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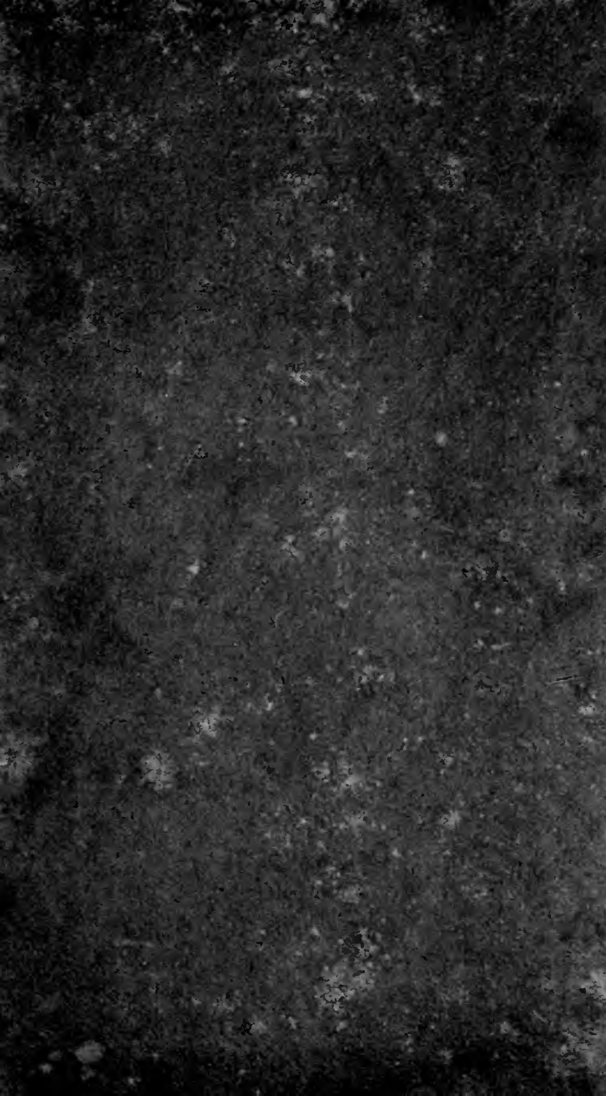

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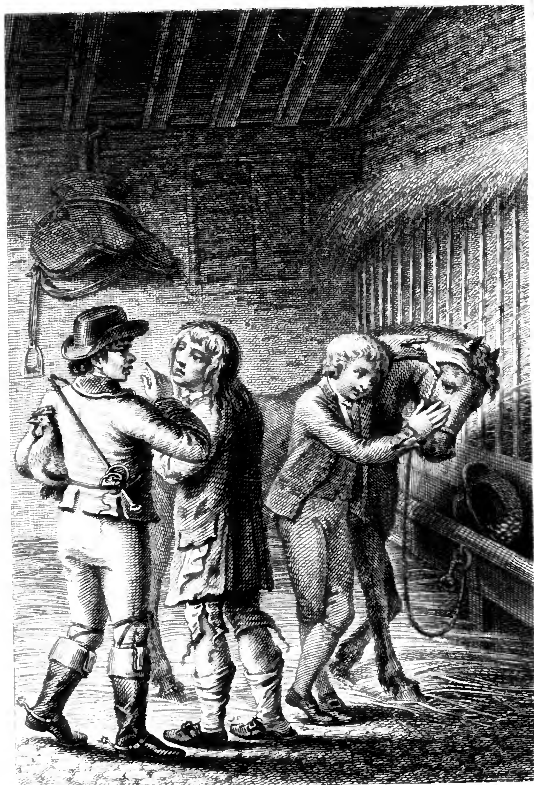

But how came you to talk of four and seven pence? I saw a Hat full of Silver. "Indeed!" said Lazy Lawrence. P. 51.

Fanny Edgeworth
with her sister Maria's love

LAZY LAWRENCE,

TARLTON,

FALSE KEY,

BEING THE FIRST VOLUME

OF

THE PARENT'S ASSISTANT,

OR

STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

By MARIA EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION, AND LETTERS FOR LITERARY LADIES.

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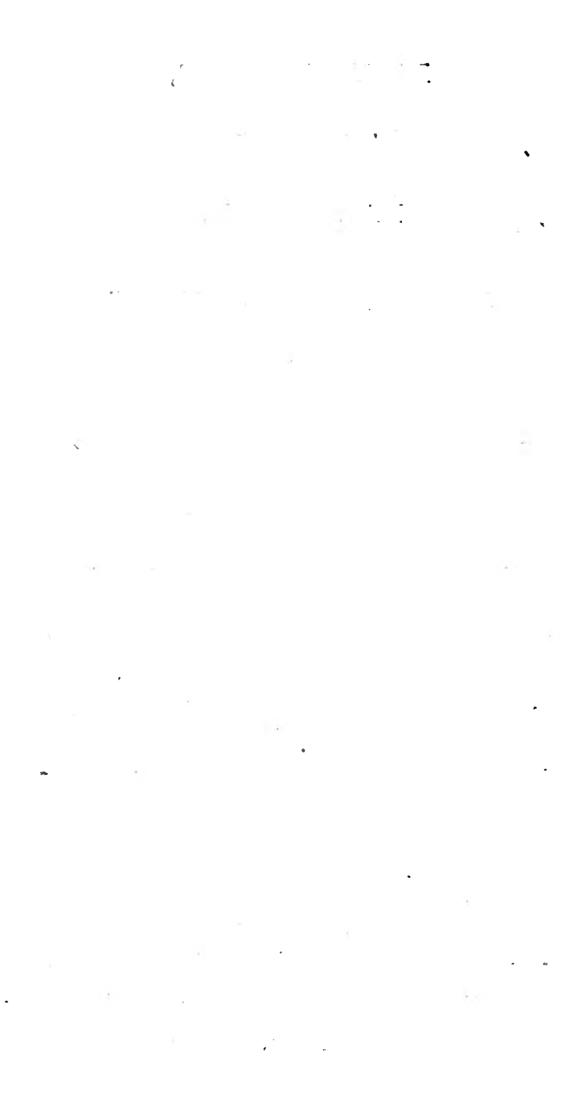

LAZY LAWRENCE.

IN the pleaſant valley of Aſhton there lived an elderly woman of the name of Preſton; ſhe had a ſmall neat cottage, and there was not a weed to be ſeen in her garden. It was upon her garden that ſhe chiefly depended for ſupport: it conſiſted of ſtrawberry beds, and one ſmall border for flowers. The pinks and roſes ſhe tied up in nice noſegays, and ſent either to Clifton or Briſtol to be ſold; as to her ſtrawberries, ſhe did not ſend them to market, becauſe it was the cuſtom for numbers of people to come from Clifton, in the ſummer time, to eat ſtrawberries and cream at the gardens in Aſhton.

Now the widow Preſton was ſo obliging, active, and good-humoured, that every one who came to ſee her was pleaſed. She lived happily in this man-

ner for feveral years; but, alas! one autumn fhe fell fick, and, during her illnefs, every thing went wrong; her garden was neglected, her cow died, and all the money which fhe had faved was fpent in paying for medicines. The winter paffed away, while fhe was fo weak that fhe could earn but little by her work; and, when the fummer came, her rent was called for, and the rent was not ready in her little purfe as ufual. She begged a few months delay, and they were granted to her; but at the end of that time there was no refource but to fell her horfe Lightfoot. Now Lightfoot, though perhaps he had feen his beft days, was a very great favourite: in his youth he had always carried the dame to market behind her hufband; and it was now her little fon Jem's turn to ride him. It was Jem's bufinefs to feed Lightfoot, and to take care of him; a charge which he never neglected, for,

besides being a very good-natured, he was a very industrious boy.

"It will go near to break my Jem's heart," said dame Preston to herself, as she sat one evening beside the fire, stirring the embers, and considering how she had best open the matter to her son, who stood opposite to her, eating a dry crust of bread very heartily for supper.

"Jem," said the old woman, "what, ar't hungry?"

"That I am, brave and hungry!"

"Aye! no wonder, you've been brave hard at work—Eh?"

"Brave hard! I wish it was not so dark, mother, that you might just step out and see the great bed I've dug; I know you'd say it was no bad day's work —and, oh mother! I've good news: Farmer Truck will give us the giant-strawberries, and I'm to go for 'em to-morrow morning, and I'll be back afore breakfast."

"God blefs the boy! how he talks!—Four mile there, and four mile back again, afore breakfaft."

"Aye, upon Lightfoot you know, mother, very eafily, mayn't I?"

"Aye, child!"

"Why do you figh, mother?"

"Finifh thy fupper, child."

"I've done!" cried Jem, fwallowing the laft mouthful haftily, as if he thought he had been too long at fupper—"and now for the great needle; I muft fee and mend Lightfoot's bridle afore I go to bed."—To work he fet, by the light of the fire, and the dame having once more ftirred it, began again with "Jem, dear, does he go lame at all now?"—"What Lightfoot! Oh la, no, not he!—never was fo well of his lamenefs in all his life—he's grown quite young again, I think, and then he's fo fat he can hardly wag."—"God blefs him—that's right—we muft fee, Jem, and keep him fat."

"For what, mother?"

"For Monday fortnight at the fair. He's to be——ſold!"

"Lightfoot!" cried Jem, and let the bridle fall from his hand; "and *will* mother ſell Lightfoot?"

"*Will;* no: but I *muſt*, Jem."

"Muſt; who ſays you *muſt?* why *muſt* you, mother?"

"I muſt, I ſay, child—Why, muſt not I pay my debts honeſtly—and muſt not I pay my rent; and was not it called for long and long ago; and have not I had time; and did not I promiſe to pay it for certain Monday fortnight, and am not I two guineas ſhort—and where am I to get two guineas? So what ſignifies talking, child," ſaid the widow, leaning her head upon her arm, "Lightfoot muſt go."

Jem was ſilent for a few minutes.—"Two guineas; that's a great, great deal.—If I worked, and worked, and

worked ever ſo hard, I could no ways earn two guineas *afore* Monday fortnight—could I, mother?"

"Lord help thee, no; not an' work thyſelf to death."

"But I could earn ſomething, though, I ſay," cried Jem proudly; "and I *will* earn *ſomething*—if it be ever ſo little, it will be *ſomething*—and I ſhall do my very beſt; ſo I will."

"That I'm ſure of, my child," ſaid his mother, drawing him towards her, and kiſſing him; "you were always a good induſtrious lad, *that* I will ſay afore your face or behind your back;—but it won't do now—Lightfoot *muſt* go."

Jem turned away, ſtruggling to hide his tears, and went to bed without ſaying a word more. But he knew that crying would do no good, ſo he preſently wiped his eyes, and lay awake, conſidering what he could poſſibly do to ſave

the horſe.—"If I get ever ſo little," he ſtill ſaid to himſelf, "it will be *ſomething;* and who knows but Landlord might then wait a bit longer? and we might make it all up in time; for a penny a day might come to two guineas in time."

But how to get the firſt penny was the queſtion.—Then he recollected, that one day, when he had been ſent to Clifton to ſell ſome flowers, he had ſeen an old woman with a board beſide her covered with various ſparkling ſtones, which people ſtopped to look at as they paſſed, and he remembered that ſome people bought the ſtones; one paid twopence, another threepence, and another ſixpence for them; and Jem heard her ſay that ſhe got them amongſt the neighbouring rocks: ſo he thought that if he tried he might find ſome too, and ſell them as ſhe had done.

Early in the morning he wakened full

of this ſcheme, jumped up, dreſſed himſelf, and, having given one look at poor Lightfoot in his ſtable, ſet off to Clifton in ſearch of the old woman, to inquire where ſhe found her ſparkling ſtones. But it was too early in the morning, the old woman was not at her ſeat; ſo he turned back again diſappointed.—He did not waſte his time waiting for her, but ſaddled and bridled Lightfoot, and went to farmer Truck's for the giant-ſtrawberries. A great part of the morning was ſpent in putting them into the ground; and, as ſoon as that was finiſhed, he ſet out again in queſt of the old woman, whom, to his great joy, he ſpied ſitting at her corner of the ſtreet with her board before her. But this old woman was deaf and croſs; and when at laſt Jem made her hear his queſtions, he could get no anſwer from her, but that ſhe found the foſſils where he would never find any more. "But can't I look

where you looked?"—"Look away, nobody hinders you," replied the old woman; and these were the only words she would say.—Jem was not, however, a boy to be easily discouraged; he went to the rocks, and walked slowly along, looking at all the stones as he passed. Presently he came to a place where a number of men were at work loosening some large rocks, and one amongst the workmen was stooping down looking for something very eagerly; Jem ran up, and asked if he could help him. "Yes," said the man, "you can; I've just dropped, amongst this heap of rubbish, a fine piece of crystal that I got to-day." —"What kind of a looking thing is it?" said Jem. "White, and like glass," said the man, and went on working whilst Jem looked very carefully over the heap of rubbish for a great while. "Come," said the man, "it's gone for ever; don't trouble yourself any more,

my boy."—"It's no trouble; I'll look a little longer; we'll not give it up ſo ſoon," ſaid Jem; and, after he had looked a little longer, he found the piece of cryſtal. "Thank'e," ſaid the man, "you are a fine little induſtrious fellow." Jem, encouraged by the tone of voice in which the man ſpoke this, ventured to aſk him the ſame queſtions which he had aſked the old woman. "One good turn deſerves another," ſaid the man; "we are going to dinner juſt now, and ſhall leave off work—wait for me here, and I'll make it worth your while."

Jem waited; and, as he was very attentively obſerving how the workmen went on with their work, he heard ſomebody near him give a great yawn, and, turning round, he ſaw ſtretched upon the graſs, beſide the river, a boy about his own age, who he knew very well went in the village of Aſhton by the name of Lazy Lawrence; a name which

he moſt juſtly deſerved, for he never did any thing from morning to night; he neither worked nor played, but ſauntered or lounged about reſtleſs and yawning. His father was an alehouſe-keeper, and being generally drunk, could take no care of his ſon, ſo that Lazy Lawrence grew every day worſe and worſe. However, ſome of the neighbours ſaid that he was a good-natured poor fellow enough, and would never do any one harm but himſelf; whilſt others, who were wiſer, often ſhook their heads, and told him, that idleneſs was the root of all evil.

"What, Lawrence!" cried Jem to him, when he ſaw him lying upon the graſs—"what, are you aſleep?"—"Not quite."—"Are you awake?"—"Not quite."—"What are you doing there?" —"Nothing."—"What are you thinking of?"—"Nothing."—"What makes you lie there?"—"I don't know—be-

caufe I can't find any body to play with me to-day—Will you come and play?" —"No, I can't; I'm bufy."—"Bufy," cried Lawrence, ftretching himfelf, "you are always bufy—I would not be you for the world, to have fo much to do always."—"And I," faid Jem, laughing, "would not be you for the world, to have nothing to do." So they parted, for the workman juft then called Jem to follow him. He took him home to his own houfe, and fhewed him a parcel of foffils, which he had gathered, he faid, on purpofe to fell, but had never had time yet to fort them. He fet about it however now, and having picked out thofe which he judged to be the beft, he put them into a fmall bafket, and gave them to Jem to fell, upon condition that he fhould bring him half of what he got. Jem, pleafed to be employed, was ready to agree to what the man propofed, provided his mother had no ob-

jection to it. When he went home to dinner, he told his mother his ſcheme, and ſhe ſmiled and ſaid he might do as he pleaſed, for ſhe was not afraid of his being from home. "You are not an idle boy," ſaid ſhe, "ſo there is little danger of your getting into any miſchief."

Accordingly Jem that evening took his ſtand, with his little baſket, upon the bank of the river, juſt at the place where people land from a ferry-boat, and where the walk turns to the wells, where numbers of people perpetually paſs to drink the waters. He choſe his place well, and waited almoſt all evening, offering his foſſils with great aſſiduity to every paſſenger; but not one perſon bought any. "Holla!" cried ſome ſailors, who had juſt rowed a boat to land, "bear a hand here, will you, my little fellow! and carry theſe parcels for us into yonder houſe." Jem ran down immediately for the parcels, and did what

he was aſked to do ſo quickly, and with ſo much good will, that the maſter of the boat took notice of him, and, when he was going away, ſtopped to aſk him what he had got in his little baſket; and when he ſaw that they were foſſils, he immediately told Jem to follow him, for that he was going to carry ſome ſhells he had brought from abroad to a lady in the neighbourhood who was making a grotto. "She will very likely buy your ſtones into the bargain; come along, my lad, we can but try."

The lady lived but a very little way off, ſo that they were ſoon at her houſe. She was alone in her parlour, and was ſorting a bundle of feathers of different colours; they lay on a ſheet of paſte-board upon a window-ſeat, and it happened that as the ſailor was buſtling round the table to ſhew off his ſhells, he knocked down the ſheet of paſte-board, and ſcattered all the feathers.

The lady looked very ſorry, which Jem obſerving, he took the opportunity, whilſt ſhe was buſy looking over the ſailor's bag of ſhells, to gather together all the feathers, and ſort them according to their different colours, as he had ſeen them ſorted when he firſt came into the room.

"Where is the little boy you brought with you? I thought I ſaw him here juſt now."—"And here I am, ma'am," cried Jem, creeping from under the table with ſome few remaining feathers which he had picked from the carpet; "I thought,' added he, pointing to the others, "I had better be doing ſomething than ſtanding idle, ma'am." She ſmiled, and, pleaſed with his activity and ſimplicity, began to aſk him ſeveral queſtions; ſuch as, who he was, where he lived, what employment he had, and how much a day he earned by gathering foſſils. "This is the firſt day I ever

tried," ſaid Jem; "I never ſold any yet, and, if you don't buy 'em now, ma'am, I'm afraid nobody elſe will, for I've aſked every body elſe."—"Come then," ſaid the lady, laughing, "if that is the caſe I think I had better buy them all." So emptying all the foſſils out of his baſket, ſhe put half a crown into it. Jem's eyes ſparkled with joy. "Oh, thank you, ma'am," ſaid he, "I will be ſure and bring you as many more to-morrow."—"Yes, but I don't promiſe you," ſaid ſhe, "to give you half a crown to-morrow."—"But, perhaps, though you don't promiſe it, you will." —"No," ſaid the lady, "do not deceive yourſelf; I aſſure you that I will not. *That*, inſtead of encouraging you to be induſtrious, would teach you to be idle." Jem did not quite underſtand what ſhe meant by this, but anſwered, "I'm ſure I don't wiſh to be idle; what I want is to earn ſomething every day,

if I knew how: I'm ſure I don't wiſh to be idle. If you knew all, you'd know I did not."—"How do you mean, *if I knew all?*"—"Why I mean, if you knew about Lightfoot."—"Who's Lightfoot?"—"Why, mammy's horſe," added Jem, looking out of the window; "I muſt make haſte home and feed him, afore it get dark; he'll wonder what's gone with me."—"Let him wonder a few minutes longer," ſaid the lady, "and tell me the reſt of your ſtory."—"I've no ſtory, ma'am, to tell, but as how mammy ſays he muſt go to the fair Monday fortnight to be ſold, if ſhe can't get the two guineas for her rent; and I ſhould be main ſorry to part with him, for I love him, and he loves me; ſo I'll work for him, I will, all I can: to be ſure, as mammy ſays, I have no chance, ſuch a little fellow as I am, of earning two guineas afore Monday fortnight."—"But are you in earneſt wil-

ling to work," ſaid the lady; "you know there is a great deal of difference between picking up a few ſtones, and working ſteadily every day, and all day long."—"But," ſaid Jem, "I would work every day, and all day long."—"Then," ſaid the lady, "I will give you work. Come here to-morrow morning, and my gardener will ſet you to weed the ſhrubberies, and I will pay you ſixpence a day. Remember you muſt be at the gates by ſix o'clock." Jem bowed, thanked her, and went away. It was late in the evening, and he was impatient to get home to feed Lightfoot; yet he recollected that he had promiſed the man who had truſted him to ſell the foſſils that he would bring him half of what he got for them; ſo he thought that he had better go to him directly; and away he went, running along by the water ſide about a quarter of a mile, till he came to the man's houſe. He was juſt

come home from work, and was ſurpriſed when Jem ſhewed him the half-crown, ſaying, "Look what I got for the ſtones; you are to have half, you know."—"No," ſaid the man, when he had heard his ſtory, "I ſhall not take half of that; it was given to you. I expected but a ſhilling at the moſt, and the half of that is but ſixpence, and that I'll take.—Wife! give the lad two ſhillings, and take this half-crown." So wife opened an old glove, and took out two ſhillings; and the man, as ſhe opened the glove, put in his fingers, and took out a little ſilver penny.—There, he ſhall have that into the bargain for his honeſty—Honeſty is the beſt policy—There's a lucky penny for you, that I've kept ever ſince I can remember."—"Don't you ever go to part with it, do ye hear!" cried the woman. "Let him do what he will with it, wife," ſaid the man. "But," argued the wife, "ano-

ther penny would do juſt as well to buy gingerbread, and that's what it will go for."—"No, that it ſhall not, I promiſe you," ſaid Jem; and ſo he ran away home, fed Lightfoot, ſtroaked him, went to bed, jumped up at five o'clock in the morning, and went ſinging to work as gay as a lark.

Four days he worked "every day and all day long;" and the lady every evening, when ſhe came out to walk in her gardens, looked at his work. At laſt ſhe ſaid to her gardener, "This little boy works very hard."—"Never had ſo good a little boy about the grounds," ſaid the gardener; "he's always at his work, let me come by when I will, and he has got twice as much done as another would do; yes, twice as much, ma'am; for look here—he began at this here roſe buſh, and now he's got to where you ſtand, ma'am; and here is the day's work that t'other boy, and he's three

years older too, did to-day—I ſay, meaſure Jem's fairly, and it's twice as much, I'm ſure."—"Well, ſaid the lady to her gardener, ſhew me how much is a fair good day's work for a boy of his age."—"Come at ſix o'clock, and go at ſix? why, about this much, ma'am," ſaid the gardener, marking off a piece of the border with his ſpade. "Then, little boy," ſaid the lady, "ſo much ſhall be your taſk every day; the gardener will mark it off for you: and when you've done, the reſt of the day you may do what you pleaſe." Jem was extremely glad of this; and the next day he had finiſhed his taſk by four o'clock, ſo that he had all the reſt of the evening to himſelf. Jem was as fond of play as any little boy could be, and, when he was at it, played with all the eagerneſs and gaiety imaginable: ſo as ſoon as he had finiſhed his taſk, fed Lightfoot, and put by the ſixpence he

had earned that day, he ran to the play ground in the village, where he found a party of boys playing, and amongſt them Lazy Lawrence, who indeed was not playing, but lounging upon a gate with his thumb in his mouth. The reſt were playing at cricket. Jem joined them, and was the merrieſt and moſt active amongſt them; till, at laſt, when quite out of breath with running, he was obliged to give up to reſt himſelf, and ſat down upon the ſtile, cloſe to the gate on which Lazy Lawrence was ſwinging. "And why don't you play, Lawrence?" ſaid he.—"I'm tired," ſaid Lawrence.—"Tired of what?"—"I don't know well what tires me; grandmother ſays I'm ill, and I muſt take ſomething—I don't know what ails me."—"Oh, pugh! take a good race, one, two, three, and away, and you'll find yourſelf as well as ever. Come, run—one, two, three, and away."—"Ah, no,

I can't run indeed," ſaid he, hanging back heavily; "you know I can play all day long if I like it, ſo I don't mind play as you do, who have only one hour for it."—"So much the worſe for you. Come now, I'm quite freſh again, will you have one game at ball; do."—"No, I tell you I can't; I'm as tired as if I had been working all day long as hard as a horſe."—"Ten times more," ſaid Jem, "for I have been working all day long as hard as a horſe, and yet you ſee I'm not a bit tired; only a little out of breath juſt now."—"That's very odd," ſaid Lawrence, and yawned, for want of ſome better anſwer; then taking out a handful of halfpence—"See what I got from father to-day, becauſe I aſked him juſt at the right time, when he had drunk a glaſs or two; then I can get any thing I want out of him—ſee! a penny, two-pence, three-pence, four-pence—there's eight-

pence in all; would not you be happy if you had *eight-pence?*"—"Why, I don't know," ſaid Jem laughing, "for you don't ſeem happy, and you *have eight-pence.*"—"That does not ſignify though—I'm ſure you only ſay that becauſe you envy me—you don't know what it is to have eight-pence—you never had more than two-pence or three-pence at a time in all your life." Jem ſmiled. "Oh, as to that," ſaid he, "you are miſtaken, for I have at this very time more than two-pence, three-pence, or eight-pence either; I have—let me ſee—ſtones, two ſhillings; then five day's work, that's five ſixpences, that's two ſhillings and ſixpence, in all makes four ſhillings and ſix-pence, and my ſilver penny, is four and ſeven-pence Four and ſeven-pence!"—"You have not!" ſaid Lawrence, rouſed ſo as abſolutely to ſtand upright, "four and ſeven-pence! have you? Shew it me,

and then I'll believe you."—" Follow me then," cried Jem, "and I'll ſoon make you believe me ; come."—" Is it far ?" ſaid Lawrence, following half running, half hobbling, till he came to the ſtable, where Jem ſhewed him his treaſure. " And how did you come by it ? honeſtly ?"—" Honeſtly ; to be ſure I did ; I earned it all."—" Lord bleſs me, earned it ! well, I've a great mind to work ; but then it's ſuch hot weather ; beſides grandmother ſays I'm not ſtrong enough yet for hard work ; and beſides, I know how to coax daddy out of money when I want it, ſo I need not work.— But four and ſeven-pence ; let's ſee, what will you do with it all ?"—" That's a ſecret," ſaid Jem, looking great. " I can gueſs ; I know what I'd do with it if it was mine—Firſt, I'd buy pockets full of gingerbread ; then I'd buy ever ſo many apples and nuts ; don't you love nuts ? I'd buy nuts enough to laſt

me from this time to Chriſtmas, and I'd make little Newton crack 'em for me, for that's the worſt of nuts, there's the trouble of cracking 'em."—" Well, you never deſerve to have a nut."—" But you'll give me ſome of yours," ſaid Lawrence in a fawning tone, for he thought it eaſier to coax than to work—" you'll give me ſome of your good things, won't you?"—" I ſhall not have any of thoſe good things," ſaid Jem. " Then what will you do with all your money?"—" Oh, I know very well what to do with it; but, as I told you, that's a ſecret, and I ſhant't tell it any body—Come now, let's go back and play—their game's up, I dare ſay."—Lawrence went back with him full of curioſity, and out of humour with himſelf and his eight-pence.—" If I had four and ſeven-pence," ſaid he to himſelf, " I certainly ſhould be happy!"

The next day, as uſual, Jem jumped

up before ſix o'clock and went to his work, whilſt Lazy Lawrence ſauntered about without knowing what to do with himſelf. In the courſe of two days he laid out ſix-pence of his money in apples and gingerbread, and as long as theſe laſted he found himſelf well received by his companions; but at length the third day he ſpent his laſt halfpenny, and when it was gone, unfortunately ſome nuts tempted him very much, but he had no money to pay for them; ſo he ran home to coax his father, as he called it. When he got home, he heard his father talking very loud, and at firſt he thought he was drunk; but when he opened the kitchen door, he ſaw that he was not drunk, but angry.

"You lazy dog!" cried he, turning ſuddenly upon Lawrence, and gave him ſuch a violent box on the ear as made the light flaſh from his eyes; "you lazy dog! ſee what you've done for me—

look!—look, look, I ſay!" Lawrence looked as ſoon as he came to the uſe of his ſenſes, and, with fear, amazement, and remorſe, beheld at leaſt a dozen bottles burſt, and the fine Worceſterſhire cyder ſtreaming over the floor. "Now, did not I order you three days ago to carry theſe bottles to the cellar; and did not I charge you to wire the corks? anſwer me, you lazy raſcal; did not I?"—"Yes," ſaid Lawrence, ſcratching his head. "And why was it not done? I aſk you," cried his father with renewed anger, as another bottle burſt at the moment. "What do you ſtand there for, you lazy brat? why don't you move? I ſay—No, no," catching hold of him, "I believe you can't move; but I'll make you." And he ſhook him, till Lawrence was ſo giddy he could not ſtand. "What had you to think of? what had you to do all day long, that you could not carry my

cyder, my Worcefterfhire cyder to the cellar when I bid you? But go, you'll never be good for any thing, you are fuch a lazy rafcal—get out of my fight!" So faying, he pufhed him out of the houfe door, and Lawrence fneaked off, feeing that this was no time to make his petition for halfpence.

The next day he faw the nuts again, and, wifhing for them more than ever, went home in hopes that his father, as he faid to himfelf, would be in a better humour. But the cyder was ftill frefh in his recollection, and the moment Lawrence began to whifper the word "halfpenny" in his ear, his father fwore, with a loud oath, "I will not give you a halfpenny, no, not a farthing, for a month to come; if you want money, go work for it; I've had enough of your lazinefs—Go work!" At thefe terrible words Lawrence burft into tears, and, going to the fide of a ditch, fat down

and cried for an hour; and when he had cried till he could cry no more, he exerted himſelf ſo far as to empty his pockets, to ſee whether there might not happen to be one halfpenny left; and, to his great joy, in the fartheſt corner of his pocket one halfpenny was found. With this he proceeded to the fruit woman's ſtall. She was buſy weighing out ſome plums, ſo he was obliged to wait; and, whilſt he was waiting, he heard ſome people near him talking and laughing very loud. The fruit woman's ſtall was at the gate of an inn-yard; and peeping through the gate in this yard, Lawrence ſaw a poſtilion and ſtable-boy about his own ſize playing at pitch-farthing. He ſtood by watching them for a few minutes. "I begun but with one halfpenny," cried the ſtable-boy with an oath, "and now I've got two-pence!" added he, jingling the halfpence in his waiſtcoat pocket. Lawrence was

moved at the ſound, and ſaid to himſelf, "If I begin with one halfpenny, I may end like him with having two-pence; and it is eaſier to play at pitch-farthing than to work."

So he ſtepped forward, preſenting his halfpenny, offering to toſs up with the ſtable-boy, who, after looking him full in the face, accepted the propoſal, and threw his halfpenny into the air. "Head or tail!" cried he. "Head," replied Lawrence, and it came up head. He ſeized the penny, ſurpriſed at his own ſucceſs, and would have gone inſtantly to have laid it out in nuts; but the ſtable-boy ſtopped him, and tempted him to throw again. This time he loſt; he threw again and won; and ſo he went on, ſometimes loſing, but moſt frequently winning, till half the morning was gone. At laſt, however, he chanced to win twice running, and, finding himſelf maſter of three halfpence, ſaid he

would play no more. The ftable-boy, grumbling, fwore he would have his revenge another time, and Lawrence went and bought the nuts. "It is a good thing," faid he to himfelf, "to play at pitch-farthing: the next time I want a halfpenny I'll not afk my father for it, nor go to work neither." Satisfied with this refolution, he fat down to crack his nuts at his leifure, upon the horfe-block in the inn-yard. Here, whilft he eat, he overheard the converfation of the ftable-boys and poftillions. At firft their fhocking oaths and loud wrangling frightened and fhocked him; for Lawrence, though a *lazy*, had not yet learned to be a *wicked* boy. But, by degrees, he was accuftomed to their fwearing and quarrelling, and took a delight and intereft in their difputes and battles. As this was an amufement which he could enjoy without any fort of exertion on his part, he foon grew fo

fond of it, that every day he returned to the ſtable-yard, and the horſe-block became his conſtant ſeat. Here he found ſome relief from the inſupportable fatigue of doing nothing, and here, hour after hour, with his elbows on his knees, and his head on his hands, he ſat the ſpectator of wickedneſs. Gaming, cheating, and lying, ſoon became familiar to him; and, to complete his ruin, he formed a ſudden and cloſe intimacy with the ſtable-boy with whom he had firſt began to game—a very bad boy. The conſequences of this intimacy we ſhall preſently ſee. But it is now time to inquire what little Jem has been doing all this while.

One day, after he had finiſhed his taſk, the gardener aſked him to ſtay a little while, to help him to carry ſome geranium pots into the hall. Jem, always active and obliging, readily ſtayed from play, and was carrying in a heavy flower-

pot, when his miſtreſs croſſed the hall. "What a terrible litter!" ſaid ſhe, "you are making here—why don't you wipe your ſhoes upon the mat?" Jem turned round to look for the mat, but he ſaw none. "Oh," ſaid the lady, recollecting herſelf, "I can't blame you, for there is no mat."—"No, ma'am," ſaid the gardener, "nor I don't know when, if ever, the man will bring home thoſe mats you beſpoke, ma'am."—"I am very ſorry to hear that," ſaid the lady, "I wiſh we could find ſomebody who would do them, if he can't—I ſhould not care what ſort of mats they were, ſo that one could wipe one's feet on them." Jem, as he was ſweeping away the litter, when he heard theſe laſt words, ſaid to himſelf, "perhaps I could make a mat." And all the way home, as he trudged along whiſtling, he was thinking over a ſcheme for making mats, which, however bold it

may appear, he did not deſpair of executing, with patience and induſtry. Many were the difficulties which his "*prophetic eye*" foreſaw; but he felt within himſelf that ſpirit, which ſpurs men on to great enterprizes, and makes them "trample on impoſſibilities."

He recollected, in the firſt place, that he had ſeen Lazy Lawrence, whilſt he lounged upon the gate, twiſt a bit of heath into different ſhapes, and he thought, that if he could find ſome way of plaiting heath firmly together, it would make a very pretty green, ſoft mat, which would do very well for one to wipe one's ſhoes on. About a mile from his mother's houſe, on the common which Jem rode over when he went to farmer Truck's for the giant-ſtrawberries, he remembered to have ſeen a great quantity of this heath; and, as it was now only ſix o'clock in the evening, he knew that he ſhould have time to

feed Lightfoot, ſtroak him, go to the common, return, and make one trial of his ſkill before he went to bed.

Lightfoot carried him ſwiftly to the common, and there Jem gathered as much of the heath as he thought he ſhould want. But, what toil, what time, what pains did it coſt him, before he could make any thing like a mat! Twenty times he was ready to throw aſide the heath, and give up his project, from impatience of repeated diſappointments. But ſtill he perſevered. Nothing *truly great* can be accompliſhed without toil and time. Two hours he worked before he went to bed. All his play hours the next day he ſpent at his mat; which, in all, made five hours of fruitleſs attempts—The ſixth, however, repaid him for the labours of the other five; he conquered his grand difficulty of faſtening the heath ſubſtantially together, and at length completely

finiſhed a mat, which far ſurpaſſed his moſt ſanguine expectations. He was extremely happy—ſung, danced round it—whiſtled—looked at it again and again, and could hardly leave off looking at it when it was time to go to bed. He laid it by his bed-ſide, that he might ſee it the moment he awoke in the morning.

And now came the grand pleaſure of carrying it to his miſtreſs. She looked full as much ſurprized as he expected, when ſhe ſaw it, and when ſhe heard who made it. After having duly admired it, ſhe aſked him how much he expected for his mat. "Expect!—Nothing, ma'am," ſaid Jem; "I meant to give it you, if you'd have it; I did not mean to ſell it. I made it at my play hours, and I was very happy making it; and I'm very glad too that you like it; and if you pleaſe to keep it, ma'am—that's all."—"But that's not all," ſaid

the lady. "Spend your time no more in weeding in my garden, you can employ yourſelf much better; you ſhall have the reward of your ingenuity as well as of your induſtry. Make as many more ſuch mats as you can, and I will take care and diſpoſe of them for you."—"Thank'e, ma'am," ſaid Jem, making his beſt bow, for he thought by the lady's looks that ſhe meant to do him a favour, though he repeated to himſelf, "diſpoſe of them," what does that mean?"

The next day he went to work to make more mats, and he ſoon learned to make them ſo well and quickly, that he was ſurprized at his own ſucceſs. In every one he made he found leſs difficulty, ſo that, inſtead of making two, he could ſoon make four, in a day. In a fortnight he made eighteen. It was Saturday night when he finiſhed, and he carried, at three journeys, his

eighteen mats to his miſtreſs's houſe; piled them all up in the hall, and ſtood with his hat off, with a look of proud humility, beſide the pile, waiting for his miſtreſs's appearance. Preſently a folding door, at one end of the hall, opened, and he ſaw his miſtreſs, with a great many gentlemen and ladies, riſing from ſeveral tables.

"Oh! there is my little boy, and his mats," cried the lady; and, followed by all the reſt of the company, ſhe came into the hall. Jem modeſtly retired whilſt they looked at his mats; but in a minute or two his miſtreſs beckoned to him, and, when he came into the middle of the circle, he ſaw that his pile of mats had diſappeared. "Well," ſaid the lady ſmiling, "what do you ſee that makes you look ſo ſurpriſed?"—"That all my mats are gone," ſaid Jem; "but you are very welcome."—"Are we?" ſaid the lady;

"well, take up your hat, and go home then, for you ſee that it is getting late, and you know "Lightfoot will wonder what's become of you." Jem turned round to take up his hat, which he had left on the floor.

But how his countenance changed! the hat was heavy with ſhillings. Every one who had taken a mat had put in two ſhillings; ſo that for the eighteen mats he had got thirty-ſix ſhillings. "Thirty-ſix ſhillings!" ſaid the lady; "five and ſeven-pence I think you told me you had earned already—how much does that make? I muſt add, I believe, one other ſix-pence to make out your two guineas." — "Two guineas!" exclaimed Jem, now quite conquering his baſhfulneſs, for at the moment he forgot where he was, and ſaw nobody that was by. "Two guineas!" cried he, clapping his hands together—"Oh Lightfoot!—oh mo-

ther!" Then, recollecting himſelf, he ſaw his miſtreſs, whom he now looked up to quite as a friend. "Will *you* thank them all," ſaid he, ſcarcely daring to glance his eye round upon the company, "will *you* thank 'em, for you know I don't know how to thank 'em *rightly*." Every body thought, however, that they had been thanked *rightly*.

"Now we won't keep you any longer —only," ſaid his miſtreſs, "I have one thing to aſk you, that I may be by when you ſhew your treaſure to your mother."—"Come, then," ſaid Jem, "come with me now."—"Not now," ſaid the lady laughing, "but I will come to Aſhton to-morrow evening; perhaps your mother can find me a few ſtrawberries."

"That ſhe will," ſaid Jem; "I'll ſearch the garden myſelf." He now went home, but felt it a great reſtraint

to wait till to-morrow evening before he told his mother. To console himſelf he flew to the ſtable: "Lightfoot, you're not to be ſold to-morrow! poor fellow!" ſaid he, patting him, and then could not refrain from counting out his money. Whilſt he was intent upon this, Jem was ſtartled by a noiſe at the door: ſomebody was trying to pull up the latch. It opened, and there came in Lazy Lawrence, with a boy in a red jacket, who had a cock under his arm. They ſtarted when they got into the middle of the ſtable, and when they ſaw Jem, who had been at firſt hidden by the horſe.

"We—we—we came"—ſtammered Lazy Lawrence—"I mean, I came to—to—to—" "To aſk you," continued the ſtable-boy in a bold tone, "whether you will go with us to the cock-fight on Monday? See, I've a fine cock here,

and Lawrence told me you were a great friend of his, ſo I came."

Lawrence now attempted to ſay ſomething in praiſe of the pleaſures of cock-fighting, and in recommendation of his new companion. But Jem looked at the ſtable-boy with diſlike, and a ſort of dread; then turning his eyes upon the cock with a look of compaſſion, ſaid in a low voice to Lawrence, "Shall you like to ſtand by and ſee its eyes pecked out?" "I don't know," ſaid Lawrence, "as to that; but they ſay a cock-fight's a fine ſight, and it's no more cruel in me to go than another; and a great many go; and I've nothing elſe to do, ſo I ſhall go."—"But I have ſomething elſe to do," ſaid Jem, laughing, "ſo I ſhall not go."—"But," continued Lawrence, "you know Monday is the great Briſtol fair, and one muſt be merry then, of all days in the year."—"One day in the year, ſure there's no harm in

ſaid Lawrence, drawing back with horror—"I never thought I ſhould come to that—and from poor Jem too—the money that he has worked ſo hard for too."—"But it is not ſtealing; we don't mean to ſteal; only to borrow it: and, if we win, as we certainly ſhall, at the cock-fight, pay it back again, and he'll never know any thing of the matter; and what harm will it do him? Beſides, what ſignifies talking, you can't go to the cock-fight, or the fair either, if you don't; and I tell ye we don't mean to ſteal it; we'll pay it again on Monday night." Lawrence made no reply, and they parted without his coming to any determination.

Here let us pauſe in our ſtory—we are almoſt afraid to go on—the reſt is very ſhocking—our little readers will ſhudder as they read. But it is better that they ſhould know the truth, and ſee what the idle boy came to at laſt.

In the dead of the night Lawrence heard ſomebody tap at his window. He knew well who it was, for this was the ſignal agreed upon between him and his wicked companion. He trembled at the thoughts of what he was about to do, and lay quite ſtill, with his head under the bed-clothes, till he heard the ſecond tap. Then he got up, dreſſed himſelf, and opened his window. It was almoſt even with the ground. His companion ſaid to him in a hollow voice, "Are you ready." He made no anſwer, but got out of the window and followed. When he got to the ſtable, a black cloud was juſt paſſing over the moon, and it was quite dark. "Where are you?" whiſpered Lawrence, groping about, "where are you? Speak to me." "I am here; give me your hand." Lawrence ſtretched out his hand. "Is that your hand?" ſaid the wicked boy, as Lawrence laid hold of him; "how cold

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it felt."—"Let us go back," ſaid Lawrence; "it is time yet."—"It is no time to go back," replied the other opening the door; "you've gone too far now to go back:" and he puſhed Lawrence into the ſtable.—"Have you found it—take care of the horſe—have you done?—what are you about?—make haſte, I hear a noiſe," ſaid the ſtable-boy, who watched at the door. "I am feeling for the half crown, but I can't find it."—"Bring all together." He brought Jem's broken flower-pot, with all the money in it, to the door.

The black cloud was now paſſed over the moon, and the light ſhone full upon them.—"What do we ſtand here for?" ſaid the ſtable-boy, ſnatching the flower-pot out of Lawrence's trembling hands, and pulled him away from the door. "Good God!" cried Lawrence, "you won't take all—you ſaid you'd only take half a crown, and pay it back on Mon-

day—you faid you'd only take half a crown!"—"Hold your tongue," replied the other walking on, deaf to all remonftrances—"if I am to be hanged ever, it fha'n't be for half a crown." Lawrence's blood ran cold in his veins, and he felt as if all his hair ftood on end. Not another word paffed. His accomplice carried off the money, and Lawrence crept, with all the horrors of guilt upon him, to his reftlefs bed. All night he was ftarting from frightful dreams; or elfe, broad awake, he lay liftening to every fmall noife, unable to ftir, and fcarcely daring to breathe—tormented by that moft dreadful of all kinds of fear, that fear which is the conftant companion of an evil confcience. He thought the morning would never come; but when it was day, when he heard the birds fing, and faw every thing look cheerful as ufual, he felt ftill more miferable. It was Sunday morn-

ing, and the bell rang for church. All the children of the village, dreſſed in their Sunday clothes, innocent and gay, and little Jem, the beſt and gayeſt amongſt them, went flocking by his door to church. “ Well, Lawrence,” ſaid Jem, pulling his coat as he paſſed, and ſaw Lawrence leaning againſt his father's door, “ what makes you look ſo black?” “ I ! ” ſaid Lawrence, ſtarting, “ why do you ſay that I look black?”—“ Nay then,” ſaid Jem, “ you look white enough now, if that will pleaſe you; for you're turned as pale as death.”—“ Pale !” replied Lawrence, not knowing what he ſaid; and turned abruptly away, for he dared not ſtand another look of Jem's; conſcious that guilt was written in his face, he ſhunned every eye. He would now have given the world to have thrown off the load of guilt which lay upon his mind; he longed to follow Jem, to fall upon

his knees, and confefs all; dreading the moment when Jem fhould difcover his lofs, Lawrence dared not ftay at home, and not knowing what to do, or where to go, he mechanically went to his old haunt at the ftable-yard, and lurked thereabouts all day, with his accomplice, who tried in vain to quiet his fears and raife his fpirits, by talking of the next day's cock-fight. It was agreed, that, as foon as the dufk of the evening came on, they fhould go together into a certain lonely field, and there divide their booty.

In the mean time Jem, when he returned from church, was very full of bufinefs, preparing for the reception of his miftrefs, of whofe intended vifit he had informed his mother; and, whilft fhe was arranging the kitchen and their little parlour, he ran to fearch the ftrawberry-beds. "Why, my Jem, how merry you are to-day!" faid his mother when he

came in with the ſtrawberries, and was jumping about the room playfully. "Now keep thoſe ſpirits of yours, Jem, till you want 'em, and don't let it come upon you all at once. Have it in mind that to-morrow's fair day, and Lightfoot muſt go. I bid farmer Truck call for him to-night; he ſaid he'd take him along with his own, and he'll be here juſt now—and then I know how it will be with you, Jem!"—"So do I!" cried Jem, ſwallowing his ſecret with great difficulty, and then tumbling head over heels four times running. A carriage paſſed the window and ſtopped at the door. Jem ran out; it was his miſtreſs. She came in ſmiling, and ſoon made the old woman ſmile too, by praiſing the neatneſs of every thing in the houſe. But we ſhall paſs over, however important they were deemed at the time, the praiſes of the ſtrawberries, and of "my grandmother's china plate." Another

knock was heard at the door. "Run, Jem," ſaid his mother, "I hope it's our milk-woman with cream for the lady."—No; it was farmer Truck come for Lightfoot. The old woman's countenance fell. "Fetch him out, dear," ſaid ſhe, turning to her ſon; but Jem was gone; he flew out to the ſtable the moment he ſaw the flap of farmer Truck's great-coat.—"Sit ye down, farmer," ſaid the old woman, after they had waited about five minutes in expectation of Jem's return. "You'd beſt ſit down, if the lady will give you leave; for he'll not hurry himſelf back again. My boy's a fool, madam, about that there horſe." Trying to laugh, ſhe added, "I knew how Lightfoot and he would be loath enough to part—he won't bring him out till the laſt minute; ſo do ſit ye down, neighbour." The farmer had ſcarcely ſat down, when Jem, with a pale wild

countenance, came back. "What's the matter?" ſaid his miſtreſs. "God bleſs the boy!" ſaid his mother, looking at him quite frightened, whilſt he tried to ſpeak, but could not. She went up to him, and then leaning his head againſt her, he cried, "It's gone!—it's all gone!" and, burſting into tears, he ſobbed as if his little heart would break. "What's gone, love?" ſaid his mother. "My two guineas—Lightfoot's two guineas. I went to fetch 'em to give you, mammy; but the broken flower-pot that I put them in, and all's gone!—quite gone!" repeated he, checking his ſobs. "I ſaw them ſafe laſt night, and was ſhewing 'em to Lightfoot; and I was ſo glad to think I had earned them all myſelf; and I thought how ſurpriſed you'd look, and how glad you'd be, and how you'd kiſs me, and all!"

His mother liſtened to him with the greateſt ſurpriſe, whilſt his miſtreſs ſtood

in ſilence, looking firſt at the old woman, and then at Jem with a penetrating eye, as if ſhe ſuſpected the truth of his ſtory, and was afraid of becoming the dupe of her own compaſſion. "This is a very ſtrange thing!" ſaid ſhe gravely. "How came you to leave all your money in a broken flower-pot in the ſtable? How came you not to give it to your mother to take care of?"—"Why, don't you remember," ſaid Jem, looking up in the midſt of his tears; "why, don't you remember you your own ſelf bid me not tell her about it till you were by."—"And did you not tell her?"—"Nay, aſk mammy," ſaid Jem, a little offended; and, when afterwards the lady went on queſtioning him in a ſevere manner, as if ſhe did not believe him, he at laſt made no anſwer. "Oh, Jem! Jem! why don't you ſpeak to the lady?" ſaid his mother. "I have ſpoke, and ſpoke the truth," ſaid Jem, proudly, "and ſhe did not believe me."

Still the lady, who had lived too long in the world to be without ſuſpicion, maintained a cold manner, and determined to wait the event without interfering, ſaying only, that ſhe hoped the money would be found; and adviſed Jem to have done crying. "I have done," ſaid Jem, "I ſhall cry no more." And as he had the greateſt command over himſelf, he actually did not ſhed another tear, not even when the farmer got up to go, ſaying, he could wait no longer. Jem ſilently went to bring out Lightfoot.—The lady now took her ſeat where ſhe could ſee all that paſſed at the open parlour window.—The old woman ſtood at the door, and ſeveral idle people of the village, who had gathered round the lady's carriage examining it, turned about to liſten. In a minute or two Jem appeared, with a ſteady countenance, leading Lightfoot; and, when he came up, without ſaying

a word, put the bridle into farmer Truck's hand. "He *has been* a good horſe," ſaid the farmer. "He *is* a good horſe!" cried Jem, and threw his arm over Lightfoot's neck, hiding his own face as he leaned upon him.

At this inſtant a party of milkwomen went by; and one of them having ſet down her pail, came behind Jem, and gave him a pretty ſmart blow upon the back.—He looked up.—"And don't you know me?" ſaid ſhe. "I forget," ſaid Jem; "I think I have ſeen your face before, but I forget."—"Do you ſo? and you'll tell me juſt now," ſaid ſhe, half opening her hand, "that you forgot who gave you this, and who charged you not to part with it too." Here ſhe quite opened her large hand, and on the palm of it appeared Jem's ſilver penny. "Where?" exclaimed Jem, ſeizing it, "oh where did you find it? and have you?—oh tell me, have

you got the reſt of my money?"—"I know nothing of your money—I don't know what you would be at," ſaid the milkwoman. "But where, pray tell me where, did you find this?"—"With them that you gave it to, I ſuppoſe," ſaid the milkwoman, turning away ſuddenly to take up her milk-pail. But now Jem's miſtreſs called to her through the window, begging her to ſtop, and joining in his entreaties to know how ſhe came by the ſilver penny.

"Why, madam," ſaid ſhe, taking up the corner of her apron, "I came by it in an odd way too—You muſt know my Betty is ſick, ſo I come with the milk myſelf, though it's not what I'm uſed to; for my Betty—you know my Betty," ſaid ſhe, turning round to the old woman, "my Betty ſerves you, and ſhe's a tight and ſtirring laſſy, ma'am, I can aſſure—" "Yes, I don't doubt it," ſaid the lady impatiently; "but

about the ſilver penny?"—"Why, that's true; as I was coming along all alone, for the reſt came a round, and I came a ſhort cut acroſs yon field—No, you can't ſee it, madam, where you ſtand—but if you were here—" "I ſee it—I know it," ſaid Jem, out of breath with anxiety. "Well—well—I reſted my pail upon the ſtile, and ſets me down awhile, and there comes out of the hedge—I don't know well how, for they ſtartled me ſo I'd like to have thrown down my milk—two boys, one about the ſize of he," ſaid ſhe, pointing to Jem, "and one a matter taller, but ill-looking like, ſo I did not think to ſtir to make way for them, and they were like in a deſperate hurry: ſo, without waiting for the ſtile, one of 'em pulled at the gate, and when it would not open (for it was tied with a pretty ſtout cord) one of 'em whips out with his knife and cuts it——

"Now have you a knife about you, Sir?" continued the milk-woman to the farmer. He gave her his knife.

"Here now, ma'am, juſt ſticking as it were here, between the blade and the haft, was the ſilver penny. He took no notice, but when he opened it, out it falls; ſtill he takes no heed, but cuts the cord, as I ſaid before, and through the gate they went, and out of ſight in half a minute. I picks up the penny, for my heart miſgave me that it was the very one huſband had had a long time, and had given againſt my voice to he," pointing to Jem; "and I charged him not to part with it; and, ma'am, when I looked I knew it by the mark, ſo I thought I would ſhew it to *he*," again pointing to Jem, "and let him give it back to thoſe it belongs to."—"It belongs to me," ſaid Jem, "I never gave it to any body—but—" "But," cried the farmer, "thoſe boys have robbed

him—it is they who have all his money."—"Oh, which way did they go?" cried Jem, "I'll run after them."

"No, no," ſaid the lady, calling to her ſervant; and ſhe deſired him to take his horſe and ride after them. "Aye," added farmer Truck, "do you take the road, and I'll take the field-way, and I'll be bound we'll have 'em preſently."

Whilſt they were gone in purſuit of the thieves, the lady, who was now thoroughly convinced of Jem's truth, deſired her coachman would produce what ſhe had ordered him to bring with him that evening. Out of the boot of the carriage the coachman immediately produced a new ſaddle and bridle.

How Jem's eyes ſparkled when the ſaddle was thrown upon Lightfoot's back! "Put it on your horſe yourſelf, Jem," ſaid the lady—"it is yours."

Confuſed reports of Lightfoot's ſplendid accoutrements, of the purſuit of

thieves, and of the fine and generous lady, who was ſtanding at dame Preſton's window, quickly ſpread through the village, and drew every body from their houſes. They crouded round Jem to hear the ſtory. The children eſpecially, who were all fond of him, expreſſed the ſtrongeſt indignation againſt the thieves. Every eye was on the ſtretch; and now ſome, who had run down the lane, came back ſhouting, "Here they are! they've got the thieves!"

The footman on horſeback carried one boy before him; and the farmer, ſtriding along, dragged another. The latter had on a red jacket, which little Jem immediately recollected, and ſcarcely dared lift his eyes to look at the boy on horſeback. "Good God!" ſaid he to himſelf, "it muſt be—yet ſurely it can't be Lawrence!" The footman rode on as faſt as the people would let

him. The boy's hat was flouched, and his head hung down, fo that nobody could fee his face.

At this inftant there was a difturbance in the crowd. A man who was half drunk pufhed his way forwards, fwearing that nobody fhould ftop him; that he had a right to fee; and he *would* fee. And fo he did; for, forcing through all refiftance, he ftaggered up to the footman juft as he was lifting down the boy he had carried before him. "I *will*—I tell you I *will* fee the thief!" cried the drunken man, pufhing up the boy's hat.—It was his own fon.—"Lawrence!" exclaimed the wretched father. The fhock fobered him at once, and he hid his face in his hands.

There was an awful filence. Lawrence fell on his knees, and in a voice that could fcarcely be heard, made a full confeffion of all the circumftances of his guilt. "Such a young creature

ſo wicked! What could put ſuch wickedneſs into your head?"—"Bad company," ſaid Lawrence. "And how came you—what brought you into bad company?"—"I don't know—except it was idleneſs." While this was ſaying, the farmer was emptying Lazy Lawrence's pockets; and when the money appeared, all his former companions in the village looked at each other with aſtoniſhment and terror. Their parents graſped their little hands cloſer, and cried, "Thank God! he is not my ſon—how often, when he was little, we uſed, as he lounged about, to tell him that idleneſs was the root of all evil."

As for the hardened wretch his accomplice, every one was impatient to have him ſent to gaol. He had put on a bold, inſolent countenance, till he heard Lawrence's confeſſion; till the money was found upon him; and he heard the milk-woman declare, that

ſhe would ſwear to the ſilver penny which he had dropped. Then he turned pale, and betrayed the ſtrongeſt ſigns of fear. "We muſt take him before the juſtice," ſaid the farmer, "and he'll be lodged in Briſtol gaol. "Oh!" ſaid Jem, ſpringing forwards when Lawrence's hands were going to be tied, "let him go—won't you—can't you let him go?"—"Yes, madam, for mercy's ſake," ſaid Jem's mother to the lady, "think what a diſgrace to his family to be ſent to gaol." His father ſtood by wringing his hands in an agony of deſpair. "It's all my fault," cried he; "I brought him up in *idleneſs*."—"But he'll never be idle any more," ſaid Jem; "won't you ſpeak for him, ma'am?"—"Don't aſk the lady to ſpeak for him," ſaid the farmer; "it's better he ſhould go to bridewell now, than to the gallows by and by."

Nothing more was ſaid, for every

body felt the truth of the farmer's ſpeech. Lawrence was ſent to bridewell for a month, and the ſtable-boy was tranſported to Botany Bay.

During Lawrence's confinement, Jem often viſited him, and carried him ſuch little preſents as he could afford to give; and Jem could afford to be *generous* becauſe he was *induſtrious*. Lawrence's heart was touched by his kindneſs, and his example ſtruck him ſo forcibly, that, when his confinement was ended, he reſolved to ſet immediately to work; and, to the aſtoniſhment of all who knew him, ſoon became remarkable for induſtry; he was found early and late at his work, eſtabliſhed a new character, and for ever loſt the name of *Lazy Lawrence.*

TARLTON.

YOUNG Hardy was educated by Mr. Freeman, a very good maſter, at one of the Sunday ſchools in ——ſhire. He was honeſt, obedient, active, and good-natured; ſo that he was eſteemed and beloved by his maſter, and by his companions. Beloved by all his companions who were good, he did not deſire to be loved by the bad; nor was he at all vexed or aſhamed, when idle, miſchievous, or diſhoneſt boys attempted to plague or ridicule him. His friend Loveit, on the contrary, wiſhed to be univerſally liked; and his higheſt ambition was to be thought the beſt natured boy in the ſchool:—and ſo he was. He uſually went by the name of *poor Loveit*, and every body pitied him when he got into diſgrace, which he frequently did;

for though he had a good diſpoſition, he was often led to do things, which he knew to be wrong, merely becauſe he could never have the courage to ſay, *no*; becauſe he was afraid to offend the ill-natured, and could not bear to be laughed at by fools.

One fine autumn evening, all the boys were permitted to go out to play in a pleaſant green meadow, near the ſchool. Loveit, and another boy called Tarlton, began to play a game at battledore and ſhuttlecock, and a large party ſtood by to look on; for they were the beſt players at battledore and ſhuttlecock in the ſchool, and this was a trial of ſkill between them. When they had kept it up to three hundred and twenty, the game became very intereſting: the arms of the combatants grew ſo tired, that they could ſcarcely wield the battledores:—the ſhuttlecock began to waver in the air; now it almoſt touched

the ground, and now, to the aſtoniſhment of the ſpectators, mounted again high over their heads; yet the ſtrokes became feebler and feebler; and "now Loveit!" "now Tarlton!" reſounded on all ſides. For another minute the victory was doubtful; but at length, the ſetting ſun ſhining full in Loveit's face ſo dazzled his eyes, that he could no longer ſee the ſhuttlecock, and it fell at his feet.

After the firſt ſhout for Tarlton's triumph was over, every body exclaimed, "Poor Loveit!"—he's the beſt natured fellow in the world!—"what a pity that he did not ſtand with his back to the ſun."

"Now I dare you all to play another game with me," cried Tarlton, vauntingly; and as he ſpoke, he toſſed the ſhuttlecock up with all his force: with ſo much force, that it went over the hedge, and dropped into a lane, which

went cloſe beſide the field. "Hey-day!" ſaid Tarlton, "what ſhall we do now?"

The boys were ſtrictly forbidden to go into the lane; and it was upon their promiſe not to break this command, that they were allowed to play in the adjoining field.

No other ſhuttlecock was to be had, and their play was ſtopped. They ſtood on the top of the bank peeping over the hedge. "I ſee it yonder," ſaid Tarlton; "I wiſh any body would get it. One could get over the gate at the bottom of the field, and be back again in half a minute," added he, looking at Loveit. "But you know we muſt not go into the lane," ſaid Loveit, heſitatingly. "Pugh!" ſaid Tarlton, "why now what harm could it do?"—"I don't know," ſaid Loveit, drumming upon his battledore; "but—" "You don't know, man! why then what are you

afraid of? I aſk you." Loveit coloured, went on drumming, and again, in a lower voice, ſaid " *he didn't know.*" But upon Tarlton's repeating, in a more inſolent tone, " I aſk you, man, what you're afraid of? he ſuddenly left off drumming, and looking round, ſaid, " he was not afraid of any thing that he knew of."—" Yes, but you are," ſaid Hardy, coming forward. " Am I," ſaid Loveit; " of what, pray, am I afraid?" " Of doing wrong!" " Afraid *of doing wrong!*" repeated Tarlton, mimicking him, ſo that he made every body laugh. " Now hadn't you better ſay afraid of being flogged?"—" No," ſaid Hardy, coolly, after the laugh had ſomewhat ſubſided, " I am as little afraid of being flogged as you are, Tarlton; but I meant—" " No matter what you meant; why ſhould you interfere with your wiſdom, and your meanings; nobody thought of aſking *you* to ſtir a ſtep for

us; but we aſked Loveit, becauſe he's the beſt fellow in the world."—"And for that very reaſon you ſhould not aſk him, becauſe you know he can't refuſe you any thing." "Indeed though," cried Loveit, piqued, "*there* you're miſtaken, for I could refuſe if I choſe it." Hardy ſmiled; and Loveit, half afraid of his contempt, and half afraid of Tarlton's ridicule, ſtood doubtful, and again had recourſe to his battledore, which he balanced moſt curiouſly upon his fore-finger. "Look at him!—now do look at him!" cried Tarlton; "did you ever in your life ſee any body look ſo ſilly!—Hardy has him quite under thumb; he's ſo motally afraid of Parſon Prig, that he dare not, for the ſoul of him, turn either of his eyes from the tip of his noſe; look how he ſquints!"—"I don't ſquint," ſaid Loveit, looking up, "and nobody has me under his thumb; and what Hardy ſaid, was only for fear

I ſhould get into diſgrace:—he's the beſt friend I have." Loveit ſpoke this with more than uſual ſpirit, for both his heart and his pride were touched. "Come along then," ſaid Hardy, taking him by the arm in an affectionate manner; and he was juſt going, when Tarlton called after him, "Ay, go along with its beſt friend, and take care it does not get into a ſcrape;—good by, Little Panado!"—"Who do they call Little Panado," ſaid Loveit, turning his head haſtily back. "Never mind," ſaid Hardy, "what does it ſignify?"—"No," ſaid Loveit, "to be ſure it does not ſignify; but one does not like to be called Little Panado: beſides," added he, after going a few ſteps farther, "they'll all think it ſo ill-natured.—I had better go back, and juſt tell them, that I'm ſorry I can't get their ſhuttlecock;—do come back with me."—"No," ſaid Hardy, "I can't go

"back; and you'd better not." "But, I affure you, I won't ftay a minute; wait for me," added Loveit; and he flunk back again to prove that he was not Little Panado.

Once returned, the reft followed of courfe; for to fupport his character for good-nature, he was obliged to yield to the entreaties of his companions, and to fhew his fpirit, leapt over the gate, amidft the acclamations of the little mob:—he was quickly out of fight.

"Here," cried he, returning in about five minutes, quite out of breath, "I've got the fhuttlecock; and I'll tell you what I've feen," cried he, panting for breath. "What?" cried every body, eagerly. "Why, juft at the turn of the corner, at the end of the lane," panting. "Well," faid Tarlton, impatiently, "do go on."—"Let me juft take breath firft." "Pugh! never mind your breath."—"Well then, juft at

the turn of the corner, at the end of the lane, as I was looking about for the ſhuttlecock, I heard a great ruſtling ſomewhere near me, and ſo I looked where it could come from; and I ſaw, in a nice little garden, on the oppoſite ſide of the way, a boy, about as big as Tarlton, ſitting in a great tree, ſhaking the branches; and at every ſhake down there came ſuch a ſhower of fine large roſy apples, they made my mouth water: ſo I called to the boy, to beg one; but he ſaid, he could not give me one, for that they were his grandfather's; and juſt at that minute, from behind a gooſeberry buſh, up popped the uncle—the grandfather poked his head out of the window; ſo I ran off as faſt as my legs would carry me, though I heard him bawling after me all the way."

"And let him bawl," cried Tarlton, "he ſhan't bawl for nothing; I'm determined we'll have ſome of his fine

large rofy apples before I fleep to-night."—At this fpeech a general filence enfued; every body kept their eyes fixed upon Tarlton, except Loveit, who look-ed down, apprehenfive that he fhould be drawn on much farther than he in-tended.—" Oh, indeed!" faid he to himfelf, " as Hardy told me, I had better not have come back!"

Regardlefs of this confufion, Tarlton continued, " But before I fay any more, I hope we have no fpies amongft us. If there is any one of you afraid to be flogged, let him march off this in-ftant!"—Loveit coloured, bit his lips, wifhed to go, but had not courage to move firft.—He waited to fee what every body elfe would do;—nobody ftirred;—fo Loveit ftood ftill.

" Well then," cried Tarlton, giving his hand to the boy next him, then to the next, " your word and honour that you won't betray me; but ftand by me,

and I'll ſtand by you."—Each boy gave his hand, and his promiſe; repeating "ſtand by me, and I'll ſtand by you."--- Loveit hung back till the laſt; and had almoſt twiſted off the button of the boy's coat who ſcreened him, when Tarlton came up, holding out his hand, "Come, Loveit, lad, you're in for it: Stand by me, and I'll ſtand by you."— "Indeed, Tarlton," expoſtulated he, without looking him in the face, "I do wiſh you'd give up this ſcheme; I dare ſay all the apples are gone by this time;— I wiſh you would—Do, pray, give up this ſcheme."—"What ſcheme, man! you hav'n't heard it yet; you may as well know your text before you begin preaching." The corners of Loveit's mouth could not refuſe to ſmile, though in his heart he felt not the ſlighteſt inclination to laugh. "Why I don't know you, I declare I don't know you to-day," ſaid Tarlton; "you uſed to be the beſt na-

tured, moſt agreeable lad in the world, and would do any thing one aſked you; but you're quite altered of late, as we were ſaying juſt now, when you ſkulked away with Hardy: come, do man, pluck up a little ſpirit, and be one of us, or you'll make us all *hate you*." "*Hate* me!" repeated Loveit, with terror; "no, ſurely, you won't all *hate* me!" and he mechanically ſtretched out his hand, which Tarlton ſhook violently, ſaying, "*Ay, now, that's right*."—"*Ay, now, that's wrong!*" whiſpered Loveit's conſcience; but his conſcience was of no uſe to him, for it was always overpowered by the voice of numbers; and though he had the wiſh, he never had the power, to do right. "Poor Loveit! I knew he would not refuſe us," cried his companions; and even Tarlton, the moment he ſhook hands with him, deſpiſed him. It is certain, that weakneſs of mind is deſpiſed both by the good and by the bad.

The league being thus formed, Tarlton affumed all the airs of a commander, explained his fchemes, and laid the plan of attack upon the poor old man's apple tree. It was the only one he had in the world. We fhall not dwell upon their confultation, for the amufement of contriving fuch expeditions is often the chief thing which induces idle boys to engage in them.

There was a fmall window at the end of the back ftaircafe, through which, between nine and ten o'clock at night, Tarlton, accompanied by Loveit and another boy, crept out. It was a moonlight night, and, after croffing the field, and climbing the gate, directed by Loveit, who now refolved to go through the affair with fpirit, they proceeded down the lane with rafh, yet fearful fteps. At a diftance Loveit faw the white-wafhed cottage, and the apple-tree befide it: they quickened their

pace, and with ſome difficulty ſcrambled through the hedge which fenced the garden, though not without being ſcratched and torn by the briars. Every thing was ſilent. Yet now and then at every ruſtling of the leaves they ſtarted, and their hearts beat violently. Once as Loveit was climbing the apple-tree, he thought he heard a door in the cottage open, and earneſtly begged his companions to deſiſt and return home. This however he could by no means perſuade them to do, until they had filled their pockets with apples; then, to his great joy, they returned, crept in at the ſtaircaſe window, and each retired, as ſoftly as poſſible, to his own apartment.

Loveit ſlept in the room with Hardy, whom he had left faſt aſleep, and whom he now was extremely afraid of wakening. All the apples were emptied out of Loveit's pockets, and lodged with Tarlton till the morning, for fear the

ſmell ſhould betray the ſecret to Hardy. The room door was apt to creak, but it was opened with ſuch precaution, that no noiſe could be heard, and Loveit found his friend as faſt aſleep as when he left him.

"Ah," ſaid he to himſelf, "how quietly he ſleeps! I wiſh I had been ſleeping too." The reproaches of Loveit's conſcience, however, ſerved no other purpoſe but to torment him; he had not ſufficient ſtrength of mind to be good. The very next night, in ſpite of all his fears, and all his penitence, and all his reſolutions, by a little freſh ridicule and perſuaſion he was induced to accompany the ſame party on a ſimilar expedition. We muſt obſerve, that the neceſſity for continuing their depredations became ſtronger the third day; for, though at firſt only a ſmall party had been in the ſecret, by degrees it was divulged to the

whole ſchool; and it was neceſſary to ſecure ſecreſy by ſharing the booty.

Every one was aſtoniſhed that Hardy, with all his quickneſs and penetration, had not yet diſcovered their proceedings; but Loveit could not help ſuſpecting, that he was not quite ſo ignorant as he appeared to be. Loveit had ſtrictly kept his promiſe of ſecreſy, but he was by no means an artful boy; and in talking to his friend, conſcious that he had ſomething to conceal, he was perpetually on the point of betraying himſelf; then recollecting his engagement, he bluſhed, ſtammered, bungled; and upon Hardy's aſking what he meant, would anſwer with a ſilly guilty countenance, that he did not know; or abruptly break off, ſaying, Oh nothing! nothing at all!

It was in vain that he urged Tarlton to permit him to conſult his friend; a gloom overſpread Tarlton's brow when he began to ſpeak on the ſubject, and

he always returned a peremptory refufal, accompanied with fome fuch taunting expreffion as this—"I wifh we had nothing to do with fuch a fneaking fellow. He'll betray us all, I fee, before we have done with him."—"Well," faid Loveit to himfelf, "fo I am abufed after all, and called a fneaking fellow for my pains; that's rather hard to be fure, when I've got fo little by the job"

In truth he had not got much, for in the divifion of the booty only one apple, and a half of another which was only half ripe, happened to fall to his fhare; though, to be fure, when they had all eaten their apples, he had the fatisfaction to hear every body declare they were very forry they had forgotten to offer fome of theirs to "*poor Loveit!*"

In the mean time the vifits to the apple tree had been now too frequently repeated to remain concealed from the old man, who lived in the cottage. He

ufed to examine his only tree very frequently, and miffing numbers of rofy apples which he had watched ripening, he, though not much prone to fufpicion, began to think that there was fomething going wrong; efpecially as a gap was made in his hedge, and there were feveral fmall footfteps in his flower beds.

The good old man was not at all inclined to give pain to any living creature, much lefs to children, of whom he was particularly fond. Nor was he in the leaft avaricious, for though he was not rich, he had enough to live upon, becaufe he had been very induftrious in his youth; and he was always very ready to part with the little he had; nor was he a crofs old man. If any thing would have made him angry, it would have been the feeing his favourite tree robbed, as he had promifed himfelf the pleafure of giving his red apples to his grand-children on his birth-day.

However he looked up at the tree in ſorrow rather than in anger, and leaning upon his ſtaff, he began to conſider what he had beſt do.

"If I complain to their maſter," ſaid he to himſelf, "they will certainly be flogged, and that I ſhould be ſorry for; yet they muſt not be let to go on ſtealing, that would be worſe ſtill, for that would ſurely bring them to the gallows in the end. Let me ſee—oh, ay, that will do; I will borrow farmer Kent's dog Barker, he'll keep them off, I'll anſwer for it."

Farmer Kent lent his dog Barker, cautioning his neighbour at the ſame time, to be ſure to chain him well, for he was the fierceſt maſtiff in England. The old man, with farmer Kent's aſſiſtance, chained him faſt to the trunk of the apple-tree.

Night came, and Tarlton, Loveit, and his companions, returned at the

ufual hour. Grown bolder now by frequent fuccefs, they came on talking and laughing. But the moment they had fet their foot in the garden, the dog ftarted up; and, fhaking his chain as he fprang forward, barked with unremitting fury. They ftood ftill as if fixed to the fpot. There was juft moonlight enough to fee the dog. "Let us try the other fide of the tree," faid Tarlton. But to which ever fide they turned the dog flew round in an inftant, barking with encreafed fury.

"He'll break his chain and tear us to pieces," cried Tarlton; and, ftruck with terror, he immediately threw down the bafket he had brought with him, and betook himfelf to flight with the greateft precipitation.—"Help me! oh, pray, help me! I can't get through the hedge," cried Loveit in a lamentable tone, whilft the dog growled hideoufly, and fprang forward to the extremity of

his chain.—"I can't get out! Oh, for God's ſake, ſtay for me one minute, dear Tarlton!"

He called in vain, he was left to ſtruggle through his difficulties by himſelf; and of all his dear friends, not one turned back to help him. At laſt, torn and terrified, he got through the hedge and ran home, deſpiſing his companions for their ſelfiſhneſs. Nor could he help obſerving, that Tarlton, with all his vaunted proweſs, was the firſt to run away from the appearance of danger. The next morning he could not help reproaching the party with their conduct.—"Why could not you, any of you, ſtay one minute to help me?" ſaid he. "We did not hear you call," anſwered one. "I was ſo frightened," ſaid another, "I would not have turned back for the whole world."—"And you, Tarlton?"—"I," ſaid Tarlton. "Had not I enough to do to take care of my-

ſelf, you blockhead? Every one for himſelf in this world!" "So I ſee," ſaid Loveit, gravely. "Well, man! is there any thing ſtrange in that?"—"Strange! why yes, I thought you all loved me?" "Lord, love you, lad! ſo we do; but we love ourſelves better."—"Hardy would not have ſerved me ſo, however," ſaid Loveit, turning away in diſguſt. Tarlton was alarmed.—"Pugh!" ſaid he, "what nonſenſe have you taken into your brain? Think no more about it. We are all very ſorry, and beg your pardon; come, ſhake hands, forgive and forget." Loveit gave his hand, but gave it rather coldly—"I forgive it with all my heart," ſaid he, "but I cannot forget it ſo ſoon!"—"Why then you are not ſuch a good-humoured fellow as we thought you were. Surely you cannot bear malice, Loveit?" Loveit ſmiled, and allowed that he certainly could not bear malice.

"Well then, come; you know at the bottom we all love you, and would do any thing in the world for you." Poor Loveit, flattered in his foible, began to believe that they did love him at the bottom, as they ſaid, and even with his eyes open conſented again to be duped.

"How ſtrange it is," thought he, "that I ſhould ſet ſuch value upon the love of thoſe I deſpiſe! When I'm once out of this ſcrape, I'll have no more to do with them, I'm determined."

Compared with his friend Hardy, his new aſſociates did indeed appear contemptible; for all this time Hardy had treated him with uniform kindneſs, avoided to pry into his ſecrets, yet ſeemed ready to receive his confidence, if it had been offered.

After ſchool in the evening, as he was ſtanding ſilently beſide Hardy, who was ruling a ſheet of paper for him, Tarlton, in his brutal manner, came up, and

ſeizing him by the arm, cried, " Come along with me, Loveit, I've ſomething to ſay to you."—" I can't come now," ſaid Loveit, drawing away his arm.—" Ah, do come now," ſaid Tarlton in a voice of perſuaſion.—" Well, I'll come preſently."—" Nay, but do, pray; there's a good fellow, come now, becauſe I've ſomething to ſay to you."—" What is it you've got to ſay to me? I wiſh you'd let me alone," ſaid Loveit; yet at the ſame time he ſuffered himſelf to be led away.

Tarlton took particular pains to humour him and bring him into temper again; and even, though he was not very apt to part with his play-things, went ſo far as to ſay, " Loveit, the other day you wanted a top; I'll give you mine, if you deſire it."—Loveit thanked him, and was overjoyed at the thoughts of poſſeſſing this top. " But what did you want to ſay to me juſt now?"—

"Aye, we'll talk of that preſently—not yet—when we get out of hearing."—"Nobody is near us," ſaid Loveit.—"Come a little farther, however," ſaid Tarlton, looking round ſuſpiciouſly.—"Well now, well?" "You know the dog that frightened us ſo laſt night?"—"Yes."—"It will never frighten us again."—"Won't it? how ſo?"—"Look here," ſaid Tarlton, drawing from his pocket ſomething wrapped in a blue handkerchief.—"What's that?" Tarlton opened it. "Raw meat!" exclaimed Loveit. "How came you by it?"—"Tom, the ſervant boy, Tom got it for me, and I'm to give him ſixpence."—"And is it for the dog?"—"Yes; I vowed I'd be revenged on him, and after all this he'll never bark again."—"Never bark again!—What do you mean?—Is it poiſon?" exclaimed Loveit, ſtarting back with horror. "Only poiſon for *a dog*," ſaid Tarlton, confuſed;

"you could not look more ſhocking if it was poiſon for a Chriſtian." Loveit ſtood for nearly a minute in profound ſilence. "Tarlton," ſaid he, at laſt, in a changed tone and altered manner, "I did not know you; I will have no more to do with you."—"Nay, but ſtay," ſaid Tarlton, catching hold of his arm, "ſtay; I was only joking."—"Let go my arm, you were in earneſt."—"But then that was before I knew there was any harm. If you think there's any harm?"—"*If*," ſaid Loveit. "Why you know, I might not know; for Tom told me it's a thing that's often done; aſk Tom."—"I'll aſk nobody! Surely we know better what's right and wrong than Tom does."—"But only juſt aſk him, to hear what he'll ſay."—"I don't want to hear what he'll ſay," cried Loveit vehemently. "The dog will die in agonies—in horrid agonies! There was a dog poiſoned at my father's, I ſaw

him in the yard.—Poor creature! he lay, and howled, and writhed himſelf!" "Poor creature!—Well, there's no harm done now," cried Tarlton, in an hypocritical tone. But though he thought fit to diſſemble with Loveit, he was thoroughly determined in his purpoſe.

Poor Loveit, in haſte to get away, returned to his friend Hardy; but his mind was in ſuch agitation, that he neither talked nor moved like himſelf; and two or three times his heart was ſo full that he was ready to burſt into tears.

"How good-natured you are to me," ſaid he to Hardy, as he was trying vainly to entertain him; "but if you knew—." Here he ſtopped ſhort, for the bell for evening prayer rang, and they all took their places, and knelt down. After prayers, as they were going to bed, Loveit ſtopped Tarlton—"*Well!*" aſked he, in an inquiring manner, fixing his eyes upon him;—"*Well!*" replied

Tarlton, in an audacious tone, as if he meant to ſet his inquiring eye at defiance; —"what do you mean to do to-night?" —"To go to ſleep, as you do, I ſuppoſe," replied Tarlton, turning away abruptly, and whiſtling as he walked off.

"Oh, he has certainly changed his mind!" ſaid Loveit to himſelf, "elſe he could not whiſtle." About ten minutes after this, as he and Hardy were undreſſing, Hardy ſuddenly recollected that he had left his new kite out upon the graſs. "Oh," ſaid he, "it will be quite ſpoiled before morning!"—"Call Tom," ſaid Loveit, "and bid him bring it in for you in a minute." They both went to the top of the ſtairs to call Tom; no one anſwered. They called again louder, "is Tom below?"—"I'm here," anſwered he at laſt, coming out of Tarlton's room with a look of mixed embarraſſment and effrontery. And as

he was receiving Hardy's commiſſion, Loveit ſaw the corner of the blue handkerchief hanging out of his pocket. This excited freſh ſuſpicions in Loveit's mind; but, without ſaying one word, he immediately ſtationed himſelf at the window in his room, which looked out towards the lane; and, as the moon was riſen, he could ſee if any one paſſed that way. "What are you doing there?" ſaid Hardy, after he had been watching ſome time; "why don't you come to bed?" Loveit returned no anſwer, but continued ſtanding at the window. Nor did he watch long in vain; preſently he ſaw Tom gliding ſlowly along a by-path, and get over the gate into the lane.

"He's gone to do it!" exclaimed Loveit aloud, with an emotion which he could not command. "Who's gone! to do what?" cried Hardy, ſtarting up. "How cruel, how wicked!" continued Loveit. "What's cruel—what's wicked?

ſpeak out at once!" returned Hardy, in that commanding tone, which, in moments of danger, ſtrong minds feel themſelves entitled to aſſume towards weak ones. Loveit inſtantly, though in an incoherent manner, explained the affair to him. Scarcely had the words paſſed his lips, when Hardy ſprang up, and began dreſſing himſelf without ſaying one ſyllable. "For God's ſake, what are you going to do?" ſaid Loveit in great anxiety. "They'll never forgive me! don't betray me! they'll never forgive me! pray ſpeak to me! only ſay you won't betray us."—"I will not betray you, truſt to me," ſaid Hardy; and he left the room, and Loveit ſtood in amazement: whilſt, in the mean time, Hardy, in hopes of overtaking Tom before the fate of the poor dog was decided, ran with all poſſible ſpeed acroſs the meadow, and then down the lane. He came up with Tom juſt as he was

climbing the bank into the old man's garden. Hardy, too much out of breath to ſpeak, ſeized hold of him, dragged him down, detaining him with a firm graſp whilſt he panted for utterance— "What, maſter Hardy, is it you? what's the matter? what do you want?"—"I want the poiſoned meat that you have in your pocket."—"Who told you that I had any ſuch thing?" ſaid Tom, clapping his hand upon his guilty pocket. "Give it me quietly, and I'll let you off."—"Sir, upon my word I hav'n't! I didn't! I don't know what you mean," ſaid Tom trembling, though he was by far the ſtrongeſt of the two; "indeed I don't know what you mean."—"You do," ſaid Hardy, with great indignation, and a violent ſtruggle immediately commenced. The dog, now alarmed by the voices, began to bark outrageouſly. Tom was terrified leſt the old man ſhould come out to ſee what was the matter;

his ſtrength forſook him, and flinging the handkerchief and meat over the hedge, he ran away with all his ſpeed. The handkerchief fell within the reach of the dog, who inſtantly ſnapped at it; luckily it did not come untied. Hardy ſaw a pitchfork on a dunghill cloſe beſide him, and ſeizing upon it, ſtuck it into the handkerchief. The dog pulled, tore, growled, grappled, yelled; it was impoſſible to get the handkerchief from between his teeth; but the knot was looſed, the meat unperceived by the dog dropped out, and while he dragged off the handkerchief in triumph, Hardy with inexpreſſible joy plunged the pitchfork into the poiſoned meat, and bore it away.

Never did hero retire with more ſatiſfaction from a field of battle. Full of the pleaſure of ſucceſsful benevolence, Hardy tripped joyfully home, and vaulted over the window-ſill, when the firſt

object he beheld was Mr. Power, the uſher, ſtanding at the head of the ſtairs, with a candle in his hand.

"Come up, whoever you are," ſaid Mr. William Power, in a ſtern voice; I thought I ſhould find you out at laſt. Come up, whoever you are!" Hardy obeyed without reply.—"Hardy!" exclaimed Mr. Power, ſtarting back with aſtoniſhment; "is it you, Mr. Hardy?" repeated he, holding the light to his face. "Why, Sir," ſaid he, in a ſneering tone, "I'm ſure, if Mr. Trueman was here, he wouldn't believe his own eyes; but for my part, I ſaw through you long ſince, I never liked ſaints for my ſhare. Will you pleaſe to do me the favour, Sir, if it is not too much trouble, to empty your pockets.—Hardy obeyed in ſilence. "Hey day! meat! raw meat! what next?"—"That's all," ſaid Hardy, emptying his pockets inſide out. "This is *all*," ſaid Mr. Power,

taking up the meat.—"Pray, Sir," ſaid Hardy, eagerly, "let that meat be burned, it is poiſoned."—"Poiſoned!" cried Mr. William Power, letting it drop out of his fingers; "you wretch!" looking at him with a menacing air, "what is all this? Speak." Hardy was ſilent. "Why don't you ſpeak?" cried he, ſhaking him by the ſhoulder impatiently. Still Hardy was ſilent. "Down upon your knees this minute, and confeſs all, tell me where you've been, what you've been doing, and who are your accomplices, for I know there is a gang of you: ſo," added he, preſſing heavily upon Hardy's ſhoulder, "down upon your knees this minute, and confeſs the whole, that's your only way now to get off yourſelf. If you hope for *my* pardon, I can tell you it's not to be had without aſking for."—"Sir," ſaid Hardy in a firm but reſpectful voice, "I have no pardon to aſk, I have nothing to con-

fefs, I am innocent; but if I were not, I would never try to get off myfelf by betraying my companions."—" Very well, Sir! very well! very fine! ftick to it, ftick to it, I advife you—and we fhall fee. And how will you look to-morrow, Mr. Innocent, when my uncle the Doctor comes home?"—" As I do now, Sir," faid Hardy, unmoved. His compofure threw Mr. Power into a rage too great for utterance. " Sir," continued Hardy, " ever fince I have been at fchool, I never told a lie, and therefore, Sir, I hope you will believe me now. Upon my word and honour, Sir, I have done nothing wrong."—" Nothing wrong? Better and better! what, when I catched you going out at night?"—" *That* to be fure was wrong," faid Hardy, recollecting himfelf; " but except that—" " Except that, Sir! I will except nothing. Come along with me, young gentleman, your time for

pardon is paſt." Saying theſe words, he pulled Hardy along a narrow paſſage to a ſmall cloſet, ſet apart for deſperate offenders, and uſually known by the name of the *Black Hole.* "There, Sir, take up your lodging there for to-night," ſaid he, puſhing him in; "to-morrow I'll know more, or I'll know why," added he, double locking the door, with a tremendous noiſe, upon his priſoner, and locking alſo the door at the end of the paſſage, ſo that no one could have acceſs to him. "So now I think I have you ſafe!" ſaid Mr. William Power to himſelf, ſtalking off with ſteps which made the whole gallery reſound, and which made many a guilty heart tremble. The converſation which had paſſed between Hardy and Mr. Power at the head of the ſtairs had been anxiouſly liſtened to, but only a word or two here and there had been diſtinctly overheard.— The locking of the black hole door was

a terrible ſound—ſome knew not what it portended, and others knew *too well*; all aſſembled in the morning with faces of anxiety. Tarlton's and Loveit's were the moſt agitated. Tarlton for himſelf; Loveit for his friend, for himſelf, for every body. Every one of the party, and Tarlton at their head, ſurrounded him with reproaches; and conſidered him as the author of the evils which hung over them. "How could you do ſo? and why did you ſay any thing to Hardy about it? when you had promiſed too! Oh what ſhall we all do! what a ſcrape you have brought us into! Loveit, it's all your fault!"—"*All my fault!*" repeated poor Loveit, with a ſigh; "well, that is hard."

"Goodneſs! there's the bell," exclaimed a number of voices at onee. "Now for it!" They all ſtood in a half circle for morning prayers! they liſtened, "Here he is coming! No—

Yes—Here he is!" And Mr. William Power, with a gloomy brow, appeared and walked up to his place at the head of the room. They knelt down to prayers, and the moment they rofe, Mr. William Power, laying his hand upon the table, cried, "Stand ftill, gentlemen, if you pleafe." Every body ftood ftock ftill; he walked out of the circle; they gueffed that he was gone for Hardy, and the whole room was in commotion. Each with eagernefs afked each what none could anfwer, "*Has he told?*" —"*What* has he told?"—"Who has he told of?"—"I hope he has not told of me?" cried they. "I'll anfwer for it he has told of all of us," faid Tarlton. "And I'll anfwer for it he has told of none of us," anfwered Loveit, with a figh. "You don't think he's fuch a fool, when he can get himfelf off," faid Tarlton.

At this inftant the prifoner was led in,

and as he paſſed through the circle, every eye was fixed upon him; his eye turned upon no one, not even upon Loveit, who pulled him by the coat as he paſſed—every one felt almoſt afraid to breathe. —"Well, Sir," ſaid Mr. Power, ſitting down in Mr. Trueman's elbow chair, and placing the priſoner oppoſite to him; "well, Sir, what have you to ſay to me this morning?"—"Nothing, Sir," anſwered Hardy, in a decided yet modeſt manner; "nothing but what I ſaid laſt night."—"Nothing more?"—"Nothing more, Sir."—"But I have ſomething more to ſay to you, Sir, then; and a great deal more, I promiſe you, before I have done with you; and then ſeizing him in a fury, he was juſt going to give him a ſevere flogging, when the ſchool-room door opened, and Mr. Trueman appeared, followed by an old man whom Loveit immediately knew. He leaned upon his ſtick as he walked,

and in his other hand carried a baſket of apples. When they came within the circle, Mr. Trueman ſtopped ſhort—"Hardy!" exclaimed he, with a voice of unfeigned ſurpriſe, whilſt Mr. William Power ſtood with his hand ſuſpended.—"Aye, Hardy, Sir," repeated he. "I told him you'd not believe your own eyes."—Mr. Trueman advanced with a ſlow ſtep. "Now, Sir; give me leave," ſaid the Uſher, eagerly drawing him aſide and whiſpering.—"So, Sir," ſaid Mr. T. when the whiſper was done, addreſſing himſelf to Hardy with a voice and manner, which, had he been guilty, muſt have pierced him to the heart, "I find I have been deceived in you—it is but three hours ago that I told your uncle I never had a boy in my ſchool in whom I placed ſo much confidence; but, after all this ſhow of honour and integrity, the moment my back is turned, you are the firſt to ſet an

example of difobedience to my orders. Why do I talk of difobeying my commands, you are a thief!"—" I, Sir," exclaimed Hardy, no longer able to reprefs his feelings.—" You, Sir—you and fome others," faid Mr. Trueman, looking round the room with a penetrating glance—" you and fome others—" " Aye, Sir," interrupted Mr. William Power, " get that out of him if you can—afk him."—" I will afk him nothing; I fhall neither put his truth or his honour to the trial; truth and honour are not to be expected amongft thieves." " I am not a thief! I have never had any thing to do with thieves," cried Hardy, indignantly. " Have not you robbed this old man? don't you know the tafte of thefe apples?" faid Mr. Trueman, taking one out of the bafket. " No, Sir, I do not; I never touched one of that old man's apples." —" Never touched one of them! I fup-

pofe this is fome vile equivocation; you have done worfe, you have had the barbarity, the bafenefs, to attempt to poifon his dog; the poifoned meat was found in your pocket laft night."—"The poifoned meat was found in my pocket, Sir! but I never attempted to poifon the dog, I faved his life."—"Lord blefs him," faid the old man. "Nonfenfe! cunning!" faid Mr. Power. "I hope you won't let him impofe upon you fo, Sir." "No, he cannot impofe upon me, I have a proof he is little prepared for," faid Mr. Trueman, producing the blue handkerchief in which the meat had been wrapped.

Tarlton turned pale; Hardy's countenance never changed.—"Don't you know this handkerchief, Sir?"—"I do, Sir?"—"Is it not yours?"—"No, Sir." —"Don't you know whofe it is?" cried Mr. Power. Hardy was filent.

"Now, gentlemen," faid Mr. True-

man, "I am not fond of puniſhing you; but when I do it, you know it is always in earneſt. I will begin with the eldeſt of you; I will begin with Hardy, and flog you with my own hands till this handkerchief is owned." "I'm ſure it's not mine;" and "I'm ſure it's none of mine;" burſt from every mouth, whilſt they looked at each other in diſmay, for none but Hardy, Loveit, and Tarlton knew the ſecret.—"My cane!" ſaid Mr. Trueman, and Power handed him the cane—Loveit groaned from the bottom of his heart—Tarlton leaned back againſt the wall with a black countenance—Hardy looked with a ſteady eye at the cane.

"But firſt," ſaid Mr. Trueman, laying down the cane, "let us ſee; perhaps we may find out the owner of this handkerchief another way," examining the corners; it was torn almoſt to pieces, but luckily the corner that was marked remained.

"J. T.!" cried Mr. Trueman. Every eye turned upon the guilty Tarlton, who, now, as pale as aſhes and trembling in every limb, ſunk down upon his knees, and in a whining voice begged for mercy. "Upon my word and honour, Sir, I'll tell you all; I ſhould never have thought of ſtealing the apples if Loveit had not firſt told me of them; and it was Tom who firſt put the poiſoning the dog into my head: it was he that carried the meat; *wasn't it?*" ſaid he, appealing to Hardy, whoſe word he knew muſt be believed—"Oh, dear Sir!" continued he, as Mr. Trueman began to move towards him, "do let me off—do pray let me off this time! I'm not the only one indeed, Sir! I hope you won't make me an example for the reſt—It's very hard I'm to be flogged more than they!" "I'm not going to flog you."—"Thank you, Sir," ſaid Tarlton, getting up and wiping his eyes.

"You need not thank me," ſaid Mr. Trueman. "Take your handkerchief—go out of this room—out of this houſe—let me never ſee you more."

"If I had any hopes of him," ſaid Mr. Trueman, as he ſhut the door after him; "if I had any hopes of him, I would have puniſhed him; but I have none—puniſhment is meant only to make people better; and thoſe who have any hopes of themſelves will know how to ſubmit to it."

At theſe words Loveit firſt, and immediately all the reſt of the guilty party, ſtepped out of the ranks, confeſſed their fault, and declared themſelves ready to bear any puniſhment their maſter thought proper.—"Oh, they have been puniſhed enough," ſaid the old man; "forgive them, Sir."

Hardy looked as if he wiſhed to ſpeak.

"Not becauſe you aſk it," ſaid Mr. Trueman, "though I ſhould be glad to oblige you—it wouldn't be juſt—but there (pointing to Hardy), there is one who has merited a reward; the higheſt I can give him is the pardon of his companions."

Hardy bowed, and his face glowed with pleaſure, whilſt every body preſent ſympathiſed in his feelings.—"I am ſure," thought Loveit, "this is a leſſon I ſhall never forget."

"Gentlemen," ſaid the old man with a faultering voice, "it wasn't for the ſake of my apples that I ſpoke; and you, Sir," ſaid he to Hardy, "I thank you for ſaving my dog. If you pleaſe, I'll plant on that mount, oppoſite the window, a young apple tree, from my old one; I will water it, and take care of it with my own hands for your ſake, as long as I am able.—And may God

blefs you! (laying his trembling hand on Hardy's head) may God blefs you—I'm fure God *will* blefs all fuch boys as you are."

THE

FALSE KEY.

MR. SPENCER, a very benevolent and fenfible man, undertook the education of feveral poor children. Amongft the reft was a boy of the name of Franklin, whom he had bred up from the time he was five years old. Franklin had the misfortune to be the fon of a man of infamous character; and for many years this was a difgrace and reproach to his child. When any of the neighbours' children quarrelled with him, they ufed to tell him he would turn out like his father. But Mr. Spencer always affured him, that he might make himfelf whatever he pleafed; that by behaving well he would certainly, fooner or later, re-

cure the eſteem and love of all who knew him, even of thoſe who had the ſtrongeſt prejudice againſt him on his father's account.

This hope was very delightful to Franklin, and he ſhewed the ſtrongeſt deſire to learn and to do every thing that was right; ſo that Mr. Spencer ſoon grew fond of him, and took great pains to inſtruct him, and to give him all the good habits and principles which might make him a uſeful, reſpectable, and happy man.

When he was about thirteen years of age, Mr. Spencer one day ſent for him into his cloſet; and as he was folding up a letter which he had been writing, ſaid to him with a very kind look, but in a graver tone than uſual, " Franklin, you are going to leave me."—" Sir!" ſaid Franklin. " You are now going to leave me, and to begin the world for yourſelf. You will carry this letter to

my ſiſter, Mrs. Churchill, in Queen's Square—you know Queen's Square." Franklin bowed. "You muſt expect," continued Mr. Spencer, "to meet with ſeveral diſagreeable things, and a great deal of rough work, at your firſt ſetting out; but be faithful and obedient to your miſtreſs, and obliging to your fellow-ſervants, and all will go well. Mrs. Churchill will make you a very good miſtreſs if you behave properly, and I have no doubt but you will."—"Thank you, Sir."—"And you will always (I mean as long as you deſerve it) find a friend in me."—"Thank you, Sir—I am ſure you are—" There Franklin ſtopped ſhort, for the recollection of all Mr. Spencer's goodneſs ruſhed upon him at once, and he could not ſay another word. "Bring me a candle to ſeal this letter," ſaid his maſter; and he was very glad to get out of the room. He came back with the candle, and with a

ſtout heart ſtood by whilſt the letter was ſealing; and when his maſter put it into his hand, ſaid, in a cheerful voice, "I hope you will let me ſee you again, Sir, ſometimes." —"Certainly: whenever your miſtreſs can ſpare you I ſhall be very glad to ſee you; and, remember, if ever you get into any difficulty, don't be afraid to come to me. I have ſometimes ſpoken harſhly to you, but you will not meet with a more indulgent friend." Franklin at this turned away with a full heart; and, after making two or three attempts to expreſs his gratitude, left the room without being able to ſpeak.

He got to Queen's Square about three o'clock. The door was opened by a large red-faced man in a blue coat and ſcarlet waiſtcoat, to whom he felt afraid to give his meſſage, leſt he ſhould not be a ſervant. "Well, what's your buſineſs, Sir?" ſaid the butler. "I

have a letter for Mrs. Churchill, *Sir*," ſaid Franklin, endeavouring to pronounce his *Sir* in a tone as reſpectful as the butler's was inſolent. The man having examined the direction, ſeal, and edges of the letter, carried it up ſtairs, and in a few minutes returned, and ordered Franklin to rub his ſhoes well and follow him. He was then ſhewn into a handſome room, where he found his miſtreſs, an elderly lady. She aſked him a few queſtions, examining him attentively as ſhe ſpoke; and her ſevere eye at firſt, and her gracious ſmile afterwards, made him feel that ſhe was a perſon to be both loved and feared. "I ſhall give you in charge," ſaid ſhe, ringing a bell, "to my houſekeeper, and I hope ſhe will have no reaſon to be diſpleaſed with you."

The houſekeeper, when ſhe firſt came in, appeared with a ſmiling countenance; but the moment ſhe caſt her eyes on

Franklin, it changed to a look of ſurpriſe and ſuſpicion. Her miſtreſs recommended him to her protection, ſaying, "Pomfret, I hope you will keep this boy under your own eye." And ſhe received him with a cold "very well, ma'am;" which plainly ſhewed ſhe was not diſpoſed to like him. In fact Mrs. Pomfret was a woman ſo fond of power, and ſo jealous of favour, that ſhe would have quarrelled with an angel who had gotten ſo near her miſtreſs without her introduction. She ſmothered her diſpleaſure, however, till night; when, as ſhe attended her miſtreſs's toilette, ſhe could not refrain from expreſſing her ſentiments. She began cautiouſly: "Ma'am, is not this the boy Mr. Spencer was talking of one day—that has been brought up by the *Villaintropic Society*, I think they call it?"—"Philanthropic Society; yes; and my brother gives him a high character: I hope he will do very well."

—"I'm ſure I hope ſo too; but I can't ſay; for my part, I've no great notion of thoſe low people. They ſay all thoſe children are taken from the very loweſt *drugs* and *refugees* of the town, and ſurely they are like enough, ma'am, to take after their own fathers and mothers."—"But they are not ſuffered to be with their parents, and therefore cannot be hurt by their example. This little boy to be ſure was unfortunate in his father, but he has had an excellent education."—"Oh, *edication!* to be ſure, ma'am, I know—I don't ſay but what *edication* is a great thing. But then, ma'am, *edication* can't change the *natur* that's in one, they ſay; and one that's born naturally bad and low, they ſay, all the *edication* in the world won't do no good; and, for my part, ma'am, I know you knows beſt, but I ſhould be afraid to let any of thoſe *Villaintropic* folks get into my houſe, for nobody can

tell the *natur* of them before hand: I declare it frights me."—" Pomfret, I thought you had better ſenſe: how could this poor boy earn his bread? he would be forced to ſtarve, or ſteal, if every body had ſuch prejudices." Pomfret, who really was a good woman, was ſoftened at this idea, and ſaid, " God forbid he ſhould ſtarve, or ſteal, and God forbid I ſhould ſay any thing *prejudiciary* of the boy, for there may be no harm in him."—" Well," ſaid Mrs. Churchill, changing her tone, " but, Pomfret, if we don't like the boy at the end of a month, we have done with him; for I have only promiſed Mr. Spencer to keep him a month upon trial—there is no harm done."—" Dear, no, ma'am, to be ſure—and cook muſt put up with her diſappointment, that's all."—" What diſappointment?"—" About her nephew ma'am; the boy ſhe and I was ſpeaking to you for."—" When?"—

" The day you called her up about the almond pudding, ma'am; if you remember, you ſaid you ſhould have no objections to try the boy; and upon that cook bought him new ſhirts; but they are ſafe, as I tell her."—" But I did not promiſe to take her nephew."—" Oh, no, ma'am, not at all; ſhe does not think to *ſay that*, elſe I ſhould be very angry; but the poor woman never let fall a word, any more than frets that the boy ſhould miſs ſuch a good place."— " Well, but ſince I did ſay that I ſhould have no objection to try him, I ſhall keep my word; let him come to-morrow: let them both have a fair trial, and at the end of the month I can decide which I like beſt, and which we had better keep."

Diſmiſſed with theſe orders, Mrs. Pomfret haſtened to report all that had paſſed to the cook, like a favourite miniſter; proud to diſplay the extent of her

ſecret influence. In the morning Felix, the cook's nephew, arrived; and the moment he came into the kitchen every eye, even the ſcullion's, was fixed upon him with approbation, and afterwards glanced upon Franklin with contempt—contempt which Franklin could not endure without ſome confuſion, though quite unconſcious of having deſerved it; nor, upon the moſt impartial and cool ſelf-examination, could he comprehend the juſtice of his judges. He perceived indeed, for the compariſons were minutely made in audible and ſcornful whiſpers, that Felix was a much handſomer, or, as the kitchen-maid expreſſed it, a much more genteeler gentlemanly-looking like ſort of perſon than he was; and he was made to underſtand, that he wanted a frill to his ſhirt, a cravat, a pair of thin ſhoes, and, above all, ſhoe-ſtrings, beſides other nameleſs advantages, which juſtly made his rival the ad-

miration of the kitchen. However, upon calling to mind all that his friend Mr. Spencer had ever ſaid to him, he could not recollect his having warned him that ſhoe-ſtrings were indiſpenſable requiſites to the character of a good ſervant; ſo that he could only comfort himſelf with reſolving, if poſſible, to make amends for theſe deficiencies, and to diſſipate the prejudices which he ſaw were formed againſt him, by the ſtricteſt adherence to all that his tutor had taught him to be his duty. He hoped to ſecure the approbation of his miſtreſs by ſcrupulous obedience to all her commands, and faithful care of all that belonged to her; at the ſame time he flattered himſelf he ſhould win the good will of his fellow-ſervants, by ſhewing a conſtant deſire to oblige them. He purſued this plan of conduct ſteadily for nearly three weeks, and found that he ſucceeded beyond his expectations in pleaſing his miſtreſs; but

unfortunately he found it more difficult to pleafe his fellow-fervants, and he fometimes offended when he leaft expected it.

He had made great progrefs in the affections of Corkfcrew the butler, by working indeed very hard for him, and doing every day at leaft half his bufinefs. But one unfortunate night the butler was gone out—the bell rang—he went up ftairs; and his miftrefs afking where Corkfcrew was, he anfwered that he was gone out. "Where to?" faid his miftrefs. "I don't know," anfwered Franklin. And as he had told exactly the truth, and meant to do no harm, he was furprifed, at the butler's return, when he repeated to him what had paffed, to receive a fudden box on the ear, and the appellation of a mifchievous, impertinent, mean-fpirited brat! "Mifchievous, impertinent, mean!" repeated Franklin to himfelf; but, looking in

the butler's face, which was of a deeper ſcarlet than uſual, he judged that he was far from ſober, and did not doubt but that the next morning, when he came to the uſe of his reaſon, he would be ſenſible of his injuſtice, and apologize for this box of the ear. But no apology coming all day, Franklin at laſt ventured to requeſt an explanation, or rather to aſk what he had beſt do on the next occaſion. "Why," ſaid Corkſcrew, "when miſtreſs aſked for me, how came you to ſay I was gone out?"—"Becauſe you know, I ſaw you go out."—"And when ſhe aſked you where I was gone, how came you to ſay that you did not know?"—"Becauſe indeed I did not."—"You are a ſtupid blockhead: could not you ſay I was gone to the waſherwoman's?"—"But *were* you?" ſaid Franklin. "Was I!" cried Corkſcrew, and looked as if he would have ſtruck him again; "how dare you give

me the lie?—Mr. Hypocrite, you would be ready enough, I'll be bound, to make excuſes for yourſelf.—Why are not miſtreſs's clogs cleaned? go along and blacken 'em this minute, and ſend Felix to me."

From this time forward Felix alone was privileged to enter the butler's pantry. Felix became the favourite of Corkſcrew; and though Franklin by no means ſought to pry into the myſteries of their private conferences, nor ever entered without knocking at the door, yet it was his fate once to be ſent of a meſſage at an unlucky time, and as the door was half open he could not avoid ſeeing Felix drinking a bumper of red liquor, which he could not help ſuſpecting to be wine; and as the decanter, which uſually went up ſtairs after dinner, was at this time in the butler's graſp, without any ſtopper in it, he was involuntarily forced to ſuſpect they were drinking his miſtreſs's wine.

Nor were the bumpers of port the only unlawful rewards which Felix received; his aunt the cook had occaſion for his aſſiſtance, and ſhe had many delicious douceurs in her gift. Many a handful of currants, many a half cuſtard, many a triangular remnant of pie, beſides the choice of his own meal at breakfaſt, dinner, and ſupper, fell to the ſhare of the favourite Felix; whilſt Franklin was neglected, though he took the utmoſt pains to pleaſe the cook in all honourable ſervice, and, when ſhe was hot, angry, or hurried, he was always at hand to help her; and in the hour of adverſity, when the clock ſtruck five, and no dinner was diſhed, and no kitchen maid with twenty pair of hands was to be had, Franklin would anſwer to her call, with flowers to garniſh her diſhes, and preſence of mind to know, in the midſt of the commotion, where every thing that was wanting was to be

found; ſo that, quick as lightning, all difficulties vaniſhed before him. Yet when the danger was over, and the hour of adverſity paſſed, the ungrateful cook would forget her benefactor, and, when it came to be his ſupper time, would throw him, with a careleſſneſs which touched him ſenſibly, any thing which the other ſervants were too nice to eat. All this Franklin bore with fortitude, nor did he envy Felix the dainties which he eat ſometimes cloſe beſide him: "For," ſaid he to himſelf, "I have a clear conſcience, and that is more than Felix can have. I know how he wins cook's favour too well, and I fancy I know how I have offended her; for, ſince the day I ſaw the baſket, ſhe has done nothing but huff me."

The hiſtory of the baſket was this. Mrs. Pomfret, the houſekeeper, had ſeveral times, directly and indirectly, given the world below to underſtand,

that ſhe and her miſtreſs thought there was a prodigious quantity of meat eaten of late. Now when ſhe ſpoke, it was uſually at dinner-time; ſhe always looked, or Franklin imagined that ſhe looked, ſuſpiciouſly at him. Other people looked ſtill more maliciouſly; but as he felt himſelf perfectly innocent, he went on eating his dinner in ſilence. But at length it was time to explain. One Sunday there appeared a handſome ſirloin of beef, which before noon on Monday had ſhrunk almoſt to the bare bone, and preſented ſuch a deplorable ſpectacle to the opening eyes of Mrs. Pomfret, that her long ſmothered indignation burſt forth, and ſhe boldly declared ſhe was now certain there had been foul play, and ſhe would have the beef found, or ſhe would know why. She ſpoke, but no beef appeared; till Franklin, with a look of ſudden recollection, cried, "Did not I ſee ſomething like a piece of beef

in a basket in the dairy—I think—" The cook, as if somebody had smote her a deadly blow, grew pale; but suddenly recovering the use of her speech, turned upon Franklin, and with a voice of thunder gave him the lie direct; and forthwith, taking Mrs. Pomfret by the ruffle, led the way to the dairy, declaring she could defy the world—"that she could, and so would."—"There, ma'am," said she, kicking an empty basket which lay on the floor—"there's malice for you—ask him why he don't shew you the beef in the basket."—"I thought I saw—" poor Franklin began. "You thought you saw!" cried the cook coming close up to him with kimboed arms, and looking like a dragon.—"And pray, Sir, what business have such a one as you to think you see?—And pray, ma'am, will you be pleased to speak — perhaps, ma'am, he'll condescend to obey you—ma'am, will you be

pleafed to forbid him my dairy—for here he comes prying and fpying about—and how, ma'am, am I to anfwer for my butter and cream, or any thing at all?—I'm fure it's what I can't pretend to, unlefs you do me the juftice to forbid him my places."

Mrs. Pomfret, whofe eyes were blinded by her prejudices againft the folks of the *Villaintropic Society*, and alfo by her fecret jealoufy of a boy whom fhe deemed to be growing a favourite of her miftrefs's, took part with the cook, and ended, as fhe began, with a firm perfuafion that Franklin was the guilty perfon. "Let him alone, let him alone!" faid fhe; "he has as many turns and windings as a hare; but we fhall catch him yet, I'll be bound, in fome of his doublings. I knew the nature of him well enough, from the firft time I ever fet my eyes upon him; but miftrefs fhall have her own way, and fee the end of it."

Thefe words, and the bitter fenfe of injuftice, drew tears at length faft down the proud cheek of Franklin, which might poffibly have touched Mrs. Pomfret, if Felix, with a fneer, had not called them *crocodile tears*. "Felix too!" thought he, "this is too much." In fact Felix had till now profeffed himfelf his firm ally, and had on his part received from Franklin unequivocal proofs of friendfhip; for it muft be told, that every other morning, when it was Felix's turn to get breakfaft, Felix never was up in decent time, and muft inevitably have come to public difgrace, if Franklin had not gottenall the breakfaft things ready for him, the bread and butter fpread, and the toaft toafted; and had not moreover regularly, when the clock ftruck eight, and Mrs. Pomfret's foot was heard overhead, ran to call the fleeping Felix, and helped him conftantly through the hurry of getting

dreſſed one inſtant before the houſe-keeper came down ſtairs. All this could not but be preſent to his memory; but, ſcorning to reproach him, Franklin wiped away his crocodile tears, and preſerved a magnanimous ſilence.

The hour of retribution was however not ſo far off as Felix imagined. Cunning people may go on cleverly in their devices for ſome time, but though they may eſcape once, twice, perhaps ninety-nine times, what does that ſignify, for the hundredth they come to ſhame, and loſe all their character. Grown bold by frequent ſucceſs, Felix became more careleſs in his operations; and it happened that one day he met his miſtreſs full in the paſſage, as he was going on one of the cook's ſecret errands. "Where are you going, Felix?" ſaid his miſtreſs. "To the waſherwoman's, ma'am," anſwered he with his uſual effrontery. "Very well," ſaid ſhe, "call at the

bookseller's in—stay, I must write down the direction.—Pomfret," said she, opening the housekeeper's room door, " have you a bit of paper." Pomfret came with the writing-paper, and looked very angry to see that Felix was going out without her knowledge; so, while Mrs. Churchill was writing the direction, she stood talking to him about it; whilst he, in the greatest terror imaginable, looked up in her face as she spoke, but was all the time intent upon parrying on the other side the attacks of a little French dog of his mistress's, which, unluckily for him, had followed her into the passage. Manchon was extremely fond of Felix, who, by way of pleasing his mistress, had paid most assiduous court to her dog; yet now his caresses were rather troublesome. Manchon leaped up, and was not to be rebuffed. " Poor fellow, poor fellow—down! down! poor fellow!" cried Felix, and put him away.

But Manchon leaped up again, and began ſmelling near the fatal pocket in a moſt alarming manner. "You will ſee by this direction where you are to go," ſaid his miſtreſs. "Manchon, come here—and you will be ſo good as to bring me—down! down! Manchon, be quiet!" But Manchon knew better; he had now gotten his head into Felix's pocket, and would not be quiet till he had drawn thence, ruſtling out of its brown paper, half a cold turkey, which had been miſſing ſince morning. "My cold turkey, as I'm alive!" exclaimed the houſekeeper, darting upon it with horror and amazement. "What is all this?" ſaid Mrs. Churchill in a compoſed voice. "I don't know, ma'am," anſwered Felix, ſo confuſed that he knew not what to ſay—"but—" "But what?" cried Mrs. Pomfret, indignation flaſhing from her eyes. "But what?" repeated his miſtreſs, waiting for his reply with

a calm air of attention, which ſtill more diſconcerted Felix; for though with an angry perſon he might have ſome chance of eſcape, he knew that he could not invent any excuſe in ſuch circumſtances which could ſtand the examination of a perſon in her ſober ſenſes. He was ſtruck dumb. "Speak," ſaid Mrs. Churchill, in a ſtill lower tone; "I am ready to hear all you have to ſay: in my houſe every body ſhall have juſtice—ſpeak—but what?"—"*But*," ſtammered Felix; and, after in vain attempting to equivocate, confeſſed that he was going to take the turkey to his couſin's: but he threw all the blame upon his aunt, the cook, who, he ſaid, had ordered him upon this expedition. The cook was now ſummoned; but ſhe totally denied all knowledge of the affair, with the ſame violence with which ſhe had lately confounded Franklin about the beef in the baſket; not entirely, however, with the

fame fuccefs, for Felix, perceiving by his miftrefs's eye that fhe was upon the point of defiring him to leave the houfe immediately, and not being very willing to leave a place in which he had lived fo well with the butler, did not hefitate to confront his aunt with affurance equal to her own. He knew how to bring his charge home to her. He produced a note in her own hand-writing, the purport of which was to requeft her coufin's acceptance of "fome *delicate cold turkey*," and to beg fhe would fend her by the return of the bearer a little of her cherry-brandy.

Mrs. Churchill coolly wrote upon the back of the note her cook's difcharge, and informed Felix fhe had no further occafion for his fervices; but, upon his pleading with many tears, which Franklin did not call *crocodile tears*, that he was fo young, and that he was under the dominion of his aunt, he touched Mrs.

Pomfret's compaſſion, and ſhe obtained for him permiſſion to ſtay till the end of the month, to give him yet a chance of redeeming his character.

Mrs. Pomfret, now ſeeing how far ſhe had been impoſed upon, reſolved for the future to be more upon her guard with Felix, and felt that ſhe had treated Franklin with great injuſtice, when ſhe accuſed him of mal-practices about the ſirloin of beef. Good people, when they are made ſenſible that they have treated any one with injuſtice, are impatient to have an opportunity to rectify their miſtake; and Mrs. Pomfret was now prepared to ſee every thing which Franklin did in the moſt favourable point of view, eſpecially as the next day ſhe diſcovered, that it was he who every morning boiled the water for her tea, and buttered her toaſt, ſervices for which ſhe had always thought ſhe was indebted to Felix. Beſides, ſhe had rated Felix's

abilities very highly, becaufe he made up her weekly accounts for her; but unluckily once, when Franklin was out of the way, and fhe brought a bill in a hurry to her favourite to caft up, fhe difcovered that he did not know how to caft up pounds, fhillings, and pence, and he was obliged to confefs, that he muft wait till Franklin came home.

But, paffing over a number of fmall incidents, which gradually unfolded the character of the two boys, we muft proceed to a more ferious affair.

Corkfcrew, frequently, after he had finifhed taking away fupper, and after the houfekeeper was gone to bed, fallied forth to a neighbouring alehoufe to drink with his friends. The alehoufe was kept by that coufin of Felix's, who was fo fond of "*delicate* cold turkey," and who had fuch choice cherry-brandy. Corkfcrew kept the key of the houfe-door, fo that he could return home at

what hour he thought proper; and, if he ſhould by accident be called for by his miſtreſs after ſupper, Felix knew where to find him, and did not ſcruple to make any of thoſe excuſes, which poor Franklin had too much integrity to uſe. All theſe precautions taken, the butler was at liberty to indulge his favourite paſſion, which ſo increaſed with indulgence, that his wages were by no means ſufficient to ſupport him in this way of life. Every day he felt leſs reſolution to break through his bad habits, for every day drinking became more neceſſary to him. His health was ruined. With a red, pimpled, bloated face, emaciated legs, and a ſwelled, diſeaſed body, he appeared the victim of intoxication. In the morning when he got up his hands trembled, his ſpirits flagged, he could do nothing till he had taken a dram; an operation which he was obliged to repeat ſeveral times in the courſe

of the day, as all thofe wretched people *muft*, who once acquire this cuftom.

He had run up a long bill at the ale-houfe which he frequented; and the landlord, who grew urgent for his money, refufed to give him further credit. One night, when Corkfcrew had drunk enough only to make him fretful, he leaned with his elbow furlily upon the table, began to quarrel with the landlord, and fwore that he had not of late treated him like a gentleman. To which the landlord coolly replied, "That as long as he had paid like a gentleman, he had been treated like one, and *that* was as much as any one could expect, or, at any rate, as much as any one would meet with, in this world." For the truth of this affertion he appealed, laughing, to a party of men who were drinking in the room. The men, however, took part with Corkfcrew, and, drawing him over to their table, made

him sit down with them. They were in high good humour, and the butler soon grew so intimate with them, that, in the openness of his heart, he soon communicated to them, not only all his own affairs, but all that he knew, and more than all that he knew, of his mistress's.

His new friends were by no means uninterested in his conversation, and encouraged him as much as possible to talk; for they had secret views, which the butler was by no means sufficiently sober to discover. Mrs. Churchill had some fine old family plate; and these men belonged to a gang of housebreakers. Before they parted with Corkscrew, they engaged him to meet them again the next night; their intimacy was still more closely cemented. One of the men actually offered to lend Corkscrew three guineas towards the payment of his debt, and hinted that, if he thought proper, he

could eafily get the whole cleared off. Upon this hint Corkfcrew became all attention, till, after fome hefitation on their part, and repeated promifes of fecrecy on his, they at length difclofed their plans to him. They gave him to underftand, that if he would affift in letting them into his miftrefs's houfe, they would let him have an ample fhare in the booty. The butler, who had the reputation of being an honeft man, and indeed whofe integrity had hitherto been proof againft every thing but his miftrefs's port, turned pale and trembled at this propofal; drank two or three bumpers to drown thought; and promifed to give an anfwer the next day.

He went home more than half intoxicated. His mind was fo full of what had paffed, that he could not help bragging to Felix, whom he found awake at his return, that he could have his bill paid off at the alehoufe whenever

he pleaſed; dropping beſides ſome hints, which were not loſt upon Felix. In the morning Felix reminded him of the things which he had ſaid; and Cork-ſcrew, alarmed, endeavoured to evade his queſtions, by ſaying that he was not in his ſenſes when he talked in that manner. Nothing however that he could urge made any impreſsion upon Felix, whoſe recollection on the ſubject was perfectly diſtinct, and who had too much cunning himſelf, and too little confidence in his companion, to be the dupe of his diſſimulation. The butler knew not what to do, when he ſaw, that Felix was abſolutely determined, either to betray their ſcheme, or to become a ſharer in the booty.

The next night came, and he was now to make a final deciſion; either to determine on breaking off entirely with his new acquaintance, or taking Felix with him to join in the plot.

His debt, his love of drinking, the impoſſibility of indulging it without a freſh ſupply of money, all came into his mind at once, and conquered his remaining ſcruples. It is ſaid by thoſe, whoſe fatal experience give them a right to be believed, that a drunkard will ſacrifice any thing, every thing, ſooner than the pleaſure of habitual intoxication.

How much eaſier is it never to begin a bad cuſtom, than to break through it when once formed!

The hour of rendezvous came, and Corkſcrew went to the alehouſe, where he found the houſe-breakers waiting for him, and a glaſs of brandy ready poured out. He ſighed—drank—heſitated—drank again—heard the landlord talk of his bill—ſaw the money produced, which would pay it in a moment — drank again—curſed himſelf, and giving his hand to the villain, who was whiſpering

in his ear, ſwore that he could not help it, and muſt do as they would have him. They required of him, to give up the key of the houſe-door, that they might get another made by it. He had left it with Felix, and was now obliged to explain the new difficulty which had ariſen. Felix knew enough to ruin them, and muſt therefore be won over. This was no very difficult taſk; he had a ſtrong deſire to have ſome worked cravats, and the butler knew enough of him to believe, that this would be a ſufficient bribe. The cravats were bought, and ſhewn to Felix. He thought them the only things wanting to make him a complete fine gentleman, and to go without them, eſpecially when he had once ſeen himſelf in the glaſs with one tied on in a ſplendid bow, appeared impoſſible. Even this paltry temptation, working upon his vanity, at length prevailed with a boy, whoſe integrity had

long been corrupted by the habits of petty pilfering and daily falsehood. It was agreed that, the first time his mistress sent him out on a message, he should carry the key of the house door to his cousin's, and deliver it into the hands of one of the gang, who were there in waiting for it. Such was the scheme. Felix, the night after all this had been planned, went to bed, and fell fast asleep; but the butler, who had not yet stifled the voice of conscience, felt, in the silence of the night, so insupportably miserable, that, instead of going to rest, he stole softly into the pantry for a bottle of his mistress's wine, and there, drinking glass after glass, he stayed till he became so far intoxicated, that, though he contrived to find his way back to bed, he could by no means undress himself. Without any power of recollection, he flung himself upon the bed, leaving his candle half hanging

out of the candleſtick beſide him. Franklin ſlept in the next room to him, and preſently wakening, thought he perceived a ſtrong ſmell of ſomething burning. He jumped up, and ſeeing a light under the butler's door, gently opened it, and to his aſtoniſhment beheld one of the bed curtains in flames. He immediately ran to the butler, and pulled him with all his force to rouſe him from his lethargy. He came to his ſenſes at length, but was ſo terrified, and ſo helpleſs, that, if it had not been for Franklin, the whole houſe would ſoon inevitably have been on fire. Felix, trembling and cowardly, knew not what to do; and it was curious to ſee him obeying Franklin, whoſe turn it was now to command. Franklin ran up ſtairs to waken Mrs. Pomfret, whoſe terror of fire was ſo great, that ſhe came from her room almoſt out of her ſenſes, whilſt he, with the greateſt preſence of

mind, recollected where he had ſeen two large tubs of water, which the maids had prepared the night before for their waſhing, and, ſeizing the wet linen which had been left to ſoak, threw it upon the flames. He exerted himſelf with ſo much good ſenſe, that the fire was preſently extinguiſhed. Every thing was now once more ſafe and quiet. Mrs. Pomfret, recovering from her fright, poſtponed all inquiries till the morning, and rejoiced that her miſtreſs had not been wakened, whilſt Corkſcrew flattered himſelf, that he ſhould be able to conceal the true cauſe of the accident. "Don't you tell Mrs. Pomfret where you found the candle, when you came into the room," ſaid he to Franklin. "If ſhe aſks me, you know I muſt tell the truth," replied he. "Muſt!" repeated Felix ſneeringly; "what you *muſt* be a tell-tale!"—"No, I never told any tales of any body, and

I ſhould be very ſorry to get any one into a ſcrape; but for all that I ſhall not tell a lie, either for myſelf or any body elſe, let you call me what names you will."—" But if I were to give you ſomething, that you would like," ſaid Corkſcrew;—" ſomething that I know you would like!" repeated Felix. " Nothing you can give me will do," anſwered Franklin ſteadily; " ſo it is uſeleſs to ſay any more about it—I hope I ſhall not be queſtioned." In this hope he was miſtaken; for the firſt thing Mrs. Pomfret did in the morning was, to come into the butler's room, to examine and deplore the burnt curtains, whilſt Corkſcrew ſtood by endeavouring to exculpate himſelf by all the excuſes he could invent. Mrs. Pomfret, however, though ſometimes blinded by her prejudices, was no fool, and it was abſolutely impoſſible to make her believe, that a candle which had been left on the hearth, where

Corkſcrew proteſted he had left it, could have ſet curtains on fire, which were at leaſt ſix feet diſtant. Turning ſhort round to Franklin, ſhe deſired, that he would ſhew her where he found the candle when he came into the room. He begged not to be queſtioned; but ſhe inſiſted. He took up the candleſtick; but the moment the houſekeeper caſt her eye upon it, ſhe ſnatched it from his hands—"How did this candleſtick come here? This was not the candleſtick you found here laſt night," cried ſhe. "Yes, indeed, it was," anſwered Franklin. "That is impoſſible," retorted ſhe vehemently, "for I left this candleſtick with my own hands, laſt night, in the hall, the laſt thing I did, after you," ſaid ſhe, turning to the butler, "were gone to bed—I'm ſure of it—Nay, don't you recollect my taking this *japanned candleſtick* out of your hand, and making you go up to bed

with the braſs one, and I bolted the door at the ſtair head after you ?"

This was all very true; but Corkſcrew had afterwards gone down from his room by a back ſtaircaſe, unbolted that door, and, upon his return from the alehouſe, had taken the japanned candleſtick by miſtake up ſtairs, and had left the braſs one in its ſtead upon the hall table.

"Oh, ma'am," ſaid Felix, "indeed you forget, for Mr. Corkſcrew came into my room, to deſire me to call him betimes in the morning, and I happened to take particular notice, and he had the japanned candleſtick in his hand, and that was juſt as I heard you bolting the door—indeed, ma'am, you forget."—"Indeed, Sir," retorted Mrs. Pomfret, riſing in anger, "I do not forget; I'm not come to be *ſupper-annuated* yet, I hope—How dare you to tell me I forget?"—"Oh, ma'am," cried Felix, "I beg your pardon. I did not—I did not

mean to ſay you forgot—but only I thought, perhaps, you might not particularly remember; for if you pleaſe to recollect—" "I won't pleaſe to recollect juſt whatever you pleaſe, Sir!—Hold your tongue—Why ſhould you poke yourſelf into this ſcrape—What have you to do with it, I ſhould be glad to know?"—"Nothing in the world, oh nothing in the world; I'm ſure I beg your pardon, ma'am," anſwered Felix in a ſoft tone, and, ſneaking off, left his friend Corkſcrew to fight his own battle, ſecretly reſolving to deſe.t in good time, if he ſaw any danger of the alehouſe tranſactions coming to light.

Corkſcrew could make but very blundering excuſes for himſelf; and, conſcious of guilt, he turned pale, and appeared ſo much more terrified than butlers uſually appear when detected in a lie, that Mrs. Pomfret reſolved, as ſhe ſaid, to ſift the matter to the bottom.

Impatiently did ſhe wait till the clock ſtruck nine, and her miſtreſs's bell rang, the ſignal for her attendance at her levee.—"How do you find yourſelf this morning, ma'am," ſaid ſhe, undrawing the curtains. "Very ſleepy, indeed," anſwered her miſtreſs in a drowſy voice; "I think I muſt ſleep half an hour longer—ſhut the curtains."—"As you pleaſe, ma'am; but I ſuppoſe I had better open a little of the window ſhutter, for it's paſt nine."—"But juſt ſtruck."—"Oh dear, ma'am, it ſtruck before I came up ſtairs, and you know we are twenty minutes ſlow—Lord bleſs us!" exclaimed Mrs. Pomfret, as ſhe let fall the bar of the window, which rouſed her miſtreſs—"I'm ſure I beg pardon a thouſand times—it's only the bar—becauſe I had this great key in my hand."—Put down the key then, or you'll knock ſomething elſe down; and you may open the ſhutters now, for I'm

quite awake."—"Dear me! I'm ſo ſorry to think of diſturbing you," cried Mrs. Pomfret, at the ſame time throwing the ſhutters wide open: "but, to be ſure, ma'am, I have ſomething to tell you, which won't let you ſleep again in a hurry. I brought up this here key of the houſe door for reaſons of my own, which I'm ſure you'll approve of—but I'm not come to that part of my ſtory yet—I hope you were not diſturbed by the noiſe in the houſe laſt night, ma'am."—"I heard no noiſe."—"I am ſurpriſed at that though," continued Mrs. Pomfret, and now proceeded to give the moſt ample account of the fire, of her fears, and her ſuſpicions.—"To be ſure, ma'am, what I ſay *is*, that, without the ſpirit of prophecy, one can no ways account for what has paſſed. I'm quite clear in my own judgment, that Mr. Corkſcrew muſt have been out laſt night after I went to bed; for, be-

ſides the japanned candleſtick, which of itſelf I'm ſure is ſtrong enough to hang a man, there's another circumſtance, ma'am, that certifies it to me—though I have not mentioned it, ma'am, to no one yet," lowering her voice—" Franklin, when I queſtioned him, told me, that he left the lantern in the outſide porch in the court laſt night, and this morning it was on the kitchen table: now, ma'am, that lantern could not come without hands; and I could not forget about that, you know; for Franklin ſays, he's ſure he left the lantern out."—" And do you believe *him?*"—" To be ſure, ma'am—how can I help believing him? I never found him out in the leaſt ſymptom of a lie, ſince ever he came into the houſe; ſo one can't help believing in him, like him or not."—" Without meaning to tell a falſehood, however, he might make a miſtake."—" No, ma'am, he never makes miſtakes;

It is not his way to go goffiping and tattling; he never tells any thing till he's afked, and then it's fit he fhould. About the firloin of beef, and all, he was right in the end I found, to do him juftice; and I'm fure he's right now about the lantern—he's *always right.*" Mrs. Churchill could not help fmiling. —" If you had feen him, ma'am, laft night in the midft of the fire—I'm fure we may thank him, that we are not burned alive in our beds—and I fhall never forget his coming to call me—Poor fellow! he that I was always fcolding and fcolding, enough to make him hate me. But he's too good to hate any body; and I'll be bound I'll make it up to him now."—" Take care that you don't go from one extreme into another, Pomfret; don't fpoil the boy."—" No, ma'am, there's no danger of that; but I'm fure if you had feen him laft night yourfelf, you

would think he deſerved to be rewarded."—"And ſo he ſhall be rewarded," ſaid Mrs. Churchill; "but I will try him more fully yet."—"There's no occaſion, I think, for trying him any more, ma'am," ſaid Mrs. Pomfret, who was violent in her likings as in her diſlikes. "Pray deſire," continued her miſtreſs, "that he will bring up breakfaſt this morning; and leave the key of the houſe door, Pomfret, with me."

When Franklin brought the urn into the breakfaſt parlour, his miſtreſs was ſtanding by the fire with the key in her hand. She ſpoke to him of his laſt night's exertions in terms of much approbation. "How long have you lived with me?" ſaid ſhe, pauſing; "three weeks, I think?"—"Three weeks and four days, madam."—"That is but a ſhort time; yet you have conducted yourſelf ſo as to make me think I may depend upon you. You know this

key?"—"I believe, madam, it is the key of the houſe door."—"It is: I ſhall truſt it in your care. It is a great truſt for ſo young a perſon as you are." Franklin ſtood ſilent, with a firm but modeſt look. "If you take the charge of this key," continued his miſtreſs, "remember it is upon condition, that you never give it out of your own hands. In the day-time it muſt not be left in the door. You muſt not tell any body where you keep it at night; and the houſe door muſt not be unlocked after eleven o'clock at night, unleſs by my orders. Will you take charge of the key upon theſe conditions?"—"I will, madam, do any thing you order me," ſaid Franklin, and received the key from her hands.

When Mrs. Churchill's orders were made known, they cauſed many ſecret marvellings and murmurings. Corkſcrew and Felix were diſconcerted, and

dared not openly avow their diſcontent; and they treated Franklin with the greateſt ſeeming kindneſs and cordiality. Every thing went on ſmoothly for three days; the butler never attempted his uſual midnight viſits to the alehouſe, but went to bed in proper time, and paid particular court to Mrs. Pomfret, in order to diſpel her ſuſpicions. She had never had any idea of the real fact, that he and Felix were joined in a plot with houſe-breakers, to rob the houſe, but thought he only went out at irregular hours, to indulge himſelf in his paſſion for drinking.—So ſtood affairs the night before Mrs. Churchill's birthday. Corkſcrew, by the houſekeeper's means, ventured to preſent a petition, that he might go to the play the next day, and his requeſt was granted. Franklin came into the kitchen juſt when all the ſervants had gathered round the butler, who, with great importance,

was reading aloud the play-bill. Every body prefent foon began to fpeak at once, and with great enthufiafm talked of the play-houfe, the actors, and actreffes; and then Felix, in the firft paufe, turned to Franklin, and faid, "Lord, you know nothing of all this! *you* never went to a play, did you?"—"Never," faid Franklin, and felt, he did not know why, a little afhamed; and he longed extremely to go to one. "How fhould you like to go to the play with me to-morrow," faid Corkfcrew. "Oh," exclaimed Franklin, "I fhould like it exceedingly." "And do you think miftrefs would let you if I afked."—"I think—may be fhe would, if Mrs. Pomfret afked her."—"But then you have no money, have you?"---"No," faid Franklin, fighing. "But ftay," faid Corkfcrew, "what I am thinking of is, that, if miftrefs will let you go, I'll treat you myfelf, rather than that you fhould be difappointed."

Delight, furprife, and gratitude, appeared in Franklin's face at thefe words. Corkfcrew rejoiced to fee that now, at leaft, he had found a moft powerful temptation. "Well, then, I'll go juft now and afk her: in the mean time lend me the key of the houfe door for a minute or two."---"The key!" anfwered Franklin, ftarting; "I'm forry, but I can't do that, for I've promifed my miftrefs never to let it out of my own hands."---"But how will fhe know any thing of the matter?---Run, run and get it for us."—"No, I *cannot*," replied Franklin, refifting the pufh which the butler gave his fhoulder. "You can't?" cried Corkfcrew, changing his tone; "then, Sir, I can't take you to the play."—"Very well, Sir," faid Franklin forrowfully, but with fteadinefs. "Very well, Sir," faid Felix, mimicking him, "you need not look fo important, nor fancy yourfelf fuch a great

man, becaufe you're mafter of a key."—"Say no more to him," interrupted Corkfcrew; "let him alone to take his own way—Felix, you would have no objection, I fuppofe, to going to the play with me?"—"Oh, I fhould like it of all things, if I did not come between any body elfe. — But come, come!" added the hypocrite, affuming a tone of friendly perfuafion, "you won't be fuch a blockhead, Franklin, as to lofe going to the play for nothing? it's only juft obftinacy: what harm can it do to lend Mr. Corkfcrew the key for five minutes; he'll give it to you back again fafe and found?" "I don't doubt *that*," anfwered Franklin. "Then it muft be all becaufe you don't wifh to oblige Mr. Corkfcrew."—"No; but I can't oblige him in this: for, as I told you before, my miftrefs trufted me; I promifed never to let the key out of my own hands; and you would not have

me break my truſt: Mr. Spencer told me *that* was worſe than *robbing*." At the word *robbing* both Corkſcrew and Felix involuntarily caſt down their eyes, and turned the converſation immediately, ſaying that he did very right; that they did not really want the key, and had only aſked for it juſt to try if he would keep his word. "Shake hands," ſaid Corkſcrew, "I am glad to find you out to be an honeſt fellow!"— "I'm ſorry you did not think me one before, Mr. Corkſcrew;" ſaid Franklin, giving his hand rather proudly; and he walked away.

"We ſhall make no hand of this prig," ſaid Corkſcrew. "But we'll have the key from him in ſpite of all his obſtinacy," ſaid Felix; "and let him make his ſtory good as he can afterwards. He ſhall repent of theſe airs. To-night I'll match him, and find out where he hides the key; and when he's aſleep we'll get it without thanking him."

This plan Felix put in execution. They discovered the place where Franklin kept the key at night, ftole it whilft he flept, took off the impreffion in wax, and carefully replaced it in Franklin's trunk, exactly where they found it.

Probably our young readers cannot guefs what ufe they could mean to make of this impreffion of the key in wax. Knowing how to do mifchief is very different from wifhing to do it; and the moft innocent perfons are generally the leaft ignorant. By means of the impreffion, which they had thus obtained, Corkfcrew and Felix propofed to get a falfe key made by Picklock, a fmith who belonged to their gang of houfebreakers; and with this falfe key they knew they could open the door whenever they pleafed.

Little fufpecting what had happened, Franklin the next morning went to unlock the houfe-door as ufual; but find-

ing the key entangled in the lock, he took it out to examine it, and perceived a lump of wax ſticking in one of the wards. Struck with this circumſtance, it brought to his mind all that had paſsed the preceding evening, and, being ſure that he had no wax near the key, he began to ſuſpect what had happened; and he could not help recollecting what he had once heard Felix ſay, that "give him but a halfpennyworth of wax, and he could open the ſtrongeſt lock that ever was made by hands."

All theſe things conſidered, Franklin reſolved to take the key juſt as it was, with the wax ſticking in it, to his miſtreſs. "I was not miſtaken when I thought I might truſt *you* with this key," ſaid Mrs. Churchill, after ſhe had heard his ſtory. "My brother will be here to day, and I ſhall conſult him; in the mean time ſay nothing of what has paſſed."

Evening came, and after tea Mr. Spencer ſent for Franklin up ſtairs. "So, Mr. Franklin," ſaid he, "I'm glad to find you are in ſuch high *truſt* in this family." Franklin bowed. "But you have loſt, I underſtand, the pleaſure of going to the play to-night."—"I don't think any thing—much, I mean—of that, Sir," anſwered Franklin ſmiling. "Are Corkſcrew and Felix *gone* to the play?"—"Yes; half an hour ago, Sir."—"Then I ſhall look into his room, and examine the pantry, and the plate that is under his care."

When Mr. Spencer came to examine the pantry, he found the large ſalvers and cups in a baſket behind the door, and the other things placed ſo as to be eaſily carried off. Nothing at firſt appeared in Corkſcrew's bed-chamber to ſtrengthen their ſuſpicions, till, juſt as they were going to leave the room, Mrs. Pomfret exclaimed, "why, if there is

not Mr. Corkſcrew's dreſs coat hanging up there! and if here isn't Felix's fine cravat, that he wanted in ſuch a hurry to go to the play!—Why, Sir, they can't be gone to the play—look at the cravat. —Ha! upon my word, I am afraid they are not at the play—No, Sir, no! you may be ſure that they are plotting with their barbarous gang at the alehouſe— and they'll certainly break into the houſe to-night—we ſhall all be murdered in our beds, as ſure as I'm a living woman, Sir—But if you'll only take my advice—"—" Pray, good Mrs. Pomfret, don't be alarmed."—" Nay, Sir, but I won't pretend to ſleep in the houſe, if Franklin isn't to have a blunderbuſs, and I a *baggonet.*"—" You ſhall have both indeed, Mrs. Pomfret; but don't make ſuch a noiſe, for every body will hear you."

The love of myſtery was the only thing which could have conquered Mrs.

Pomfret's love of talking. She was ſilent; and contented herſelf the reſt of the evening with making ſigns, looking *ominous*, and ſtalking about the houſe like one poſſeſſed with a ſecret.

Eſcaped from Mrs. Pomfret's fears and advice, Mr. Spencer went to a ſhop within a few doors of the alehouſe, which he heard Corkſcrew frequented, and ſent to beg to ſpeak to the landlord. He came; and, when Mr. Spencer queſtioned him, confeſſed that Corkſcrew and Felix were actually drinking in his houſe, with two men of ſuſpicious appearance. That, as he paſſed through the paſſage, he heard them diſputing about a key; and that one of them ſaid, "Since we've got the key, we'll go about it to-night." This was ſufficient information. Mr. Spencer, leſt the landlord ſhould give them information of what was going forwards, took him along with him to Bow-ſtreet.

A conſtable and proper aſſiſtance was ſent to Mrs. Churchill's. They ſtationed themſelves in a back parlour, which opened on a paſſage leading to the butler's pantry, where the plate was kept. A little after midnight they heard the hall-door open; Corkſcrew and his accomplices went directly to the pantry, and there Mr. Spencer and the conſtable immediately ſecured them, as they were carrying off their booty.

Mrs. Churchill and Pomfret had ſpent the night at the houſe of an acquaintance in the ſame ſtreet. "Well, ma'am," ſaid Mrs. Pomfret, who had heard all the news in the morning, "the villains are all ſafe, thank God; I was afraid to go to the window this morning, but it was my luck to ſee them all go by to gaol—they looked ſo ſhocking!—I am ſure I never ſhall forget Felix's look to my dying day! — But poor Franklin! ma'am, that boy has the beſt heart in

the world—I could not get him to give a ſecond look at them as they paſſed—poor fellow! I thought he would have dropped; and he was ſo modeſt, ma'am, when Mr. Spencer ſpoke to him, and told him he had done his duty."—"And did my brother tell him what reward I intend for him?"—"No, ma'am, and I'm ſure Franklin thinks no more of *reward* than I do."—"I intend," continued Mrs. Churchill, "to ſell ſome of my old uſeleſs plate, and to lay it out in an annuity for Franklin's life."—"La, ma'am!" exclaimed Mrs. Pomfret with unfeigned joy, "I'm ſure you are very good; and I'm very glad of it."—"And," continued Mrs. Churchill, "here are ſome tickets for the play, which I ſhall beg you, Pomfret, to give him, and to take him with you."—"I am very much obliged to you, indeed, ma'am; and I'll go with him with all my heart, and chooſe ſuch plays as won't

do no prejudice to his morality.—And ma'am," ſaid Mrs. Pomfret, "the night after the fire I left him my great bible, and my watch, in my will; for I never was more miſtaken at the firſt in any boy in my born days: but he has won me by his own *deſerts*, and I ſhall from this time forth love all the *Villaintropic* folks for his ſake."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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