

ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

**PAUL CLIFFORD —
VOLUME 01**

Эдвард Бульвер-Литтон
Paul Clifford — Volume 01

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Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Paul Clifford — Volume 01

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1840

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

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

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

CLIFTON, July 25, 1840.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1848

Most men who with some earnestness of mind examine into the mysteries of our social state will perhaps pass through that stage of self-education in which this Novel was composed. The contrast between conventional frauds, received as component parts of the great system of civilization, and the less deceptive invasions of the laws which discriminate the *meum* from the *tuum*, is tempting to a satire that is not without its justice. The tragic truths which lie hid in what I may call the Philosophy of Circumstance strike through our philanthropy upon our imagination. We see masses of our fellow-creatures the victims of circumstances over which they had no control,—contaminated in infancy by the example of parents, their intelligence either extinguished or turned against them, according as the conscience is stifled in ignorance or perverted to apologies for vice. A child who is cradled in ignominy, whose schoolmaster is the felon, whose academy is the House of Correction,—who breathes an atmosphere in which virtue is poisoned, to which religion does not pierce,—becomes less a responsible and reasoning human being than a wild beast which we suffer to range in the wilderness, till it prowls near our homes, and we kill it in self-defence.

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

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

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

There is no immorality in a truth that enforces this question; for it is precisely those offences which society cannot interfere with that society requires fiction to expose. Society is right, though

youth is reluctant to acknowledge it. Society can form only certain regulations necessary for its self-defence,—the fewer the better,—punish those who invade, leave unquestioned those who respect them. But fiction follows truth into all the strongholds of convention; strikes through the disguise, lifts the mask, bares the heart, and leaves a moral wherever it brands a falsehood.

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

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

Knelworth, 1848.

CHAPTER I

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

—Crabbe.

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

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

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

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

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

poor cretur may n't see the difference.' So I takes the plays, Mrs. Margery, and here they be sure_ly!
_ And how's poor Judy?"

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

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

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

"If you are like *him*," she muttered, "I will strangle you,—I will! Ay, tremble, you ought to tremble when your mother touches you, or when *he* is mentioned. You have his eyes, you have! Out with them, out,—the devil sits laughing in them! Oh, you weep, do you, little one? Well, now, be still, my love; be hushed! I would not harm thee! Harm —O God, he *is* my child after all!" And at these words she clasped the boy passionately to her breast, and burst into tears.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Left alone with her child, the face of the wretched mother softened as she regarded him, and all the levities and all the vehemences—if we may use the word—which, in the turbulent commotion of her delirium, had been stirred upward to the surface of her mind, gradually now sank as death increased upon her, and a mother's anxiety rose to the natural level from which it had been disturbed and abased. She took the child to her bosom, and clasping him in her arms, which grew weaker with every instant, she soothed him with the sort of chant which nurses sing over their untoward infants; but her voice was cracked and hollow, and as she felt it was so, the mother's eyes filled with tears. Mrs. Margery now reentered; and turning towards the hostess with an impressive calmness of manner which astonished and awed the person she addressed, the dying woman pointed to the child and said,

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II

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

Deserted Village.

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

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

Whether it was that, on discovering these pranks, Mrs. Lobkins trembled for the future bias of the address they displayed, or whether she thought that the folly of thieving without gain required speedy and permanent correction, we cannot decide; but the good lady became at last extremely anxious to secure for Paul the blessings of a liberal education. The key of knowledge (the art of reading) she had, indeed, two years prior to the present date, obtained for him; but this far from

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

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

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

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

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

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

When of these and various other poetical effusions you were somewhat wearied, the literary fragments in bumbler prose afforded you equal edification and delight. There might you fully enlighten yourself as to the "Strange and Wonderful News from Kensington, being a most full and true Relation how a Maid there is supposed to have been carried away by an Evil Spirit on Wednesday,

15th of April last, about Midnight." There, too, no less interesting and no less veracious, was that uncommon anecdote touching the chief of many-throned powers entitled "The Divell of Mascon; or, the true Relation of the Chief Things which an Unclean Spirit did and said at Mascon, in Burgundy, in the house of one Mr. Francis Pereaude: now made English by one that hath a Particular Knowledge of the Truth of the Story."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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