

ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

**PAUL CLIFFORD —
VOLUME 02**

Эдвард Бульвер-Литтон

Paul Clifford — Volume 02

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Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Paul Clifford — Volume 02

CHAPTER VII

*Begirt with many a gallant slave,
Apparelled as becomes the brave,
Old Giaffir sat in his divan:*

.....

*Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy.*

Bride of Abydos.

The learned and ingenious John Schweighaeuser (a name facile to spell and mellifluous to pronounce) hath been pleased, in that *Appendix continens particulam doctrinae de mente humana*, which closeth the volume of his "Opuscula Academica," to observe (we translate from memory) that, "in the infinite variety of things which in the theatre of the world occur to a man's survey, or in some manner or another affect his body or his mind, by far the greater part are so contrived as to bring to him rather some sense of pleasure than of pain or discomfort." Assuming that this holds generally good in well-constituted frames, we point out a notable example in the case of the incarcerated Paul; for although that youth was in no agreeable situation at the time present, and although nothing very encouraging smiled upon him from the prospects of the future, yet, as soon as he had recovered his consciousness, and given himself a rousing shake, he found an immediate source of pleasure in discovering, first, that several ladies and gentlemen bore him company in his imprisonment; and, secondly, in perceiving a huge jug of water within his reach, which, as his awaking sensation was that of burning thirst, he delightedly emptied at a draught. He then, stretching himself, looked around with a wistful earnestness, and discovered a back turned towards him, and recumbent on the floor, which at the very first glance appeared to him familiar. "Surely," thought he, "I know that frieze coat, and the peculiar turn of those narrow shoulders." Thus soliloquizing, he raised himself, and putting out his leg, he gently kicked the reclining form. "Muttering strange oaths," the form turned round, and raising itself upon that inhospitable part of the body in which the introduction of foreign feet is considered anything but an honour, it fixed its dull blue eyes upon the face of the disturber of its slumbers, gradually opening them wider and wider, until they seemed to have enlarged themselves into proportions fit for the swallowing of the important truth that burst upon them, and then from the mouth of the creature issued,—

"Queer my glims, if that be n't little Paul!"

"Ay, Dummie, here I am! Not been long without being laid by the heels, you see! Life is short; we must make the best use of our time!"

Upon this, Mr. Dunnaker (it was no less respectable a person) scrambled up from the floor, and seating himself on the bench beside Paul, said in a pitying tone,—

"Vy, laus-a-me! if you be n't knocked o' the head! Your poll's as bloody as Murphy's face ven his throat's cut!"

["Murphy's face," unlearned reader, appeareth, in Irish phrase, to mean "pig's head."]

"'T is only the fortune of war, Dummie, and a mere trifle; the heads manufactured at Thames Court are not easily put out of order. But tell me, how come you here?"

"Vy, I had been lushing heavy vet—"

"Till you grew light in the head, eh,—and fell into the kennel?"

"Yes."

"Mine is a worse business than that, I fear;" and therewith Paul, in a lower voice, related to the trusty Dummie the train of accidents which had conducted him to his present asylum. Dummie's face elongated as he listened; however, when the narrative was over, he endeavoured such consolatory palliatives as occurred to him. He represented, first, the possibility that the gentleman might not take the trouble to appear; secondly, the certainty that no watch was found about Paul's person; thirdly, the fact that, even by the gentleman's confession, Paul had not been the actual offender; fourthly, if the worst came to the worst, what were a few weeks' or even months' imprisonment?

"Blow me tight!" said Dummie, "if it be n't as good a vay of passing the time as a cove as is fond of snuggery need desire!"

This observation had no comfort for Paul, who recoiled, with all the maiden coyness of one to whom such unions are unfamiliar, from a matrimonial alliance with the *snuggery* of the House of Correction. He rather trusted to another source for consolation. In a word, he encouraged the flattering belief that Long Ned, finding that Paul had been caught instead of himself, would have the generosity to come forward and exculpate him from the charge. On hinting this idea to Dummie, that accomplished "man about town" could not for some time believe that any simpleton could be so thoroughly unacquainted with the world as seriously to entertain so ridiculous a notion; and, indeed, it is somewhat remarkable that such a hope should ever have told its flattering tale to one brought up in the house of Mrs. Margaret Lobkins. But Paul, we have seen, had formed many of his notions from books; and he had the same fine theories of your "moral rogue" that possess the minds of young patriots when they first leave college for the House of Commons, and think integrity a prettier thing than office.

Mr. Dunnaker urged Paul, seriously, to dismiss so vague and childish a fancy from his breast, and rather to think of what line of defence it would be best for him to pursue. This subject being at length exhausted, Paul recurred to Mrs. Lobkins, and inquired whether Dummie had lately honoured that lady with a visit.

Mr. Dunnaker replied that he had, though with much difficulty, appeased her anger against him for his supposed abetment of Paul's excesses, and that of late she had held sundry conversations with Dummie respecting our hero himself. Upon questioning Dummie further, Paul learned the good matron's reasons for not evincing that solicitude for his return which our hero had reasonably anticipated. The fact was, that she, having no confidence whatsoever in his own resources independent of her, had not been sorry of an opportunity effectually, as she hoped, to humble that pride which had so revolted her; and she pleased her vanity by anticipating the time when Paul, starved into submission, would gladly and penitently re-seek the shelter of her roof, and, tamed as it were by experience, would never again kick against the yoke which her matronly prudence thought it fitting to impose upon him. She contented herself, then, with obtaining from Dummie the intelligence that our hero was under MacGrawler's roof, and therefore out of all positive danger to life and limb; and as she could not foresee the ingenious exertions of intellect by which Paul had converted himself into the "Nobilitas" of "The Asinaeum," and thereby saved himself from utter penury, she was perfectly convinced, from her knowledge of character, that the illustrious MacGrawler would not long continue that protection to the rebellious *protege* which in her opinion was his only preservative from picking pockets or famishing. To the former decent alternative she knew Paul's great and jejune aversion; and she consequently had little fear for his morals or his safety, in thus abandoning him for a while to chance. Any anxiety, too, that she might otherwise have keenly experienced was deadened by the habitual intoxication now increasing upon the good lady with age, and which, though at times she

could be excited to all her characteristic vehemence, kept her senses for the most part plunged into a Lethean stupor, or, to speak more courteously, into a poetical abstraction from the things of the external world.

"But," said Dummie, as by degrees he imparted the solution of the dame's conduct to the listening ear of his companion,— "but I hopes as how ven you be out of this 'ere scrape, leetle Paul, you vill take varning, and drop Meester Pepper's acquaintance (vich, I must say, I vas always a sorry to see you hencourage), and go home to the Mug, and fam grasp the old mort, for she has not been like the same cretur ever since you vent. She's a delicate-'arted 'oman, that Piggy Lob!"

So appropriate a panegyric on Mrs. Margaret Lobkins might at another time have excited Paul's risible muscles; but at that moment he really felt compunction for the unceremonious manner in which he had left her, and the softness of regretful affection imbued in its hallowing colours even the image of Piggy Lob.

In conversation of this intellectual and domestic description, the night and ensuing morning passed away, till Paul found himself in the awful presence of Justice Burnflat. Several cases were disposed of before his own; and among others Mr. Duminie Dunnaker obtained his release, though not without a severe reprimand for his sin of inebriety, which no doubt sensibly affected the ingenuous spirit of that noble character. At length Paul's turn came. He heard, as he took his station, a general buzz. At first he imagined it was at his own interesting appearance; but raising his eyes, he perceived that it was at the entrance of the gentleman who was to become his accuser.

"Hush," said some one near him, "'t is Lawyer Brandon. Ah, he's a 'cute fellow! it will go hard with the person he complains of."

There was a happy fund of elasticity of spirit about our hero; and though he had not the good fortune to have "a blighted heart,"—a circumstance which, by the poets and philosophers of the present day, is supposed to inspire a man with wonderful courage, and make him impervious to all misfortunes,—yet he bore himself up with wonderful courage under his present trying situation, and was far from overwhelmed, though he was certainly a little damped, by the observation he had just heard.

Mr. Brandon was, indeed, a barrister of considerable reputation, and in high esteem in the world, not only for talent, but also for a great austerity of manners, which, though a little mingled with sternness and acerbity for the errors of other men, was naturally thought the more praiseworthy on that account; there being, as persons of experience are doubtless aware, two divisions in the first class of morality,— *imprimis*, a great hatred for the vices of one's neighbour; secondly, the possession of virtues in one's self.

Mr. Brandon was received with great courtesy by Justice Burnflat; and as he came, watch in hand (a borrowed watch), saying that his time was worth five guineas a moment, the justice proceeded immediately to business.

Nothing could be clearer, shorter, or more satisfactory than the evidence of Mr. Brandon. The corroborative testimony of the watchman followed; and then Paul was called upon for his defence. This was equally brief with the charge; but, alas! it was not equally satisfactory. It consisted in a firm declaration of his innocence. His comrade, he confessed, might have stolen the watch; but he humbly suggested that that was exactly the very reason why he had not stolen it.

"How long, fellow," asked Justice Burnflat, "have you known your companion?"

"About half a year."

"And what is his name and calling?" Paul hesitated, and declined to answer.

"A sad piece of business!" said the justice, in a melancholy tone, and shaking his head portentously.

The lawyer acquiesced in the aphorism, but with great magnanimity observed that he did not wish to be hard upon the young man. His youth was in his favour, and his offence was probably the consequence of evil company. He suggested, therefore, that as he must be perfectly aware of the

address of his friend, he should receive a full pardon if he would immediately favour the magistrate with that information. He concluded by remarking, with singular philanthropy, that it was not the punishment of the youth, but the recovery of his watch, that he desired.

Justice Burnflat, having duly impressed upon our hero's mind the disinterested and Christian mercy of the complainant, and the everlasting obligation Paul was under to him for its display, now repeated, with double solemnity, those queries respecting the habitation and name of Long Ned which our hero had before declined to answer.

Grieved are we to confess that Paul, ungrateful for and wholly untouched by the beautiful benignity of Lawyer Brandon, continued firm in his stubborn denial to betray his comrade; and with equal obduracy he continued to insist upon his own innocence and unblemished respectability of character.

"Your name, young man?" quoth the justice. "Your name, you say, is Paul,—Paul what? You have many an alias, I'll be bound."

Here the young gentleman again hesitated; at length he replied,—

"Paul Lobkins, your worship."

"Lobkins!" repeated the judge,—"Lobkins! Come hither, Saunders; have not we that name down in our black books?"

"So, please your worship," quoth a little stout man, very useful in many respects to the Festus of the police, "there is one Peggy Lobkins, who keeps a public-house, a sort of flash ken, called the Mug, in Thames Court,—not exactly in our beat, your worship."

"Ho, ho!" said Justice Burnflat; winking at Mr. Brandon, "we must sift this a little. Pray, Mr. Paul Lobkins, what relation is the good landlady of the Mug, in Thames Court, to yourself?"

"None at all, sir," said Paul, hastily; "she's only a friend!"

Upon this there was a laugh in the court.

"Silence!" cried the justice. "And I dare say, Mr. Paul Lobkins, that this friend of yours will vouch for the respectability of your character, upon which you are pleased to value yourself?"

"I have not a doubt of it, sir," answered Paul; and there was another laugh.

"And is there any other equally weighty and praiseworthy friend of yours who will do you the like kindness?"

Paul hesitated; and at that moment, to the surprise of the court, but above all to the utter and astounding surprise of himself, two gentlemen, dressed in the height of the fashion, pushed forward, and bowing to the justice, declared themselves ready to vouch for the thorough respectability and unimpeachable character of Mr. Paul Lobkins, whom they had known, they said, for many years, and for whom they had the greatest respect. While Paul was surveying the persons of these kind friends, whom he never remembered to have seen before in the course of his life, the lawyer, who was a very sharp fellow, whispered to the magistrate; and that dignitary nodding as in assent, and eyeing the newcomers, inquired the names of Mr. Lobkins's witnesses.

"Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert" and "Mr. William Howard Russell," were the several replies.

Names so aristocratic produced a general sensation. But the impenetrable justice, calling the same Mr. Saunders he had addressed before, asked him to examine well the countenances of Mr. Lobkins's friends.

As the alguazil eyed the features of the memorable Don Raphael and the illustrious Manuel Morales, when the former of those accomplished personages thought it convenient to assume the travelling dignity of an Italian prince, son of the sovereign of the valleys which lie between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, while the latter was contented with being servant to Monseigneur le Prince; even so, with far more earnestness than respect; did Mr. Saunders eye the features of those high-born gentlemen, Messrs. Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell; but after a long survey he withdrew his eyes, made an unsatisfactory and unrecognizing gesture to the magistrate, and said,—

"Please your worship, they are none of my flock; but Bill Troutling knows more of this sort of genteel chaps than I does."

"Bid Bill Troutling appear!" was the laconic order.

At that name a certain modest confusion might have been visible in the faces of Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert and Mr. William Howard Russell, had not the attention of the court been immediately directed to another case. A poor woman had been committed for seven days to the House of Correction on a charge of *disrespectability*. Her husband, the person most interested in the matter, now came forward to disprove the charge; and by help of his neighbours he succeeded.

"It is all very true," said Justice Burnflat; "but as your wife, my good fellow, will be out in five days, it will be scarcely worth while to release her now."

[A fact, occurring in the month of January, 1830. *Vide* "The Morning Herald."]

So judicious a decision could not fail of satisfying the husband; and the audience became from that moment enlightened as to a very remarkable truth,—namely, that five days out of seven bear a peculiarly small proportion to the remaining two; and that people in England have so prodigious a love for punishment that though it is not worth while to release an innocent woman from prison five days sooner than one would otherwise have done, it is exceedingly well worth while to commit her to prison for seven!

When the husband, passing his rough hand across his eyes, and muttering some vulgar impertinence or another had withdrawn, Mr. Saunders said,—

"Here be Bill Troutling, your worship!"

"Oh, well," quoth the justice; "and now, Mr. Eustace Fitz—— Hallo, how's this! Where are Mr. William Howard Russell and his friend Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert?"

"Echo answered,—where?"

Those noble gentlemen, having a natural dislike to be confronted with so low a person as Mr. Bill Troutling, had, the instant public interest was directed from them, silently disappeared from a scene where their rank in life seemed so little regarded. If, reader, you should be anxious to learn from what part of the world the transitory visitants appeared, know that they were spirits sent by that inimitable magician, Long Ned, partly to report how matters fared in the court; for Mr. Pepper, in pursuance of that old policy which teaches that the nearer the fox is to the hunters, the more chance he has of being overlooked, had, immediately on his abrupt departure from Paul, dived into a house in the very street where his ingenuity had displayed itself, and in which oysters and ale nightly allured and regaled an assembly that, to speak impartially, was more numerous than select. There had he learned how a pickpocket had been seized for unlawful affection to another man's watch; and there, while he quietly seasoned his oysters, had he, with his characteristic acuteness, satisfied his mind by the conviction that that arrested unfortunate was no other than Paul. Partly, therefore, as a precaution for his own safety, that he might receive early intelligence should Paul's defence make a change of residence expedient, and partly (out of the friendliness of fellowship) to back his companion with such aid as the favourable testimony of two well-dressed persons, little known "about town," might confer, he had despatched those celestial beings who had appeared under the mortal names of Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell to the imperial court of Justice Burnflat. Having thus accounted for the apparition (the *disapparition* requires no commentary) of Paul's "friends," we return to Paul himself.

Despite the perils with which he was girt, our young hero fought out to the last; but the justice was not by any means willing to displease Mr. Brandon, and observing that an incredulous and biting sneer remained stationary on that gentleman's lip during the whole of Paul's defence, he could not but shape his decision according to the well-known acuteness of the celebrated lawyer. Paul

was sentenced to retire for three months to that country-house situated at Bridewell, to which the ungrateful functionaries of justice often banish their most active citizens.

As soon as the sentence was passed, Brandon, whose keen eyes saw no hope of recovering his lost treasure, declared that the rascal had perfectly the Old Bailey cut of countenance, and that he did not doubt but, if ever he lived to be a judge, he should also live to pass a very different description of sentence on the offender.

So saying, he resolved to lose no more time, and very abruptly left the office, without any other comfort than the remembrance that, at all events, he had sent the boy to a place where, let him be ever so innocent at present, he was certain to come out as much inclined to be guilty as his friends could desire; joined to such moral reflection as the tragedy of *Bombastes Furioso* might have afforded to himself in that sententious and terse line,—

"Thy watch is gone,—watches are made *to go*."

Meanwhile Paul was conducted in state to his retreat, in company with two other offenders,—one a middle-aged man, though a very old "file," who was sentenced for getting money under false pretences, and the other a little boy who had been found guilty of sleeping under a colonnade; it being the especial beauty of the English law to make no fine-drawn and nonsensical shades of difference between vice and misfortune, and its peculiar method of protecting the honest being to make as many rogues as possible in as short a space of time.

CHAPTER VIII

Common Sense. What is the end of punishment as regards the individual punished?

Custom. To make him better!

Common Sense. How do you punish young offenders who are (from their youth) peculiarly alive to example, and whom it is therefore more easy either to ruin or reform than the matured?

Custom. We send them to the House of Correction, to associate with the d—dest rascals in the country!

Dialogue between Common Sense and Custom.—Very scarce.

As it was rather late in the day when Paul made his first *entree* at Bridewell, he passed that night in the "receiving-room." The next morning, as soon as he had been examined by the surgeon and clothed in the customary uniform, he was ushered, according to his classification, among the good company who had been considered guilty of that compendious offence, "a misdemeanour." Here a tall gentleman marched up to him, and addressed him in a certain language, which might be called the freemasonry of flash, and which Paul, though he did not comprehend *verbatim*, rightly understood to be an inquiry whether he was a thorough rogue and an entire rascal. He answered half in confusion, half in anger; and his reply was so detrimental to any favourable influence he might otherwise have exercised over the interrogator, that the latter personage, giving him a pinch in the ear, shouted out, "Ramp, ramp!" and at that significant and awful word, Paul found himself surrounded in a trice by a whole host of ingenious tormentors. One pulled this member, another pinched that; one cuffed him before, and another thrashed him behind. By way of interlude to this pleasing occupation, they stripped him of the very few things that in his change of dress he had retained. One carried off his handkerchief, a second his neckcloth, and a third, luckier than either, possessed himself of a pair of carnelian shirt-buttons, given to Paul as a *gage d'amour* by a young lady who sold oranges near the Tower. Happily, before this initiatory process—technically termed "ramping," and exercised upon all new-comers who seem to have a spark of decency in them—had reduced the bones of Paul, who fought tooth and nail in his defence, to the state of magnesia, a man of a grave aspect, who had hitherto plucked his oakum in quiet, suddenly rose, thrust himself between the victim and the assailants, and desired the latter, like one having authority, to leave the lad alone, and go and be d—d.

This proposal to resort to another place for amusement, though uttered in a very grave and tranquil manner, produced that instantaneous effect which admonitions from great rogues generally work upon little. Messieurs the *ravmpers* ceased from their amusements; and the ringleader of the gang, thumping Paul heartily on the back, declared he was a capital fellow, and it was only a bit of a spree like, which he hoped had not given any offence.

Paul, still clenching his fist, was about to answer in no pacific mood, when a turnkey, who did not care in the least how many men he locked up for an offence, but who did not at all like the trouble of looking after any one of his flock to see that the offence was not committed, now suddenly appeared among the set; and after scolding them for the excessive plague they were to him, carried off two of the poorest of the mob to solitary confinement. It happened, of course, that these two had not taken the smallest share in the disturbance. This scene over, the company returned to picking oakum; the tread-mill, that admirably just invention by which a strong man suffers no fatigue and a weak one loses his health for life, not having been then introduced into our excellent establishments for correcting crime. Bitterly and with many dark and wrathful feelings, in which the sense of injustice at punishment alone bore him up against the humiliations to which he was subjected,—bitterly and with a swelling heart, in which the thoughts that lead to crime were already forcing their way through a soil suddenly warmed for their growth, did Paul bend over his employment. He felt himself touched on

the arm; he turned, and saw that the gentleman who had so kindly delivered him from his tormentors was now sitting next to him. Paul gazed long and earnestly upon his neighbour, struggling with the thought that he had beheld that sagacious countenance in happier times, although now, alas! it was altered not only by time and vicissitudes but by that air of gravity which the cares of manhood spread gradually over the face of the most thoughtless,—until all doubt melted away, and he exclaimed,—

"Is that you, Mr. Tomlinson? How glad I am to see you here!"

"And I," returned the quondam murderer for the newspapers, with a nasal twang, "should be very glad to see myself anywhere else."

Paul made no answer; and Augustus continued,—

"To a wise man all places are the same,'—so it has been said. I don't believe it, Paul,—I don't believe it. But a truce to reflection! I remembered you the moment I saw you, though you are surprisingly grown. How is my friend MacGrawler?—still hard at work for 'The Asinaeum'?"

"I believe so," said Paul, sullenly, and hastening to change the conversation; "but tell me, Mr. Tomlinson, how came you hither? I heard you had gone down to the North of England to fulfil a lucrative employment."

"Possibly! The world always misrepresents the actions of those who are constantly before it."

"It is very true," said Paul; "and I have said the same thing myself a hundred times in 'The Asinaeum,' for we were never too lavish of our truths in that magnificent journal. 'T is astonishing what a way we made three ideas go."

"You remind me of myself and my newspaper labours," rejoined Augustus Tomlinson. "I am not quite sure that I had so many as three ideas to spare; for, as you say, it is astonishing how far that number may go, properly managed. It is with writers as with strolling players,—the same three ideas that did for Turks in one scene do for Highlanders in the next; but you must tell me your history one of these days, and you shall hear mine."

"I should be excessively obliged to you for your confidence," said Paul, "and I doubt not but your life must be excessively entertaining. Mine, as yet, has been but insipid. The lives of literary men are not fraught with adventure; and I question whether every writer in 'The Asinaeum' has not led pretty nearly the same existence as that which I have sustained myself."

In conversation of this sort our newly restored friends passed the remainder of the day, until the hour of half-past four, when the prisoners are to suppose night has begun, and be locked up in their bedrooms. Tomlinson then, who was glad to re-find a person who had known him in his *beaux jours*, spoke privately to the turnkey; and the result of the conversation was the coupling Paul and Augustus in the same chamber, which was a sort of stone box, that generally accommodated three, and was—for we have measured it, as we would have measured the cell of the prisoner of Chillon—just eight feet by six.

We do not intend, reader, to indicate, by broad colours and in long detail, the moral deterioration of our hero; because we have found, by experience, that such pains on our part do little more than make thee blame our stupidity instead of lauding our intention. We shall therefore only work out our moral by subtle hints and brief comments; and we shall now content ourselves with reminding thee that hitherto thou hast seen Paul honest in the teeth of circumstances. Despite the contagion of the Mug, despite his associates in Fish Lane, despite his intimacy with Long Ned, thou hast seen him brave temptation, and look forward to some other career than that of robbery or fraud. Nay, even in his destitution, when driven from the abode of his childhood, thou hast observed how, instead of resorting to some more pleasurable or libertine road of life, he betook himself at once to the dull roof and insipid employments of MacGrawler, and preferred honestly earning his subsistence by the sweat of his brain to recurring to any of the numerous ways of living on others with which his experience among the worst part of society must have teemed, and which, to say the least of them, are more alluring to the young and the adventurous than the barren paths of literary labour. Indeed, to let thee into a secret, it had been Paul's daring ambition to raise himself into a worthy member

of the community. His present circumstances, it may hereafter be seen, made the cause of a great change in his desires; and the conversation he held that night with the ingenious and skilful Augustus went more towards fitting him for the hero of this work than all the habits of his childhood or the scenes of his earlier youth. Young people are apt, erroneously, to believe that it is a bad thing to be exceedingly wicked. The House of Correction is so called, because it is a place where so ridiculous a notion is invariably corrected. The next day Paul was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Lobkins, who had heard of his situation and its causes from the friendly Dummie, and who had managed to obtain from Justice Burnflat an order of admission. They met, Pyramus and Thisbe like, with a wall, or rather an iron gate, between them; and Mrs. Lobkins, after an ejaculation of despair at the obstacle, burst weeping into the pathetic reproach,—

"O Paul, thou hast brought thy pigs to a fine market!"

"'T is a market proper for pigs, dear dame," said Paul, who, though with a tear in his eye, did not refuse a joke as bitter as it was inelegant; "for, of all others, it is the spot where a man learns to take care of his bacon."

"Hold your tongue!" cried the dame, angrily. "What business has you to gabble on so while you are in limbo?"

"Ah, dear dame," said Paul, "we can't help these rubs and stumbles on our road to preferment!"

"Road to the scragging-post!" cried the dame. "I tells you, child, you'll live to be hanged in spite of all my care and 'tention to you, though I hedicated you as a scholard, and always hoped as how you would grow up to be an honour to your—"

"King and country," interrupted Paul. "We always say, honour to king and country, which means getting rich and paying taxes. 'The more taxes a man pays, the greater honour he is to both,' as Augustus says. Well, dear dame, all in good time."

"What! you is merry, is you? Why does not you weep?"

Your heart is as hard as a brickbat. It looks quite unnatural and hyena-like to be so _devil-me-careish!" So saying, the good dame's tears gushed forth with the bitterness of a despairing Parisina.

"Nay, nay," said Paul, who, though he suffered far more intensely, bore the suffering far more easily than his patroness, "we cannot mend the matter by crying. Suppose you see what can be done for me. I dare say you may manage to soften the justice's sentence by a little 'oil of palms;' and if you can get me out before I am quite corrupted,—a day or two longer in this infernal place will do the business,—I promise you that I will not only live honestly myself, but with people who live in the same manner."

"Buss me, Paul," said the tender Mrs. Lobkins, "buss me—Oh! but I forgits the gate. I'll see what can be done. And here, my lad, here's summat for you in the mean while,—a drop o' the cretur, to preach comfort to your poor stomach. Hush! smuggle it through, or they'll see you."

Here the dame endeavoured to push a stone bottle through the bars of the gate; but, alas! though the neck passed through, the body refused, and the dame was forced to retract the "cretur." Upon this, the kind-hearted woman renewed her sobbings; and so absorbed was she in her grief that seemingly quite forgetting for what purpose she had brought the bottle, she applied it to her own mouth, and consoled herself with that elixir vitae which she had originally designed for Paul.

This somewhat restored her; and after a most affecting scene the dame reeled off with the vacillating steps natural to woe, promising, as she went, that if love or money could shorten Paul's confinement, neither should be wanting. We are rather at a loss to conjecture the exact influence which the former of these arguments, urged by the lovely Margaret, might have had upon Justice Burnflat.

When the good dame had departed, Paul hastened to repick his oakum and rejoin his friend. He found the worthy Augustus privately selling little elegant luxuries, such as tobacco, gin, and rations of daintier viands than the prison allowed; for Augustus, having more money than the rest of his

companions, managed, through the friendship of the turnkey, to purchase secretly, and to resell at about four hundred per cent, such comforts as the prisoners especially coveted.

[A very common practice at the Bridewell. The Governor at the Coldbath-Fields, apparently a very intelligent and active man, every way fitted for a most arduous undertaking, informed us, in the only conversation we have had the honour to hold with him, that he thought he had nearly or quite destroyed in his jurisdiction this illegal method of commerce.]

"A proof," said Augustus, dryly, to Paul, "that by prudence and exertion even in those places where a man cannot turn himself he may manage to turn a penny."

CHAPTER IX

*"Relate at large, my godlike guest," she said,
"The Grecian stratagems,—the town betrayed!"*

DRYDEN: Virgil, Aeneid, book ii.

Descending thence, they 'scaped!

—Ibid.

A great improvement had taken place in the character of Augustus Tomlinson since Paul had last encountered that illustrious man. Then Augustus had affected the man of pleasure, the learned loungeur about town, the all-accomplished Pericles of the papers, gayly quoting Horace, gravely flanking a fly from the leader of Lord Dunshunner. Now a more serious yet not a less supercilious air had settled upon his features; the pretence of fashion had given way to the pretence of wisdom; and from the man of pleasure Augustus Tomlinson had grown to the philosopher. With this elevation alone, too, he was not content: he united the philosopher with the politician; and the ingenious rascal was pleased especially to pique himself upon being "a moderate Whig"!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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