibition (if the report be true) against importing any bulky produce purchased anywhere but in the country where it is produced."

"I hope this is too bad to be true," observed Visscher.

"Nothing is too bad to be attempted by a jealous country against one which has been particularly successful in commerce," observed Snoek. "The tonnage of this country is more than half that of all Europe; and Great Britain thinks it time to lower our superiority. Whether she will gain by doing so, time will show."

"I think Great Britain is very ill-natured and very mean," observed Christian, who had generally something to say on every subject that was discussed in his presence. "I think I shall call her Little Britain, from this time. But, Heins, what will you do with all the things you have bought, as you told me, in Asia and America, and in France and Italy? You must send back your cinnamon to Ceylon, and——O, but I forgot that other people may buy them, though the English will not. But I hope you have not bought too much for the present number of your customers. There is another large ship coming from one of the American islands, I heard—".

He was checked by the remembrance of who it was that told him this. Heins related, with a deep sigh, which might be given to the memory of either the ship or its owner, that the vessel had been wrecked, and was now at the bottom of the sea. This was the other piece of bad news he had to tell. At least two-thirds of his hearers asked after the crew, while the rest inquired for the cargo. The cargo was lost, except a small portion, which had been preserved with difficulty. The crew had been picked up, only one sailor-boy being missing. It was from two of them who had found their way home that Heins had received the tidings of his misfortune.

"One sailor-boy!" repeated Christian. "Do you know how he was lost? Was he blown from the yards, do you think? Or was he washed overboard? or did he go down with the ship?"

Heins did not know any particulars of the sailor-boy. But where? But how? But when did this happen?

It happened where many shipwrecks had happened before, and many would again, and in the same manner. The vessel had struck on the Eddystone rock on a stormy night. This was another nuisance for which the Dutch were indebted to the English. This fatal rock—.

"Did the English make the Eddystone rock?" little Roselyn inquired, in a low voice, of the pastor. "I thought it was God that broke up the fountains of the deeps, and fixed the everlasting hills." Her wiser brother Christian enlightened her.

"God made this rock; but perhaps he made it so that it might be of use to us, instead of doing us harm, if the English would make the best use of it. Is not that what Heins means, M. Aymond?"

M. Aymond believed that what Mr. Vanderput had just said was true; that the English were about to build a light-house on this dangerous rock, which might thus be made to guide ships into a British harbour, instead of causing them to perish. He trusted that it would appear that Heins was mistaken in saying that many more ships would be lost on that rock; and he hoped that men would learn in time to make all God's works instruments of blessing to their race. Christian carried on the speculation.

“And then, perhaps, man's works may not perish by accident before they are worn out, as this ship did. But yet this was what happened with one of God's works too,—that sailor-boy. He perished before he was worn out. But why do people ever wear out, M. Aymond? Whether a person is drowned at fifteen or dies worn out at eighty, does not much signify, if God could make them live a thousand years. Only think of a person living a thousand years, M. Aymond! He would see cities grow as we see ant-hills rise, while the sea roared against the dykes as it did at the beginning. He would see the stars move so often that he would know them all in their places. He would know almost everything. O! why do not men live a thousand years? and why does God let a young sailor-boy be lost?”

Gertrude whispered, “All the days of Methuselah were nine hundred, sixty and nine years; and he died.”

“Yes,” added the pastor, gravely meeting the kindling eyes of Christian; “death comes sooner or later; and whether it came soon or late would be all in all if we were to live no more. But as man's life is never to end——”

“Ah! I see. If his life is never to end, it does not signify so much when he passes out of one kind of life into another. I was going to ask why there should be any death at all. If I made a world, I would——”

Christian had talked too eagerly, and now was prevented by his cough from speaking any more at present. When he recovered his voice, the pastor turned his attention from the lost sailor-boy to the lost ship, asking whether it had not answered its purpose in making several voyages; whether the skill and toil of the artificers had not been repaid. Christian thought not; and he went on to exhibit as much as he could of the worked up knowledge and labour which had in this instance been engulphed by the waves. He seemed SO much irritated, however, by his imperfection in the knowledge of ship-building, that Gertrude proposed that he should pay her a visit at Saardam, where he might look down from a window upon the dock-yard, and witness nearly the whole process without being moved from his couch. She almost repented the proposal when she saw the poor boy's rapture; but, happily, no one perceived any objection to the plan. The little voyage of seven miles could be made perfectly easy to invalids; and it was quite certain that Christian would be happy with Gertrude, if anywhere. Heins and the pastor contended for the charge of Christian, and old Mr. Slyk, the most punctilious of mourners, allowed that such an indulgence might,—especially with a view to increased knowledge,—be extended to a sufferer like Christian, within the days of strict mourning, provided the mother and the younger children staid at home. Luc clenched his fist on hearing this, and Roselyn pouted; but their jealousy of their brother soon vanished when his dreaded pain came on, and they were put out of the

room by their mother, as usual, that they might not become hardened to the expressions of agony which they could not relieve.

They were heartily glad when the day was nearly over;—when there was an end of going from the melancholy burial feast in one room, into the apartment where Gertrude was describing to the now passive Christian spectacles which they were not to see, and pleasures which were held to be incompatible with the mourning of which they already required to be reminded. They were not, however, allowed to retire in this state of forgetfulness of the occasion. The pastor's closing prayer, the solemn looks of the servants, and their mother's silent tears when she laid her hand upon their heads, left them no disposition for complaint as they stole away to their beds.

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Chapter II.

AN EXCURSION

“One, two, three,—five of you going with me to Saardam!” cried Christian, as he saw Heins and the pastor follow the children and Katrina into the boat: the children who, in Mr. Slyk's absence, had prevailed on their mother's good nature to let them go with their brothers. “And Mr. Visscher is coming before the afternoon. What a party to belong to me!”

It was very natural that Christian should overrate his own importance, passing his life, as he did, in a little circle where every one was eager to give him pleasure: but never was he more mistaken than in supposing that he was any thing more than a convenient pretence to some of his friends for visiting Saardam. There was an attraction there which would have taken two of them thither every day, if as good an excuse had offered as that of which they now took advantage. Heins'felt that at Saardam resided one who would make as perfect a wife for a rich Amsterdam merchant as could be imagined, if she had but a little more gaiety. She was pretty; she was amiable; she was rich; and she and his mother would suit admirably; and the children were fond of her. The pastor's feelings about Gertrude are less easily described; but they tended to the same object as those of Heins.

These two were aware of each other's intentions; but there was as little enmity in their rivalship as there was present satisfaction in their pursuit. Aymond was perfectly convinced that Gertrude could never love Heins; but he was nearly as certain that she did not yet love himself: and Heins found that he made no progress in the lady's good graces, while he trusted that his friendly hints to her brother would prevent her throwing herself away upon a poor refugee minister of religion, whose tender conscience had already led him into adversity, and who could therefore never be trusted to keep out of it in future.

“What a party of you to take care of me!” repeated Christian, in great glee, when he began to enjoy the easy motion of the boat, and to perceive that his deadly enemy, the fog, was clearing away before the bright June sunshine, “Look, pastor, look at Amsterdam! Is there a city in the world like Amsterdam, I wonder? How the spires, and the highest houses stand up out of the mist, like a little city floating in the air, or sailing in a cloud. *O,* Heins!—Kaatje, do ask Heins which bells those are. I am sure I never heard such sweet bells before.”

They were the bells of St. Nicholas Church, which Christian heard almost every day of his life. Christian would hardly believe they were the same.

“They clatter and jangle so as to make my head ache very often; but these might send one to sleep, if it were not much pleasanter to lie awake and listen to them.—Everything is light coloured hereto what it is at home,—as if silver had been

shed over it. The sky is not bright blue, as it is between the limes, but grey; and the water gleams as if the moon was hanging just over it; and it is not muddy under the boat as it is below our bridge; and I dare say there is never any bad smell, and nobody need be afraid of ague. I wish we could stop, that I might fish. There must be plenty of fine fish in such water as this."

When reminded of Saardam dock-yards, however, he had no further wish for delay. From this moment to the time of landing, Katrina's good-nature was taxed to turn him incessantly, that he might see, now the forest of masts at Amsterdam, and the dark hulls resting upon the grey water, and then the gaily-painted wooden houses of Saardam, with their point ed gables turned some one way and some another, each with its weather-cock; and all looking like baby-houses amidst the vast piles of timber from which the dock-yards were supplied.

Christian's delight was in no wise diminished when he was established on his couch at the promised window, whence he could overlook one of the busiest parts of the dock-yard. He had no attention to spare for the tidings of wonder which Roselyn brought, from one quarter of an hour to another, when she had fairly gained her point of being allowed to find her way about as she pleased. Now she drew near to whisper that she was sure there was to be a very good dinner, as twice the quantity of turf was burning in the kitchen that was ever used at home, and such a number of bright pots upon the fire that it was inconceivable what could be in them She had tried to find out, but they were all close covered, and the servants were so busy and so quiet that she was afraid to ask. Better wait and see, Christian pronounced; so off ran Roselyn in another direction, whence she soon returned with more wonders. The garden,—Christian must see the garden. It was little larger than the room he was sitting in; but it had walks, and grottos, and a rivulet; and the rivulet had a paved bed of pebbles, and the walks were made of cockle-shells, and the borders of red and blue and green glass; and the wall which enclosed the whole, was chequered with blue and white bricks. Moreover, there was a better garden some way off, with tulips as fine as could be seen any where within five leagues of Amsterdam. Fond of tulips and good dinners as Christian was, all this interested him less than what was passing before his eyes. He wanted to be left in peace to make his observations, till his beloved Gertrude could come and answer his questions.

When she appeared, Heins was at her heels. He could never understand that it was disagreeable to her to be followed, which ever way she turned; and attributed her gravity of countenance to the religious bent she had taken, which was a most desirable quality in a wife. Christian wished, with all his heart, that Heins would keep away, that Gertrude and he might be as happy together as they always were when there was no one by to whom she curtsied and spoke with formality.

"Does not this hammering tire you?" she asked.

"You had better let me carry you into the inner room," said Heins. "It is as quiet there as on the water."

“O, no, no,” cried Christian. “I have not seen half that I want; and I am very glad that they are at work so nearly under the windovv, because I can watch what they are doing. They were hauling up that great beam when I came, and now look how nicely they have fitted it into its place. But I want to know who some of these people are. You see that short man, smoking, with the rule in his hand, and a great roll of papers peeping out of his breeches pocket.”

“Yes; that is a master-builder. You will see that he is never long out of sight of his men.”

“You might have known him for the master-builder, and these shipwrights for his men,” observed Heins.

“I guessed who he was: but there is another who looks something like a master too, though he is dressed like a sailor. He is a very idle man, I think. He has stood there all this time, with his arms folded, making the men laugh, and the master too, sometimes. Once he took up a mallet that another man had laid down; and a strong blow he gave with it: but he soon left off, and the master did not seem to scold him at all.”

“Nobody scolds Master Peter. Nobody asks him to do more work than he likes; but he does a great deal; and hard work too. He likes joking quite as well as working; and these men are fond of having him among them, for he lightens their labour, and is very good-natured.”

This hint was enough for Luc, who came into the apartment just in time to hear it. He found his way to another window which also looked into the yard, and began to call, at first cautiously, and then more loudly, “Master Peter! Master Peter!”

Master Peter did not hear till the party at the window heard also; and when he turned, Gertrude was leaning out to ascertain which of her household was making overtures of acquaintance. Luc's head had already disappeared; so that Master Peter could not but suppose that it was Gertrude who had greeted him. He laid his hand on his breast, and, with a gesture of courtesy, advanced directly beneath the window. The lady explained that some young visitors had made free with his good-nature; and he immediately asked if they would like to come down and view the dock-yard. At the close of his speech, he turned to the master, as if suddenly recollecting that he ought to ask permission to admit visitors. The master exerted himself to intermit his puffs of smoke, while he desired Master Peter to do as he chose.

“O, let me go! let me go!” cried Christian, in answer to Heins's doubts whether it would not be causing too much trouble to gratify the boy's wish.

Gertrude soon settled the affair by taking hold of one side of Christian's little chair, and making Katrina take the other. She would not relinquish her grasp in favour of Heins, who followed her out, officiously pressing his help; she reserved that favour for Master Peter, who met the party at the gate of the yard, and immediately seeing the state of the case, took the boy in his arms, and promised to show him whatever he

wished to see. Those who knew Christian thought this a large promise; and Heins was very instructive as to the degree in which it should be accepted.

The boy himself, as he looked around him, scarcely knew where and how to begin his inquiries. Vessels in every stage of progress, from the bare-ribbed skeleton to the full-rigged merchant ship, ready for launching, met his eye in every direction. The carpenters' yards resounded with the blows of the mallet; the rope-walks looked tempting; and he also wanted to be carried among the stacks of timber which seemed to him too huge to have been piled up by human strength.

“Where can all this wood have come from?” was his natural exclamation.

“Some of it came from my country,” replied Master Peter. “You see that pile of tall pine-trees laid one upon another as high as the Stadt-house. Those are masts for the ships we are building; and they come out of the woods of my country. They came as part of a cargo, and some of them will go back as part of a ship that carries a cargo.”

“And where will it go next?”

“It will come back again with hemp to make such ropes as those, and pitch and tar to smear the timbers with, and canvass for the sails, and many things besides that your people want for use, and your merchants for sale,—tallow, and oils, and hides, and furs.”

“But do not you want the hemp, and pitch, and canvass for your own ships? Or have you enough for both yourselves and us?”

Master Peter was sorry to say that very few ships had yet been built in his country. He hoped there would soon be more. But his countrymen must still manage to have enough of the produce of their woods and wilds for themselves and the Dutch, as they could not do without many things which the Dutch merchants were accustomed to bring them in exchange; silks and jewels, for the ladies; wine, spice, and fruit, for their tables: gold and silver to make money of; and pewter vessels and steel utensils for their kitchens.”

“But you can fetch these things for yourselves when you have ships,” argued Christian.

“We can fetch them, but we must have something ready to give in payment for them.”

Heins disputed whether any other country could compete with the United Provinces in fetching commodities from all parts of the globe.

He treated with solemn ridicule Master Peter's hopes of what might be achieved by fleets which were not yet in existence, and pointed out, with a very insulting air of superiority, the resources of his own country,—To say nothing of the half-finished navy which was before their eyes, there was a forest of masts just within sight, which he defied any port in the world to rival. There were ships of his own and his partner's bringing iron, copper, and the materials of war from Sweden and Norway; grain and

flax-seed from the Baltic; books, wines, and timber from Germany; coal from England; spice, fruits, and cottons from the regions of the east; and gold and silver from the west.

All very true, Master Peter allowed; but all this need not prevent his country from fetching and carrying as much as she could, whether it might prove more convenient to furnish herself with all that she wanted from the ports of Holland, or to go round the world to purchase each commodity in its native region. In answer to Heins's boast of the commerce of the United Provinces, Peter begged to remind him that it was now past its greatest glory. It had perceptibly declined for more than twenty years.—Heins insisted that the shipping of the United Provinces nearly equalled that of the whole of the rest of Europe.—True again; but it was pretty certain that Dutch prosperity would not advance much beyond the point it had now reached, while that of other countries might rapidly overtake it. The Dutch had so much wealth that they now found difficulty in making profitable use of it in their own country; and by lending it to foreigners, they helped those foreigners to become rivals to themselves. Such was the result of Master Peter's observation in the course of his travels,—travels which he hoped to extend to England, where he might chance to meet Dutch capital in another form. He understood that the Dutch had not only deposited forty millions of their wealth in the English funds, but had lent large sums to individuals; thus investing money in a rival country for the sake of the higher interest which could be obtained there.

Christian thought this very unpatriotic. If it was true, also, as he had been told by his mother, that Heins and Mr. Vanderput sold no goods abroad, but brought a great many to sell at home, he thought the firm very wrong indeed. If they chose to spend Dutch money in the countries of their rivals and their enemies, they ought at least to take care that their rivals spent as much money among them.

Heins replied that this was the concern of the exporting merchants who had the use of the ships to carry out Dutch produce, which were to return with foreign commodities.

“You should look well to them,” persisted Christian; “for I do not believe they bring in half so much money as you send out. I never see such a thing as a Spanish dollar, or an English guinea, unless a traveller has come to Amsterdam to spend it; and how we have so many ducats, and guilders, and stivers left, after the number you send away, is more than I can tell.”

Heins replied mysteriously that his partner and he seldom sent away any money; which made Christian very angry, certain as he was of what his mother had told him of Heins being an importing merchant.

“How can you tease the boy?” inquired Master Peter. And he asked Christian if he really supposed that everything that was bought, all the world over, was bought with gold and silver? If he would only consider the quantity of coin that would have been collected in the States by this time if all their produce had been thus paid for, he would see how troublesome such a method of commerce would be.

But some of this money would go away again, Christian observed, as long as the States bought as well as sold. However, lie perceived that while there was mutual exchange, it must save much trouble to exchange the goods against one another, as far as they would go, and pay only the balance in money. But this balance, when large, must be a very sad thing for the country that had to pay it.

“Do you think the country would become liable to pay it,” asked Master Peter, “if it had no advantage in return? Do you think your brother would run up heavy bills with the French wine-growers, if he did not hope to make profit of their wines? When my country has as many ships as I wish her to have, I shall encourage my merchants to—I mean, I hope my countrymen will—make very large purchases from foreign countries.”

“But if Heins sends away a ship load of guilders,” remonstrated Christian, “the States will be so much the poorer, however much wine may come in return; because the wine will be drunk in Amsterdam, and paid for with more guilders. And then Heins will send out these guilders again, I suppose, and not care how little money there is left in the country, so long as his own pocket is filled.”

Heins smiled condescendingly, and promised Christian that when he grew older he should know better what he was talking about. How should the boy know better, unless his questions were answered? asked Gertrude, who came with Katrina to relieve Master Peter of his charge. But the good-natured sailor took his seat on a piece of timber, saying that the little man should have his questions properly attended to;—questions the very same as had been asked by many a taller, if not a wiser man. Christian did not like to be called “little man,” but forgave the expression in consideration of his questions being thought manly. Peter told him that many kings having feared for their kingdoms what Christian feared for the States,—that they would be emptied of money,—had passed laws to prohibit money being sent out of the country. They had not remembered, any more than Christian, that other countries must buy also; so that Heins's neighbours would be taking money from abroad, while Heins was sending it out,—supposing that it actually went in the shape of guilders.

“But how do we know that they will buy?” asked Christian. “If they do not choose to buy—what then?”

“They always do choose it, and must choose it, since they cannot get what they want in any-other way. The people in the mine-countries,—in South America,—have more gold and silver than they know what to do with; and no linen, no cloth, no knives and pots and kettles, no one of many articles that they consider necessary to their comfort. Now, would not it be very foolish in their governors to prevent their sending out their spare gold in exchange for what they must otherwise do without?”

Yes: but Christian thought the case of mining countries peculiar. No where else, he supposed, was precious metal superabundant. If it were indeed,—But perhaps the truest sign of there being too much of it was the wish of the people to send it away. What would Master Peter do if he was a ruler?

Master Peter's nation being in great want of gold and silver, he should wish his people to send out as much tallow and timber as they could sell; but if he ruled in Holland, where there was more precious metal than was wanted, he would encourage the Dutch to send out velvets and brandy, for the sake of bringing back, not money, but wealth in some more useful form. In either case, it would be for the sake of what was brought back that he should be anxious to have the produce of the country exported.

Of course, Christian observed, there could be little good in sending property away unless for the sake of what it brought back. He, for his part; should have no particular wish to dispose of his show-box at the next fair, if lie was to have only an apple in exchange; but he should be glad to sell it for the model of a ship which he much desired to have. In the latter case, he should be much pleased; but his pleasure would be, not in parting with his show-box, but in gaining the model.

“Well, my dear boy,” said Heins, “that will do. We are not children who want to have every thing explained by a wise little man like you.”

“Those kings were not children that Master Peter was speaking of,” observed Christian; “and yet they seemed to want to have it explained that they might as well part with their gold as with anything else, since the thing that signified most was whether they got anything better in exchange.”

“You have quite changed your opinion,” said Gertrude. “An hour ago, you thought it a very sad thing to part with gold.”

“Yes; because I thought gold was somehow more valuable than anything else; that it had a value of its own. But, if there is any one country where gold is of little use, it seems as if it was much like other goods;—fit to be changed away when one has too much of it, and got back again when one wants it.”

“Then it is time,” said Gertrude, “that merchants, and those who rule them, should leave off being very glad when money is imported rather than goods, and very sorry when it is exported.”

“They may feel sure,” Heins observed, “that they will soon have an opportunity of getting more money, if they want it. No one thing is bought and sold so often as money; and they may be as confident that some will soon fall in their way as that there would always be blue cloth in the market, if every trader in the world bought and sold blue cloth.”

Christian saw yet another consequence from what Master Peter had told him. If gold Was very cheap in Peru and very dear in Russia, and if furs and hemp were very cheap in Russia and very dear in Peru, it would do as much good to the one country as to the other to exchange them, while it could do nobody any harm. At this grand discovery the boy was so delighted that he ran the risk of bringing on his pain by the start which he made to put his face opposite to Master Peter's. It was very mortifying to hear once more Heins's compassionate laugh, while he asked whether everybody did not know this before. Did not his mother send abroad the butter which it cost very

little to make at the farm, and cause her household to eat salt butter of foreign preparation?

“I never could make that out; and Kaatje never could tell me,” exclaimed Christian, “We none of us like the salt butter so well; and it costs more to buy than our own fresh butter to make; and yet we must all eat salt butter.”

“Because my mother can sell every kop of her butter abroad for more than she pays for the best salt butter that is brought in. You know there is no butter to equal the Dutch.”

“Nor anything else, by your own account, Mr. Heins,” replied Master Peter, laughing. “There is nothing to be found abroad equal to what you have at home. A pretty honest boast this for a large importer! What say you to your corn?”

“That our difficulty in producing it has proved the loftiness of Dutch genius, and the abundance of Dutch resources. Nature has placed us in a barren district, where we have not the less multiplied and prospered, through our own talents and virtues, by which we have been supplied from abroad with that which Providence had forbidden to us.”

“If Providence forbade us to have corn,” said Christian aside to Gertrude, “how is it that we have corn? It seems to me that it is very like Providence's having made the Eddystone Rock a dangerous place. Men have been reminded to make it a useful beacon; and our people at home have been obliged to begin a trade in corn; which trade has made them rich; so that they are better off, perhaps, than if they had the most fertile fields in the world.”

Gertrude smiled, and said she believed this was the method by which Providence taught men to help one another, and showed them how. After this, Christian heard no more of the argument going on about the extent to which the Dutch traders had successfully carried their principles of exporting goods that were cheap, and importing those which were dear. He was pondering the uses of adversity,—of the few kinds of adversity which had particularly struck him.—What was there in the storms of the Zee,—what was there in the clay soil of Luc's garden, where no hyacinths would grow,—what was there in the French king's ravaging wars,—what was there in his own horrible pain, to show men how to help one another? In his own case, one side of the question was easily answered. At this moment, while his weary head was resting on Master Peter's breast, wondering at the depth of voice which vibrated from within, he felt that his infirmities allured the wise and the strong to help and comfort him; but how wars stimulated men to aid as well as destroy one another—much more, how he could be of service to any body, were subjects for much deeper meditation. Just when he had an impression that he had arrived near the solution, he unconsciously lost the thread of his argument; and when his companions, some time afterwards, would have asked his opinion of what was last said, they found that he was happily asleep on the bosom of his new friend.

The hunt in which Master Peter had taken up his abode being just at hand, be insisted on laying the boy on his own bed, while the took his frugal workman's meal. Gertrude, who said she could see the dock-yards any day of her life, remained with Christian, while her guests continued their survey of the curiosities of the place.

When they returned to the house to dinner, they found that the other expected guest, Aalbert Visscher, had arrived, and was making himself very agreeable to Christian;—probably more so than to Gertrude; since his discourse was of pleasures whose number and variety could scarcely be approved by such steady and self denying persons as the Vanderputs. Gay were the tales of the snipe-shooting and skaiting of last winter; of the sailing and fishing matches of the spring; and of the wagers of fancy pipes and rare tobacco which yet remained to be decided by the arrival or non-arrival of expected ships by a certain clay. Gertrude rose and offered to show Christian the curious time-piece he had inquired for;—the time-piece whose hours were struck on porcelain cups by a silver hammer. It was almost the first time Gertrude was ever known to break voluntarily the modest silence of a Dutchwoman in company; much more to interrupt the conversation of another; and Christian looked up surprised.

“My poor boy,” exclaimed Aalbert, “I beg your pardon. I only thought of amusing you, and I am afraid I have hurt you.”

“O, because I cannot shoot and skait and swim? It does not hurt me, indeed, or I am sure I should be very unhappy; for I hear of something every day that I shall never be able to do.”

“Christian likes to hear of other” people's pleasures, whether he can join in them or not,” observed Gertrude. “But he can lay wagers, and may be all the more easily tempted to do so from having fewer amusements than you, Mr. Visscher.”

“And you do not approve of laying wagers, my sober lady,” replied Aalbert.

“It is God who appoints the winds, and makes a path in the deep waters for the blessings he brings us,” replied Gertrude; “and I think it scarcely becomes us to sport with the uncertainty with which He is pleased to try our faith, and make matter for gambling of His secret counsels.”

The pastor enforced the impiety. Vanderput thought all gambling vicious; and Heins proved to Christian that in him it would be peculiarly atrocious, since, as he could never hope to earn any money, his speculations must be at the risk of others. Christian ingenuously admitted all this, but was not the less in a hurry to ask for more tales of adventure from the gay bill-broker, as soon as the pastor's long grace was over. Nothing more was said of wagers; nor was it necessary, so ample were Aalbert's other resources of amusement,—or, as the pastor expressed it, of dissipation. Aymond's countenance wore a deeper gravity every moment as he saw the eagerness with which the children listened, the indolent satisfaction with which Vanderput let his guests be thus entertained, and the interest with which even Gertrude appeared to be beguiled. Heins also perceived this interest; and thought it time to be exerting himself to rival it.

He took advantage of every long puff with which his adversary regaled himself, to draw attention upon his own gaieties. For every wild-duck, he had a story of a tulip; for every marvellous bagging of snipe, he had an unheard-of draught of herrings. If Aalbert had made a humorous bargain at the last Rotterdam fair, he had made an excessively acute one. If the bill-broker had met with a ducking in Haerlem lake, the importer had been within an ace of running aground in the Zuyder Zee. There was a remarkable parallel between their fortunes if Gertrude would but perceive it. What she was most ready to perceive, however, was that the conversation grew very tiresome after Heins had taken it up; and she was not sorry when the boatmen sent in word that it was time the party were afloat, if they meant to reach Amsterdam before the gates were closed.

The prudent guests were in haste to be gone. It was true that, by paying a stiver each, they might gain admittance any time within an hour from the first closing of the gates; but where was the use of paying a stiver, if it could be as well avoided?

As it was bad for Christian's cough to be on the water in the evening, he was left behind to enjoy one more survey of the dock-yard,—one more chance of intercourse with his dear Master Peter, He sacrificed something, he knew, in not seeing the congregation of dark masts springing from the silver mist, and not feeling the awe of penetrating" the fog where unknown obstacles might be concealed. He remembered something of the night-call of the boatmen, alternating with the splash of their oars, as they approached the crowded harbour; and he would have liked to hear it again. But Gertrude was at hand to hearken to and join in his vesper prayer, and to sing him to sleep with any hymn he chose.

"My pain has not come to-day, nor yesterday, nor the day before," said he, as he lay down. "I do not think it will come yet. O, Gertrude, suppose it should never come any more 1"

"And if not," said Gertrude, with a pitying smile, "what then?"

"Why, then I think I should like to live a thousand years, like the man we were, fancying the other day. But, perhaps, I might want next to be able to walk, and then to have no more coughing (for I am very tired of coughing sometimes). So I dare say it is best——"

"It is always best to make ourselves as happy as it pleases God to give us power to be, my dear boy; and I think you do this very well for a little lad."

As she stooped to kiss his forehead, Christian whispered that she very often helped to make him happy. "But," said he, "you think my pain will certainly come again?"

Gertrude could not tell. She recommended thinking as little about it as possible. If he thought about God, and what the gospel promises, he would be happy at the time, and best prepared, if his pain should seize him, "Whenever I think of Jesus Christ, Ger trade, it makes me long to have lived when he lived. If he had cured me, as he cured

so many, I would never have denied him, or gone away without thanking him. Do you really believe anybody ever did that?"

Gertrude was afraid it was too true; but suggested some palliations; and hinted that there were ways of testifying faithlessness or discipleship to Jesus even now, when he was present only in his gospel.

His spirit pillowed upon this truth, Christian fell asleep, and dreamed that he met Jesus on a shore, which would have been that of the Zuyder Zee, only that there were mountains; and that Jesus bade him walk, and that he not only walked, but flew up to the very top of the highest mountain, where he met Gertrude, and told her what had happened; and that she sang his favourite hymn; and that, though they seemed alone, many voices came to sing it with her from every side.

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Chapter III.

FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS

All circumstances seemed to favour Heins's wish of trying what he could do to surpass his father in the matter of commercial success. His partner—the most irksome check upon his enterprises,—was this year chosen one of the four reigning burgomasters; and it was impossible that Vanderput should gives much attention *as* usual to his private business, while engaged by his public office. From the presence of his mother, Heins was also to be soon released; a presence which imposed some degree of restraint on his projects, though Mrs. Snoek thought no more than the other women of Amsterdam of interfering in those commercial affairs of which they were supposed incompetent to judge.

This prudent lady found her worldly circumstances so much altered by the death of her husband, that she thought a considerable difference in her way of life desirable; though it was impossible to affirm such a change to be necessary. It was not enough to satisfy her that she and her younger children had an abundant capital, (partly invested in country estates, and partly deposited in the Bank of Amsterdam,) besides that which remained in the hands of the, firm. There was no longer a revenue from the exertions of the head of the family; and it appeared to her that there ought, therefore, to be a corresponding reduction in the family expenditure, and a more careful superintendence than ever of the means of revenue which remained. She decided on going, with her younger children, to reside on an estate which she possessed in a cheap part of the country, to the north, where she might herself manage the dairies, which had proved very productive while in the hands of her boors, and might be made still more profitable under her own management. Heins smiled to himself at this prudence in a rich widow, who could have afforded to gratify any ambition in which she might have been disposed to indulge; but he was too well pleased to be left to his own devices to offer any objection to the removal of the rest of the family to the neighbourhood of Winkel. He described the attractions of the green meadows to Roselyn, and of the shores of the Zee to Luc; and was very obliging in expediting matters for the letting of the house, and the despatch of the necessary furniture by the treckschuit. The house-tax being 2½ per cent. of the value of the house, whether it was tenanted or empty, the leaving it empty was not to be thought of, if such an extremity could by any means be avoided; but the tax on servants was also high; and this expense must go on till the family departed for Winkel, unless, as Heins dreaded, his mother should dismiss a part of her establishment while the eyes of her Amsterdam acquaintance were yet upon her. The object of the mother being to dismiss all her town servants but Kaatje, and her son's, to prevent their acquaintance witnessing this measure of economy, both were eager to let the house, and thereby expedite the final arrangements. It was perfectly satisfactory to all parties that Vanderput felt himself called upon, on the reception of his new dignity, to exhibit a little more outward state than formerly; to quit his humble abode, bring his sister to keep his house at Amsterdam, and make the cottage at Saardam his country abode. He

agreed with his partner that the Keiser's Graft was a very proper situation for the residence of a reigning burgomaster; and presently concluded a bargain for Mrs. Snoek's house, to the satisfaction of both parties. Nothing then remained to impede the execution of the family plans; and Hems, after seating his mother in the boat, carefully placing Christian on his cushions by her side, and bidding farewell, with a solemn countenance, to the joyous Luc and Koselyn, betook himself homewards with a full head, a light heart, and a most satisfactory sense of his own importance as the sole representative in Amsterdam of the opulent family of Snoek.

Heins possessed in perfection the happy art of deriving importance to himself from whatever conferred it on his connexions. No one looked more ostentatiously grave than he on the day when his partner was proceeding in state to take the oaths, and examine the treasure at the Bank, in virtue of his high office. Heins pushed his way through the crowd which surrounded the Stadt-house, and exhibited himself by turns at all the seven porticoes which answered to the seven provinces, glancing around him at each, in hopes of meeting the eye of some provincial connexion whom he might either pass over with a slight notice, or from whom he might admit congratulations on the honour with which his firm was now invested for ever. The greetings were as respectful as he could desire. They could not be exceeded, unless by such as he might receive when he should himself be a reigning burgomaster. Smoke roiled away in volumes from around his dignified person, while a dozen pipes at a time were dislodged at his approach; a hum of voices arose wherever he turned, and made itself heard above the bell-music ringing from the upper air. Many who had before insisted on room for their breeches, as the English ladies of the same period for their hoops, now squeezed themselves into small compass to let the junior partner of Vanderput pursue his majestic way. It seemed that Heins was to play the first part on the scene till the rare and thrilling sound of horses' feet should be heard, betokening the approach of the magistrates: but a mortifying circumstance occurred, which disturbed the tranquillity of the little great man.

He felt himself grasped on the shoulder by a heavy hand; and, turning round, was astonished to see that one in a common sailor's dress had thus dared to accost him. He superciliously released his shoulder, and would have passed on; but Master Peter would not let him escape thus easily. He wanted to inquire after his little friend Christian, and to complain of Gertrude for fixing her abode where it was impossible for her gentle face any more to look down upon the spot where Master Peter and his companions worked. He seemed amused instead of offended at Heins's endeavours to shake him off, and, by some inexplicable means, interested the bystanders, so that it might have been unwise to treat him with downright contempt.

“I have come from Saardam this morning,

Mr. Snoek, to assist at this honourable ceremony.”

“One might thereby know you for a foreigner,” replied Heins. “Our workmen of Holland do not leave their occupation to look on shows,—even so important as this. You may not find your master very ready to ask you to work again, if you must thus run away for a frolic.”

Master Peter smiled as if he was not very uneasy on this point, and observed that a true Hollander should be gratified by the interest of foreigners in the display of civic honours. Heins replied that this depended much on the quality of the foreign observers; to which Master Peter agreed, going on to say,

“I cannot see what I wish, after all. Your people are ready enough to show parts of this magnificent building.”

“It appears magnificent to foreigners, no doubt,” replied Heins, with dry complacency; “but we must have something better than this hereafter.”

“Something better than this noble Stadt-house!” exclaimed Master Peter. “Where will you find a better architect than Van Campen? And when will Holland be more prosperous than in Van Campen's time? Holland is not what she was; and she will yet look back with a melancholy pride on the century when the Stadt-house was built at Amsterdam.”

“You think so much of this place because you have seen nothing like it, I suppose. You have seen Moscow, perhaps?”

Peter had happened to be there once; far inland as it was for a common sailor to go.

“Well; you had better get such a building as this erected there, if you can persuade your emperor to undertake so grand an enterprise; and then we will show you what better things we can do.”

“Perhaps our emperor will take you at your word, Mr. Snoek, while he is about building his new city. We have the Kremlin already at Moscow; but our new city would be graced by such an erection as this. Shall I put your idea into the Keiser's head?”

Heins nodded a compassionate assent. Master Peter continued,

“But I must carry my story complete. I must get within those iron doors on the ground floor, which look as if they were meant to shut in a legion of devils. There is not a dyke on all your coast that could not be forced more easily than those doors, if they are as strong as they appear.”

“ They are thus strong. What defence can be too strong for the forty millions of guilders that are stored in the Bank of Amsterdam?”

Master Peter observed to himself that he must have a view of this treasure-chamber before he left Holland; an observation which Heins overheard, and treated with fitting ridicule, informing the stranger that no foot ever crossed the threshold of the treasure-chambers but those of the reigning burgomasters, who were the administrators of the Bank.

“You say there are forty millions of guilders in”those chambers,” observed Master Peter. “I should have thought there had been more, considering how extensively your

Bank deals with all merchants who tread your quays." for, Heins was far from meaning to say that the Bank dealt only to the extent of these forty millions. It was not necessary that precious metal should be kept to meet the presentation of bank receipts which had expired. It was enough that receipts in actual circulation should be convertible; and forty millions of guilders seemed to him a rather striking amount of convertible currency, to be issued by one bank.

"You should remember, Mr. Snoek, that this Bank is not like other banks, where merchants may deal or not, as it pleases them. Your law that every bill drawn upon Amsterdam, or negotiated here, of the value of 600 guilders, must be paid in bank money, obliges all merchants trading in your country to have an account with your Bank; so that the amount of money in these treasure-chambers is a pretty fair guide to the extent of your commerce."

Heins observed that the law in question was necessary, as, before it was made, the varying quality of the metal currency at Amsterdam rendered the value of bills of exchange so uncertain as materially to injure the operations of commerce. In a place to which money flowed from all parts of the world, there must necessarily be much clipt and worn coin in circulation. While such coin was present, all that was issued, new and good, from the Mint, immediately disappeared; and to whatever extent the issue might proceed, the merchants could scarcely obtain enough good money to pay their bills. Under these circumstances, the institution of bank-money was most serviceable to the credit and commerce of the country; and the law which compelled the payment of all bills of 600 guilders and upwards, in such money, was only a new evidence, in Heins's opinion, of the depth of Dutch wisdom, and the fertility of Dutch genius. How well the experiment had answered was proved by the willingness of all respectable merchants to pay a premium for this bank money. Though the difference between good coin and the light money which was poured into Holland at the time of the establishment of the Bank was no more than nine per cent., the merchants had been willing, from the very beginning, to allow the bank money to bear a more considerable agio.

They might well be thus willing, Master Peter thought, since their bank deposits were safe from robbery, Fire and other accidents; the whole city of Amsterdam being bound for it.

"The city, though not the depositing merchants, was very near losing much of its bank wealth by fire," replied Heins, pointing to a part of the Stadt-house which appeared newer than the rest. "See how near the treasure-chamber the flames must have approached! Some say that smoked guilders blacked the hands of the receivers, so lately as twenty years back, when the Bank was called upon to make large issues of coin, from the French having reached Utrecht."

"This proves either extraordinary confidence in the Bank, or that it keeps an ample stock of precious metal," observed Peter. "Money cannot he much wanted which remains smoked for sixty years after a fire. However, your merchants are wise to let money remain where it is safe."

“Our bank-credits serve our objects as well as cash,” replied Heins; “and if we called out our funds in the shape of coin, every good ducat would be worth no more than the base money which foreigners set afloat in the market. It answers our purpose better to sell our claim for this money at a premium than to use the actual money; and thus the Bank preserves its resources within itself.”

“And more than preserves them. Your city must derive a fine revenue from this Bank. There are fees on deposit; fees on transfer; fines for neglecting to balance accounts twice a-year; and no little profit by selling foreign coin for more, than is given for it, and by disposing of bank-money at a higher agio than that at which it is received. All this together must amount to much more than the expenses of the establishment.”

Heins began to feel an increase of respect for the foreign sailor, who seemed to know as much of commercial concerns as if he had been a Dutchman. He was also impressed by the tone of confidence with which the stranger spoke of what improvements would be adopted from abroad into his own country. It was strange to hear him now pronouncing upon a national bank as one of the necessary institutions of the Keiser's new city. No commerce, he declared, could proceed on equal terms between a country that had stable banks and one that had not. The advantages of a bank as a medium for the transaction of business, as a rendezvous for the balancing of bills of exchange, and, above all, as a security, by the practice of discounting, against all dangerous inequalities in the distribution of money, were too great to be compared with any other plan of mutual accommodation. The Stadt-house might be rivalled as a building; but unless its noble banking institution was adopted, no imitation could command such respect as the original. The Keiser must establish a bank, or the great city of the Neva would never rival that of the Amstel, to whatever pitch of grandeur its contemplated navy might attain.

Heins was So far propitiated by this speech that he would have allowed the sailor to stand immediately behind him when the procession passed, if it had so pleased Master Peter; but his curiosity was too active to allow him to stand stock still, as he was desired, when the unaccustomed train of horsemen appeared in sight. He laughed very unceremoniously at the portly figures of the burgomasters, who appeared packed into their seats in much fear of falling. The saddles were very safely peaked before and behind, while the swelling garments of the riders formed a cushion of defence on each side; insomuch that the question seemed rather to be how they should contrive to dismount, than whether there was any danger in their present position. When their predecessors in office appeared in one of the porticoes to receive the new potentates, the work of dismounting began, amidst the solemn officious help of a train of inferior personages; and this was the time chosen by Master Peter to cross the open space from which the crowd had been driven back, and make his way straight into the interior of the building. A hundred hands were held out to stop him, and a hundred voices cried out upon his insolence. But these impediments only roused his passion. He appeared in a tremendous fury for a few moments; but, instead of doing any act of violence, he looked around him as if for some who would execute vengeance for him. Meeting no friendly faces, he dismissed his wrath, and made some mysterious brief appeal to a man in authority, who, with no further hesitation, opened a way for the

stranger into the court where the ceremony was about to take place; a privilege which none but the officials connected with the Bank had ever before been known to enjoy.

As soon as Heins had recovered a little from his amazement, it occurred to him that that which had been granted to a common sailor would scarcely be refused to the partner of one of the dignitaries; and forthwith he too crossed over; he too attempted to pass through the portico. The observing people seemed at a loss what to do this time. The hundred hands were only half raised; the thousand voices produced only a murmur. The officers, however, knew their duty. At a sign from the magistrate who had admitted Master Peter's appeal, they interposed their batons; and two of them, seizing the mortified merchant by each arm, conducted him back among the crowd, followed by a frown from Vanderput, and welcomed by grave jokes from his less enterprising neighbours. There he was left to murmur out his discontent, while the despised Master Peter was witnessing the remarkable ceremony of the delivery of the charge of the Bank of Amsterdam by one set of magistrates to their successors. It was mortifying to Heins to hear from him afterwards the details of how the four great wax lights were brought in grave procession, and put, together with the Bank books, into the hands of their new guardians; how the massive bolts of the treasure-chambers revolved amidst the silence, and were returned to their staples when the officials had entered; how the time seemed long while the examiners were comparing the treasure with the account of it in the Bank books; how eagerly listened to was their declaration, when they came out, that all was correct; and how solemn the oath then administered to them, that they would faithfully discharge their office, and guard the civic treasure. Of the aspect of the ponderous keys every one could judge for himself, as each of the new magistrates, when he re-appeared, wore a bunch of them at his girdle, and probably felt that they constituted the heaviest penance of the day.

Heins was pacing homewards, not altogether so happy in his self-importance as when he had traversed the same ground a few hours before, when he was crossed in his path by Slyk.

“Ha! I thought you had been fifty miles off,” said Heins. “I was told you had settled to the northward of us.”

“News which may or may not be true,” replied Slyk, mysteriously. “I have more to say to you thereupon. You must visit me;—after 'Change time. After 'Change time, remember. Fransje will entertain us well at table, if you will sup. You will sup with us, friend Snoek.”

Francesca bent forward eagerly to enforce the invitation, which Heins accepted, after having gazed at the sky with knit brows, and then round upon the walls, as if looking there for a record of his engagements.—Slyk believed he was adding another inducement when he hinted that his discourse of the evening might bear some relation to Heins's respected mother.

“How interesting Mr. Snoek is!” was Francesca's observation to her father, as she stole a glance after Heins. “How sad he looked before he saw us just now! He will never get over his father's death.”

“Poor youth! The cares of the world have come early upon him,” observed her father. “We must guide him in the disposal of his affairs, and cheer his spirits, Fransje.”

Francesca needed no prompting to do so gentle a service to the rich young merchant, who might rise to be a reigning burgomaster, if he could rally his spirits up to the point of ambition.—She would not have despaired of this, if she had seen the difference in the countenance of Heins before and after meeting her. He reached his own abode, consoled by the thought that if society at large was yet unaware of his merits, there was one personage of some consideration, with a fair and lively daughter, who thought him worth asking to supper.

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Chapter IV.

WISE MEN AT SUPPER

In such a country as Holland was at the time of our story, the prime subject of interest to persons engaged in commerce was the state of the Exchange. By this, the merchants not only found their own affairs determined, but were furnished with an indication of the general condition of trade at home and abroad. As by the Exchange, the debts of individuals residing at a distance from their creditors are cancelled without the transmission of money, the state of the Exchange marks out clearly in which country there has been the greatest amount of purchase, and in which of sale. It affords no indication of the positive amount of purchase and sale, because when this is nearly balanced between different countries, the exchange nearly preserves its level: or, to use technical language, is nearly at par. But the relative amount is infallibly shown by the exchange of any country being above or below par; and this circumstance serves to guide individuals in the conduct of their transactions.

Instead of discharging debts to foreigners in the manner taken for granted by Christian,—viz., by transmitting money to a foreign land, as they would to the grocer's or the wine-merchant's in the next street, exporters and importers were early obliged, by an absurd enactment against the exportation of money, to devise some expedient for paying each other without using gold and silver. The most obvious way was to set against one another the values of things bought and sold, so that the balance was all that remained to be discharged. When it did not happen that the same firm at home had bought of the same firm abroad to whom it had sold, it was only necessary to find another firm at home which had bought in the same market abroad, and to exchange acknowledgments of debt, up to the amount at which the respective debts balanced one another; and these acknowledgments of debt served as money, in the same way as the promissory notes of bankers. In 1190, (which is the earliest recorded date of the practice of exchanging debts,) if an English merchant sold 100l. worth of cider into Holland, and his Dutch connexion had sold to another London merchant 90*l*. worth of fat cattle, the readiest way of paying the greater part of the debt was for the Dutchman to refer his cider selling correspondent to his neighbour, the importer of cattle, for 90*l*.: 10*l*. would still remain due; and as the Dutchman was prohibited from sending it in gold and silver, he would look about for some neighbour who had 10*l*. owing to him from England, and would say, “I will pay you 10*l*., if you will desire your debtor to pay the same sum to my correspondent on the other side the water.” By this simple mutual accommodation, the expense and risk of sending large sums of money are avoided; the postage, and the stamp charged by government upon such transactions, are the only cost incurred; and the whole process of buying and selling is simplified to all parties.

The convenience of this method being found great, it was improved as commerce increased, till a market was established where merchants might meet and make their exchanges without loss of time, instead of having to run after one another in search of

what each wanted. The next thing was to institute a class of persons whose express business should be to manage these transactions. These persons, the bill-brokers, can tell how nearly the debts of different countries balance each other; and it is they who first purchase, and then provide merchants with these acknowledgments of debt, which circulate instead of money. These disposable acknowledgments, called bills of exchange, bear a very small proportion to the bargains between any two trading countries; because, where there is considerable intercourse, the sales of one party generally nearly balance those of the other. The nearness of their approach to a balance determines the price of those bills which remain to be sold, or which are desired to be bought. When bills are scarce, and merchants have difficulty in procuring these ready means of discharging their debts, they are anxious to pay a price for them, in order to be spared the inconvenience of transmitting money. A competition ensues, and it becomes generally known that the country where the bills are scarce has bought more than it has sold; that it owes more money than it has to receive; that (to use the technical term) the exchange is unfavourable to that country. The reverse is known to be the case when there is a superabundance of bills in the market; so that the merchants of a great trading country anxiously watch the exchange-market, not only to get their own debts settled, but to learn the general condition of commerce.

In order to the immediate detection of an alteration in the course of exchange, it was desirable to have a certain fixed point of calculation to which all variations might be referred. This fixed point was called the par of the exchange, and denoted, when it was first instituted, a perfect equality of exchange, both of goods and money, between the trading parties. The exchange between Holland and Great Britain was at par when the two countries sent exactly the same amount of wealth to each other. Supposing ten guilders to go to a pound, the exchange would be at par when the Dutch exported to England one thousand guilders' worth of commodities, and imported from England one hundred pounds' worth of commodities. So that, so long as ten guilders go to a pound, and Holland and England exchange the same quantity of goods, the exchange will not vary, really or seemingly, from the fixed point of calculation. It is only the one country exporting more goods than the other which can really make the amount of value due greater from one than the other: but, because ten guilders have not always gone to a pound, more money has sometimes appeared to be due from one than the other, even while the quantity of goods exchanged has been precisely the same, as computed in anything but the altered money. When eleven guilders go to the pound, while the par of exchange is still called ten, more money will appear to be due from Holland to England for the same quantity of goods as before; and consequently, while the actual state of trade will be exactly the same as before, it will be declared on 'Change that the exchange has turned against Holland; *i. e.,* that Holland owes more money to England than she has to receive. However, merchants whose interest it is to watch the course of exchange, easily distinguish the real from tire nominal variation, and learn to make use of the fixed point of calculation with due allowance for the difference caused by the alterations in the value of money. They can ascertain what they want to know of the general state of commerce, in the midst of what would be, to an inexperienced person, a deception; and a merchant who has, by any rare accident, been prevented from going on 'Change, only wants to know the nominal variation from par, and to compare it with his knowledge of the respective currencies of the two

countries, to satisfy himself as to which ought to push its exports, and which its imports.

The first question asked by one Dutch merchant of another, in Heins's time, usually related to the exchange. It was that which his old friend Jakob greeted him with this evening, as, punctual to the appointed moment, he entered the apartment where Francesca and supper were waiting to honour and be honoured by him.—Heins saw at a glance that better entertainment was provided for him than his wealthy parents had ever thought fit to indulge him with. It shad been their method to surround themselves with whatever was essential to comfort, and whatever served as a good investment for their money; but, in all articles of mere consumption, they had been frugal in a way which Slyk and his daughter seemed little disposed to imitate. While the Snoeks' cellars were full of choice French wines and brandies, they drank beer only. While preparing the richest butter and cheese which their fat meadows could produce, their servants and children must be content with an inferior kind, imported salt. Not thus was Jakob's table furnished by his fair daughter. On the present occasion, it looked very tempting. Placed between the windows, so that the eaters might enjoy the amusement of observing the passers by, without the table itself being seen from without, one source of entertainment, always acceptable to a Dutchman, was secure. There was no lack of odoriferous foreign fruits, of flasks whose aspect was, not to be mistaken, or of more substantial delicacies from the native pastures and decoys. This array was reflected from each corner of the apartment by mirrors, so placed as to exhibit every object within ken, from the train of passengers on the bridge at the bottom of the street, and the slow-moving barge advancing in an opposite direction, to the beau-pots filled with tulips which stood on the floor in corresponding angles of the apartment. What made the aspect of the place the most dazzling to Heins was, that there were four Francescas, each differing from the other according to the direction in which the gazer looked. Here, the profile of the pretty face and the jewelled arm were most conspicuous; there, the closely fitting jacket, and the knot of hair fastened behind with a silver pin. Now, the bright eyes looked out from between the two ringlets which curled exactly to the same turn on the foreheads of all Dutchwomen; and again, the yellow slipper was seen to rest on the chauife-pied, whose constant use must infallibly spoil the form of the most beautiful foot that ever trod the quays of Amsterdam. At the further end of this radiant apartment leaned old Jakob, prepared with questions about how matters looked on 'Change: in the middle sat Franeesca, deeming it no affront that such affairs were considered of the first importance, even in her presence; and between them stood Heins, commercial *con amore* one moment, and awkwardly gallant the next, till the familiarity of the evening meal enabled him to make his attentions to the father and the daughter more compatible than it had at first appeared possible to render them.

“They may talk of our commerce having declined,” said Slyk, “but there is no nation like the Dutch after all. Our refugee divines preach to more purpose to us than they did in France, about the wisdom of Solomon in his traffic with Hiram, king of Tyre, and all the riches that he gained thereby. We are a people obedient to the Divine word, Mr. Heins; and it pleases Heaven to prosper our industry, in spite of seeming obstacles. Even Solomon's wisdom was not taxed to procure cedar and shittim wood in the face of king Hiram's prohibitions; but we have done as much in getting the

exchange with England turned in our favour, notwithstanding her late jealous enactments."

Franeesca was of opinion that Holland was now under a special divine blessing for having received and cherished the Huguenots who had been driven from France. Heins thought that this opinion was countenanced by the fact that a considerable part of the prosperity of the States was derived from the industry of these very refugees. On the other hand, England was also open to the Huguenots, and it was against England that the exchange had turned.

This was a difficulty easily answered, Jakob said. England was punished for her jealousy; for her unneighbourly conduct towards the States. Was it not Heins's belief that a vast importation of brandies, velvets, and jewellery from Dutch vessels had been going on in England of late?

"Certainly," replied Heins. "While we can gain no more than two, or, at most, three per cent, on our capital at home, we must invest it abroad, even at some risk; and this has been done in England to such an extent that the government there must be a little surprised at the present course of the exchange. Visscher has put but a small percentage in his pocket today, I rather think; for there is such an abundance of bills on England in the market, and so few are present to buy, that the business has been very languid."

"There will soon be an end of that," replied Slyk. "A flood of this kind of money is presently absorbed. It is not like our hard gold, or our bank money, which rests at the disposal of one nation instead of two."

Heins suggested that bank money was like a ball sent up by a solitary player, which might return or be lost according to the skill or awkwardness with which it was thrown; whereas exchange money was a shuttlecock played between two nations, which was sure to visit each in turn, as long as both were interested in keeping up the game. This flight of fancy, so much more French than Dutch, enhanced Francesca's admiration of the accomplishments of the young merchant. She was not aware, however, that bills of exchange could be exactly called money. She knew that they might, in one sense, be so considered, as "they discharged debts; but debts might also be discharged by barter, where no money was present.—Heins explained that bills of exchange form an actual currency, temporary in its, nature, like bank paper, but possessing all the requisites of a medium of exchange.

"I have been using one as money this very day," he continued. "You must know,—(I do not hesitate to speak openly before friends)—I have been trying my fortune, while others did, in a venture to England. I am not in the habit of exporting, as you know; but I shipped a snug package of velvets, which certain great folks are at this moment wearing, perhaps in the king of England's own presence. I was paid in a bill drawn on a timber merchant here, payable at usance;———you know what that means?"

Familiar as the term was, the young lady did not know what it meant. Heins explained that bills are paid either at sight, or at a certain specified time after date, or at the

period which is pointed out by the custom or law of the place on which the bill is drawn; which period is called the usance of the place. At Amsterdam this was one month after date. Heins went on,

“I was, at the same time, desirous of purchasing some powder and ball, which I had a fine opportunity of disposing of. I therefore offered this bill,—not to the owner of the powder, (who would leave Amsterdam before the bill became due, and would have charged me whatever it might cost him to have it changed for a different kind of money,)—but to my friend Visscher, the bill-broker, who sold me a bill on Copenhagen, which suited my powder-merchant's convenience, and put a profit into Visscher's pocket, and saved me the necessity of calling any money out of the Bank. So you see this bill was real money in my hands, is so now in Visscher's, and may be again in a hundred other hands before the month is up.”

Slyk thought commerce would slacken grievously if bills did not serve as a circulating medium, as well as being the means of liquidating debts. If people were obliged to depend on their individual stock of money for the prosecution of all their undertakings, they would be stopped short at the outset of many a fine speculation: whereas by having access to the credit-bank (viz. the exchange market), and thus being able to exchange their credit for cash, at a small sacrifice, facilities were afforded, and an equalization of demand was established which was highly favourable to an extensive and beneficial employment of capital. This was the advantage of bills bearing date, instead of being, in all instances, payable at sight. When payable at sight, they were not of course money; and every protraction of date was equivalent to an increase in the quantity of money; as the bill passed through more hands, the longer it had a separate existence from the cash it represented.

“I suppose, then,” said Francesca, “that your new undertaking is to be carried on by the help of this kind of money. But perhaps bills of exchange do not circulate so far inland.”

“I have nothing to do but to exchange them for inland bills, or for cash,” observed her father. “Snoek, you say that foreign bills superabound on 'Change. What say you to some of the spare capital which is afloat being lent to me for a grand and beneficial design which I have in hand some way up the country?”

“I have little or no money to spare just at this time,” replied Heins: “for the present state of the exchange, you see, is just that which makes it desirable for us to import to the utmost. I must invest in British produce as much as I can gather together while bills on Britain are cheap. But there must be many exporters who are slackening their business till the exchange turns. They will be ready enough to let you have money at little or nothing above the common rate of interest. What is your object?”

“I told you that I might give you news of your mother this evening. I saw her yesterday morning, and all the children; and I may see her again once or twice a week, if I am enabled to carry on my design. In that case, I shall settle in her near neighbourhood.”

"And Fransje,"—inquired Hems, looking with an appearance of anxiety towards the lady,—"Fransje, will you leave us too?"

"I shall delight in being so near your mother," replied Fransje. "And. those dear children, I could sit; by Christian's couch from morning till night. He is so interesting! It is so soothing too, to one's heart, to be able to cheer such a sufferer!"

Heins knew that Fransje's presence did not usually cheer Christian's spirits, but quite the reverse. He remembered also that Fransje never could sit beside the invalid for half an hour together, unless there was some one present to admire her assiduity; while Gertrude, who said nothing about the pleasure, had frequently held the boy in her arms for hours during his agony, and kept her seat through a long summer's day when Christian could not, with all his endeavours, keep his temper with anybody else. Heins smiled vaguely, however, upon Fransje's protestations: and when talk of business was resumed, her fancy wandered on into the days when she might enact the applauded sister-in-law, in return for the desirable establishment she should have obtained as the lady of the rising merchant, Heins Snoek.

"You remember," said Jakob, "the fine vein of turf that runs from the dyke at Winkel to the lake twenty miles inland. I have often said, *as I* suppose many others have, that it is a shame that vein is not worked."

Heins had heard that there were many doubts whether it would be worth while to excavate this turf till labour should be cheaper in the north, and more fuel required for the increasing population. Slyk, however, had an answer to every objection.

If it was merely to dig up a single cargo of turf," said he, "I grant you it would not be worth while to transport labourers from the South. But mine is a very extensive plan indeed. In the first place, this turf lies only two feet below the surface, and it is seven feet deep. It will be some time before we exhaust such a vein, twenty miles in length. O, I assure you, the breaks are nothing; merely caused by the intersecting dykes. We have only to cross over, and begin again at the distance of a few feet.—Permission! can you suppose we shall be refused permission to improve the land as we proceed, to the great advantage of the owners? Yes; to their great advantage; as you will say when you have heard the whole of my scheme. We shall not make a swamp of the excavation. No, no. We will leave the honour of making inland lakes to our ancestors. I do not wonder that you take fright at the idea of a new lake, twenty miles long. I mean, instead of a lake, to have a fat green meadow, stretching from Winkel to nearly the opposite coast."

Did not water always rise where turf was cut? Heins asked, Would not the proprietors of the soil object that no share of the fuel procured would compensate to them for having their fields turned into a bog? Slyk assured him that nothing was further from his thoughts than parting with the turf so near home. At Winkel, Heins was reminded, there was a strand, backed by a line of sand-hills, where the accumulated cockleshells of a million of tides were heaped. On these hills a range of kilns was to be erected to convert the cockle-shells into lime to manure the wet soil by filling up the spaces from which the turf was dug. From this strand was the fuel to be shifted, in order to

command a sale in every town and village on the Zuyder Zee, and the coasts with which it communicated. The next thing would be to import lean Danish cattle, to fatten on the meadows enriched by the produce of the lime-kilns. From these arose visions, in Heine's fancy, of unfathomable depths of butter, innumerable multitudes of cheeses, of dairy farms rising-on the slope of every dyke, and vessels entering each creek and bay along the shore. Slyk had succeeded in captivating his mercantile imagination far better than Francesca the nobler part of the faculty. While turf was the only object in the picture, Heins doubted and weighed as a Dutchman should; but when above the turf there were meadows, and on the meadows cattle, with dairy farms in the fore-ground, lime-kilns in the distance, and shipping on the horizon, Heins was carried away by a vehement desire to have a share in all this enterprise; to be in part master of this grand new creation. He was little aware on what a shaking bog all this superstructure of hopes was built.

Slyk had many requisites for the conduct of a speculation. He had enterprise; he had experience; and he had not the restraint of a conscience; but he had also no money: at least, he had what in Holland at that time was called no money. He had enough in house, furniture, clothes, and jewels to have sold for what would comfortably maintain himself and his daughter; but this was poverty, in the eyes of the Dutch merchants of 1696. To have no disposable funds, was a degree of poverty at which many a boor would have been alarmed; and it was so extraordinary a case, that Slyk's whole endeavour was to keep his plight a secret, and to get out of it as soon as he could. As he was rather changeable in his employments, it was not very easy to track him; and his manner was of that imposing kind which commonly bespeaks conscious wealth; so that Heins was excusable for concluding, with the rest of the world of Amsterdam, that old Jakob Slyk was rich. So rapidly did his supposition rise, this day, to conviction, that he was presently conscious of lamenting that he had destined so much of his disposable capital to investments in foreign produce; and pondering how much he could extricate, to be applied in Slyk's speculation.

“You mean to conduct the whole yourself,” he said. “You speak of settling on the spot.”

“Certainly, and you must visit your mother frequently, to see how the work proceeds. You will go with us to-morrow, if you really think of taking a share. You will go over the ground with me.”

Heins thought of the business which required his attention at home; of the cargoes to be unloaded; the foreign letters to be looked for in the present condition of the exchange; and the necessary observation of commercial affairs, for which his partner could scarcely find time for some days after his entrance upon his new office. Heins feared he could not go.

Francesca intimated that she was to accompany her father, and spoke of the family party at Winkel. Heins hesitated, but feared he must delay. Slyk let drop that Gertrude was to go in the same boat to pay her promised visit to Mrs. Snoek; and then, after much talk about hesitation and difficulty, Heins found, at last, that he could contrive to get away for a few days. There were certain signs of vexation in her countenance

which her father endeavoured to screen from observation by fixing Heins's attention on himself. He expatiated on his own fitness for the undertaking, from the experience he had had in the management of all conceivable affairs that can come within the province of a money-maker. To judge by his own intimations, he must be the richest man in the States. He instanced all the occasions of his gains, and none of his losses.

“Trust me to manage labourers' said he.” I shall scarcely have such trouble with another set as I had with my fourteen boatmen, once upon a time, at the outset of the herring-fishery. Fransje, you remember that stormy 24th of June?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Fransje. “The sea lashed the dyke as if it had been mid-winter, as the fishermen went to church. Their wives followed trembling, and said it was blasphemy to ask a blessing on the fishery, if their husbands tempted Providence by going out in such a storm. By midnight, most of the men thought so too; and the moment of sailing passed away while they stood on the dyke, each boat's company looking at the rest, to see what they meant to do. I well remember the flashes of lightning disclosing the tossing row of empty boats.”

“Not all empty, however,” observed Slyk.” I led the way, and it was not ten minutes after midnight when the last of my crew stepped on board. I had the advantage of their being Catholics, however. There was only one Calvinist; and he was nearly enough to spoil the whole, till I took him on the side of predestination. Then he was quiet enough; and the Catholics set up one saint against another, so as to leave a balance of probabilities that we should get safe home.”

Heins laughed, though in some constraint, through wonder that the sanctimonious Jakob should thus come out in the new character of a joking adventurer. Did the party get safe home? he asked.

“Safe! yes; and much more than safe. We ran for the Brill; and had the luck to get in first; as was very just, since we were the first to go out,—only five minutes after the legal time, remember, in a midsummer tempest. We brought in a fine cargo, and sold every fish at a ducat. That was equally agreeable to Catholic and Calvinist.”

“And which were you?”

“Oh, we were all of one faith that day;—that the first herrings of the season are special gifts of Providence to the Dutch of all persuasions, You should have seen the scramble there was *for* our cargo. All the sick people in the place, or their nurses, came out to get a fresh herring as an infallible cure; and those in health were almost equally eager. We were not disposed to doubt the recipe which brought in ducats as fast as if they had been stivers.”

“You make a point of having a fresh herring, the first day of the season,” remarked Francesca, looking doubtfully at her father, whom she had never before heard to question the soundness of the popular belief in the sovereign efficacy of the first-caught herrings.

"And always shall, my dear, while I have a ducat to buy one with. I am only pointing out the advantage that it was to me and my men that they had a leader over them who knew how to manage them. One quarter of an hour, later, and the Brill would have been supplied from another buss. This is not the only time, Heins, that I made a little fortune at sea in one trip. It is some years ago now,—but I remember as if it was yesterday,—a singular little expedition that I made during the war. To be sure, there was sufficient danger in it, and nicety enough required to make me remember it pretty distinctly; but really, I could fancy, (if you had not told me the course of the exchange to-day,) that the French were still before our ports. Poor fellows! a very provoking thing was near happening to two or three of their captains. They would have been obliged to refuse battle with our ships, and make the best of their way home, if it had not been for me. I helped them to some of their laurels."

"You helped the French to their laurels" exclaimed Heins in astonishment. "How did you do that? and why?"

"I have by nature,—I should say, I owe to Providence a high sense of justice," replied Slyk, gravely. "I could never bear to see any advantage gained, even by my own country, where there was not fair play; and I can never consider battle conducted on equal terms when one party has plenty of ammunition, and the other little or none. This was the case in the instance I speak of."

"So you robbed the French ships of ammunition, in order to afford the Dutch fair play. Truly, the gallant French would not have cared much for laurels won from a defenceless enemy."

"You mistake the matter quite," replied Slyk. "If the deed you describe would have been patriotic, mine was much more so, and in a very refined way. It was the French who wanted powder and ball. But I did not rob the Dutch. What was obtained from them was by their own free will. I went to meet a vessel on its way from the Baltic with ball, and made rapid sail, so as to fall in with the French just in time to supply them with the means of keeping up the fight."

"But the powder: the Baltic vessel did not furnish you with powder, I suppose."

"The powder I was obliged to afford at a less advantage to myself. The Dutch commander was willing enough to furnish me, out of his superfluity, with what I wanted; but he insisted on such a price as left me small profit. I told him it was hardly worth the risk of stealing my way through the smoke to the other side of the enemy, for so small a share of the profits as I pocketed. But, between us, we carried off a pretty lump of French money; enough to console our commander for being beaten, and to compensate to me for the risk and the toil. It was hard and hot work handing up on one side the ship the ammunition which was to be fired into the Dutchman from the other; but both parties might thank me for securing them fair play."

Heins's veneration for Dutch genius rose higher than ever. He doubted whether any country could produce a parallel to this instance of practical wisdom. But there was more for him to hear:—many a narrative of expeditions up and down the Rhine, when

sugar, coffee, and woollen cloths were disposed of to unheard of advantage at every village on the way up, and enormous rafts of timber swept down the stream in return, bearing the exulting Jakob home to the country of which Heins began to think him a conspicuous ornament. Many a region had he also supplied with earthenware, and his exploits in tobacco-pipes were enough of themselves to immortalize his commercial genius. The Winkel adventure now appeared a moderate and purely rational affair, and Heins himself began to see the expediency of enlarging the speculation yet further by adding a tobacco-pipe manufactory to their establishment, if, as was expected, the right kind of earth was found to be plentiful near any spot of the twenty miles of turf soil.

“You will be ready to go with us early tomorrow to see your mother,” said Fransje, quitting the table to make her preparations for departure.

“To view the ground,” added her father.

Heins rose as he replied that, in order to do so, he must hasten away to consult his partner on the whole affair, and make arrangements for diverting some of his capital from other channels in order to engage in this new object. But he would see what could be done in a few hours. Slyk assured him that there was no haste about the advance of capital, as there was abundance in hand; that he had better view the ground before he decided anything, or troubled his illustrious partner at so busy a time with an important affair, of which all the details could not yet be presented. Heins agreed not to trouble his partner further at present than to send him a note of excuse for an absence of a few days on a visit to Winkel.

Slyk told the truth when he said that he had at present abundance of money for the carrying on of his enterprise. It by no means followed that it was his own. Whose it was depended upon circumstances yet future; depended, not only on whether the speculation should terminate favourably or unfavourably, but on the length of time that it-could be carried on.

Slyk's plan was one very common among adventurers. It was to raise money by drawing and re-drawing inland bills of exchange, in combination with two men of a genius of as high an order as his own. The Dutch banks were not all like the great bank of Amsterdam. There were some in every large town in the states which were very like banks in general, and which were subject to imposition from adventurers. From the coffers of two or three of these banks Slyk's friends contrived to extract capital for his purposes, taking the chance of the enterprise turning out well enough to enable them to replace what they now borrowed on false pretences.

Slyk drew a bill upon honest Hugo Cats of Haerlem, payable two months after date. Not that Cats owed Slyk anything; but in consideration of being allowed to draw in his turn for the amount, with interest and commission, he permitted the supposition of a debt. In order to avoid suspicion, the re-drawing was done through a third party, Cats drawing his bill, before the expiration of the two months, on Geysbuk of Rotterdam; who, in his turn, was to draw on Slyk before the expiration of the further two months. The bill returned on Slyk must bear, of course, a great accumulation of

interest and commission, but he trusted to his enterprise to pay off all; and his immediate object was answered in the bankers' gold being obtained which was to enable him to make his first payments to his labourers, and to the proprietors of the vein of turf from which he expected so much wealth. Interest was low, at this time: a sure sign that the profits of stock were also low? but Slyk intended that *his* profits should be unlike those which followed every other investment of capital, and justify, by the issue, his plan of raising money by circulation.

The bankers were rendered unsuspicious, not only by the comparative infrequency of fraudulent speculation at a time and in a country where a needy merchant was a phenomenon almost unheard of, but by the mode in which the bills were indorsed. Several names appeared on the back of each bill; and these and the shortness of the date together gave an appearance of security to the whole affair. It was scarcely likely that all these parties should fail before the expiration of the two months, even if the drawer and acceptor had been considered persons of doubtful credit. But there was no reason for questioning any part of the proceeding. The re-drawing was always done in good time to prevent any attention being fixed upon the previous bill; and the first advance of money seemed to have been gained so easily, that the parties resolved to repeat the experiment, if they failed to obtain, at a less cost, the funds they wanted, from Heins, or from some other rich merchant, young and uncontrolled enough to be made a dupe. Meantime, the speculators amused themselves with contemplating the unconscious security of all whom they had made their tools;—of the bankers from whose coffers they had abstracted their capital, and of such of the indorsers as were no worse than careless, and who therefore little dreamed of the necessity which might arise for their paying for the delinquency of the drawer. If they were disposed to complain of the hardship of each indorser being liable for the amount of a protested bill, (that is, of a bill which the acceptor cannot pay,) they should have been more careful to ascertain the soundness of the credit with which they linked their own.

There was little liability of this kind incurred with respect to foreign bills of exchange; the Dutch merchants of that period being cautious and experienced in their dealings with strangers. But, at home, suspicion was nearly laid asleep in a state of things which afforded rare occasion to a spirit of adventure, and little temptation to fraud. Where money abounded to such a degree as to bring down the rate of interest to the lowest point, and to constitute every trader a man of substance, capital was little in request, and could be had almost for the asking. Slyk had the art to make his own use of the security thus generated, and to obtain capital, at a greater cost certainly than if he had been able to prove himself a trustworthy person, but freed from the necessity of manufacturing this kind of proof. He preferred having to pay heavy interest and commission at last, to allowing attention to be fixed upon his honour and his substance; and the views of his companions were congenial with his own.

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Chapter V.

GOING NORTHWARDS.

The transit from Amsterdam to Winkel was accomplished too soon for the wishes of some of the party, while others found it very wearisome. These last were not rendered impatient by the annoyances which would have fatigued an English traveller,—the slowness of the trekschuit, the frequent interruptions of the bridges over the canal, and the smoking which went on on board the boat. All these were matters of course to a Dutch voyager. Heins's unexpected attendance was much more wearisome to Gertrude than any anticipated circumstances of the voyage; and her ancient attendant was more annoyed by the manifest rivalship of Francesca Slyk than by any infliction, in the form of smoke or garlic, of the other passengers. Heins, on the other hand, enjoyed and made the most of the protracted opportunity thus afforded him of paying his court to Gertrude, well knowing that, once on shore, his privileges would be at an end. While she sat sewing in the roef, or best cabin, he took his place beside her, and importuned her with conversation, in defiance of Francesca's frequent calls to observe the pleasure boats which floated on the canal, or the laden barges which were being towed down, or the trim gardens of the country houses stretching to the brink of the water. If Gertrude engaged herself in any employment in which he was not concerned, he was far too ready with his warnings of some provoking bridge which they might as well pass on foot, or of the approach of dinner-time, when he had ascertained that they might safely go on shore to refresh themselves on the grass, out of the reach of the scents of tobacco on the one hand, and decaying vegetation on the other. Then came the ostentation of the delicate dinner he had caused to be provided, and of the taste with which he had selected the spot where they were to rest. He was never wearied of pointing out how the grass on the sloping dyke where they sat was greener than anywhere else; and what a pleasant shade the willows made; and how precisely he had chosen the point of view for seeing the slow sail gliding between the tufted banks and gay gardens. He busied himself to learn the name of every village whose houses were clustered on the intersecting dykes; and piqued himself on measuring exactly by his eye the extent of the oblong fields formed by the intersections. He pronounced learnedly on the turf-soils and clay soils which alternated under what, to inexperienced eyes, was only bright verdure; and, when there had been enough of this, glided into a fit of sentiment on the unrivalled beauties of a summer noon in Holland. Gertrude had been silently admiring what he now began to praise,—the prospect where the greenest of meadows formed a relief from the gleams of water on every side,—water in the sluggish canal, water standing in the hollows, water rising in the grass, water hanging in the air in the form of a silvery haze, which dissolved the outlines, and melted into harmony the hues of all objects, from the whirling mills on the banks which seemed to possess a life of their own, to the lazy cattle which lay ruminating under the scanty shade of the willows. From the moment that Heins became romantic, however, Gertrude's contemplation was spoiled; and she returned to her spiced baked eels and glass of liqueur with a new relish.

If Heins could but have been made to tow the boat which held his beloved, she would have been happy to admit his services while dining on shore; but to have him at her elbow in the trekschuit, and at her feet on the grass, was rather too much. As soon as she could with any grace leave the company, she wandered with her attendant to some distance from the feasting party, trusting that Francesca would choose this time for detaining Heins by her side.

Without going out of hearing of the bell of the trekschuit, Gertrude found she could change her scene and company. From the ridge of the bank she saw a bleaching-ground below, and hastened down to exchange a few words with the children who were sitting in a circle to guard the linen, and peeling sallows the while. The ground was unapproachable but by a little bridge over the ditch; and on this bridge was stationed an old woman, with petticoats tucked up to an unusual shortness, a hat like an umbrella, and an evident preparation for the endurance of heat and fatigue.

“You are weary, good mother, since you seem to be resting,” said Gertrude. “Truly you would rest better in the shade.”

The old lady replied, that she was only waiting for the boat-call. She took her turn to tow, when the trekschuit passed this place. It was warm work in a summer's noon, and she took her pleasure before and after it.

“And what becomes of the horse?” inquired Gertrude's maid. “We changed horse but lately.”

“My grandson there rides him forward through he fields to a point where the towing-path grows wide enough for him again,” said the old woman; “and the boy lightens my way home, when the boat is on its course again.”

“You talk,” said Gertrude, “of taking your pleasure. Is it pleasure to lean over this bridge at noon time?”

“It is a pleasure, young mistress, to look abroad and see how Providence has blest our land above every other. I venture to say something to our pastor in return for all that he says to us. I tell him that, though he has lost his country for his religion's sake, he has gained a better, besides his heavenly reward. Our pastor came from France during the persecution.”

“And does he like this country better than France?”

No doubt, the old woman supposed. In France, she was credibly informed, more than one cow had died of drought, during the last hot season, when heaven blessed Holland with water enough for the purposes of all Europe, if some of it had not been putrid. In certain parts of France, such a thing as an eel was never seen; and there was a false religion there, which showed that the curse of God was on the country. The very children were quite unlike the Dutch children. They would dance and shout under the chestnut trees, and laugh loud enough to be heard far off, instead of giving their hearts to God, and using their hands in the service of their parents, like the little people who were at work so soberly in yonder bleaching ground.

“You point out to your grand-children,” said Gertrude, “the blessings you are yourself so sensible of?”

“The pastor teaches them to give praise for the pure gospel,” replied the old woman; “and I bring them out to show them the gifts that follow upon grace. I show them the waters that bear corn to us, and breed fish for us; and the pastures that feed our cows. And I tell them about the sand that the rough sea washes up to strengthen our dykes; and I bid them be thankful that we have lime-kilns near, without which the fever might carry us all off any autumn.”

“The fever prevails here then?”

“We have lost two of the children in it; but Providence has been pleased to show us the way out of this danger, through our pastor. You see that mill, with the new thatch upon it. Well; it was our pastor who thought we might have a mill as well as our neighbours; and it carries off the mud, and keeps up a stir in the water, so that we trust God will preserve us from the fever this year.”

“Your house stands on high ground,” observed Gertrude. “It looks as if it must be healthy and convenient.”

“We can see the spires of two great towns from it. I tell the children the sight should make them thankful that they are far from the snares which try the spirit in great cities. It pleases Heaven to prosper my son's traffic at Rotterdam fair, once a year; and he brings home news enough of what he sees there to show us that a country place like this is the true resting place for God's chosen.”

“I should like to rest here a while with you, good mother; and to bring with me a little friend to whom Providence denies repose upon earth.” And Gertrude spoke of Christian, adding that she trusted the good mother was so much more pious than herself as to be reconciled to even such a case of suffering as this. The dame requested, with much respect, that if opportunity should offer, she might be honoured with a call on her hospitality in behalf of the child whom the hand of God had touched, and whose heart would, she trusted, be in due time touched by His grace.

Gertrude really hoped that such an opportunity would occur, whenever Christian should return to Amsterdam. Hospitality was at that time as free in Holland as in any country at any period; and the disciples of the reformed religion, especially, communicated as brethren. Gertrude thought that she and Christian could be very happy for a while in the substantial farm-house which stood on the slope, with a well-ordered family of children about them, a pious pastor at hand, and the happy dame to point out blessing in every thing. Christian should hear all about it; and it was much to be wished that the slanderers of Holland could see what her peasantry really were;—that they were remarkable for other things than being the richest in the world.

Gertrude had no time to improve her acquaintance with the family before the bell rang, and it was necessary to hasten back to the boat. While she again settled down to her work in the cabin, the dame stoutly passed the towing-rope over her shoulders,

and paced the narrow foot-path for three miles, drawing the boat after her with great apparent ease. After bidding her farewell, Gertrude had not come to a conclusion as to what blessing the dame could contrive to educe from the infliction of Heins's society, when her attention was called to an important feature in the landscape. Rising above the dykes which crossed the country in every direction, was an eminence planted with trees, and prolonged to the furthest visible points north and south. This was certainly the sea dyke, and they were approaching Winkel; and accordingly, they were presently after landed at the summer-house which overlooked the canal from the extremity,—that is,—the highest part of Mrs. Snoek's garden.

What screams of joy issued from this retreat is the boat glided before the window from which Christian was fishing, and well-known faces looked out from the cabin, and one friend after another stepped on shore! The summer-house had windows all round, that no passing object might escape the notice of those who came there to be amused. Christian occupied nearly the whole water-window, as it was called. His brother and sister contended for the dyke or road-window, from whence Luc speedily descended to make acquaintance with the towing-horse. Mrs. Snoek awaited her guests at the door, and' Katrina stretched her neck from the back-window which presented no object beyond the familiar cows, and the herd's cottage in the back-ground. With his fishing-rod suspended, and his eyes so intently fixed on Gertrude that he did not even hear the compliments of Francesca, Christian sat patiently waiting his share of the caresses which his active brother and sister were snatching from the common favourite. He was rewarded, as usual, for his patience by his friend's taking a seat where he could keep possession of her hand, and see every turn of her countenance. At the first unobserved moment, she bent over him, whispering an inquiry whether his spirit had been at quiet in the absence of the pastor, and whether he had been strong of heart, as he had promised, for his mother's sake. Christian looked down, as if afraid to answer for himself, and at last said that his pain had been worse than ever, just when Gertrude was not there to nurse him.

"And how did you bear it?"

"Ask mother," replied the boy, with one of his radiant smiles, which yet had little of the brightness of childhood in it. And he went on to tell how his mother had scarcely ever left him, and how she had time now to nurse him, just as she did before his father was ill; and how he had told her his secret about bearing the pain; and how she thought it a very good method, and was glad to understand why he looked in a particular way when the pain seemed to be coming on, and spoke slowly and gently when he had been lying awake at night longer than usual; and how she really thought he might try to be as patient as Jesus Christ, and become more so, in time, than seemed possible at present. Gertrude was very glad to hear all this, and also that the ranunculus, which had been taken all possible care of for her, was now in beautiful blow, and that they were to go down to the decoy together the first day that there should be no mist, when Christian had two or three kinds of waterfowl to show her which had never settled near them before. But all this was hastily dismissed for Master Peter. Master Peter had inquired, more than once, for Christian; but had said nothing about coming to Winkel. Christian must meet him again at Saardam some day.

And now Gertrude and Christian had both need of patience; Gertrude being first half stifled by Roselyn's boisterous love, and then rescued by Heins, at the expense of many tears from the scolded child; and Christian being not less teased by lectures from Slyk, and fondness from Francesca. He did not lose his good-humour, however; and, with the rest of the party, was too happy to wish to leave the summer-house till the sun sank red behind the west-dyke, and the evening fog began to rise.

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Chapter VI.

NEWS FROM HOME.

Slyk and Heins were equally anxious to lose no time in viewing the scene of their undertaking; the former, because he disliked any delay in getting possession of the young merchant's money, and the latter, because he was anxious to signalize himself by illustrious success. They set forth the next morning for the dwelling of the peasant who had undertaken to lodge the workmen during the time of their being employed in the neighbourhood. The whole family party accompanied them, except Christian and his inseparable friend Gertrude, who remained behind to enjoy pleasures which would be less fatiguing to the invalid. The decoy was to be visited; and the garden, with its rare flowers ranged in their beds as by the rod of a magical mathematician. Christian pointed out to his companion, as he was being carried in at the gate, the motto which he had chosen for an inscription, “Peaceful is my garden.”

“And now, Kaatje, you may go, if you will leave me the silver whistle. You can Work in the summer-house, you know; and we will call you when I want to be moved. Do you like this place, Gertrude?”

Gertrude thought it the pleasantest spot in the whole garden. The shade was welcome, and it was a pretty sight to see the herons wading in the stream so near them; and the boat jutted out behind the summer-house so as to make a good object for a painter. Christian hoped they might use the boat while Heins was with them. It was seldom entered at other times, except for the purpose of being kept in readiness for an escape, in case of a flood. Every house had its boat in that neighbourhood; for the sea was very rough at times, and the river had risen four inches higher last winter than had been known for many years, so that it had been determined to raise the dyke before the danger could recur. Meantime every house had its boat.

“You think of that boat sometimes, I dare say,” observed Gertrude, “when your cough keeps you awake, and you hear the wind roar and the waters splash. Do you feel afraid at such times?

“No; I do not think God would let us perish so. He has suffered the storks to build on the summer-house, though we cannot get them to settle on the house. See; we have put up a frame for them to build on, and they will not come; but there are two nests on the summer-house roof.”

“What do you suppose from that?” inquired Gertrude, who was far from being exempt from the superstition of the ‘country with respect to the stork, there supposed to be a holy bird.

“I think that if a flood came, we must get to the summer-house as fast as we could, and stay there till the storks flew away; and then we must go down into our boat.”

“And what would you do while you were waiting for the waters to subside? If they continued to rise, and nobody came, would you be afraid?”

“Not if M. Aymond was but with us, to pray for us. Or if God would put a rainbow in the cloud, it would be a sign that people had been saved from a much worse flood. Do you know, I call that boat our ark; but there is not room in it for half the creatures we should like to save. Luc's dog might go, and Roselyn's parrot, and perhaps Kaatje's calf might find a corner; but our poor cows must all be drowned. I hope there will never be a flood.”

All further speculation was stopped by the arrival of a special messenger from Amsterdam, with letters from the dignitary Vanderput to his sister and his partner. Gertrude, after she had satisfied herself that nothing was the matter, read her despatch without remark, and then directed the messenger to overtake Mr. Snoek, and deliver his letter without delay.

Mr. Snoek, meanwhile, was in raptures at all that he saw and heard. Not having been made aware that the work was even begun, he was amazed to find a lake where he expected to tread the trembling soil of a moist pasture land. How this came to be water when it should have been the well-limed soil which he had described, Slyk went on explaining from the moment they entered the district, till the party arrived at the door of the boor's dwelling. The truth of the matter was that he was himself surprised and struck with the apprehension that some of his devices had failed, that money was wanted to set the lime-kilns at work, and pay the delvers; and that, as Dutch labourers had little idea of working for anything but ready money, they had gone away. They must be recoverable, however; they must be still in the neighbourhood, at some temporary work, and not unwilling to be recalled, when pay should be again forthcoming.

“They may well be willing to come back,” observed Jan, the boor. “My wife and I made them as comfortable as so many burgomasters. And their wages were such as fully to make up to them for being brought so far from home. But, Mr. Slyk, unless you employ them soon,—unless you engage them before they are discharged from their present work, you will have to alter your terms.”

“No fear!” replied Slyk. “If the knave that should have sent you a remittance a fortnight ago does not make haste, I will make him answerable for spoiling the best work that was ever undertaken in this district.”

“There can be no difficulty in getting money to go on with,” observed Heins. “It is a most absurd reason for stopping the work.”

“Most absurd, indeed,” replied Slyk. “Neither you nor I, my dear sir, shall leave room for such an excuse, I am sure. We would both rather turn our pockets inside out. The fellows shall be recalled this very day, if we can muster our resources. You shall see the vein,—you shall be shown, layout but first, Jan, let us view your establishment. Where do you lodge our men?”

Jan led the way into the house, which was built and laid out after the fashion of the better sort of peasants' houses of that period. A range of stalls for cattle extended along each side of the long low room of which the dwelling consisted: and a space was boarded off at the upper end of the apartment for the use of the family. Here was the ample hearth on which the turf fire burned; and here the beds, ranged in recesses of the walls, and the cupboards which contained the domestic apparatus of the establishment. In the present instance, the cows had been dismissed to a temporary shelter provided for them at a little distance from the house, and their stalls had been fitted up with beds for the workmen, so that tobacco-smoke had of late issued from the recesses which had been wont to exhale the sweet breath of cows. The clothing which the cows wore in damp weather still hung against the partitions of the stall, denoting their original destination.

"Do you know, papa," said Francesca, who had been talking with Jan's wife, "it was only for brandy that these people struck, after all. They were not in such a hurry for their money but that they could have waited for a remittance; but for spirits they could not wait."

"How should they?" inquired Jan, "Working, as they did, up to their knees in water for seven or eight hours a-day, how should they exist without brandy?"

Every body agreed that spirits were the only safeguard against the perils of ditch water, and that eight hours a day was very hard work indeed. Few labourers could be brought to exceed six. But why, Slyk asked rather angrily, was brandy wanting? There was plenty to be had at Winkel, and Jan might have been obliging enough to purchase a supply, for which he knew very well he should have been presently paid. Jan opened a cupboard door, in order to display the evidence of his having no cash at command just now. Some pictures, handsomely framed and carefully covered with canvass, were laid up there, to be sold at the next Rotterdam fair. Jan's wife piqued herself on her taste in paintings, and her husband had before found it answer well to trust to it for the investment of money which must otherwise lie where it could gather neither profit nor interest. He, and other Dutch peasants, had made money by selling again the judicious purchases they were enabled to make from time to time. Those who dared not venture upon pictures had small speculations in gold chains and other expensive ornaments; and a yet humbler class had their little ventures of books and foreign toys. Every thing sold at the Rotterdam fair; and every Dutchman might be trusted to make his speculation answer.

Jan having proved that his capital did not exist in a form that would immediately exchange for brandy, intimated that he had something to say in private, and to show out of doors to the gentlemen. As they went out, Heins declared his intention of furnishing an abundant supply of spirits out of the stock at Amsterdam, which, had been destined for England, but was scarcely likely to be wanted there till the course of exchange had turned. At present, while the exchange was in favour of Holland, the British merchants were, of course, stimulated to export as much as they could, and would receive no produce from Dutch ports, clandestinely or openly, till they had paid their debts by exportation. Slyk made a light mention of this being one convenient

method in which Heins's proposed assistance might be advanced; and an immediate supply of brandy, salt butter, and meat was promised.

What Jan had to show was of no little importance. No one knows better than a Dutchman that water is never idle, even when it appears perfectly stagnant. The pools which had spread over the ground whence the turf had been dug, lay so still that the birds might have used them for a looking-glass in which to dress their plumage; but these waters were, nevertheless, at work, as Jan proved by leading his guests to one spot of the inner dyke, where the soil appeared to be slightly giving way. On this stormy coast, as in other parts of Holland, the sea-dyke was not the only protection provided for the pastures which lay beneath its level. It was all-sufficient for common times and seasons, but in the event of a slight irruption, or of any accident to the mills on the neighbouring canals, it was desirable to have a channel provided to carry off an occasional flood. Such a channel was furnished by erecting a land-dyke within the sea-dyke, leaving the space between to serve as a passage for any overflow of water. The whole range of the sea-dyke near Winkel was in admirable order. No dyke in the country was more thickly planted with the reed which assists the gathering and hardening of the sand thrown up by the waves. Its top was broad enough for two carriages to pass with ease; and its internal slope was of a soil so hard that nothing but the matted grass would grow upon it. The inner dyke was yet hardly consolidated: but the process was hastened by the planting of trees to a great extent. The young wood throve, and gave promise of binding the whole soil in a net-work of roots. The only doubtful point was the one now indicated by Jan. The bog water had spread to the foot of this mound; and just there, the roots of a young willow seemed to be starting. This was all: but, to the eye of a Dutchman, it conveyed much.

Slyk gave positive orders for the immediate erection of a mill to aid the drainage; and that no more turf should be dug till an abundance of lime was prepared to fill up the drained field, and till the bank was ascertained to be in a sound condition. He made Heins observe that there was very little water between the dykes, and no probability of more before all should have been rendered secure.—Jan prepared himself to set off in pursuit of the workmen, authorized to bring them back by the granting of even better terms than before, if such should be demanded.

Heins observed that the masters of labourers in some other countries were more happily circumstanced than he and his friend. In England, men asked work of the masters, who were therefore in a situation to exercise a choice, and to exert some authority; but in Holland, the masters had to seek for labourers, and were consequently at their mercy as often as there happened to be no scarcity of work. Even at present, when, through the quantity of wealth in the country, it was difficult to find employment for capital at home, and there was therefore more labour to be disposed of than in the days of comparative poverty, the labouring classes were able to make their own terms, from the abundance which they possessed. One of the difficulties attending" any new undertaking was the management that was necessary to bring the requisitions of the labourer into agreement with the interests of the master.

“Another difficulty,” observed Slyk, “is the poor encouragement that is given to liberal undertakings in this country. Our banks will bring on a general distress, if they do not mend their measures. If they are so timid and so ill-humoured as they are now about discounting bills, and lending money to the spirited individuals who exert themselves to benefit their country, everything will go to ruin. It is a part of their regular duty to assist those who would enrich, those who would beautify the face of the land; but there is more trouble than most enterprises will pay in getting a few bills discounted.”

Before he had finished his complaint, the messenger from Amsterdam had appeared and delivered Vandefput's letter to Heins. There was something in Heins's frowning brow and falling countenance as he read, which induced Jakob to take up his theme again as soon as he could obtain a hearing. He enlarged once more on the avarice and cowardice of the banks, which refused to aid even such an undertaking as the one before their eyes. Heins would scarcely believe it, but the Leyden bank had within a week refused to discount bills drawn by Cats of Haerlem upon Geysbuk of Rotterdam.

Heins could very easily believe it. The refusal of the bank probably arose from the same cause which would now, he feared, prevent him from making the advances he had destined to the undertaking before him. He found that the turn of the exchange had given such a stimulus to importation that he had less money at command, unfortunately, than he could have had at any other conjuncture.—But he had promised, Slyk reminded him. He had promised brandy, butter, and meat immediately, and money to a considerable amount layout

Subject to the consent of his partner, Heins observed; and his partner now wrote him word that their joint capital was already completely invested.

“But you have capital of your own, independent of the partnership,” said Slyk; “you, and your mother also. I beg your pardon for seeming to interfere in your concerns, my dear fellow; but I am not one to stand by quietly, and see a young friend, just left to his own guidance, let slip so splendid an opportunity as this of making thirty per cent, of his spare capital. I have a great regard for your mother too, and would fain see that her worldly concerns do not suffer from her being deprived of her husband, my very good friend. If she were here, with three thousand guilders in her right hand, I would merely say, ‘here is our ground, there is the sea,’ and leave the rest to her own good sense.”

Heins looked about him for some time before he made any reply, and then lamented that this soil was not already fit for pasturage, as some German and Danish cattle were on the point of arriving to be fattened; and it would have been one way of aiding the scheme to deposit them on this spot. Jakob explained that there was a farm at a little distance which belonged, he declared, to, himself. He would say no more than that any advances made by Heins might be repaid in the feed of these cattle, and thus made independent of whatever risk might be thought to attend the grand scheme.

Long did Heins pace to and fro on the dyke, pondering his resources, and reconsidering the letter of his partner, which was as follows:—

"I am sorry that your absence occurs just at this time, however short it may be: for every day may make so important a difference in the course of exchange as may materially affect our commercial concerns. How long the exchange may remain as it is there is no saying, as there is a rumour of the enforcement of tithe on the cultivation of madder in Great Britain; and this will bring the madder of a Presbyterian country like ours, which pays no tithe, into the market, at an advantage which must tempt those merchants to export largely who are now importing. If, besides this, certain relaxations of monopoly which are talked of should take place, to the advantage of Dutch commerce, our exports to Great Britain will be so abundant as presently to turn the course of exchange. It is our part, then, while we can get bills cheap, to urge our business to the fair limits of our capital, that we may have the fewer debts to pay to England when that competition for bills arises which must certainly follow the present abundance. I did business with Visscher this afternoon, as you were not here to do it for me. He is too busy (making his fortune, I suppose, out of the variations of exchange) to have a word to say to his old friends till after 'Change hours. I fancy that the bills on England which have fallen in value bring a pretty profit into the broker's pocket when transmitted to Paris, where the exchange is greatly in favour of England. Visscher must be making much more by this state of things than he lost a while ago by the variation which took place in consequence of the depreciation of money in Paris. A fine lot of bills in his hands, which would have borne a premium over night, were gladly disposed of at a discount the next day. Visscher has never forgiven the over-issue of paper which caused this; but he is making up for it now. His charge per cent, on these transactions is no trifling gain in these busy days. When the exchange is once more at par, he will spare us a day at Saardam to talk over a little speculation in which it seems to me that we may share with advantage.

"It is rumoured on 'Change to-day that a certain provincial bank has taken up a suspicion of the means by which a present neighbour of yours is floating a scheme which he boasts of as promising great things. It is said that a confederation of needy men have tried the now unusual trick of drawing on one another in a circle, and thus raising money to carry on their scheme, which they may or may not be eventually able to pay. The bank in question has been gradually getting out of the scrape for some time past, not forcing the parties to a bankruptcy, but making more and more difficulty about discounting their bills. The other banks which have been favoured with the custom of the parties are taking the hint, it is said, and looking close into the character of the transaction. If so, the truth of the matter will soon appear. Meanwhile, should any speculator fall in your way, beware of his representations; particularly if he talks of the distress of the country, and attributes it to the timidity of the banks. The country is prosperous, and the banks know what they are about full as well as he. When I have said 'beware,' I have said that which makes me think it worth while to send a special messenger with my letter. Besides this, I have only to say that I shall be glad to see you at home; and that if your mother has any fine pasturage untenanted, our Danish cattle may as well be landed in her neighbourhood, and fattened on her meadows as on those of a stranger. Arrange this as you please. * * *"

In the days when extensive alterations in the currency of trading countries were common, commerce was much indebted to the intervention of such men as Visscher. The bill-brokers held the power of equalizing the exchange, or of preventing its

variations from exceeding a certain limit. The variations of the real exchange can, it is true, never exceed the limit fixed by the cost of transmitting metals; for, as soon as the premium which a merchant has to pay on the bill he wishes to purchase is higher than the expense of sending gold and silver, he, and others circumstanced like himself, will pay debts in money, the competition for bills will be lessened, and their price will fall: but the tendency which the exchange has to correct itself is much assisted by the operations of the bill-brokers, who, as they deal in the bills of many countries, can transport this kind of currency from places where it is superabundant to places where it is scarce. Like all other traders, they seek to buy where their article is cheapest, and to sell where it is dearest; and this, of course, lessens the cheapness and the dearness in different places. At the present time, the bills on England were cheap at Amsterdam, and dear in Leghorn; and Visscher, and other bill-brokers, by buying up bills on England, and transmitting them to Leghorn, assisted in equalizing the demands of Holland and England, and also of Leghorn and England, on each other, and thus aided in restoring the exchange to par.

But when the currency of any country is altered, no operations of the bill-brokers, or of any one else, can prevent the exchange from *appearing* to sustain a great variation, though those who understand the circumstances, and are not apt to be alarmed by the mere sound of words, know that, in such a case, if the exchange be really at par, it cannot be nominally so, and do not therefore trouble themselves about the apparent difference. This nominal variation does not affect trade; because the decrease in the price of goods to be exported answers to the discount which the exporting merchant sustains on his foreign bill: that is, if an English merchant draws a bill on Amsterdam for 1000 guilders in return for 90. worth of goods, the discount at which the Englishman sells his bill exactly answers the saving he has made from the price of the goods exported being lowered through the depreciation of the English currency: while the premium which the bill would bear in Paris answers to the apparent surplus of the 100 guilders. The holders of bills drawn before the alterations in the currency took place are affected by such changes; and such liabilities to profit and loss are among the evils attendant upon fluctuations in currency; but the amount of exportation and importation, and therefore the real exchange, are in no wise affected by alterations in the representative of their value.

If the course of the exchange is watched with anxiety, it should be with regard to the nominal and not the real variation. As a test of the state of the currency of the country its deviations are important, and cannot be too narrowly observed by those in whom the power resides of enlarging and contracting the currency. But the real variation might be safely left to itself, even if there were no intervention of bill-brokers by which equalization is secured. The variation can never pass the amount by which the cost of transmitting payments in metal exceeds that of making payment in bills. This cost can never be great while there is a set of persons, like bill-brokers, to buy bills where they are cheapest, and sell them where they are dearest; and thus, by arbitrating the exchanges of different countries, equalize the whole. As such equalization aids the security of property, commerce is largely indebted to the intervention of this class of dealers.

If any means could be found by which the rise and fall of money could take place at once and equally all over the trading world, there would be an end to nominal variations of exchange, and commerce would be divested of one of its mysteries: but this can never be while production is more abundant in one place than another; and while the cost of the carriage of commodities increases with distance. Mrs. Snoek found it cheaper living at Winkel than at Amsterdam: that is, the great articles of consumption were produced at hand, and had no cost of carriage to bear; and the value of the precious metals was therefore higher at Winkel than in Amsterdam, go much higher as to induce the Amsterdam exporter who made purchases of her butter and cheese to pay her in that commodity which was cheap to him while it was dear to her,—money. In return for the produce of her farm, which was shipped from her neighbourhood, there was a flow of money from Amsterdam to Winkel; a flow which would continue till money, becoming more plentiful at Winkel, fell in value so as to make it better worth the while of both parties that Mrs. Snoek should be paid in commodities. If the respective commodities should balance each other in value, so as to show that there was the same proportion of money in both places, no money would be transmitted; but if money at length abounded at Winkel more than at Amsterdam, it would become worth Mrs. Snoek's while, in her turn, to buy the merchant's commodities with that which was cheap to her while it was dear to him. Such inequalities must exist in different parts of the same country, and, much more, in different countries; and, while they do exist, the coins of countries will change their relative value, and there will be nominal variations of the exchange, wholly independent of the total amount of sales between different countries.

At present, as in all former times, money was dearer at Winkel than at Amsterdam; Mrs. Snoek delivered the produce of her farm to be shipped at the dyke near her own abode, and was paid in money from Amsterdam. As this suited her views of prudence, she designed to remain, with her family, where she was, while Winkel continued to be a cheap place of residence. Slyk was happy to hear this, both as it afforded a prospect of many opportunities of confirming his hold on Heins's speculative enthusiasm and his purse; and because it was likely to bring more of Messrs. Vanderput and Snoek's herds of lean foreign cattle to fatten on the pastures round Winkel. Mrs. Snoek had but little pasturage to let while she kept up a fine dairy of her own; and Jakob's drained fields would be tenanted as fast as they were ready to bear the weight of the herds that hungered for the rich verdure which springs from such a soil as he “could boast of. This matter was settled on the road homewards; Heins. seeing nothing in such an arrangement inconsistent with the caution recommended by his partner; and Mrs. Snoek thinking it well that her son should obtain something from Jakob in exchange for the advances made or to be made. Not that her opinion was asked by Heins, Being a man of business, he cared little for the opinion of any woman; but, nevertheless, he had no objection to her approbation.

Orders were left with Jan to bring back the work-people without delay; and Gertrude was sorry to hear, before Heins's departure in the afternoon, that he hoped to come again shortly to visit his family, and his very good friends the Slyks. She did not choose to acknowledge the look which conveyed that they would not be the only causes of his return. She had the hope, however, that his Danish cattle were included with herself in his unexpressed regards.

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Chapter VII.

A NIGHT'S PROBATION.

“Why must Gertrude go so soon?” asked Christian of his mother, one fine evening, when the little family were seated at their homely supper. “I am sure when she came, she did not mean to go away so soon. Nobody wishes her to go.”

“I wish her to stay,” replied Mrs. Snoek; and Gertrude knows that I do; so that I think she would stay if she could. But you can ask her.”

Gertrude must go the next morning, though she was as fond of the country, and as sorry to leave her friends as Christian could desire. Her servant had orders to prepare for the little voyage, and——

“I will stop her,” cried both the younger children,’ each trying to outstrip the other in getting down from their high stools and flying to the door. Their mother called them back, with a rebuke for leaving their seats before grace was said; and even Christian thought that Gertrude should be allowed to do as she pleased.

“But,” he continued, “the pastor comes with Heins to-morrow or the next day; and you could go home with them, instead of having only your old woman to talk to in the trekschuit.”

“The pastor will talk to you instead of to me,” replied Gertrude, with a smile; “and that will be better for you than parting with three friends at one time.”

“But you have never seen the rush-planting here,” exclaimed Luc. “We all came too late for the spring planting; and now, you are going away before the autumn one. I do not know whether they will let me plant any this year; but last year, they would not allow any children to go nearer than the top of the dyke. Just as if we should pull any up!”

The imputation of pulling up reeds from the dykes was repelled as indignantly by a Dutch-man, woman, or child, in those days, as a charge of sheep-stealing would now be in this country. Such an act was death, according to the old Dutch law, and the entire nation was educated to regard it with disgust and horror.

Christian told how he was laid on the edge of the dyke, and saw gangs of men and women at work on the slope, planting the reeds with which the banks were bristled, in order that the sand which was washed up by the sea should be retained till it hardened into an outer coating of the mound. If Gertrude would stay, perhaps Heins would take the whole party out in a boat, to see from the bay the people at work all along the dyke, while the sea washed their very feet.—Mrs. Snoek thought it a still better reason for Gertrude's remaining that Amsterdam was now in its least healthy state. She would find the canals very offensive, after the air of the open sea, to which she had

been accustomed of late. In another month they would be cleared out, and then all would fee safe till the next season's hot weather. Katrina, who was waiting,—that is, sitting at work in the window till she should be wanted,—put in an observation that the waters round Winkel had never been fresher than now. The late high seas had filled the channel between the inner and the sea-dyke, and all the mills had been in full activity for some days. The apothecary was of opinion that there would be less ague at Winkel this autumn than for many seasons past. So saying, Katrina looked out, to see how all the mills within view appeared to be alive, their sails swinging, and their machinery, open towards the water, whirling and twisting, as if by some self-moving power.

She did not draw in her head immediately; and Luc would have hastened to see what it was that attracted her attention, but that grace had not yet been said.

“Kaatje, what is the matter?” asked her mistress, as she saw the work drop from the maid's hands.

“Christ, have pity! the dyke has burst!” exclaimed Katrina. “The flood comes pouring—Mercy! how it sweeps in by the peat-field!”

“The peat-field! Then we are lost,” cried Gertrude, “Where——”

“Mother!” said Christian, “say grace, and let us go.”

Not one word of the long grace was omitted or hurried, or pronounced in a less steady voice than usual. When it was ended, Mrs. Snoek issued her orders.

“To the upper rooms, my children! Christian, we will carry you to the top of the house. Katrina, ring the great bell. It may be heard as far as the village. But first, close all the lower shutters. They may be some little defence. And, Gertrude, we must put out a flag from the roof.”

“The summer-house!” suggested Christian. “The boat is there.”

“True, true. We will get to the summer-house, if there is still time.”

There was time, as the summer-house stood on high ground, and the water had not yet reached the lowest part of the garden. The servants and children ran as for their lives. Mrs. Snoek and Gertrude, who carried Christian's little couch between them, walked more slowly, and stopped at a seat half-way up the gravel walk. There they looked around, and perceived that their abode and its precincts formed a little island in the midst of a flood, which was rapidly advancing on every side, as if to close them in. Tossing waves were chasing each other over the green fields, swallowing up all that came in their way; while the terrified cattle, for the most part, ran towards the farm-buildings on the little dyke below, as if to find safety there; and a few endeavoured to keep their footing in the midst of the tide, lashing with their tails every swell that came lo buffet them. The trim garden, with its gay beds, shone in the evening light with as quiet an air as if its low hedge formed a sufficient security from the deluge, while a sunny haze hung like a canopy over its recesses, and made the tranquillity of

the upper air contrast strangely with the watery surface, which seemed troubled by storm. Far off, the village rose upon the loftier dyke which bordered the canal, its grey willows looking as firmly rooted, its houses as spruce as when no one dreamed of its being within the reach of accident. Thither Gertrude's gaze was turned intently.

“Thank God! the whole country round is not under water,” she cried. “It is only the section between the north canal and Winkel. Thank God! there are but few in jeopardy.”

Christian could perceive that people were gathering on the dyke of the north canal; and both they and the Winkel people seemed wholly occupied in watching the section which lay between. Not a face appeared to be turned the other way.

“A horse!” cried Christian. “Do not you see a horse on the ridge? The magistrate is out, and the people will begin to do something for us.”

That the magistrate was on horseback to take the command,—a practice which is reserved for very rare occasions,—was a favourable sign; but Mrs. Snoek silently pointed to one which dashed Christian's confidence. The dyke which had given way,—the same that had been injured by Slyk's bog-water,—appeared now to be crumbling down, ell by ell, with a rapidity which defied all attempts at repair. Its layers of soil oozed away in mud; its wattles were floating on the billows; and the blocks of stiff clay which had lain square, one upon another, showed a rounded surface till they disappeared from their positions. The opening enlarged every moment, and it seemed as if the tide in the outer channel rose in proportion as it found a vent. The first dribblings over the edge of the dyke appeared at wider and wider distances, while the gushing in the centre grew more copious as the waters below rose to meet it.

“Do but hear!” said Christian, in a low voice. “How it splashes and roars!”

His mother perceived that spray was beginning to fly in at the gate at the bottom of the garden, and some of the poor cattle were already afloat, supported for awhile by the clothing which would soon help to sink them. She made a sign to Gertrude to resume her share of their burden, and they proceeded towards the summer-house.—When the servants had been sent back for the provisions they ought to have brought with them, and had returned with all they could fetch away, (the lower apartments being already flooded;) their mistress gave orders for the summer-house door to be closed. Christian begged to be first carried out for a moment. He wished to look up to the roof. A stork was perched there, flapping its wings; and Christian was satisfied. The next thing to be done was to bring the boat immediately under the window, and to fasten it securely to the summer-house, that it might not be carried away out of reach.

“I wish the pastor was here,” said Christian, who, with the rest of the party, had little apprehension of personal danger, as long as the evening was serene, and the extent of the devastation limited. “I wish the pastor was here now, to tell us what we ought to do.”

“We need no voice of man,” replied Gertrude. “Hark, how deep calleth unto deep!”

The boy looked entranced as he fixed his eyes alternately on the line of blue sea, where ships were gliding in the light breeze, and on the muddy surge around, which already bore many wrecks, and assumed a more threatening appearance every moment. His mother's voice in prayer was the first thing that roused him.—Before it ceased, the garden had a multitude of streams running through it, and only a few red and yellow blossoms reared their heads where all had lately been so gay. Next came the first dash against the walls of the building, and spray thrown in at the window, whence Roselyn withdrew in mute terror. Before closing the shutter, her mother gave an anxious look towards the village and the farm-buildings.

“The herd and his wife have a boat, and each a stout arm,” said she, “and we may consider them safe. Kaatje, you can row; and both Gertrude and I can hold an oar. They do not seem to be doing anything for us from the village.”

Katrina, alarmed, like the rest of the party, by her mistress's words and manner, declared that she had never dipped an oar in troubled waters. It was little she could do on a canal. The sun was gone down too, and what were they to attempt in the dark? Surely her mistress would remain where they were till assistance came, even if that should not be till morning.—Certainly, if possible, was her mistress's reply; from which Gertrude inferred that Mrs. Snoek thought the summer-house unsafe. It was raised on piles, like the best part of Amsterdam, and more strongly founded than the dwelling-house; but it even now shook perceptibly; and it seemed too probable that it might fall very soon, if the rush of waters continued.

Twilight faded away, and darkness succeeded, and no hail from a distance was yet heard:—no sound but that of waters, to which the party remained silently listening; Christian, with his eyes fixed on the scarcely discernible boat which danced below, and Gertrude watching for the moon as anxiously as if their safety depended on a gleam of light. It came, at length, quivering on the surface below, and lighting up the tree tops which appeared here and there like little islands where the inner dyke had been.

The flood was found to have risen to the level of the floor; and the servants, almost glad to have something to do, began to lower the provisions into the boat. Presently a loud crack was heard; the mirror, which reflected the broken moonbeams, was perceived to hang awry; and, more ominous still, the stork first fluttered and then sped away.

“Do you see, mother?” said Christian, as he pointed upwards. “We must go.”

“You are not afraid, my dear boy? Katrina and I will go first, and Gertrude will let you down while we keep the boat steady. You are not afraid, Christian?”

“I wish Luc was not so frightened,” replied the boy, who, in truth, seemed more animated than alarmed. “Luc, the Spirit is on the face of these waters too.”

Roselyn, tired out, had fallen asleep on her mother's bosom. It was a rough waking, amidst spray and the chill night air; and she made her cries heard further than perhaps any signal shout that her companions could have raised. Nothing that had yet happened had distressed the party so much as this child's screams, renewed with every pitch of the boat, which, though strong, and so large as to consist of two cabins, was now tossed like the lightest shallop. Christian never could bear Roselyn's lamentations, and they now had their usual effect upon him, of making him cough dreadfully, and upsetting his cheerfulness for the time. When he could find voice, he began to complain of several things which no one could remedy; and struggled the more to express himself, the more violently his cough returned.

"You must be silent," Gertrude said, gently. "We cannot help one another. God only can help us now; and we must await his will."

"Thank you for putting me in mind," cheerfully replied the boy. "O, Gertrude, I wonder what that will is! Do you think we shall sink deep, deep in these cold waters? I think the apostle Peter was very daring to go down out of the boat. There is no Christ now to come over these rough waves, and bid us not be afraid. O, if there were——"

"We can try not to be afraid, as if he were really here," said Gertrude. "Let us be still, lest we should be tempted to complain."

Christian did not speak again, and tried to suppress his cruel cough. His mother was aware of the effort, and would have had him carried down, saying that the poor boy was doomed, whether they ever reached land or not. He would never get over the exposure of this night. Christian made no opposition, but Gertrude suggested that the boat itself was in danger from the wrecks which it encountered; and that the only chance of safety, in case of any great shock, was in being on the exposed part. So Christian was left to feed his spirit as he would with the impressions which came upon his awakened senses.

Katrina's oar had been carried away at the first attempt to use it. The other could be employed only in pushing off whatever was brought by the waves to threaten the boat. One object after another was recognized by the party;—a plank, which from its colour was known to belong to the farm buildings; and a chest that had stood in the dwelling-house, which must therefore be down. Whatever security might await her family, Mrs. Snoek saw that the fruits of long toil and much care were already swept away.

A fearful crisis came at last, while the party were watching a dark object at no great distance, which looked like a boat. It might be many things instead of a boat; but it was more like one than any object they had seen this night. While she was looking at it, something came fluttering against Gertrude's face, which made her start. It was the flag which had waved from the gilt ball of the summerhouse. All turned, and dimly saw the whole fabric fall in sideways, and disappear amidst a cloud of dust, which was blown full in their faces. No fixture could be found near, by which the single oar could be made of any avail to keep the boat out of the eddy. That there were fixed

points was soon made known, however, by the repeated shocks which the boat underwent; shocks which threatened to drive in its bottom.

“Now God have mercy upon us!” cried the mother. “If we go down, it will be now.”

A cry arose from the children and the servants. From Christian there was no cry, but a groan, which, though low, reached his mother's ear and heart. She saw that his hands were grasping the ribs of the boat.

“My boy, your pain is upon you.”

“Never mind me,” said the boy, in a voice patient through its agony. “Let my Father take me. Save Luc. Save Roselyn.”

The boat had been staved by the last shock, and was now rapidly sinking. Help was, however, at hand. The dark object was really a boat. The cry had directed it to the right spot; it arrived in time to pick up every one of the party, not before they were wet, but before they were actually afloat. Christian was very nearly going down with the wreck, so firmly were his hands clenched to its sides: but his mother exerted her fast failing strength to rescue him, and afterwards to hold him on her knees during the fearful struggle with the enemy from which he would thankfully have been released by drowning.

The villagers who manned the rescuing boat respected the misery of the mother, whom they believed to be watching over her dying child. They spoke only to say that the passage to the village would be long and perilous, and that the earliest assistance would be procured by landing on the nearest point of the sea dyke, where succours could be brought, if there should not happen to be a house at hand.

Before the moon had gone down upon the watery waste, the party were received into the house of a hospitable fisherman, who, with his wife, did all that could be done for their safety and comfort till they could he removed to the abode of an acquaintance in Winkel; or, as Gertrude proposed, to her brother's country house at Saardam. To make the exertion of this removal was, she believed, the best thing for Mrs. Snoek's spirits and for Christian's health, which might possibly be revived by the care which would be bestowed on him by those whom he most loved, in a familiar scene, far distant from the desolation which must meet his eye every time he looked abroad, if he remained at Winkel.

His mother consented with the less difficulty that there was every probability of a fever prevailing in the district which had been laid waste. She had suffered too much from the flood, to think of braving the pestilence which must ensue. When her farm servant and his wife came to condole and relate their share of the perils of the preceding night, they received her directions about saving the wreck of the property, and doing what might be practicable towards restoring the estate.

These people were full of indignation at having been left, with their mistress's family, to try their chance of escape from drowning, while those who deserved such a fate much more had taken good care of their own security. Jan and his household had

chanced to sleep on board their boats for two or three nights past, after bustling about with extraordinary vigour during the day. Slyk and his daughter had also, most opportunely, been induced to pass a few days with an acquaintance whose abode was at some distance from the scene of disaster. They came to sympathize with the Snoeks; old Jakob glorifying Providence for having interfered in so marvellous a manner to preserve himself and Fransje; and Fransje full of anxiety to know whether Heins was likely to come to assist in the great work of reclaiming the section which now lay waste.

Heins came as appointed, attended by the pastor:—came to see his Danish cattle floating lifeless in the muddy lake; to try doubtfully to fix the point where his mother's pretty residence had stood; to ponder whether the extent of the damage and of his liabilities could be concealed from his partner; and to wonder how much Gertrude had been told, and what she would think of the issue of this his first grand scheme of enterprise.

Mrs. Snoek greeted the pastor with a hope that she need not look on this calamity as a judgment on her solicitude about worldly interests. The pastor had said much to her, and said it often, about sitting loose from the things of this world; and she trusted she had taken it to heart. Unless she was much mistaken, she had only endeavoured to do what, as a mother, and the widow of an honourable man, it behaved her to improve her children's fortunes, and justify their father's ambition for them. The pastor decided that she would best prove the purity of her views by her cheerful acquiescence in her present losses.

A Dutch lady of a later age would have found it easy to acquiesce in such losses for the sake of the amount of wealth which remained: but in the times of the high prosperity of the Dutch, desire grew with acquisition, and it was not enough to be rich, if it was possible to be richer, or if others were richer, or if the individual had been go at a preceding time. Though she and her children had more wealth than they could consume, the widow found it required all her resignation to bear patiently the loss of what she had no occasion for.

“You always told me,” said Christian to the pastor, “to take care not to love any people or things too much, because I should most likely have to leave them all very soon. But you see they have left me.—O, I do not mean my mother, and Gertrude, and Luc and Roselyn; but I have lost my pretty calf; and my tame heron has flown away; and my tulips,—that beautiful late-blower! There was not such a Bybloemen in all the district as the best of mine. When I bade it farewell for this year, and looked for the last time into its cup, with its white bottom, so beautifully broken with cherry, I did not think it would be rotting under the water so soon. I never saw such a cup as that flowed had. I shall never see such another.”

The pastor shook his head. Christian, taking this for sympathy in his grief, went on,

“And my calf had got to know me, and to let me do what I liked with him. He stood quite still to let me help to put on his jacket yesterday when the evening chill was coming on. I am glad I did not see him die, if he splashed in the water like one poor

cow that I saw. I shall never love another calf. O, now I know why you shake your head so. You think that I should soon have left them, if they had not left me. Perhaps I may never get better than I am to-day; and to-day I cannot sit up at all. But, tell me one thing I want to know. Do you think animals live again? It seems very hard that my calf should die so soon, if it is not to live any more: and, if I am to die soon too——"

"You would like to meet whatever you have loved," said the pastor, finishing his sentence for him. "I think God will give you beings to love wherever you are, Christian; because I think you cannot live without loving; and I am very sure that, wherever you are, there will be some to love you."

Christian smiled, and said that people loved him now out of kindness, because they were sorry for his pain, and that he could not do what other children did: and he loved them because they were so good as not to mind the trouble he was always giving them. He was sure they would not forget him when he had ceased to be a trouble to any body; and perhaps he could do something for them when there should be an end of all pain, and when he might perhaps be as strong as the angel that stood between heaven and earth, and cried out so that the thunders answered him. This reminded Christian to tell how he now knew what the voices were like that came from under God's throne. Last night, he had learned what was the sound of many waters. Just when his pain came on, he thought these voices were calling for him. He seemed now disappointed that it had not been so. The pastor told him that it should be left to God to call him away in whispers or in thunders. His only care should be to hold himself ready to depart.

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Chapter VIII.

NEWS AT HOME.

Heins consented, at the earnest request of his friend Jakob, to remain at Winkel for a few days, to superintend the necessary operations there, instead of returning southwards with his family. Jakob himself set out in search of labourers, and of wherewithal to pay them. His absence was considered necessary, as the suspicion had got abroad that he was somehow the cause of the mischief that had happened. Justice moved slow in Holland at that time; which did not usually signify, as Dutchmen also moved slow; but whether Jakob had become infused with liveliness by his intercourse with the French, or whether he had learned celerity by his enterprises at sea, he acted little like a Dutchman on the present occasion. While the magistrate was yet suffering from the fatigue of having been on horseback, and his advisers were weighing the amount of suspicion against Slyk, Slyk was gone —to return presently, of course; he would certainly return immediately, because he said so, and because his friend Heins said so, and because his daughter remained with her servant in full repose.

Heins believed this, and wrought patiently for a few days, being carefully tended in the intervals of his labours by Francesca, who lavished all her attentions upon him: for her father's sake, as she declared. He was so grieved that Heins should have been involved in any disaster through his means, that the least that could be done to console him was to make Heins as comfortable as possible. Jakob did not, however, return; and when he was fairly on the high seas, Jan had the conscience to let Heins know that the old rogue had set sail from the bay on the night of his departure, and was now on his way to collect some foreign debts, with the proceeds of which he would re-appear when the storm which was ready to burst upon him at home should have blown over. In much wrath, Heins took his passage home without a moment's delay, being accompanied by Francesca and her duenna; no place being now, as Heins admitted, so proper for her as her father's residence at Amsterdam.

On their arrival, her apparent surprise was as great as Heins's real consternation at finding Slyk's house shut up, the furniture gone, and no provision made for his daughter's residence. Francesca was not slow in finding a reason for this, and in conveying her opinion to Heins. Her father had concluded that, as Mr. Snoek's wife, she would not want any residence but his; and it would have been a great piece of extravagance to leave a handsome house and furniture to the care of servants, while the master was taking a foreign journey. Heins could not agree in this interpretation; but it was impossible to leave the lady and her duenna to take care of themselves in the midst of Amsterdam. He took them to the house of his partner, in order to commend them to Gertrude's care. Gertrude was at Saardam; but her brother offered to send for her; which proposal seemed very agreeable to Visscher, who was smoking his pipe with Vanderput at the time of the entrance of the somewhat forlorn party from Winkel.

Heins was not slow in assenting, desiring, if he could be spared from business, to be the messenger to Saardam the very next morning. In his own mind, he thought it but fair that, in return for liis enforced civility to a lady whom he did not care for, he should be favoured with the charge of her whom he was most anxious to please. Visscher, however, resented the idea of any one assuming that which he called his office; and Vanderput supported him, by intimating to his partner that his future brother-in-law was the proper person to fetch his sister home.

Francesca took upon herself to say how fully Mr. Snoek approved, as she also did, of the proposed connexion. It was but the day before that they had been agreeing on the absurdity of the prevalent opinion that M. Aymond would carry off the prize, just because Gertrude had a particularly religious turn. Mr. Snoek had eagerly assented to her opinion that any one who understood Gertrude might long have seen that she was thinking of a very different person from the pastor.

Heins was stung with rage and mortification on hearing this. If his attachment to Gertrude had been real, and worthy of her, any disappointment which he might now have testified would have been regarded with respect. As it was, the best thing he could do was to seize a pipe and surround himself with as dense a smoke as he could raise; a smoke which drove even Franhesca from the apartment.

The sense of this mortification was somewhat blunted by the occurrence of others. Visscher began a story of which Heins could not at first perceive the drift, about his return, once upon a time, from a winter expedition to Rotterdam. He had skaited from Leyden to Rotterdam for the purpose of skaiting back again; and when he returned, he found that the world had not stood still during his absence; but that tidings of loss and gain, and of many kinds of change awaited him.

“Just so,” he went on, “our friend Heins has been afloat himself, and setting the country afloat, and he comes back, taking for granted that all is as he left it.”

“And is it not?” asked Heins. “What has happened?”

“Only such a variation in the exchange with England as will frighten you, if you are no wiser than our Bank Directors. You should see their emissaries peering about on ‘change——”

Vanderput put a stop to this mode of exemplification of the state of commerce. He would allow no disrespectful mention in his presence of the body of which he was a member. It was the business of the reigning burgomasters to ascertain daily the course of exchange: but they could see an inch before their noses, as well as any bill broker on 'change, and left it to women and the superannuated to tremble at the sentence, that the exchange had turned against Holland.

“What becomes of our profits now?” said Heins. “Must we let them be swallowed up by the premium which I suppose bills on England now bear in the market?”

“Only your extraordinary profits. You are not going to be rich so soon as you dreamed you should be: but neither are you going to be impoverished.”

"By the variation in the exchange," added Vanderput, gravely. "If Mr. Snoek is to be impoverished, it will be by other accidents."

Before Heins had time to ask the meaning of this, Mr. Visscher went on.

"You should see the bustle of the exporters on our quays. There are Toll and Co., who so lately stood enviously watching the briskness of your doings, you remember, Mr. Snoek; their time is now come. You and your brethren imported at such a rate that you made bills on England scarce in the market. Toll and Co., of course, got such a premium on those which they held, as to be able to ship off many more kinds of goods than they could have ventured upon while they had to part with their bills at a discount. They have been lading ship after ship; and you may now have time to see them clear out; for I conclude you will not go on to import as you have done of late."

"To be sure not," said Vanderput. "Our profits en many articles are not such as to afford the premium on bills made necessary by the present scarcity. We must, for the present, confine our business to exporting only those articles which will afford the usual profits, after the premium is paid."

Heins sighed deeply at the prospect of his grand schemes remaining in abeyance at the very time that he fancied he should be making all Amsterdam stare at the magnificence of his importations. The cool, sagacious Vanderput rebuked the sigh.

"You must have known," he said, "that things would take this turn. If it answered well to us to import largely while bills were cheap, it must have answered in the same way to others; and the extent to which importation was consequently carried, must turn the balance, rendering it necessary for us to pay our excess of debt either by sending metal money, or by bidding against one another for bills. You must be quite as certain that the balance will turn again when these busy exporters have brought down bills to a discount in our exchange market."

"Hear, all ye rulers who tremble on your thrones when the balance is not even!" cried Visscher. "All ye rulers, from the Keiser of the Russias to the worshipful burgomasters of Amsterdam!"

"Neither the Keiser you speak of, nor our burgomasters entertain the horror you suppose," observed Vanderput. "They leave it to the legislators of Great Britain, France, and Spain to dread that either scale of a self-rectifying balance can kick the beam. They leave it to the children of their nation to be particularly happy when the exports of their merchants exceed the imports; —happy because they suppose the money owing to the country to be so much additional wealth; so much pure gain. The Russian Keiser knows too well the toil and outlay by which his subjects prepare their tallow and hides, to suppose that the money they fetch from abroad is more than an adequate exchange. He knows the wants of his people too well not to think that the commodities which are brought them from other countries are not worth more to them than any money that ever was coined. The reason why he is anxious to improve the commerce of his empire is, that its inhabitants may gather more and more wealth from

abroad; and he looks on exportation only as a means to importation, as the desirable end."

Heins was somewhat surprised at the confidence with which his partner spoke of the views of the mighty Keiser of a distant empire. Before he had time to ask whence he derived his information, Vanderput gravely turned to his melancholy partner, and told him that he wished, from his heart, that nothing worse betided Heins's fortunes than the temporary slackening of his trade. It was a pity that he had so trifled with his private funds as to indorse the bills drawn by Slyk, Geysbuk, and Cats on each other. Slyk, as he perceived, was gone; Geysbuk had failed; and as for Cats,—he had been made a mere tool. One or two careless indorsers, besides Heins, had become liable for the amounts of bills; and the banks which had been taken into the circle, had also suffered; but the largest bills had been indorsed first by Heins, who must now suffer severely for his credulity and carelessness.

Vanderput was probably of opinion that evil tidings are most easily borne when they come all at once; for he proceeded to say that as it was impossible for him, one of the head merchants of Amsterdam, to remain in connexion with a man who would be presently known as having been made the dupe of a swindler, through his own spirit of speculation, the firm of Vanderput and Snoek must be dissolved at the earliest practicable term. The want of confidence, he added, of which Heins had been guilty in entering into extensive schemes without the slightest hint to the partner of his father, and the steady friend of his family, would have constituted a sufficient reason for dissolving partnership, if the speculation had issued in complete success.

Heins began by making light of the matter, and proving how rich he should remain, even if all the claims of Slyk's creditors were established against him; but when it appealed that Vander-put was far from disputing his wealth, but only thought that it did not affect the question, he became desperate, and stormed more like an Italian than a Dutchman, as the travelled bill-broker declared. When Heins perceived, however, that his threats fell powerless on the imperturbable Vanderput, he assumed a more imposing mood, and dropped grand hints, as he left the apartment (which he threatened never tore-enter), of the mighty things that he would do when released from the thraldom of a partnership which had never accorded with his commercial principles any more than with his tastes.

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Chapter IX.

CLOSE OF A BRIEF STORY.

Gertrude had long ago told Christian that he must visit Saardam again, some day, and see Master Peter. Christian was as little disposed to forget Gertrude's promises as Gertrude herself; and he repeatedly reminded her of this one. The invitation to Saardam was renewed with all earnestness, but Gertrude would now no longer answer for Master Peter being visible there. She would not say that he was gone; but neither would she engage that Christian should ever see him again: and her reserve on the subject perplexed her little friend. He found he must wait for light upon the matter till he reached Saardam; if that day should ever come.

That day came; and the drooping, worn-out boy found himself, after much toil and many restings by the way, once more placed within view of his favourite prospect, with the beams of the declining sun glistering on the heaving surface of the sound, and the nearer dock-yards chequered with long shadows from the timber-stacks and half-built vessels. It did not diminish the interest of the view that about a furlong of the dyke came within its range, with its trains of passengers hastening to and fro, and all the bustle taking place upon it which Luc and Roselyn thought much better worth attending to than the regular labours of the dock-yard. Christian cast an occasional glance that way while the children were looking out, the afternoon after the arrival of Gertrude and Christian from the north. The rest of the party had been settled some days; but Christian and his nurse had stopped to rest at the abode of the good dame who had offered her hospitality, in case of the invalid passing her way. This old woman had infused a further spirit of thankfulness into the suffering boy; so that, though he felt himself declining daily, he grew more patient as he had more need of patience.

The pastor was now sitting by his side, speaking little, and keeping his eye fixed on the gleaming sea.

“O, look, look!” cried Christian, pointing in the direction of the road. “One, two, four teams of dogs! and the carts piled as high as they can bear. They must be going to the fair.—0, how tired I am “he continued, languidly.” “Here I lie, while that stream of people passes on, on, on,—all busy, all expecting something, and thinking only of being as busy always.”

“You are not the only one, Christian, that feels this,” said the pastor. “Some who are as strong as the strongest of yon traffickers and pleasure-seekers feel, like you, that the hand of God is upon them, to fix them apart while the world passes on. It is not you alone, my boy.”

“I know whom you mean,” said Christian, in a low voice. “Christ stood on the mount and on the shore, and saw all the people going up to the feast.”

“He did,” replied the pastor, speaking in a manner which convinced Christian that he had not met his friend's thought.

“Would you have been busier in France than you are here,” he asked, “if the French king had not sent you away?”

“Perhaps I might; but God appoints his servants their station; and I am content. I am content to be the minister of his grace, and bless him for lightening the hearts of others. He will strengthen me to bear the burden of my own.”

After a moment's thought on the peculiar sadness of the pastor's tone, Christian laid his arm on his friend's shoulder, and whispered,

“*I* love Gertrude very much too; and I always thought——1 was so surprised when she told me——”

“Say no more about it. my boy. Talk rather of my country, or of my kindred, or of anything else that I have lost”

“I cannot talk at all,” said the boy, whose tears were fast flowing for the pastor, though it was some time since he had shed any for himself. He lay quietly listening to the pastor's consolations, till his mother appeared to say that Master Peter had come to see him. She was evidently wishing to tell something more, if Master Peter had not followed at her heels. The pastor hastened to disengage himself from Christian, that he might rise and make a profound obeisance. Christian, who had never seen his friend offer so low a reverence, especially to a carpenter in his workman's dress, laughed aloud. Mrs. Snoek, much alarmed at this ill-timed mirth, uttered at once what she had been wanting to say;—that Master Peter was a very different Peter from what they had imagined,—no other than the Keiser of all the Russias.

While Christian looked wistfully in Peter's face to learn if this was true, the Emperor lifted him gently from his couch, and held him in his arms as he had done on the first day of their acquaintance, assuring him that, as he would not allow his fellow-workmen to treat him differently now that they knew who he was, he should be very sorry if Christian grew afraid of him. As he spoke, he looked with a smile towards the opposite side of the room, where Luc had backed into a corner, and Roselyn was peeping from behind her mother's ample skirt.

“Luc looks afraid of you,” said Christian;

“and I might be afraid, if I were Luc. But, sir, I am just going where a great Keiser is no more than a pastor; and I dare say not so much. If I see you there very soon, you will not be a Keiser, and I shall be no more afraid of you than when you were only Master Peter.”

“Very soon, Christian? I hope we shall not meet there very soon.”

“O, yes: ask the pastor,” said the boy, eagerly. “He will tell you that I am going very, very soon.”

This the pastor unhesitatingly confirmed; but added that the Keiser had, he trusted, a long work to achieve before he was called into the presence of the King of Kings.

“O, yes,” said Christian, “how busy you are all going to be; and you, Master Peter, the busiest of all. You are learning to build fleets and cities;—at least, I heard them say so about the Keiser;—and you are getting wise men to teach you all that they know; while I am going to a place where there is no device nor knowledge.”

The pastor suggested that this probably applied only to the place where his body would be laid. This hint sufficed to excite the boy to pour out upon the Emperor a torrent of perplexing questions, about what he thought would become of the spirit. The readiest answer was,—(what was true enough,)—that Christian was completely exhausted, and must not talk any more at present. Peter would come in at the end of his day's work, and tell him about the fleet he intended to build, to ride in the harbour of his new city. Meanwhile, he desired Christian not to think he was going to die so very soon. It was not at all likely. He would send for his best physician from Russia, and tell him to restore Christian, so that the boy should visit him in his new capital, some time or other, when the cough should be gone, and the mysterious pain cured, and life a very different thing to Christian from what he had ever felt it yet.

The upright pastor could not silently let pass any observations of this nature. He reminded the Keiser that, though placed by the hand of God in a position of absolute dominion over multitudes of men,—over their lives and worldly lot, —he was no more the Lord of Life, in a higher sense, than the meanest of his serfs. It was not for him to say that the bowl should not be broken, or the silver cord loosed, when neither was given into his hand.

The mischief,—or what the pastor considered mischief,—was however done. After Peter had left the apartment, Christian employed himself in speaking when he could, and musing when he could not speak, on what he should see, and hear, and learn, and do, if he recovered enough to visit the new capital of all the Russias. He gave notice, from time to time, that he did not at all expect that this would ever happen; it was unlikely that his pain should ever go away entirely, and that Peter should remember him when he should be the great Keiser again. Yet, as his strength ebbed away, minute by minute, his convictions that he was not going to die just yet grew more vigorous. Observing him unable to finish something he wished to say, his mother feared that his pain was coming.

“No, I do not think it will come. No! no pain—” Yet his face expressed terror of an approaching paroxysm.

“I wish the Keiser had not come, or had not spoken presumptuously, as the potentates of this world do ever,” said Gertrude, more moved to displeasure than was common to her gentle nature.

“The Keiser wishes it too,” said Peter, who had entered the room softly, and saw at a glance that Christian's short day of life was likely to close nearly as soon as his own day's work, at the end of which he had promised to entertain the boy with stories that

could have no charm for a dying ear. “My poor boy, I deceived you. I have tainted your dying hours. Can you forgive me?”

Christian's now rigid countenance relaxed into the radiant smile which betokened his highest mood of faith. The movement, whether of body or spirit, summoned his pain; but its very first touch released him. He left the greatest of this world's potentates treasuring up the forgiveness of a feeble child, and wondering, as at a new thought, that one who had power over millions of lives should have no more interest than others with the supreme Lord of Life.

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Summary Of Principles Illustrated In This Volume.

Nations exchange commodities, as individuals do, for mutual accommodation; each imparting of its superfluity to obtain that in which it is deficient.

The imparting is therefore only a means of obtaining. Exportation is the means of obtaining importation,—the end for which the traffic is instituted.

The importation of money into a country where money is deficient is desirable on the same principle which renders desirable the supply of any deficient commodity.

The importation of money into a country where money is not deficient is no more desirable than it is to create an excess of any other commodity.

That money is the commodity most generally bought and sold is no reason for its being a more desirable article of importation than commodities which are as much wanted in the country which imports it.

That money is the commodity most generally bought and sold is a reason for its being the commodity fixed upon for measuring the relative amounts of other articles of national interchange.

Money bearing different denominations in the different trading countries, a computation of the relative values of these denominations was made in the infancy of commerce, and the result expressed in terms which are retained through all changes in the value of these denominations.

The term by which in each country the original equal proportion was expressed is adopted as the fixed point of measurement called the par of exchange; and any variation in the relative amount of the total money debts of trading nations is called a variation from par.

This variation is of two kinds, nominal and real.

The nominal variation from par is caused! y an alteration in the value of the currency of any country, which, of course, destroys the relative proportion of its denominations to the denominations of the currency of other countries. But it does not affect the amount of commodities exchanged.

The real variation from par takes place when any two countries import respectively more money and less of other commodities, or less money and more of other commodities.

This kind of variation is sure to correct itself, since the country which receives the larger proportion of money will return it for other commodities when it becomes a

superfluity; and the country which receives the smaller proportion of money will gladly import more as it becomes deficient.

The real variation from par can never therefore exceed a certain limit.

This limit is determined by the cost of substituting for each other metal money and one of its representatives,—viz., that species of paper currency which is called Bills of Exchange.

When this representative becomes scarce in proportion to commodities, and thereby mounts up to a higher value than the represented metal money, with the cost of transmission added; metal money is transmitted as a substitute for Bills of Exchange, and the course of Exchange is reversed and restored to par.

Even the range of variation above described is much contracted by the operations of dealers in bills of exchange, who equalize their value by transmitting those of all countries from places where they are abundant to places where they are scarce.

A self-balancing power being thus inherent in the entire system of commercial exchange, all apprehensions about the results of its unimpeded operation are absurd.

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THE LOOM AND THE LUGGER.
PART I.

Chapter I.

TAKING AN ORDER.

Mr. Culver, the silk-manufacturer, arrived at home later than the usual dinner hour, one dark winter day. He had been attending a meeting at the Mansion-house, held on the behalf of the Spitalfields weavers, whose deplorable distress in the middle of the season caused fearful anticipations of what their condition might be before a warmer season and a brisker state of trade should arrive. Mr. Culver's thoughts were occupied, during his slow and sad walk from the Mansion-house to his abode in the neighbourhood of Devonshire. square, by doubts whether a time of activity would ever arrive; or, if it did, how long it would last. Year after year, since he had entered business, had he been flattered with hopes that permanent prosperity would come; that the ladies of England would continue to prize silk fabrics as the most beautiful material for dress; and would grow conscientious enough to refuse smuggled goods, when every conceivable variety could be had from the looms of their own country. These had been Mr. Culver's hopes till of late. Now he began almost to despair, and to acknowledge himself tired out by the alternate perverseness of customers and workmen. As soon as a new fashion was fairly established, and orders abounded, there was sure to follow a strike among the men for wages; they invariably urging that a protected manufacture must be able to yield good wages to the operatives employed in it. As soon as their demands were yielded to, and the price of goods therefore enhanced, the market was deluged with smuggled silks; and while traffic was busy in the shops, the manufacturer was left to sigh over his ruinous stock when the fashion of the season had passed away. Being thus the sport, as he said, of three parties,—the encroaching weavers, the capricious public, and the smuggling shopkeepers,—the manufacturer declared that he stood no chance of prosperity, however ready the taxed millions of his countrymen might be to tell him that they were made to suffer that he might flourish, and that he had no right to complain while so many paid for the protection granted to his manufacture. Mr. Culver found it difficult to be grateful for the vaunted protection which did him no good; and was strongly disposed to resign the favour and his business together. He wished he had done it ten years before, when lie might have withdrawn from the manufacture a richer man than now. At present, all the manufactures of the kingdom were in so depressed a state that there was little encouragement to invest his remaining capital in any other concern; and it would, if unemployed, barely suffice for the maintenance of his family—his motherless young family—whose interests depended on himself alone. His chief doubt about leaving off business immediately arose from something that he had heard at the Mansion-house this day, in confirmation of rumours previously afloat,—that it was the intention of government to introduce some important changes into the silk-trade,—to authrize a restricted importation of foreign silks. The rumour had created a prodigious outcry at

the meeting, and caused such a contest between certain shopkeepers and manufacturers, such a splitting into two parties, as made it seem probable that the interests of the starving weavers—the objects of the meeting—would be forgotten between them. Mr. Culver was one who wished for the removal of the existing prohibition, seeing and feeling as he did that nothing could be worse than the present state of the trade in England, and believing that the rage for foreign fabrics might subside when they could be easily had, and that it must be a good thing to try a new footing for a manufacture which was at present carried on to the injury of all the parties concerned. If he continued to manufacture, it Would be with the hope of this change; but he ended with a doubt whether he ought to play the speculator much longer, and whether there was not something in the nature of the business which would for ever prevent its being in a permanently flourishing state. When he approached his own house, he saw his girls looking over the blind, as if waiting for him; and, in the background, nurse's high cap, always white, as if by miracle, considering the locality.

“O, papa!” cried Charlotte, “we thought you never would have come.”

“I dare say dinner will be overdone, my dear; but never mind. If cook is not vexed, I shall not care.”

“But the Bremes' footboy has brought a note for you; and he has called twice since for an answer; and he was obliged to go home without one, after all.”

“Such an ugly footboy, papa!” observed Lucy. “Nurse says that when they set up a footboy, they might as well have got one that had not a snub nose just like his master's.”

“And such a ridiculous livery, papa! It is so odd to see such a little fellow with knee-breeches, and with buttons on his big coat as large as my doll's saucers! Nurse says——”

“Hold your tongue, my dear. I want to read this note; and when we go to dinner, I have something to talk to you about that signifies more than Mr. Breme's footboy's coat-buttons.”

While the note was being read, nurse, who was a privileged person, did not leave the room, but muttered her wonder where the change came from that made shopkeepers now so different from what shopkeepers used to be. She remembered the time when the Bremes would no more have thought of having a footboy than of living in the king's palace. And if shopkeepers' children learned to dance in her young days, they were satisfied with plain white frocks, instead of flaunting in silks and gauze ribbons, like the Miss Bremes. There lay the secret, however. It was of the silks that all the rest came. Every body knew that the Bremes lived by breaking the laws;—that old Breme's shop in town, and his son's at Brighton, were full of unlawful goods.

“And so they will be, nurse,” said her master, “as long as the great folks at court, and all the fine ladies who imitate them, buy French goods as fast as they can be

smuggled.—Charlotte, see if dinner is coming. I am in a hurry. I have to go out again directly."

"O, papa!" said Lucy, "I thought you had something very particular to tell us; and now you say you are going out directly."

"It must do when I come back to-night, or in the morning. It is nothing very entertaining; but almost anything is better worth telling than all the faults you have to find with what the Bremes say and do. How can it possibly signify to you and me whether their footboy has a snub nose or a sharp one?"

"No, but, papa, it is such a very wicked thing of Mr. Breme to smuggle half the things in his shop, when the poor weavers close by are starving, and he knows it. Nurse says——O, here is the boiled beef! but I can go on telling you while you are helping the others. Nurse says——"

"Nurse," said Mr. Culver, "it is a pity you should stay to cut the child's food. Charlotte will attend to her."

Nurse unwillingly withdrew. Perhaps she would have attempted to stand her ground, if she had known what her master was planning against her. He was at this moment thinking that he must, by some means, put a stop to all this gossip about their neighbours; gossip which, in the case of the Bremes, was strongly tinctured with the malice which it was once thought nurse Nicholas could not bear towards any human being. It would be difficult, he feared, to separate nurse in any degree from those whom she would always consider her charge, even if she should live to see them all grown up; but her influence must be lessened, if he did not mean the girls to grow up the greatest gossips in the neighbourhood. He thought that the return of their brothers from school in the approaching holydays (brothers both older than Charlotte, the eldest girl) would afford a good opportunity for breaking the habit of nurse being in the parlour all day long during his absence. He now began the change by sending her away before dinner, instead of immediately after.

"Old Short has been telling nurse," continued Lucy,—"you know old Short, papa?"

"My dear, he used to weave for me before you were born."

"Well; old Short tells nurse that there is not a loom at work in all Crispin-street, nor has been all this month, while silk pelisses are more the fashion than ever they were. The Bremes had such beautiful pelisses last Sunday at church! You saw them, papa?"

"Not I, my dear. I do not go to church to look at people's pelisses."

"O, well! they are made Paris fashion; and of French silk too. Your silks are not good enough for such high and mighty young ladies, nurse says."

"There will soon be an end of that," observed Charlotte, who attributed her father's gravity to the fact of his manufacture being slighted. "There will soon be an end of all that; and nurse's son is going to help to put an end to it."

“Yes, papa,” cried Lucy. “Only think! He is going into the Pretence Service.”

“La, Lucy! you mean the Preventive Service,” cried Charlotte.

“To *prevent* prohibited goods being brought on shore; to *prevent* smugglers' boats from landing. Now you will understand, Lucy, what the Preventive Service means. So Nicholas is to be one of the Coast Guard! I suppose nurse is pleased.”

“I hardly know,” replied Charlotte. “He says it is very hard service in these times; and I believe she thinks her son fit to be an admiral. He has to guard the Sussex coast; and nurse says there are more smugglers there than any where.”

Lucy was of opinion that he should have somebody to help him. He could hardly manage, she thought, to prevent boats landing, if several chose to come together. He must be a very brave man indeed, she thought, to judge by what had been given him to do. No wonder nurse was proud of him! Nicholas sank much in her estimation when she heard that he was not alone to guard the whole Sussex coast, but had companions within sight by day, and within hail by night.

“But do they all earn wages, like Nicholas?” inquired Lucy. “They pay him wages, besides letting him have his pension still, that was given him for being wounded in a battle. I wish old Short, and some of the other poor people he was telling nurse about, could be made guards too. But who pays them?”

“Who do you think pays them? Try and find out.”

Charlotte thought that her father and the other manufacturers were the most likely people to pay for the prevention of smuggling, especially as some shopkeepers and the public had no objection to smuggling. But when she remembered how many guards there must be, if they were in sight of one another all along the coast where smuggling went on, she began to think that it must be an expense which would be hardly worth the manufacturers' while. Lucy supposed that if each manufacturer kept one, it might be easily managed. She asked which would cost most,—a Preventive servant or a footboy?

“You think, I suppose,” said her father, “that as the Preventive men do not prevent smuggling, after all, we might as well have a footboy, and be as grand as the Bremes. But, do you know, Lucy, I think the Bremes would have much more reason to laugh at us then, than you have now for ridiculing them. I believe Mr. Breme is growing rich; and he must know very well that I am growing poor.”

Charlotte asked again about the Coast Guard. She would have been pleased just now to learn that her father had any kind of manservant in his pay, besides those in the warehouse of whom she knew already. When, however, she was told the annual expense of keeping a guard against smugglers on the coast and at sea, she believed that the cost was beyond the means of all the manufacturers together that she had ever heard of. It was above four hundred thousand pounds a-year,—a sum of which she could as little realize the idea as of so many millions.

“Yes, my dear,” said her father, “four hundred thousand pounds are paid every year for *not* preventing smuggling; for we see that smuggling still goes on.”

“How can it be?” asked Lucy. “Do the men go to sleep, so that they do not see the boats coming? Or are they lazy? or are they cowardly? I do not think there will be any more smuggling in Sussex, now that Nicholas is there.”

Her father laughed, and told her it would require a much greater man than Nicholas to put a stop to smuggling in Sussex; and that if the Coast Guard could keep their eyes wide open all the twenty-four hours round, and were as active as race-horses, and as brave as lions, they could not prevent smuggling, as long as people liked French goods better than English; and that such would be people's taste as long as French goods were to be had better for the same money than any that were made in England.

Why the English should be so foolish as to make their fabrics less good and less cheap than the French, Mr. Culver could not now stay to explain. He despatched his cheese, tossed off his port, recommended the girls to learn as much as they pleased from nurse about the Preventive Service, and as little as they could about the Bremes' misdeeds, and was off, to see the very man against whom nurse's eloquent tongue had been employed.

Mr. Breme appeared to have something of consequence to display to Mr. Culver, as he turned on the gas in his back-room to an unusual brightness when his friend entered. (They still called themselves friends, though provocations were daily arising in matters of business which impaired their good will, and threatened to substitute downright enmity for it in time.)

“Here, my dear sir,” said Breme; “just look——but I wish you had come by daylight: you can't conceive the lustre by daylight;—just look at this piece of goods, and tell me if you ever manufactured anything like it.”

Mr. Culver unrolled one end of the piece of silk, ran his finger-tips over the surface, furled and unfurled its breadth, contemplated its pattern, and acknowledged that it was a very superior fabric indeed. He had hardly ever seen such an one from the Lyons looms, and he was sure neither Macclesfield nor Spitalfields had produced it.

“Can Spitalfields produce such an one, or one nearly resembling it?” asked Breme. “That is the question I wanted to ask you, my dear sir. Bring me a specimen which shall pass for French, and you shall have a larger order than has left this house for a twelvemonth past;—provided always that you can furnish it without delay.”

There need be no delay, Culver answered; for there were more looms unemployed in Spitalfields than could be set to work by any order that a single house could give. But the inferiority of the British manufacture was the impediment;—an inferiority which seemed almost hopeless. There was not a child of ten years old, dressing her doll in her mamma's odds and ends of silk, that could not tell French from English at a glance. Ay; put her into a dark room, and she would know the difference by the feel.

"You should get rid of this inferiority, my dear sir," said Breme, with an encouraging smile, "and then we shall be most happy to deal exclusively with you. We prefer dealing with neighbours, *caeteris paribus, I* assure you. You should get rid of this inferiority, and then——"

"Get rid of it! I should like to know how, while our weavers insist on the wages which they fancy can be spared from a protected trade, and will not believe that their prosperity has anything to do with the quality of their work. As long as they fancy their manufacture by law established, they will take no pains to improve it. There is no stimulus to improvement like fair competition."

"Well! your men's wages will soon be no longer by law established; that will be one step gained. You will then compete with Maccles-field and Paisley, which you could not do while your Spitalfields Act was in force. Bestir yourselves, I advise you, or the foreigners will cut you out in every way."

"I shall bestir myself to get our protection removed," observed Culver. "This is our only hope: but in this endeavour you will not join me, Breme. Contraband goods have too many charms for your customers, and bring too much profit to you, to allow you to wish that the trade should be open. Beware, however, that you are not caught some day."

Breme begged to be trusted to take care of himself. As to his fondness for a stock of contraband goods, he would just mention, in confidence, a circumstance which would prove his disposition to encourage the home manufacture.

"When I was last in Paris," said he, "a manufacturer there offered to supply me with any quantity of silk goods, to be deposited in any part of London that I might point out, upon the payment of an insurance of ten per cent. This tempting offer I declined, sir."

"Because you knew you could as easily get the goods without paying the insurance. Very meritorious, indeed, Mr. Breme! However, I am not one to talk about the patriotism, and the loyalty, and all that, involved in the case: for I hold the frequent and unpunished breach of a law to be a sufficient proof that the law is a bad one; and that the true social duty in such transactions is to buy where things are cheapest, and sell where they are dearest; thus relieving those who want to sell, and accommodating those who wish to buy. I am not going to quarrel with you, sir, for buying your silks abroad, if you will only join hands in getting your neighbours freed for a fair competition with France."

"Very liberal, indeed, my dear sir! Very handsome, indeed! It will give me great pleasure if you can accept the order which I have just given you a hint of. By the way, were you at the last India sale?"

"Of course."

"How did the bandanas go?"

“You probably know as well as I. I am no exporter of bandanas.”

“Do you mean to insinuate that I am? Retail dealers have something else to do, I assure you.”

“O yes;—to sell them when they come back again. But you must know how they are disposed of at the India House, and how much it costs to carry them over to Guernsey, and bring them in again, in spite of the Pretence Service (as my little girl calls it), before you can tell whether to sell them at seven or eight shillings apiece in your back shop.”

“Upon my word, sir, you are very wise,” said Breme, laughing.

“One learns such wisdom at a dear cost,” replied Culver. “Let me see. About 1,000,000 bandanas have been sold at the India House this year, at four shillings apiece. Of these, full 800,000 come back to be sold at seven or eight shillings each; so that the users of bandanas pay a bounty of 800,000 times three shillings a-year to speculators and smugglers, besides their share of the expense of the Blockade and Coast Guard which is employed to prevent their getting their handkerchiefs. It is a beautiful system, truly!”

“Let it work quietly, till those concerned begin to see into it,” replied Breme. “You ought not to complain, you know. It is all done to protect your craft.”

“If government would please to protect the consumers' money,” observed Culver, “they would have more to spend on the produce of my looms. All I ask is that the people's purses may be protected, and we manufacturers left to take care of ourselves. Government has been so long killing us with kindness that I doubt whether we shall ever get over it. However, cut me a pattern of your silk, and I will consult with my cleverest workman, and let you know what we can do.”

“Certainly:—that is,—I am sure I may trust your honour.”

“My interest, if not my honour. You must know very well that our books are not so full of orders just now as to make us willing to throw a chance one into other hands.”

“True, true! But a rival house——”

“Will not interfere with you while you agree to fair terms. I will be off to *my factotum,* as I call him, in ray business matters. I hope Mrs. Breme is well, and the young ladies?”

“The children are well enough; but my wife has not got over the autumn fogs yet. She would not be persuaded to leave Brighton till the royal party had removed; and the consequence is just what I expected. Her chest is so delicate that I doubt whether she will get across the doors this winter. It is really a very animated, an extremely fascinating scene, you know, when the royal household are at hand. Your young folks are flourishing, I hope?”

“Quite so. Good evening. My best respects to your lady.”

“Good evening. O, Mr. Culver, just one thing more! You said something about your stock. Have you a good assortment that one might select a few pieces from,—of grave colours,—at moderate prices?”

“0 yes. Will you come and see?”

“I think I will,” replied Breme, looking round for his hat. “And a good many blacks?”

“Of course; but you had better view them by daylight. You are not thinking of choosing colours to-night?”

“Certainly; but I can examine your prices, and bring home a piece or two of blacks. Here, Smith! Send Johnson after me directly to Mr. Culver's warehouse with his bag. As to these bandanas, Mr. Culver——”

Culver turned quick round upon him with the question,

“Is the King dead?”

“Lord bless my soul, what an idea! His Majesty dead! No, not that I have heard; nor even ill, for anything I know.”

Mr. Culver was not quite satisfied; so remarkable was Breme's method of inquiring after his stock of blacks—at the tail of their conversation, and yet with an evident design of immediately possessing himself of some pieces. He was not altogether mistaken. Breme had received private intelligence of the inevitable occurrence of a slight general mourning, and was anxious to have his assortment of black silks ready at once, and the fabric in imitation of his French pattern prepared against the expiration of the short mourning.

Culver was enough on his guard to avoid selling any of his stock quite so low as he might have done if no suspicion had crossed him. When the transaction was concluded, he stepped into Crispin-street, to consult the best skilled of his workmen on the matter of the new order.

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Chapter II.

GIVING AN ORDER.

Mr. Culver was not unaccustomed to visit his work-people in their abodes, and knew very well what sights to expect on opening the door; but he had never chanced to look in upon any one of them on an evening of January,—a dull month for trade, and almost the dreariest as to weather. He did not anticipate much that was comfortless in the aspect of Cooper's abode; for Cooper was so good a workman as to be always employed while any business at all was doing. His wife was a more tidy body than many weavers are blessed with; and her baby was far from resembling the miserable little creatures who may be seen in any street in London, with peaked chins, blue lips, and red noses, their ribs bent in with uncouth nursing, and legs bowed from having been made untimely to bear the weight of the swollen body. Mrs. Cooper's baby smiled a smile that was not ghastly, and danced in its father's arms when he had time to play with it, instead of wearing his heart with its cries when he should be sleeping the sleep which follows a day of hard labour.

Knowing all this, Mr. Culver, was ratter surprised by the first view of Cooper's apartment this night. Its atmosphere was apparently made up of the remains of the orange fog of the morning, the smoke from the chimney which could not make its way into the upper air, that which proceeded from the pipe of the old man who cowered over the dull fire, and that which curled magnificently from the dipped candles on either side the loom:—which candles seemed to yield one-tenth part light, and the rest to be made up of yellow tallow, wick growing into perpetual cauliflowers, and smoke. The loom was going, with its eternal smack and tick, serving, in cooperation with the gap under the door, for as admirable a ventilator as could have been wished for on the hottest day in August. Mrs. Cooper was discharging many offices in her own person; being engaged now in snuffing the rapidly-wasting candles, now in giving a fresh impulse to the rocking cradle, but chiefly in tying the threads of her husband's work, while he was intent, with foot, hands, and eye, on the complicated operations of his craft.

It seemed a somewhat unequal division of labour that these two should have so many tasks upon their hands, while a third was sitting lazily smoking by the fire, who might as well have been tending the baby. But old Short had another occupation, which was vastly important in his own eyes, although it would sometimes have been gladly dispensed with by everybody about him. Old Short was always grumbling. This being an avocation that he had ever found time for in his busiest days, it was not to be supposed that he would neglect it now that he had nothing else to do; and accordingly his voice of complaint arose in all the intervals of Cooper's loom music, and formed a perpetual accompaniment to its softer sounds.

It was matter of some surprise to Mr. Culver, who believed that Cooper and his wife were justified in living comfortably if they chose, that they should continue to give a

place at their fireside to a cross old man, to whom they were bound neither by relationship nor friendship. On the present occasion, his first remark, offered in an under-tone, was, “So you have the old gentleman with you still! He does not grow more pleased with the times, I suppose?”

Cooper winked, and his wife smiled.

“Have you any expectations from him? Or what can induce you to give him house-room? He is very well able to take care of himself, as far as I see.”

“Very well, indeed, sir. He is as capable, as to his work, as ever, when he gets any: and it is trying sometimes to hear him talk; but he is not the only person to feel the hardship of the times, sir; and one must put up with a fault or two, for the sake of having a respectable lodger.”

“He pays us fairly the little we ask for his share of our fire and our meals,” observed the wife; “and we are getting used to that tone of his by degrees;—except, indeed, the baby. One would think baby knew what Short was talking about by its fidgeting and crying when he begins on a fresh complaint.”

Short was all this time listening to himself too intently to be aware what was said on the other side of the room. He missed Mr. Culver's expression of concern at Cooper's being obliged to add to his resources by having a boarder, but was roused by the exhibition of the pattern of French silk. He felt too much contempt for it, however, to look closely at it, when he heard what it was. He supposed it was one of the new-fangled fashions people had taken to since the Spitalfields weavers had had their just wages held back from them. He had said what would happen when his brother weavers consented to take less wages than the Act gave them. The manufacture deserved to go clown——

“I am quite of your opinion,” observed Mr. Culver. “We deserve to go down if we do not mend our methods. Look at the lustre of this pattern, and only feel its substance. We deserve not to prosper if we do not improve our fabrics, with such an example as this before us of what may be done.”

“Leave the French to mind their own matters,” replied the old man, “and let the English, wear what is English, as they should.”

“You will find that rather difficult to manage, friend, if they like the French fabric better.”

“Never tell me, sir! It is a fancy, and a wicked fancy, that of liking French goods. Why, for wear, there is nothing like our brocades, that there was such a demand for when I was young. There was variety enough, too, in all conscience. There was the double and treble striped, and the strawberry-spotted, and——”

“O yes, I remember, Mr. Short. The first waistcoat I danced a cotillon in was such a strawberry-spotted thing as you describe. Nothing like it for wear, as you say. Down

came my little Lucy in it, the other day, to make us laugh; and, to be sure, the colours are as bright as ever. But then, there is nothing like those brocades for price either."

Short hated to hear such grumbling about the prices of things as was always to be heard now that the French had got a footing *in* the country. In old times, those that could afford to wear silk did not grudge a good price for it.

"Very true; but many more people wear silk now; and they are of a class to whom it is of consequence to pay no more than is necessary."

"Ay; and to please them, you have wrought your web thinner and thinner, till you have made it too thin for even the cheapeners; and now you must learn from the French to give your fabric more substance."

"I am afraid we cannot do that for the same money; hey, Cooper?" said Mr. Culver, watching for the sentence which the weaver should pronounce when he should remove his magnifying glass from his eye, and give judgment on the pattern.

"I think we may do it, sir," pronounced Cooper. "I believe I see the principle of the thing; and I could make a fair imitation, I think. Not with the same body, of course. We cannot afford to put in equal material for the money; but a slighter fabric of the same pattern might sell, I have no doubt."

"If I might put in my word," said Mrs. Cooper, "I should recommend a higher price instead of a slighter fabric. It is more for the substance than the pattern that the French silks are preferred, I have heard say."

"My dear," said her husband, "I cannot pretend to rival a French weaver, if you give me leave to use all the silk that ever passed through a foreigner's loom. That is a point above me. So we had better content ourselves with a likeness as to figure and price.—I cannot conceive," he continued, as he turned the pattern over and over, and held it in various lights, "*how* the foreigners can afford their silks at such a price as to tempt our shopkeepers to the risk of the contraband trade."

"Never tell me!" cried Short again. "You do not really think that the French sell at the rate our shopkeepers say they do! It is all a trick of the people at home, to spite those they have been jealous of so long. They may starve us; but the law will be too strong for them, sooner or later."

"I rather hope that they may be too strong for the law," replied Mr. Culver. "If we can but get the law altered, our day of prosperity may come again. We might have learned by this time that all our hopes of selling our silks abroad are at an end, unless we improve like our neighbours, instead of wrapping ourselves up in the idea that nobody can ever equal us."

"Ay, I suppose it was under the notion that it was a fine thing to export, that we were forbidden to import silks," observed Cooper; "but if they had only let us have a little free conversation with the French about their manufacture, we might by this time have had something as good as they to sell abroad."

“Or if not silks, something instead, which would have been produced out of what we should have saved from our expensive manufacture. If I had but the capital which is wasted in following our inferior methods, what fine things I would do with it for my family, and, in some sort, for my country!”

“I cannot imagine,” Cooper again observed, “how the French afford their goods at the price they do. Whether it is that they have food cheaper, and therefore wages are lower, or whether it is that they have better machinery, I should like to come to a fair trial with them. If we can get upon an equality with them, well and good; there will be buyers at hand for all that we can make. If we cannot compete with them, better know it at once, and turn to something else, than be supplanted by means of a contraband trade, while our masters' money is spent in guarding the coast to no purpose.”

“Never tell me!” interposed old Short. “You grumblers” always grudge every farthing that is not spent upon yourselves.”

“0, yes,” replied Cooper, smiling; “we grumblers grudge every half-crown that is laid out on French silks in our neighbourhood; and no wonder, friend.”

“It is the Coast Guard I was thinking of,” replied the old man. “There is Mrs. Nicholas's son just well settled in the Preventive Service; and now you are for doing away the whole thing. What is to become of the poor lad, I wonder?”

“Cooper will teach him to weave,” said Mr. Culver, laughing. “So many more people would wear silks, if we had fair play, that we might make a weaver of a coast guardsman here and there.”

Cooper feared it would be a somewhat difficult task to impart his skill to Nicholas, who was not over-bright in learning; but he would attempt more difficult things if they brought any chance of relief from the present unhappy state of affairs. He was as little given to despond as any man; and was more secure than many of his neighbours of being employed as long as there was occupation to be had; but it did make him tremble to look forward, when he reflected how his earnings grew less, quarter by quarter.

“Ay; that is the way,” muttered Short. “You let the masters off their bargain about wages, and then you complain that your earnings are small. People's folly is a mystery to me.”

“As great a mystery as the black dye,—hey, Mr. Short?” said Mrs. Cooper.

The old man smiled with an air of condescension when Mr. Culver asked, “What of the black dye?'

“Only that Mr. Rose was complaining of seldom having his goods dyed exact to pattern, sir: and the dyer made an excuse about the air;—some stuff that I forget, about the air being seldom two days alike at that time of year. As if the air had anything to do with black dye! No, no,—never tell me!”

“As great a mystery as the mishap with the steam-boat, perhaps, Mr. Short?”

“*Why,* ay; there is another piece of nonsense, sir. I happened to be at hand when the little steam-boat blew up, five years ago. I saw the planks and things blown clean on shore, sir; and they would have had me believe that it was steam that did it.' Never tell me,' said I,' that steam did all that.'”

“How did it happen, then, do you suppose?”

“What is that to me? They might blow it up with gunpowder for anything that I cared. But about the dye,—that is a different matter altogether; and so is the affair of the wages, since our bread depends on the one and the other. And as for throwing open our trade to those French rascals, never tell me that you are not all idiots if you wish for such a thing. I have woven my last piece, sir, if you prevail to bring in a Frenchman to supplant me. Mark my words, sir, I have woven my last piece.”

“I hope not, Short. I hope you will weave many another piece before you die, however we may arrange matters with the French. Meantime, if Cooper discovers the secret of yonder pattern, as I think he will, you must find a place for your loom at the other end of the room, and be ready for your share of the work.”

Short muttered that new-fangled patterns did not suit old eyes and hands like his. He must starve with the starving, since he could not take his chance with those who were fond of change.—The mention of the starving left the parties no spirits for further conversation on other subjects; and Mr. Culver departed, while Cooper stepped back into his loom, and the old man resumed his pipe, full of contempt for all masters that were caught by a new pattern, and of all workmen that would have anything to say to such innovations. He only wished they would come first to him with their new schemes. He should enjoy bidding them weave for themselves, if they must have new fancies.

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Chapter III.

DUMB DUTY.

Cooper had good reason for doubting his capability of teaching Nicholas to weave, and for thinking such a task the worst consequence that could result to him from the abolition or reduction of the Coast Guard. There were, indeed, few things that Nicholas could learn to do, and it was therefore a happy circumstance for himself and his mother that his present appointment had been obtained for him. He had good eyes, and a set of strong limbs, so that he stood as fair a chance as a brighter man of seeing a boat on the waves, and of sustaining his six hours' watch to the satisfaction of his officer, in ordinary times. How he might conduct himself at any crisis,—whether he would do what he ought on seeing a suspicious vessel near the coast, or whether any human power could prevail with him to alter the periods or the mode of his watch with-out deranging all his faculties,—was another question: but no emergency having arrived since his appointment, Nicholas was, as yet, in very good repute with everybody about him. Lieutenant Storey had never found fault with him; and Mrs. Storey had more than once bestowed a word and a smile on him, in answer to his reverential salutation, and the open-mouthed admiration with which he was perceived to regard his officer's young bride. His mates let him alone except at those lounging times when one person did as well as another to make remarks to about the state of the weather and the water, and the prospects of the fishing below. As for the villagers, they were, from some cause or other, more civil to Nicholas than they usually were to men of his calling; so that he determined, at least once a day, that he was a favourite of fortune, and had uncommon reason to be grateful to Providence. At least once a day;—for so often did he usually rest his knee against a certain big stone on the beach, and look seaward through his telescope: on the first occasion of doing which, it had entered his mind that his mother admired him very much, and that everybody was very kind to him. Each time afterwards that he used the same action, he thought that everybody was very kind to him, and that his mother admired him very much; and he grew fond of this stone, and of using his telescope in that particular place. By a sort of instinct, he rose from his knee, and shot his instrument into its case, as soon as any annoyance was suspected to be approaching; so that he was pretty sure of keeping his periodical mood in its primitive state.

This method of his,—of having a particular time and place fixed in which to enjoy, and another in which to endure,—was vexatious to those who delighted in teasing. The children of the village could never fix Nicholas to his stone; and when he was upon his watch he would bear anything. This being considered a settled matter, they left off attacking him at such times, leaving it to the wind and rain to overthrow his tranquillity if they could. Nicholas was not destined, however, to be always so favoured above his more irritable companions, as he found one bitter February day, when the hardships of the watch were quite enough of themselves for an ordinary stock of patience.

A dense fog hung so low that there was no use in keeping watch on the heights, and the Coast Guard were therefore stationed along the margin, in the exact position for being drenched by the spray, nipped by the wind, and stifled by the fog, as they looked with anxious gaze over the dull sea, which appeared more like a heaving expanse of oil than a congregation of waters. There was small use in peering abroad; for the mist hung like a curtain till within a furlong of the beach. *As* little comfort was there in looking inland. The near cliffs of Beachy Head seemed icy, and the sea-birds that dwelt there appeared to be cowering in their holes from the cold. The fishermen's huts bore the comfortless aspect that wooden houses always do when their roofs are loaded with snow; and even the station-house, perched on the highest point of the cliffs, seemed deprived for the time of its air of cleanliness and comfort. Just at the moment when the fog fell most chilly, and the spray flew most searchingly, and the rattle of the waves on the shingle sounded most dreary, a troop of children came wandering by, some of the little ones threatening to cry with cold, but the elder ones not having had the spirit of mischief yet starved out of them. They were pupils of Mr. Pin, the village schoolmaster, and were on their way to their several homes from his well-warmed schoolroom. One of the troop, a brown, handsome, roguish-looking boy, ran up to Nicholas with—

"I say, Mister, sir, what's your name?—what's o'clock?"

Of course, Nicholas made no answer; and the question was put in all forms which could be expected to provoke a reply,—all to no purpose.

"I say, master, let me hold your spy-glass while you blow upon your fingers; you can't hold it. There! bang it goes! Lord! look, there it goes again! He can't hold his spy-glass no more than a baby."

The joke now was to twitch his coat-tail, or otherwise startle Nicholas, so as to cause him to drop his glass as often as his benumbed fingers raised it to the level of his eye.

"Look, look! if his eyes be not running over every time the wind blows. Look! how he blinks away from the fog, every puff that comes! A pretty watch he makes! I say, what is that black thing yonder, sir? It is a boat, as sure as I am alive. You had better look sharp, sir."

"No, not that way," said another; "more to the right, near to that cliff. No, no; this way, to the left. Why, man, you have lost your eyes!"

The rogues were delighted to see that, though Nicholas made no reply, his head wagged from right to left, and from left to right, as they chose to turn it. When he had gazed till the fog had drawn closer round the nearer headlands, and when he wiped his eyes in the cutting wind with his coat-sleeve, till they watered faster than ever, the joke was improved upon. The children crowded together in a sheltered corner, and invited Nicholas to come too, and be comfortable, instead of standing to be buffeted like a sea-gull that knew no better. They tantalized him with accounts of what they were going to do at home,—with mention of hot broth and potatoes, of fire, of shelter, and of everything comfortable that he was not likely to have for nearly six hours to

come. Nicholas was immoveable; and when they were tired of plaguing him, and ran off with expressions of insulting pity, he paced his allotted walk without any sign of anger or discontent. His first token of emotion of any kind was a vehement laugh, when he saw what next befel the little brown boy who had begun the attack on him.

The boy's companions had warned him of the uselessness of trying to provoke Nicholas, and had recommended Brady in preference,—Brady, the Irishman, who was known to find it necessary to keep the thought of punishment before him, in order to hold his tongue when jeered by those who would take advantage of his not being able to answer. About Brady, therefore, gathered the small fry; and they pestered him till he turned suddenly round, seized Uriah Faa, the gipsy boy, and laid him sprawling, just in advance of a ninth wave, as it was rolling on. The boy yelled, Brady resumed his walk, the other children scampered off, full of fear and wrath, and Nicholas laughed aloud.

“Really now, I call that very cruel,” said a sweet voice behind him. “I would not do such a thing as that for the world; and I should be very sorry to laugh at it. Would not you, Elizabeth?”

“O, yes; but what can you expect from a set of creatures like this Coast Guard, that are put here to plague the people?” replied Elizabeth.

Overwhelmed with grief and shame stood Nicholas, tongue-tied under a charge which wounded him keenly. Elizabeth's contempt did not trouble him very much, though a stranger might have pronounced her a more particular-looking lady than her companion, from her being more gaily dressed, and carrying more grandeur in her air. His grief was that the tender-hearted, sweet-spoken little lady, who never bore ill-will to anybody, should think him cruel. It was his duty to seem to take no notice, and to go on looking out for vessels; but Nicholas could not so play the hypocrite when Mrs. Storey was in question. An observer might have been amused at the look of misery with which he seemed about to ask leave to go down on his knees on the wet shingle, and must have been convinced that no thought of contraband traders was in his mind as he turned to watch the ladies proceeding on their bleak way. Nicholas's only resource was to resolve to speak in defence of his comrade and himself, as soon as his watch should be ended.

In a very short time, it appeared as if the lady's words, as well as the boy's cries, had made themselves heard up the country. From one recess or another of the cliff's dropped picturesque forms, in gipsy guise, all directing their steps towards that part of the beach where Brady and Nicholas were stationed on the margin of the tide. A fisherman or two looked out lazily from the cottages; and their more active wives drew their cloaks about them, and hastened down to see what would ensue on the ducking of a mischievous boy.

“Goodness, Matilda!” cried Elizabeth, “they are coming this way. Mercy! they are going to speak to us. Which way shall we run? What shall we do?”

And without waiting for an answer to her questions, the lady took to flight, and scudded towards the cliff path as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, screaming by the way, as often as any one person came nearer to her than another. Matilda, not quite foolish enough to follow at the same rate, but very much alarmed, was immediately surrounded by gipsies, vociferating in a language which she did not understand, and pointing so angrily towards the guard, that it was plain she would be safer without their protection than with it. The state of affairs was not improved by the junction of the fishermen's wives.

“O, Mrs. Alexander,” cried the lady, addressing the best known face among the latter,” what do these people want with me? What are they going to do?”

“They want you to bear witness, my lady, how the boy Uriah has been used by these cruel-hearted, thieving rogues, that don't care what mischief they do with their hands, while they have never a tongue in their heads, but creep about like spies.”

“Perhaps it is very well that the tongues are all on one side,” said the trembling lady; “there is no saying how quarrels might otherwise issue, Mrs. Alexander.”

“Bless us! how you shake with cold, my lady! Only think what it must be to be laid flat in the water, as Uriah was by yon villain's hands. If they had been frozen off by the wrists, it would only have served him right. One would think you had been in the water too, Ma'am, by your shaking.”

“I am in hot water just now,” declared Matilda, half laughing. “Cannot you call off these rude people, and prevent their pressing round me? You seem to know them.”

“O yes, sure, Ma'am; and you would know them too, if you had been a little longer in this place. It is only old Faa, the gipsy, and his tribe, that come here every winter. The lady that was with you just now knows very well who they are, and where they live, for all her running away so fast.”

“I wish she would come back then, for I cannot tell what in the world to say to them. Mr. Faa! Which is Mr. Faa?”

A grisly-looking old gipsy stepped forward.

“You do not suspect me of having Caused your boy to be dipped, I hope?”

All bowed, and vociferated their horror at such an idea.

“Neither must you expect me to bid you duck those men. It is a very cold day; and I am so sorry to have witnessed one ducking, that I should be very unwilling to see anybody else laid under water.”

This was perhaps the most foolish speech she could have made, as it put into their heads the idea of summary vengeance. She saw her mistake in the increased rage of the people, and the look of defiance that Brady put on. There was little use now in saying that there might have been fault on both sides, and that it was best to forgive

and forget. There was no use in offering to tell the Lieutenant what had happened, and in answering for it that such an offence should not happen again; the people were determined to make the most of having the officer's lady on their side, and of the present opportunity of gratifying their hatred of the Coast Guard. All the ungracious acts ever committed there by a coast guard rushed into their remembrance; how one neighbour had been stopped and searched on the beach, and the fire of another put out on the cliff, under the suspicion of its being a signal; how the boat of a third could never come home without being entered by these spies; and how, once upon a time, a person had been shot by a choleric member of the Preventive Force. All these sins seemed likely to be now visited on the heads of Brady and Nicholas, when a mediator appeared in the shape of Pim, the schoolmaster, the most potent personage between the martello towers and Parson Darby's Hole,—a so-called cavern in the cliffs of Beachy Head.

Mr. Pim owed his influence, not to any physical force, though he was the tallest and stoutest man within five miles; nor to wealth, for he professed to have nothing but his village day-school to support his family upon; nor to any connexion with the great, for he was a bluff, homely personage, who did not want or care for anybody's favours; nor to his own superior wit, for no one was aware of his being remarkably endowed in this way. It was partly that he had given to his neighbours all the book-learning that they could boast of, and the little religion that they professed. It was yet more that he had been a long resident with his family, after having early buried his wife among them. But, above all, it was his merry heart, making itself understood by a voice mighty enough to out-bellow the waves at Beachy Head, that was the charm of Mr. Pim. He liked to be told that he should have been a preacher, with such a voice as his, and would forthwith enact the reverend gentleman for a minute or two; but he could never make his splendid voice bring out any thing but little jokes with small wit in them; for the good reason that his brain would supply nothing else. Nothing more was necessary, however, to constitute him the most popular man within his sphere.

“Hi, hi! what is all this about?” was the question that came travelling through the air, as soon as his tall form became visible, approaching from the houses. “What are you buzzing about here for, when your young one is toasting at home, as dry as the cod-sounds that hang over his head? Toasting! aye, at my fire. I met him dripping like a duck, and he would have slunk away; but it was up with him this way;” and he seized upon a boy standing near, and threw him across his shoulder, twisting him about with one hand as if he had been a doll. “This way I carried him home, unwilling enough, to my Rebecca. ‘ Here, Beck,’ says I, ‘ take him and toast him till I come back to give him a flogging.’ And now he is expecting me, so I must be off, as soon as you will please to give over quarrelling, and march home. Flog him! ay, to be sure, for disturbing these men at their duty. It is a fine thing, you gipsy gentlemen, to have put your young folks under the rod; and it would be a thousand pities not to use it. You can't get the impish spirit out of them all in a day.”

“But has the boy done wrong?” inquired Mrs. Storey. “Even if he has, he has surely been punished enough.”

“Not while ill blood is left, my lady. I never leave off punishing my boys till they laugh with me, and it is all right again. If Mr. Faa will undertake to make his boy laugh as much as he cried half an hour ago, he is welcome to go and fetch him away. But then there must be an end of this silly business. You, sir,” to Brady, “thrust your pistol into your pocket, or I will help you to chuck it deeper into the sea than you can go to fetch it.”

Brady looked as angry now as the gipsies had done when they heard that Uriah was to be flogged; but neither party could long withstand Pim's authoritative style of good humour. He ended with making every body laugh, turning the attention of the guard seawards, dispersing the group of complainers in different directions, and adjourning the quarrel, if he could not dissolve it. As he attended the lady to the station-house, he explained to her the little hope there was of establishing a good understanding between the Coast Guard and the country people.

“I pity the poor fellows down below, with all my heart,” said he, turning from the first point of the ascent to observe the guard, now again loitering along the margin. “Not so much for being out in the cold, though they slap themselves with their swinging arms like yon flag in a high wind. It is not for the cold I pity them, since a young lady keeps them company in it.”

“I seldom stay within all day, especially when Miss Storey is with me,” replied Matilda; “but I would not promise to bear this cold for six hours; and I do pity those poor men very much.”

“So do I, madam, because they moreover meet cold looks at every turn; which you, not being a spy, will never do.”

“But these men are spies only upon those who break the laws. You do not mean that the innocent are not glad to be watched?”

Pim looked sly while he said he knew but of one innocent in all the neighbourhood, and he happened to be among the spies, and so was very popular. Mrs. Storey would go deeper than the pun, however, and asked whether the neighbours generally had need to fear the enforcement of the law.

“I bring up all my scholars so religious, it would do your heart good to see them,” replied Pim. “They know the Bible all through, and understand the whole of the Church Catechism, as you will find, if you will give us the honour of a visit some day.”

“I will, to morrow, Mr. Pim.”

“Suppose we say the end of the week, ma'am, when they are furbished up for the parson. You will be more sure of being pleased towards the end of the week. I make my scholars very moral.”

“Then they have no reason to fear spies, I should think.”

“Why, as to that, ma'am, it all depends on people's notions of what it is to be moral; and when there is so much difference of opinion on that, it seems natural enough that each party should settle the point as seems most agreeable.

I wonder, now, what you think of the gentlefolks that come to Hastings and Brighton, and all the bathing places along this coast.”

“I suppose they are much like other gentlefolks, are they not? How do their morals affect those of your scholars?”

“Why, just this way. If ladies in their walks make acquaintance with the fishermen's children, and use that as a pretence for calling on their mothers, and letting drop that they would be glad of a lot of gloves or silk hose from over beyond there, is not it natural for the cottage-girls to think the bargain a very pretty and proper one, when they see the goods brought out of the cupboard? And if gentlemen drop in here and there, as they saunter about, to taste French brandy, or pocket a few cigars, is it not likely that the lads hereabouts, who are fond of adventure at all times, will take the hint, and try their luck at sea on dark nights?”

“But are such practices common among visiters to the coast?”

“Are they not?—And those who do not care to step across a poor man's threshold themselves are ready enough to buy of such as will; of the shop-keepers at Brighton, and others that import largely. Now all this is what the law calls immoral, while the people see no reason to think so.”

“And which side do you take,—you who make your scholars so moral?”

“I take neither side in my teaching, but leave the matter to be settled according as the cliildren have friends among the cottagers, or in the coast guard, or the law, or the custom-house. But there is one thing I do try to teach them,—not to quarrel with other people about the right and the wrong, nor to hate anybody, but let the whole thing go on quietly. God knows, it is hard work enough; but I do try. It *is* hard work; for they hate each of those watchers as if he had cloven feet and a long tail.”

“How do you set about making the guard beloved?”

“Nay, nay, that is too much to try. And it is doubly difficult to me from my having a son in the custom-house; which exposes me to be called partial; but I always say, ‘ Hate them in your hearts as much as you will; but you owe it to your king and country not to show it. Be as civil to the king's servants as you would to his majesty himself.’”

“I am afraid you do not always succeed; I should as soon think of telling a man that he need not mind having a fever; but he must take particular care that his hands be not hot.”

“Where we cannot do every thing, ma'am, we must do what we can. How should I prevent the guard being unpopular, when they act as spies every hour of the day and night? And would you have me declare them always in the right when it is their very

business to prevent people getting the goods that they want and will have? As long as people will drink brandy, and smoke tobacco, and wear silks and laces, I see no use in preaching to them to buy dear when they can buy cheap. All I pretend to is to make as little harm come of it as possible; to persuade the people to sell their spirits instead of drinking them, and avoid brawls with the enemy they must submit to have set over them."

"With my husband and his men," said Mrs. Storey, smiling at the idea of her husband's being any man's enemy. The notion was almost as absurd (in a different way) in relation to him as to Nicholas.

"You see, ma'am, it is not only that this Coast Guard is a terrible spoil-sport; it is a very expensive thing. When the people pay their taxes, and when they look at the nearest Custom-house,—aye, every time a Preventive officer has a new coat, they remember that they pay for keeping spies over themselves. This is provoking, you will allow; and many's the time they throw it in my teeth,—I having a son in the Custom-house, as I said."

"Why do you not tell them that, if there were no duties, they would lose their trade at the same time that they got rid of their enemies? Do not they see that fishermen would no longer be employed in fetching silks and spirits, if there were no laws to hinder merchants from doing it as cheaply? I should like to see how your neighbours would look if every custom-house was pulled down throughout the country, and every man in the Preventive Service sent about other business."

"Why, then, I suppose, fisherhad prospered since she men would be simply fishermen, and my son must come and help me to keep school,—if any school remained for me to keep."

"How would such an arrangement interfere with your school?"

Mr. Pim mysteriously gave the lady to understand that fishermen cannot commonly afford schooling for their children, unless they have some resource beyond their boats and nets. Nobody knew how much of the money circulating in this neighbourhood came through the breach of the laws which some of it was employed to maintain. He went on,—

"It would be some comfort that there would be fewer taxes for us to pay; and if government kept up reasonable duties (which would be but fair) the burden would fall lightly upon all. Government would not be cheated; we should not be insulted with useless taxes and with spies, and——"

"And some of you would have your pockets lightened of much ill-gotten money, and your hearts of much hatred that it is shocking to think of," replied the lady.

"Moreover, we should see less of the gipsies," observed Mr. Pim. "Whether this would be a good or an evil, is a point that some of us might differ upon; but it is certain that they would not settle in bleak places like this in winter, if there were not something likely to happen in the long nights to repay them for the bitterness of the

short days. They would not like our bare sandy levels and our cold caverns better than a snug London alley, if there were not good things to be had here that do not fall in their way there."

"You would lose a scholar or two if the gipsies kept away. I cannot think how you persuaded such people to send their children to school."

Pim laughed heartily, but gave no explanation. As they drew near the turf-fence of the station-house, he stopped to contemplate the place, and observed that it was a neat, tight little dwelling, and pleasanter, he should think, for a lady to live in than the martello towers farther on. There was something dreary-looking in those towers, as if they must be cold in winter and hot in summer, perched upon the bare sands, and made up of thick walls with few windows. Whereas, the white station-house seemed just the place which might suitably have plants trained against it now that a lady's fine taste reigned within (supposing the wind would let them grow); and as for its winter evening comforts,—when he saw gleams from the window piercing the darkness, like a lesser beacon, he could only be sorry for the Lieutenant that it was ever necessary to leave such a fire-side as there must be within, to go out amidst scenes where—where—

"Where he is much less welcome," replied Matilda, smiling. "I dare say your people,—fishermen, gipsies, schoolmasters, and all,—would strongly recommend my husband staying where he is comfortable, let what will be doing on the beach."

"And I am sure you should, my lady, as a good wife. If you knew——"

"Do not tell me," replied Matilda, hastily. "I will hear of those things from nobody but my husband himself."

While Mr. Pim was inwardly saying that the lady would scarcely hear from the Lieutenant the worst that could be told, Miss Storey came running to the gate, full of wonder whether all was safe, and what the gipsies had done to Matilda, and how her sister-in-law had prospered since she herself had so valiantly left her side. Matilda did not trouble herself to reply with more civility than Elizabeth deserved; but bestowed all the overplus on the schoolmaster, whom she invited in to enjoy the comforts of shelter and fire.

Mr. Pim could not stay to do more than compliment the lady on her endurance of the sharp cold of the sea-shore. He concluded she would scarcely pass her doors again till milder weather should come.

"O yes, I shall," replied Matilda. "Be the weather what it may, I shall come and visit your daughter, and see how you make your scholars moral, gipsies and all."

The gipsies were the most moral people in the world, to judge by the punctuality and liberality of their payments, Mr. Pim declared; and when the imp was whipped out of them, they made very good scholars. With this explanation, and something between a bow and a nod, the rosy schoolmaster took his leave, and, with his hands behind him,

and beginning to whistle before the ladies had turned their backs, shuffled briskly down the slope to the sea-shore.

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Chapter IV.

AN AFTERNOON TRIP.

Matilda could not imagine why Elizabeth had not gone home, instead of waiting all this time at the station-house. It must be past Mrs. Storey's dinner hour, and there seemed some reason to fear that Elizabeth meant to stay for the rest of the day. If she did, however, she must invite herself, Matilda resolved; for it was far from being her own inclination to have any guest on this particular occasion;—the day of her husband's return after an absence of half a week,—the terrible first absence after a marriage of six weeks. They had met only for one hour in the forenoon; dinner-time would soon bring him home, and it would be too provoking to have a third person to intrude, especially if that third person were Elizabeth, of whom the Lieutenant was more fond than his wife could at all account for, Elizabeth might see, if she chose, that she was unwelcome; for Matilda had no intention of concealing the fact. She neither sat down, nor asked Elizabeth to do so; but, throwing off her bonnet, and stirring the fire, employed herself next in rectifying the time-piece by her own watch.

“My dear,” Elizabeth began, strenuously warming herself.

“I wish she would not call me ‘ my dear,’” thought Matilda; “it is so old maidish.” But Matilda might have known that a wife of twenty is very naturally called ‘ my dear’ by a sister-in-law of thirty-five.

“My dear,” resumed Elizabeth, “you talked of going to see Mr. Pim's school. We may as well go together. Fix your time.”

Matilda could not fix any time at present. Her husband had been absent, and her engagements must depend on his for some days to come.

“Very well. I know he is always out between ten and one o'clock; and that will be your time. I shall expect you some morning soon, between ten and twelve, as the school breaks up at noon. It lies straight past our door; but if you wish me to call you, I can easily come up.”

“O, by no means, thank you. But we shall meet before the end of the week, and can fix all about it. Mr. Pim wishes us not to go till the end of the week, when the children will have their catechism at their tongues' ends.”

“As to meeting, I do not know,” replied Elizabeth. “I am going to be very busy for some days. And indeed it is time I was at home now; for I promised my mother to cut out a cap for her before dark.” And Elizabeth extended her hand to take her muff.

“Indeed!” cried Matilda, briskly. “Let me walk part of the way home with you. And you must allow me to help you with your work. You know I have nothing to do, and——”

“So it seems, indeed,” replied Elizabeth, looking round with a supercilious smile, upon the bare work-table-, the perfectly-arranged book shelves, and the closed piano, which collectively presented a picture of *a* most bride-like lack of occupation.

“If you are inclined to send up your mother's handkerchiefs,” said Matilda, coldly, “it will give me great pleasure to make them.”

“Not for the world,” Elizabeth declared. So fond as her brother was of Matilda's music, and so much as they were to read together, Matilda could have no time for anybody's affairs but her own;—a decision which Matilda submitted to in silence. Elizabeth proceeded to deliver a dozen messages from her mother to the young housekeeper, about the butcher, and the milkman, and their own, dear, favourite fisherman, who supplied them so much better than the one Matilda patronized. She must positively begin to buy her fish of him directly, though they would not for the world interfere with her little domestic plans; but she might not know that George liked above all things——

Matilda sprang to the window, seeing something through the gathering dusk like the skirt of a coat. It was only the sentinel, however, and she drew back disappointed, and applied herself to examine whether her hyacinths were duly supplied with water.

“Just one thing more,” Elizabeth said. “You will excuse my mother observing (but indeed we could not help it) the plaiting of George's shirts. It is impossible you should know all his ways yet,—indeed how should you?—so, I will just mention that he has been used——”

“How very dark it is growing!” observed Matilda, once more peering out into the dusk, “O no, it is not so bad out of doors,” she added, when she had thrown up the sash. “It is impossible to tell what the weather is like, the windows being double, and such a state as they are always in with the damp from the sea. I wish, with all your management, Elizabeth, you would teach one how to keep one's windows clear and bright by the sea-side. It spoils half the pleasure of working or reading in this window-seat. In the summer time, however, when one can sit with the window open, it will be delightful. But it really is getting dark.”

“I am going,” said Elizabeth, quietly. “You shall have your husband all to yourself to-day, my dear. By the way, do you mean to tell him of that little affair down below this morning?”

“Do I mean to tell him?” cried Matilda, astonished. “To be sure. I tell him everything.”

“0, very well. I would only just give a hint that that plan may not always be prudent, my dear: that is all. You are in a very responsible situation, you should remember; such ticklish terms as your husband and his men are on with the people about you. A little indiscretion on your part,—perfectly natural at your age,—may bring on bloodshed, you are aware. Do you know, my dear, I would not be in your place for the world.”

“Would not you?” replied Matilda, with astonishing tranquillity.

“Why, only think of the incident of this day. How do we know what may arise out of it, if you repeat it to George? He must take notice of it, when otherwise it might pass over.”

“Without his hearing how you shrieked and ran away,” thought Matilda; and she was strongly tempted to say it, but refrained: and when Elizabeth at length found that she really must be going if she meant to be at home before dark, the sisters by marriage parted on friendly terms.

The Lieutenant looked somewhat graver than usual when he came in to dinner, and little disposed to talk while a third person was present. Moreover, he had the air of listening in the intervals between the clattering of plates and knives, and the creaking of the servant's shoes. Before drawing to the fire, when the door was at length closed behind table-cloth and cheese, he went to the window to look out,-—the dull window which allowed little to be seen through its salted panes. He was about to repair to an upper window, but Matilda wrapped her head in a shawl, and threw up the sash.

“You would have me believe,” she said, in answer to her husband's fears, “that I am not fit to live in this place: but I scorn both wind and fog. If you should wish to set a watch in Parson Darby's hole, I believe I should serve your purpose as well as any body;—as long, I mean, *as* no fighting was required.”

“Let us see what you will make of it to-night, without going to Parson Darby's hole. If your eyes and ears are better than mine, I may be glad of them presently.”

“What am I to look and listen for? This booming sea is enough to prevent our hearing anything else, unless it be two of your gruff men talking close by the window. What else do you expect me to hear?”

“Possibly a whittle, which may be heard among all conceivable combinations of hoarse sounds.”

“But your own men whistle.”

“Not to-night. They have orders to the contrary.”

“Mr. Pim whistles perpetually, when he is not mimicking a whining, whipped scholar, or waiting the explosion of some practical joke. What is to be done with poor Mr. Pim, if he is caught in the fact?”

“He will take care to be caught in no fact that will do him any harm. Only tell me if you hear a whistle; that is all. And point out any signal you may see;—but, I dare say, you do not know how to look for one.”

“I wish you would take me out, and teach me.”

“What, now? This bitter evening? My love, you could scarcely keep your footing in this wind. And it is so dark——”

“So much the better for a first lesson. If you are really going yourself, do take me with you.”

In two minutes Matilda was ready, laughing at the appearance she made with her head swathed in a shawl, and the rest of her person in a cloak, to save the annoyance which her usual out-of-doors dress would have been in a high wind. Clinging to her husband, making many a false step, and invariably laughing as she recovered her footing, she gained the ridge of the cliff', and stood amidst all the sublimity of a gusty night on the wild sea-shore. The blast took away her breath, as fast as she gained it, and her husband's voice was almost lost in the roar and dash from beneath, while the lightest of her shriller tones made itself heard through the commotion.

“Now show me how to look for a signal,” she said. “They do not surely light fires on the headlands?”

“If they wished it, they must ask leave of the wind,” replied her husband, “as well as of us; and they know they will have no leave of the one or the other, to-night. No: they make their fires in the clefts and caverns, and——”

“I see one! I see one!” cried Matilda, eagerly pointing to a gleam which came and went, like a bright speck on the horizon.

“That, my love!” cried her husband, laughing. “They must be bold smugglers who would run in to such a light as that. That is the light on Belltoot, made to look distant by the fog. You should turn eastwards; and seek rather for indications of a light, than for the light itself. If you see a dull red streak, or the least glimmer upon the passing fog, show it me. It will tell that there is a fire in a chalk pit or a cavern.”

After looking for some time in vain, Matilda inquired whether there was reason to suppose that the smugglers were particularly busy this night. Not knowing who might be near in the darkness, her husband pressed her arm in token that questions of this nature would be better answered at home.

They walked on till they fell in with one of the sentinels, who was of opinion that nothing out of the common way would be done to-night, as the storm was rising to such a height as would make it too hazardous for even the most daring smugglers to run in at Birling Gap, or at any other place on the neighbouring coast.

“You hear, Matilda,” said the Lieutenant. “Now, have you seen all that you wish to see?'

“By no means,” she replied, laughing: “but it does not seem likely that we should gain anything by staying; so you had better go down and finish your wine, and we can come again tomorrow night.”

The sudden calm and quiet of the little parlour made the Lieutenant rub his hands under the sense of comfort, while Matilda put back her lank hair from over her eyes, and prepared to tell the story of the morning. The Lieutenant had however already heard it. Matilda was glad of this, and went on to ask if any harm could possibly arise from telling her husband every thing that happened to her, and all that she observed. No harm in the world, but possibly a great deal of good. It might put her on her guard against doing and saying things which were perfectly innocent and amiable in themselves, but which might be imprudent under certain circumstances;—such as showing herself indignant on seeing a gipsy boy ducked, when the neighbours were already quite angry enough on his account. The Lieutenant loved to see her ardour in such causes; but he was sorry to say it did not consist with the prudence necessary to be observed by any one connected with him, in his present office. This as enough to make Matilda vituperate the office, till she remembered that by its means her husband was detained by her side, instead of being dispatched to the other end of the world. It required this and many other comforting considerations to reconcile the Lieutenant himself to this service, uncongenial as it was to the spirit of an active and enterprising officer, who had no particular pleasure in playing the spy on a grand scale, and who found it galling to a kindly temper to live among a host of enemies. He had hesitated long about accepting the appointment, entertaining, in addition to his disinclination, a fear that it would be an effectual bar to further promotion. If it had not been that his mother and sister depended mainly on him for support, and that, having waited till forty, he wished to marry, he would hardly have bartered the hope of professional eminence for pecuniary advantage; but, circumstanced as he was, he thought it right to accept an appointment which allowed him to enjoy the fruits of former service while gaining more by present duty. Though satisfied that he had done right, and fully sensible of the blessing of having a home always about him, he had no objection to hear the Preventive Service found fault with in a quiet way by his own fireside, and foreign service exalted at its expense.

“What could put it into your head, Matilda, that harm could come of your telling me every thing.' The prudence I speak of relates to your reserve with our neighbours, not with me. What could have put such an idea into your head?”

“Elizabeth thought that I had better not tell you every thing. But if I really have a difficult part to act, I shall be miserable without your help. I never could act for myself in my life.”

“Never.” asked her husband, with a smile. “I think you can boast of one act of remarkable decision, my love.”

“Half the merit, at least, was yours,” replied Matilda, laughing. “And as for guiding myself without you, it is out of the question. So I must tell you all that happens, and you must teach me how to behave to our neighbours.'”

Her husband paused for a moment to reflect what a pity it was that, when Matilda's natural behaviour was all that was charming, she should be put under restraint by the position she filled. It was a hard task to have to teach her to suspect her neighbours, and to frame her conduct by her suspicions.

"*You* have no reason for trying to manage me by reserves," said he. "Elizabeth has, no doubt, her own little mysteries."

Matilda looked up surprised. She had never before heard the Lieutenant speak of his sister but with fondness and confidence.

"1 mean no reproach," he continued. "Elizabeth is a good creature, and the best of sisters to me. I only mean that she has her womanish tastes, which, like other women, she must gratify; and she knows it is the properest and kindest thing to let me know nothing of her confidential visits to the fishermen's wives. I cannot prevent her doing what every body else does; and it is better that I should not be obliged to take any notice."

"What *do* you mean?" cried Matilda. "Is it possible that Elizabeth has anything to do with smugglers? that——"

"Ah, now you have started upon a new scent, my dear; and let us see what you can make of it before you get home again.—Now you are fancying Elizabeth out at sea at night in the lugger we are looking for, or helping to land the goods; and the first day that passes without your seeing her, you will fancy she has taken a trip to Guernsey. Do not you begin to see how a thousand little mysterious circumstances are now explained? Cannot you account for——"

Matilda held up her hand as petitioning to be heard, while her fond husband delighted himself with her signs of impatience under his raillery.—She protested that she knew perfectly well what his charge against Elizabeth amounted to; that she contrived to buy articles of dress better and cheaper by the seaside than these could be procured in shops. She only wished to say, that she desired to acquit Elizabeth as far as her testimony would go. She had no reason to suppose, from anything that she had seen, that Elizabeth was given to such practices.

"It may be some time before she takes you into her confidence in these matters, my dear. Meantime, do not let us talk of ' charge' and ' acquittal,' as if Elizabeth had committed a crime. If I thought so, I would not have credited the fact on any testimony whatever."

"How then can you be what you are?" exclaimed Matilda. "If you think smuggling is no crime, why do you engage to spend your days in suspicion, and your nights in watching, and even to spill human blood, if necessary, to prevent contraband trading.'"

"My office springs out of a set of arbitrary regulations which may possibly be necessary to the general good of society. At any rate, they subsist, and they must be maintained as long as the nation does not decide that they shall be abolished. This is all we Preventive officers have any concern with. It does not follow that we must condemn a lady for preferring one sort of lace or silk stockings to another, or for trying to get them, when she knows government has failed in the attempt to keep them out of the country."

"You say this just because Elizabeth is in question," replied Matilda. "Suppose I were to report it to the Admiralty, or the Board of Trade—how would it look upon paper?"

"I dare say you would not find a man at the Admiralty, or any where else,—a sensible man,—who would declare a taste for foreign commodities,—for as large a variety of commodities as possible, of the best kinds, to be anything but a good. No man of sense wishes the society in which he lives to be in that state of apathy which does not desire what is best, but only to be saved trouble. Neither does he recommend that the desire of that which is best should be gratified at the greatest possible expense and trouble."

"Certainly, one would rather see one's neighbours wishing for French silks, than being content with skins of beasts; and, if they must have silks, one would rather get the material from Italy and India than have establishments for silkworms at home at a vast expense."

"To be sure. And we might as well at once wish for English beet-root sugar, or for claret made from hot-house grapes, as condemn Elizabeth for desiring to have foreign lace. As for our countrymen liking to have tobacco duty-free, when the duty amounts to a thousand per cent. on the prime cost,—there is nothing to be wondered at in that. Moreover, the desire of foreign commodities is the cause of a great saving. These goods are not permanently desired because they are foreign. Their having acquired a reputation as foreign must arise from their being better or cheaper than our own. Our own productions of the same kind are either improved through the competition thus caused, or they give way in favour of other productions which we can in turn offer to foreigners better and cheaper than their own. If nobody cared for claret and tobacco, thousands of our people, who are busy in preparing that which *is* given in exchange for these articles, would be idle; and if we were bent upon growing our own tobacco, and forcing vines instead of buying of our neighbours, the expense would be tremendous, and would answer no good purpose on earth that I can see. So Elizabeth is as much at liberty to wish for Brussels lace, if she prefers it to Honiton, as I feel myself to fill my glass with this good Port in preference to my mother's gooseberry."

"I should think nobody doubts all this about wine, and sugar, and tobacco," said Matilda. "But when it comes to the question of manufactures that really can maintain a rivalship,—then is the time, I suppose, when it is said to be wrong to wish for foreign goods. As long as really good silks, and really beautiful laces are made in England, at a moderate price, is there any occasion to buy of foreigners?"

"Whether there is occasion, is soon proved by the fact of our looking or not looking abroad. As I said before, if these articles are to be had as good at home, we shall not look abroad; if not, it is a waste of money and trouble to be making them, when we might be making something which foreigners would be glad to take in exchange for their laces and silks. If the rival manufactures are a match for each other, let them fight it out, and the nations will be sure not to be charged more than is necessary for their purchases. If they are not a match for each other, it is sheer waste to uphold the weakest; and the taste for foreign goods is of use as it points out infallibly when the weakness lies at home."

"I have heard all this allowed as to necessary articles; such as brandy and sugar, which are never made in England. But I have had many a lecture against buying luxuries anywhere but at home; and really it seems a very small sacrifice to be content with home-made luxuries instead of foreign."

"Those who so lectured you, love, were more intent upon fitting you to be the wife of a Preventive officer, than upon teaching you plain sense. They did not tell you that this is a sort of sacrifice which (like many other arbitrary sacrifices) hurts all parties. They did not point out to you that every purchase of a foreign luxury presupposes something made at home with which the purchase is effected. The French fan you played with so prettily the first time——"

"O, do you remember that fan? that evening?"

"Remember the first ball at which I danced with you, love! It would be strange if I forgot it."

And the Lieutenant lost the thread of his argument for a while.

"Well!" said Matilda, at length; "what clumsy, home-made thing do you think I gave for that fan?"

"*You* probably gave nothing more clumsy than a bright golden guinea, or a flimsy banknote: but, having got to the bottom of the money exchanges, we should find that some yards of cotton, or a few pairs of scissors had been exchanged for that fan, with a profit to the manufacturer of either article that it might happen to be. Thus, every purchase of a foreign article, be it a necessary or a luxury, presupposes some domestic production for which we thereby obtain a sale."

"And the same must be the case with the French fan-makers. They, or their neighbours, procure cotton gowns or scissors for their wives which they must have paid more for at home. So there is an advantage to each, unless my fan could have been as well made in England."

"In which case, there would have been a fan made instead of so many pairs of scissors; that is all; and you would have been just as well pleased with an English fan."

"Would you?" inquired Matilda, smiling.

"I never saw a fan I liked so well," replied the Lieutenant: "but there is no saying what I might have thought of any other fan under the same circumstances."

"Well, I shall tell Elizabeth, if she lets me into her confidence, that she may come here dressed in French fabrics, without any fear of displeasing you?"

"I shall not take upon myself to be displeased about the matter, while those who have more concern in it than I are not strict. If French silks rustle in the royal presence, and bandanas are flourished by law-makers in full assembly, I do not see why the officers

of government should embarrass themselves with scruples. My business is to prevent contraband goods from being landed hereabouts, and not to find out who has the benefit of them when they are once on shore."

This reminded the Lieutenant to look out again, and Matilda remained musing at the fire for a few moments. It seemed to her that our native manufacturers were very ill-used, being deprived of the stimulus to improvement which is caused by free and fair competition, while they were undersold in their own market, with the connivance of those who mocked them with the semblance of protection. She thought the dwellers on the coast ill-used; their duty to the government being placed, by arbitrary means, in direct opposition to their interests, and their punishment being severe and, from its nature, capricious, in proportion as temptation was made too strong for them. Her husband's shout of "Holloa, there!" to some person without brought her to the window, where she saw against the dim sky the outline of one who appeared motionless and dumb.

It was not for a considerable time that any explanation could be elicited. At last a melancholy, gruff voice said, "I thought I might chance to see my lady. I was only looking about for my lady."

"And where did you expect to find me, Nicholas?" asked Matilda, looking out over her husband's shoulder. "You may have seen me sit on yonder gun, or lean over the fence sometimes; but I do not choose such an hour or such weather as this."

Nicholas only knew that he could have no rest a till he had apologized for not having answered when he was spoken to in the morning. He wished to say that he must not speak while on watch; but, as to being disrespectful to the lady——"

The lady acquitted him of any such enormity, and would have sent him away happy with the assurance that she did not now conclude him stony-hearted for laughing when Uriah Faa was ducked. The Lieutenant had, however, a word to say to him about the state of things on the beach. No alarm had been given, Nicholas reported, though he would not, for his part, swear that the expected vessel might not be near. He had not seen that vessel, nor any other; for, as the Lieutenant might have observed, it was too dark to see anything: but he would not swear that it might not be to be seen, if it was now daylight. This being all that could be got out of him, Nicholas was permitted to depart to his rest; rest which he wanted not a little, for he had lingered about for more than an hour at the close of his watch, in the vague hope of seeing Matilda, without taking any measures to do so. He stretched his tired limbs before the fire, thinking (though he was nearly a quarter of a mile from the big stone on the beach) that he was a happy man, as everybody was very kind to him.

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Chapter V.

MORNING WALKS.

The next dawn broke bright and clear, to the surprise of every body who was learned in the weather, and greatly to the disappointment of certain parties who had an interest in the continuance of the fog.

On a steep slope among the cliffs of Beachy Head, at the foot of a lofty wall of chalk, and sheltered by it, was collected a party of men, women, and children, who had little appearance of having just risen from their beds. The men, for the most part, were stretched at length, drinking, or looking out languidly to sea. The two women, one young, the other middle aged, and brown, weather-worn, and in sordid apparel, with lank hair hanging about her ears, were smoking, and busying themselves in the feminine employment of making a clearance. That is, they were stowing certain packages in the bottom of huge panniers, destined for the backs of three asses, which were looking up from the beach in vain longing for the inaccessible, scanty herbage of the slope. Two girls, as brown as the elder woman, were amusing themselves with picking up the balls of foam which had been thrown in by the fierce tide, and sending them trembling down the wind. Uriah Faa, in apparent forgetfulness of the disgraces of the preceding day, sat dangling his heels from a projecting piece of the cliff, aiming fragments of chalk at the auks and wills which flapped past him, or swept out to sea in long lines below. One man was seen apart from the group, who did not appear to belong to the place, the persons, or the hour. He stood leaning at the mouth of a cleft in the chalk precipice, sometimes yawning, sometimes buttoning his great coat closer, as the morning breeze passed him, and then glancing up apprehensively at one point after another of the cliffs overhead, as if he expected to see there the peeping face of a spy. Next, he looked at his watch, and seemed growing so restless and uncomfortable, that the younger of the women took upon herself to comfort him by giving notice that the sloop was expected every moment to arrive for its cargo of chalk, and that all would be safe before the spies could see so far off as a furlong.

“But the division is not made yet,” objected the agent. “My bandanas are stowed away with some of Solomon's packages; and you know Alexander makes over to me his venture of ribbons and lace, this time.”

“What put that into your head?” growled Alexander, half raising himself, and looking surlily at the agent. “Do you think I have risked running in in a fog, and wrought since midnight, to give over my share to anybody? You may take your chance next time. You'll find the matter well worth staying for.”

“But, you know, Alexander, we settled that I was to have the first batch that was landed;—for a consideration, you remember—for a fair consideration. One night suits you as well as another, living on the spot.”

“By no means; when one batch is safe ashore, and the other still at sea.”

“But, consider, I cannot spare two days. They want me at Brighton every hour, and I promised Breme that he should have the goods”

Alexander seemed to think that all this was nothing to him, while he had his package safe under his elbow. He applied himself to a fresh, dram of Hollands, and appeared to have done listening.

“Try Solomon,” advised Mrs. Draper. “He is liberal, and likes to accommodate. He will take the chance of another night, if you make it worth his while.”

“Here comes Solomon himself,” cried several voices, as a well-known whistle announced the approach of some one; and Mr. Pim appeared from a side path, (if path it might be called,) his hands crossed behind him, and his merry face shining through the dusk.

“I thought you would take your morning's walk this way,” observed Mrs. Draper, as she handed him a mug, and pointed to the right keg.

“It is time we were parting instead of meeting,” said Pim. “We shall have a bright morning upon us full soon enough.”

“Father,” shouted Uriah, “the fog is drawing off, and here is the sloop coming in below.”

“Trinity, bring the ass to yon point,” cried Mrs. Draper to her little daughter, who was scrambling on all fours up the steepest part of the slope.

“Here, Lussha, my beauty,” said old Faa to his grandchild, “help me to fill up the panniers, my bird.”

Uriah came to help, and a respectable load of chalk was presently heaped upon the packages in the panniers, which were forthwith carried down, and hung upon the shaggy asses. Old Faa then helped to set each bare-legged child astride on the beasts, and commended them to each other's care. Slowly and surely the animals took their way along the ribbed chalk which here constituted the beach, while the children looked back to hear what Pim was saying to-them.

“Trinity Draper, I hope you don't forget your catechism, my child. There is a lady coming to the school in a day or two, and it will be the worse for you if you cannot say your Catechism. Uriah and Lussha, you hear what I say. Remember your catechism.”

Their Saturday's train of associations being awakened by this warning, the children began involuntarily to gabble altogether, and their confusion of tongues made itself heard as they wound out of sight, till a stumble of Trinity's steed caused Uriah's gallantry to prevail over his scholarship, and occupied him in belabouring her ass with true gipsy grace and strength.

A pale yellow ray shot up from the horizon full into the cleft, beside which the unshaven and weary agent stood, making his bargain with Pim. This first break of sunshine was a signal not to be neglected. The laziest of the party sprang to their feet, and hastened to deposit their kegs and bales under the chalk which formed the apparent cargo of the sloop that pitched below in the light grey waters. As the fog disclosed more and more of the expanse, two or three of the men fixed their glasses from behind different projections, anxious to be assured that the lugger, which had approached under cover of the darkness, was scudding away before the light. She was just visible when the whole horizon became clear, making all speed towards her native coast. Though there was reason to hope that all was safe, as far as she was concerned, there was danger that the smuggling party might be surprised by the apparition of the revenue cutter from the east or the west, before all needful precautions were taken; and there was a prodigious stir among the more active and the more timid of the party. Within half an hour the fire was put out, and the embers scattered to the winds; the men wandered off in different directions, and nobody remained amidst the wild scene but Mr. Pim, who looked about him and whistled to the sea-birds, and Mrs. Draper, who lingered behind the rest of the gipsy party, to seek satisfaction to her maternal and friendly solicitudes about the progress of her child and the Faas at the school.

By dint of many questions, she learned that the young people were likely to be excellent Christians, as they were very ready at the Bible; highly moral, as they were always whipped when they did wrong; as patriotic as if they had not belonged to a foreign tribe, since they lost no opportunity of insulting the Preventive men; and finally, very scholastic, as they had learned to sit still by the half hour together, which had at first appeared a point impossible of achievement. The mother's heart was so elated with this report, and Pim found it so much pleasanter to walk and whistle in the wintry sunshine than to play the pedagogue, that the discourse was prolonged far beyond the hour when his duties ought to begin; he comforting himself with the assurance that Rebecca would take care that the little things had something to do.

In the midst of his holiday mood, he was disturbed by a voice calling him from overhead, and, looking up, he perceived Rebecca herself, earnestly gesticulating at the summit of the cliff. She shouted, she beckoned, incessantly, and seemed in such a fever of impatience that her father concluded that some disaster must have happened.

“Hi, hi, Beck!” resounded his mighty voice, in answer, from the face of the cliff, as he began to scramble up the track by which he had descended. “What, is the house on fire, girl, or do the spies want to get hold of me?” he asked, with prodigious tranquillity; “or,” and at the thought he quickened his scramble into a kind of kangaroo leap, “or has any harm come to some of the brats?”

“The ladies are come! the ladies! and nobody at home but I and the dame,” cried Rebecca; and her news seemed to be received with nearly as much vexation by her father as it was related with agony by herself.

“They will dodge the brats, and put them out,” he growled in his deepest tone: “after all the pains I meant to take to-day, the little things will be out in their Bibles, though

they can say it all with me. The Faas and Draper will not be there, however; only the soberer sort of children."

He was mistaken. The gipsy pupils were present with the rest, and formed a part of the class which Matilda had collected around her, and whom she was now engaged in examining.

"Think of your running away yourself!" muttered Pim to his daughter. "Why could not you have sent the dame? There would have been no harm in her knowing where I was."

"She would hardly have hobbled there and back before dinner," replied Kebecca. "We have been very quick, and the ladies can't have got far."

They had got far enough to see that though the children had (in their own phrase) "got into the Bible," they had not (to use their master's) "got through it" with the understanding, whether or not they had with the tongue. The children Matilda was conversing with were all between ten and fifteen years of age, and therefore capable of giving intelligent answers about the patriarchal tale they had been reading, if about any part of the Bible whatever.

"What did they do next," she asked, "after determining where they should settle?"

"They pitched their tents before it grew dark."

"Do you know how a tent is pitched?"; "Yes, my lady; it is daubed all over with tar."

Uriah Faa, well-informed on this matter, set the mistake right.

"When they saluted each other, what did they do? What is it to salute?"

"They scolded each other right well."

"If they had wished to scold one another, there would hardly have been such handsome presents given;—so many sheep and oxen, and asses and camels. What is a camel?"

"A sow."

"But they *had* been angry with one another," observed a child.

"Yes; but they were now going to be friends, though they thought each other in fault. Should we be sorry or angry when others are in fault?"

"Angry."

"Why"

"Because they have no business to do wrong."

“And if others are angry with us, what should we do?”

“Give them as good as they bring.”

Matilda began now to despair of the much-vaunted morals of Mr. Pim's pupils; but, to give them a fair trial, she turned to the New Testament, and questioned them about a story that their master allowed they knew perfectly well.

“When the Apostle had neither silver nor gold, what did he give to the lame man?”

“Halfpence.”

The explanation on the subject of halfpence led to a commentary on the story of the poor widow, and her gift to the treasury.

“Now, little boy,” said Matilda to one of the youngest, who had been playing stealthily with the end of her fur tippet, “what was the widow's mite? What is a mite?”

“A flea.”

“He knows most about the Old Testament,” observed his master, anxious to shift his ground again.

“Yes,” replied Matilda, “he told me about Esau and Jacob, and the mess of pottage. What is a mess, children?”

“Ashes,”—“Dirt,”—“Rubbish,”—cried they.

“And what is pottage?”

“Sheep's head and taters.”

Matilda thought she would try them with the Commandments. “Is it right to covet?”

“Yes.”

“Why so?”

“Because it makes us comfortable to have things.”

As a last experiment, she turned back to the first page of the Bible, and found they could tell that the world was made in six days; upon hearing which Mr. Pim began to rally his spirits.

“What were the two great lights which were made to rule the day and the night?”

“Dungeness and the North Foreland.”

Matilda rose, and the schoolmaster put the class to flight in a trice, with a box on the ear to one, a shake to a second, and a kick to a third. Matilda's remonstrances were lost amidst the tumult of shrieks and yells which now arose. At the first moment that Pim could spare from correcting his pupils, he informed the lady that they had got on badly lately from the impossibility of getting the parents to send them regularly. When there was any work in hand, someway up the beach——

"Towards Birling Gap," suggested Matilda. "But that sort of work is done in the night, is it not?"

"Yes; but the little things have enough to do the next day in making a clearance; and, at such times, up they start, and away, the first minute I turn my back."

"You turn your back to go after the same business, I am afraid, Mr. Pim. If you like whistling among the cliffs, and driving bargains in the clefts better than keeping to your desk, how can you expect the children not to take the liberty of indulging the same taste when you give them opportunity?"

Mr. Pim looked about him to ascertain what o'clock it was, and would fain have made out that it was time for the children to go home; but Mrs. Storey would not let him off so easily. She convinced him that it was not yet eleven, and declared that she wished far more to see how matters ordinarily went on than to usurp the office of interrogator. When the children had recovered their spirits, and their master his composure, business was resumed; and Matilda was as much surprised at the cleverness with which some things were taught as she had been shocked at the deficiencies of the kind of learning in which Mr. Pim was the least versed. She now envied him his power over the children's minds, and the effect which he knew how to produce by a timely joke, or a familiar illustration, or an appeal to facts with which his pupils were already familiar. She only wished that he would pique himself rather less upon his morals while making the very most of the opposition of interests in the society about him. He could not speak of any virtue without pointing out that his friends had it, and the Preventive men not; and, even in the presence of the Lieutenant's wife, it seemed difficult to restrain the expressions of hatred which were on the lips of him who taught and of those who answered.

The ladies did not leave the school till it was emptied of the children, whom they followed, to see how some dropped into their several homes, and whither others betook themselves. The last who was left to trip along by herself was Trinity Draper, who cast a glance behind her at almost every step, as if not liking to have her return accompanied by strangers. They had no intention, however, of losing sight of her, as they were disposed for a walk, and found their curiosity excited by the mingled barbarism and civilization in the air of the children of this wandering tribe.

They began, after a time, to suspect that the little girl did not mean to let them see her place of abode, so manifold were her turnse and windings from the beach to the fields, and then upon the downs, and again to the beach. When she had led them through a long circuit, she finally struck up the country, and proceeded towards an unfrequented hollow way, where high banks excluded the view on either side, a rugged soil wearied

the feet of the walker, and nothing was to be seen at the end of the lane but the grey sea, at the moment undiversified by a single sail.

“I wonder you are not afraid to set foot in this dreary place, so alarmed as you were by these very people yesterday,” observed Matilda to her companion, as they arrived in sight of a gipsy tent, spread on a patch of grass under shelter of the eastern bank. “I have been speculating all the way on when you would propose to turn back.”

Elizabeth replied that she had visited the encampment before, without fear, knowing that the men were absent at this time of day, and that there was nothing to fear from the women and children.

“They assemble at meal times, I fancy,” replied Mrs. Storey; “and there is the smoke of their cookery, you see.”

The thin blue smoke was curling up around the trunk of a tree, in the hollow formed by whose roots was kindled the fire, which Trinity now hastened to feed with sticks from the hedges. She peeped into the pot, which steamed from under the three poles that supported it, and proceeded to stir [the mess with a forked stick, affording glimpses to her visiters of a sort of meat whose shape and colour were new to them. On their inquiring what the stew was made of, Trinity pointed to a skin which lay in the ditch, and which was undeniably that of a brown dog. Matilda expressed her horror, and the child looked up surprised, observing, “Baba says the same hand made the dog and the sheep.”

“Who is Baba?”

“Her father,” replied Elizabeth. “Baba means Father. Where did you get this dog, Trinity? I hope it is not stolen.”

Trinity believed Uriah had found it under the hedge. She took up the head, which was left with the skin, and showed by the teeth that the animal must have been very old.

“Dear me! I suppose you pick up all the dead animals that lie about the country,” cried Elizabeth.

“Bebee says that beasts that have died by the hand of God are better than those that have died by the hand of man,” replied Trinity.

A low moan issued from the tent at this moment, which seemed to strike the child with surprise and terror: she sprang upon her feet, and looked eagerly towards the curtain which hung over the entrance, but did not venture to go in. When Matilda inquired if any one within was sick, the girl shook her head, replying, “No sickness, but there must be death. That is the death moan.”

Mrs. Storey instantly proceeded to the tent, thinking that assistance might be wanted; and, lifting up the awning, she saw Mrs. Draper standing beside the body of a very old woman, which was propped up in a sitting posture, and composed in attitude and countenance. Mrs. Draper's countenance was also calm, as she folded her arms in her

red cloak, and rocked herself hackwards and forwards, giving the death moan at intervals. After a certain number of repetitions, The turned to the ladies, and, in a voice of indifference, asked their business, glancing with a smile towards their palms. Elizabeth did not seem to share Matilda's surprise at this transition from one mood to another, but returned Mrs. Draper's smile, not ungloving her hand, but pointing out divers blemishes in the gloves she wore, and remarking, “What shocking gloves these are! I used to get beauties of gloves at Brighton. I wish I could get such here.”

“We are only carriers,” observed the gipsy. “You must walk a mile eastward to find a batman's wife.”

And she pointed significantly in the direction of Alexander's cottage. Elizabeth insinuated that carriers might be paid for their services in goods as well as the bat or bludgeon men, whose office it was to fight the battles of the smugglers while contraband goods were being landed and distributed. It appeared, however, that the gipsies preferred having their pay in money to loading themselves with more incumbrances than were necessary. It was plain that Elizabeth must apply elsewhere for gloves.

Matilda was meanwhile trying to tempt Trinity into the abode, in order to learn from her some particulars about the deceased, whose departure seemed to be borne by Mrs. Draper with such extraordinary composure: but Trinity still shrank from the sight of the dead, though willing enough to tell all she knew of her. She could only relate that this woman had been with the gang as long as Trinity could remember anything; that she had been blind all that time; and had been carried from place to place on a donkey, which was always led by the most careful person in the company. She had outlived all her relations, and had been tended by the Faas and Drapers only because there was no one else to take care of her. All her days had been spent in wandering, Trinity believed, as she had heard her say that it was seventy years since she had slept in a bed. It did not appear that her death had been immediately expected, as the men of the gang who were engaged as carriers, the preceding night, were gone to Brighton, and some other places a little way up the country; and when Trinity went to school that morning, she had left the old dame making cabbage nets, as usual. Mrs. Draper here took up an unfinished net, and said that it had dropped from the hands of the old woman half an hour before, when the fainting fit came on in which she had died. It was rather a pity, Mrs. Draper observed, that the departure had been so sudden, as the wake of the first night could scarcely be as honourable as they could wish. They must do their best to collect a multitude of mourners by the second night. Meanwhile, Trinity must summon as many of the tribe as were within reach; and if the ladies would please to walk out of the tent, she would fasten down the curtain so that nobody could get in, and set the dog to watch while she went her ways.

It struck Matilda as rather strange to leave the body unguarded by human care at midday, in order to provide for its being watched at night by ten times as many persons as were necessary. There was nothing to be done, however, but to obey the gipsy's desire, as it was plain that the greatest offence that could be offered would be to propose to touch or to remain near the body.

As they bent their heads under the low hoop which supported the curtain at the entrance, Elizabeth foolishly remarked that it was very well the poor soul had not had a long illness in such a comfortless place.

“You that live in ceiled houses,” replied Mrs. Draper, haughtily, “dwell as your fathers dwelt. So do we.”

“But being ill and dying,—that is so different!”

“If we are content to die as our fathers died, who forbids? “persisted” the gipsy, in a tone which silenced the objector. Mrs. Draper slightly returned the farewell of her visiters, and stood watching them till they were nearly out of sight, when she fastened the dog to one of the hoops of the tent, took off the stew, threw water on the fire, and climbed the bank, in order to pursue her way over the down in an opposite direction from that along which Trinity was tripping.

Very different was the picture presented by the domestic establishment of the Alexanders, whom Elizabeth would not be restrained from visiting, in search of gloves, and with the hope of seeing many things besides which might delight her eyes, if her purse would not extend to the purchase of them. Matilda positively refused to accompany her, and walked on to pay a visit to her mother-in-law.

Mrs. Alexander was engaged with her young folks in tying the claws of the lobsters which had been caught that morning; a work requiring some dexterity, and assisted with some fear by the children, who were apt to start and let go at the critical moment, if the creature showed any disposition to friskiness. A technical question or two from Elizabeth sufficed to induce Mrs. Alexander to quit her task, wash her hands, and show her visiter into a light closet at the back of the cottage, where she promised to join her in a few minutes. Where she went Elizabeth had no idea; but she returned in ten minutes with an apron full of mysteries, and followed by two of her boys, bearing between them a package which was almost too large to be brought in at the narrow door. A girl was already seated on the outer door-sill, to give notice of the approach of any spy; and the eldest boy was directed to keep guard at the entrance of the closet, while apparently busy in carving his wooden boat of three inches long.

Mrs. Alexander intimated that besides gloves, she had an unusual choice of cambrics and silks, and a few pieces of valuable lace, out of which the lady might suit herself, if she chose, before the goods were sent up the country, as they were to be without delay. Elizabeth would not promise to buy, but, of course, accepted the invitation to examine; and then what tempting treasures were spread before her eyes!

“0 lovely!” she cried. “What a colour! I wonder whether it would wear well. So delicate! so rich! There is nothing like those French for colours.”

Mrs. Alexander, as in gratitude bound, joined in lauding the Lyons manufacturers, and their dyers.

“The hue is most beautiful, to be sure, but the fabric of this is better;—and this,—and this,” she continued, applying the scientific touch to each in turn. “It seems to me that

all the pieces of that one pattern,—the olive green, and the blue, and the violet,—are of a poorer fabric than the rest. But the figure is completely French", to be sure."

Mrs. Alexander observed that the Brighton ladies, and some at Hastings, had taken a great fancy to that particular pattern; and it was selling rapidly at some of the principal shops.

"Well, now, if I had seen those pieces at a shop,—if I had met with them anywhere but here, I should have pronounced them English. It is very odd that all of that one figure should have less substance than the others. Did they come over as part of the same cargo?"

"Stowed cheek-by-jowl in the hold of the lugger that was but six hours out of sight," Mrs. Alexander declared.

"I suppose they have been only just landed," observed Elizabeth, "for you would not keep such a stock as this by you, with so many enemies about. I wonder you are not afraid."

"It is only for a few hours, ma'am; just till the carriers come back from their present errand. I do not sell in any but a chance way, as you know, ma'am; and——"

"I always supposed your husband had been a batman, and I am told the batmen are often paid in goods," interrupted Elizabeth.

"In part, ma'am; but the greater portion of what is before you is here only on trust. We take care to keep them out of sight of the few whose business it is to ruin the coast; but, for that matter, the hands that served to land and stow ten times as much as all this, are enough to defend what is left. But the carriers will be back soon, and then——"

"And then they will have something else to do than to set off for Brighton again immediately,—if you mean the gipsies." And Elizabeth explained that they would have to attend the wake of the old woman, for two or three nights together.

This was such important news that Mrs. Alexander instantly sent one of the children in search of his father, and seemed now careless as to whether her visiter made a purchase or not. After selecting a package of gloves which was too large for her pocket, and was therefore to be left behind till a favourable opportunity should occur of conveying them unseen, Elizabeth detained a two-inch pattern of the silk whose figure she most admired, and which was somewhat cheaper than the rest, from the inferiority of its quality. She must consult her mother, she declared, and should probably send an order for a quantity sufficient for two or three dresses. Her desire' to obtain some of the benefits of this importation was enhanced by the woman's apparent indifference as to whether she indulged in a purchase. She resolved to make all speed homewards, and to persuade her mother, and, if possible, Matilda, to seize the opportunity of decking themselves in contraband fabrics.

She was not destined to arrive at home so soon as she imagined. Instead of Elizabeth, appeared a neighbour's child, breathless and excited, to request Matilda's immediate presence at a well-known house on the beach, and to urge the Lieutenant being sent for with all speed. It was plain that Elizabeth had been stopped by the Coast Guard, and conveyed by them to the house of the dame appointed to search all women who were suspected of having smuggled goods concealed about them. This was an act of audacity on the part of the guard that Matilda could not have anticipated, or she would have used more urgent persuasions with her sister-in-law against connecting herself in any way with the secret proceedings of the people about her. She was little aware that the adventure arose out of the reprobation of Brady's punishment of the gipsy-boy, which she and Elizabeth had testified the day before.

Brady had seen Miss Storey enter the suspected house of Alexander; he had remarked signs of movement within and about it during her stay; and had watched her leaving it with a hurried step on the way home. Brady did not see why a lady should make a mockery of his office any more than a poor woman, to whom the temptation was greater; and he was quite disposed to use his authority against one who had blamed him when he could not defend himself, and exposed him to be mobbed. He therefore planted himself directly in her path, on the beach, and requested her to deliver up the contraband articles which she was carrying about her.

The consciousness of what had just passed at Mrs. Alexander's deprived Elizabeth of the sense of innocence, and of that appearance of it which she might have justified by the fact that she had no smuggled goods about her person. She instantly thought of the pattern of silk, and tried to hide it, in a way which confirmed the suspicions of the foe. There was nothing for it but to go to the place appointed; but, on the way, she bethought herself of sending a messenger for some of her family. She appeared in so great tribulation when Matilda arrived, as to leave little doubt of her being actually in the scrape; and delay or evasion seemed therefore the best policy.

“Have you demanded to be taken before a magistrate?” asked Matilda.

“A magistrate! La” no! How dreadful to think of going to a justice! I dare not, I am sure. “Tis dreadful to think of.”

“Not so dreadful as to put up with such a piece of audacity as this. If I were you, I would give these people as much trouble as possible in the business they have brought upon themselves, and make them heartily sick of it before they have done.”

“Better not make such a fuss, and expose one's-self before all the folks on the way: better take it quietly,” said the search-woman, holding open the door of the inner room appointed for the process. Elizabeth peeped into the room, and then looked at Matilda in restless dismay, declaring that she had nothing about her that she would not have produced in a moment to the guard, if he had asked her quietly, instead of bringing half the population about her heels.

"Then go to the magistrate, and tell him so," said Mrs. Storey, authoritatively. "It is a privilege which the law allows you; and an innocent person does wrong in not claiming it."

Elizabeth could not bring herself thus to oblige Brady to declare what reasons he had to suspect her. She doubted and hesitated, till her foes could and would wait no longer. She was searched, and nothing found, except, at the last moment, the pattern of silk, squeezed up in her glove. This discovery was very discomfiting to the ladies, and was made the most of by Brady, who held it up in the face of the Lieutenant, when that gentleman arrived, breathless, to ascertain what disaster had befallen the ladies of his family.

"What! is that all you have got? I wish you joy of your share of the seizure," said he to Brady, pushing his hand aside. "I hope you will make more sure of your game the next time you abuse your duty to insult a lady."

Brady said he should discharge his office, let who would be the sufferer; and added, that he held in his hand what was a sufficient justification. He then proceeded to deposit the two inches of silk carefully in his tobacco-box.

"Let me look at it," demanded the Lieutenant. Brady glanced towards the fire, as if fearing that that was destined to be the next place of deposit for his precious snip. The Lieutenant laughed contemptuously, and walked to the farthest possible distance from the fire, still holding out his hand for the pattern.

"Why, man," said the officer, "you had better make haste to qualify yourself a little better for your business, or you will make yourself the laughing-stock of the place. This silk is no more French than your coat is Chinese. Here, take it back, and ask any knowing person you please, and you will find this was woven in Spitalfields or at Macclesfield."

Brady muttered something about "humbug;" and the search-woman became extremely anxious to explain that it was no part of her business to choose her victims: she had only to discharge her duty upon all who were brought to her. The Lieutenant silenced her by pushing past her, with his wife and sister on each arm. The little crowd opened before them as they re-issued from the house, and closed again round Brady, to learn the result of his loyal enterprise. He was in too thorough an ill-humour to give them any satisfaction, anticipating (what, in fact, proved his fate) that he should be twitted with this deed for months to come, by every man, woman, and child who did not bear a due patriotic affection towards the Preventive Service.

The officer did not speak till it was time to deposit his sister at her own door.

"Now, Elizabeth," said he, "I hope this will prove a lesson to you. You and my mother came to live here on my account, and on my account you must go away again, unless you can bring your practices into agreement with my duties. It is a lucky chance for you that that rag is of English make, or——"

"Oh, brother! do you really think it is not a French silk?"

"To be sure, or I should not have said *so,"* replied the Lieutenant, with much displeasure in his tone. "If I chose to tell lies to screen you, you might stay here, following your own fancies, till doomsday. It is because I always will speak the truth about those who belong to me that I request you to go away, if you must do things which make the truth painful for you to hear and for me to tell."

"Well, my good sir, do not be in a passion. I only thought you were telling a convenient fib, such as everybody tells about such matters, in the Custom-house and out of it."

"Not everybody, as you now find," replied the officer; "and I hope this is the last time you will expose me to the suspicion of fibbing in your behalf."

Matilda half withdrew her arm from her husband's, terrified at a mode and strength of rebuke which would have almost annihilated her; but Elizabeth bore it with wonderful indifference, wishing him good morning, as on ordinary days.

"She is a good creature," the Lieutenant observed, in his customary phrase, after walking on a few paces in silence. "She is a good creature, but monstrously provoking sometimes. A pretty scrape she had nearly got herself and all of us into."

"Remember how lately it was that you were defending the desire for foreign commodities in general, and Elizabeth's in particular," observed Matilda.

"Well! all that I said was very true, I believe," replied the officer, half laughing under a sense of his own inconsistency. "I have as firm a faith as ever in the truth of what I then said."

"Your doctrine, then, is, that Elizabeth is right in having the desire, and in gratifying it; but that she is wrong in being caught in the fact."

"Why, it does come pretty nearly to that, I am afraid. It comes to the fact that duties clash in a case like this; so that, one's conscience being at fault, an appeal to the law must settle the matter. I see no crime in Elizabeth's taste, apart from the means she may take to gratify it; but the law pronounces her wrong, so we must conclude she is wrong."

"Duties do, indeed, clash," replied Matilda; "and if so painfully in one case, what must be the extent of the evil if we consider all who are concerned? Even in this little neighbourhood, here is Mr. Pim unable to teach honour, as he says, without giving the notion that it is a merit to conceal fraud, and pointing out a whole class as objects of contempt and hatred. The dwellers near, almost to a man, look upon the government as a tyrant, its servants as oppressors, its laws as made to be evaded, and its powers defied. Oaths are regarded as mere humbug; and the kindliest of social feelings are nourished in direct relation to fraud, and pleaded as its sanction. There is not a man near us who does not feel it necessary, nor a woman who does not praise it as virtuous, nor a child who is not trained up in the love and practice of it. This is the morality which one institution teaches from village to village all along our

shores,—mocking the clergyman, setting at nought the schoolmaster, and raising up a host of enemies to the government by which it is maintained; and all for what?"

"To help us in our national money matters, in which, in truth, it does not very well succeed," observed the Lieutenant.

"And to protect the interests of certain classes of its subjects," replied Matilda, "in which, if most people say true, they succeed as little."

"Spitalfields is in a worse state than ever," observed the Lieutenant; "and there are terrible complaints from our glovers and our lace-makers."

"And if not," continued Matilda—" if protection availed to these people, the case would be very little better than it is now. Money prosperity is desirable only as it is necessary to some higher good,—to good morals and happiness; and if it were, in fact, secured to our glovers, and silkmen, and lace-makers, it would be purchased far too dear at the expense of the morals of such a multitude as are corrupted by our restrictive laws. There can be nothing in the nature of things to make the vexation and demoralization of some thousands necessary to the prosperity of other thousands. Providence cannot have appointed to governments such a choice of evils as this; and——"

"And you, my dear, for your share, will therefore withhold your allegiance from a government which attempts to institute such an opposition."

"It is rather too late an age of the world for me to turn rebel on that ground," replied Matilda, smiling. "Such governments as we were speaking of are dead and gone, long ago. Our government is not granting any new protections or prohibitions, surely!"

"But I thought you would quarrel with it for not taking away those which exist. I thought you would give it your best blessing if they sent an order to all us Preventive people to vacate our station-houses and march off."

"I certainly felt more disaffected to-day than ever in my life before," observed Matilda. "To think that, in a country like this, anybody may be stopped and searched upon mere suspicion!"

"With the privilege of demanding the decision of a magistrate, remember."

"Which magistrate may order the search, if he finds sufficient ground of suspicion. And this outrage is to take place as a very small part of the machinery for protecting the interests of certain classes, to the great injury of all the rest; and especially, as many of themselves say, to their own. It makes one indignant to think of it."

"It is the law, my love; and while it exists, it must be obeyed. I must order my men to stop you, if you should chance to sympathize in Elizabeth's tastes. Hey, Matilda?"

"Do, by all means, when you find me smuggling; but perhaps my share of the temptation may soon be at an end. I trust all this distress that you speak of will end in

bringing into an active competition with foreigners those of our people who are now sitting with their hands before them, perceiving how the gentry of England are apparelled in smuggled goods. No fear for our occupation, you know. There will still be brandy and tobacco, on which, as we do not grow them ourselves, government will call for so high a duty as will encourage smuggling. No prospect of your being useless yet a while."

"Nor of our neighbours being as loyal as you would have them."

"Nor of their living at peace, and in frank honesty."

"Nor of Pim's making his scholars moral."

"Nor of our manufacturers having fair play."

"Nor of the same justice being done to the revenue. Alas! how far we are from perfection!"

"Yet ever tending towards it. Unless we believe this, what do we mean by believing in a Providence? since all evidence goes to prove that its rule is infinite progression. Yes, we are tending upwards, though slowly; and we shall find, when we arrive in sight of comparative perfection, that a system of restriction which debases and otherwise injures all parties concerned, is perfectly inconsistent with good government."

"Then shall I have earned my dinner in some other, and, I trust, a pleasanter, way than today," observed the Lieutenant. "I shall never get reconciled to my office, Matilda, especially while I hear of brother officers abroad——"

"Oh! you are dreading your patrol to-night, because it is beginning to snow," said Matilda, smiling. "You shall go in, and fortify yourself with some duty-paid brandy and untaxed water; and then, if you will let me go with you again, we will defy the smugglers as manfully as if they were to be the enemies of good order for evermore."

"You shall not go out in the dark again, my love. It took all my manfulness from me to see you so near the edge of the cliff in a wind which might drive you out as if you were a sea-gull. The place looks scarcely fit for you on the brightest of days; you have no chance out of doors on a gusty night."

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Chapter VI.

A NIGHT WATCH.

The night of the gipsy late-wake was one of the clearest and coldest moonlight. Such a night,—when the smallest skiff showed black on the glistening sea, and every sailing bird cast its shadow on the chalky cliff, and each stationary figure on the heights exhibited a hard outline against the sky,—was little fit for smuggling adventure; yet the officers of the Coast Guard had a strong impression that a landing of contraband goods was to be attempted, in defiance of the lady moon, and of the watchers who "blessed her useful light." A gipsy festival afforded an excellent pretence for collecting the country people in sufficient force to brave the guard; and it was suspected that the people themselves thought so, as tidings of the festival were most industriously spread through all the country, and certainly very eagerly received. Lieutenant Storey held consultations with his brother officers at all the stations near; and every precaution was taken to enable a great force to assemble with speed at the points where it seemed pretty certain that a landing would be attempted. One or two trusty men were sent to overlook the wake from a height, that they might report the numbers and apparent disposition of the people; and Lieutenant Storey visited these men on their posts soon after the beginning of the ceremony.

"Well! what news?" said Matilda, anxiously, as the Lieutenant entered the room where his wife, mother, and sister were waiting supper for him.

"Why, it is a fine freezing night," he replied, rubbing his hands, and accepting the seat which was offered him close by the blazing fire. "So you have Elizabeth to keep you company, as I advised you. That is very well, as I rather think you will not be persuaded to go to bed till late. And you, too, mother! Who would have thought of your climbing up to us so late in the day?"

"But the gipsies!" cried the ladies. "Did you see the wake?"

"I heard more than I saw of it; for the banks are so high that one could only catch a glimpse of a few heads now and then. But there was a strong glare from their torches, there being little moonlight, I suppose, in the hollow way: and their noise is really inconceivable. Such yelling and howling, and what I suppose they call singing! They will wake up all the sheep in the pens for a mile round."

"I am afraid there are a great many collected," observed Matilda.

"I should think there must be, for I never heard any gabble or din to compare with it, except when the wind and the sails are wrangling in a storm at sea. But come, let us have supper. I must be gone again presently; and this is not an air to take away one's appetite."

His mother inquired whether they could learn anything of the progress of events by looking out of the windows, or whether they must wait for news till his return. He replied, “You will see nothing by going to the window but as fine a moonlight sea as ever you saw; and the light-house, and perhaps poor Nicholas staring about him, as he is bound to do.”(If there is any affray, it will be far out of your sight. We keep our eyes upon Birling and Crowlink Gap. Either of them is an easy place of rendezvous from the wake. You will be as still as death here, and I advise you all to go to sleep till I knock you up to let me in.”

The mother and sister wondered what he thought they could be made of to go to bed at such a time. Matilda piled fresh logs on the fire, and looked to see that the lamp was trimmed.

“I'll tell you what,—I'll desire Nicholas to come, from time to time, to tell you whether he hears or sees anything or nothing,” said the Lieutenant, “I have put him on the nearest beat, where I am pretty sure of his having nothing to do; and he can just step to the gate, if you like to be at the trouble of hearing that he has nothing to tell.”

“Do be less presumptuous, my dear son,” said Mrs. Storey.' How dare you make sure of nothing happening?”

“It was only a hasty word, mother. I have not been presumptuous in reality, as you would say if you saw how completely we are prepared. More ale, if you please, Elizabeth. And now, I must not stay any longer. I shall be sure to tell Nicholas: but you will not detain him from his post.”

Matilda ran out before him to have his parting kiss at the gate, and to watch him of sight. The full light from the beacon turned at the moment upon her face, stronger than the moonlight, and showed that tears were upon her cheek.

“I cannot scold you, love,” said her husband, as he wiped them away. “I do pity you women that have to sit waiting at home when anything is to happen. I could fancy myself crying like a baby if I were obliged to do so. But go in now, there's a good girl.”

“The moment you are out of sight. I suppose you really cannot tell,—you cannot even tell *me,*—when you are likely to be home again.”

“Impossible. It may be two hours, or it may be twelve.”

Matilda had only to pray that it might be two, while she watched her husband on his way to Nicholas's beat, where he stopped to speak with the figure perched upon the brow of the cliff. Presently the figure might be seen to touch its hat; the Lieutenant waved his hand towards the station-house, and speedily disappeared, leaving Matilda to re-enter the parlour, whose clear fire, double windows, and listed doors she would willingly have exchanged for the biting air on Hotcombe Flat, by her husband's side.

During the hour which elapsed before Nicholas lifted the latch of the gate, whose welcome slick brought all the ladies to the door, Matilda had wished twenty times that

she was alone. Elizabeth was full of groundless fears of her own devising, while she ridiculed those of other people; and Mrs. Storey gave a lecture on patience every time Matilda moved on her chair, looking up in her face with all possible anxiety, however, at each return from an excursion to the upper windows. The methodical Nicholas was more tiresome still. He began with an explanation of what his orders were about giving intelligence to the ladies, and of his purpose in now appearing before them. He proceeded with an account of where he had stood, and how he had looked round and listened, and what he had been thinking about; and it was only at the last that it came out that he had seen and heard nothing particular.

“And do you think you could hear a pistol-shot from Birling Gap, or from so far as Crow-link Gap.?”’

Nicholas could not answer for it, having never heard a pistol fired from either place while on duty on his present beat; but he soon recollected that his officer had told him that it was a very calm night, and that he could certainly be able to hear the sound in question from the farthest of the Seven Sisters; and therefore Nicholas fully believed that he should hear a pistol as soon as fired.

“Very well,” said Matilda, venturing upon such a breach of discipline as handing him a glass of ale. “Now we will not detain you: we were desired not; but come again in an hour, and sooner, if anything happens.”

Nicholas's heart, which was always warm towards the lady, was rarefied by the honours and benefits of this night. To be appointed, in some sort, her special servant,—to be treated with kind words from her lips, and with ale from her own hands,—was enough, in combination with the ale itself, to raise his spirits to the highest pitch of which, as a sober man, he was capable. He could scarcely refrain from whistling as he went back to his beat, and was actually guilty of humming “Rules Britannia,” as he flung himself down in a sort of niche on the very brow of the dizzy cliff, whence he was wont to gaze abroad over the expanse.

“‘ Rule, Britannia!’—Ay, that lady is worth a thousand of the bigger and smarter one, and the old one too, if a poor man may think so.—‘ Britannia rule the waves.’—Hoy, hoy! where did this sloop come from, that I did not see her before? She's waiting for an early cargo of chalk, I'll be bound; but it is odd I did not see her before, only that she lies so close under, one could not see without looking over. ‘ And come again in an hour,’ says she, ‘ or sooner, if anything happens.’ I wonder how the hour goes.—‘ Britons never shall be slaves!’—If I had my mother's old watch, now!. Bless her! she's now asleep, I suppose, in the bed with the green checked curtains. She says she thinks of me in her prayers, and has all the sea before her as she goes to sleep, and me marching above it, helping to guard the nation.—' Britannia rule the waves!'—It is only a fair turn for me to think of her when she is asleep, as I hope she is now. Lord! how she used to beat me! and all, as she says now, for tenderness, to make a great man of me.

To be sure, I never guessed it at the time,—‘ Britons never shall be slaves! Never! never!’ I don't know that I had not best walk; it is so different sitting here from what it

is when the sun is out, platting straw for my hat. It is time I had a new hat; I thought I saw the lady glancing at it. Think of her taking notice of such little things! Kind heart! ‘ Come again within the hour,’ says she, ‘ and sooner, if anything happens.’ That's she looking out, I warrant, where there is a little bit of light from the window. There 'tis gone 'Tis the will of Providence that she should notice me so. I wish she knew how my mother thinks of me: but that is no doing of mine, either; it is the will of Providence too; and I doubt whether anybody is so happy as, by the will of Providence, I am, with my mother, and the people here all so harmless to me, and the lady! And it is something to see such a bright sea as this, so like what I saw in the show-box at Weyhill fair, when my mother treated me, then a young boy. I am sure everybody is wonderfully kind to me. I wonder how the hour goes. It is bitter cold, to be sure; and I think yon bit of shelter is best, after all.—

‘Britons never, ne—ver——’”

And Nicholas once more crouched in his recess, where he rocked himself to the music of the waves, and looked in vain over the wide expanse for the smallest dark speck, in watching which he might find occupation. He soon found that his observation would have been better bestowed nearer home. While walking, he had disdained the well-worn path along the chalk line, strewed within a few feet of the verge for the guidance of the watchers on dark nights. As it was light enough for safety, he availed himself of the opportunity of varying his beat, and trod the less bare path from the chalk line to the very edge of the cliff. He had looked straight before him, whether his back was turned north or south, giving no attention to the right hand or the left. He had also been too hasty in his conclusion that the vessel which lay below, in the deep, broad shadow of the cliffs, was a chalk sloop, waiting for the tide.

By leaning forwards a little, any one in Nicholas's present seat could command a view of a winding and perilous, almost perpendicular, track, which ascended from the spot where the gipsies had assisted at the last unloading of a smuggling vessel. Something like rude steps occurred at small intervals in this track; but they were so imperfect, and it was so steep, that the assistance of either ropes or mutual support was necessary to those who would mount, with or without a load on their shoulders. As the tide had till now been too high to permit access to this spot by the beach, it was one of the last in which Nicholas could have expected to see foes. For want of something to do, he picked two or three flints out of a layer which was bedded in the chalk within reach, and amused himself with sending them down the steep, in order to watch what course they would take. Leaning over, to follow with his eye the vagaries of one of these, his ear was struck by a bumping, dead sound, which could not be caused by his flint. Looking a little to the right, without drawing back, he perceived something moving in the shadowy track. But for the sound which had excited his suspicions, he would have concluded that some cliff-raven or sea-bird had been disturbed in its hole, and he watched intently for a few seconds to discover whether this was not the case; but it soon became evident to his sharpened sight that there was a line of men laboriously climbing the track, each with his two small tubs braced upon his shoulders. Whether they had a strong rope by which each might help himself, or whether each supported the one above him, could not be discovered from the distance at which Nicholas sat; nor could he guess whether they were aware of his being so near.

He started up, and stood in the broad moonlight, fumbling for his pistol, which was not quite so ready to his hand as it ought to have been. A subdued cry spread up and down, from mouth to mouth, among his foes, a large body of whom appeared instantly on the ridge, from the hollow where they had collected unobserved. One of them cried,—

“Hand over your pistol, lad, and sit down quietly where you were, and we will do you no harm.”

To do anything but what his officer had desired was, however, too confusing to Nicholas's faculties to be borne. The order to fire as soon as smugglers were perceived came upon his mind, as if spoken at the moment in the Lieutenant's own voice, and saved him the trouble of all internal conflict. He fired, and was instantly fired upon in turn, and wounded. As he staggered far enough back from the verge to fall on safe ground, he had the consolation of hearing (after the cloud of flapping sea-birds had taken themselves far out to sea) a repetition of shots along the cliffs on either hand, fainter and shorter in the increasing distance. The ominous roll of the drum,—the most warlike signal of the smugglers,—was next heard from the hollow to the right, and more sea-birds fluttered and screamed. Silence was gone; the alarm was given; and poor Nicholas need not resist the welcome faintness that stretched him on the grass. The smugglers, annoyed by former repeated failures in their attempts to intimidate or gain over the Preventive watch, were now exasperated by Nicholas's unflinching discharge of his duty; and they determined to make an example of him, even in the midst of their preparations to resist the force which they knew to be on the way to attack them. The first necessary precaution was to range the batmen who had been collected by the sound of the drum, in two rows, from the vessel to the foot of the cliff, and again from the verge of the cliffs to where the carts were stationed, surrounded with guards. This being done, their pieces loaded, and their bludgeons shouldered, a small party was detached to take possession of the wounded man. On raising him, it was found that he was not dead, and that it was by no means certain that his wounds were mortal. When he recovered his senses, he felt himself lifted from the ground by a rope tied round his middle, and immediately after was being lowered over the edge of the precipice, carefully protected from being dashed against the face of the cliff by the men who stood at regular distances down the track, and who handed him from one to the other till he reached the bottom, where two stout men received him, and supported him on either side to a little distance along the shingle.

“What are you going to do with me?” he faintly asked; but they made no answer.

“For God's sake spare my life”

“Too late for that, lad,” replied one.

“No, not too late,” said Nicholas, with renewed hope. “I don't think you have killed me. I shall get well, if you will let me go.”

“Too late, lad. You should not have fired.”

“You are going to murder me then,” groaned the victim, sinking down upon a large stone where he had often leaned before, it being the one from which he was wont to look out to sea. “I did not expect it of you, for your people have always behaved very well to me. Everybody has been kind to me,” he continued, his dying thoughts getting into the train which the spot suggested. “But, if you will do me one more kindness, do, some of you, tell the lady at the station why I could not come as she bade me. ‘ Come within the hour,’ says she——”

He stopped short on hearing two pistols cocked successively. No duty to be done under orders being immediately present to his mind, a paroxysm of terror seized him. He implored mercy for his mother's sake, and, with the words upon his lips, sank dead before the balls were lodged in his body as in a mark.

The proceeding was witnessed by some of his comrades, and by his officer, from the top of the cliff; and fierce were the cries and numerous were the shots which followed the murderous party, as they quickly took up the body, and fell back among the crowd of smugglers within the deep shadow where they could no longer be distinguished.

The party being three hundred strong, any resistance which the Preventive Force could offer was of little avail to check their proceedings, as long as they were disposed to carry them on. They persevered for some time in landing, hoisting up, and carting away their tubs, the batmen keeping line, and frequently firing, while the carriers passed between with their burdens. At length, a shot from one of the guard, which took more effect than was expected, seemed to occasion some change in their plans. They drew in their apparatus, ascended the track in order, bearing with them the bodies of their slain or wounded companions, and formed round the carts, in order to proceed up the country, deserting a portion of the cargo which was left upon the shore. The vessel, meanwhile, hoisted sail, and wore round to stand out to sea.

“Can you see how many are killed or disabled?” inquired the Lieutenant of one of his men. “What is this they are hauling along?”

“Two bodies, sir; whether dead or not, I can't say.”

“Not poor Nicholas's for one, I suppose.”

“No, sir; they have both their faces blacked, I see.”

“We must get Christian burial for Nicholas, if it be too late to save him,” said the Lieutenant to his men, who were boiling with rage at the fate of their comrade.

“They have pitched him into the sea, no doubt, sir, unless they have happened to leave him on the beach as a mockery.”

The procession passed with their load, like a funeral train; and to stop them would only have occasioned the loss of more lives. There were no stragglers to be cut off, for they kept their corps as compact as if they had been drilled into the service, and practised in an enemy's country. It was, in fact, so. They had been trained to regular defiance of laws which they had never heard spoken of but in terms of hatred; and

whenever the agents of government were around their steps, they felt themselves in the midst of enemies.

When the smugglers had proceeded so far inland as to be out of danger, they made a halt, and gave three cheers,—an exasperating sound to the baffled guard.

“Let them cheer!” cried the Lieutenant, “our turn will come next. Down to the beach, my lads, before the tide carries off what belongs to you there. If any of you can find tracks of blood, it may not be too late for poor Nicholas, after all. Down to the beach, and seize whatever you can find.”

He remained for a few moments on the steep, ranging the horizon with his glass, internally cursing the rapid progress that the lugger (which few but Nicholas would have taken for a sloop, however deep the shadow) was making in her escape.

“The cutter always contrives to be just in the wrong place,” thought he, “or to arrive too late when called. She will come, as she did before, full sail, as soon as the smuggler has got out of sight, and changed her course.”

On joining his men, he found they had partly recovered their spirits, amidst the booty which lay before their eyes. Some few had given their first attention to searching for the body of their comrade, but the greater number were insisting on the necessity of removing the seizure to the Custom-house, before the tide should have risen any higher. It was already washing up so as to efface any marks of blood which might have remained on the shingle; and it seemed most probable, in the absence of any clue, that the body of Nicholas was being dashed in the surf which sent its spray among those who defied its advances to the last, before they mounted once more upon the down. They were obliged to leave a few tubs floating, after they had secured the goods which it was most important to keep dry. If these kegs could hold together amidst the dashing of the waves, they would be recoverable in the morning from the sea, as the law forbade all floating tubs to be picked up by anybody but the Coast Guard, and the watch on the shore could keep an eye on the observance of the law, for the short time that would be necessary.

“Brady, post off to the station-house, and let the ladies know we are all safe but one. Stay! You will not thank me for sending you away from your booty; and, besides, they will not believe you. I must go myself. Halt a minute, my lads.”

The officer directed his steps to the gleam which shone out through the curtain of Matilda's window. Though he found her voiceless, and his mother and sister in a state of restless terror, he could not stay to revive them. The firing had seemed to them so fearful that they would scarcely credit the testimony of their own eyes that the Lieutenant was safe, or his assurance that only one life had been lost on the side of the Preventive Force. He did not say whose life that was, for he knew that there was not a man under his command whom his wife would miss more than poor Nicholas. This painful communication he left to the morning. With an assurance that the enemy had all marched off, and that no dangerous duty remained, the officer entreated his family

to go to rest. It was very probable that he might not come home till daylight, and it would now be folly to waste any more anxiety upon him.

Elizabeth thought it really would be very foolish, though she declared she did not expect to sleep a wink for a month to come. She began her preparations, however, by putting up her work with alacrity, and lighting her mother to her bedroom. Matilda went also to hers, but not to remain. As soon as all was quiet, she stole town lo the fire-side, laid wood upon the embers, put out her light, and sat down, preferring a further watch to broken dreams. The cracking of the fuel and the ticking of the time-piece composed her agitated thoughts; but, instead of cheerfulness, a deep melancholy succeeded to the internal tumult of so many hours—a melancholy which grew with that it fed on.

Matilda had not hitherto been given to deep thought, or strong feeling, for any one but her husband; but the new influences of circumstance, of late suspense and fear, of the hour, and of her present social position,—all combined to stimulate her to higher reflection than, as a light-hearted girl, she had been wont to encourage. She would fain have known which of the men had fallen,—what home was to be made desolate by the tidings that must soon be on their way. Were they to stun the young wife who, like herself, had——O, no! It was too dreadful to think of! Were they to smite the matron, who, in her Irish cabin, daily told the little ones around her knee tales of the brave and tender father who was to come back and caress them one day *2* Were they to wither the aged parent, who prayed for his roving son, and looked for the return of the prodigal before he died; or the band of young kindred who watched with longing the glory of their elder brother, and would be struck dumb at this ignoble close of his envied service? Whoever it was, a life was gone! And how? Men of the same country, members of the same social state, had been made enemies by arbitrary laws. They had been trained to deceive and to defy one another when they should have wrought, side by side, to nourish life instead of to destroy it,—to strengthen peace instead of inflicting woe. He who made the human heart to yearn at the voice of kindliness, and to leap up at the tone of joy, thereby rebukes the system which gives birth to mutual curses, and flings sorrows into many homes;—He who gradually discloses to the roused human ear the music of His name, does it for other purposes than to have it taken upon human lips in mockery as a pass-word to the meanest frauds;—He who made yon glittering sea a broad path by which his children might pass to and fro, so that the full may bear bread to the hungry, and the skilful send clothing to the naked, must pity the perverseness by which such mutual aid is declined, or yielded only at the expense of crime—artificial crime, which brings on natural, as its sure consequence;—He who scatters his bounties over the earth with impartial hand, his snow and sunshine, his fruits and gems;—He who lets loose his herds on the plains of the tropics, and calls the fishy tribes into the depths of Polar seas;—He who breathes upon the cornfields, and they wave; who whispers among the pine-forests of the North, and they bow before him, —thus works that men may impart and enjoy; and yet man will not impart, and forbids his fellow-man to enjoy;–He' who in still small voice says to the Hindoo beneath the palm-tree, “Get three a home;” who visits the broken sleep of the toil-worn artizan to bid him get food and rest; who comes in the chill wind to the shivering boor to warn him to provide apparel; who scares the crouching Arab with thunders among the caverned rocks, and the Greenlander with

tempests on the icy sea, and the African with wild beasts in the sultry night, that out of their terror may arise mutual protection and social case,–is daringly gainsaid by intermeddlers, who declare that one nation shall have scanty food, and another miserable clothing; and that a third must still find holes in the rocks, or a refuge in the trees, because neither wood nor iron shall be given for habitations. Shall there not come a day when the toil-worn Briton shall complain, “I was hungry, and ye gave me no food;” and the Pole, “I was naked, and ye clothed me not;” and the Syrian wanderer. “I was houseless, and ye sheltered me not;” and the gem-decked hungering savage. “I was poor and miserable, and ye visited me not, nor let me enrich you in return?” When will men learn that the plan of Divine Providence indicates the scheme of human providence; that man should distribute his possessions as God scatters his gifts; that, as man is created for kindliness and for social ease, he should be governed so as to secure them; that, as all interests naturally harmonize under a law of impartial love, it is an impiety to institute a law of partiality, by which interests are arbitrarily opposed? When will men learn that it should be with their wrought as with their natural wealth,—that, as the air of heaven penetrates into all hidden places, and nourishes the life of every breathing thing, all the elements of human comfort should expand till they have reached and refreshed each partaker of human life; that as the seeds of vegetation are borne here and there by gales, and dropped by birds upon ridges and into hollows, the means of enjoyment should be conveyed to places lofty or lowly in the social scale, whence the winged messengers may return over the deep with an equal recompense? When will governments learn that they are responsible for every life which is sacrificed through a legislation of partiality; whether it be of a servant of its own, murdered by rebellious hands, or of a half-nourished babe dying on its sickly mother's knee, or of a spirit-broken merchant, or of a worn-out artizan? When will the people learn that, instead of acquiescing in the imposition of oaths which they mean to break, of a watch which they permit to be insulted and slaughtered, of a law which they bring up their children to despise and to defy, they should demand with one voice that freedom in the disposal of the fruits of their toil, upon which mutual interest is a sufficient check, while it proves a more unfailing Stimulus than any arbitrary encouragement given to one application of industry at the expense of all others? When shall we leave the natural laws which guide human efforts as they guide the stars in their courses to work, without attempting to mend them by our bungling art? When shall man cease to charge upon Providence evils of his own devising, and pray for deliverance from the crimes he himself has invented, and from the miseries which follow in their train? We implore that there may be no murder, and put firelocks into the hands of our smugglers. We profess our piety, and hold the Bible to unhallowed lips in our custom-houses. W'e say “Avaunt!” to all that is infernal when we bring our children to the font, and straightway educate them to devilish subtilty and hatred. We weekly celebrate our love for our whole race, and yet daily keep back a portion of the universal inheritance of man. O, when will man come in singleness of heart before his Maker, and look abroad upon His works in the light of His countenance!

Matilda's eyes were shining tearful in the firelight when her husband entered.

“Hey! tears, my love? I saw no tears when there was more cause,—two hours ago.”

“I had no time for them then,” said Matilda, brushing them away.

“And why now? Do you dread more such nights, or are you worn out, or——”

“No, no; it was not for myself. It was shame.—O, I am so ashamed!”

“Of me, love? Do not you like my duty? or, do I not perform it well?”

“O, no, no. I am so ashamed at the whole world, and especially at our own nation, which thinks itself so Christian. Here we send one another out man-hunting. We make a crimp, tempt a man into it, and punish him for it. Is this Christian?”

“It would be a disgrace to paganism.”

“We are proud of being made in God's image, and we take pains to make human governments the reverse of the Divine. How dare we ask a blessing upon them?'”

“Come, come, my good girl, you must think of something more cheerful. The hearing of a life being lost has been too much for you. You never were so near the scene of a murder before, I dare say.”

“Never,” replied Matilda, with quivering lips.

“It will not affect you so much again. You will become more used to the circumstances of such a situation as ours. You will feel this sort of adventure less painfully henceforward.”

“But I do not wish that,” was all that Matilda chose to say, lest her sorrow should be charged upon discontent with her individual lot. She looked out once more upon the sea, darkening as the moon went down, and satisfied herself that the time would come for which she had been inquiring,—when man would look above and around him, and learn of Providence.

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Chapter VII.

HEAR THE NEWS!

All was bustle about the nearest Custom-house when the seized vessel and goods were expected to arrive the next morning. The magistracy in the neighbourhood were also busy, for there seemed to be no end to the offences against the law which had arisen out of the adventure of the preceding night.

The first steps taken were towards the discovery of the murderer of Nicholas; and, for this purpose, application was made to government for aid, in the shape both of police-officers and of an offer of reward for the disclosure of the murderers. Little was hoped from the latter proceeding, as the smugglers were known to yield powerful protection to each other, and to be united by a bond of honour as strongly in each other's defence as against the law. If Nicholas's murderers were known to every dweller along the coast, from Portsmouth to the North Foreland, there was little probability that any one would step forward to name or lay hands on them. But, the little that government could do,—pry about and offer bribes, was done; and, whether or not the guilty persons might tremble or flee, every body else laughed.

One of the gipsy band was brought up before two justices of the peace on violent suspicion of having, after eight in the evening, and before six in the morning', made, aided, or assisted in making, or been present at making, a signal, by means of light, fire, flash, blaze, signal by smoke, and so forth, through all the offences described in the appropriate clause of that most singular statute ordained for the prevention of smuggling. No proof could be brought, though the truth of the charge was generally believed, and the gipsies thereby became more popular than ever. They were dismissed, and every body laughed.

A boy was brought up, on a charge of trespass, by a farmer, who complained that his fenced land had been entered and trampled, and his well and bucket made use of without leave. The boy pleaded that he had entered for the purpose of putting out a fire which he suspected to be intended for a signal to smugglers. The justices referred. to the statute, found that “it shall be lawful,” c., to commit this kind of trespass, and that the boy had only done his duty. And now, every body frowned.

A woman who had been caught standing near a tub of the spirits which had been seized, which tub was staved, was brought up on the charge of having staved the same. The penalty was so heavy as to tempt to a vast deal of false swearing on her behalf, by dint of which she escaped; and her friends and neighbours laughed again. She was not the less glad of this issue that, being a poor person, she would have been supported while in prison by a daily allowance drawn from the pockets of the nation. A crew of fishermen were summoned to show cause why they should not, according to law, pay the treble value of a floating keg of gin, which, having bumped against their boat at sea, they had stretched out their hands to appropriate. There was no use in

denying the act, as it had been witnessed by two keen eyes through unimpeachable glasses, from a headland. All that the fishermen could do was to swear that they only meant to deliver over the spirits to the Custom-house officers, and were prevented from doing so by being arrested immediately on landing. The magistrates considered this a very doubtful case; and, having before their eyes the fear of the collective power of their smuggling neighbours, gave their decision in favour of the fishermen; whereat the informers were indignant, and the folks in waiting exulted.

All parties had by this time had enough of this ceremony; but the justices agreed in assuring the Lieutenant, that if they chose to look strictly into the proceedings of their neighbours, and to inflict all the punishments ordained in the statute for all the modes of offence specified therein, they might be constantly occupied from morning till night; the gaols would be filled; there would be a distraint for penalties in almost every cottage, and offenders would be nearly as common as persons who stood above five feet in their shoes. They entertained him with a sight of the entire statute, as he was not acquainted with the whole; and all thought it perfectly consistent with their exemplary loyalty to decide that it was truly an extraordinary specimen of legislation. The justices could no more boast of the achievements of their authority in putting down smuggling than the officer of his efficiency in preventing it. All shook their heads, complimented each other's exertions, and desponded about the availableness of their own.

“What is to be done?” was the commonplace query which ensued.

“Why, you see,” said one of the justices, “the prohibiting a commodity does not take away the taste for it; and if you impose a high duty, you only excite people to evade it, and to calculate the average rate of the risk of detection. That being done, there will always be abundance of speculators found to make the venture, and no lack of customers to bid them God speed.”

“Then there are two ways of demolishing the practice,—lowering the duties, so as to remove the temptation to smuggling; and increasing the difficulty of carrying on a contraband trade.”

“I should say there is but one,” replied the first speaker. “Difficulties have been multiplied till we who have to administer the law groan under them, and smuggling is still on the increase.”

“What is government about all the time?” asked the Lieutenant. “They must know this, and yet they let their own power be mocked, and the interests of our manufacturers and commercial men be sacrificed.”

“Of our manufacturers, but not necessarily of all our commercial men. Contraband trade is a fine thing for certain shopkeepers; and you might hear some curious stories below there,” (nodding towards the Custom-house,) “about certain methods of obtaining drawbacks, and then re-landing the goods by the help of our night-working neighbours. However, government is getting a glimpse of the true state of the case, as we shall soon see.”

“Because,” observed the other magistrate, “government is beginning to look to the right quarter for information. It is nonsense to consult collectors of the revenue, and persons in their interest and of their way of thinking, about the best method of rendering taxes effectual. The only way is to contemplate the interests of the tax payers. This done, it is easily seen that there is not much wisdom in a system, the enforcement alone of which costs the country many hundred thousand pounds a year.”

“And which is not enforced, after all, and never can be. No, no; the government sees now that the only way is to lower the duties down to the point which makes contraband trading a speculation not worth attempting.”

“What makes you suppose that government views the matter in this light?'”

“It is said, and confidently believed in London, that government has taken into consideration this petition from the principal silk-manufacturers in and about London.”

The Lieutenant read the petition in the newspaper, of recent date, now handed to him.

“Hum. ‘This important manufacture, though recently considerably extended,’—aye, so it ought to be, from the increasing number of wearers of silk,—’ is still depressed below its natural level'—they are tired of Spitalfields subscriptions, I suppose, and of living among starving weavers, who throw the blame of their starvation on their masters;—' by laws which prevent it from attaining that degree of prosperity which, under more favourable circumstances, it would acquire.'—Well! what thinks the House of this petition?”

“That will be seen when government speaks upon it. It is thought that the prohibition of foreign silks will be removed, and a moderate duty substituted. If so, it will be an important experiment.”

“I rather think,” observed the other magistrate, “that the fault will soon be found to be neither in the undue mildness of the law, nor in our way of administering it,—of both which the customs and excise officers are for ever complaining. I believe my friend here and I shall have little less reason to bless the change than these petitioning manufacturers.”

“There will be enough left for me to do,” observed the Lieutenant, “if, as I suppose, they will leave as they are the duties on articles not produced at home. Many a cargo of gin and tobacco will yet be landed in my day. Meanwhile, I must go and see the unpacking at the Custom-house. I hope I shall not be tempted to smuggle within those very walls, on my wife's account.”

When the officer arrived at the Custom-house, he found the Collector and Comptroller invested with all the dignity of active office, and the members of the Coast Guard who were there to claim their share of booty, watching with eagerness for the unpacking of a large store of that beloved weed which was wont to “cheer but not inebriate” them on their watch. A few inquisitive neighbours were peeping in from window and door, and Mr. Pim, admitted through favour, from his son being the

Collector's clerk, paced up and down, his countenance exhibiting a strange alternation of mirth and vexation. He could not help enjoying the fun of people eluding, and baffling, and thwarting one another; such fun being one chief inducement to him to connect himself as he had done with contraband traders; but it was a serious vexation to see some of his property,—goods on whose safe arrival he had staked the earnings of his irksome school-hours,—thus about to fall into the hands of those who had paid no such dolorous price for them.

Somebody wondered that, as the smugglers had taken time to carry away so considerable a portion of their cargo, a large package of tobacco should have been left behind; tobacco feeing an exceedingly valuable article of contraband trade, from the difference between its original cost and its price when charged with the duty. If smugglers paid threepence a pound for their article, and sold it at half-a-crown, it must repay their risks better than most articles which they could import. One of the guard believed he had seen numerous packages of tobacco on the people's shoulders, as they passed to the carts, and supposed that the quantity before them formed a very small portion of what had been landed.

“Most likely,” observed the Collector. “There is more tobacco landed than there is of any thing else, except brandy and geneva. It is high time government was bestirring itself to put down the smuggling of tobacco. Do you know, sir,” (to the Lieutenant,) “these fellows supply a fourth part of the tobacco that is consumed in England?”

“That is nothing to what they do in Ireland,” observed Brady. “There were seventy vessels in one year landing tobacco between Waterford and Londonderry.”

“Yes; the Irish are incorrigible,” replied the Collector; “they smuggle three-fourths of the tobacco they use.”

The Lieutenant doubled whether they were incorrigible. Neither the Irish, nor any body else, would think of smuggling unless they were tempted to it. If the duty, now three shillings per pound, were reduced to one shilling, smuggling tobacco would not answer; the sinning three-fourths would get their tobacco honestly, and government would be the gainer. The same advantage would arise in England from the reduction of the duty; as, in addition to the practice of smuggling being superseded, the consumption of the article would materially increase, as is always the case on the reduction of a tax. With every augmentation of the duty from eight-pence per pound to three shillings, there had been a failure of consumption at the same time with an increase of contraband trade; so that the revenue had suffered doubly, and to an extent far beyond its gains from the heightening of the duty.

“What have we got here?” cried Pim, as a gay-coloured article was drawn out from among the packages.

“Flags! Aye; these were clever fellows, and knew their business, you see. Here are pretty imitations of navy flags, and a fine variety. British, Dutch, French! They knew what they were about,—those fellows.”

“So do you, it seems, Mr. Pim,” observed the Collector. “You are as wonderfully learned in flags as if you had taken a few trips to sea yourself.”

“I have lived on this coast for many a year, and seen most of the flags that wave on these seas,” replied Pim. “But since these flags are but poor booty, it is a pity your men cannot catch those that hoisted them, and so get a share of the fine.”

“Suppose you put them on the right scent, Mr. Pim. I fancy you could, if you chose.”

Mr. Pim disclaimed, with all the gravity which his son's presence could impose. A parcel of bandanas next appeared, and as the familiar red spotted with white appeared, a smile went round the circle of those who anticipated a share of the seizure.

“Ho, ho! I suspect I know who these belong to,” observed the Collector. “There is a gentleman now not far off on this coast who could tell us all about them, I rather think. He has been sent for from London, under suspicion of certain tricks about the drawback on the exportation of silks. His shop is supplied very prettily by our smugglers, and his connexion with them is supposed to be the inducement to him to make large purchases at the India sales. I have no doubt he is one of those who buy bandanas at four shillings a piece, and sell them at eight shillings, when they have had a trip to Ostend or Guernsey. I have a good mind to send for him.”

“This is the last sort of commodities I should think it can be pleasant to you Custom-house folks to declare forfeited,” observed Pim.” Your consciences must twinge you a little here, I should think. I don't doubt your tobacco and your brandy being duty-paid, and all proper; but when paying duty will not do, you will offend, just like those who are not government servants, rather than go without what you have a mind to. I'll lay any wager now——”

“Hold your impertinent tongue, sir,” cried the. Collector

Mr. Pim obeyed, taking leave to use his hands instead. He stepped behind the Collector, and quietly picked his pocket of a bandana: he did the same to the Comptroller; and afterwards to all the rest, though the land-waiter whisked away his coat-tail, and the tide-waiter got into a corner The only one who escaped was the clerk (Pim own son), and he only because his having one round his neck made the process unnecessary. A goodly display of bandanas,—real Indian,— now graced the counter, and everybody joined in Pim's hearty laugh.

“Now,” said he, “if you summon Breme on the suspicion of this property being his——”

“So you know who the gentleman was that I was speaking of,” cried the Collector. “Very well. Perhaps you can tell us a little news of this next package.”

And forthwith was opened to view a beautiful assortment of figured silks, of various colours, but all of one pattern. Mr. Pim gravely shook his head over them.

“If you know nothing of those, I do,” said Brady, taking out his tobacco-box, and producing therefrom the snip of silk which had been extracted from Elizabeth's glove. “'Tis the same article, you see; and the Lieutenant here declares 'tis English.”

“And so it is, and so are these,” declared the Collector. “The French would be ashamed of such a fabric as this, at the price marked, though they might own the figure; which must be imitated from theirs, I fancy. We had better send for Mr. Breme, and let the other Custom-house know of this seizure. I suspect it will throw some more light on the tricks about the drawback.”

Mr. Breme was found to be nearer at hand than had been supposed. Having failed in his speculation, through two unfortunate seizures of contraband cargoes, he had cut but a poor figure at the larger Custom-house, where he had just been examined, and found it necessary to consult with his Brighton brother as to the means of getting the threatened fine mitigated, or of paying it, if no mercy could be obtained. He was proceeding along the coast to Brighton, when Pim, who was aware of his movements, met him, and told him of the adventures which had taken place at Beachy Head.

What was to be done? Should he slip past to Brighton quietly, at the risk of being brought back in a rather disagreeable way, or should he make his appearance at once, and brave the circumstances, before more evidence should be gathered against him from distant quarters? The latter measure was decided upon; and Breme, after changing his directions to the post-boy, leaned back in his chaise to ruminate, in anything but a merry mood, on the losses which he had sustained, was sustaining, and must expect still further to sustain.

Breme had lately become a merchant in a small way, as well as a shopkeeper. He had followed the example of many of his brethren in trade, in venturing upon a proceeding of some risk, in hopes that large profits would cover the loss of the occasional failures which he had to expect. He had employed his Spitalfields neighbour to manufacture a fabric in imitation of French silk, and had exported the produce as English, receiving at the Custom-house the drawback granted to such exportation. This drawback was the remission, or paying back, of the duties on the article to be exported; such remission being necessary to enable the exporter to sell his commodity in the foreign market on equal terms with the foreign manufacturers, who were less burdened with taxes. Breme claimed and received this drawback, he and his agents swearing, in due form, according to the statute, that the goods were really for sale abroad, and should not be relanded. The oath was considered merely as a necessary form; and Breme had no notion of selling his goods in a foreign market at a lower price than would be given for them in England, under the supposition that they were French. Back they came, therefore; and the government, which had paid the drawback, besides having thereby made a very pretty present to Mr. Breme, saw an addition made to the stock of the already overstocked market at home, while the weavers of silk were starving, and it was charitably contributing to frequent subscriptions for their relief. Mr. Breme was now, however, a loser in his turn, his beautiful goods being clutched by the strong hand of the law. In addition to this trouble, he was suffering under the prospect of a speedy end being put to this kind of speculation.

He could not decide what line of defence to take till he reached the Custom-house, and heard the nature and amount of the evidence that there might be against him. When he was told that the case was to be followed up very diligently, and exposed as a warning; that tire silks were known to be of the same kind as those for which he had had to answer in another place; and that the manufacturer and weavers would be produced to swear to the origin of the whole,—he offered to make oath that he had sold the goods abroad, and that their being afterwards smuggled back again was the act of his customers, and not his own. The Collector congratulated him that, this being the case, he was not subjected to the loss which some of his friends had regretted on his account. It was, indeed, a much pleasanter thing to have sold the goods and pocketed the money than to see such a beautiful lot of goods, prepared at so much cost, and with so much labour and ingenuity, now lying a forfeit to the offended British law. With a bitter sweet smile, Mr. Breme bowed in answer to this congratulation, and changed the subject. He observed that days of comparative leisure were apparently at hand for all the gentlemen he saw around him. If government should carry into other departments the changes it was about to make in the silk trade, there would be an end of many of the little affairs with which the time of the Custom-house officers was now so fully and disagreeably occupied.

What did he mean? Did he bring any new information?

Merely that government was about to remove the prohibition on the importation of foreign silks, and to substitute an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent.

“Bless my soul, sir! what an extraordinary thing!” cried the Collector. “You do not mean that you are sure of the fact, sir?”

Mr. Breme had it from the best authority.

“Why ‘ extraordinary?’” asked the Lieutenant. “The nature of our business this morning is proof enough that some change is necessary, is it not?”

“To be sure,” replied Breme; “but the change should be all the other way. Do you know, sir, the market is deluged already with silk goods from the late slight mourning, and from a change of fashion since? What are we to do, sir, when the French pour in a flood of their manufactures upon us?”

“Our market is glutted because we can find no vent for our produce; and I do not see how the matter could be mended by increasing the inducements of smugglers to supply us, while our weavers are starving in the next street. If the French silks are, on the average, 25 per cent. cheaper than ours, a duty of 30 per cent, will leave our manufacturers a fair chance in the competition with foreigners, and will throw the trade of the smugglers into their hands. My only doubt is, whether the duty is not too high,—whether there is not still some scope left to smuggling' enterprize.”

“Your countrymen are much obliged to you, I am sure, sir,” said Breme, tartly. “I think government should know that some of its servants are ill-disposed to their duty.”

The Lieutenant dared the shopkeeper to say this again, in the midst of the witnesses of what his conduct had been on the preceding night. Breme meant only,——and so forth.

Anxious and perplexed were all the faces now, except the Lieutenant's own. His men had only a vague idea that something was to happen to take away their occupation, and to do a great mischief. Their officer bade them cheer up, and told them that it was only to the article of silk that the reported regulations would relate.

“There is no knowing that,” sagely observed the Collector. “When they begin with such innovations, there is no telling where they will leave off. With such a fancy once in their heads, Ministers (though God forbid I should say any evil of them!) will not stop till they have ruined the revenue, and laid waste the country under the curse of an entirely free trade.”

“I dare say they will be wise enough to retain duties which all classes allow to be just; and the levying of them will afford you quite sufficient occupation, Mr. Collector, if our trade increases, as it is likely to do under such a system,” replied the Lieutenant. “This little custom-house may no longer be wanted as a store-place for contraband goods; but there will be all the more to do in the large ports; and there, sir, you may find an honourable and appropriate place.”

Neither the Collector nor any of his coadjutors, however, could be consoled under the dire prospect of the total ruin of the revenue, which was the result they chose to anticipate from the measures understood to be now in contemplation. Their only ground of hope was, that the British manufacturers would rise in a body to remonstrate against the sacrifice of their interests. This, however, considering that the most eminent of the body had already petitioned for the opening of the trade, offered a very slender promise of consolation.

Pim had early slipped away to spread the news of the contemplated “ruin of the coast.” The tidings spread from mouth to mouth, till they filled every cottage, and reached even the recesses where the gipsies made a home. Draper and Faa came forth over the down to hear what the schoolmaster had to tell, and returned thoughtful to the tent where Mrs. Draper was looking out for them.

“Then the winters will pass over us in a ceiled house,” said she, when she had heard the news.

“We must join our tribe in London from the first autumn fog till the last spring frost.”

“You and yours,” said one of the men, who was weaving the rush bottom of an old chair.

“We men may work in the free air, though there will be stones instead of turf under our feet. Many chairs to mend in London.”

“But no night-play to fill the pocket and sharpen the spirits,” old Faa observed. There was nothing in cities that he liked so well as his task of the last night,—to stand on the

ridge as a watch upon the sentinel, and stoop, or hold himself erect, according as the sentinel turned his back or his face, that the lads in the furze might know when to creep forward on all-fours, and when to lie still. It was far pleasanter to see them all collected safe in the shadow of Shooter's Bottom, ready for work or fighting, whichever might befal, than to mix in the medley of bustling people in London streets, who were too busy in the lamplight to heed the stars overhead, which, indeed, it took some time to make out through such an air.

Mrs. Draper would forgive the air for the sake of the warmth and shelter; and the children would excuse everything for the sake of being seventy miles distant from Mr. Pim's school-room. The younger of the men hoped that the "ruin of the coast" might be delayed beyond another winter; that if they might no more have the pleasure of handing bales of silk ashore during unlawful hours, tubs of spirits might yet cross the surf between sunset and sunrise.

"The ' ruin of the coast!'" cried Elizabeth, as the words struck her ear in passing some of the cottages. "Dear me! has anything happened to the fish, I wonder." She soon found,—what she ought to have known before,—that fish are not always the chief concern of fishermen on the coasts of a land where trades are severally "protected." Let the fish swarm in the waters as the motes in the sunbeam, and the coast may be not the less ruined in the opinion of fishermen who grow sophisticated under a bad law.

The wives looked melancholy, as in duty bound, at the extraordinary cruelty of which the government was going to be guilty,—at the very irksome caprice by which it was endeavouring to prevent itself from being cheated, as heretofore, for the advantage of those who mocked, and occasionally murdered, its agents. The good wives thought it very strange of the government to interfere with their husbands. To set spies was bad enough; but to take away their best occupation was a thing not to be borne patiently. No wonder Ned kicked away his nets, and Jem cursed the child, and Dick left his boat, and said he should go to the parish, as his prime work at sea was taken from him. As for the children, they looked as much dismayed under the shadow of evil tidings as their mothers had done in childhood, on being told that Buonaparte and his French were coming ashore to cut all their throats. As soon as they dared speak, there was many a wail of "O mammy, mammy! are they going to ' ruin the coast?'"

Elizabeth thought she would make haste to the down, and tell her sister the dismal story. Breasting the wind as hardily as Matilda herself could have done, she arrived at length at the station-house, unable, for some time, to find breath for her tale. The signs of consternation below had attracted Matilda's notice; and she, too, had dared the wind, to look for the cause through the telescope, which was her favourite companion when the Lieutenant was absent. Her smile at the news surprised Elizabeth, pleased as she was with her own prospects under the new arrangements.

"I should not have thought," she observed, "that you would care so much about the matter. It will be very pleasant, to be sure, to have as much French silk, without breaking the law, and being searched, and all that kind of thing, as we like to buy; but really, if you were to see the distress of those poor people below;—the children——"

“Ah, the children! I am sorry for their fright; but they will soon be comforted. For their parents my pity is at an end. Yonder are their boats and tackle, and strong arms to use them; and there is the great and wide sea, where they may innocently get the bread by which they profess to live. This is better than stealing the bread from those who have no sea at hand from whence to fetch their food. I cannot pity those fishermen, Elizabeth: I cannot be sorry at this news. Remember, there are places full of a woe, compared with which the vexation of the people you pity is mirth;—chill chambers, where little ones have no heart to play, but crowd together to keep warmth in them;—alleys, where the wife, who is no longer wanted at her husband's loom, holds out her hand for the alms which her brave-souled husband has not the courage to ask;—hearths, where the mechanic sits with his arms by his side, looking into the empty grate, and thinking of stirring times gone by. When the wife comes in with this news, gathered from the street-talkers, he will leap up, look to his loom, and play with his shuttle as a child with a new toy. Hope will warm his heart from that moment,—hope will be in his face when he hurries out to hear if the news be true,—hope will be in his speech when he returns. These, multitudes of these sufferers, are they whom I have pitied; and for them, therefore, you must let me now be glad.”

END OF THE FIRST PART.

W. Clowbs, Stamford etreet.

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PREFACE.

Some of my correspondents will not be surprised at the notice I find myself compelled to give, that I shall henceforward take in no unpaid letters, directed in an unknown handwriting, which have not the name of the writer superscribed. The tax of postage for anonymous flattery or abuse is one to which I cannot be expected to submit.

As for the other tax,—on time,—thus imposed on myself and others, it may supersede some of it to declare, once for all, that no appeals to me, whether made in print or by letter, anonymous or avowed, have or shall have any effect upon me, unless they are addressed to my reason. If my arguments are open to refutation, I shall be thankful to have them refuted. If my views are founded on a false or narrow induction, the most acceptable as well as the truest kindness will be to show me where lies the error or deficiency. As an illustrator of truth, it behaves me to listen, with the utmost respect, to applications like these; but, as a vowed servant of the people, I am not at liberty to attend to appeals to my individual interests, whether presented in the form of evil prognostications, of friendly cautions, or of flattery, gross or refined.

What I have just said is applicable to only a few individuals, to some of whom I owe gratitude for kind intentions, and towards others of whom I feel more concern than resentment. To those to whom my work has been, in my own heart, dedicated from the beginning,—the people,—I have only to say that their generous appreciation of my object is so effective a support and stimulus, that nothing troubles me but a sense of the imperfection of my service; and that the most precious of my hopes is, that I may become capable of serving them with an ability which may bear some proportion to the respect with which I regard their interests.

H. M.

THE LOOM AND THE LUGGER.
PART II.

Chapter I.

THE COOPERS AT HOME.

A fine spring shower was falling one May morning, in 1826, when Mrs. Cooper, the weaver's wife, was busily engaged in dusting her husband's loom, taking advantage of the interval between the finishing of tile piece with which he was now gone to his employer, and the beginning of the new one which he expected to bring home. Many weavers are as averse to dusting and cleaning taking place in their peculiar department as the most slovenly bookworm. They appear to believe that a canopy of cobwebs sheds as important an influence on their work as the student expects from the midnight lamp. Old Short was one of these, and Mrs. Cooper, therefore, thought

herself fortunate in his absence at the same time, and on the same errand with her husband. She might not only clean her husband's loom in peace, but have a touch at the old man's, in the hope that the removal of some elis of cobweb, and an ample measure of dust, might escape his notice. Having opened the windows wide to admit the air freshened by the pattering shower, she sang to her baby,—still so called, though now nearly three years old,—encouraging, from time to time, the imperfect imitations of the child as he stood pulling buttercups to pieces at a chair, and cramming the remains through holes in its rush bottom. There were hopes that the child would, at some future day, be perfect in this song, for Short sang it from morning till night; and, when he was absent, Mrs. Cooper unconsciously took it up as often as she looked towards his end of the room. She was very tired of hearing it, too; but it was such a good exchange for the grumblings of former years, that she never found fault with the melody, and made up her mind to hear it hourly for the few years old Short might have to live.

But why had he left off grumbling? For a reason which does not prevail with all grumblers,—that he had nothing to complain of. For two years Mr. Culver had given him constant employment, and paid him well; and he heard so much on all sides of the great relief to the manufacturers from the reduction of the duties on raw silk,—a reduction permitted in order to prepare the manufacturers for a fair competition with the French when the prohibition of foreign silks should cease,—that he became less confident in his predictions that the trade would be found to be ruined; that the French would carry all before them; and that the last days of Spitalfields' industry were approaching. He had so often emphatically taken his neighbours to witness that he was weaving his last piece, and been presently found weaving another, that he had now let the subject drop, and adopted the more cheerful saying, “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” This served his purpose very well, though he would have found it difficult, if questioned, to point out what evil he proposed thus philosophically to endure. In summer, to be sure, it was sometimes hot; and the days went on to grow dark early in winter; but the Coopers were kind to him, and able, through their own prosperity, to take good care of him. The child was readily admitted to be any thing but a plague; and with fifteen shillings a-week wherewith to answer his own small wants, the old man was not only abundantly supplied for the present, but had been able to accomplish one or two objects which he had long had at heart. His burial money was safely laid by; and he had bought a venerable Bible, which had been discovered by a neighbour lying on a book-stall, with his grandmother's birth entered on the fly-leaf. Short could not read; but he was uneasy as long as this Bible lay on the stall, liable to be tossed about without any pretence of consideration for his grandmother's name. Here it was now, deposited on the highest shelf of the cupboard, so that there was no fear of the child getting to it before he should be sixteen, unless on a Sunday morning, when it was regularly taken down to be dusted. As it was immediately replaced, however, being far too valuable to be read out of, it was not likely to receive any harm at the hands of the baby. With all present needs amply supplied, and provision being made for his body and his Bible being disposed of as they ought to be, it was certainly much more reasonable that Short should sing than grumble.

“Look, look, Ichabod! See how the rain pours down! Look at the shining bright raindrops, my pretty one!” said Mrs. Cooper, as she threw open another lattice, and cast a glance into the morsel of garden-ground behind.—“Cock-a-doodle-do! How the cock shakes off the wet. Come, my pet, come and see the cocks and hens in the shower; and the tulips! O, the fine tulips! How soon they will blow after this rain. Come, Ichabod, come, see the tulips!”

Instead of toddling across the room in answer to his mother's call, as usual, the child set up a cry of terror, not without cause. In thrusting his green and yellow leaves into the holes of the rush-bottomed chair, he had pushed his hand through, and was a fast prisoner till his mother released him. When this was done, and it only remained to appease him, he was taken to the window to call for the gipsyman to come and mend the poor chair. Long did mother and child call, in mimickry of each other, and no gipsy-man appeared; but instead of him, old Short and the two neighbours, who also wove in this room, all seeming very angry.

“Make haste in from the wet, Mr. Short,” cried the house-wife from the window “and bring the neighbours in with you for shelter till the shower is over. 'Tis a fine pelting spring shower.”

And Mrs. Cooper set down the child at a chair which had no holes, while she hastily put out of sight her duster and brush, that Short's evident ill-humour might not be increased by the appearance of any preparation for cleaning.

“You are welcome, neighbours,” said she to one after another, as their heads emerged from the darkness of the winding staircase. “Plenty of room: room for twice as many, the looms being all empty at this time. 'Tis a curious chance that the looms should be all four quiet at once; but——”

“It will be a more curious chance when they are all going again,” observed Rogers, one of the neighbours.

“Aye, aye,” replied old Short, “I, for one, have wove my last piece.”

“Why, dear me, Mr. Short, have you got to saying that again? Only think how often you have said that, and, bless God! it has never come true.”

“'Tis true enough now, however,” he replied. “There is hardly a master that will give out a cane to-day. There's nothing doing, nor never will be, while those cursed French are on the face of the earth.”

“I thought you told me there was no more fear of them? I thought you were delighted at what the government ordered about the lengths of their pieces,—that none should come here of the lengths that we knew they had woven? I remember you rubbed your hands over that news till the child laughed again.”

“Aye, that sounded all very well; but government can't, or won't, prevent those goods coming, though they are prohibited. The French are as hard at work as ever, weaving silks of the new lengths, and the other goods are pouring in all along the coast, by

means of the smugglers. There is more smuggled silk in the market now than ever was known before, and——”

“But it will soon be all sold and gone; and besides, in two months the law will let them in, so as to allow people to buy them fairly; and then there will be an end of the smuggling, they say.”

“Never tell me! By that time, the new goods that are now on their looms will be ready. No, no; it will just be as it has always been with the Spitalfields weaver. Heaven and earth try together which can spite him most.”

“Well, now, Mr. Short, I must think it is hardly right to say so. We have had our share of troubles, to be sure; but every thing that could be done seems to me to have been thought of. You should remember how long we were especially favoured as to wages.”

“And much good it did us! Can you deny that at that very time all our best orders went to Paisley and Macclesfield, while we ought to have had our hands full, as not being such mushroom folks as they? Can you deny, that people next took it into their heads to wear cottons, so that in one winter four thousand looms stood idle? You” may not remember the winter of seventy-three: it was before your time, I fancy; but there was the hand of God upon the people, if anywhere: poor starving creatures lying about on the door-sills, too weak to get home, when they had been out for the chance of an alms. But even that was nothing to the distress of fifteen and sixteen, which I suppose you do not pretend to forget.”

“Forget it! no,” replied Mrs. Cooper, with a mournful shake of the head. “That was the year my poor father died; and mother and I thought he might have lived longer (though he had worn himself out at his loom) if we could have nourished him better, and let him hear the cheerful sound of the loom. Then it was that he advised me to set to work and qualify myself for a service, instead of remaining a weaver; he repenting, as he said, that he had brought me up to an occupation that wears the spirits by its changes as much as the body by its toils. No; I do not forget that winter; but I should be sorry to say any thing about spiting the Spitalfields weavers, for I am sure every thing was done for us that charity could do.”

“Well, but I don't like charity, for my part; it is not the same thing as earning, and being beholden to no man.”

“Why, that's true; but you have been beholden to no man of late. You have earned to your heart's content for a long time past, without interruption from God or man, Mr. Short.”

“Not without spite from man, mistress. Do you forget my being forbidden to keep pigeons these last eighteen months? There was nothing in the world I cared about like my pigeons: and now, since these many new houses, with wonderful good windows, have been built, I must send away my birds, lest they should break a pane.”

“You should forgive that, in consideration of your neighbours having more air and light. Yon very houses, new and with sashed windows, should show you that times are improved, Mr. Short.”

“Lake, the builder, will hardly tell you that they are,” observed Dickens, the weaver. “You should have seen him just now, holding forth to us about how we have all been deceived. When every thing looked so bright two years ago, he began to build, thinking there could never be houses enough for all the weavers that would be wanted; and now, Culver gives out scarcely a cane, and where is Lake to get his rents?”

“Has not my husband got a cane?” asked Mrs. Cooper, with a faltering voice.

“Not he, I warrant,” replied Short; “and neither Dickens nor I want our looms; so there is six shillings a week, besides work, struck off from you at once. And now, mistress, I suppose you will leave off being thankful for nothing, as you are so ready to be.”

Mrs. Cooper made no other answer than taking up little Ichabod, who was holding up his forefinger, and saying “hark!” to a noise in the street. When it came nearer, he did not like it, and his under lip began to project, and his innocent chin to wrinkle for a cry. His mother chattered to him to send away his fears, though she did not like what she heard any better than he.”

Tramp, tramp, came many feet, and the buzz of voices rose and sank. Some hundreds must have passed, before every casement in the house was opened for the inmates to peep out. A sudden gleam of sun which came out diverted the child's attention; and when he stretched out his hand, with an impatient cry, to snatch the raindrops that trembled and glistened from the eaves, every man of the crowd below looked up as he passed. They might any where have been known for weavers by the projecting eyes and narrow shoulders which distinguish the tribe, and yet more by the shuffling step with which they slopped through the pools, with feet whose accustomed motion was on the treadles of the loom. The pallid gloom which sat on their faces was a less peculiar characteristic; it belongs equally to the sinewy miner, the stout ploughman, and the withered operative, when want is at their heels, and they believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is the word of tyrants which has set it on to dog them.

“Holla, there! where are you marching?” cried Dickens from the window. “Where is Cooper?” he inquired, perceiving that Mrs. Cooper's glance was wandering over the crowd, and that she had checked herself when about to ask for him, fearing, no doubt, that he might not like to be called out from among his companions by a woman's voice. Every man looked round him, and no Cooper came out.

“He is not there, my mistress,” said Dickens, seizing his hat, and clattering down the narrow stairs to join the mob. “I must just go and see what is doing; and you will get news from your husband before I come back, I'll be bound.”

There seemed to be a halt at the end of the street, and Short and Mrs. Cooper, who were now left to their mutual conjectures, emulated each other in leaning out of the window, to see what was to happen next.

“Dad, dad, dad,” said young Ichabod presently, kissing the palm of his hand, as was his wont when his father came in sight from abroad.

“Why, there's my husband! and I never saw him all this time,” cried Mrs. Cooper, hastening to go down to him as he stood with folded arms, leaning against the door-post below.—All he could tell was that he feared some mischief would happen. There had been discontent for some little time; the worst hands being turned off one week, and more and more by degrees, till now, when many of the best had been sent home without the expected employment. There was great anger against the masters, and, above all, against the Frenchman. Cooper fancied they were about to call him to account, from the stand the crowd seemed to be making near his house.

“But, John, what are we to do?”

“Why, we must get on without that six shillings a-week, till our neighbours have work again. I must work a little harder, that is all.”

To her surprise and delight, Mrs. Cooper now perceived that her husband had lodged just within the door the cane that she had been assured had been denied him. He, happier than his neighbours in being a better workman, had employment; and his wife could spare a good-natured smile at Short's propensity to make the worst of everything, and also some sympathy for he Frenchman.—She should be sorry if any harm came to him, far away as the young ladies, his sisters, were from their friends. It was a pity they came, to be sure, interfering with Englishmen's proper business; but they seemed to conduct themselves very well——

“Except in the point of his picking out the best weavers, and getting them from the other manufacturers,” observed Cooper. “He would fain have had me; but I told Mr. Culver he might depend upon me, as I have too much spirit to leave an English master for a foreign one.”

“Besides that, you would hardly know what to make of his new sorts of looms and patterns. They would not come easy to your hand.”

“For that matter,” replied Cooper, “I am not above learning anything new, even from a Frenchman; and I have some curiosity to find out how they manage a certain thing that I have been trying after these two years. I shall try and try again, for I don't want to come out at last a worse weaver than Cook.”

“You a worse weaver than Cook!” exclaimed the wife. “I should like to see the day when that will happen, John Cooper.”

Cooper smiled and reminded his wife how much easier it is to improve one's craft when put in the way by a knowing person, than when one has to find it out for one's

self. Nevertheless, as Culver had been a good master to him, he would continue to work for him, if the Frenchman offered him the weight of his first piece in gold.

“This much,” continued Cooper, “I am willing to do for Culver: but as to anything more, I am for letting a man have fair play, be he French or be he English. I would not persecute any man for choosing to settle in one place rather than another, whatever I might think about its being better for him to remain in his own country.”

“Do you think Culver encourages the people against the Frenchman?”

“Not one of the masters likes him; and indeed he does steal their trade very fast.”

“Aye, just at present; but his secrets will soon get abroad; and others will manufacture as well as he; and then they ought to thank him for teaching them.”

“May be they will then: but they don't now. Not that Culver would lift his hand and say, ‘Burn down that man's house;' but he would ather not hear him praised as his own weavers praise him.”)

“They praise everything about him but his odd speech. What a misfortune 'tis that he cannot speak English as we do!”

M. Gaubion, the gentleman in question, daily thought so too. He could make his way, as to language, very well with educated persons; but the dialect of his weavers puzzled him perpetually. His foreman acted as interpreter; but in his absence, M. Gaubion, who at Lyons had been thought to be very accomplished in the English language, found that he could not understand one word in ten that was said to him. The case was made worse by his being a timid man, and fully alive to all the peculiarities of his situation, without being able to make light of them as some of the gayer tempered of his countrymen would have done.

On the present occasion, M. Gaubion was taken by surprise; and unintelligible as the yells of an English mob were likely to be to him at any time, there was no chance of his understanding them amidst the conflict of feelings under which he now listened to them. The word “Macclesfield” alone struck his ear as familiar, and he comprehended from it that the people disapproved of the proceedings of his firm in that place, where he believed he had been doing what must be acceptable in employing some hundreds of people in throwing and manufacturing silk. He knew that building had been going on, through the stimulus given by his demand for labour, and that which had arisen in other quarters, partly through rivalship of himself, partly from an uncontrolled spirit of speculation, and, yet more, because the silk trade was really, on the whole, in an improving condition. He wanted to explain to the crowd that one thousand new houses had been demanded by advertisement in Maccles-field, the year before, and that from four to five thousand apprentices had been wanted about the same time; and that if, after this tremendous state of activity, manufacturers found their business slack for a time, it was hard to lay the blame on him of what had resulted from their own extravagant speculations. It was wronging him to suppose that his concern, however flourishing, could swallow up all others, or that he had any more to do with the

temporary distress at Macclesfield or in Spitalfields than at Coventry, where there were thousands out of employment at this very time.—M. Gaubion could find no words, however, at the critical moment; and if he had, they could scarcely have been heard while the builder, who could not get his rents, was haranguing, and the disappointed weavers were shouting, and the envious manufacturers on the outskirts of the mob were grumbling about the favour shown to Frenchmen by an unpatriotic government. There was nothing to be done but to throw down among the crowd the newspaper containing the advertisements about houses and apprentices, and to trust to the sense of the people to discover what it was that they were to make out from the proceeding.

The constables now arrived and inspired him with more confidence in their staves than he had in the good sense of the people. Stragglers fell off from the main body in all directions, till nobody chose to stay to be marked as disposed for a riot. They left the foreigner wondering in hm-self.

“What is it that these people would have? I employ hundreds of them, and they complain. 1 teach them my superior art, and they are jealous. If I were to employ but twenty where I employ a hundred, they would complain yet more. If we Frenchmen kept the secrets of our manufacture, these English would nourish a still stronger jealousy. What is it that they would have?”

This was just the question which Mrs. Cooper had ready for her husband to answer, when he returned, newspaper in hand, from M. Gaubion's house.

“They want a steady, uniform demand,” was his reply; “which neither M. Gaubion, nor any one else, can ensure them, unless they could give them masters with cool and sound heads, and find some broom that would sweep away the mischiefs that remain from old bad plans. How is M. Gaubion, or any one else, to prevent the slackness which comes of building a thousand new houses to hold five thousand new apprentices in one town?—of which you may read in this paper. And if we are so jealous of the French goods as by law to declare all of a wrong length which are made ready to be sold here as soon as they are allowed to be brought in, how is Gaubion, or any one else, to prevent the smuggling of those goods? What we want is a little prudence on the part of the government and the masters, and a little patience on that of the men.”

“Aye, patience!” cried Short. “Patience enough wanted to hear you talk! Here you have been preaching prudence and patience these ten years; and all for what? Can anything make the silk trade prosper?”

“It has prospered, for two years past, only rather too vehemently,” replied Cooper. “If the masters had let it grow a little more gradually, all would have been right: and all will be right yet, if we have but a little patience, as I said before.”

“You have no reason for saying that, in the face of all experience.”

“I have reason;—and that from experience. The demand for thrown silk is greater than ever it was; and if that is not a good sign, I don't know what is. Nearly twice as much thrown silk is imported now as there was when the trade was most protected; and our throwsters at home find a demand for a million of pounds more than was needed two years ago. Now what is this silk all wanted for but to be woven? and, depend upon it, Mr. Short, you will have your share.”

“Aye, when, I wonder? You talk as if I were a young man, instead of an old fellow who can't wait for his bread till new-fashioned schemes are tried, and the old ones found to be best. When, I say?”

“When we make trial of fair play between nation and nation; which will be after next July.”

“And here is May now,” observed Mrs. Cooper. “If no more silk is to be smuggled after July, Mr. Short, you will soon be at your loom again. I wish I could think that the French gentleman would be comfortable after that time; but I fear the feeling against him is too strong to go down so soon.”

“That is the worst of such feelings ever being allowed to grow up,” replied her husband. “However we may talk about being on free, and fair, and friendly terms of competition with the French after July, I doubt whether we shall be willing to make the experiment really a fair one, as if we belonged all to one country.”

“Why, John,” said his wife, “even you would not work for the foreigner so soon as for your old employer. You were saying so this very morning.”

John muttered something about its being a different thing countenancing Frenchmen in their proper country and in one's own neighbourhood; but he could not give a very satisfactory account of what he meant. He ended by hoping that there would be room, in the world of production for everybody; and that all would find out where it was easiest to get what all wanted, that each, whether English, French, or Chinese, might be employed to furnish what he could provide most easily and cheaply, and all help one another. If this were done, all might perhaps be well furnished with necessaries and comforts; and, if not, their privations would not be made more bitter by the jealousies which God's children now nourished against one another.

Short was sure the only way to have peace and quiet was to go on in the old way.

“What shall we make of you, my boy?” cried Cooper, catching up the child for a romp, before beginning the arduous task of putting his new piece into the loom. “What shall we make of you, child? Will you be a little weaver?”

The boy immediately began stamping with his tiny foot, and reaching out his hand for the shuttle.

“Why, look!” cried his delighted mother. “He is pretending to weave already. Aye; that is the way, my boy. Tread, tread! That is the way. Will Ichabod be a weaver, like father?”

“In steadier times than his father lived in, I hope,” said Cooper. “Hey, boy? Will you weave like a Frenchman, Ichabod, so that your loom may be as busy as a Frenchman's?”

“And carry an English heart in your breast, dear, all the time?” added old Short.

“Without hating the foreigners,” observed Mrs. Cooper. “We must teach him, John, that there is room in the wide world for all.”

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Chapter II.

MATTERS OF TASTE.

Though M. Gaubion was himself too shy to be very eager about the society of his neighbours, he had no wish to place any restraint upon the inclination of his household for intercourse, not only with the families to whom they had brought special introductions, but with those whose near residence tempted to an acquaintance. Mr. Culver and he merely exchanged bows and slight greetings when they passed; but that was no reason why Mr. Culver's daughters, who met his little sister Adele at children's parties, should not be her companions at other times; nor why Mademoiselle Gaubion, the elder sister, and his housekeeper, should not indulge her hospitable disposition, and make as many friends as she could.

It was a great mortification to this lady to see her brother looked coldly upon by those who ought, she believed, to be capable of appreciating his manifold merits: but she conceived that this coldness would only be increased by her becoming reserved also; and that the best justice and kindness to him was to endeavour to interest those whom he could not exert himself to propitiate. She made herself popular for his sake, and earnestly hoped in time to see her own popularity merge in his. Mr. Culver already pronounced her a very amiable and accomplished young person, and declared himself happy in allowing Charlotte and Lucy to visit Adèle, though nurse was somewhat lofty in her way of talking about the freedom which the foreigners were so ready to use with her young ladies.—The time had been when a sentence from nurse would have settled the matter any way she chose; but the girls were growing up now to an age when it was proper to consult them about their undertakings and pleasures; and nurse had never been what she once was since the loss of her son. She was more prejudiced and more peevish than ever, and had, therefore, lost much of her authority over her master as well as her charges. As she did not choose herself to lift the knocker of a Frenchman's door, there was nothing for it but to order Susan to go with the girls instead.

Before Charlotte and Lucy had been long seated, they were observed to be exchanging looks and whispering about something which stood on a table at one end of the room.

“My flowers! You envy me my flowers,” said Mademoiselle Gaubion. “Smell them then. Are they not sweet as they are full blown?”

Not all the politeness which Charlotte could muster enabled her to say that the smell was very sweet. Instead of white-thorn, mignionette, and carnation, the perfume was rather that of musk. She caught Mademoiselle Gaubion's hand in the midst of its flourishes to and from her nostrils, and obtained a close view of the bouquet. It was artificial.—Lucy agreed with her that neither had ever before seen such artificial flowers; and it was long before they were tired of placing them in various lights, and

trying how easy it would be to deceive nurse and their youngest sister as they had themselves been deceived. Harriet Breme would hardly wear her lily of the valley any more if she could see these. She might look through her father's stock many times before she would find any so fresh looking,—so very natural.

In a little while, Mademoiselle Gaubion observed, such flowers as these might be had in every shop in London where such goods were sold. In July——

"O, that is when French silks may be had, papa says. But these flowers cannot be made of silk."

Mademoiselle Gaubion explained that the cocoons of silk-worms were used for these flowers, and showed how they were painted and embroidered into the semblance of real flowers. She offered to teach Charlotte how to make them, if it was thought worth while. Charlotte thought it would be well worth while, as all flowers except such coarse-daubed bunches as she did not like to wear, cost a great deal of money.

Adèle also had yet to learn. She had had plenty of flowers for her doll's robe and turban at Lyons; but she had bought them, as they cost next to nothing there.

"Ah," said Lucy, "we were wondering how some French things can be made so cheap. Nurse has a beautiful box that her son got somehow from France, and it cost only a shilling. He told her so, for fear she should think he had done an extravagant thing. There is a glass at the bottom; and the sides are of pink paper, beautifully plaited; and there is an enamelled picture of the Virgin and St. Somebody; and round the picture, the prettiest wreath of flowers;—tiny roses and forget-me-not, and yellow buds and green leaves between. It is a large box,—as large as my hand; and it cost only a shilling. The flowers alone would cost two, papa says, if "we ordered such to be made here."

"We would show you that box," said Charlotte, "but that we do not like to ask nurse now for anything that her poor son gave her. She can think of nothing but him all the day after, if we do."

"Poor nurse! has her son left her?" asked Mademoiselle Gaubion.

"O, he died,—and so shockingly! It is more than two years ago now; but nurse is as grieved as ever when anything puts her in mind of it. It was so dreadful for the first few days,—before it was known exactly what had become of him! Nurse would not believe he was dead; and she was always saying that the smugglers had carried him out to sea, and sold him for a sailor, like somebody she once heard about. She was sure he would come back one day, either a rich India merchant, or begging at the door,—or somehow. And then, when the next letter came——"

"Did it tell? Was he dead?"

"O yes. Papa would not let us tell Maria, for fear of its making her afraid to go to bed; and I believe he did not mean us elder ones to know; but nurse set us to ask my brother Robert; for she never believed that papa had told her everything. Do you

know, when they had shot him dead, they put his body into a cavern in the cliff, on the top of a flight of steps, and sitting us so that he looked as if he was alive, the first moment they found him."

"But O, what do you think put it into their heads to look for him there?" interrupted Lucy. "They saw two cliff-ravens fly out when somebody went near the cavern; and then they knew that there must be a body there."

Lucy stopped short at a sign from her sister, who thought the rest of the story too horrible to *be* told. Since Adèle could not make out by any mode of cross-questioning, what these further particulars were, she wanted next to know what caused Nicholas to be murdered. Her sister explained to her, with so much feeling, the nature of the service on which he had been engaged, and showed so much concern at his fate, that Lucy said, half to herself, and looking wistfully at Mademoiselle Gaubion,

"I shall tell nurse how sorry you are."

"Tell her, if it can comfort her to have the sympathy of a stranger."

"A stranger,—a foreigner," repeated Lucy, still half to herself.

"I said a stranger, not a foreigner," replied Mademoiselle, smiling. "As long as it is a stranger who sympathizes, what matters it whether she be native or foreign?"

"Nurse thinks," replied Charlotte, "that French people are not sorry when any harm comes to those who try to prevent their smuggling. She was saying this morning——"

Another sign from Charlotte.

"Tell me what she said," replied Mademoiselle, smiling in a way which emboldened Lucy to proceed.

"She said she did not want to have anybody in the neighbourhood that had helped to murder her son; and that every French person had helped to murder him, because it was the trying to get in French goods that made all the mischief."

"Nurse does not know, perhaps, that the French suffer no less than the English in this kind of struggle. Frenchmen are sometimes thrown overboard into the sea, or shot on the shore. Frenchmen run the risk of losing their goods; and in such a contention, I am afraid it sometimes happens that a Frenchman hates an Englishman."

"What! for smuggling each others' goods? If they want each others' goods, why do not they buy and sell them at once, without loss and fighting and cheating and murder?"

"Are you French really sorry about smuggling?" asked Lucy. "Because, if you are——"

"You may see in a moment that my brother is sorry. Why else should he leave his country, and come to live here? he comes to make silk here which may be sold without cheating and fighting."

"And if papa went to Lyons, would the people there be glad or sorry to see him?"

"If he went to make silks, they would not be either particularly glad or sorry, because the people at Lyons make silks better than your papa, or any other Englishman, knows how to make them yet. But if your papa went to make cotton goods, or knives and scissors, or if he set up iron works, they would be very glad to have him; for all these things are made by the English better than by the French."

"Then you would get artificial flowers ' or so cheap that you need not make them yourselves," added Adèle: "and you would have silk frocks, like the Bremes; for the prettiest silk frocks cost twelve or fourteen shillings less there than here."

Charlotte thought she should like to go to Lyons; it would be such a saving of money; and she thought the Lyons people must like coming to London, if they could get things made of iron, and steel, and cotton, cheaper than in France. Adèle proposed that there should be a general change; that all the Lyons people should come to London, and as many Londoners go to Lyons. As it was plain, however, that this would leave matters just where they were at first, as the French could not bring their silk-worms from the south with them, nor the English carry their iron mines on their backs, the simple expedient occurred to the young ladies of the inhabitants sending their produce freely to one another, instead of wandering from home to produce it.

"If the French would send me my silk," observed Charlotte, "I might save my fourteen shillings here just as well as at Lyons; and if I had to pay a little for the bringing, some Lyons girl would pay papa for the sending of the cotton gowns she would buy of him. What a capital bargain it would be for us both! Do not you think so, Mademoiselle?"

"I do; but there are many who do not. When some of our French rulers wished that our people should save their money by buying your cottons where they could be had cheapest, our people were frightened. They sent and told the king that France was ready to bathe his throne with her tears in agony at the idea of buying English goods so easily: and now, you know, some of you English are just as much alarmed at being allowed to get silks cheaper than you can make them."

"But it is so very silly!" exclaimed Charlotte. "Such people might as well prefer paying five shillings for a bad bouquet to paying half-a-crown for a pretty one, like that. I do not see why they should give away money to bad flower-makers at that rate."

"Especially when the bad flower-makers might get more money still by doing something which they could do much better. Yet this is just the way that Buonaparte made his people waste their money, some time ago. He would not let them have sugar and coffee from the places where they could be had best and cheapest, but would try

to produce them at home. He made people press out the juice of carrots and beet-root, and whatever tasted sweet, as the sugar cane will not grow in France; and, with a world of trouble, they made a little sugar; but it was far too dear for many people to buy. They tried to make tea of many kinds of herbs, and coffee of bitter and burnt roots; while, all this time, there was plenty of tea in China, and sugar and coffee in the West Indies."

"I would have left off all those things, if I might not have had them properly," said Charlotte.

Lucy thought it would be very hard to be so stinted by any man's caprice and jealousy; and she saw that the saving would be only in one way, after all. The French might save the money they were bidden to spend on dear sugar and bad tea, but they would still lose the opportunity of selling the goods of their own manufacture which the Chinese and the West Indians would have taken in return for their tea and sugar. It was very odd of Buonaparte not to see that his plan caused a loss in every way.—Mademoiselle thought that he did see this; but that he did not mind the loss to his own people, provided he made the English suffer. She had nothing to say for the good-nature of this; but who thought of good-nature when kings go to war, with the express purpose of ruining one another as fast as possible, while they each boast that God is on their side? She remembered that her father admired Buonaparte as much as anybody could; but even her father could not thank him for making many of the necessaries and comforts of life so dear as to prevent his getting on in the world. She remembered the day when the news came that foreign trading was to go on again. Her father found himself able then to make her brother Marc a farmer. Marc had long wished to be a farmer; but his father had not had the power to do anything for him while much of his money was swallowed up in the consumption of things which were only to be had dear and bad as long as the ports were shut.

"I suppose," said Charlotte, "that must have been the case with many people besides your father. Everybody that kept house must have saved as soon as the ports were opened. I wonder what they did with their savings!"

"Madame Mairon began to dress her daughters in the prettiest English muslins that ever were seen. All Lyons began to admire those girls, though some complained that they spent their money on foreign goods. But I am sure they laid out a great deal on native ribbons and lace at the same time, which they could not have afforded if tea and sugar had been as high as ever. Then there were the Carillons. They set up a hundred more looms directly; and every body called them proud and speculative; but the looms are still busy, I fancy."

"Ah, that is the worst of it," observed Charlotte. "While their looms are going, ours are standing still."

"Not *because* theirs are going. Witness my brother's. The Carillons made silks for many countries, but not for England; for they have never smuggled, I believe. When your father's weavers see the goods the Carillons will send over, after next July, they may learn to weave as well; and then your father may sell as many; for there will be

more people to wear silks every year, in proportion as more countries send us goods, and want some in return. There is plenty of room in the world for your father, and my brother, and the Carillons."

"I wish," said Adèle, "you would show Lucy the shells M. Carillon gave you."

"What sort of shells?" Lucy asked: and for an answer she was shown into a room at the rear of the house, which was unlike any room she had ever seen before. One side of it was occupied by cases of stuffed birds, some from all the four quarters of the world. There were other curiosities in great abundance, less captivating to young eyes than gold-dropped African partridges, and burnished American humming-birds; but the shells transcended the most brilliant of the winged creatures. Speckled, streaked, polished, they were held before the eye. Fluted, indented, ribbed in waving lines, they were examined by the touch. Murmuring, they were held to the delighted ear. There was no end of admiring the pearly hues of some, the delicate whiteness of others, and the fantastic forms of those which lay in the centre of the cabinet.

"So M. Carillon gave you these shells!"

"Some of them. Those in the compartment that Lucy is looking at. M. Carillon's sons have not quite all the world to themselves to trade in; though they do sell their father's goods on many shores. When your brothers grow up to be merchants, and sell your father's silks in many countries, they will bring you shells as beautiful as these, if you ask them."

"I should like a parrot better," said Lucy.

"I should like some plums and chocolate, like those that Pierre had sent him from South America," observed Adèle.

"Well, anything you please," replied Mademoiselle. "Only let the nations be in good humour with one another, and we may all have what we like. I know I should never have possessed this pretty museum if Jean Carillon had not been trading to India, and fallen in with these shells; and there is not a museum in Paris that will not be improved, year by year, as our ships go into new countries, and bring fresh curiosities for us to study and admire."

"But I suppose these shells cost a great deal; and the birds, too?"

"They do at present, because it is a sort of new taste, and very little pains have been taken to gratify it. But there are shells enough in the deep and wide Indian seas to furnish the cabinets of the world; and there are birds enough in the western forests and gardens to show every child in our close cities what beautiful creatures God has made to flutter in his hottest sunshine. The taste will be sure to spread, as it is for the good of everybody that it should spread. Many natives of foreign countries who now lie dozing on the burning shores, trying to forget their hunger and not to regard the heats, will dive into the green sea for the beautiful things that are hidden there. They will be up and busy when they see European ships on the horizon, and sing as they sit

polishing and preparing the curiosities which are to bring them bread for their children, and raise a roof over their own heads."

"But we must pay for these curiosities," objected Lucy. "We must pay very high; and I think that is not fair, when birds can be had for the catching, and shells by being just taken out of the sea."

"When those days come, my dear, we shall pay what will be a high price to those natives, but a low one to us. People in their country will begin to wish for our curiosities, as we wish for theirs. A savage gave this noble shell, as large as my hand, and more finely veined than any marble in the world, for six nails; and when that savage's children grow a little more civilized than we are now, they will give another such shell for a square inch of your Derbyshire lead ore, or half-a-dozen dried English plants. Then the drying of plants here, and the diving for shells there, will be a business which will support a family; and both countries will be wiser and happier than they were before, by having obtained something new to study and admire."

"I think," said Adele, "that people will not know, till that time, all that they might and should know of what God has made for them."

"They will certainly not know all the happiness that God has made for them, till they share as equally as possible what He has given to each; whether it be that which belongs to sea, air or earth, or the produce of man's skill. Whatever any country produces best, that let it exchange for what other countries produce best. Thus will all be best served, and in the best humour with each other."

"If you might choose what you would have from the finest country in the world, what should it be?" asked Lucy of Mademoiselle.

"I should like a great number of things to make our museum more complete. Here are only a few stray treasures."

"But M. Carillon is going to send you something very strange and very valuable," observed Adele. "Something from Egypt, is not it!"

"Yes; and I shall be very glad of whatever he may send me; but he cannot give me what I should like best."

"I know what you mean. You want some plants. Well, perhaps this may be a dried lotus, or the flowering reed of the Nile. His son has been in Egypt; and how do you know that he may not be sending you plants?"

"I should like them alive," replied Mademoiselle. "The potato was brought alive, and it grevv and flourished; and I should like to try whether some of the American shrubs could not be made to grow here. There are some of the Madeira mountain plants which I would rather have than wine and oranges."

“But what would you do with them? There is no room here for such a garden as we had by the river-side at Lyons; and even in a conservatory the plants would get smoked.”

“Why, that is true,” replied Mademoiselle, sighing. “We must be content with our little museum.”

“Are you very fond of plants?” enquired Charlotte. “Then I will take you to two or three of papa's weavers——”

She stopped short, and bit her lip, and Lucy frowned at her. Mademoiselle asked with a smile,

“What of the weavers? Will they show me flowers?”

Charlotte answered constrainedly that the operatives of Spitalfields were very fond of their little gardens, and succeeded in raising beautiful tulips and auriculas.

“O, let us go! It cannot be far, and it is a very fine evening,” said the eager little lady, looking up to the yellow sunshine which streamed in from between two opposite chimneys. Charlotte and Lucy glanced at each other, and neither offered to move.

“Why, my children, is it possible?” cried Mademoiselle, putting a hand on the shoulder of each, and looking them full in the face with a smile. “You are afraid, I see, to introduce me to your father's weavers. You are afraid to tell nurse that you have done so, because poor nurse is jealous of the French gentleman, and his little French sister. Is it not so?”

The girls seemed about to cry. Mademoiselle went on,

“You shall request your father to introduce ms to a florist or two. Meantime, we will ask my brother whether there are such among those whom he employs. My girls, we are of one country now,-—you and I. Why should there be any tormenting, unworthy jealousy? Tell me why.”

Charlotte only knew that some people thought,—some people feared,—it seemed so very natural that manufacturers should get the best weavers from one another.

“So very natural!” exclaimed Mademoiselle. “I tell you, my girl, that my brother, has it not in his nature to feel jealousy of a neighbour; and I tell you also that my brother will in time give good weavers to your father and to all of the same occupation in this neighbourhood. If the suspicion you speak of were natural, it would be for my brother to feel it; yet, I will take you among his men without fear, if we find that they have tulips and auriculas.”

Before Charlotte had quite ventured to look again in Mademoiselle's face, M. Gaubion came in, and gave her the address of several of his men who were as fond of flowers as herself. When she gaily asked him if he was afraid of the Miss Culvers being admitted to intercourse with persons who were working for him, he smiled and

added the address of a woman who was weaving velvet of a particularly curious pattern, which he thought the young ladies might like to see. This woman might have auriculas too, for aught M. Gaubion knew; and the party set out to ascertain the point.

Mrs. Ellis was found at her loom, and over-heard to be scolding lustily till her visitors popped their heads through the pap by which, the stairs opened into the room. Her natural tone of voice was not immediately recoverable, and she spoke in something between a whine and a scream, which suited ill with the languid air with which she hung her head aside, and fumbled with the gilt locket which hung by a worn hair-chain round her neck. She had so much the appearance of an actress of the lowest grade, that Mademoiselle thought there could be no mistake in conjecturing that she had not always pursued her present occupation, nor offence in asking how the confinement suited her health. She had sat at the loom, she said, since she was the age of that boy,—pointing to a lad who had evidently been the object of her wrath. Not that she had had work all that time. O, no! She had suffered her share from want of work. Indeed, it was hard to tell which was worst for the health;—the load on the spirits of having no work, or the fatigue of weaving. If the ladies would believe her, it was a killing occupation. It sat very hard upon her stomach, and her heart turned half round; and her lungs,—O, if they knew what lungs she had!

“You let us know that before we came up to see you,” observed Mademoiselle. “If you think your lungs weak, is it not a pity that you should exert them as you did just now? And, this minute, you spoke much louder than we need trouble you to to.”

“Ah! ma'am, 'tis the way with my voice. When it once gets up, I can't, somehow, get it down again.”

The boy at the loom confirmed this by a sidelong look of great meaning. His mother sighed so as to show a fine remaining capacity of lung, and was about to proceed about her infirm head, and a weak ancle that she had had all her life, when her visitors turned the current of her complaints upon the times. Poor wages! very poor wages! and hard work. It was a bad sort of employment.

“Why, then, do you bring up your children to it? Here are five looms in this room.”

“Yes, ma'am; but only three for my own family. My eldest girl is a filler. Those two farther looms are let to neighbours.”

“And both with work in them, I see. This seems a pretty piece of black silk that your boy is about; and he seems to be doing his work well.”

“Pretty well, ma'am: pretty well, for the time. I thank the Almighty, Tom is a middling boy.”

The little lad had all the appearance of being better than a middling boy. He worked with might and main while the ladies stood by, shouting the shortest possible answers to their questions, amidst the noise of his machine. His mother gave him a smart rap on the head, and asked him where his manners were, to go on with his weaving while the ladies spoke to him. His looks conveyed his apprehension that he should have

been equally found fault with if he had quitted his grasp of his shuttle without leave. He now related that he was twelve years old, had learned to weave three weeks, and had in that time woven sixteen yards, for which he was to have sixpence a-yard. The ladies thought that, in relation to him, his mother's voice ought to be made to come down again, to whatever pitch it might have risen.

“And whose work is this?” asked Charlotte, examining a piece of slight French-white silk, carelessly covered with a brown-looking cloth.

“That's Peggy's,” replied Tom. “She has left it for to-night, to make the beds.”

The girls had observed, as they mounted the stairs, that though there was a green baize on the floor of the room below, a handsome mahogany chest of drawers, a tea-tray with a tiger upon it, and above it two fine pictures,—viz., the Duke of Wellington staring mightily upon his companion, a Madonna, as if meditating war against her child—though all these things testified to the means of comfort being in the house, there existed the deplorable discomfort of unmade beds late in the evening. A curl-papered girl, with a face grimed with dust from her loom, was lazily undrawing the curtains, and about to let in the flesh air for the first time that day. Mademoiselle did not know much about how far money went in this country; but she consulted with Charlotte as to whether the times ought to be called very bad by a family who earned respectively, three, five, ten, and twenty shillings a-week, besides letting two looms at three shillings per week each. Charlotte thought they must be so well off that it would be worth while to spare the second girl from her loom, and give her time to take her hair out of the paper with which it bristled, to make the beds in the cool air of the morning, to new paper the staircase, where tatters hung to gather the dust, revealing the most snug mouse-holes possible; to brush the green baize, polish the tiger, and dust the Duke of Wellington; and, finally, to purify the atmosphere of the weaving-room, by certain appliances which seemed at present not to be dreamed of. But Mrs. Ellis appeared to think that it would be time enough to clean when days of adversity should come.

She resumed her curious velvet weaving, that the young ladies might observe the action of the machinery; in the course of which investigation Adele was sensible of a descent of dust into her mouth as she looked up, and Lucy's cheek was tickled by a floating cobweb. Seeing the one make a grimace, and the other rub her cheek indignantly, Charlotte asked Mrs. Ellis how often she whitewashed. The lady with the locket smiled at the simplicity of such a question, addressed to a weaver; and when asked whether dust did not injure her work, she reached out her hand for a brush which lay near, gave one stroke with a skilful flourish, and looked with a triumphant face through the cloud she had just raised, as if to say, “You see!” Part of the gesture was, however, lost upon her visitors; for Mademoiselle had run to the window on the first hint of what was going to happen; Charlotte was coughing; and Lucy and Adele had their hands before their faces.

Mademoiselle returned, after awhile, to suggest a modest doubt whether it was not better to be without dust, than to brush it from one place that it might fall upon another—into Mrs. Ellis's weak lungs, among other receptacles; but Mrs. Ellis seemed

to agree with old Short, that a loom would be nothing without cobwebs; and all that remained, therefore, was to ask about the auriculas.

Tom brightened up at the word. The poor lad had none to show at home; for his mother had no idea of sparing him time enough to make any use of the small patch of soil behind the house, which presented a fine study of cabbage-stalks and broken crockery to any painter who might happen to be passing by the back lane. But Cooper lived at hand; and Cooper happened to like auriculas, and to think Tom something more than “a middling boy;” and he encouraged him to come at spare minutes, and watch the progress of his friend's gardening; and, moreover, allowed him a corner in which to set a root or two of his own. At the first sign of permission from his mother, Tom now pulled down his wristbands, flung on his coat, and stood, cap in hand, to show the ladies the way.

It was not till the Miss Culvers drew one another's attention to old Short, as his grizzled head was seen from the garden to be moving in his loom, that it occurred to Mademoiselle that she might be trespassing on the premises of their father's weavers, after all. Next popped up at the window the round face of Ichabod, kissing the palm of his hand as he saw his father, though Charlotte flattered herself that this act of courtesy was intended in answer to her nod.

“O dear!” said Mademoiselle, “we are in a forbidden place. Come, Charlotte, come and hear that I am not begging to know any secrets about weaving, but only about flowers: and, Lucy, do you keep beside Adèle; and if she asks any questions that nurse would not like, tell me.”

Cooper laughed, and said that he was the one to learn, instead of communicating secrets to French manufacturers; and Miss Charlotte need not fear his leaving her father's service, as he had told his wife, but a little time ago, that Mr. Culver had been a good master to him, and he was determined to work for him still, if all the foreigners in the world came to settle near. He explained that he meant no incivility by this, offering the choice of some fine roots to Mademoiselle, giving her advice as to the cultivation of them, and inviting her to come whenever she liked to consult him on this matter of mutual taste.

“How is it,” asked Mademoiselle, smiling, “that you will treat a foreigner, as to flowers, as if she was an Englishwoman? Do you forget that I am French, that you thus offer me the choice of your tulips?”

Cooper replied that God had made flowers to grow in all parts of the world as a common possession; and that for people to be jealous of one another's methods of cultivation was a meanness that he, for one, would be ashamed of. He knew that a neighbour of his had wrung off the head of a pigeon of a rare kind, that he might be master of the only pair of that kind in existence; but this was, in his opinion, making sport of God's works, and encouraging bad feelings towards men, in a way which was irreligious, if anything was. If he saw a party of his neighbours' children in the fields, one taking possession of all the violets, and another of all the primroses, and a third of all the buttercups, and preventing those to whom only daisies were left from having

any benefit of what God's hand had scattered for all, he should get his bible, and show them plenty of sayings in it which should make them ashamed of themselves.

“And why not so, likewise, with that which is produced by man?” inquired the lady. “Are not the faculties of man roots from which proceed designs; and are not the fruits of those designs as clearly given for common use in the end as the blossoms which are scattered over the fields and meadows? Let him that gathers call them his; but let him be free to impart when he meets with another who also desires to impart,—free from the interference of authority—free from the envious remarks of those who look on; and if one has more skill than another, let them learn of one another.”

“To be sure, madam: just as I am willing to show you my method with my tulips.”

“And as my brother is willing to improve your silk manufacture. But you will not learn what he has to teach, because he is a foreigner.”

Cooper was willing enough to learn as much as he could find out by examining what was wrought in the Frenchman's loom; but working for him, when English masters were to be had, was altogether a different thing.

One would think, Mademoiselle observed, that God had made the flowers of the field, and that man had made himself, by the distinction thus set up between those possessions which were allowed to be given for the good of all, and those which were proposed to be kept for selfish purposes. Clothing of silk was as much furnished by Providence as the raiment of the field-lilies; and to forbid the transference of the one or the other is to oppress both those who would transfer and those who would receive: it was to condemn violet-gatherers to have nothing but violets, and primrose-lovers to grow tired of primroses; while they would have been made perfectly happy by the mixed garland, whose materials were all within their reach.

Cooper observed that his little Ichabod had grown tired of buttercups lately, and had got the habit of throwing them out of the window. It was sometimes difficult to amuse so young a child, who had no companions at home. He often thought of taking him to the infant school, where the little ones had sham gardens, which it was pretty to look at.

“Let your child carry his lap full of buttercups,” replied Mademoiselle, “and he will exchange them readily for things which he will not throw out of the window; and from this infant traffic we will go and take a lesson in mutual confidence and mutual help.”

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Chapter III.

CHANCK CUSTOMERS.

Nurse Nicholas had met with so much sympathy and kindness from everybody about her since the day when her misfortune was made known to her, that she excited, at length, something like envy in the inferior servants of Mr. Culver's family. They had, at first, offered to make up her mourning for her, and to take the entire charge of the children for a few days, that she might have leisure to grieve alone; and they were making slops, or mixing brandy-and-water for her all day long for the first week,—thinking indulgence a very consoling thing, whether earned by illness of body or pain of mind. Moreover, they had patience with her pettishness for a longer time than could have been expected, observing to one another that it was certainly a very cutting thing to have an only son shot; and that it was enough to make any temper go astray to think of anybody that had done his best for his country being served in such a way. In time, however, when four years had elapsed, they began to feel that the call upon their good-nature and forbearance was more protracted and incessant than was necessary. Nurse had really grown so proud, that it was difficult to keep well with her; and they were tired of seeing the very same look come over her face, and of hearing the very same sigh, whenever there was mention of things which must be mentioned sometimes,—people's sons, for instance, and the sea, and tobacco, and such things. If there was any sort of dispute, in which their master or the young ladies interfered, everybody was sure to be blamed except nurse; and profit came out of her misfortune in other ways, too. They wished they might ever get into such favour with any master or mistress as to have friends to tea as often as nurse had; and all to cry over the story of poor Nicholas, though, to be sure, time was found to talk about plenty of other things before the evening was over. Then, though Nicholas had been a very good son, in respect of sending presents to his mother, out of his pay, the gifts she now had would much more than make up for anything she had lost from that quarter. They could not conceive, for their parts, what she could do with her wages; they only wished they were to expect what she must have to leave. She really could not spend anything, except for the trifles she gave the children on their birthdays. As sure as the year came round, her master presented her with a black gown; and the young ladies bought muslin handkerchiefs and mourning-caps, more than she could use; and Mademoiselle had knitted her a pair of black mits for Sundays, that were quite a curiosity for the knitting. O yes; it was very well to wear mourning from year to year,—longer than she had done for her husband. Nurse would always wear mourning now, as well she might, though they doubted whether she would have had much more comfort of her son, if he had lived, than now; for he could not have been spared often from his duty, and he was always but a poor hand at writing a letter. If a woman was to lose an only son, it could hardly happen in an easier way than it had happened to nurse.

In the midst of some such speculations as these, it happened that nurse accepted a little black shawl from one of the young ladies with unaccountable indifference. There

was nothing for it but to suppose that she was now so accustomed to presents that she thought little of them. But on the next Sunday the matter was differently explained. Nurse appeared in a splendid figured brocade, which had been left her by an aunt, and never altered in the fashion, from there being no materials wherewith to make up any part of it afresh. By dint of a double quantity of muslin handkerchief, and of a long and wide muslin apron, tamboured by herself when at school, the peculiarities of the waist were in part hidden, while enough projected on all sides to show what fine, stout fabrics our fathers could weave. The apparition of nurse, thus attired, appeared on the stairs time enough to allow of all the necessary speculation being gone through before church.

"Papa, papa!" cried Lucy, flying about the house to find her father, who was reading his Sunday paper quietly in the back parlour. "Oh, papa!——"

"Well, my dear. But I wish you would not slam the door."

"I thought nurse was behind, and I did not want her to come in. Oh, papa! have you seen nurse?"

"No, my dear. Is her nose growing out of the window, and over hill and dale, like the wonderful nose in the German story that Maria was telling me?"

"No, no! but she does look so odd in that gay gown that she used to show us for a sight; and just after Charlotte gave her a shawl, too,—a shawl with a border of pretty grey and white pattern, on a black ground. She might have worn Charlotte's shawl a little first."

"She will wear it still, I dare say; and perhaps she thinks she has been in black long enough."

Nurse now came in, with a prim and somewhat sentimental expression of countenance, as if thinking that she ought to change her face with her dress, and scarcely knowing how to set about it. Her master's question soon brought back one of her accustomed modes of looking and speaking.

"You are going-out for the day, I suppose, nurse?"

"Going out, sir! where should I go to? It is for those who have friends and relations to go out visiting; and I have none, except just the Taylors and the Aytons, and old Mr. Martin, and Sukey Street, and a few more. You seem to think I must be always wanting to go out visiting, sir."

"Not at all, nurse. It was only that I saw you were dressed, and I supposed——"

"Dressed! aye, it is time to be dressed when the very nursery-maids make as fine a show *as* their mistresses did twenty years ago. Why, there is Mrs. Mudge's nurse-maid; I curtsied to her last week, knowing the baby, and taking the girl for Mrs. Mudge herself, as I well might do, for she had a prettier Leghorn than ever her mistress wore, and a slate-coloured silk, with leg of mutton sleeves. You may rely

upon it, sir, with leg of mutton sleeves, and a band the same, buckled behind, like a young lady."

"And so you put on something gayer than a slate-coloured silk to outdo her."

"It puts one upon one's dignity, sir, to see such ways in bits of girls sprung up but yesterday. At this girl's age I worked hard enough, I remember, for months together, before I got a chintz, which was thought a great thing in my day."

"And I dare say somebody scolded you for getting it; for chintzes cost as much then as some silks do now. I dare say somebody scolded you, nurse."

"Why, my mistress made me wear black mittens and a white apron with it, to show that I was a servant: which was very proper, though I had no mind to it at the time. *But* as to wearing silk, except on a pincushion, I assure you, sir, I never thought of such a thing."

"Any more than Mrs. Mudge's maid now thinks of dressing in white satin. I dare say not, indeed; for it was as much as any but rich mistresses could do to get silk dresses in your young days."

Nurse hoped her master was not going to object to her wearing silk now, on Sundays and the young ladies' dancing days. When servant-girls took upon them to wear such things as their elders never aspired to, it was time——

"I am not going to object to your wearing silk, nurse, any more than to the nurse-maid you speak of doing the same. The more you both wear, the belter for me."

"Aye, in the sense of your being a manufacturer; but, as the master of a family, sir, you would judge differently."

"Not at all. If there are silk-worms enough in the world to yield silk wherewith to dress every man, woman and child, where is the harm of every man, woman, and child wearing silk, if it pleases them to do so?"

"But the look of it, sir! Think of a girl dressing like her mistress!"

"It is an unfit thing when the girl has not money enough properly to afford such a dress. But if the price falls to a point within her reach, there is no more reason why she should not possess herself of such an one than there would be if she had had money left her wherewith to buy it. Her mistress will forthwith array herself in some more expensive fabric, which, perhaps, none below duchesses had worn till it became cheaper in proportion, as silk had done; and this fabric will, in its turn, descend within the reach of servants, till Mrs. Mudge's maid may, in her old age, be as much surprised at the array of the young girls of that time as you now are at people of her rank wearing silk."

"But, papa," objected Lucy, "what are the ladies to do all this time? Must duchesses go on inventing expensive things to wear, or else dress like their maids?"

"There will be always plenty of people able and willing to save the duchesses the trouble of inventing," replied her papa. "We have not yet seen half of what human ingenuity may do in the way of inventing comforts and discovering beauties. If you could pop into the world again a few hundred years hence, you might chance to find every African between the tropics dressed in clear muslin, and every Laplander comfortably muffled in superfine scarlet or blue cloth."

"And what would our duchesses wear then, papa?"

"Something which we cannot guess at; and which to them would appear more beautiful and convenient than was ever invented before."

Nurse wondered what her master could be thinking of. Instead of having people humble and contented with their condition, he would have them be looking up and on continually.

"Have you seen the gipsy women lately?" inquired her master. Not very lately, nurse replied; but she probably should soon, as a great annual gipsy feast was to be held within the month, somewhere near town; and no doubt the Drapers would return to their old haunts for the occasion.

"Do you bid them be contented with their condition, living in tents, on the damp ground, and eating animals that they find dead?"

Nurse thought her master more odd than ever. As if all respectable people did not like to live under a roof, and have decent clothes, and eat like Christians! She did not know that in old times, servants and labourers who dwelled somewhat in gipsy style were desired to be content with their condition; and that it was thought a piece of ineffable presumption to wish to live in abodes at which beggars would now shrug their shoulders. Mr. Culver would have people content without what could not be had otherwise than by the sacrifice of what is of more consequence than that which they wish for. He was sorry to see maid-servants dressed in lace, because it *is* impossible for maid-servants to buy lace without neglecting their parents and friends, or omitting to provide themselves with a hundred more necessary things, or with a fund for their own support when they must cease to earn; but if lace should ever come to be as cheap as tape, he should like to see every body wear lace that likes it.

"O, papa!" cried Lucy, "would you like to see little Ichabod Cooper with lace on his shirt-collar?"

"I should like to see the Coopers, and not only the Coopers, but the poorest of the poor, in possession of every thing that is useful and that gives pleasure. If there was enough for every body of all that is useful and beautiful, why should not every body have it? All would be the happier, would not they?"

"But there never could be enough of every thing for every body, papa."

"How do you know that, my dear? I am far from being sure of that myself."

Lucy stared, and began to think of all that she liked best;—blue sashes, and cages of squirrels, and ice-creams, and *Rosamond—Rosamond* that she hid under her pillow that she might read it before nurse was awake in the morning. Was it possible that there could ever be enough of all these for every body in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America? Her papa assured her that the experiment had never yet been tried how many of God's good gifts can be put within the reach of God's creatures. So many have been afraid of others possessing too much, that all have only got a very little way in helping one another, though they have been very clever at the work of mutual hindrance. It may be that there are pearls enough in southern oceans to deck the whole human race; and cotton enough on the American plains to clothe the species; and dyes enough in the eastern woods to diversify all the habitations in the world; and industry, and zeal, and good-will enough in men's hearts to dispose them all to learn and to communicate whatever the wise have to teach, and the benevolent to suggest, and the inventive to relate, from the remotest corners of the earth. It may be that every good book will in time be read in all countries of the globe, and then——

"And then," interrupted Lucy, "some Lapland children may read about Rosamond's gallop down the Black Lane; and some little people in China may be pleased at finding that she was fond of gold and silver fish. Well, this does not seem very surprising when one thinks how many people in America and in the East Indies know all about Rosamond already."

"I should like to be now sending my silks as far as our good books will travel in time," observed Mr. Culver.

"And so you will, I suppose, papa, if so many people will wear silks as you seemed to think just now."

"Your brothers may, after me; or their sons and grandsons, after them," replied Mr.-Culver; "but it takes a long time for people to learn to exchange freely and fairly against each other, when they have been taught to be mutually jealous, and to fancy that if one party gains by the exchange, the other must be a loser."

"But many more do buy silk than some time ago, papa."

"Yes, indeed," observed nurse; "when maidservants begin, it is a pretty good sign that silk is growing common."

"Then you will grow rich, papa. I should like you to grow rich."

Her father told her that a beginning was made by his having ceased to grow poor. When smuggling should have ceased, and there should have been time for the English manufacture to improve as the French had done, he hoped he might be more in the way of growing rich than he had ever yet been. Meanwhile, the more people wore silks, be they servant-maids or the dames of New Zealand, the better for him; and for them, if they felt more complacent in silk attire than in the woollen petticoats and mantles of matting which their respective ancestors wore.

"The Bremes dance beautifully in their blue Gros-de-Naples frocks," Lucy observed.

“Better than you in your white, my dear! Well, if all the world is to wear more silk, it is time you and your sisters were beginning,—I suppose you think. Hey, Lucy?”

Nurse was in possession of the young ladies ideas on this subject, and took the present opportunity of putting her master in possession of them likewise, together with her own.

“Well, nurse, I have no wish that my children should go on being envious of the Bremes a moment longer than is necessary. So, silk frocks they shall have. I shall send you in half a piece from the warehouse, which will do very well. If you find a few blemishes in the warp, you can cut them out in the making, I dare say; and, but for them, the fabric is perfectly good.”

The girls were a little disappointed at not having the choice of a colour, and alarmed at the mention of blemishes; but it was a great thing to have gained, in any way, a point which had long been aspired to. Nurse was much vexed that she could not have the pleasure of making the purchase at Mr. Breme's shop, giving Mr. Breme himself, if he should be behind the counter, all possible trouble in suiting the tastes of her young ladies. In order not to be wholly deprived of this satisfaction, she determined that all the adjuncts of these pretty new dresses should be purchased there. This settled, she and her charge were equally anxious not to delay the business beyond the next day.

When they arrived near the shop, on the Monday morning, nurse still resplendent in her figured brocade, they were mortified at finding the house shut in by a scaffolding, and the narrow entrance between the planks almost closed up by heaps of shavings and piles of bricks. They slackened their pace to observe, and were silently afraid that it must be too dark within for the proper transaction of business. While pausing, they were saluted by a cloud of dust which rose after some heavy blows behind the screen of planks, and which did much towards convincing them that the present was hardly the time or place for discharging their errand.

“We must come some other time,” remarked Lucy to the unwilling nurse.

“We must go somewhere else,” observed Charlotte, who saw little hope of the scaffolding being clown before the next dancing-day, beyond which it was impossible to wait for the new silk frocks.

The workmen went on knocking, sawing, and standing in the way very unconcernedly; but a strange-looking personage peeped out from behind the corner of the screen of planks, saying,

“Go somewhere else, ladies? Where will you meet with such a shop as this, now being enlarged for your convenience? You will find it light and busy enough within. I know of one good customer, at least, that is there.”

The girls thought this odd, as the man was only a poor person who was mending a chair-bottom, in the corner formed by the projection of the scaffolding into the street, where he could lay his rushes beside him, and work undisturbed by the passengers,

while in full view of them. He seemed to take upon himself the office of advertiser of Mr.) Breme's concern, as he directed to the establishment the attention of all who stopped and peeped over the heads of the little boys who were watching his proceedings. He let everybody know that the shop was accessible, and was now being enlarged. Several persons lingered to see whether nurse and her charge went in; and their safe and easy entrance, when they once made the attempt, encouraged one or two to follow.

Charlotte looked round for the good customer spoken of by the chair-mender, but could see no finely-dressed lady engrossing the attention of the shop-people; no dainty gentleman pronouncing upon such articles as he might be presumed to understand. There was only an old woman buying nun's lace for her mob-cap; and a young woman, with a baby in her arms, comparing remnants of common print; and a child waiting patiently, with a hot half-penny squeezed in her hand, for a skein of thread; and a party of gipsies in red cloaks at the further end of the shop, with their backs turned to the new comers. Nurse was too busy putting on her spectacles, and holding gauze ribbons in various lights, to take any notice of what other people were doing, till the man who was serving her leaned over the counter to whisper that the customers yonder (nodding towards the gipsies) were choosing a very expensive dress for their queen to wear at the next of their festivals; and that it was to be made up by one of the first dress-makers in town. A stout country girl, who had followed nurse and her party, and taken her seat beside them, heard this as well as they; and from that moment her attention seemed bent upon the wearers of the red cloaks rather than upon her own purchases. She stepped forward a pace or two, when one of them turned at an accidental noise, and an immediate recognition took place, to the surprise and amusement of the shop-people.

The gipsy strode forward, holding out her brown hand, and saying,

“Why, Miss Rebecca, I thought the sea-shore was our meeting-place. So often as I have met you there. I never dreamed of seeing you in town parts.”

“Nor I neither, Mrs. Draper: but I am not long from home.”

“Only come for a little pleasure, Miss Rebecca. Well; you know I used to tell you that there was one that would give you what pleasure you liked, if you chose to ask. I dare say now——”

And Mrs. Draper looked round, as if for some supposed companion of Rebecca's; but Rebecca answered,

“Now, I told you, Mrs. Draper, long ago, to talk no nonsense; and I'm here buying things, you see——”

“Ay, my dear; I see,” said Mrs. Draper, looking no graver for being told that she talked nonsense. “I see; but how's the father?”

“Why, but middling. Father's a wonderful hearty man for his years, to be sure, considering some things.”

“Ah! the ruin of the coast, which must have hurt his feelings. And dame,—how's the dame?”

“O, she's well, and hobbling about, as usual. And I hope she'll keep well. Dame and me are going to keep school—a boarding-school for girls.”

Mrs. Draper laughed heartily at the idea of Rebecca teaching manners, as she said, and walking out behind her young ladies, two and two.

“Ah! you may laugh,” answered Rebecca, food-humouredly; “and I know many people think I'm not a bit fit for it; but I don't care what “pains I take—I don't care what I do,’ if I could but see father smile.”

Mrs. Draper was struck dumb; for to her it seemed that Mr. Pim not smiling was not Mr. Pim at all. What could have happened to render it difficult for Rebecca to “make father smile?”

“It is not a venture, as it would be to set up a school in a town, to set one up in the country,” observed Rebecca. “'Tis such a common thing, you know, to send children to the sea-side when they are delicate; and dame always took great care of our chilblains; and, for my part, I like nursing them when they are ill better than teaching,—ever so much. And, you know, I *can* teach sewing, I think much of needle-work; it is so useful! They shall do a deal of that.—And then we have the maps. I can teach them those; and they shan't stick to them too long. I remember, when I used to learn, how my back ached, and I used to get the fidgets, and think, ‘ Well, now, shall we ever leave off?’ O, they shall go out and come in again; and we'll find them something to read that they will get amused with; and if anything more is wanting, why, father will help us, perhaps.”

“He will help you all to run races on the downs. He is the one to say ‘ One, two, three, and away.’ But I really hoped, Miss Rebecca, that you were buying for a house of your own.”

“And where would be the use of a house of my own, unless father was to be in it? and then it would be all one as his. No, the old house must do,—at least for a beginning. If better times should come, perhaps——”

“What! your father's school fell off, then. It was a fine one when my children went; but I suppose the ruin of the coast ruined it?”

“Tis all ruin to us. If it was only the loss of the trade to himself, that was a great amusement. But it set the people all complaining about not affording schooling for the children; for they had grown careless about the fishing. And then, several went away for a time, after the murder, for fear of the reward the government offered; and that broke up everything. Father never got over that.—You may talk about running races on the down. Father has never been to the down with any heart since; for it was there that he spoke with poor Nicholas the very day before——”

Rebecca stopped short, struck by the effect of what she was saying on the gay ancient personage who sat near. Nurse came forward, jerking an end of ribbon in one trembling hand, and fumbling for her handkerchief with the other, while her countenance resumed the expression of which her fellow-servants were tired, and which they hoped she had laid aside with her mourning.

“My son, ma'am! I beg pardon for interrupting you, ma'am, but he was my son. Nicholas, I heard you mention. If you knew him, perhaps you would tell me anything you might know.”

Rebecca and the gipsy looked at each other, which made nurse appeal to Mrs. Draper, with confessions that she should not have turned her away from the back-door so peremptorily, the last time she came to tell the maids' fortunes, if she had thought she knew anything about the Preventive Service and her poor son.

“We knew him very well indeed,” said the plain-spoken Rebecca. “He used to pass almost before our door twenty times in a day, when he was upon watch; and our children used——”

“Ah, poor fellow! he was always like a child himself. He could never say a cross word to a child,” sobbed nurse.

“Nor to anybody else,” feelingly observed Rebecca.

Charlotte saw that the scene was becoming such as little beseems a busy shop, and she thought of an expedient for gratifying nurse without exposing her feelings to observation. After a consultation with Lucy, she asked Rebecca if she could come to tea at their house, and tell nurse everything that she could recollect about Nicholas. This Rebecca promised to do, though her stay in London was to be very short. She had come only to “improve herself” for a week or two, and to provide a few necessary additional articles for her school-keeping; and her father began to want her at home.

While nurse was wiping her eyes, in preparation for finishing her shopping, Mrs. Draper called upon Rebecca for an opinion respecting the purchase the gipsies were about to make. Lucy followed, being unable to restrain her curiosity; and impatiently did she beckon for her sister to join her when she saw with how splendid an array the counter was spread. Rebecca looked no less delighted.

“Yes, that will be the one,” observed Mrs. Draper, seeing that Rebecca's eye rested on a fabric of peculiar richness and beauty. “O, yes, it is expensive; but it is worth the money; and these cheaper silks have grown so common! Half the girls we tell fortunes to have more or less silk about them. Our queen must not be taken for such as live by a yearly wage. She must have of the best, and this must be the one.”

“O no, sir,” Rebecca replied, drawing back from the gentleman behind the counter, when he pressed some of his goods upon her notice, “O, no, thank you, sir; they are all too dear for me to buy to wear down by the sea-side.”

“Yet you and these ladies have seen very pretty silks down by the sea-side,” observed Mr. Breme, for it was lie who was himself serving his best customers for the hour. “We all know that very pretty silks have been seen by the seaside; but that day is over.”

“I don't know that, indeed,” replied Rebecca. “They say that Brighton will be fuller than ever next season, and that is the place for pretty dresses. I suppose there are not many such beauties as this sold anywhere?”

“More than you would suppose, ma'am; particularly of late. There is no end now to the silks that may be lawfully had; and when that is the case, more people think of wearing.”

“And yet silks are very little cheaper than they were.”

“At present, not much, as you say, ma'am. But people are so pleased to think that they may wear what has been forbidden so long, that they make a very brisk trade, I am happy to say. This will lead to improvement and cheapness, and then people at home and abroad will wear more still. The more you can get of a thing, the more will be wanted. That is the rule, ma'am; from small beer to satin dresses. The more can be had of a thing, the more will be wanted. Could not you fancy one of these beautiful things, ma'am?”

“Very easily,” replied Rebecca, “if a fairy would come this moment and give me money to buy one, but not else. I am keeping yonder gentleman waiting with the brown holland, which is what I wanted. I must leave your silk dresses in your shop till I have earned one.”

On further consideration, Rebecca feared she could not spare a whole evening to nurse. She had so much to do, and her time was so short! Would a call do? or meeting them in their walk? A better plan than either struck Charlotte. Would not Rebecca meet them at the dancing-school on Wednesday? One who was about to keep school should see some dancing; and she and nurse might have their chat in a corner, without anybody knowing what they were talking about. This was certainly the best plan, and Rebecca agreed to it, with grand expectations of the sight she was to see.

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Chapter IV.

GRIEF AND DANCING.

Rebecca was so anxious about her appointment, that she arrived at the dancing-school some time before the party she expected to meet. A family of pretty little children were just sashed and sandalled, and made ready to enter the great room, when she arrived; and she drew back, with her usual modesty, to allow them and their governess to pass. Their dancing-school curtsey filled her with admiration; and she pulled up her head, and began bending her knees in involuntary imitation, when she remembered that she had better not try anything so new before so many spectators as were assembled in the room. She went up to the dancing-master, in her usual stumping pace, and apologized for not making such a curtsey on her entrance as those young ladies, as she had not been used to it. Mr. Brown condescended to give her a grin and a nod; and, when he saw her stand as if not knowing where to turn next, did her the further favour of pointing with his fiddle-bow to a seat which she might be permitted to occupy.

There she sat, absorbed in what she saw, till nurse arrived with Miss Charlotte and Miss Lucy in their new frocks, new shoes, new gloves, and all things newer, if not handsomer, than the Miss Bremes'.

“They are not here yet,” whispered the one sister to the other.

“No, not yet: but I hope they will be sure to come. Why, look! there is Adèle, and her sister with her! Nurse, we will go and sit beside Adèle, and then you and Miss Pim can have your talk comfortably by yourselves. I am sure the Jenkinsons will make room for us on their bench.”

The Jenkinsons made room, and it was immediately discovered that Adèle came to learn to dance; upon hearing which, Lucy fell into a reverie which lasted till a twang of the fiddle called her up for her first quadrille.

Rebecca could not help breaking off her answers to nurse's questions to wonder at Lucy's dancing, and admire the height of her jumps, which, however, did not seem to please Mr. Brown quite so well.

“Gently, gently, Miss Lucy,” said he. “There may be too much activity, ma'am, as well as too little. We are not at a leaping-match, ma'am.”

Lucy blushed and smiled, and still went on, sometimes nearly losing her balance, and having already lost any grace she might have been accustomed to display. She threw out her feet, sometimes heel foremost, stuck her elbows in her sides to give herself more concentrated power for a jump, and over-reached her mark in crossing, till she nearly pulled her partner down. Mr. Brown declared, at last, that he must send for a

neighbouring builder to ascertain whether the room was strong enough to bear Miss Lucy's dancing.

“Poor thing!” exclaimed Rebecca, “why should not they let her dance as merrily as she likes? I will never stint my scholars in their jumps.”

Nurse thought that on the sea-shore, or on the green, it was different from the present occasion. Miss Lucy came to learn to dance, not to practise leaping. She could not imagine what possessed the child to-day to dance as she did. Lucy was not strong, and there was trouble enough sometimes in getting her to do more than merely shuffle her feet.

“She just makes up when she is in spirits for what she can't do at other times,” was Rebecca's good-natured excuse, as she smiled at the happy-looking fluttered Lucy.

Nurse beckoned the offender across the room to receive a rebuke, as soon as the quadrille was finished; and Lucy came smiling, panting, and fanning herself, and went away again, not at all disheartened by nurse's lecture on manners. She was observed, as she took her seat, to look up at Mademoiselle and Adèle, as much as to say, “What do you think of my dancing?” Mademoiselle smiled, and Adèle looked indifferent.

“Well, ma'am,” said nurse, “so the Lieutenant's lady was very sorry for my poor son. I remember he said something of her once in a letter or a message.”

“Said something of her! Why, well he might. He seemed to think of little but pleasing or displeasing her; and she was kind to him accordingly. I used to think he would never put his hat on again, when he had taken it off to be spoken to by the ladies from the station-house.”

“Aye, there is another lady too. Was she kind to my poor son also?”

“All very well: but Miss Storey had always more partiality for our people than for the Preventive men. Poor father said,—one of the last jokes I have heard him make,—that he saw nothing for it but Miss Elizabeth taking to drinking or smoking, as she is so partial to smuggling and all that sort of thing, and as she must now get what she used to have so in other ways.”

“But gloves come over against the law still, do not they?”

“Very few, high as the duty is. They are not sought after as they were a while ago, for they say the English gloves are nearly as good and as cheap now, and there are many more made. They say at the Custom-house that near twice as many skins come into the country as there were a few years ago; and so there is no occasion to smuggle so many French.”

“So Miss Storey does not go down to the poor people's cottages as she used to do, my son told me, stealing out of sight of the guard?”

“Not she. She walks quite disconsolate along the beach to the east, instead of going in and out, above and below, among the downs, as she used to do when she had something- to go out for.”

“And the Lieutenant's lady too; does she go out as formerly?”

“As much as ever; but then she has something to do that makes it worth while. She gets one of the Preventive people to carry a little light table and her portfolio; and she paints,—never minding the wind or the sun, or anything. If it blows much, she pins her paper down at the corners, and puts her hair back, and paints away: and if the sun is hot, up goes her large umbrella, and still she paints away.”

“Dear me! What does she paint? I wonder whether she ever painted my poor son.”

“I think she hardly began after her marriage till the spring weather came on, and——”

“Ah! it was March when lie came by his end. The 3d of March, at half-past one in the morning, they tell me; ma'am.”

“The lady has painted a good many of the guard, though,” continued Rebecca, wishing to change the subject. “She has a number of pictures of them, some drawing water at the wells on the downs, or sitting polishing their arms in the martello towers, or feeding their pigs at the station-house. We used to hear strangers call those towers very ugly things; but she has made a world of pretty pictures of them, looking as different as if they were not the same places.”

“She must be a clever lady, then; for there is nothing to my mind so dull and uniform as those towers. They are worse than the houses I saw last year in the Regent's Park,—all alike, except such little differences as don't signify.”

“Mrs. Storey would make even them look different, I fancy: for, as to these towers,—some are white, standing on a yellow sand, with a dark blue sky behind, and the sea a darker blue still,—which you know it is sometimes. And then she makes a shadow from a cloud come over the tower, and the sea all streaked with different colours; and then it is the turn of the sails at sea to be white,—and a bird, perhaps, hovering over the dark parts. Once she went out when the moon was near the full, the Lieutenant himself carrying her cloak and her sketch-book that time, and she wanting nothing besides but her case of pencils. From that sketch she made a beautiful picture of a grey sea, with the foam white in the moonlight; and in that case, the tower was quite black on the side of the shadow, and so was the guard on watch, as you saw him between you and the surf.”

“I wish she had painted my poor boy, ma'am; or that he had lived to carry her table. It would have made him so proud! But you say she was sorry for what happened to him?”

“Everybody was sorry. Father, for one, has never got over it. But the lady was on the beach when—when——”

“I know what you mean, my dear. Go on.”

“Well; she looked so,—you can't think. Father was quite pale when he came out from among the crowd of children that had got about the mouth of the cavern; but he was nothing to her, in the comparison.”

“Indeed! Well—my dear——”

“O! so white, and so grieved, more than frightened. She beckoned father to her, to settle what to do till some of the guard could come; and then she called the children after her, and went away, to take them away, though she could hardly walk.”

“Dear me!” was all that escaped from nurse, who could not prevent its being seen through her emotion that she was flattered by this tale: and she did not attempt to conceal her gratification at hearing what a crowd attended the funeral, and how the people gathered to read and hear read the proclamation of reward for the detection of the murderers. And all this interest was about her son! Nothing could ever make up to her, she told Rebecca, for his body being hidden for a time, as it was. It would have been such a consolation to her to know that he made as beautiful a corpse as she had often said he would. Those who had seen how her boy looked when he was asleep might be sure that he would look better when he was dead than ever he did when he was alive.

While Rebecca was meditating what she could say by way of consolation for Nicholas not having made so beautiful a corpse as might have been expected from him, certain sounds from the other side of the room attracted her attention, and half diverted poor nurse's.

“So the Lieutenant said of him..... O! no need to start, ma'am, at Mr. Brown's rapping his fiddle. He is never really in a passion, though he pretends anger, to keep the young folks in order.”

“But they have done something to make him angry. Hark! what a rattling in the fiddle!”

“But look at the corners of Mr. Brown's mouth. He does not know how to help laughing all the time.”

“As the children find out,” observed Rehecca, seeing how the boys peeped over one another's shoulders to see the effect of the old joke of putting pease into a violin.

“And the girls are all huddled together, not a bit like young ladies,” added nurse, moving solemnly towards her charge, patting their backs, chucking their chins, and ascertaining that their feet were in the first position. Alas! they were in none of the five lawful positions.

“Let us see what Adèle will make of her positions,” whispered Lucy, as she saw the little French girl led out, to take, as was supposed, her first lesson. “She does not seem

to mind it; but she will when she finds she cannot keep her balance in the curtsey at the last".

She was surprised that Mr. Brown tuned his violin. Music was not wanted for teaching the positions. Mr. Brown must be in an absent fit; and Adèle must be very conceited to smile and look at her ease, on such an occasion. When she should have learned two years, and be able to dance the same quadrilles as Lucy, she might look at ease, and welcome: but already——

Already Adèle showed that she knew one position at least. Before the words "Point the toe, ma'am," had passed the dancing-master's lips, the toe was pointed as if the whole foot was made of something as flexible as the thin sole of the little shoe.

"I do believe Adèle can dance," burst from Lucy's lips, as the fiddle-bow gave its last flourish before making music. There was no further room for doubt, though much for wonder. Adèle sped away,—much as if she was winged: round and round,—hither and thither,—up and down and across, not half so much out of breath with the exertion as Lucy was with witnessing it, and with some thoughts which came into her mind. "What a silly, stupid, vain thing. I have been! I hope Adèle and Mademoiselle did not find out that I wanted to show off to them. How very bad Adèle must think my dancing, to be sure! I did hear the windows rattle once, when I had jumped very high; and Adèle comes down as light as a feather. I wish we could get back to two o'clock again. If I could make them all forget this last hour, I would never show off again; at least, not till I was sure that I could do a thing better than other people." And Lucy held her fan to her chin to watch the rest of Adèle's performance in mute admiration.

"Look, now, at that child of mine, with her fan at her chin, of all places!" observed nurse, a-hemming to catch Lucy's attention, and then bridling, and placing her knitting-needles (for nurse carried her knitting everywhere but to church, and there fell asleep for want of it) in the position in which she thought a fan ought to be held. Lucy, vexed to be interrupted in her scrutiny, and so often chidden, tossed her fan into her sister's lap, and turned to Mademoiselle to talk, and thereby avoid the necessity of perceiving nurse's signs.

"Ay, that's the way children do," said nurse; "that was just as my poor boy used to turn and get away from me, when I had been whipping him, all for his good, as I used to tell him, and to make a great man of him. He never liked it, nor saw what a great man he might be some day, guarding his country on the top of those cliffs, and dying, and all."

"And all for nothing," added the matter-of-fact Rebecca; "which must make it the more hurting to you. Nay, now, do not look so offended, as if I had said that Nicholas did not do his duty. He did what he could; but it always seems to me a great fuss about nothing."

"About nothing, ma'am? Is smuggling nothing?"

“That Coast Guard can't prevent smuggling, after all; and if they could, is not it a much cheaper way of preventing it, to make smuggling not worth while? Here, with all their spying, and searching, and seizing, they can lay their hands on only 5000*l.* worth of smuggled silk in a year, while we all know that fifty times that much comes to be worn. Is not it a great fuss about nothing to risk men's lives for a little matter like that? And they get no more in proportion of tobacco or spirits, or anything else; so, as father says, they might as well put smuggling out of our thoughts at once, or let us do it in peace and quiet. Father has had no peace and quiet this long while, nor ever will have till we find him something to do; and that is hard to find. There is my brother out of the Custom-house, too, being no longer wanted now they are reducing the business and the salaries, and even talking of shutting up the Custom-house.”

“You ought to be sorry, then, that people smuggle less than they did,—as sorry as I fancy your father is, my dear.”

“Why, as for that, it is very well to be in the Custom-house, to collect the dues the government ought to have; but, for my part, I never liked my brother's having to look to the seized goods, which sometimes happened to be what he would rather have seen anywhere else. If he had at once set himself to something else——”

“You had better send him here; my master wants more hands.”

“With all my heart. If he had set himself to supply people's demands at home, instead of preventing their being supplied from abroad, it would have been all very well. But he liked better to marry, and live upon my father, (supposing father to be rich,) than to work at a new business; and now I must keep school, and do what I can for them all. Dear me! what a pretty dance that is! I do not know what I am to do. if the parents expect my girls to dance in that manner. I forgot to look at Miss Lucy this time. Oh, ma'am, what can be the matter with her? Do look how she is crying. Bless her poor heart! how the tears run down!”

Lucy did, at this moment, exhibit a somewhat extraordinary spectacle,—weeping and cutting capers, sobbing and attitudinizing, and looking dolorously in the face of her partner (one of the Master Bremes) whenever the turns of the dance obliged them to regard each other. If she would have given any rational excuse for her emotion, she would have been excused from dancing in tears; but she was mute, and must therefore take her turn with her companions. The fact was, that, while standing up and waiting for the signal to begin, Lucy had chanced to turn her eyes on a mirror that hung opposite, and to see a young gentleman behind her wriggling in imitation of her earlier exploits of this day; and, what was worse, she saw that Mr. Brown indulged in a broad grin at the joke. Not all her attempts to think of something pleasant,—of her new frock, Mademoiselle's museum, and the kitten promised by Adèle,—could enable her to keep down her tears. They only came the faster the more she struggled against them; and all hope of concealing them was over before Rebecca's kind heart became moved by her sorrow, and Adèle squeezed in sympathy the hand which she encountered in the course of the figure. This sympathy only aggravated the evil: it caused a long, crowing sob to resound through the room, moving the boys to laughter,

and everybody else to pity. It was a lost case, and the credit of the day,—of Adèle's first day at the dancing-school,—was irretrievable.

Mademoiselle removed to a seat next nurse, to inquire what could have been the matter with Lucy all this day; and when told that she had been well and in high spirits up to the moment of entering the room, she was anxious to be allowed to feel her pulse, and ascertain whether there was fever in the case,—nothing short of fever being, in her opinion, sufficient to account for her alternate boisterousness and melancholy. Lucy being surrendered to Mademoiselle, presently began to grow calm. The scarlet flush which had spread over her neck faded, and the sobs subsided, as she assured her friend that she was not at all ill: it was all her own fault. This mystery was received in respectful silence, and a long pause ensued, at the end of which Lucy looked up through her tears to say,—

"How beautifully Adèle dances!"

"Yes, she dances prettily; but she wants practice, and does not take exercise enough; and that is the reason why we have brought her to learn again. Adèle is a lazy girl in some things: are you not, Adèle?"

"But where did she learn to dance? I never saw such dancing. I do not believe anybody here will ever dance so well. There's Nancy Breme: her feet go well enough, but she pokes; and her sister carries her head high enough,—mighty high,—like the proud that are going to have a fall, nurse says; but she turns in the left foot, as Mr. Brown is for ever telling her. And there is——"

"Well, well; we will not dispute Adèle's dancing better than any body here."

"O, but I was going to say myself too. I meant to find fault with my own dancing, and Charlotte's."

"No occasion, my dear. I have heard what Mr. Brown has to say about it, you know; and he is a better judge than either of us. Perhaps you will go with us to Lyons, some day, and see where Adèle used to dance, under the chestnuts by the river-side. Or, if you must have boards to dance on, you shall go to M. Carillon's country-house, where you may waltz in his summer saloon, with roses hanging in at the window."

"Is that the M. Carillon who sent you those beautiful shells? And is his great new present come for your museum?"

"It is on its way, and we may hear of its arrival any day. You shall come and see it when it is unpacked and in its place. Now, do you think you can dance again? Mr. Brown looks as if he wanted a partner for that merry boy."

"O, I cannot dance with him," exclaimed Lucy. "Yes, I will, though he did laugh at me. I find fault with other people, I know, so I suppose it is fair that they should with me."

And she started up, and offered herself to dance; and a sign from the good-natured Mr. Brown forbade any one from staring at her red eyes.

“Well, ma'am,” said Rebecca to nurse, “and now that I have seen Miss Lucy comfortable asyain, I must go. I'm sure if you know of any delicate children, or others that do not want a finer education than we can give them, you will think of dame and I.”

“Yes, indeed, my dear, for the sake of my poor son. Thank you, I'm sure, for all you have told me about him; and if your father should happen to come, so as to give me a call, I think he might manage to remember a little more. And give my respects to the Lieutenant's lady, and tell her that I consider my son honoured by her preference; and tell——”

“I have been thinking, Mrs. Nicholas, whether you could not come down among us. You will be sure to see Mrs. Story yourself then; and we would make you heartily welcome in our way.”

“What! to see the very place? The cliffs, and the beach, and the very cave and all! O, my dear! Well, we will see; and many thanks to you.”

Rebecca thought it right to advertise her intended school in every possible manner, and therefore made an effort to mention her plan to Mr. Brown, observing that he was probably in the way of hearing of children who wanted sea-air and nursing; and that they would be well taken care of, though she could not pretend to have them taught such dancing as she had seen that day.

Mr. Brown smirked, said something about reviving breezes, native elasticity, natural grace, and the hand of art, and bowed her out with an emphatic screech of his instrument, just at the moment that she was declaring him very kind.

The remainder of the lesson was passed in silence by the higher powers, as nurse could not bring herself to speak of the subject uppermost in her thoughts,—her poor son,—to a French woman, whom, as being French, she considered as in some sort, concerned in his murder.

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Chapter V.

HATE AND HAND-BILLS.

When Mademoiselle returned to her own drawing-room, she found her brother there,—an unexpected visitor at this time of day, when he was usually engaged in his counting-house. He was standing at the window, with his eyes fixed upon a newspaper, which he might or might not be reading, so completely was his attitude one of meditation.

"I have waited for you," he said; "I wished to see you before I went out again. Are you ready to go back to France?"

"To France! Is there to be a war?"

"Only that war which wars of arms bring on,—war against classes and individuals, arising out of national jealousy. No, thank God! the slaughter of tens of thousands is at an end; and what matters the ruin of one insignificant Frenchman?"

"Ruin! Are they going to ruin you?" asked his sister, her eyes flashing.

"No anger, my dear," said M. Gaubion. "Judge not these English people by the example of our happier countrymen. They have been trained for centuries to suspicions like this;"—(handing the newspaper to his sister, and pointing out a paragraph.) "I was aware of this training, and I ought not to have come. It is for the Frenchmen of two centuries hence to be the brethren of Englishmen."

"But you can disprove this charge," urged Mademoiselle; "or, as the duty of proof rests with your enemies, you can dare them to the proof. Let them show, if they can, that you carry on your business as a cloak to hidden practices. Let them lay a finger on a single article smuggled by you. They cannot; and this is a mere calumny,—a newspaper calumny."

M. Gaubion pointed out that the charge was contained in a report of some significance, and was not one of the common paragraphs which no wise man thinks it worth while to be vexed at. Its appearance in such a mode indicated a hostility in persons interested in the silk trade, which would probably end in sending a peaceably-disposed man home again.

"I have been trying to make myself an English woman ever since I came," observed Mademoiselle, "but I will cease the endeavour; it is better to be French."

"Nay, France may blush for similar follies. How long was it before we had men wise enough to discover, that if France received cottons, it must be in return for something that France had produced! When some few perceived this, what cries issued from our work-shops! What certainty did some feel that the total disorganization of society

would ensue! How others rehearsed the dirge which must presently be sung over the tomb of French industry! And who knows but that a Manchester man might then have been torn in pieces by the prejudiced operatives of France?"

"But did you not say just now that the English are peculiarly prejudiced on this matter?"

"They have been made so by their national circumstances. Their manufacturers and merchants have had a greater voice in the government than is allowed in many other countries; and this voice has for ever cried out, ' Protect us!'—' Encourage us!' Then of course followed the cry of other classes, 'Be impartial!'—'Protect us also.'"

"Ah! the difficulty is to stop. Each new protection raises clamour for more; and some are left dissatisfied after all is done that can be done. It becomes a scramble which class can cost the country most; how each article can be made dearest, and therefore how the people may be soonest impoverished at home, and prevented from selling abroad on equal terms with their neighbours. So it would be if protection were universal; but surely it cannot be so in England, or any where else?"

"Not altogether; but her rulers have found themselves perplexed by her land-owners and tillers being jealous of the manufacturers; and the ship-owners, of the agricultural class; and the labourers, most justly, of all these. There will be no peace till the just plea is admitted, that the interest of those who consume is the paramount interest; and that the rule of commerce at home and abroad, therefore, is that all shall be left free to buy where they can buy cheapest. The observance of this rule would soon quench the desire for protection, as the protected would have no customers but those from whose pockets their bounties are yielded. Yet this rule is the last which the ministries of England have till now regarded."

"Strange! since the consumers are so much more considerable a body than any class of the protected."

"Nothing is strange when there is a want of money. Does not a minor make over his property to sharpers for his debts before he has enjoyed it? Do not the besieged in a city revel in food and wine while starvation impends? If so, why should not a government, involved in ruinous wars and other extravagance, stake the commerce of the country for an immediate supply of money? When, new taxes must be imposed, submission has been bought by new protections. The example once set, other restrictions have followed, till those who possess nothing but the fruits of their own labour bear the whole burden. They pay to the landlords, that bread may be dear; they pay to the India House, that tea may be rendered a blameable luxury to them, and that what is woven in eastern looms may be out of their reach; they paid for the wars which occasioned the restraints which they now pay to keep up."

"But why do they thus pay? And is not all this a reason why they should welcome you, instead of desiring a continuance of their bondage?"

"Slaves often hug their chains as ornaments, and the ignorant mistake custom for right. My enemies are not aware how they have suffered from the long custom of restriction; and it was my folly to expect a welcome from the poor, who have ever been taught, that what a foreigner gains an Englishman must lose; or from masters who have been cradled in fear, not by the generous nurse,—competition, but by the jealous demon,—monopoly."

"Truly," exclaimed Mademoiselle, "the lark is likely to be hooted and clawed if she ventures among the owls. You are right, brother; there is nothing for it but fleeing away."

"These owls being even now transforming into day-birds, and the lark having once been an owl herself, both should have patience with each other," replied her brother, laughing. "But though the hooting may be borne for awhile, the tearing to pieces is hardly to be awaited in patience. I have been growing more unpopular every day, my dear; 1 see it in many faces, whenever I look beyond my own people. They like me, I believe; but they will soon be threatened out of working for me. They will also seize on this imputation, that I make use of them as a screen for practices which take work out of the hands of their brethren. After they have learned—only through my zeal overcoming their reluctance—to rival us in the niceties of our art, they will drive us away as if we had done them an injury."

"And yet you will not let me reproach them."

"If you must blame, blame the selfish monarchs, the temporising ministers, the barbarous aristocracies, the vain-glorious generations of the people that have passed away,—rather than the descendants on whom they have entailed the consequences of their mutual follies. The spirit of barbarism lingers about its mortal remains. Barbaric wars are hushed, the dead having buried their dead;—Barbaric shows are fading in splendour, and are as much mocked at as admired;—Barbaric usurpations are being resisted and supplanted day by day; but the infatuation which upheld them so long is not altogether dispelled; and if we rashly suppose that it is, we deserve to suffer for coming within its reach. I was wrong to settle among a people who invited us to a contraband trade, were driven by their own vicissitudes to offer us, with much reluctance, a lawful one; and now, through the hardness of their own terms, suspect us wrongfully, and make a great crime of that which they themselves have taught us."

"They seem to forget that we are on equal terms of obligation; that we French take as much of the produce of their industry as they take of ours."

"I shall urge this on our jealous neighbours, and will go as an equal to a brother manufacturer for counsel," observed M. Gaubion. "Culver knows little of me, but he holds many of my principles, and to him will Fnow go. If he thinks this charge of importance, I will deal with it as he advises; if not, I will strive to think so too."

Whether the charge was of importance was decided before Mr. Culver could be appealed to. As M. Gaubion pursued his way through the streets, hand-bills met his eye at every turn, in which was contained the newspaper paragraph that had troubled

him, accompanied by unfriendly comments, and hints that the Treasury was well aware of the nature of the Frenchman's establishment, and of the means by which it was supported. He saw knots of people gathered round the windows where this hand-bill was stuck up, and showing it to one another in the alleys. He would fain have got possession of one to put into Culver's hands, but did not choose to run the risk of being discovered by making the request in a foreign accent. He could see nobody who appeared to be employed in distributing them, or who had two copies. At length ‘he passed a little shop, where a boy was leaning over the counter, apparently spelling out the contents of the bill, while another copy hung in the window. M. Gaubion marched straight in, took the bill from the window, pointing to the one on the counter, and walked out again, the boy crying after him—

“Stop, sir—stop; we can't spare it. You can get one by asking at the———”

The rest was lost upon the escaped stranger, who walked on unobserved, and meeting no one whom he knew till he arrived opposite Cooper's door.

At Cooper's door was a knife-grinder, grinding Mrs. Cooper's scissors as she stood by, and making sparks at such a rate as to delight master Ichabod, who stood, now holding by his mother's gown and winking, and now clapping his hands-in delight. As soon as Mrs. Cooper perceived M. Gaubion at some distance on the other side of the street, she pulled her gown from the child's grasp, ran in, and instantly returned, followed presently by her husband, who pretended to be talking to the knife-grinder, but was evidently watching the approach of the gentleman. When M. Gaubion was near enough to be saluted, Cooper offered him a shy, uncertain bow, but seemed very ready to speak when the gentleman crossed over to ask him if he knew how long this hand-bill had been in circulation.

“We were just wondering, sir, my wife and I, whether you had seen it. I hope you don't mind it, sir; that is, I hope you have no reason to mind it.”

“Why, Cooper, you do not believe this bill?”

Cooper believed that many people did not think what mischief they were about in smuggling. The Spitalfields men had reason enough to know this; but it had been so long the custom to drive a profitable contraband trade, without being thought the worse of, that if some people did it still, it was no great wonder; though he must think it a sin and a shame.

“But such is not my trade, Cooper; I have not smuggled a single piece.”

“Well, it is very lucky if you can say so, sir, for there is nothing the masters and men are so jealous of now. If you had profited by a contraband trade, you would not have been the only person in the present company that must take to something less profitable.”

The gipsy knife-grinder looked up saucily, and jabbered a few words of what might, by an acute discerner, be detected for French;—such French as might be picked up by means of half an hour's talk with a Guernsey person, four times a year.—On being

asked how he relished the change from making moonlight trips and fighting midnight battles to tinkering and grinding among the abodes of men; he answered that if his profits were smaller than they had been, they were better than he had expected when he chose this neighbourhood for the scene of his operations. A few years before, all the knives and scissors were at the pawnbroker's; it did not signify whether pans and kettles were battered or whole, as there was nothing to put into them; and there was little employment in chair-mending, as the people sat on the floor, or ate their crust standing. Now that there was smoke in almost every chimney, and that little men,—nodding to Icha-bod,—were allowed to pull rushen seats to pieces, a gipsy's occupation was a better one than he had once known it.

"'T would be a thousand pities you should have to change your trade, sir," said Cooper; "and if, as you say, there is no truth in what is said about the smuggling……But are you sure you are right in coming abroad this evening, sir? I don't like saying disagreeable things; but that is better than leaving you, without warning, to suffer them. From what I see and hear,—and my wife too,—I should be afraid you might be roughly spoken to. 'Tis the best kindness to all parties to keep out of sight when any are disposed to mischief.—Do I know how long this has been brewing? Why, no. There has been whispering, to my knowledge, for weeks; and it is four days since my child called us to see the boys acting the Frenchman under the windows; and the grown-up folks said some rough words then. But I, for one, never saw the bill till this day."

Cooper now spoke a few words to his wife, which seemed to dismay her much. She pulled his arm, twitched his coat, and looked miserable while he proceeded to say,

"If I might take the liberty of so offering, sir, I would propose to step with you, wherever you are going. I would say ' behind' you, but that it would not answer the purpose so well. I am pretty well known as a sound English master's man, and———"

"Prejudice on every side!" exclaimed the-Frenchman, in his heart. "This man evidently believes the charge, or part of it, and he offers in his protection, on the ground that he is known not to like me and my doings!"

Cooper's courtesy was coolly declined, and M. Gaubion walked on to ascertain elsewhere the origin of the calumny.

Mr. Culver recommended his keeping quiet, and, if there was no foundation for the report, it would soon blow over. "*If* there was no foundation!" The same doubt appeared on every hand.

"Just tell me," asked Gaubion," why I should drive a contraband trade, when I might legally import, if I chose?"

"The duty is high enough still, sir, to induce smuggling in certain favourable cases. I was an advocate for the trade being thrown open; and being so, I am now for such a duty as shall put us on a par with your countrymen. I think a duty of twelve or fifteen

per cent, would do this, and leave no temptation to cheat us out of our market. I should have advised a higher duty some time ago; but smuggling is made easier now by so much silk being brought in legally; and I think we should be better protected by the lower duty than the higher."

"I see," observed the Frenchman, "that in this case, as in others, some of those who are the very parties supposed to be protected are the most willing to resign the protection. It is declared to be a difficult thing to get a protection repealed; but the difficulty does not always rest with the protected party."

"That entirely depends on the state of his affairs," replied Mr. Culver. "If the protection loaves him his business in a flourishing state,—which seldom happens for many years together,—or even permits it to remain in a state which barely justifies its being carried on, he may dread something worse happening by the removal of protecting duties; but if, for a length of time, his trade declines, and the faster the more government meddles with it, he will quickly learn, as I have learned, to preach from the text, ' Protect the people's pockets, and we shall have as fair a chance as we want.' The difficulty, sir, arises from the number of interests mixed up in an arbitrary system like that of protections. While people and money are wasted in spying, and threatening, and punishing, when they ought to be producing, there will be many an outcry against a change which would deprive them of their office, though it would set them free for one much more profitable to the people. Then again, if persons have been bribed to pay a new tax by the promise of protection, it is difficult to oblige them to go on paying the tax, and give up the bribe, unless they have a mind so to do. They talk of injustice; and with some reason. The long and short of the matter is, that once having got into an unnatural system, it costs a world of pains and trouble to get out of it again."

"The only way is to go back to some plain clear principle, and keep it in view while loosening the entanglements which have been twisted about it."

"When do you find governments willing to do that?" asked Mr. Culver.

"In this case it would be very easy, there being one, and but one sure test of the advantageousness of trade in any article of commerce;—the profit that it yields. If a merchant finds it more profitable to sell his goods abroad than at home, he will send them abroad, without the help of the government. If the contrary, it is wasting just so much money to tempt him to deal abroad. If less profit is made by manufacturing silks in England than by getting them from abroad in return for cottons, whatever is spent in supporting the silk manufacture is so much pure loss."

"But you do not think that this is actually the case with our English silk manufacture?"

"I do not; as I prove by becoming an English silk manufacturer myself. For this very reason, I see that there is no need of the protection of government. The interference of government is either hurtful or useless. Foreign goods either are or are not cheaper than home-made goods. If they are cheaper, it is an injury to the buyer to oblige him

to purchase at home. If they are not, there is no occasion to oblige him to purchase at home. He will do so by choice."

"Aye; but the buyer is the last person considered in these arrangements. It is hard to discover why, if the merchant can supply more cheaply than the manufacturer, the customer should be taxed to uphold the manufacturer. I have no wish that my customers should be so taxed; for I know that instead of upholding me, they will leave me and buy elsewhere. If they and I are left free to observe the true rule of interest,—to buy in the cheapest market we can discover, and sell in the dearest, we shall find our interests agree, be fast friends, and make commerce the advantageous thing it was designed to be."

"That is, an indirect source of wealth to all. How can rulers help seeing that as nothing is produced by commerce, as it is an indirect source of wealth,—a mere exchange of equivalents of a lower value which become equivalents of a higher value by the exchange,—the more direct the exchange, the more valuable it is to both parties? If a portion of the value is to be paid to a third party for deranging the terms of the bargain, the briskness of exchanges will be impaired in proportion to the diminution of their profit."

"And while my customers are prevented from buying in the cheapest market, I am, by the same interference, hindered,—aye prohibited, selling in the dearest. My customers complain that my silks are higher priced than those of your country; but give me the means of a fair competition with your countrymen, and [will engage to get a higher price,—(that is, more commodities in exchange,)—in some parts of the world than any duchess in London will give me. The price would be lower to the buyer, but higher to me."

"I suppose the excuse for these protections in the beginning was that the infant manufacture might not be hindered by the vast growth of the same manufacture abroad. Your rulers expected that your art would be sooner perfected if fostered."

"And has it proved so? Were we not, three years ago, far inferior to you in the goodness of our fabrics? And if we are now overtaking you, is it not owing to our protection being partly removed? Was not any immediate improvement more than counterbalanced by the waste of establishing and upholding an artificial system, of diverting capital from its natural channels, and of feeding, or half feeding the miserable thousands who were beggared and starving under the fluctuations which our impolicy had caused?—The businesses which have been the most carefully protected,—the West India trade, agriculture, and till lately, the silk trade,—may have been very profitable for a short period, but they have suffered more from fluctuations, have caused more national waste, and more misery to whole classes of people than any that have been less interfered with. The cotton trade is the one to which we owe the power of sustaining our unequalled national burdens, subsistence for 1,400,000 of our population, and incalculable advantages of exchange with countries in many latitudes; and the cotton manufacture has been left unprotected from the very beginning."

“Your ribbon weavers of Coventry do not, however, appear disposed to take care of themselves. How loud are their complaints of distress!”

“And the distress is real: but it belongs to the old system, and it would have been not distress only, but annihilation, if the introduction of the new system had been long delayed. Coventry once believed herself destined to supply the whole world with ribbons. Then she made the sad discovery that she must be content with the home market; and now that this also fails, Coventry complains of the government, instead of bestirring herself. While our cotton men have been bright and brisk, depending on their own exertions, Coventry has been dull and lazy, depending on the prohibitive system. One of her looms prepares five times less ribbons, with an equal amount of manual labour, as your improved French loom; and she is reasonable enough to expect that the world shall buy her ribbons instead of those of her rivals, if our government can but be brought to order the world so to do.”

“Her manufacture would plainly have expired outright, if the government had not set her free to improve.”

“To be sure it would; and it is not over-gracious in Coventry to take this act of justice,—tardy though it be,—as an injury. Coventry and old governments have been in the wrong together. Let the mischief that results be made a lesson to all by referring it to its true cause; and then there may be a chance of such an increase of prosperity as may remove all disposition to recrimination.”

“This is exactly what I have long wished to behold in my own country,” observed the Frenchman. “Protection has done little less mischief there than here; but unhappily this is a case in which countries are as unwilling to take precedence as court ladies are to yield it. Each country refuses to be first. All cry, ‘ We will wait till others repeal their prohibitive systems;’ as if every new channel of exchange opened were not a good.”

“And as if commerce consisted of arbitrary gifts, and not of an exchange of equivalents,” replied Culver. “It may be a vexation and disadvantage to us, if you take no hardware and cottons from us; but that is no reason why we should not provide ourselves with your claret and brandy; as, if you cannot receive our hardware and cottons, you will take something else. If you will take nothing of ours, you can sell us nothing of yours, and the injury is as great to you as to us. But we should punish ourselves unnecessarily, if we refused your brandies because you refuse our acissors and knives. It is saying, ‘ Because we cannot sell cottons, neither will we sell woollens.’ It is being like the cross child who sobs, “You won't let me have custard, so I won't have any dinner at all.” If governments will only, as I said before, let the people's purses alone, other governments must necessarily do the same. If your French government lets your people buy cottons in the cheapest market,—that is, here,—our government cannot prevent our getting our claret in exchange in the cheapest market,—that is, at Bordeaux. A much more comfortable and profitable method to both parties than doing without cotton and claret, or paying more for making them at home than they are worth.”

“How is it,” M. Gaubion now inquired, “that holding the same doctrine with myself as to the principle of trade at large, you can yet be jealous of me because I am a foreigner? I use the word ‘ jealous’ as not too strong; for surely, Mr. Culver, your reception of me was but half-amicable.”

Mr. Culver's manner immediately cooled as he observed that there was much room left yet for unfair dealing; much encouragement to underhand schemes. He kept himself clear of accusing any man, while matters were in doubt; particularly a gentleman with whom he had the honour of only a slight acquaintance; but the duty was undeniably still high enough to tempt to a contraband trade. It was unquestionable that smuggling was still carried on, and, to however small an extent, still to the injury of the home manufacturer; and he, being a home manufacturer, must wish to have the offence brought home to the right person. No man could desire more earnestly than he did that such an offence should be precluded by good management; but, till it was so, all who hoped for his friendship must clear themselves from the charge of taking his means of subsistence from under him.

“But how am I to clear myself?” asked M. Gaubion. “This is what I came to ask of you; and but now you advised me to keep quiet. I am not to clear myself; but I am not to have your friendship till I have cleared myself.—I must, I will clear myself, Mr. Culver; and you shall tell me how. Will an oath do it?”

Mr. Culver drily replied that he required no oath.

“You! no. I would not offer my oath to a private individual who would not take my word. It must be to some official person. Tell me, Mr. Culver, will an oath do?”

Mr. Culver believed that oaths were such common things in commercial and Custom-house affairs that they were not thought much of.

“True indeed!” exclaimed the Frenchman; “and alas for those who set up oaths against the plain and acknowledged interests of nations, classes and individuals! How shall the sin of tempting to perjury be wiped from their souls? If my oath will not avail, to what species of proof shall I resort?”

“To none, till there is a distinct charge brought against you, fortified by particulars. It is your interest to keep quiet.”

“I will not stay to receive this advice of yours a third time,” replied M. Gaubion. “I will go for advice to one who is not jealous of me; and if such an one I cannot find, I will, stranger as I am, act without counsel, without aid against my enemies. I may be compelled to return whence I came, but I will not go till I have justified myself for my country's sake.”

He went out hastily, leaving Mr. Culver in no very pleasant mood, in the conflict between his liberal principles and his petty personal jealousies. He hummed a tune as he took up the obnoxious handbill, whistled as he laid it down again, and ended with frowning because it was a close evening, and flinging his pen into a corner because he made a blot on beginning to write.

M. Gaubion found nothing in the streets as he pursued his way home to make him desire Cooper's escort. They were remarkably quiet, and he supposed that the weavers had resorted to their gardens for their evening amusement, or had gone to rest in preparation for the early toil of the next day. When he was within a few hundred yards of his own house, however, a hum came upon his ear, like the murmur of a multitude of voices at a distance. After listening for a moment, and satisfying himself that the cries which mingled with the hum must proceed from some unusual cause, he ran forward, trying to resist the persuasion that all this must have some connexion with himself, and to decide that a fire had probably broken out somewhere in his neighbourhood.

It was now dusk. A few lamps showed a flame uncongenial with the prevailing light, and the lamp-lighter was seen, now flitting from post to post with his ladder on his shoulder, and now pausing for an instant, with his foot on the lowest rung, to listen. A lamp-lighter was a safe person of whom to make inquiry, M. Gaubion thought;—one who had no interest in commercial squabbles, and would not betray him on account of his foreign speech. Of him, therefore, the Frenchman inquired what was going on; but the man could offer only conjecture. He had not yet lighted the lamps in that direction, and he did not think he should carry his lantern much further till he knew whether they had not fire enough and too much already. M. Gaubion passed on for better satisfaction; and as he threaded his way among the loiterers, runners, and gazers, who began to thicken as he proceeded, he longed for an English tongue for one minute, that he might learn that which every one else seemed now to know. He was glad to perceive a woman's head emerge from a vault, and gaze slowly round, as if at a loss to account for the bustle. He took his stand for a minute within hearing of the inquiry which he hoped she would make.

“Why, I say there!” cried she presently, “is there afire?”

The runner applied to shook his head, and passed on.

“You, there! Can you tell me what it is if it's not afire?”

The boy snapped his fingers at her, and ran on.

“What, are ye all running after you don't know what? What is it, I say?”

“Come and see, if you can't ask civilly,” growled an old man, making his way on his two sticks as fast as he could.

“What care I what's the matter?” muttered the woman, turning to descend once more into the vault.

“O, ask this person!” cried M. Gaubion. “He looks as if he could and would tell us.”

“Ask him yourself, can't ye, instead of watching and listening to what I may say. If you have nothing better to do than that, you might go and see for yourself, I think.”

As he turned to go away, the lady condescended to make one more effort to satisfy her curiosity.

“It is something about the Frenchman, I don't know exactly what,” was the reply. “Something about his having smuggled goods while he pretended to weave them. They are looking for him, to give him three groans, or a ride, or a ducking, or something of the sort.”

“Perhaps they won't have to look very long if they come to the right place,” observed the woman, with an ill-natured laugh towards M. Gaubion, who did not stay to hear more. When he arrived at the end of his own street, his first impression was that all was quiet, and the place empty; but a moment convinced him that the dark mass extending up and down from his own house, which he had taken for shadow, was in reality a crowd. The occasional movement of a woman with a white cap, or an apron over her head, showed him what the picture really was; and this was the only stir seen for awhile.

“O dear! sir, O sir, is it you? Let me advise you to turn back,” said a respectable body who stood at her shop-door, and instantly knew M. Gaubion. “It is as much as your life is worth, sir, to go near. There! here comes somebody out of the crowd, I declare! Bless you, sir, do take care of yourself!” and she stepped backwards, and shut the door full in the gentleman's face.

“You take good care of yourself, at least,” thought the persecuted man to himself. “You are afraid even to ask me to shelter myself with you from this storm. But you need not have feared. I must first learn how my sisters are.”

This was done by boldly pushing through a crowded thoroughfare into the back row, stepping over a paling or two, taking the liberty of crossing two or three gardens, dispersing a few broods of chickens by the way, climbing a wall, crawling along the roof of an outhouse, where the pigeons wondered at the new companion who had come among them, and finally taking a vigorous leap just by his own back-door. No hue and cry disturbed these manœuvres. There was less danger of this than there would have been in the dead of night. All eyes were more securely absent than if they had been closed in sleep, for they were occupied with what was passing in front of the house.

“Mercy on us! here they come in from behind!” cried the terrified kitchen damsels as their master burst open the back-door. “God save us! it's my master himself, and he'll be murdered. O, sir, why did not you stay away?”

“Fasten up that door,” said the gentleman. “As one got in that way, more might. Lock and bolt it.—Where is your mistress; and Miss Adèle, where is she?”

“Upstairs, and towards the front, sir; and do you know, Mademoiselle has been to the lower windows, behaving as brave as a general; so miserable about you, sir, all the time. She went down to tell the people that you were not here; but she has been in such a terror every moment, lest you should come and thrust yourself into the midst of

it. We have been thinking of all ways to get somebody out to give you warning; but there was nobody but us women. Mademoiselle wished to have gone herself; but, besides that we could not think of such a thing, she was wanted to amuse the people with observing her, as she says. So she keeps about the front windows. We think some help will be here soon, to do away with their idea of waylaying you; but my mistress is in mortal terror, though she is above showing it to the wretches without."

"Well, tell her that I am safe in the house—"

"And upstairs, sir? You will go upstairs out of sight?"

"Willingly: into the loft, if it will make my sisters any easier. But do not go as if you had a piece of news to tell her. Let it drop quietly, that the people may not find out that she is hearing anything particular."

The maid performed her office with some prudence, and brought back a message that Made moiselle dared not come to speak to him yet; but that if he would go into the back attic, Adèle should visit him presently with some refreshment.

With deep disgust at being compelled thus to skulk on his own premises, the gentleman ascended to the top of the house, and venturing to take a brush from his own chamber as he passed, was occupied in brushing his coat when his younger sister appeared. She nearly let fall the tray she was carrying, as she cried,

"They have had hold of you, after all, I do believe!"

"What! because I look a strange figure? No, my dear. This dust is from the wall I had to get over, and these cobwebs from the top of the outhouse."

"How horrid! But the first thing I am to tell you is———What are you listening to? Yes, it is! It is a band. There are soldiers or somebody coming at last. We thought they never would. We thought nobody would help us.—Stay! where are you going? Into the front room? O, you must not! Indeed, indeed you must not go there!" And Adèle hung her whole weight upon her brother's arm, and screamed.

"Hush! hush! you silly child," he said. "One scream may do more harm than anything I mean to venture. I will only peep from the corner of the blind to see what is coming; that is all."

Adèle sobbed with terror as her brother performed the projected feat.

"Ah, there is some protection coming for us, I suppose, by the crowd making way. And yet the people do not look frightened. Nobody moves off. Music! what wretched music! It cannot possibly belong to a regiment. A drum and two fifes. What is it that they are playing, Adèle?"

Adéle sobbed out that it was the "Dead March in Saul," she believed.

“Ah! so it is! Now, my dear, come here! Do look! It will make you laugh, instead of crying. What is all this about, do you think?”

“What a ridiculous figure!” exclaimed Adèle, laughing. “How can grown-up men play with such a thing?”

“It is meant for me. Do not you see?”

“But you do not wear powder, nor a long pigtail all down your back: and you do not stick out your elbows in that ridiculous way.”

“Some people think that all Frenchmen do so; and many in this crowd—most of them, I believe—have never seen me. But you will perceive presently how they would treat me, if they could get hold of me.”

M. Gaubion being more inclined to observe in deep silence what was going on than to proffer any further explanations, left his sister to discover for herself that there was a cord round the neck of the effigy, that the piece of wood over its head was meant for a gibbet, and that a double death was to be typified by its fate, preparations being already in progress for a fire in the midst of the crowd.

There was scarcely wood enough collected to broil the effigy thoroughly, and further contributions were speedily brought in from all quarters, as soon as the want was made known. Men from the neighbourhood brought old lumber which their wives had pointed out as being to be spared. Lads brought pales and faggots, no one knew whence. The very children seemed to catch the spirit, casting from their little hands such bits of paper and of shavings as they could pick up. One poor little fellow, however, was less patriotic than his companions. He cried bitterly at seeing his wheelbarrow sacrificed, and pulled his merciless father's coat till a box on the ear struck him dumb and tearless. It was true the barrow was without a wheel, had lost a leg, and presented only one shaft; but still it was his barrow, and had been used to the last for purposes much more congenial to the child's tastes than roasting a Frenchman.—M. Gaubion internally blessed this child,—not for an instant supposing that anything but attachment to his barrow was the cause of his resistance,—but loving him for being the only one unwilling to feed the insulting fire.

“The very children,” thought he, “that have smiled and nodded at me, when I stepped out of the way of their marbles, and come confidently to me when their kites have fallen over my wall, are at this moment taught to mock and hate me, they know not why. That boy who is pinning the effigy's name—Mounseer Go-be-hung—on its back, was taught to write by my order. There goes my green wicket!—off its hinges, and into the heap! The lads that pulled it down have often passed through it with my work under their arms, and my money in their pockets.—O, you fiend of a woman! Do you put shavings into your infant's hand, that it too may have a share in the inhospitality of your country? May that infant live to subsist upon my resources, and to make you thank heaven that the Frenchman came among you!—Ah! you are all calling for fire. By heavens, I believe you will get none! Yonder housewife shakes her head; and in the next house they are raking out the fire. There is not a candle to be

seen through a window, the whole length of the street. Can it be that my neighbours feel for me? Alas! here is a lighted slip of wood procured at last! Bravo! good woman! brave woman! to empty your pot of beer upon it! Who is that they have laid hands on there? The lamp-lighter; the same that I spoke to. He should not have brought his lantern! They will take it from him. Not they! dash it goes against the wall; and what a yell as its fragments fly! I *have* friends, I see; but they are of those who have nothing to do with silk-weaving; of those who owe nothing to me, instead of those whom I have benefited. Well; I will not blame the people, but the discipline of jealousy in which they have been brought up.—Here is fire at last! I will not seek to know who gave it. God forgive him!"

It was enough to madden the most gentle who was interested in the case, to see how the effigy was treated in the fire;—poked with pitch-forks, made to dance upon the gibbet, to fold its hands, to turn its labelled back, and nod to the ladies who were supposed to be peeping from some corner of the windows. So searching a glance traversed the whole front of the house from a thousand upturned and gleaming faces, that M. Gaubion felt it necessary to withdraw, and forego the rest of the irritating sight. He could not go out of hearing of his new name,—Mounseer Go-be-hung,—shouted in the intervals between the groans with which the flaming of the last tatters of the effigy was hailed; but the presence of his sister made him calm. He could not agree in the conviction of the housemaid, that he would be a prodigious favourite with the people in a few days; like a master in whose family she had once lived, who was burned in effigy one week, and the next, received amidst the touching of hats wherever he went, the question about wages between him and his men having been settled in the interval. M. Gaubion did not stand so good a chance for popularity;—in the first place, because he was a foreigner; and in the next, because whatever evils the people were suffering from the speculation and overtrading of their masters, could not be remedied so speedily as a dispute about wages could be temporarily settled. As for dissociating foreigners in the minds of the people, from their hardships,—that was likely to be as much a work of time as the removal of the hardships themselves.

Before the crowd had quite ended their grim pastime, the expected interruption happened. An alarm of the approach of the authorities spread from a considerable distance, and all dispersed hither and thither, leaving it to the winds to play with the smouldering embers, and to the gazers from the surrounding windows to watch the last little puffs of smoke, as they wandered into the upper air.—A thundering rap brought down M. Gaubion, grave and stiff, followed by his sisters, grave and pale, to open the door which the servants could not be induced to unlock and unbar.

When everything had been ascertained from the inhabitants of the house which could be told by the young ladies and the trembling, loquacious servants (at length persuaded to look their protectors in the face, instead of peeping at them over the banisters) about the circumstances of the riot, and from their master about its supposed causes, the magistrate departed, with the persons he brought with him, except one constable who was left to guard the house, and a messenger who seemed to come on other business.

He shortly explained his errand. Taking a newspaper from his pocket, he pointed out that the Secretary of the Treasury, and the whole Board of Customs, were charged with being cognizant of the fact of the foreigner's smuggling transactions, and parties to his scheme for ruining the trade of his neighbours. So grave a charge rendered it necessary for his Majesty's government to sift the matter to the bottom, and to ascertain the real state of the case with regard to the Frenchman, as well as to prove their own innocence. It was possible that irregularities on the part of a mercantile firm might have been connived at by some of the inferior servants of the Customs Board; and though it was far from being the intention of the Board to impute such irregularities to M. Gaubion, it was desirable that he should, if possible, put it in their power to acquit him wholly of the charge.

“Thankfully,—most thankfully will I do so,” was his reply. “How shall we commence the proceeding?”

“By your accompanying me with the least possible delay to the Treasury, where your accusers will meet you.”

“I am ready at this instant. Let us go.—But what kind of proof will be required? Is it necessary to prepare my proofs, or will a clear head and an honest heart suffice for my defence?”

The messenger had no orders but to bring the gentleman himself. It was too late this evening; but he would wait upon him the next morning, to guide him into the presence of his accusers.

This arrangement completely restored M. Gaubion's spirits. His sister was somewhat fluttered by the idea of such an examination as he was to undergo; but assented to its being the thing of all others now to be desired. Adèle could not be talked out of the idea that her brother was going to be tried, and that something very dreadful must happen. She cried herself to sleep, to be awakened by visions of the effigy dancing in the flames. Her brother lost even the oppressive sense of being the object of popular hatred in his satisfaction at being allowed an opportunity of justifying himself, and slept undisturbed by the ghosts of the events of the bygone day.

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Chapter VI.

INVESTIGATIONS.

While Mademoiselle was striving to employ herself diligently the next morning, during her brother's absence, three quarters of her acquaintance came to condole, or to enquire, or to use any pretence which might enable them to satisfy their curiosity. Of the remaining fourth part, some had the kindness to stay at home, and content themselves with a message of enquiry how the family found themselves after the alarm of the last evening; while others contented themselves with remaining at home, and not sending, dropping a hint at the breakfast-table that it would be time enough to take notice of past events when it should appear whether the Gaubions could clear themselves, and what would be thought of them henceforward. Mr. Culver left no orders, before he went out, as to what his young people were to do; and when the question was proposed by themselves, there was a difference of opinion. Nurse believed that foreigners were a bad set altogether, and that it would be better to have nothing more to do with any of them. Charlotte thought it would look rather odd to break off intercourse so suddenly; and Lucy offered to vouch for poor Adfele's having done nothing very bad about smuggling, however the case might stand with her brother. The girls agreed that it might be a kindness to take Adèle for the day; and even nurse was open to the argument that it would be very pleasant to hear the whole story of the riot from the very best authority. The debate ended in nurie and Lucy

–Lucy as being Adèle's special companion—setting off to bring her back with them;—an object less easy of accomplishment than they had imagined.

Being sent for to speak to them in the hall, Adèle appeared, to urge their proceeding to the dining-room.

“Every body is there,” said she, “and you will hear all about it, if you will come in. The room is almost full; but you know most of the people. We never thought of so many coming at once, but it would not do not to see them; it would make them think there is more the matter than there really is; and I am sure they all mean to be very kind. Do come in.”

In answer to the suggestion that they could hear every thing much more comfortably from her in Devonshire-square, the little French girl positively declined leaving home this day. She gave so many good reasons for her resolve, that there was nothing for it but following her into the parlour, if they wished to carry home any tidings.

“Such a pity, to be sure,” Mrs. Piggins was saying, “when you had painted and made all nice so lately. It is but a month, scarcely a month, I think, Betsy, since I got a daub of green paint on my cloak (all my own carelessness, ma'am; I'm sure I don't mean———) from your green wicket, and now it is pulled down and burned to ashes! and the smoke, I see, has blackened the cornice; so lately as it was painted! We just

looked up before we knocked at the door, to find whether the front of the house seemed any-how different; and then Betsy pointed out to me that the cornice was blackened,"

"And so brutal it was of the people, Mademoiselle," observed Miss Harvey, "to make you light the pile that was to burn your brother. I wonder how you ever did it,—only that I suppose you could not help yourself."

"O, that is quite a mistake," replied Mademoiselle, smiling. "They asked us for fire, and we told them our fires were out; that was all."

"Well, to be sure!" cried Miss Harvey, looking at her sister, "we were told that they dragged you among them, and made you set the bonfire alight with a torch, and that you cried out loud, ' My hand but not my heart consents.' So this is not true?"

Mademoiselle shook her head.

"Then it may not be true either—It is better to ask at once," said the lady, in answer to her sister's wink and frown, "it may not be true either that M. Gaubion was handcuffed when he was fetched away to the Treasury."

"What is that?" asked Mademoiselle, whose ear did not happen to have ever been met by the word 'handcuffed'."

By gesture, as well as explanation, the sense was made known to her; and then her laugh had as much of indignation as of mirth in it.

"You might have supposed that was false without asking," said the younger Miss Harvey to her sister. "As it was not true that M. Gaubion had his right arm broken, and that Miss Adèle lay without hopes of recovery———"

"I!" exclaimed Adèle "they did nothing to me; they never thought about me at all."

"So I find, my dear; but that is the way people will talk."

"Now, Mademoiselle," observed good, kind Mr. Belson, "if you are quite sure that neither my wife nor I can do any thing for you, I had better be going, instead of helping to fill your room when you cannot possibly be much disposed for entertaining company. You are very right, my dear,—quite right to open your doors, and let people see how little is to be seen; but there is no need for me to trouble you any longer. When you wish to see my wife, just send across to tell her so. and make any use you like of me. Good morning, ladies."

More visitors came in, and Mademoiselle had again to begin the ten-times-repeated tale.

"And which window was it you first looked out of, ma'am? The first story, did you say? We were told the lower———"

"It is certainly a hackney-coach, Adèle," cried Mademoiselle, who had started from her seat in the midst of that which was being said to her; "it is a hackney-coach with two gentlemen in it."

And without ceremony the two young ladies ran out of the room, closing the door behind them, and leaving their visitors to look wondering and wise upon each other. Miss Harvey stepped to the window in time to see the tenants of the coach alight, whispering to her sister that Mademoiselle had not absolutely denied the story of the handcuffs, after all.

Free in respect of the hands, however, and apparently light of heart, the gentleman alighted, nodding to his sisters, but not entering the house till his slow-paced companion was ready to precede him. The coach was not discharged; the ladies did not at once re-enter the room; and the second person was certainly not a gentleman; but it was impossible to suppose that matters were going wrong, while M. Gaubion wore so cheerful a face. Thus decided the observers in the dining-room.

"Is it all over?—all well over?" whispered Mademoiselle, on meeting her brother.

"All brought to an issue which cannot fail," he replied. "They will have my books; and my books are the best witnesses I could bring,—eloquent, silent witnesses of my innocence."

"They do not believe you then?"

"The Board of Customs does, I am confident; but they cannot refuse to go to the bottom of the matter, now they have begun, and it is very well for me that it should be so; but I cannot stay now; I must not keep the officer waiting———"

"The officer!"

"Yes; I asked for him. Do not look so frightened; I requested that he might come with me, that I might not be suspected of leaving some of my books behind, or destroying any papers. I did propose sending to you for the books; but I thought you might, in your hurry, omit something."

"I am glad you came yourself."

"So am I, as it will satisfy you that the affair must end well. Now that they have brought me to the proof, I am safe."

Mademoiselle could not deny this; yet the thought of an officer being on the premises cast a shade over her face as she returned to her visitors.

One of the ladies proffered the consoling consideration that, if the worst came to the worst, the punishment would be nothing in comparison with what many gentlemen had undergone for treason, and such things. She supposed a fine would be all; and it could not be very difficult for M. Gaubion to pay a fine; and if there should be a short imprisonment added———

“I thought I had explained, madam, that there is no danger of any kind of punishment; there is not even a prosecution; and, if there were, my brother has clear proof to bring forward of the falsehood of the charge. My concern is only on account of its being imagined that he could be so false, so treacherous, as to come and seem to rely on the hospitality of a foreign nation, for the very purpose of injuring their trade. Let his acquittal be as honourable as possible,—as honourable as it will be,—still we can never forget that he has been suspected of this despicable offence against the society he lives in.”

As all was now known that could be known within the limits of a decent visit, one after another of the visitors dropped away; those who lingered in the street agreeing with those who overtook, that Mademoiselle was a very sweet creature, certainly, and probably perfectly delightful in her native society; but that she was rather high-flown for this sober country.

Mademoiselle had need of all her high-flown thoughts to sustain her this day. Her brother did not come home to dinner, nor appear at tea-time, nor arrive before the last moment to which Adèle was permitted to sit up, in hopes of his customary evening blessing. A little while before midnight he returned, languid,—whether only in body, or likewise depressed in spirits, his sister could not at first discover. He solemnly assured her that all was going on well; that his books had been minutely examined, and every transaction found to be regular, and every statement correct. The declaration of the amount of his stock was found to be consistent with the number of weavers whose English names stood in his books; and the work declared to be now in their hands tallied with the unfulfilled orders which were registered. Yet all was not over; it remained to send round to the houses which were set down as the abodes of his weavers, in order to discover whether those weavers really lived there, and were actually employed on the work declared to be in their looms. This was to be done to-morrow, and when it should have turned out favourably for the foreigner, it was difficult to conceive of any further pretence being found for doubting his word, or persecuting him as an enemy.

Yet Mademoiselle was certain that her brother was dejected—that his confidence was impaired; and she told him so. He admitted it, and ascribed the change in his spirits to the alteration which had taken place in the relative feelings of himself and his accusers. While it was merely that he, was not esteemed by them, his consciousness of, innocence was sufficient to bear him up. But they had, since morning, seen so much jealousy, heard so much cavilling, witnessed such unwillingness to relinquish each charge, and such extraordinary ingenuity in imagining methods of fraud which might possibly have been put in practice by him, that he felt he could no longer respect or esteem some among whom he had hoped to live in amity.

It was very painful, he observed, not to be esteemed by them; but not to be permitted to esteem them was an intolerable evil. He did not know what he could do but go away, after all.

“Wait; be patient till the more liberal policy has had time to work,” was his sister's advice. “If it be true that the former system made them subtle and jealous, the latter

and better system may restore to them the attributes of that brotherhood which must some day prevail. If it is already too late for them to be thus wrought upon, there is hope from their children and successors. Let us remain to prove it."

"It is folly," he replied, "to expect that the blighting effects of a prohibitive system can be removed from the heart and mind, any more than from the fortunes, in the course of one generation, or of many generations; but if we can aid the work of amelioration by staying, let us stay, and convert into friends as many of our neighbours as we can."

The next morning was rather a warm one for the work which M. Gaubion had to do. It is warm work on a freezing winter's day to have one's good faith questioned, and to listen to cross-examinations conducted with the express object of discovering discrepancies in one's statements, and under the certainty that every mistake detected is to be'accounted a lie. When to this is added the climbing the stair-cases of Spitalfields, in summer weather, the glare in the streets from long rows of burnished lattices, and the trippings and slippings on cabbage-stalks and leaves in the alleys, any degree of lassitude may be pardoned at the end of the excursion. The Frenchman had to take heed to his steps in more ways than one. He was careful not to dictate to the examiners in any way, and never to precede them in their walks and their clambering. They had with them a plan of Spitalfields, and he left it wholly to them to discover the abodes entered in his books, and to satisfy themselves that the persons named really dwelt there. He stood passive—(whether also patient was best known to himself)—while a consultation was held in the broiling sun whether they should turn this way or that, and how they should discover the right number when there was no visible sign of it. He followed up stairs merely to see that he had fair play, and then, for the first and last time in his life, could not condescend to speak to his own weavers.

Notwithstanding lungs, stomach, and head, Mrs. Ellis was still at work, and still able, by brandishing her brush, to raise clouds as instantaneously as Jupiter himself could cleave them with a motion of his armed right hand. Her locket still shone, only somewhat more coppery than before; and her hair was decidedly grown, its front ringlets now tickling her chin as they danced in the breath of her loom.

"A beautiful piece of velvet, indeed, Mrs. Ellis! Your name is Ellis, I think."

"Alas! yes, sir; and the worse for me that I ever knew the name; much more took it. Such a life as I had with my husband———"

"Well, we did not come to hear about your husband, but about you. You are a person of much more Importance to us, Mrs. Ellis."

The lady came out of her loom to make a more extensive curtsey than the space within its bench would allow.

"A beautiful figure that velvet has, to be sure, What house are you weaving it for?"

"Mr. Corbyn's, sir. We all weave fot Mr. Corbyn."

The examiners looked at one another, and one of them was disposed to think she meant to say Culver, as there was no manufacturer of the name of Corbyn in the neighbourhood.

“Do you mean Mr. Culver or M. Gaubion, good woman?” asked an impartial examiner.

“Same's he they call Mounseer Go-be-hung,” Tom called out from behind.

“What, this gentleman?” and they made way for the Frenchman to show himself. At the sight of him, Tom reddened prodigiously, and poked over his work as if his life depended on his weaving half a yard an hour.

“What are you ashamed of, all in a moment?” asked one of the visitors. “I am afraid you had some hand in the riots the other night, like many an idle boy. Come, tell me; do not you like to light a bonfire?”

“Indeed I can't say that my Tom is any thing better than a middling boy,” observed Mrs. Ellis. “Would you believe it, gentlemen, he left his work a full quarter of an hour sooner than he had leave to do, the night of the riot; and when he came home, the skin was off the palm of his hand as clean as if it had been peeled, and he has never had the grace to seem sorry for it.”

“Indeed, I don't know who should be sorry for such a misfortune, if he is not,” observed a visitor, gravely. “Come, Tom, tell me how it happened. You had been pulling down shutters, or pulling up palings, I am afraid.”

“I hadn't though,” said Tom, attempting to set the treadles going, but being instantly deprived by his mother of his shuttle.

“Then I doubt you helped to carry the gibbet, and hang the effigy?”

“I didn't though,” answered Tom.

“Who hurt your hand so, then? It must have been somebody in a great passion.”

“No, ’twarnt; I got it done myself.”

“Well, I wonder at your taste. I would always keep a whole skin, if I could.”

Tom pulled his forelock respectfully, and went on with his work, his mother shaking her head, as if she thought his case desperate. Other people's leaving off speaking to him was the signal for M. Gaubion to begin.

“I think I saw you, Tom, the night of the riot.” Tom looked up.

“Was it not you that cut the rope, and tried to drag the effigy away?”

Tom nodded.

“What did you do next? I was obliged to go from the window then.”

“So you *war* there! I just crinkle-crankled myself up in the rope, so that they couldn't burn you without me too.”

“But they did not burn you, I hope?”

“Jist singed a bit; no more. This,” pointing to his hand, “comed of a great nail in the gibbet, that gived me a good hould as long as it lasted.”

“So you pulled it out.”

“We split the gibbet's self ’mong us; and then ’twar all over with me, and I corned home directly then.”

“Why did not you stay to see the sight, when once you found you could not help its going forward?”

“They put me in a rare passion, ‘mong ’em; and I didn't want to see nought of their sights.”

“What were you in a passion about? What had you to do with it?”

To this question no answer was to be got, but instead thereof an inquiry.

“For all they say, you won't think of going away for sich as they? They'll come round, when they see you don't go off in a huff.”

“And if I do go, you will easily get work, Tom. You weave well now, and Mr. Culver and many others will have work to give you.”

“No fear,” Tom said; but he did not seem to wish M. Gaubion to go away the more for that.

“Do ask her,” said one of the visitors to the Frenchman,—“you know her better than we do,—do ask her why, in times like these, she does not live in more comfort. The wonder is that she lets these looms at all in a room where a saucepan-full of cabbage-water stands in a corner, and her peppermint-bottle on the sill, and not a window open.”

M. Gaubion did not see that it was any business of his; but Tom overheard the remark, and gave assurance that his mother had so little appetite that she could not eat her breakfast without her little rasher and greens; and that she was so subject to sinking of her inside, that she was obliged to keep her peppermint-bottle beside her.

“And do you take any of it, boy?”

“Why, no, sir: my inside don't sink often till night; and then I go and garden.”

"That is better than taking peppermint, depend upon it. Mrs. Ellis, it seems to me a pity that you should bring up both these young folks as weavers. If you were to make this boy something else, there would be a better chance for you all when bad times come; and meanwhile, you could let his loom for half as much as he earns."

Objections sufficient to knock down half-a-dozen such proposals were poured out on the instant, and re-urged so vehemently on the mention of bad times, that it was plain the widow did not anticipate bad times, but thought weaving the best occupation she could bring up her children to. She ended by saying, that to be pretty sure of work, at Tom's age, under such a master as M. Gaubion, was more than he could expect in any other employment; and that if there was any change, she thought *she* should have the benefit of it. Heaven only knew what she had gone through, from Tom's age till now—in her husband's time especially. She always thought, in her youth, that her's was a hard lot, so much at the loom as she was; but all that was nothing to the confinement afterwards. Her husband was of a jealous temper, God forgive him! and kept at home and within himself sadly; and he could not bear that her acquaintance should be so much more general than his; so that she had more trouble than enough if she moved three yards from her own door, to have a chat with a neighbour. Since she lost him, poor man! (which would have been a great relief but for her having such a family upon her hands,) she had had to work for bread, and for any little comforts which her weak health made necessary; and now, if anybody was to have rest, or any advantage, it should be herself, and not Tom, who was but just———

"But would you apprentice yourself to a gardener, or to learn any new business?" inquired M. Gaubion. "That was what I contemplated for Tom. If he could weave like you,—if this velvet were his work,—I should not propose the change."

The widow laughed at the idea of her boy weaving as well as herself, but would not yet hear of any change. The examiners found that it was time to make a change in the scene of their inquiries; and declaring themselves satisfied that Mrs. Ellis was Mrs. Ellis, and that she lived and wove as declared, they left poor Tom to throw his shuttle amidst reveries of ranunculus, geranium, tulip, and hyacinth.

The names of Dickens and Rogers were down on the list; and it was therefore necessary to go to Cooper's, whesre their looms stood.

There was not a more cheerful house in all Spitalfields than Cooper's. Short had resumed his ancient song, and sat, with his grizzled hair hanging about his round shoulders, cheerily weaving his fiftieth last piece. Dickens and Rogers were no less busy, and, consequently, equally amiable. No dispute ever arose within these four walls, but when the comparative merits of the masters, English and French, were in question; or when, by chance, any old-world custom was brought into contrast with any new. On such occasions, Mrs. Cooper's good-humour presently charmed away strife; and she contrived, ultimately, to persuade each disputant to be content with his own opinion, as he was with his own species of work. Let him who weaves gros-de-Naples feel himself enlightened in his advocacy of what is modern; and let him who weaves velvet plume himself on his fidelity to what is ancient. Such was her philosophy, communicated in a timely smile, and a gentle word let drop here and

there. Ichabod was an admirable auxiliary in restoring peace when his grown-up companions were ruffled. He could at any time be made to imitate the loom's smack and tick, or to look into Rogers's pocket to see what he could find there; or to stroke old Short's cheek, and rock upon his shoulders, regardless of the dusty coat-collar; or to stick a daisy into Dickens's button-hole; after any one of which feats he was blessed, and winked at behind his back, as the rarest child that ever was seen. If, on hot days, a pint of beer was wished for, Ichabod could bring it without spilling, provided it was in a quart pot. Surrounded by both arms, and tightly squeezed against his breast, it arrived safe, Mrs Cooper removing every stick and straw out of her child's path, that he might get credit and confidence, instead of disgrace and a panic. Cooper, meanwhile, worked away for his wife and boy, trusting to go on to do so, notwithstanding any temporary mischief caused by the speculations of throwsters, and when the discordant prophecies of those about him should have issued in acquiescence in the lasting benefits of an unrestricted commerce.

The examiners were even more tempted to forget their immediate object here than at Mrs. Ellis's. One walked straight up to the clear, bright window, to look out upon the patch of garden-ground behind; while the other took notice of a curious foreign clock (once belonging to Cooper's ancestors), which had been preserved as family property through all chances and changes of fortune. It was true that now either of the almost equally short hands might point as it happened, to six or twelve; that the machine, like other machines, sometimes went to sleep at night, and was now and then drowsy in the day; but the case was inlaid as curiously as ever, and the chimes set all the lively children who might be within hearing chiming, morning, noon, and night. Whatever might be Ichabod's destined education in other respects, he was sure to know enough of German text to read the name of the maker of this clock, and sufficient geography to be able to tell whereabouts on the earth's surface lay the Flemish town where it received its wondrous being.

“You should see my husband's other garden, out of doors, sir,” said Mrs. Cooper. “You seem to like this; but it is nothing to the one out of doors. I do not mean for size, but for the beauty of the flowers.”

“Ay,” observed Short,” he pays ten shillings a year for it; and he does not make half so much out of it as used to be made in my young days.”

“I get health and wholesome amusement out of it; and that is enough when one cannot get more. You see, gentlemen, ours is a bad occupation for the health and the nerves. You may see a sort of scared look, they say, that we weavers have, and bent backs, by the time we come to middle age; and even my hands shake so sometimes, at the end of a long day's work, that I should soon begin to feel myself growing old, if I did not turn out to breathe a little, and occupy myself in something pleasant. It is well worth while making a little less money than one might do, and to keep one's health.”

“Certainly; if you are lucky enough to be able to afford it.”

“Why, sir, our people here do mostly contrive to afford some fancy or another; either a garden like mine, or birds, or flute-playing, or drawing. Drawing for the most part

requires a steadier hand than a weaver has; but we hear many a flute far and near in the summer evenings. There are few fancies that may not be found here and there among us: though there are not many men that, having but one child and a managing wife, are so free to afford them as I am."

"The way to afford them is to make them pay," observed old Short. "Folks understood that matter in my time. A root that Cooper here sells for eighteen-pence, used to bring five guineas. Those were the times to grow flowers in."

"I had rather see a hundred roots of any beautiful tulip in a hundred gardens," observed M. Gaubion, "that a hundred owners might enjoy its beauty, than have the single root from which the hundred sprang, even though it might make me envied by all my neighbours, and moreover be worth five or fifty guineas."

"So had I, sir," said Cooper: "for the same reason that I had rather see any useful or pretty article of manufacture growing cheap, and spreading over the world, than have it remain scarce, that I and a few others might have the sale of it to ourselves. My flowers answer their purpose better in giving pleasure to me and mine, than in being wondered at and snatched up for their rarity; and it is the same with things that are wrought by the hand of man. They must be scarce at the beginning; but that scarcity is a necessary fault, not a virtue, as far as their usefulness is concerned. But, as to making them more scarce than they need be, I would not be the man that had to answer for it!"

"Then you deserve the due and true reward of the liberal,—to have plenty while giving others plenty. I see you work for one master, and these neighbours of yours for another. You seem all to be busy enough."

"Yes, sir. Thank God! M. Gaubion has had enough for his people to do; and we,—that is, I,"—nodding with a significant smile towards Short,—"cannot but improve by seeing what is all the same as French work going on under one's eyes. Our fabrics, sir, are quite another thing already to what they were three years ago."

There was indeed a manifest difference between Short's piece (which might be taken as a specimen of what the English fabric had been five years before) and Cooper's, whose work was little, if at all, inferior to that which M. Gaubion's trained men were achieving with his improved apparatus.—That gentleman took no part while the comparison was being made; and when looked for, as his companions were about to leave the room, was found in a corner with Ichabod, cooking dinner in the kitchen of a baby-house which was the little lad's favourite toy. Twice had the jack been wound up, nine times had the goose revolved, and again and again had the lady inhabitant been brought down from her toilet to the kitchen fire, and led from the kitchen to her jointed table, before Ichabod would leave hold of M, Gaubion's right-hand cuff, and allow him to go about other business than his gallant cookery.

"Your little son has his fancy as well as you," the gentleman observed with a smile. "Though far from the age of being worn and weary, Ichabod has his fancy;—the first fancy, I hope, of many."

“It is as much Mr. Short's fancy as Ichabod's, or more,” replied Mrs. Cooper, “Mr. Short has been good enough to make the greater part of this toy with his own hands. These little chairs are cut with his own knife; and the looking-glass,—do look, sir, how nicely so small a bit of glass is framed,—this looking-glass is of his making; and so little time as he has now too!”

Short let his shuttle rest while he watched complacently how the grave men of business gathered round his baby-house, to admire one and another of its toys. He did not hear Cooper whisper that Mr. Short seemed to have more time now for the child than when he used to sit over the fire all day, moping because he had nothing to do. Now, it was a regular thing, on a Sunday morning, for the old man to take Ichabod on his knee, and turn over the big bible, that was brought down out of the cupboard, looking at the pictures, and at Short's great-grandfather's handwriting. And there was scarcely an evening that he was not about one little kind-hearted job or another, while the child was asleep, little thinking what treats were preparing for him.

“Well! long may we all be able to afford to keep a fancy!” said one of the visitors. “That is, if the fancy is of a better kind than that of accusing this gentleman here, because he is a foreigner, of practices which it is clear to me he never dreamed of.”

All present joined in the wish, and Rogers and Dickens desired no more than to be as free from care, if they lived to old age, as Short was now. He was sure, from his claim of long service, of work from a good master, as long as any work was to be had; and there was little doubt of this whenever the consequences of the first disorder, inevitable on the occasion of a change of system, should be surmounted, and speculation subside into its natural channels. This would soon happen now, and Short need not, they hoped, say any more that he had woven his last piece, till he should find his hand refuse to throw the shuttle, or his feet grow stiff upon the treadles.

M. Gaubion had a bow from the entire audience as he left the room, Short himself being propitiated by his act of winding up the jack.

Others of the gentleman's foes were not so easily won. He very simply supposed, and led his sisters to suppose, that all was well over when the haunts of his weavers had been examined, and his statements found correct. No such thing. Some one was wise enough to discern that this entire method of examination and verification might be a concerted plot;—concerted between the Treasury and the Frenchman.

What was to be done next?

Some proof must be afforded that M. Gaubion had no French goods in his possession.

“A proof easily afforded,” replied he. “Go to my warehouse; turn over every piece of silk it contains; and with the first article of foreign manufacture which you can thence produce, I will restore to you my esteem, and forfeit yours.”

One, and another, and another, declined the commission, on the plea of want of confidence in their own judgment and experience; though it was scarcely three years since any notable little girl of ten years old could tell a French from an English silk by

a mere glance or touch. This new-born modesty was not allowed to be an obstacle to the experiment. M, Gaubion requested that the most acute detector of foreign fabrics on the Customs establishment should precede him to his warehouse, and try what could be found there. As it was impossible to devise a more searching trial of the foreigner's good faith than he had himself proposed, his plan was agreed upon.

Day after day, the inquiry was prosecuted; and M. Gaubion allowed the free range of his warehouse to all the parties concerned, except himself. He began to fancy, naturally enough, that he had mistaken his way on leaving home, and got set down in some country where the Inquisition still thrives, commerce being its subject instead of religion; silks its object instead of creeds; the fabrics of human hands instead of those of human heads. He could very confidently identify the working spirit.

He opposed an invincible patience to the workings of this spirit; and read with a calm eye the Report of the Custom House agent that thirty-seven pieces had been selected from among many hundred as undoubtedly French; and stood by with an unmoved countenance to witness their seizure; and followed with a steady step to the depôt, albeit greeted with insults at every turn, in the neighbourhood where he was known. Unassisted even by his own clerks, that no room might be afforded for a further charge of collusion, he made out from the books to which access was granted on his petition, a list of the weavers of these thirty-seven pieces; issued summonses to them, and went home to await the appearance of those who had to travel from Macclesfield to swear to their own work. His sisters had no more bitter jokes about handcuffs to amuse him with: but it was pretty evident to them, (though their neighbours were not so plain-spoken to the ladies as to their servants,) that it was thought not to look well that the matter was so long in hand; and that that which had been declared so easy of proof should be so tardily acknowledged. Mademoiselle was also quite of the opinion that all this did not look well. For whom it looked ill was another question.

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Chapter VII.

PROSPECTIVE BROTHERHOOD.

When the Macclesfield weavers arrived to swear to their handiwork, it was remarked with some surprise that they did not appear to bear the same similitude to their Spitalfields' brethren as one race of weavers usually bears to another. Several of them measured more than five feet five; and though some were pale and thin, they did not show the peculiar conformation of shoulders and of face which marks the weaving son and grandson of a weaver. The simple reason of this was, that most of these men had but lately taken to the craft; only in consequence of the magnificent promises held out, and the large speculations entered into, on the determination of parliament to repeal the restrictions of former years. When many thousands of apprentices were advertised for, and a multitude of new hands quarrelled for by ambitious capitalists, the temptation was great to quit employments which were poorly paid, for the sake of the wages which the masters vied with each other in offering. It happened, of course, that many, both of masters and men, were disappointed. The inundation of smuggled silks, caused by the prohibition of pieces of a certain length, prepared for the opened market, was a serious misfortune to the masters; and the immediate extension of sale, in consequence of the greatness of the supply, did not equal their expectations. As their stocks accumulated, some of their men were compelled to betake themselves to other occupations, or to wait for a clearance of the market, complaining, meanwhile, the foolish of the new measures by which a competition was established with the French, the wise of the miscalculations by which the good effects of the new measures had been for a time obscured. M. Gaubion's men alone had no cause for lamentation. The superiority of his goods ensured his immediate prosperity on his settling in England; and of his many workmen, none went back disappointed to an inferior kind of labour, or sat listless, waiting for better times.

These men had something cheerful to say even of those of their brethren whose hopes had been disappointed as to the silk manufacture. It happened “luckily,” as they said,—“of course,” as M. Gaubion and Mr. Culver agreed,—that there was an increased demand for labour in some other businesses, in exact proportion as French silks sold in our markets. This was natural enough, as the French must have something in return for their goods; and they would of course take those articles which we can produce better than they. It was not the less a happy thing, however, for the poor man, because it was a matter of course, that if one of his sons had to wait for the clearing of the silk market, another who was a cutler, and a third who was a cotton spinner, were in a state of increased prosperity. The fact was, that the distress of the weavers had been greater in 1816 than at any time since, while it was occasioned by causes much more likely to be lasting in their operation, and was in no degree compensated by increased briskness in other departments of British manufacture. The sum and substance of the news from Macclesfield was that some scores of slightly-built cottages were certainly tumbling into ruins, but that many dozens were inhabited which had not been in existence five years before;—that there had undoubtedly been a

transference of some hundreds of apprentices from the various branches of the silk manufacture to other departments of labour, but that a much greater number had been added to the silk throwing and weaving population;— and that, if many were still waiting for employment, they were not so many by half as those who had been taken on by other classes of masters.

It could not be otherwise, an officer of the Customs declared, as the imports of raw and thrown silk were already nearly double what they had been in the busiest year under the old system, and as our exports of manufactured silks had increased 300 per cent, since the trade had been thrown open.

“You left your own country just at the right time, sir,” observed another officer to M. Gaubion. “The French exports have been declining,—not so fast as ours have risen,—but enough to show that the English need not fear competition with their foreign neighbours.”

“But who could have guessed,” asked the first, “how amazingly the manufacture would improve in this short time? The heavier sort of fabrics have improved more in three years than in any quarter of a century before. As to gauzes, and ribbons, and other light kinds of goods, the French still surpass us there, and will do so, probably, for a long time to come; but in the substantial and more important fabrics of our looms, we can undersell our neighbours in many countries abroad.”

“For which we are partly indebted to this gentleman, whom some of you have taken upon you to persecute,” observed a plain-spoken Macclesfield man. “Poor man as I am, I had rather be myself, working under him, than them that have been working against him. And how it came into their heads to suspect him is more than I can guess. Come, gentlemen, I am ready to swear to my piece. That's the piece I wove: I can swear to it, by certain marks, as confidently as my wife could to our eldest by the mole on his arm.”

One of the Customs officers could give an account of one circumstance which had aggravated the suspicions against M. Gaubion. A mysterious-looking package had arrived at the Custom-house, addressed to Mademoiselle, and declared to contain a mummy for her museum. This package had been detained for some time, on pretence of its being difficult to assign the duties on an article which it did not appear had been in the contemplation of the framers of the Customs regulations at the period of their origin. A mummy could scarcely be specified as raw produce; and if considered as a manufactured article, it would be difficult to find a parallel by which to judge of the rate of duty for which it was liable. Under this pretence, the package had been detained; but there were suspicions that it enclosed some other stuffing than the linen swathing-bands of Egyptian production, and it was reserved for examination, in case of the whole train of evidence against the gentleman miscarrying. The more it was examined, the more the package looked as if it must conceal prohibited goods in some of its recesses; but the proof was kept for a grand explosion, as the catastrophe of poor M. Gaubion's trials. The gentlemen pf the Custom-house had begun now to think that there might be possibly no more dishonesty in this package than in those of M. Gaubion's proceedings which had been already investigated; and the box had

therefore been opened and examined this morning, when they found the mummy, the whole mummy, (which was well for Mademoiselle's museum,) and nothing but the mummy, (which was equally well on her brother's account.)

Nothing now remained but to verify the authorship of the thirty-seven pieces. Three men swore to two each as their own; and every one of the others was claimed by a maker. These thirty-seven pieces of unquestionable French goods were all woven in Macclesfield and Spitalfields!

Culver examined the men, and the marks they pointed out, and did not glance towards the Frenchman while the investigation was going on. Just so was it with the persevering accusers of the stranger. The difference between them and Mr. Culver was, that neither did they look in M. Gaubion's face finally, but slunk away, after the wont of false accusers; while Mr. Culver went up to the acquitted to say—

"I never gave worse advice, sir, than when I recommended you to keep quiet, and let matters take their course. Innocent as you are proved to have been all this time, I hope you would have disregarded my advice, if our riotous neighbours had not compelled you to throw it behind you. I thought I was giving you the most friendly counsel, sir; for, to say the truth, I thought,—without having a bad opinion of you, either,—that you had most probably been involved as these gentlemen said you were."

"Without having a bad opinion of me! How could that be?"

"Why, sir, when one considers how long our prohibitive laws have been evaded by all classes of people in turn,—so that the bad were not held to be the worse for such practices, and they were considered no stain upon the good,—it seemed natural enough that, if your interest tempted you particularly, you should continue the contraband trade when other people were thinking to have done with it."

"In declaring that I might violate public loyalty and private faith in one set of circumstances, without being a bad man," said M. Gaubion, "it seems to me that you pass the severest of censures on the power which framed those circumstances."

"I have no objection, sir, to having my words considered in that light. The business of governments is to guard the freedom of commerce, and not to interfere with it. If they choose to show partiality, and to meddle with affairs which they cannot properly control, they become answerable for the sin of disobedience which is sure to arise, and for all the mischiefs that follow in its train. If, moreover, governments take up any wrong notion,—such as that which has caused us a world of woe,—that the benefits of commerce arise from what is exported rather than from what is imported,—if such a notion is taken up, and obstinately acted upon, long after the bulk of the people know better, the ruling powers are responsible for all the consequences that visit themselves and the subjects whom they have afflicted, either by commercial misfortunes or by legal punishments."

“Then you consider your ancient governments (less liberal and enlightened than the present) answerable alike for my guilt, if I had smuggled, and for my troubles under the suspicion of having smuggled?”

“Just so; and for more within my little circle of observation than I should like to have to bear my share of.”

“For the late prosperity of Breme and his brother,—prosperity of which the neighbours were jealous because it arose from amidst the destitution of a host of native weavers?.”

“I could soon bring myself to bear the thought of that, seeing that Breme is more prosperous still, now that there is not destitution among his neighbours. The Brighton concern may have gone down in some degree; but the London one has flourished in greater proportion. I could much sooner forgive myself for Breme's former prosperity, let it come whence it might, than for breaking the heart of a fine fellow,—a friend of Breme's,—on the coast. I mention him because he is a specimen of a large class who were induced by the temptations of a flourishing contraband trade to quit their proper business, and set their hearts upon a cast which must disappoint them, sooner or later. Poor Pim was made for as hale and cheerful an old age as man need have: but he and his neighbours flourished too much under a bad system, and now they flourish too little under a better; and there sits the poor man, grey before his time, moping and moaning by his fireside, while his daughter, who should have gone on to be the best of housekeepers to a father she looked up to, is now striving to keep the house in another sense, and toiling in vain to preserve the appearances on which their scanty bread depends. Pim would never have been tempted to be anything but what he was fit for, if he had not unhappily fallen under an artificial system. Poor fellow! I hoped there had been comfort in store for him in the shape of a companion to gossip with. Our poor nurse———”

“My ancient enemy,” observed M. Gaubion, smiling. “I fear she will hardly be glad to hear the news of me that you will carry home. To your daughters, at least, I trust it will be welcome.”

“There is little intelligence that will be welcome to them to-day, even though it concerns yourself. They are mourning their old friend, who died this morning.”

“What, nurse! I shall be more grieved than ever that I caused her so much pain as I believe I did, by making myself, as far I could, an Englishman. But I could not help it. She left us no message of peace, I fear.”

“Not exactly a message, for she left no messages except one for my son, and one for Rebecca Pim; but I heard her speaking more pleasantly of your family yesterday than I should have expected. She kept her own opinions to the last; but she seemed to grow tired of the enmities which sprang from them. She felt kindly towards everybody latterly, as far as I know, except Mrs. Mudge's nurse-maid. Why, I can tell you no more of Mrs. Mudge's nurse-maid (nor could poor nurse herself, I fancy) than that she wears, and has for some time worn, a silk gown. It was this which occasioned the

message to my son; viz, that, as our firm is now prospering, she hoped we might do very well without tempting people to wear silks who never wore them before; and that, dying, she could not countenance what she had been so little used to, even if it was to benefit her master's trade and family. The message to Rebecca Pim related to those of Rebecca's neighbours who had been kind to nurse's poor son."

"Ah! I remember your daughters told my sisters that sad story. Can we be of any service to your family? Shall I send Adèle, or———"

"My dear sir! why do you stand here, letting me talk about a hundred things, while your ladies are in suspense about your affair? I deserve———"

"Not so. I have sent to relieve them, and shall now follow. Tell me if I can serve you."

"Yes, if you can make your sisters forgive the part I have acted towards you. For those who have done worse, I will offer no defence."

"None is needed beyond that which is before our eyes in the struggles of an expiring system of monopoly. But a few days ago, I thought I could hardly forgive my opponents; but now I am disposed to wait and see the effects of a natural co-operation of interests. Let your Coopers have hearts open for ' fancies,' and a purse wherewith to indulge them;—let your old friend Short leave an unfinished piece upon his loom when his hour shall come;—let your daughters purchase French or English dresses as they list;—let our neighbours and ourselves be free to sell where we find customers most eager to buy;—let the government trust us to prosper after our own manner,—and there will be no antipathies mixed up with our bargains; no loss of time and temper in suspiciously watching one another's proceedings; no mutual injury in apprehension, any more than in reality."

"Do you really expect to see the day when all will go so smoothly with us?"

"That the day will fully come I believe, because I already see the dawn. But a few hours ago it seemed to me all clouded, and I fretfully declared I would not abide the uncertainty."

"And now? You cannot now think of leaving us,—to our everlasting shame? You will allow us to repair our disgrace?"

"We will repent our mutual offences;—I my precipitancy, and you your misapprehension. Yes; I will stay, and in our brotherhood as individuals discern the future brotherhood of our respective nations.

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Summary Of Principles Illustrated In This And The Preceding Volume.

The countries of the world differ in their facilities for producing the comforts and luxuries of life.

The inhabitants of the world agree in wanting or desiring all the comforts and luxuries which the world produces.

These wants and desires can be in no degree gratified but by means of mutual exchanges. They can be fully satisfied only by means of absolutely universal and free exchanges.

By universal and free exchange,—that is, by each person being permitted to exchange what he wants least for what he wants most,—an absolutely perfect system of economy of resources is established, the whole world being included in the arrangement.

The present want of agreement in the whole world to adopt this system does not invalidate its principle when applied to a single nation. It must ever be the interest of a nation to exchange what it wants little at home for what it wants more from abroad. If denied what it wants most, it will be wise to take what is next best; and so on, as long as anything is left which is produced better abroad than at home.

In the above case, the blame of the deprivation rests with the prohibiting power; but the suffering affects both the trading nations,—the one being prevented getting what it wants most—the other being prevented parting with what it wants least.

As the general interest of each nation requires that there should be perfect liberty in the exchange of commodities, any restriction on such liberty, for the sake of benefiting any particular class or classes, is a sacrifice of a larger interest to a smaller,—that is, a sin in government.

This sin is committed when,—

First,—Any protection is granted powerful enough to tempt to evasion, producing disloyalty, fraud, and jealousy: when,

Secondly,—Capital is unproductively consumed in the maintenance of an apparatus of restriction: when,

Thirdly,—Capital is unproductively bestowed in enabling those who produce at home dearer than foreigners to sell abroad as cheap as foreigners,—that is, in bounties, on exportation: and when,

Fourthly,—Capital is diverted from its natural course to be employed in producing at home that which is expensive and inferior, instead of in preparing that which will purchase the same article cheap and superior abroad,—that is, when restrictions are imposed on importation.

But though the general interest is sacrificed, no particular interest is permanently benefited, by special protections, since

Restrictive regulations in favour of the few are violated, when such violation is the interest of the many; and

Every diminution of the consumer's fund causes a loss of custom to the producer. Again.

The absence of competition and deprivation of custom combine to make his article inferior and dear; which inferiority and dearness cause his trade still further to decline.

Such are the evils which attend the protection of a class of producers who cannot compete with foreign producers of the same article.

If home producers can compete with foreign producers, they need no protection, as, *cæteris paribus,* buying at hand is preferable to buying at a distance.

Free competition cannot fail to benefit all parties:—

Consumers, by securing the greatest practicable improvement and cheapness of the article;

Producers, by the consequent perpetual extension of demand;—and

Society at large, by determining capital to its natural channels.

W. Clowks, Stamford-street.