

**ФРЕДЕРИК
МАРРИЕТ**

JAPHET IN
SEARCH OF A
FATHER

Фредерик Марриет

Japhet in Search of a Father

«Public Domain»

Марриет Ф.

Japhet in Search of a Father / Ф. Марриет — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

Part 1—Chapter I	5
Part 1—Chapter II	8
Part 1—Chapter III	12
Part 1—Chapter IV	15
Part 1—Chapter V	18
Part 1—Chapter VI	21
Part 1—Chapter VII	25
Part 1—Chapter VIII	28
Part 1—Chapter IX	31
Part 1—Chapter X	35
Part 1—Chapter XI	39
Part 1—Chapter XII	43
Part 1—Chapter XIII	47
Part 1—Chapter XIV	50
Part 1—Chapter XV	53
Part 1—Chapter XVI	57
Part 1—Chapter XVII	61
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	63

Frederick Marryat

Japhet in Search of a Father

Part 1—Chapter I

Like most other Children, who should be my Godfather is decided by Mammon—So precocious as to make some Noise in the World, and be hung a few days after I was born—Cut down in Time, and produce a Scene of Bloodshed—My early Propensities fully developed by the Choice of my Profession.

Those who may be pleased to honour these pages with a perusal, will not be detained with a long introductory history of my birth, parentage, and education. The very title implies that, at this period of my memoirs, I was ignorant of the two first; and it will be necessary for the due development of my narrative, that I allow them to remain in the same state of bliss; for in the perusal of a tale, as well as in the pilgrimage of life, ignorance of the future may truly be considered as the greatest source of happiness.

The little that was known of me at this time I will however narrate as concisely, and as correctly, as I am able. It was on the – I really forget the date, and must rise from my chair, look for a key, open a closet, and then open an iron safe to hunt over a pile of papers—it will detain you too long—it will be sufficient to say that it was on *a* night—but whether the night was dark or moonlit, or rainy or foggy, or cloudy or fine, or starlight, I really cannot tell; but it is of no very great consequence. Well, it was on a night about the hour—there again I'm puzzled, it might have been ten, or eleven, or twelve, or between any of these hours; nay, it might have been past midnight, and far advancing to the morning, for what I know to the contrary. The reader must excuse an infant of – there again I am at a nonplus; but we will assume of some days old—if, when wrapped up in flannel and in a covered basket, and, moreover, fast asleep at the time, he does not exactly observe the state of the weather, and the time by the church clock. I never before was aware of the great importance of dates in telling a story; but it is now too late to recover these facts, which have been swept away into oblivion by the broad wing of Time. I must therefore just tell the little I do know, trusting to the reader's good nature, and to blanks. It is as follows:—that, at the hour – of the night—the state of the weather being also —:—I, an infant of a certain age – was suspended by somebody or somebodies – at the knocker of the Foundling Hospital. Having made me fast, the said somebody or somebodies rang a peal upon the bell which made the old porter start up in so great a hurry, that, with the back of his hand he hit his better half a blow on the nose, occasioning a great suffusion of blood from that organ, and a still greater pouring forth of invectives from the organ immediately below it.

All this having been effected by the said peal on the bell, the said somebody or somebodies did incontinently take to their heels, and disappear long before the old porter could pull his legs through his nether garments and obey the rude summons. At last the old man swang open the gate and the basket swang across his nose; he went in again for a knife and cut me down, for it was cruel to hang a baby of a few days old; carried me into the lodge, lighted a candle, and opened the basket. Thus did I metaphorically first come to light.

When he opened the basket I opened my eyes, and although I did not observe it, the old woman was standing at the table in very light attire, sponging her nose over a basin.

“Verily, a pretty babe with black eyes!” exclaimed the old man in a tremulous voice.

“Black eyes, indeed,” muttered the old woman. “I shall have two to-morrow.”

“Beautiful black eyes, indeed!” continued the old man.

“Terrible black eyes, for sartain,” continued the old woman, as she sponged away.

“Poor thing, it must be cold,” murmured the old porter.

“Warrant I catch my death a-cold,” muttered the wife.

“But, dear me, here’s a paper!” exclaimed the old man.

“Vinegar and brown paper,” echoed the old woman.

“Addressed to the governors of the hospital,” continued the porter.

“Apply to the dispenser of the hospital,” continued his wife.

“And sealed,” said he.

“Get it healed,” said she.

“The linen is good; it must be the child of no poor people. Who knows?”—soliloquised the old man.

“My poor nose!” exclaimed the old woman.

“I must take it to the nurses, and the letter I will give to-morrow,” said the old porter, winding up his portion of this double soliloquy, and tottering away with the basket and your humble servant across the court-yard.

“There, it will do now,” said the old wife, wiping her face on a towel, and regaining her bed, in which she was soon joined by her husband, and they finished their nap without any further interruption during that night.

The next morning I was reported and examined, and the letter addressed to the governors was opened and read. It was laconic, but still, as most things laconic are, very much to the point.

“This child was born in wedlock—he is to be named Japhet. When circumstances permit, he will be reclaimed.”

But there was a postscript by Abraham Newland, Esquire, promising to pay the bearer, on demand, the sum of fifty pounds. In plainer terms, there was a bank note to that amount inclosed in the letter. As in general the parties who suspend children in baskets, have long before suspended cash payments, or, at all events, forget to suspend them with the baskets, my arrival created no little noise, to which I added my share, until I obtained a share of the breast of a young woman, who, like Charity, suckled two or three babies at one time.

We have preparatory schools all over the kingdom; for young gentlemen, from three to five years of age, under ladies, and from four to seven, under either, or both sexes, as it may happen; but the most preparatory of all preparatory schools, is certainly the Foundling Hospital, which takes in its pupils, if they are sent, from one to three days old, or even hours, if the parents are in such extreme anxiety about their education. Here it commences with their weaning, when they are instructed in the mystery of devouring pap, next, they are taught to walk—and as soon as they can walk—to sit still; to talk—and as soon as they can talk—to hold their tongues; thus are they instructed and passed on from one part of the establishment to another, until they finally are passed out of its gates, to get on in the world, with the advantages of some education, and the still further advantage of having no father or mother to provide for, or relatives to pester them with their necessities. It was so with me: I arrived at the age of fourteen, and notwithstanding the promise contained in the letter, it appeared that circumstances did *not* permit of my being reclaimed. But I had a great advantage over the other inmates of the hospital; the fifty pounds sent with me were not added to the funds of the establishment, but generously employed for my benefit by the governors, who were pleased with my conduct, and thought highly of my abilities. Instead of being bound ’prentice to a cordwainer, or some other mechanic, by the influence of the governors, added to the fifty pounds and interest, as a premium, I was taken by an apothecary, who engaged to bring me up to the profession. And now, that I am out of the Foundling, we must not travel quite so fast. The practitioner who thus took me by the hand was a Mr Phineas Cophagus, whose house was most conveniently situated for business, one side of the shop looking upon Smithfield Market, the other presenting a surface of glass to the principal street leading out of the same market. It was a *corner* house, but not in a *corner*. On each side of the shop were two gin establishments, and next to them were two public-houses and then two

eating-houses, frequented by graziers, butchers, and drovers. Did the men drink so much as to quarrel in their cups, who was so handy to plaster up the broken heads as Mr Cophagus? Did a fat grazier eat himself into an apoplexy, how very convenient was the ready lancet of Mr Cophagus. Did a bull gore a man, Mr Cophagus appeared with his diachylon and lint. Did an ox frighten a lady, it was in the back parlour of Mr Cophagus that she was recovered from her syncope. Market-days were a sure market to my master; and if an overdriven beast knocked down others, it only helped to set him on his legs. Our window suffered occasionally; but whether it were broken heads, or broken limbs, or broken windows, they were well paid for. Everyone suffered but Mr Phineas Cophagus, who never suffered a patient to escape him. The shop had the usual allowance of green, yellow, and blue bottles; and in hot weather, from our vicinity, we were visited by no small proportion of bluebottle flies. We had a white horse in one window, and a brown horse in the other, to announce to the drovers that we supplied horse-medicines. And we had all the patent medicines in the known world, even to the “all-sufficient medicine for mankind” of Mr Enouy; having which, I wondered, on my first arrival, why we troubled ourselves about any others. The shop was large, and at the back part there was a most capacious iron mortar, with a pestle to correspond. The first floor was tenanted by Mr Cophagus, who was a bachelor; the second floor was let; the others were appropriated to the housekeeper, and to those who formed the establishment. In this well-situated tenement, Mr Cophagus got on swimmingly. I will, therefore, for the present, sink the shop, that my master may rise in the estimation of the reader, when I describe his person and his qualifications.

Mr Phineas Cophagus might have been about forty-five years of age when I first had the honour of an introduction to him in the receiving-room of the Foundling Hospital. He was of the middle height, his face was thin, his nose very much hooked, his eyes small and peering, with a good-humoured twinkle in them, his mouth large, and drawn down at one corner. He was stout in his body, and carried a considerable protuberance before him, which he was in the habit of patting with his left hand very complacently; but although stout in his body, his legs were mere spindles, so that, in his appearance, he reminded you of some bird of the crane genus. Indeed, I may say, that his whole figure gave you just such an impression as an orange might do, had it taken to itself a couple of pieces of tobacco pipes as vehicles of locomotion. He was dressed in a black coat and waistcoat, white cravat and high collar to his shirt, blue cotton net pantaloons and Hessian boots, both fitting so tight, that it appeared as if he was proud of his spindle shanks. His hat was broad-brimmed and low, and he carried a stout black cane with a gold top in his right hand, almost always raising the gold top to his nose when he spoke, just as we see doctors represented at a consultation in the caricature prints. But if his figure was strange, his language and manners were still more so. He spoke, as some birds fly, in jerks, intermixing his words, for he never completed a whole sentence, with *um—um—* and ending it with “so on,” leaving his hearers to supply the context from the heads of his discourse. Almost always in motion, he generally changed his position as soon as he had finished speaking, walking to any other part of the room, with his cane to his nose, and his head cocked on one side, with a self-sufficient tiptoe gait. When I was ushered into his presence, he was standing with two of the governors. “This is the lad,” said one of them, “his name is *Japhet*.”

“Japhet,” replied Mr Cophagus; “um, scriptural—Shem, Ham, *um—* and so on. Boy reads?”

“Very well, and writes a *very* good hand. He is a very good boy, Mr Cophagus.”

“Read—write—spell—good, and so on. Bring him up—rudiments—spatula—write labels—um—M.D. one of these days—make a man of him—and so on,” said this strange personage, walking round and round me with his cane to his nose, and scrutinising my person with his twinkling eyes. I was dismissed after this examination and approval, and the next day, dressed in a plain suit of clothes, was delivered by the porter at the shop of Mr Phineas Cophagus, who was not at home when I arrived.

Part 1—Chapter II

Like all Tyros, I find the Rudiments of Learning extremely difficult and laborious, but advance so rapidly that I can do without my Master.

A tall, fresh-coloured, but hectic looking young man, stood behind the counter, making up prescriptions, and a dirty lad, about thirteen years old, was standing near with his basket to deliver the medicines to the several addresses, as soon as they were ready. The young man behind the counter, whose name was Brookes, was within eighteen months of serving his time, when his friends intended to establish him on his own account, and this was the reason which induced Mr Cophagus to take me, that I might learn the business, and supply his place when he left. Mr Brookes was a very quiet, amiable person, kind to me and the other boy who carried out the medicines, and who had been taken by Mr Cophagus, for his food and raiment. The porter told Mr Brookes who I was, and left me. “Do you think that you will like to be an apothecary?” said Mr Brookes to me, with a benevolent smile.

“Yes; I do not see why I should not,” replied I.

“Stop a moment,” said the lad who was waiting with the basket, looking archly at me, “you hav’n’t got through your *rudimans* yet.”

“Hold your tongue, Timothy,” said Mr Brookes. “That you are not very fond of the rudiments, as Mr Cophagus calls them, is very clear. Now walk off as fast as you can with these medicines, sir—14, Spring Street; 16, Cleaver Street, as before; and then to John Street, 55, Mrs Smith’s. Do you understand?”

“To be sure I do—can’t I read? I reads all the directions, and all your Latin stuff into the bargain—all your summen dusses, horez, diez, cockly hairy. I mean to set up for myself one of these days.”

“I’ll knock you down one of these days, Mr Timothy, if you stay so long as you do, looking at the print shops; that you may depend upon.”

“I keep up all my learning that way,” replied Timothy, walking off with his load, turning his head round and laughing at me, as he quitted the shop. Mr Brookes smiled, but said nothing.

As Timothy went out, in came Mr Cophagus. “Heh! Japhet—I see,” said he, putting up his cane, “nothing to do—bad—must work—um—and so on. Mr Brookes—boy learn rudiments—good—and so on.” Hereupon Mr Cophagus took his cane from his nose, pointed to the large iron mortar, and then walked away into the back parlour. Mr Brookes understood his master, if I did not. He wiped out the mortar, threw in some drugs, and, showing me how to use the pestle, left me to my work. In half an hour I discovered why it was that Timothy had such an objection to what Mr Cophagus facetiously termed the *rudiment* of the profession. It was dreadful hard work for a boy; the perspiration ran down me in streams, and I could hardly lift my arms. When Mr Cophagus passed through the shop and looked at me, as I continued to thump away with the heavy iron pestle, “Good,”—said he, “by-and-by—M.D.—and so on.” I thought it was a very rough road to such preferment, and I stopped to take a little breath. “By-the-by—Japhet—Christian name – and so on—sirname—heh!”

“Mr Cophagus wishes to know your other name,” said Mr Brookes, interpreting.

I have omitted to acquaint the reader that surnames as well as Christian names are always given to the children at the Foundling, and in consequence of the bank note found in my basket, I had been named after the celebrated personage whose signature it bore. “Newland is my other name, sir,” replied I.

“Newland—heh!—very good name—everybody likes to see that name—and have plenty of them in his pockets too—um—very comfortable—and so on,” replied Mr Cophagus, leaving the shop.

I resumed my thumping occupation, when Timothy returned with his empty basket. He laughed when he saw me at work. “Well, how do you like the rudimans?—and so on—heh?” said he, mimicking Mr Cophagus.

“Not overmuch,” replied I, wiping my face.

“That was my job before you came. I have been more than a year, and never have got out of those rudimans yet, and I suppose I never shall.”

Mr Brookes, perceiving that I was tired, desired me to leave off, an order which I gladly obeyed, and I took my seat in a corner of the shop.

“There,” said Timothy, laying down his basket; “no more work for me *hanty prandium*, is there, Mr Brookes?”

“No, Tim; but *post prandium*, you’ll *post* off again.”

Dinner being ready, and Mr Cophagus having returned, he and Mr Brookes went into the back parlour, leaving Timothy and me in the shop to announce customers. And I shall take this opportunity of introducing Mr Timothy more particularly, as he will play a very conspicuous part in this narrative. Timothy was short in stature for his age, but very strongly built. He had an oval face, with a very dark complexion, grey eyes flashing from under their long eyelashes, and eyebrows nearly meeting each other. He was marked with the small pox, not so much as to disfigure him, but still it was very perceptible when near to him. His countenance was always lighted up with merriment; there was such a happy, devil-may-care expression in his face, that you liked him the first minute that you were in his company, and I was intimate with him immediately.

“I say, Japhet,” said he, “where did you come from?”

“The Foundling,” replied I.

“Then you have no friends or relations.”

“If I have, I do not know where to find them,” replied I, very gravely.

“Pooh! don’t be grave upon it. I hav’n’t any either. I was brought up by the parish, in the workhouse. I was found at the door of a gentleman’s house, who sent me to the overseers—I was about a year old then. They call me a foundling, but I don’t care what they call me, so long as they don’t call me too late for dinner. Father and mother, whoever they were, when they run away from me, didn’t run away with my appetite. I wonder how long master means to play with his knife and fork. As for Mr Brookes, what he eats wouldn’t physic a snipe. What’s your other name, Japhet?”

“Newland.”

“Newland—now you shall have mine in exchange: Timothy Oldmixon at your service. They christened me after the workhouse pump, which had ‘Timothy Oldmixon fecit’ on it: and the overseers thought it as good a name to give me as any other; so I was christened after the pump-maker with some of the pump water. As soon as I was big enough, they employed me to pump all the water for the use of the workhouse. I worked at my *papa*, as I called the pump, all day long. Few sons worked their father more, or disliked him so much; and now, Japhet, you see, from habit, I’m pumping you.”

“You’ll soon pump dry, then, for I’ve very little to tell you,” replied I; “but, tell me, what sort of a person is our master?”

“He’s just what you see him, never alters, hardly ever out of humour, and when he is, he is just as odd as ever. He very often threatens me, but I have never had a blow yet, although Mr Brookes has complained once or twice.”

“But surely Mr Brookes is not cross?”

“No, he is a very good gentleman; but sometimes I carry on my rigs a little too far, I must say that. For as Mr Brookes says, people may die for want of the medicines, because I put down my basket to play. It’s very true; but I can’t give up ‘peg in the ring’ on that account. But then I only get a box of the ear from Mr Brookes, and that goes for nothing. Mr Cophagus shakes his stick, and says, ‘Bad boy—big stick—um—won’t forget—next time—and so on,’” continued Timothy, laughing; “and it is so on, to the end of the chapter.”

By this time Mr Cophagus and his assistant had finished their dinner, and came into the shop. The former looked at me, put his stick to his nose, “Little boys—always hungry—um—like good dinner—roast beef—Yorkshire pudding—and so on,” and he pointed with the stick to the back parlour. Timothy and I understood him very well this time: we went into the parlour, when the housekeeper sat down with us, and helped us. She was a terribly cross, little old woman, but as honest as she was cross, which is all that I shall say in her favour. Timothy was no favourite, because he had such a good appetite; and it appeared that I was not very likely to stand well in her good opinion, for I also ate a great deal, and every extra mouthful I took I sank in her estimation, till I was nearly at the zero, where Timothy had long been for the same offence; but Mr Cophagus would not allow her to stint him, saying, “Little boys must eat—or won’t grow—and so on.”

I soon found out that we were not only well fed, but in every other point well treated, and I was very comfortable and happy. Mr Brookes instructed me in the art of labelling and tying up, and in a very short time I was very expert; and as Timothy predicted, the rudiments were once more handed over to him. Mr Cophagus supplied me with good clothes, but never gave me any pocket-money, and Timothy and I often lamented that we had not even a halfpenny to spend.

Before I had been many months in the shop, Mr Brookes was able to leave when any exigence required his immediate attendance. I made up the pills, but he weighed out the quantities in the prescriptions: if, therefore anyone came in for medicines, I desired them to wait the return of Mr Brookes, who would be in very soon. One day, when Mr Brookes was out, and I was sitting behind the counter, Timothy sitting on it, and swinging his legs to and fro, both lamenting that we had no pocket-money, Timothy said, “Japhet, I’ve been puzzling my brains how we can get some money, and I’ve hit it at last; let you and I turn doctors; we won’t send all the people away who come when Mr Brookes is out, but we’ll physic them ourselves.” I jumped at the idea, and he had hardly proposed it, when an old woman came in, and addressing Timothy, said, “That she wanted something for her poor grandchild’s sore throat.”

“I don’t mix up the medicines, ma’am,” replied Timothy; “you must apply to that gentleman, Mr Newland, who is behind the counter—he understands what is good for everybody’s complaints.”

“Bless his handsome face—and so young too! Why, be you a doctor, sir?”

“I should hope so,” replied I; “what is it you require—a lotion, or an embrocation?”

“I don’t understand those hard words, but I want some doctor’s stuff.”

“Very well, my good woman; I know what is proper,” replied I, assuming an important air. “Here, Timothy, wash out this vial very clean.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Timothy, very respectfully.

I took one of the measures, and putting in a little green, a little blue, and a little white liquid from the medicine bottles generally used by Mr Brookes, filled it up with water, poured the mixture into the vial, corked and labelled it, *haustus statim sumendus*, and handed it over the counter to the old woman.

“Is the poor child to take it, or is it to rub outside?” inquired the old woman.

“The directions are on the label;—but you don’t read Latin?”

“Deary me, no! Latin! and do you understand Latin? what a nice clever boy!”

“I should not be a good doctor if I did not,” replied I. “On second thoughts, I consider it advisable and safer, that the application should be *external*, so I translated the label to her—*Hhaustus*, rub it in—*statim*, on the throat—*sumendus*, with the palm of the hand.”

“Deary me! and does it mean all that? How much have I to pay, sir?”

“Embrocation is a very dear medicine, my good woman; it ought to be eighteen-pence, but as you are a poor woman, I shall only charge you nine-pence.”

“I’m sure I thank you kindly,” replied the old woman, putting down the money, and wishing me a good morning as she left the shop.

“Bravo!” cried Timothy, rubbing his hands; “it’s halves, Japhet, is it not?”

“Yes,” I replied; “but first we must be honest, and not cheat Mr Cophagus; the vial is sold, you know, for one penny, and I suppose the stuff I have taken is not worth a penny more. Now, if we put aside two-pence for Mr Cophagus, we don’t cheat him, or steal his property; the other seven-pence is of course our own—being the *profits of the profession*.”

“But how shall we account for receiving the two-pence?” said Timothy.

“Selling two vials instead of one: they are never reckoned, you know.”

“That will do capitally,” cried Timothy; “and now for halves.” But this could not be managed until Timothy had run out and changed the sixpence; we then each had our three-pence halfpenny, and for once in our lives could say that we had money in our pockets.

Part 1—Chapter III

I perform a wonderful Cure upon Saint John Long's Principle, having little or no Principle of my own—I begin to puzzle my Head with a Problem, of all others most difficult to solve.

The success of our first attempt encouraged us to proceed; but afraid that I might do some mischief, I asked of Mr Brookes the nature and qualities of the various medicines, as he was mixing the prescriptions, that I might avoid taking any of those which were poisonous. Mr Brookes, pleased with my continual inquiries, gave me all the information I could desire, and thus I gained, not only a great deal of information, but also a great deal of credit with Mr Cophagus, to whom Mr Brookes had made known my diligence and thirst for knowledge.

“Good—very good,” said Mr Cophagus; “fine boy—learns his business—M.D. one of these days—ride in his coach—um, and so on.” Nevertheless, at my second attempt, I made an awkward mistake, which very near led to detection. An Irish labourer, more than half tipsy, came in one evening, and asked whether we had such a thing as was called “*A poor man's plaster*. By the powers, it will be a poor man's plaster when it belongs to me; but they tell me that it is a sure and sertain cure for the thumbago, as they call it, which I've at the small of my back, and which is a hinder to my mounting up the ladder; so as it's Saturday night, and I've just got the money, I'll buy the plaster first, and then try what a little whisky inside will do; the devil's in it if it won't be driven out of me between the two.”

We had not that plaster in the shop, but we had blister plaster, and Timothy, handing one to me, I proffered it to him. “And what may you be after asking for this same?” inquired he.

The blister plasters were sold at a shilling each, when spread on paper, so I asked him eighteen-pence, that we might pocket the extra sixpence.

“By the powers, one would think that you had made a mistake, and handed me the rich man's plaster instead of the poor one's. It's less whisky I'll have to drink, anyhow; but here's the money, and the top of the morning to ye, seeing as how it's jist getting late.”

Timothy and I laughed as we divided the sixpence. It appeared that after taking his allowance of whisky, the poor fellow fixed the plaster on his back when he went to bed, and the next morning found himself in a condition not to be envied. It was a week before we saw him again, and much to the horror of Timothy and myself, he walked into the shop when Mr Brookes was employed behind the counter. Timothy perceived him before he saw us, and pulling me behind the large mortar, we contrived to make our escape into the back parlour, the door of which we held ajar to hear what would take place.

“Murder and turf!” cried the man; “but that was the devil's own plaster that you gave me here for my back, and it left me as raw as a turnip, taking every bit of my skin off me entirely, forebye my lying in bed for a whole week, and losing my day's work.”

“I ready do not recollect supplying you with a plaster, my good man,” replied Mr Brookes.

“Then, by the piper that played before Moses, if you don't recollect it, I've an idea that I shall never forget it. Sure enough, it cured me, but wasn't I quite kilt before I was cured?”

“It must have been some other shop,” observed Mr Brookes. “You have made a mistake.”

“Devil a bit of mistake, except in selling me the plaster. Didn't I get it of a lad in this same shop?”

“Nobody sells things out of this shop without my knowledge.”

The Irishman was puzzled—he looked round the shop. “Well, then, if this a'n't the shop, it was own sister to it.”

“Timothy,” called Mr Brookes.

“And sure enough there was a Timothy in the other shop, for I heard the boy call the other by the name; however, it’s no matter if it took off the skin, it also took away the thumbago, so the morning to you, Mr Pottykary.”

When the Irishman departed, we made our appearance. “Japhet, did you sell a plaster to an Irishman?”

“Yes—don’t you recollect, last Saturday? and I gave you the shilling.”

“Very true; but what did he ask for?”

“He asked for a plaster, but he was very tipsy. I showed him a blister, and he took it;” and then I looked at Timothy and laughed.

“You must not play such tricks,” said Mr Brookes. “I see what you have been about—it was a joke to you, but not to him.”

Mr Brookes, who imagined we had sold it to the Irishman out of fun, then gave us a very severe lecture, and threatened to acquaint Mr Cophagus if ever we played such tricks again. Thus the affair blew over, and it made me very careful; and, as every day I knew more about medicines, I was soon able to mix them, so as to be of service to those who applied, and before eighteen months had expired, I was trusted with the mixing up of all the prescriptions. At the end of that period Mr Brookes left us, and I took the whole of his department upon myself, giving great satisfaction to Mr Cophagus.

And now that I have announced my promotion, it will perhaps be as well that I give the reader some idea of my personal appearance, upon which I have hitherto been silent. I was thin, between fifteen and sixteen years old, very tall for my age, and of my figure I had no reason to be ashamed; a large beaming eye, with a slightly aquiline nose, a high forehead, fair in complexion, but with *very* dark hair. I was always what may be termed a remarkably clean-looking boy, from the peculiarity of my skin and complexion; my teeth were small, but were transparent, and I had a very deep dimple in my chin. Like all embryo apothecaries, I carried in my appearance, if not the look of wisdom, most certainly that of self-sufficiency, which does equally well with the world in general. My forehead was smooth, and very white, and my dark locks were combed back systematically, and with a regularity that said, as plainly as hair could do, “The owner of this does everything by prescription, measurement, and rule.” With my long fingers I folded up the little packets, with an air as thoughtful and imposing as that of a minister who has just presented a protocol as interminable as unintelligible; and the look of solemn sagacity with which I poured out the contents of one vial into the other, would have well become the king’s physician, when he watched the “lord’s anointed” in *articulo mortis*.

As I followed up my saturnine avocation, I generally had an open book on the counter beside me; not a marble-covered dirty volume, from the Minerva press, or a half-bound, half-guinea’s worth of fashionable trash, but a good, honest, heavy-looking, wisdom-implying book, horribly stuffed with epithet of drug; a book in which Latin words were redundant, and here and there were to be observed the crabbed characters of Greek. Altogether, with my book and my look, I cut such a truly medical appearance, that even the most guarded would not have hesitated to allow me the sole conduct of a whitlow, from inflammation to suppuration, and from suppuration to cure, or have refused to have confided to me the entire suppression of a gumboil. Such were my personal qualifications at the time that I was raised to the important office of dispenser of, I may say, life and death.

It will not surprise the reader when I tell him that I was much noticed by those who came to consult, or talk with, Mr Cophagus. “A very fine looking lad that, Mr Cophagus,” an acquaintance would say. “Where did you get him—who is his father?”

“Father!” Mr Cophagus would reply, when they had gained the back parlour, but I could overhear him, “father, um—can’t tell—love—concealment—child born—Foundling Hospital—put out—and so on.”

This was constantly occurring, and the constant occurrence made me often reflect upon my condition, which otherwise I might, from the happy and even tenor of my life, have forgotten. When I retired to my bed I would revolve in my mind all that I had gained from the governors of the hospital

relative to myself.—The paper found in the basket had been given to me. I was born in wedlock—at least, so said that paper. The sum left with me also proved that my parents could not, at my birth, have been paupers. The very peculiar circumstances attending my case, only made me more anxious to know my parentage. I was now old enough to be aware of the value of birth, and I was also just entering the age of romance, and many were the strange and absurd reveries in which I indulged. At one time I would cherish the idea that I was of a noble, if not princely birth, and frame reasons for concealment. At others—but it is useless to repeat the absurdities and castle buildings which were generated in my brain from mystery. My airy fabrics would at last disappear, and leave me in all the misery of doubt and abandoned hope. Mr Cophagus, when the question was sometimes put to him, would say, “Good boy—very good boy—don’t want a father.” But he was wrong, I did want a father, and every day the want became more pressing, and I found myself continually repeating the question, “*Who is my father?*”

Part 1—Chapter IV

Very much puzzled with a new Patient, nevertheless take my Degree at fifteen as an M.D.; and what is still more acceptable, I pocket the fees.

The departure of Mr Brookes, of course, rendered me more able to follow up with Timothy my little professional attempts to procure pocket-money; but independent of these pillages by the aid of pills, and making drafts upon our master's legitimate profits, by the assistance of draughts from his shop, accident shortly enabled me to raise the ways and means in a more rapid manner. But of this directly.

In the mean time I was fast gaining knowledge; every evening I read surgical and medical books, put into my hands by Mr Cophagus, who explained whenever I applied to him, and I soon obtained a very fair smattering of my profession. He also taught me how to bleed, by making me, in the first instance, puncture very scientifically all the larger veins of a cabbage-leaf, until well satisfied with the delicacy of my hand, and the precision of my eye, he wound up his instructions by permitting me to breathe a vein in his own arm.

“Well,” said Timothy, when he first saw me practising, “I have often heard it said, there's no getting blood out of a turnip; but it seems there is more chance with a cabbage. I tell you what, Japhet, you may try your hand upon me as much as you please, for two-pence a go.”

I consented to this arrangement, and by dint of practising on Timothy over and over again, I became quite perfect. I should here observe, that my anxiety relative to my birth increased every day, and that in one of the books lent me by Mr Cophagus, there was a dissertation upon the human frame, sympathies, antipathies, and also on those features and peculiarities most likely to descend from one generation to another. It was there asserted, that the *nose* was the facial feature most likely to be transmitted from father to son. As I before have mentioned, my nose was rather aquiline; and after I had read this book, it was surprising with what eagerness I examined the faces of those whom I met; and if I saw a nose upon any man's face, at all resembling my own, I immediately would wonder and surmise whether that person could be my father. The constant dwelling upon the subject at last created a species of monomania, and a hundred times a day I would mutter to myself, “*Who is my father?*” indeed, the very bells, when they rung a peal, seemed, as in the case of Whittington, to chime the question, and at last I talked so much on the subject to Timothy, who was my *Fidus Achate*, and bosom friend, that I really believe, partial as he was to me, he wished my father at the devil.

Our shop was well appointed with all that glare and glitter with which we decorate the “*house of call*” of disease and death. Being situated in such a thoroughfare, passengers would stop to look in, and ragged-vested, and in other garments still more ragged, little boys would stand to stare at the variety of colours, and the 'potteccary gentleman, your humble servant, who presided over so many labelled-in-gold phalanxes which decorated the sides of the shop.

Among those who always stopped and gazed as she passed by, which was generally three or four times a day, was a well-dressed female, apparently about forty years of age, straight as an arrow, with an elasticity of step, and a decision in her manner of walking, which was almost masculine, although her form, notwithstanding that it was tall and thin, was extremely feminine and graceful. Sometimes she would fix her eyes upon me, and there was a wildness in her looks, which certainly gave a painful impression, and at the same time so fascinated me, that when I met her gaze, the paper which contained the powder remained unfolded, and the arm which was pouring out the liquid suspended.

She was often remarked by Timothy, as well as me; and we further observed, that her step was not equal throughout the day. In her latter peregrinations, towards the evening, her gait was more

vigorous, but unequal, at the same time that her gaze was more steadfast. She usually passed the shop for the last time each day about five o'clock in the afternoon.

One evening, after we had watched her pass, as we supposed, to return no more till the ensuing morning, for this peeping in, on her part, had become an expected occurrence, and afforded much amusement to Timothy, who designated her as the "mad woman," to our great surprise, and to the alarm of Timothy, who sprang over the counter, and took a position by my side, she walked into the shop. Her eye appeared wild, as usual, but I could not make out that it was insanity. I recovered my self-possession, and desired Timothy to hand the lady a chair, begging to know in what way I could be useful. Timothy walked round by the end of the counter, pushed a chair near to her, and then made a hasty retreat to his former position. She declined the chair with a motion of her hand, in which there was much dignity, as well as grace, and placing upon the counter her hands, which were small and beautifully white, she bent forwards towards me, and said, in a sweet, low voice, which actually startled me by its depth of melody, "I am very ill."

My astonishment increased. Why, I know not, because the exceptions are certainly as many as the general rule, we always form an estimate of the voice before we hear it, from the outward appearance of the speaker; and when I looked up in her face, which was now exposed to the glare of the argand lamp, and witnessed the cadaverous, pale, chalky expression on it, and the crow's feet near the eyes, and wrinkles on her forehead, I should have sooner expected to have heard a burst of heavenly symphony from a thundercloud, than such music as issued from her parted lips.

"Good heavens, madam!" said I eagerly and respectfully, "allow me to send for Mr Cophagus."

"By no means," replied she. "I come to you. I am aware," continued she in an undertone, "that you dispense medicines, give advice, and receive money yourself."

I felt very much agitated, and the blush of detection mounted up to my forehead. Timothy, who heard what she said, showed his uneasiness in a variety of grotesque ways. He drew up his legs alternately, as if he were dancing on hot plates; he slapped his pockets, grinned, clenched his fists, ground his teeth, and bit his lips till he made the blood come. At last he sidled up to me, "She has been peeping and screwing those eyes of hers into this shop for something. It is all up with both of us, unless you can buy her off."

"I have, madam," said I, at last, "ventured to prescribe in some trivial cases, and, as you say, receive money when my master is not here; but I am entrusted with the till."

"I know—I know—you need not fear me. You are too modest. What I would request is, that you would prescribe for me, as I have no great opinion of your master's talents."

"If you wish it, madam," said I, bowing respectfully.

"You have camphor julep ready made up, have you not?"

"Yes, madam," replied I.

"Then do me the favour to send the boy with a bottle to my house directly." I handed down the bottle, she paid for it, and putting it into Timothy's hands, desired him to take it to the direction which she gave him. Timothy put on his hat, cocked his eye at me, and left us alone.

"What is your name?" said she, in the same melodious voice.

"Japhet Newland, madam," replied I.

"Japhet—it is a good, a scriptural name," said the lady, musing in half soliloquy, "Newland—that sounds of mammon."

"This mystery is unravelled," thought I, and I was right in my conjectures. "She is some fanatical methodist;" but I looked at her again, and her dress disclaimed the idea, for in it there was much taste displayed.

"Who gave you that name?" said she, after a pause.

The question was simple enough, but it stirred up a host of annoying recollections; but not wishing to make a confidant of her, I gently replied, as I used to do in the Foundling Hospital on Sunday morning—"My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, ma'am."

“My dear sir, I am very ill,” said she, after a pause; “will you feel my pulse?”

I touched a wrist, and looked at a hand that was worthy of being admired. What a pity, thought I, that she should be old, ugly, and half crazy!

“Do you not think that this pulse of mine exhibits considerable nervous excitement? I reckoned it this morning, it was at a hundred and twenty.”

“It certainly beats quick,” replied I, “but perhaps the camphor julep may prove beneficial.”

“I thank you for your advice, Mr Newland,” said she laying down a guinea, “and if I am not better, I will call again, or send for you. Good night.”

She walked out of the shop, leaving me in no small astonishment. What could she mean? I was lost in reverie, when Timothy returned. The guinea remained on the counter.

“I met her going home,” said he. “Bless me—a guinea—why, Japhet!” I recounted all that had passed. “Well, then, it has turned out well for us instead of ill, as I expected.”

The *us* reminded me that we shared profits on these occasions, and I offered Timothy his half; but Tim, with all his *espièglerie* was not selfish, and he stoutly refused to take his share. He dubbed me an M.D., and said I had beaten Mr Cophagus already, for he had never taken a physician’s fee.

“I cannot understand it, Timothy,” said I, after a few minutes’ thought.

“I can,” replied Timothy. “She has looked in at the window until she has fallen in love with your handsome face; that’s it, depend upon it.” As I could find no other cause, and Tim’s opinion was backed by my own vanity, I imagined that such must be the case. “Yes, ’tis so,” continued Timothy, —“as the saying is, there’s money bid for you.”

“I wish that it had not been by so ill-favoured a person, at all events, Tim,” replied I; “I cannot return her affection.”

“Never mind that, so long as you don’t return the money.”

The next evening she made her appearance, bought, as before, a bottle of camphor julep—sent Timothy home with it, and asking my advice, paid me another guinea.

“Really, madam,” said I, putting it back towards her, “I am not entitled to it.”

“Yes, you are,” replied she. “I know you have no friends, and I also know that you deserve them. You must purchase books, you must study, or you never will be a great man.” She then sat down, entered into conversation, and I was struck with the fire and vigour of the remarks, which were uttered in such a melodious tone.

Her visits, during a month, were frequent, and every time did she press upon me a fee. Although not in love with her person, I certainly felt very grateful, and moreover was charmed with the superiority of her mind. We were now on the most friendly and confiding terms. One evening she said to me, “Japhet, we have now been friends some time. Can I trust you?”

“With your life, if it were necessary,” replied I.

“I believe it,” said she. “Then can you leave the shop and come to me to-morrow evening?”

“Yes, if you will send your maid for me, saying that you are not well.”

“I will, at eight o’clock. Farewell, then, till to-morrow.”

Part 1—Chapter V

My Vanity receives a desperate Wound, but my Heart remains unscathed—
An Anomaly in Woman, one who despises Beauty.

The next evening I left Timothy in charge, and repaired to her house; it was very respectable in outward appearance, as well as its furniture. I was not, however, shown up into the first floor, but into the room below.

“Miss Judd will come directly, sir,” said a tall, meagre, puritanical looking maid, shutting the door upon me. In a few minutes, during which my pulse beat quick, (for I could not but expect some disclosure; whether it was to be one of love or murder, I hardly knew which,) Miss Aramathea Judd, for such was her Christian name, made her appearance, and sitting down on the sofa, requested me to take a seat by her.

“Mr Newland,” said she, “I wish to—and I think I can entrust you with a secret most important to me. Why I am obliged to do it, you will perfectly comprehend when you have heard my story. Tell me, are you attached to me?”

This was a home question to a forward lad of sixteen. I took her by the hand, and when I looked down on it, I felt as if I was. I looked up into her face, and felt that I was not. And, as I now was close to her, I perceived that she must have some aromatic drug in her mouth, as it smelt strongly—this gave me the supposition that the breath which drew such melodious tones was not equally sweet, and I felt a certain increased degree of disgust.

“I am very grateful, Miss Judd,” replied I; “I hope I shall prove that I am attached when you confide in me.”

“Swear then, by all that’s sacred, you will not reveal what I do confide.”

“By all that’s sacred I will not,” replied I, kissing her hand with more fervour than I expected from myself.

“Do me then the favour to excuse me one minute.” She left the room, and in a very short time, there returned, in the same dress, and in every other point the same person, but with a young and lively face of not more, apparently, than twenty-two or twenty-three years old. I started as if I had seen an apparition. “Yes,” said she, smiling, “you now see Aramathea Judd without disguise; and you are the first who has seen that face for more than two years. Before I proceed further, again I say, may I trust you—swear!”

“I do swear,” replied I, and took her hand for the book, which this time I kissed with pleasure, over and over again. Like a young jackass as I was, I still retained her hand, throwing as much persuasion as I possibly could in my eyes. In fact, I did enough to have softened the hearts of three bonnet-makers. I began to feel most dreadfully in love, and thought of marriage, and making my fortune, and I don’t know what; but all this was put an end to by one simple short sentence, delivered in a very decided but soft voice, “Japhet, don’t be silly.”

I was crushed, and all my hopes crushed with me. I dropped her hand, and sat like a fool.

“And now hear me. I am, as you must have already found out, an impostor; that is, I am what is called a religious adventuress—a new term, I grant, and perhaps only applicable to a very few. My aunt was considered, by a certain sect, to be a great prophetess, which I hardly need tell you was all nonsense; nevertheless, there are hundreds who believed in her, and do so now. Brought up with my aunt, I soon found out what fools and dupes may be made of mankind by taking advantage of their credulity. She had her religious inspirations, her trances, and her convulsions, and I was always behind the scenes; she confided in me, and I may say that I was her only confidant. You cannot, therefore, wonder at my practising that deceit to which I have been brought up from almost my infancy. In person I am the exact counterpart of what my aunt was at my age, equally so in figure, although my

figure is now disguised to resemble that of a woman of her age. I often had dressed myself in my aunt's clothes, put on her cap and front, and then the resemblance was very striking. My aunt fell sick and died, but she promised the disciples that she would re-appear to them, and they believed her. I did not. She was buried, and by many her return was anxiously expected. It occurred to me about a week afterwards that I might contrive to deceive them. I dressed in my aunt's clothes, I painted and disguised my face as you have seen, and the deception was complete, even to myself, as I surveyed my countenance in the glass. I boldly set off in the evening to the tabernacle, which I knew they still frequented—came into the midst of them, and they fell down and worshipped me as a prophetess risen from the dead; deceived, indeed, by my appearance, but still more deceived by their own credulity. For two years I have been omnipotent with them; but there is one difficulty which shakes the faith of the new converts, and new converts I must have, Japhet, as the old ones die, or I should not be able to fee my physician. It is this: by habit I can almost throw myself into a stupor or a convulsion, but to do that effectually, to be able to carry on the deception for so long a time, and to undergo the severe fatigue attending such violent exertion, it is necessary that I have recourse to stimulants—do you understand?”

“I do,” replied I; “I have more than once thought you under the influence of them towards the evening. I'm afraid that you take more than is good for your health.”

“Not more than I require for what I have to undergo to keep up the faith of my disciples; but there are many who waver, some who doubt, and I find that my movements are watched. I cannot trust the woman in this house. I think she is a spy set upon me, but I cannot remove her, as this house, and all which it contains, are not mine, but belong to the disciples in general. There is another woman, not far off, who is my rival; she calls me an impostor, and says that she is the true prophetess, and that I am not one. This will be rather difficult for her to prove,” continued she, with a mocking smile. “Beset as I am, I require your assistance; for you must be aware that it is rather discreditable to a prophetess, who has risen from the dead, to be seen all day at the gin-shop, yet without stimulants now I could not exist.”

“And how can I assist you?”

“By sending me, as medicine, that which I dare no longer procure in any other way, and keeping the secret which I have imparted.”

“I will do both with pleasure; but yet,” said I, “is it not a pity, a thousand pities, that one so young—and if you will allow me to add, so lovely, should give herself up to ardent spirits? Why,” continued I, taking her small white hand, “why should you carry on the deception: why sacrifice your health, and I may say your happiness—” What more I might have said I know not, probably it might have been an offer of marriage, but she cut me short.

“Why does everybody sacrifice their health, their happiness, their all, but for ambition and the love of power? It is true, as long as this little beauty lasts, I might be courted as a woman, but never should I be worshipped as—I may say—a god.—No, no, there is something too delightful in that adoration, something too pleasant in witnessing a crowd of fools stare, and men of three times my age falling down and kissing the hem of my garment. This is, indeed, adoration! the delight arising from it is so great, that all other passions are crashed by it—it absorbs all other feelings, and has closed my heart even against love, Japhet. I could not, I would not debase myself, sink so low in my own estimation, as to allow so paltry a passion to have dominion over me; and, indeed, now that I am so wedded to stimulants, even if I were no longer a prophetess, it never could.”

“But is not intoxication one of the most debasing of all habits?”

“I grant you, in itself, but with me and in my situation it is different. I fall to rise again, and higher. I cannot be what I am without I stimulate—I cannot stimulate without stimulants, therefore it is but a means to a great and glorious ambition.”

I had more conversation with her before I left, but nothing appeared to move her resolution, and I left her, lamenting, in the first place, that she had abjured love, because, notwithstanding the

orris root, which she kept in her mouth to take away the smell of the spirits, I found myself very much taken with such beauty of person, combined with so much vigour of mind; and in the second, that one so young should carry on a system of deceit and self-destruction. When I rose to go away she put five guineas in my hand to enable me to purchase what she required. “Add to this one small favour,” said I, “Aramathea—allow me a kiss.”

“A kiss,” replied she, with scorn; “no, Japhet, look upon me, for it is the last time you will behold my youth! look upon me as a sepulchre, fair without but unsavoury and rottenness within. Let me do you a greater kindness, let me awaken your dormant energies, and plant that ambition in your soul, which may lead to all that is great and good—a better path and more worthy of a man than the one which I have partly chosen, and partly destiny has decided for me. Look upon me as your friend; although, perhaps, you truly say, no friend unto myself. Farewell—remember that to-morrow you will send the medicine which I require.”

I left her, and returned home: it was late. I went to bed, and having disclosed as much to Timothy as I could safely venture to do, I fell fast asleep, but her figure and her voice haunted me in my dreams. At one time, she appeared before me in her painted, enamelled face, and then the mask fell off, and I fell at her feet to worship her extreme beauty; then her beauty would vanish, and she would appear an image of loathsomeness and deformity, and I felt suffocated with the atmosphere impregnated with the smell of liquor. I would wake and compose myself again, glad to be rid of the horrid dream, but again would she appear, with a hydra’s tail, like Sin in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, wind herself round me, her beautiful face gradually changing into that of a skeleton. I cried out with terror, and awoke to sleep no more, and effectually cured by my dream of the penchant which I felt towards Miss Aramathea Judd.

Part 1—Chapter VI

My Prescriptions very effective and palatable, but I lose my Patient—The Feud equal to that of the Montagues and the Capulets—Results different—Mercutio comes off unhurt.

The next day I sent Timothy to purchase some highly rectified white brandy, which I coloured with a blue tincture, and added to it a small proportion of the essence of cinnamon, to disguise the smell; a dozen large vials, carefully tied up and sealed, were despatched to her abode. She now seldom called unless it was early in the morning; I made repeated visits to her house to receive money, but no longer to make love. One day I requested permission to be present at their meeting, and to this she gave immediate consent; indeed we were on the most intimate terms, and when she perceived that I no longer attempted to play the fool, I was permitted to remain for hours with her in conversation. She had, as she told me she intended, re-enamelled and painted her face, but knowing what beauty was concealed underneath, I no longer felt any disgust.

Timothy was very much pleased at his share of this arrangement, as he seldom brought her the medicine without pocketing half-a-crown.

For two or three months everything went on very satisfactorily; but one evening, Timothy, who had been sent with the basket of vials for Miss Judd's assistance, returned in great consternation, informing me that the house was empty. He had inquired of the neighbours, and from the accounts given, which were very contradictory, it appeared that the rival prophetess had marched up at the head of her proselytes the evening before, had obtained entrance, and that a desperate contention had been the result. That the police had been called in, and all parties had been lodged in the watch-house; that the whole affair was being investigated by the magistrates, and that it was said that Miss Judd and all her coadjutors would be sent to the Penitentiary. This was quite enough to frighten two boys like us; for days afterwards we trembled when people came into the shop, expecting to be summoned and imprisoned. Gradually, however, our fears were dismissed, but I never from that time heard anything more of Miss Aramathea Judd.

After this affair, I adhered steadily to my business, and profiting by the advice given me by that young person, improved rapidly in my profession, as well as in general knowledge; but my thoughts, as usual, were upon one subject—my parentage, and the mystery hanging over it. My eternal reveries became at last so painful, that I had recourse to reading to drive them away, and subscribing to a good circulating library, I was seldom without a book in my hand. By this time I had been nearly two years and a half with Mr Cophagus, when an adventure occurred which I must attempt to describe with all the dignity with which it ought to be invested.

This is a world of ambition, competition, and rivalry. Nation rivals nation, and flies to arms, cutting the throats of a few thousands on each side till one finds that it has the worst of it. Man rivals man, and hence detraction, duels, and individual death. Woman rivals woman, and hence loss of reputation and position in high, and loss of hair, and fighting with pattens in low life. Are we then to be surprised that this universal passion, undeterred by the smell of drugs and poisonous compounds, should enter into apothecaries' shops? But two streets—two very short streets from our own—was situated the single-fronted shop of Mr Ebenezer Pleggitt. Thank Heaven, it was only single-fronted; there, at least, we had the ascendancy over them. Upon other points, our advantages were more equally balanced. Mr Pleggitt had two large coloured bottles in his windows more than we had; but then we had two horses, and he had only one. He tied over the corks of his bottles with red-coloured paper; we covered up the lips of our vials with delicate blue. It certainly was the case—for though an enemy I'll do him justice—that, after Mr Brookes had left us, Mr Pleggitt had two shopmen, and Mr Cophagus only one; but then that one was Mr Japhet Newland; besides, one of his assistants had only one eye,

the other squinted horribly, so if we measured by eyes, I think the advantage was actually on our side; and, as far as ornament went, most decidedly; for who would not prefer putting on his chimney-piece one handsome, elegant vase, than two damaged, ill-looking pieces of crockery? Mr Pleggit had certainly a gilt mortar and pestle over his door, which Mr Cophagus had omitted when he furnished his shop; but then the mortar had a great crack down the middle, and the pestle had lost its knob. And let me ask those who have been accustomed to handle it, what is a pestle without a knob? On the whole, I think, with the advantage of having two fronts, like Janus, we certainly had the best of the comparison; but I shall leave the impartial to decide.

All I can say is, that the feuds of the rival houses were most bitter—the hate intense—the mutual scorn unmeasurable. Did Mr Ebenezer Pleggit meet Mr Phineas Cophagus in the street, the former immediately began to spit as if he had swallowed some of his own vile adulterated drugs; and in rejoinder, Mr Cophagus immediately raised the cane from his nose high above his forehead in so threatening an attitude as almost to warrant the other swearing the peace against him, muttering, “Ugly puppy—knows nothing—um—patients die—and so on.”

It may be well supposed that this spirit of enmity extended through the lower branches of the rival houses—the assistants and I were at deadly feud; and this feud was even more deadly between the boys who carried out the medicines, and whose baskets might, in some measure, have been looked upon as the rival ensigns of the parties, they themselves occupying the dangerous and honourable post of standard bearers.

Timothy, although the kindest-hearted fellow in the world, was as good a hater as Dr Johnson himself could have wished to meet with; and when sometimes his basket was not so well filled as usual, he would fill it up with empty bottles below, rather than that the credit of the house should be suspected, and his deficiencies create a smile of scorn in the mouth of his red-haired antagonist, when they happened to meet going their rounds. As yet, no actual collision had taken place between either the principals or the subordinates of the hostile factions; but it was fated that this state of quiescence should no longer remain.

Homer has sung the battles of gods, demigods, and heroes; Milton the strife of angels. Swift has been great in his Battle of the Books; but I am not aware that the battle of the vials has as yet been sung; and it requires a greater genius than was to be found in those who portrayed the conflicts of heroes, demigods, gods, angels, or books, to do adequate justice to the mortal strife which took place between the lotions, potions, draughts, pills, and embrocations. I must tell the story as well as I can, leaving it as an outline for a future epic.

Burning with all the hate which infuriated the breasts of the two houses of Capulet and Montagu, hate each day increasing from years of “biting thumbs” at each other, and yet no excuse presenting itself for an affray, Timothy Oldmixon—for on such an occasion it would be a sin to omit his whole designation—Timothy Oldmixon, I say, burning with hate and eager with haste, turning a corner of the street with his basket well filled with medicines hanging on his left arm, encountered, equally eager in his haste, and equally burning in his hate, the red-haired Mercury of Mr Ebenezer Pleggit. Great was the concussion of the opposing baskets, dire was the crash of many of the vials, and dreadful was the mingled odour of the abominations which escaped, and poured through the wicker interstices. Two ladies from Billingsgate, who were near, indulging their rhetorical powers, stopped short. Two tom-cats, who were on an adjacent roof, just fixing their eyes of enmity, and about to fix their claws, turned their eyes to the scene below. Two political antagonists stopped their noisy arguments. Two dustmen ceased to ring their bells; and two little urchins eating cherries from the crowns of their hats, lost sight of their fruit, and stood aghast with fear. They met, and met with such violence, that they each rebounded many paces; but like stalwart knights, each kept his basket and his feet. A few seconds to recover breath; one withering, fiery look from Timothy, returned by his antagonist, one flash of the memory in each to tell them that they each had the *la* on their side, and “Take that!” was roared by Timothy, planting a well-directed blow with his dexter and dexterous

hand upon the sinister and sinisterous eye of his opponent. “Take that!” continued he, as his adversary reeled back; “take that, and be damned to you, for running against a *gentleman*.”

He of the rubicund hair had retreated, because so violent was the blow he could not help so doing, and we all must yield to fate. But it was not from fear. Seizing a vile potation that was labelled “To be taken immediately,” and hurling it with demoniacal force right on the chops of the courageous Timothy, “Take that!” cried he with a rancorous yell. This missile, well-directed as the spears of Homer’s heroes, came full upon the bridge of Timothy’s nose, and the fragile glass shivering, inflicted divers wounds upon his physiognomy, and at the same time poured forth a dark burnt-sienna-coloured balsam, to heal them, giving pain unutterable. Timothy, disdaining to lament the agony of his wounds, followed the example of his antagonist, and hastily seizing a similar bottle of much larger dimensions, threw it with such force that it split between the eyes of his opponent. Thus with these dreadful weapons did they commence the mortal strife.

The lovers of *good order*, or at least of fair play, gathered round the combatants, forming an almost impregnable ring, yet of sufficient dimensions to avoid the missiles. “Go it, *red-head!*” “*Bravo! white-apron!*” resounded on every side. Draughts now met draughts in their passage through the circumambient air, and exploded like shells over a besieged town. Bolusses were fired with the precision of cannon shot, pill-boxes were thrown with such force that they burst like grape and cannister, while acids and alkalies hissed, as they neutralised each other’s power, with all the venom of expiring snakes. “Bravo! white-apron!” “Red-head for ever!” resounded on every side as the conflict continued with unabated vigour. The ammunition was fast expending on both sides, when Mr Ebenezer Pleggit, hearing the noise, and perhaps smelling his own drugs, was so unfortunately rash and so unwisely foolhardy as to break through the sacred ring, advancing from behind with uplifted cane to fell the redoubtable Timothy, when a mixture of his own, hurled by his own red-haired champion, caught him in his open mouth, breaking against his only two remaining front teeth, extracting them as the discharged liquid ran down his throat, and turning him as sick as a dog. He fell, was taken away on a shutter, and it was some days before he was again to be seen in his shop, dispensing those medicines which, on this fatal occasion, he would but too gladly have dispensed with.

Reader, have you not elsewhere read in the mortal fray between knights, when the casque has been beaten off, the shield lost, and the sword shivered, how they have resorted to closer and more deadly strife, with their daggers raised on high? Thus it was with Timothy: his means had failed, and disdaining any longer to wage a distant combat, he closed vigorously with his panting enemy, overthrew him in the first struggle, seizing from his basket the only weapons which remained, one single vial, and one single box of pills. As he sat upon his prostrate foe, first he forced the box of pills into his gasping mouth, and then with the lower end of the vial he drove it down his throat, as a gunner rams home the wad and shot into a thirty-two pound carronade. Choked with the box, the fallen knight held up his hands for quarter; but Timothy continued until the end of the vial, breaking out the top and bottom of the pasteboard receptacle, forty-and-eight of antibilious pills rolled in haste down Red-head’s throat. Timothy then seized his basket, and amid the shouts of triumph, walked away. His fallen-crested adversary coughed up the remnants of the pasteboard, once more breathed, and was led disconsolate to the neighbouring pump; while Timothy regained our shop with his blushing honours thick upon him.

But I must drop the vein heroical. Mr Cophagus, who was at home when Timothy returned, was at first very much inclined to be wroth at the loss of so much medicine; but when he heard the story, and the finale, he was so pleased at Tim’s double victory over Mr Pleggit and his messenger, that he actually put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out half-a-crown.

Mr Pleggit, on the contrary, was anything but pleased; he went to a lawyer, and commenced an action for assault and battery, and all the neighbourhood did nothing but talk about the affray which had taken place, and the action at law which it was said would take place in the ensuing term.

But with the exception of this fracas, which ended in the action not holding good, whereby the animosity was increased, I have little to recount during the remainder of the time I served under Mr Cophagus. I had been more than three years with him when my confinement became insupportable. I had but one idea, which performed an everlasting cycle in my brain—Who was my father? And I should have abandoned the profession to search the world in the hope of finding my progenitor, had it not been that I was without the means. Latterly, I had hoarded up all I could collect; but the sum was small, much too small for the proposed expedition. I became melancholy, indifferent to the business, and slovenly in my appearance, when a circumstance occurred which put an end to my further dispensing medicines, and left me a free agent.

Part 1—Chapter VII

Looking out for Business not exactly minding your own Business—The Loss of the Scales occasions the Loss of Place to Timothy and me, who when weighed in other Scales were found wanting—We bundle off with our Bundles on.

It happened one market-day that there was an overdriven, infuriated beast, which was making sad havoc. Crowds of people were running past our shop in one direction, and the cries of “Mad bull!” were re-echoed in every quarter.

Mr Cophagus, who was in the shop, and to whom, as I have before observed, a mad bull was a source of great profit, very naturally looked out of the shop to ascertain whether the animal was near to us. In most other countries, when people hear of any danger, they generally avoid it by increasing their distance, but in England, it is too often the case, that they are so fond of indulging their curiosity, that they run to the danger. Mr Cophagus, who perceived the people running one way, naturally supposed, not being aware of the extreme proximity of the animal, that the people were running to see what was the matter, and turned his eyes in that direction, walking out on the pavement that he might have a fairer view. He was just observing, “Can’t say—fear—um—rascal Pleggitt—close to him—get all the custom—wounds—contusions—and—” when the animal came suddenly round the corner upon Mr Cophagus, who had his eyes the other way, and before he could escape tossed him through his own shop windows, and landed him on the counter. Not satisfied with this, the beast followed him into the shop. Timothy and I pulled Mr Cophagus over towards us, and he dropped inside the counter, where we also crouched, frightened out of our wits. To our great horror the bull made one or two attempts to leap the counter; but not succeeding, and being now attacked by the dogs and butcher boys, he charged at them through the door, carrying away our best scales on his horns as a trophy, as he galloped out of the shop in pursuit of his persecutors. When the shouts and hallooes were at some little distance, Timothy and I raised our heads and looked round us; and perceiving that all was safe, we proceeded to help Mr Cophagus, who remained on the floor bleeding, and in a state of insensibility. We carried him into the back parlour and laid him on the sofa. I desired Timothy to run for surgical aid as fast as he could, while I opened a vein; and in a few minutes he returned with our opponent, Mr Ebenezer Pleggitt. We stripped Mr Cophagus, and proceeded to examine him. “Bad case this—very bad case, indeed, Mr Newland—dislocation of the os humeri—severe contusion on the os frontis—and I’m very much afraid there is some intercostal injury. Very sorry, very sorry, indeed, for my brother Cophagus.” But Mr Pleggitt did not appear to be sorry; on the contrary, he appeared to perform his surgical duties with the greatest glee.

We reduced the dislocation, and then carried Mr Cophagus up to his bed. In an hour he was sensible; and Mr Pleggitt took his departure, shaking hands with Mr Cophagus, and wishing him joy of his providential escape. “Bad job, Japhet,” said Mr Cophagus to me. “Very bad, indeed; sir; but it might have been worse.”

“Worse—um—no, nothing worse—not possible.”

“Why, sir, you might have been killed.”

“Pooh! didn’t mean that—mean Pleggitt—rascal—um—kill me if he can—shan’t though—soon get rid of him—and so on.”

“You will not require his further attendance now that your shoulder is reduced. I can very well attend upon you.”

“Very true, Japhet;—but won’t go—sure of that—damned rascal—quite pleased—I saw it—um—eyes twinkled—smile checked—and so on.”

That evening Mr Pleggitt called in as Mr Cophagus said that he would, and the latter showed a great deal of impatience; but Mr Pleggitt repeated his visits over and over again, and I observed that

Mr Cophagus no longer made any objection; on the contrary, seemed anxious for his coming, and still more so, after he was convalescent, and able to sit at his table. But the mystery was soon divulged. It appeared that Mr Cophagus, although he was very glad that other people should suffer from mad bulls, and come to be cured, viewed the case in a very different light when the bull thought proper to toss him, and having now realised a comfortable independence, he had resolved to retire from business, and from a site attended with so much danger. A hint of this escaping him when Mr Pleggit was attending him on the third day after his accident, the latter, who knew the value of the *locale*, also hinted that if Mr Cophagus was inclined so to do, that he would be most happy to enter into an arrangement with him. Self-interest will not only change friendship into enmity, in this rascally world, but also turn enmity into friendship. All Mr Pleggit's enormities, and all Mr Cophagus's shameful conduct, were mutually forgotten. In less than ten minutes it was "*My dear Mr Pleggit*, and so on," and "*My dear brother Cophagus*."

In three weeks everything had been arranged between them, and the shop, fixtures, stock in trade, and good will were all the property of our ancient antagonist. But although Mr Pleggit could shake hands with Mr Cophagus for his fixtures and *good will*, yet as Timothy and I were not included in the *good will*, neither were we included among the *fixtures*, and Mr Cophagus could not, of course, interfere with Mr Pleggit's private arrangements. He did all he could do in the way of recommendation; but Mr Pleggit had not forgotten my occasional impertinences or the battle of the bottles. I really believe that his *ill-will* against Timothy was one reason for purchasing the *good will* of Mr Cophagus; and we were very gently told by Mr Pleggit that he would have no occasion for our services.

Mr Cophagus offered to procure me another situation as soon as he could, and at the same time presented me with twenty guineas, as a proof of his regard and appreciation of my conduct—but this sum put in my hand decided me: I thanked him, and told him I had other views at present, but hoped he would let me know where I might find him hereafter, as I should be glad to see him again. He told me he would leave his address for me at the Foundling Hospital, and shaking me heartily by the hand, we parted. Timothy was then summoned. Mr Cophagus gave him five guineas, and wished him good fortune.

"And now, Japhet, what are you about to do?" said Timothy, as he descended into the shop.

"To do," replied I; "I am about to leave you, which is the only thing I am sorry for. I am going, Timothy, in search of my father."

"Well," replied Timothy, "I feel as you do, Japhet, that it will be hard to part; and there is another thing on my mind—which is, I am very sorry that the bull did not break the rudimans (pointing to the iron mortar and pestle); had he had but half the spite I have against it, he would not have left a piece as big as a thimble. I've a great mind to have a smack at it before I go."

"You will only injure Mr Cophagus, for the mortar will not then be paid for."

"Very true; and as he has just given me five guineas, I will refrain from my just indignation. But now, Japhet, let me speak to you. I don't know how you feel, but I feel as if I could not part with you. I do not want to go in search of my father particularly. They say it's a wise child that knows its own father—but as there can be no doubt of my other parent—if I can only hit upon her, I have a strong inclination to go in search of my mother, and if you like my company, why I will go with you—always, my dear Japhet," continued Tim, "keeping in my mind the great difference between a person who has been fee'd as an M.D., and a lad who only carries out his prescriptions."

"Do you really mean to say, Tim, that you will go with me?"

"Yes, to the end of the world, Japhet, as your companion, your friend, and your servant, if you require it I love you, Japhet, and I will serve you faithfully."

"My dear Tim, I am delighted; now I am really happy: we will have but one purse, and but one interest; if I find good fortune, you shall share it."

“And if you meet with ill luck, I will share that too—so the affair is settled—and as here comes Mr Pleggit’s assistants with only one pair of eyes between them, the sooner we pack up the better.”

In half an hour all was ready; a bundle each, contained our wardrobes. We descended from our attic, walked proudly through the shop without making any observation, or taking any notice of our successors; all the notice taken was by Timothy, who turned round and shook his fist at his old enemies, the iron mortar and pestle; and there we were, standing on the pavement, with the wide world before us, and quite undecided which way we should go.

“Is it to be east, west, north, or south, Japhet?” said Timothy.

“The wise men came from the east,” replied I.

“Then they must have travelled west,” said Tim; “let us show our wisdom by doing the same.”

“Agreed.”

Passing by a small shop we purchased two good sticks, as defenders, as well as to hang our bundles on—and off we set upon our pilgrimage.

Part 1—Chapter VIII

We take a Coach, but the Driver does not like his Fare and hits us foul—We change our Mode of travelling, upon the Principle of slow and sure, and fall in with a very learned man.

I believe it to be a very general custom, when people set off upon a journey to reckon up their means—that is, to count the money which they may have in their pockets. At all events, this was done by Timothy and me, and I found that my stock amounted to twenty-two pounds eighteen shillings, and Timothy's to the five guineas presented by Mr Cophagus, and three halfpence which were in the corner of his waistcoat pocket—sum total, twenty-eight pounds three shillings and three halfpence; a very handsome sum, as we thought, with which to commence our peregrinations, and, as I observed to Timothy, sufficient to last us for a considerable time, if husbanded with care.

“Yes,” replied he, “but we must husband our legs also, Japhet, or we shall soon be tired, and very soon wear out our shoes. I vote we take a hackney-coach.”

“Take a hackney-coach, Tim! we mustn't think of it; we cannot afford such a luxury; you can't be tired yet, we are now only just clear of Hyde Park Corner.”

“Still I think we had better take a coach, Japhet, and here is one coming. I always do take one when I carry out medicines, to make up for the time I lose looking at the shops, and playing peg in the ring.”

I now understood what Timothy meant, which was, to get behind and have a ride for nothing. I consented to this arrangement, and we got up behind one which was already well filled inside. “The only difference between an inside and outside passenger in a hackney-coach is, that, one pays, and the other does not,” said I, to Timothy, as we rolled along at the act of parliament speed of four miles per hour.

“That depends upon circumstances: if we are found out, in all probability we shall not only have our ride, but be *paid* into the bargain.”

“With the coachman's whip, I presume?”

“Exactly.” And Timothy had hardly time to get the word out of his mouth, when *flac, flac*, came the whip across our eyes—a little envious wretch, with his shirt hanging out of his trowsers, having called out *Cut behind!* Not wishing to have our faces, or our behinds cut any more, we hastily descended, and reached the footpath, after having gained about three miles on the road before we were discovered.

“That wasn't a bad lift, Japhet, and as for the whip I never mind that with *corduroys*. And now, Japhet, I'll tell you something; we must get into a waggon, if we can find one going down the road, as soon as it is dark.”

“But that will cost money, Tim.”

“It's economy, I tell you; for a shilling, if you bargain, you may ride the whole night, and if we stop at a public-house to sleep, we shall have to pay for our beds, as well as be obliged to order something to eat, and pay dearer for it than if we buy what we want at cooks' shops.”

“There is sense in what you say, Timothy; we will look out for a waggon.”

“Oh! it's no use now—waggons are like black beetles, not only in shape but in habits, they only travel by night—at least most of them do. We are now coming into long dirty Brentford, and I don't know how you feel, Japhet, but I find that walking wonderfully increases the appetite—that's another reason why you should not walk when you can ride—for nothing.”

“Well, I'm rather hungry myself; and dear me, how very good that piece of roast pork looks in that window!”

“I agree with you—let's go in and make a bargain!”

We bought a good allowance for a shilling, and after sticking out for a greater proportion of mustard than the woman said we were entitled to, and some salt, we wrapped it up in a piece of paper, and continued our course, till we arrived at a baker's, where we purchased our bread; and then taking up a position on a bench outside a public-house, called for a pot of beer, and putting our provisions down before us, made a hearty, and, what made us more enjoy it, an independent meal. Having finished our pork and our porter, and refreshed ourselves, we again started and walked till it was quite dark, when we felt so tired that we agreed to sit down on our bundles and wait for the first waggon which passed. We soon heard the jingling of bells, and shortly afterwards its enormous towering bulk appeared between us and the sky. We went up to the waggoner, who was mounted on a little pony, and asked him if he could give two poor lads a lift, and how much he would charge us for the ride.

"How much can ye afford to give, measters? for there be others as poor as ye." We replied that we could give a shilling. "Well, then, get up in God's name, and ride as long as you will. Get in behind."

"Are there many people in there already?" said I as I climbed up, and Timothy handed me the bundles.

"Noa," replied the waggoner, "there be nobody but a mighty clever 'poticary or doctor, I can't tell which; but he wears an uncommon queer hat, and he talk all sort of doctor stuff—and there be his odd man and his odd boy; that be all, and there be plenty of room, and plenty o' clean stra'."

After this intimation we climbed up, and gained a situation in the rear of the waggon under the cloth. As the waggoner said, there was plenty of room, and we nestled into the straw without coming into contact with the other travellers. Not feeling any inclination to sleep, Timothy and I entered into conversation, *sotto voce*, and had continued for more than half an hour, supposing by their silence, that the other occupants of the waggon were asleep, when we were interrupted by a voice clear and sonorous as a bell.

"It would appear that you are wanderers, young men, and journey you know not whither. Birds seek their nests when the night falls—beasts hasten to their lairs—man bolts his door. '*Propria quae maribus,*' as Herodotus hath it; which, when translated, means, that 'such is the nature of mankind.' '*Tribuuntur mascula dicas,*' 'Tell me your troubles,' as Homer says."

I was very much surprised at this address—my knowledge of the language told me immediately that the quotations were out of the Latin grammar, and that all his learning was pretence; still there was a novelty of style which amused me, and at the same time gave me an idea that the speaker was an uncommon personage. I gave Timothy a nudge, and then replied—

"You have guessed right, most learned sir; we are, as you say, wanderers seeking our fortunes, and trust yet to find them—still we have a weary journey before us. '*Haustus horâ somni sumendum,*' as Aristotle hath it; which I need not translate to so learned a person as yourself."

"Nay, indeed, there is no occasion; yet am I pleased to meet with one who hath scholarship," replied the other. "Have you also a knowledge of the Greek?"

"No, I pretend not to Greek."

"It is a pity that thou hast it not, for thou wouldst delight to commune with the ancients. Aesculapius hath these words—'*Asholder—offmotton accapon—pasti—venison,*'—which I will translate for thee—'We often find what we seek when we least expect it.' May it be so with you, my friend. Where have you been educated? and what has been your profession?"

I thought I risked little in telling, so I replied, that I had been brought up as a surgeon and apothecary, and had been educated at a foundation school.

"'Tis well," replied he; "you have then commenced your studies in my glorious profession; still, have you much to learn; years of toil, under a great master, can only enable you to benefit mankind as I have done, and years of hardship and of danger must be added thereunto, to afford you the means. There are many hidden secrets. '*Ut sunt Divorum, Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Virorum,*'—many parts of the globe to traverse, '*Ut Cato, Virgilius, fluviorum, ut Tibris, Orontes.*' All these have I visited,

and many more. Even now do I journey to obtain more of my invaluable medicine, gathered on the highest Andes, when the moon is in her perigee. There I shall remain for months among the clouds, looking down upon the great plain of Mexico, which shall appear no larger than the head of a pin, where the voice of man is heard not. ‘*Vocito, vocitas, vocitavi,*’ bending for months towards the earth. ‘*As in presenti,*’ suffering with the cold—‘*frico quod fricui dat,*’ as Eusebius hath it. Soon shall I be borne away by the howling winds towards the New World, where I can obtain more of the wonderful medicine, which I may say never yet hath failed me, and which nothing but love towards my race induces me to gather at such pains and risk.”

“Indeed, sir,” replied I, amused with his imposition, “I should like to accompany you—for, as Josephus says most truly, ‘*Capiat pilulae duae post prandium.*’ Travel is, indeed, a most delightful occupation, and I would like to run over the whole world.”

“And I would like to follow you,” interrupted Timothy. “I suspect we have commenced our *grand tour* already—three miles behind a hackney-coach—ten on foot, and about two, I should think, in this waggon. But as Cophagus says, ‘*Cochlearija crash many summendush,*’ which means, ‘There are ups and downs in this world.’”

“Hah!” exclaimed our companion. “He, also, has the rudiments.”

“Nay, I hope I’ve done with the *Rudimans,*” replied Timothy.

“Is he your follower?” inquired the man.

“That very much depends upon who walks first,” replied Timothy, “but whether or no—we hunt in couples.”

“I understand—you are companions. ‘*Concordat cum nominativo numero et persona.*’ Tell me, can you roll pills, can you use the pestle and the mortar, handle the scapula, and mix ingredients?”

I replied, that of course I knew my profession.

“Well, then, as we have still some hours of night, let us now obtain some rest. In the morning, when the sun hath introduced us to each other, I may then judge from your countenances whether it is likely that we may be better acquainted. Night is the time for repose, as Quintus Curtius says, ‘*Custos, bos, fur atque sacerdos.*’ Sleep was made for all—my friends, good night.”

Part 1—Chapter IX

In which the Adventures in the Waggon are continued, and we become more puzzled with our new Companions—We leave off talking Latin, and enter into an engagement.

Timothy and I took his advice, and were soon fast asleep.

I was awakened the next morning by feeling a hand in my trowser's pocket. I seized it, and held it fast.

“Now just let go my hand, will you?” cried a lachrymal voice.

I jumped up—it was broad daylight, and looked at the human frame to which the hand was an appendix. It was a very spare, awkwardly-built form of a young man, apparently about twenty years old, but without the least sign of manhood on his chin. His face was cadaverous, with large goggling eyes, high cheek bones, hair long and ragged, reminding me of a rat's nest, thin lips, and ears large almost as an elephant's. A more woe-begone wretch in appearance I never beheld, and I continued to look at him with surprise. He repeated his words with an idiotical expression, “Just let go my hand, can't you?”

“What business had your hand in my pocket?” replied I, angrily.

“I was feeling for my pocket handkerchief,” replied the young man. “I always keeps it in my breeches' pocket.”

“But not in your neighbour's, I presume?”

“My neighbour's!” replied he, with a vacant stare. “Well, so it is, I see now—I thought it was my own.”

I released his hand; he immediately put it into his own pocket, and drew out his handkerchief, if the rag deserved the appellation.

“There,” said he, “I told you I put it in that pocket—I always do.”

“And pray who are you?” said I, as I looked at his dress, which was a pair of loose white Turkish trowsers, and an old spangled jacket.

“Me! why, I'm the fool.”

“More knave than fool, I expect,” replied I, still much puzzled with his strange appearance and dress.

“Nay, there you mistake,” said the voice of last night. “He is not only a fool by profession, but one by nature. It is a half-witted creature, who serves me when I would attract the people. Strange, in this world, that wisdom may cry in the streets without being noticed, yet folly will always command a crowd.”

During this address I turned my eyes upon the speaker. He was an elderly-looking person, with white hair, dressed in a suit of black, ruffles and frill. His eyes were brilliant, but the remainder of his face it was difficult to decipher, as it was evidently painted, and the night's jumbling in the waggon had so smeared it, that it appeared of almost every colour in the rainbow. On one side of him lay a large three-cornered cocked hat, on the other, a little lump of a boy, rolled up in the straw like a marmot, and still sound asleep. Timothy looked at me, and when he caught my eye, burst out into a laugh.

“You laugh at my appearance, I presume,” said the old man, mildly.

“I do in truth,” replied Timothy. “I never saw one like you before, and I dare say never shall again.”

“That is possible; yet probably if you meet me again you would not know me.”

“Among a hundred thousand,” replied Timothy, with increased mirth.

“We shall see, perhaps,” replied the quack doctor, for such the reader must have already ascertained to be his profession; “but the waggon has stopped, and the driver will bait his horses. If inclined to eat, now is your time. Come, Jumbo, get up; Philotas, waken him, and follow me.”

Philotas, for so was the fool styled by his master, twisted up some straw, and stuffed the end of it into Jumbo’s mouth. “Now Jumbo will think he has got something to eat. I always wake him that way,” observed the fool, grinning at us.

It certainly, as might be expected, did waken Jumbo, who uncoiled himself, rubbed his eyes, stared at the tilt of the waggon, then at us, and without saying a word, rolled himself out after the fool. Timothy and I followed. We found the doctor bargaining for some bread and bacon, his strange appearance exciting much amusement, and inducing the people to let him have a better bargain than perhaps otherwise they would have done. He gave a part of the refreshment to the boy and the fool, and walked out of the tap-room with his own share. Timothy and I went to the pump, and had a good refreshing wash, and then for a shilling were permitted to make a very hearty breakfast. The waggon having remained about an hour, the driver gave as notice of his departure; but the doctor was nowhere to be found. After a little delay, the waggoner drove off, cursing him for a *bilk*, and vowing that he’d never have any more to do with a “lamed man.” In the mean time Timothy and I had taken our seats in the waggon, in company with the fool, and Master Jumbo. We commenced a conversation with the former, and soon found out, as the doctor had asserted, that he really was an idiot, so much so that it was painful to converse with him. As for the latter, he had coiled himself away to take a little more sleep. I forgot to mention, that the boy was dressed much in the same way as the fool, in an old spangled jacket, and dirty white trowsers. For about an hour Timothy and I conversed, remarking upon the strange disappearance of the doctor, especially as he had given us hopes of employing us; in accepting which offer, if ever it should be made, we had not made up our minds, when we were interrupted with a voice crying out, “Hillo, my man, can you give a chap a lift as far as Reading, for a shilling?”

“Ay, get up, and welcome,” replied the waggoner.

The waggon did not stop, but in a moment or two the new passenger climbed in. He was dressed in a clean smock frock, neatly worked up the front, leather gaiters, and stout shoes; a bundle and a stick were in his hand. He smiled as he looked round upon the company, and showed a beautiful set of teeth. His face was dark, and sun-burnt, but very handsome, and his eyes as black as coals, and as brilliant as gas. “Heh! player folk—I’ve a notion,” said he, as he sat down, looking at the doctor’s attendants, and laughing at us. “Have you come far, gentlemen?” continued he.

“From London,” was my reply.

“How do the crops look up above, for down here the turnips seem to have failed altogether? Dry seasons won’t do for turnips.”

I replied that I really could not satisfy him on that point, as it was dark when we passed.

“Very true—I had forgotten that,” replied he. “However, the barleys look well; but perhaps you don’t understand farming?”

I replied in the negative and the conversation was kept up for two or three hours, in the course of which I mentioned the quack doctor, and his strange departure.

“That is the fellow who cured so many people at —,” replied he; and the conversation then turned upon his profession and mode of life, which Timothy and I agreed must be very amusing. “We shall meet him again, I dare say,” replied the man. “Would you know him?”

“I think so, indeed,” replied Timothy, laughing.

“Yes, and so you would think that you would know a guinea from a halfpenny, if I put it into your hands,” replied the man. “I do not wish to lay a bet, and win your money; but I tell you, that I will put either the one or the other into each of your hands, and if you hold it fast for one minute, and shut your eyes during that time, you will not be able to tell me which it is that you have in it.”

“That I am sure I would,” replied Tim; and I made the same assertion.

“Well, I was taken in that way at a fair, and lost ten shillings by the wager; now, we’ll try whether you can tell or not.” He took out some money from his pocket, which he selected without our seeing it, put a coin into the hand of each of us, closing our fists over it, “and now,” said he, “keep your eyes shut for a minute.”

We did so, and a second or two afterwards we heard a voice which we instantly recognised. “Nay, but it was wrong to leave me on the way-side thus, having agreed to pay the sum demanded. At my age one walketh not without fatigue, ‘*Excipenda tamen quaedam sunt urbium,*’ as Philostratus says, meaning, ‘That old limbs lose their activity, and seek the help of a crutch.’”

“There’s the doctor,” cried Timothy, with his eyes still shut.

“Now open your eyes,” said the man, “and tell me, before you open your hand, what there is in it.”

“A halfpenny in mine,” said Tim.

“A guinea in mine,” replied I.

We opened our hands, and they were *empty*.

“Where the devil is it?” exclaimed I, looking at Tim.

“And where the devil’s the doctor?” replied he, looking round.

“The money is in the doctor’s pocket,” replied the man, smiling.

“Then where is the doctor’s pocket?”

“Here,” replied he, slapping his pocket, and looking significantly at us. “I thought you were certain of knowing him again. About as certain as you were of telling the money in your hand.”

He then, to our astonishment, imitated the doctor’s voice, and quoted *prosody, syntax, and Latin*. Timothy and I were still in astonishment, when he continued, “If I had not found out that you were in want of employ, and further, that your services would be useful to me, I should not have made this discovery. Do you now think that you know enough to enter into my service? It is light work, and not bad pay; and now you may choose.”

“I trust,” said I, “that there is no dishonesty?”

“None that you need practise, if you are so scrupulous: perhaps your scruples may some day be removed. I make the most of my wares—every merchant does the same. I practise upon the folly of mankind—it is on that, that wise men live.”

Timothy gave me a push, and nodded his head for me to give my consent. I reflected a few seconds, and at last I extended my hand. “I consent,” replied I, “with the reservation I have made.”

“You will not repent,” said he; “and I will take your companion, not that I want him particularly, but I do want you. The fact is, I want a lad of gentlemanly address, and handsome appearance—with the very knowledge you possess—and now we will say no more for the present. By-the-by, was that real Latin of yours?”

“No,” replied I, laughing; “you quoted the grammar, and I replied with medical prescriptions. One was as good as the other.”

“Quite—nay, better; for the school-boys may find me out, but not you. But now observe, when we come to the next cross-road, we must get down—at least, I expect so; but we shall know in a minute.”

In about the time he mentioned, a dark, gipsy-looking man looked into the waggon, and spoke to our acquaintance in an unknown language. He replied in the same, and the man disappeared. We continued our route for about a quarter of an hour, when he got out, asked us to follow him, and speaking a few words to the fool, which I did not hear, left him and the boy in the waggon. We paid our fare, took possession of our bundles, and followed our new companion for a few minutes on the cross-road, when he stopped, and said, “I must now leave you, to prepare for your reception into our fraternity; continue straight on this road until you arrive at a lime-kiln, and wait there till I come.”

He sprang over a stile, and took a direction verging at an angle from the road, forced his way through a hedge, and disappeared from our sight. “Upon my word, Timothy,” said I, “I hardly know

what to say to this. Have we done right in trusting to this man, who, I am afraid, is a great rogue? I do not much like mixing with these gipsy people, for such I am sure he belongs to.”

“I really, do not see how we can do better,” replied Timothy. “The world is all before us, and we must force our own way through it. As for his being a quack doctor, I see no great harm in that. People put their faith in nostrums more than they do in regular medicines; and it is well known that quack medicines, as they call them, cure as often as others, merely for that very reason.”

“Very true, Timothy; the mind once at ease, the body soon recovers, and faith, even in quack medicines, will often make people whole; but do you think that he does no more than impose upon people in that way?”

“He may, or he may not; at all events, we need do no more, I suppose.”

“I am not sure of that; however, we shall see. He says we may be useful to him, and I suppose we shall be, or he would not have engaged us—we shall soon find out.”

Part 1—Chapter X

In which the Reader is introduced to several new Acquaintances, and all connected with them, except Birth and Parentage, which appears to be the one thing wanting throughout the whole of this Work.

By this time we had arrived at the lime-kiln to which we had been directed, and we sat down on our bundles, chatting for about five minutes, when our new acquaintance made his appearance, with something in his hand, tied up in a handkerchief.

“You may as well put your coats into your bundles, and put on these frocks,” said he; “you will appear better among us, and be better received, for there is a *gathering* now, and some of them are queer customers. However, you have nothing to fear; when once you are with my wife and me, you are quite safe; her little finger would protect you from five hundred.”

“Your wife! who, then, is she?” inquired I, as I put my head through the smock frock.

“She is a great personage among the gipsies. She is, by descent, one of the heads of the tribe, and none dare to disobey her.”

“And you—are you a gipsy?”

“No, and yes. By birth I am not, but by choice, and marriage, I am admitted; but I was not born under a hedge, I can assure you, although I very often pass a night there now—that is, when I am domestic; but do not think that you are to remain long here; we shall leave in a few days, and may not meet the tribe again for months, although you may see my own family occasionally. I did not ask you to join me to pass a gipsy’s life—no, no, we must be stirring and active. Come, we are now close to them. Do not speak as you pass the huts, until you have entered mine. Then you may do as you please.”

We turned short round, passed through a gap in the hedge, and found ourselves on a small retired piece of common, which was studded with about twenty or thirty low gipsy huts. The fires were alight and provisions apparently cooking. We passed by nine or ten, and obeyed our guide’s injunctions to keep silence. At last we stopped, and perceived ourselves to be standing by the fool, who was dressed like us, in a smock frock, and Mr Jumbo, who was very busy making the pot boil, blowing at the sticks underneath till he was black in the face. Several of the men passed near us, and examined us with no very pleasant expression of countenance; and we were not sorry to see our conductor, who had gone into the hut, return, followed by a woman, to whom he was speaking in the language of the tribe. “Nattée bids you welcome,” said he, as she approached.

Never in my life will the remembrance of the first appearance of Nattée, and the effect it had upon me, be erased from my memory. She was tall, too tall, had it not been for the perfect symmetry of her form. Her face of a clear olive, and oval in shape; her eyes jetty black; nose straight, and beautifully formed; mouth small, thin lips, with a slight curl of disdain, and pearly teeth. I never beheld a woman of so commanding a presence. Her feet were bare, but very small, as well as her hands. On her fingers she wore many rings, of a curious old setting, and a piece of gold hung on her forehead, where the hair was parted. She looked at us, touched her high forehead with the ends of her fingers, and waving her hand gracefully, said, in a soft voice, “You are welcome,” and then turned to her husband, speaking to him in her own language, until by degrees they separated from us in earnest conversation.

She returned to us after a short time, without her husband, and said, in a voice, the notes of which were indeed soft, but the delivery of the words was most determined; “I have said that you are welcome; sit down, therefore, and share with us—fear nothing, you have no cause to fear. Be faithful, then, while you serve him; and when you would quit us, say so, and receive your leave to depart; but if you attempt to desert us without permission, then we shall suspect that you are our enemies,

and treat you accordingly. There is your lodging while here,” continued she, pointing to another hut. “There is but one child with you, his boy (pointing to Jumbo), who can lie at your feet. And now join us as friends. Fleta, where are you?”

A soft voice answered from the tent of Nattée, and soon afterwards came out a little girl, of about eleven years old. The appearance of this child was a new source of interest. She was a little fairy figure, with a skin as white as the driven snow—light auburn hair, and large blue eyes; her dress was scanty, and showed a large portion of her taper legs. She hastened to Nattée, and folding her arms across her breast, stood still, saying meekly, “I am here.”

“Know these as friends, Fleta. Send that lazy Num (this was Philotas, the fool,) for more wood, and see that Jumbo tends the fire.”

Nattée smiled, and left us. I observed she went to where forty or fifty of the tribe were assembled, in earnest discourse. She took her seat with them, and marked deference was paid to her. In the mean time Jumbo had blown up a brisk fire; we were employed by Fleta in shredding vegetables, which she threw into the boiling kettle. Num appeared with more fuel, and at last there was nothing more to do. Fleta sat down by us, and parting her long hair, which had fallen over her eyes, looked us both in the face.

“Who gave you that name, Fleta?” inquired I.

“They gave it me,” replied she.

“And who are they?”

“Nattée, and Melchior, her husband.”

“But you are not their daughter?”

“No, I am not—that is, I believe not.”

The little girl stopped short, as if assured that she had said too much, cast her eyes down on the ground, and folded her arms, so that her hands rested on each opposite shoulder.

Timothy whispered to me, “She must have been stolen, depend upon it.”

“Silence,” said I.

The little girl overheard him, and looking at him, put her finger across her mouth, looking to where Num and Jumbo were sitting. I felt an interest for this child before I had been an hour in her company; she was so graceful, so feminine, so mournful in the expression of her countenance. That she was under restraint was evident; but still she did not appear to be actuated by fear. Nattée was very kind to her, and the child did not seem to be more reserved towards her than to others; her mournful, pensive look, was perhaps inherent to her nature. It was not until long after our first acquaintance that I ever saw a smile upon her features. Shortly after this little conversation, Nattée returned, walking with all the grace and dignity of a queen. Her husband, or Melchior, as I shall in future call him, soon joined us, and we sat down to our repast, which was excellent. It was composed of almost everything; sometimes I found myself busy with the wing of a fowl, at another, the leg of a rabbit—then a piece of mutton, or other flesh and fowl, which I could hardly distinguish. To these were added every sort of vegetable, among which potatoes predominated, forming a sort of stew, which an epicure might have praised. I had a long conversation with Melchior in the evening; and, not to weary the reader, I shall now proceed to state all that I then and subsequently gathered from him and others, relative to the parties with whom we were associating.

Melchior would not state who and what he was previous to his having joined the fraternity of gipsies; that he was not of humble birth, and that he had, when young, quitted his friends out of love for Nattée, or from some other causes not to be revealed, he led me to surmise. He had been many years in company with the tribe, and although, as one received into it, he did not stand so high in rank and estimation as his wife, still, from his marriage with Nattée, and his own peculiar qualifications and dexterity, he was almost as absolute as she was.

Melchior and Nattée were supposed to be the most wealthy of all the gipsies, and, at the same time, they were the most liberal of their wealth. Melchior, it appeared, gained money in three different

characters; as a quack doctor, the character in which we first saw him; secondly, as a juggler, in which art he was most expert; and, thirdly, as a fortune-teller, and *wise man*.

Nattée, as I before mentioned, was of very high rank, or caste, in her tribe. At her first espousal of Melchior she lost much of her influence, as it was considered a degradation; but she was then very young, and must have been most beautiful. The talents of Melchior, and her own spirit, however, soon enabled her to regain, and even add still more to, her power and consideration among the tribe; and it was incredible to what extent, with the means which she possessed, this power was augmented.

Melchior had no children by his marriage, and, as far as I could judge from the few words which would escape from the lips of Nattée, she did not wish for any, as the race would not be considered pure. The subdivision of the tribe which followed Nattée consisted of about forty men, women, and children. These were ruled by her during the absence of her husband, who alternately assumed different characters, as suited his purpose; but in whatever town Melchior might happen to be, Nattée and her tribe were never far off, and always encamped within communication.

I ventured to question Melchior about the little Fleta; and he stated that she was the child of a soldier's wife, who had been brought to bed, and died a few hours afterwards; that, at the time, she was on her way to join her husband, and had been taken ill on the road—had been assisted by Nattée and her companions, as far as they were able—had been buried by them, and that the child had been reared in the camp.

In time, the little girl became very intimate, and very partial to me. I questioned her as to her birth, telling her what Melchior had stated: for a long while she would not answer; the poor child had learned caution even at that early age; but after we were more intimate, she said, that which Melchior had stated was *not true*. She could recollect very well living in a great house, with everything very fine about her; but still it appeared as if it were a dream. She recollected two white ponies—and a lady who was her mamma—and a mulberry-tree, where she stained her frock; sometimes other things came to her memory, and then she forgot them again. From this it was evident that she had been stolen, and was probably of good parentage; certainly, if elegance and symmetry of person and form could prove blood, it never was more marked than in this interesting child. Her abode with the gipsies, and their peculiar mode of life and manners, had rendered her astonishingly precocious in intellect; but of education she had none, except what was instilled into her by Melchior whom she always accompanied when he assumed his character as a juggler. She then danced on the slack wire, at the same time performing several feats in balancing, throwing of oranges, etcetera. When Melchior was under other disguises, she remained in the camp with Nattée.

Of Num, or Philotas, as Melchior thought proper to call him, I have already spoken. He was a half-witted idiot, picked up in one of Melchior's excursions; and as he stated to me, so did it prove to be the fact, that when on the stage, and questioned as a fool, his natural folly, and idiotical vacancy of countenance, were applauded by the spectators as admirably assumed. Even at the alehouses and taverns where we stopped, everyone imagined that all his folly was pretence, and looked upon him as a very clever fellow. There never was, perhaps, such a lachrymose countenance as this poor lad's; and this added still more to the mirth of others, being also considered as put on for the occasion. Stephen Kemble played Falstaff without stuffing—Num played the fool without any effort or preparation. Jumbo was also "picked up;" this was not done by Melchior, who stated, that anybody might have him who claimed him; he tumbled with the fool upon the stage, and he also ate pudding to amuse the spectators—the only part of the performance which was suited to Jumbo's taste, for he was a terrible little glutton, and never lost any opportunity of eating, as well as of sleeping.

And now, having described all our new companions, I must narrate what passed between Melchior and me, the day after our joining the camp. He first ran through his various professions, pointing out to me that as juggler he required a confederate, in which capacity I might be very useful, as he would soon instruct me in all his tricks. As a quack doctor he wanted the services of both Tim and myself in mixing up, making pills, etcetera, and also in assisting him in persuading the public

of his great skill. As a fortune-teller, I should also be of great service, as he would explain to me hereafter. In short, he wanted a person of good personal appearance and education, in whom he might confide in every way. As to Tim, he might be made useful, if he chose, in various ways; amongst others, he wished him to learn tumbling and playing the fool, when, at times, the fool was required to give a shrewd answer on any point on which he would wish the public to be made acquainted. I agreed to my own part of the performance, and then had some conversation with Timothy, who immediately consented to do his best in what was allotted as his share. Thus was the matter quickly arranged, Melchior observing, that he had said nothing about remuneration, as I should find that trusting to him was far preferable to stipulated wages.

Part 1—Chapter XI

Whatever may be the Opinion of the Reader, he cannot assert that we are no Conjurors—We suit our wares to our Customers, and our Profits are considerable.

We had been three days in the camp when the gathering was broken up, each gang taking their own way. What the meeting was about I could not exactly discover: one occasion of it was to make arrangements relative to the different counties in which the subdivisions were to sojourn during the next year, so that they might know where to communicate with each other, and, at the same time, not interfere by being too near; but there were many other points discussed, of which, as a stranger, I was kept in ignorance. Melchior answered all my questions with apparent candour, but his habitual deceit was such, that whether he told the truth or not was impossible to be ascertained by his countenance.

When the gathering dispersed we packed up, and located ourselves about two miles from the common, on the borders of a forest of oak and ash. Our food was chiefly game, for we had some excellent poachers among us; and as for fish, it appeared to be at their command; there was not a pond or a pit but they could tell in a moment if it were tenanted, and if tenanted, in half an hour every fish would be floating on the top of the water, by the throwing in of some intoxicating sort of berry; other articles of food occasionally were found in the caldron; indeed, it was impossible to fare better than we did, or at less expense.

Our tents were generally pitched not far from a pool of water, and to avoid any unpleasant search, which sometimes would take place, everything liable to detection was sunk under the water until it was required for cooking; once in the pot, it was considered as safe. But with the foraging, Timothy and I had nothing to do; we participated in the eating, without asking any questions as to how it was procured.

My time was chiefly spent in company with Melchior, who initiated me into all the mysteries of cups and balls—juggling of every description—feats with cards, and made me acquainted with all his apparatus for prepared tricks. For hours and hours was I employed by his directions in what is called “making the pass” with a pack of cards, as almost all tricks on cards depend upon your dexterity in this manoeuvre. In about a month I was considered as a very fair adept; in the mean time, Timothy had to undergo his career of gymnastics, and was to be seen all day tumbling and re-tumbling, until he could tumble on his feet again. Light and active, he soon became a very dexterous performer, and could throw a somerset either backwards or forwards, walk on his hands, eat fire, pull out ribands, and do fifty other tricks to amuse a gaping audience. Jumbo also was worked hard, to bring down his fat, and never was allowed his dinner until he had given satisfaction to Melchior. Even little Fleta had to practise occasionally, as we were preparing for an expedition. Melchior, who appeared determined to create an effect, left us for three days, and returned with not only dresses for Timothy and me, but also new dresses for the rest of the company and shortly afterwards, bidding farewell to Nattée and the rest of the gipsies, we all set out—that is, Melchior, I, Timothy, Fleta, Num, and Jumbo. Late in the evening we arrived at the little town of —, and took up our quarters at a public-house, with the landlord of which Melchior had already made arrangements.

“Well, Timothy,” said I, as soon as we were in bed, “how do you like our new life and prospects?”

“I like it better than Mr Cophagus’s *rudimans*, and carrying out physic, at all events. But how does your dignity like turning Merry Andrew, Japhet?”

“To tell you the truth, I do not dislike it. There is a wildness and a devil-may-care feeling connected with it which is grateful to me at present. How long it may last I cannot tell; but for a year or two it appears to me that we may be very happy. At all events, we shall see the world, and have more than one profession to fall back upon.”

“That is true; but there is one thing that annoys me, Japhet, which is, we may have difficulty in leaving these people when we wish. Besides, you forget that you are losing sight of the principal object you had in view, that is, of finding out your father.”

“I certainly never expect to find him among the gipsies,” replied I, “for children are at a premium with them. They steal from others, and are not very likely therefore to leave them at the Foundling. But I do not know whether I have not as good a chance in our present employment as in any other. I have often been thinking that as fortune-tellers we may get hold of many strange secrets; however, we shall see. Melchior says, that he intends to appear in that character as soon as he has made a harvest in his present one.”

“What do you think of Melchior, now that you have been so much with him?”

“I think him an unprincipled man, but still with many good qualities. He appears to have a pleasure in deceit, and to have waged war with the world in general. Still he is generous, and, to a certain degree, confiding; kind in his disposition, and apparently a very good husband. There is something on his mind which weighs him down occasionally, and checks him in the height of his mirth. It comes over him like a dark cloud over a bright summer sun; and he is all gloom for a few minutes. I do not think that he would *now* commit any great crime; but I have a suspicion that he has done something which is a constant cause of remorse.”

“You are a very good judge of character, Japhet. But what a dear little child is that Fleta! She may exclaim with you—Who is my father?”

“Yes, we are both in much the same predicament, and that it is which I believe has so much increased my attachment to her. We are brother and sister in misfortune, and a sister she ever shall be to me, if such is the will of Heaven. But we must rise early to-morrow, Tim; so good night.”

“Yes, to-morrow it will be juggle and tumble—eat fire—um—and so on, as Mr Cophagus would have said; so good night, Japhet.”

The next morning we arrayed ourselves in our new habiliments; mine were silk stockings, shoes, and white kerseymere knee'd breeches, a blue silk waistcoat loaded with tinsel, and a short jacket to correspond of blue velvet, a sash round my waist, a hat and a plume of feathers. Timothy declared I looked very handsome, and as the glass said the same as plain as it could speak, I believed him. Timothy's dress was a pair of wide Turkish trowsers and red jacket, with spangles. The others were much the same. Fleta was attired in small white satin Turkish trowsers, blue muslin and silver embroidered frock, worked sandals, and her hair braided and plaited in long tails behind, and she looked like a little sylph. Melchior's dress was precisely the same as mine, and a more respectable company was seldom seen. Some musicians had been hired, and handbills were now circulated all over the town, stating that Signor Eugenio Velotti, with his company, would have the honour of performing before the nobility and gentry. The bill contained the fare which was to be provided, and intimated the hour of the performance, and the prices to be paid for the seats. The performance was to take place in a very large room attached to the inn, which, previous to the decadence of the town, had been used as an assembly-room. A platform was erected on the outside, on which were placed the musicians, and where we all occasionally made our appearance in our splendid dresses to attract the wonder of the people. There we strutted up and down, all but poor little Fleta, who appeared to shrink at the display, from intuitive modesty. When the music ceased, a smart parley between Melchior and me, and Philotas and Timothy, as the two fools, would take place; and Melchior declared, after the performance was over, that we conducted ourselves to admiration.

“Pray, Mr Philotas, do me the favour to tell me how many people you think are now present?” said Melchior to Num, in an imperative voice.

“I don't know,” said Num, looking up with his idiotical, melancholy face.

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared the crowd at Num's stupid answer.

“The fellow's a fool!” said Melchior, to the gaping audience.

“Well, then, if he can't tell; perhaps you may, Mr Dionysius,” said I, addressing Tim.

“How many, sir? Do you want to know exactly and directly?”

“Yes, sir, immediately.”

“Without counting, sir?”

“Yes, sir, without counting.”

“Well then, sir, I will tell, and make no mistake; there’s *exactly as many again as half*.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” from the crowd.

“That won’t do, sir. How many may be the half?”

“How many may be the half? Do you know yourself, sir?”

“Yes, sir, to be sure I do.”

“Then there’s no occasion for me to tell you.”

“Ha! ha! ha!”

“Well then, sir,” continued Melchior to Philotas, “perhaps you’ll tell how many ladies and gentlemen we may expect to honour us with their company to-night.”

“How many, sir?”

“Yes, sir, how many?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” said Num, after a pause.

“Positively you are the greatest fool I ever met with,” said Melchior.

“Well, he does act the fool as natural as life,” observed the crowd. “What a stupid face he does put on!”

“Perhaps you will be able to answer that question. Mr Dionysius,” said I to Tim.

“Yes, sir, I know exactly.”

“Well, sir, let’s hear.”

“In the first place, all the pretty women will come, and all the ugly ones stay away; and as for the men, all those who have got any money will be certain to come; those who hav’n’t, poor devils, must stay outside.”

“Suppose, sir, you make a bow to the ladies.”

“A very low one, sir?”

“Yes, very low indeed.”

Tim bent his body to the ground, and threw a somerset forward. “There, sir; I bowed so low, that I came up on the other side.”

“Ha! ha! capital!” from the crowd.

“I’ve got a round turn in my back, sir,” continued Tim, rubbing himself. “Hadn’t I better take it out again?”

“By all means.”

Tim threw a somerset backwards. “There, sir, all’s right now. One good turn deserves another. Now I’ll be off.”

“Where are you going to, sir?”

“Going sir! Why, I left my lollipop in the tinder-box, and I’m going to fetch it.”

“Ha! ha! ha!”

“Strike up, music!” and Master Jumbo commenced tumbling.

Such was the elegant wit with which we amused and attracted the audience. Perhaps, had we been more refined, we should not have been so successful.

That evening we had the room as full as it could hold. Signor Velotti *alias* Melchior astonished them. The cards appeared to obey his commands—rings were discovered in lady’s shoes—watches were beat to a powder and made whole—canary birds flew out of eggs. The audience were delighted. The entertainment closed with Fleta’s performance on the slack wire; and certainly never was there anything more beautiful and graceful. Balanced on the wire in a continual, waving motion, her eyes fixed upon a point to enable her to maintain her position, she performed several feats, such as the playing with five oranges, balancing swords, etcetera. Her extreme beauty—her very picturesque and

becoming dress—her mournful expression and downcast eyes—her gentle manner, appeared to win the hearts of the audience; and when she was assisted off from her perilous situation by Melchior and me, and made her graceful courtesy, the plaudits were unanimous.

When the company dispersed I went to her, intending to praise her, but I found her in tears. “What is the matter, my dear Fleta?”

“O nothing! don’t say I have been crying—but I cannot bear it—so many people looking at me. Don’t say a word to Melchior—I won’t cry any more.”

Part 1—Chapter XII

It is very easy to humbug those who are so eager to be humbugged as people are in this World of Humbug—We show ourselves excessively disinterested, which astonishes everybody.

I kissed and consoled her; she threw her arm round my neck, and remained there with her face hid for some time. We then joined the others at supper. Melchior was much pleased with our success, and highly praised the conduct of Timothy and myself, which he pronounced was, for the first attempt, far beyond his expectations.

We continued to astonish all the good people of – for five days, when we discovered the indubitable fact, that there was no more money to be extracted from their pockets, upon which we resumed our usual clothes and smock-frocks and with our bundles in our hands, set off for another market town, about fifteen miles distant. There we were equally successful, and Melchior was delighted with our having proved such a powerful acquisition to his troop; but not to dwell too long upon one subject, I shall inform the reader that, after a trip of six weeks, during which we were very well received, we once more returned to the camp, which had located within five miles of our last scene of action. Everyone was content—we were all glad to get back and rest from our labours. Melchior was pleased with his profits, poor little Fleta overjoyed to be once more in the seclusion of her tent, and Nattée very glad to hear of our good fortune, and to see her husband. Timothy and I had already proved ourselves so useful, that Melchior treated us with the greatest friendship and confidence—and he made us a present out of the gains, for our exertions; to me he gave ten, and to Timothy five, pounds.

“There, Japhet, had you hired yourself I should not have paid you more than seven shillings per week, finding you in food; but you must acknowledge that for six weeks that is not bad pay. However, your earnings will depend upon our success, and I rather think that we shall make a much better thing of it when next we start, which will be in about a fortnight; but we have some arrangements to make. Has Timothy a good memory?”

“I think he has.”

“That is well. I told you before that we are to try the ‘Wise Man,’—but first we must have Nattée in play. To-morrow we will start for —,” mentioning a small quiet town about four miles off.

We did so, early the next morning, and arrived about noon, pitching our tents on the common, not far from the town; but in this instance we left all the rest of our gang behind. Melchior’s own party and his two tents were all that were brought by the donkeys.

Melchior and I, dressed as countrymen, went into the town at dusk, and entered a respectable sort of inn, taking our seats at one of the tables in the tap-room, and, as we had already planned, after we had called for beer, commenced a conversation in the hearing of the others who were sitting drinking and smoking.

“Well, I never will believe it—it’s all cheat and trickery,” said Melchior, “and they only do it to pick your pocket. Tell your fortune, indeed! I suppose she promised you a rich wife and half-a-dozen children.”

“No, she did not,” replied I, “for I am too young to marry; but she told me what I know has happened.”

“Well, what was that?”

“Why, she told me that my mother had married again, and turned me out of doors to work for my bread.”

“But she might have heard that.”

“How could she? No, that’s not possible; but she told me I had a mole on my knee, which was a sign of luck. Now how could she know that?”

“Well, I grant that was odd—and pray what else did she promise you?”

“Why, she said that I should meet with my dearest friend to-night. Now that does puzzle me, for I have but one in the world, and he is a long way off.”

“Well, if you do meet your friend, then I’ll believe her; but if not, it has been all guess work; and pray what did you pay for all this—was it a shilling, or did she pick your pocket?”

“That’s what puzzles me,—she refused to take anything. I offered it again and again, and she said, ‘No; that she would have no money—that her gift was not to be sold.’”

“Well, that is odd. Do you hear what this young man says?” said Melchior, addressing the others, who had swallowed every word.

“Yes,” replied one; “but who is this person?”

“The queen of the gipsies, I am told. I never saw such a wonderful woman in my life—her eye goes right through you. I met her on the common, and, as she passed, she dropped a handkerchief. I ran back to give it her, and then she thanked me and said, ‘Open your hand and let me see the palm. Here are great lines, and you will be fortunate;’ and then she told me a great deal more, and bid God bless me.”

“Then if she said that, she cannot have dealings with the *devil*,” observed Melchior.

“Very odd—very strange—take no money—queen of the gipsies,” was echoed from all sides.

The landlady and the bar-maid listened with wonder, when who should come in, as previously agreed, but Timothy. I pretended not to see him; but he came up to me, seizing me by the hand, and shaking it with apparent delight, and crying, “Wilson, have you forgot Smith?”

“Smith!” cried I, looking earnestly in his face. “Why so it is. How came you here?”

“I left Dublin three days ago,” replied he; “but how I came here into this house, is one of the strangest things that ever occurred. I was walking over the common, when a tall handsome woman looked at me, and said, ‘Young man, if you will go into the third public-house you pass, you will meet an old friend, who expects you.’ I thought she was laughing at me; but as it mattered very little in which house I passed the night, I thought, for the fun of the thing, I might as well take her advice.”

“How strange!” cried Melchior, “and she told him the same—that is, he would meet a friend.”

“Strange—very strange—wonderful—astonishing!” was echoed from all quarters, and the fame of the gipsy was already established.

Timothy and I sat down together, conversing as old friends, and Melchior went about from one to the other, narrating the wonderful occurrence till past midnight, when we all three took beds at the inn, as if we were travellers.

The report which we had circulated that evening induced many people to go out to see Nattée, who appeared to take no notice of them; and when asked to tell fortunes, waved them away with her hand. But, although this plan of Melchior’s was, for the first two or three days, very expedient, yet, as it was not intended to last, Timothy, who remained with me at the inn, became very intimate with the bar-maid, and obtained from her most of the particulars of her life. I, also, from repeated conversations with the landlady, received information very important, relative to herself and many of the families in the town, but as the employment of Nattée was for an ulterior object, we contented ourselves with gaining all the information we could before we proceeded further. After we had been there a week, and the fame of the gipsy woman had been marvellously increased—many things having been asserted of her which were indeed truly improbable—Melchior agreed that Timothy should persuade the bar-maid to try if the gipsy woman would tell her fortune: the girl, with some trepidation agreed, but at the same time, expecting to be refused, consented to walk with him over the common. Timothy advised her to pretend to pick up a sixpence when near to Nattée, and ask her if it did not belong to her; and the bar-maid acted upon his suggestions, having just before that quitted the arm of Timothy, who had conducted her.

“Did you drop a sixpence? I have picked up one,” said the girl, trembling with fear as she addressed Nattée.

“Child,” replied Nattée, who was prepared, “I have neither dropped a sixpence nor have you found one—but never mind that, I know that which you wish, and I know who you are. Now what would you with me? Is it to inquire whether the landlord and landlady of the Golden Lion intend to keep you in their service?”

“No,” replied this girl, frightened at what she heard; “not to inquire that, but to ask what my fortune will be?”

“Open your palm, pretty maid, and I will tell you. Hah! I see that you were born in the West—your father is dead—your mother is in service—and let me see,—you have a brother at sea—now in the West Indies.”

At this intelligence, all of which, as may be supposed, had been gathered by us, the poor girl was so frightened that she fell down in a swoon, and Timothy carried her off. When she was taken home to the inn, she was so ill that she was put into bed, and what she did say was so incoherent, that, added to Timothy’s narrative, the astonishment of the landlady and others was beyond all bounds. I tried very hard to bring the landlady, but she would not consent; and now Nattée was pestered by people of higher condition, who wished to hear what she would say. Here Nattée’s power were brought into play. She would not refuse to see them, but would not give answers till she had asked question and, as from us she had gleaned much general information, so by making this knowledge appear in her questions to them, she made them believe she knew more. If a young person came to her, she would immediately ask the name—of that name she had all the references acquired from us as to family and connexions. Bearing upon them, she would ask a few more, and then give them an abrupt dismissal.

This behaviour was put up with from one of her commanding presence, who refused money, and treated those who accosted her as if she was their superior. Many came again and again, telling her all they knew, and acquainting her with every transaction of their life, to induce her to prophesy, for such, she informed them, was the surest way to call the spirit upon her. By these means we obtained the secret history of the major part, that is, the wealthier part of the town of —; and although the predictions of Nattée were seldom given, yet when given, they were given with such perfect and apparent knowledge of the parties, that when she left, which she did about six weeks after her first appearance, the whole town rang with accounts of her wonderful powers.

It will appear strange that Melchior would not permit Nattée to reap a harvest, which might have been great; but the fact was that he only allowed the seed to be sown that a greater harvest might be gathered hereafter. Nattée disappeared, the gipsies’ tent was no longer on the common, and the grass, which had been beaten down into a road by the feet of the frequent applicants to her, was again permitted to spring up. We also took our departure, and rejoined the camp with Nattée, where we remained for a fortnight, to permit the remembrance of her to subside a little—knowing that the appetite was alive, and would not be satisfied until it was appeased.

After that time Melchior, Timothy, and I, again set off for the town of —, and stopping at a superior inn in another part of the town, dressed as travellers, that is, people who go about the country for orders from the manufacturers, ordered our beds and supper in the coffee-room. The conversation was soon turned upon the wonderful powers of Nattée, the gipsy. “Nonsense,” said Melchior, “she knows nothing. I have heard of her. But there’s a man coming this way (should he happen to pass through this town) who will surprise and frighten you. No one knows who he is. He is named the Great Aristodemus. He knows the past, the present, and the future. He never looks at people’s hands—he only looks you in the face, and *woe be to them who tell him a lie*. Otherwise, he is good-tempered and obliging, and will tell what will come to pass, and his predictions never have been known to fail. They say that he is hundreds of years old, and his hair is while as silver.” At this information many expressed their doubts, and many others vaunted the powers of the gipsy. Melchior replied, “that all he knew was, that for the sum of two guineas paid down, he had told him of a legacy left him of

six hundred pounds, which otherwise he would never have known of or received.” All the town of – being quite alive for fortune-telling, this new report gained wind, and after a week’s sojourn, Melchior thought that the attempt should be made.

Part 1—Chapter XIII

The Seed having been carefully sown, we now reap a golden Harvest—We tell everyone what they knew before, and we are looked upon as most marvellous by most marvellous fools.

We accordingly packed up and departed to another market town. Timothy dressed in a sombre suit of black, very much like an undertaker, was provided with a horse, with the following directions: to proceed leisurely until he was within half a mile of the town of—, and then to gallop in as fast as he could, stop at the best inn in the place, and order apartments for the Great Aristodemus, who might be expected in half an hour. Everything in this world depends upon appearances, that is, when you intend to gull it; and as everyone in the town had heard of the Great Aristodemus, so everyone was anxious to know something about him, and Timothy was pestered with all manner of questions; but he declared that he was only his courier, and could only tell what other people said; but then what other people said, by Timothy's account, was very marvellous indeed. Timothy had hardly time to secure the best rooms in the hotel, when Melchior, dressed in a long flowing silk gown, with a wig of long white hair, a square cap, and two or three gold chains hanging from his neck, certainly most admirably disguised, and attended by me in the dress of a German student, a wig of long brown locks hanging down my shoulders, made our appearance in a post-chaise and four, and drove up to the door of the inn, at a pace which shook every house in the street, and occasioned every window to be tenanted with one or more heads to ascertain the cause of this unusual occurrence, for it was not a very great town, although once of importance; but the manufactures had been removed, and it was occupied by those who had become independent by their own exertions, or by those of their forefathers.

The door of the chaise was opened by the obsequious Timothy, who pushed away the ostlers and waiters, as if unworthy to approach his master, and the Great Aristodemus made his appearance. As he ascended the steps of the door, his passage was for a moment barred by one whose profession Melchior well knew. "Stand aside, exciseman!" said he, in a commanding voice. "No one crosses my path with impunity." Astonished at hearing his profession thus mentioned, the exciseman, who was the greatest bully in the town, slipped on one side with consternation, and all those present lifted up their eyes and hands with astonishment. The Great Aristodemus gained his room, and shut his door; and I went out to pay for the chaise and order supper, while Timothy and the porters were busy with our luggage, which was very considerable.

"My master will not see anyone," said I to the landlord: "he quits this town to-morrow, if the letters arrive which he expects by the post; therefore, pray get rid of this crowd, and let him be quiet, for he is very tired, having travelled one hundred and fifty miles since the dawn of day."

When Tim and I had performed this duty, we joined Melchior in his room, leaving the news to be circulated. "This promises well," observed Melchior; "up to the present we have expended much time and money; now we must see if we cannot recover it tenfold. Japhet, you must take an opportunity of going out again after supper, and make inquiries of the landlord what poor people they have in the town, as I am very generous, and like to relieve them; you may observe, that all the money offered to me for practising my art, I give away to the poor, having no occasion for it." This I did, and we then sat down to supper, and having unpacked our baggage, went to bed, after locking the door of the room, and taking out the key.

The next morning we had everything in readiness, and as the letters, as the reader may suppose, did not arrive by the post, we were obliged to remain, and the landlord ventured to hint to me, that several people were anxious to consult my master. I replied, that I would speak to him, but it was necessary to caution those who came, that they must either offer gold—or nothing at all. I brought his consent to see one or two, but no more. Now, although we had various apparatus to use, when

required, it was thought that the effect would be greater, if, in the first instance, everything was simple. Melchior, therefore, remained sitting at the table, which was covered with a black cloth, worked with curious devices, and a book of hieroglyphics before him, and an ivory wand, tipped with gold lying by the book. Timothy standing at the door, with a short Roman sword buckled round his belt, and I, in a respectful attitude, behind the Great Aristodemus.

The first person who was admitted was the lady of the mayor of the town; nothing could be more fortunate, as we had every information relative to her and her spouse, for people in high places are always talked of. Aristodemus waved his hand, and I brought forward a chair in silence, and motioned that she should be seated. Aristodemus looked her in her face, and then turned over several leaves, until he fixed upon a page, which he considered attentively. “Mayoress of—, what wouldst thou with me?”

She started, and turned pale. “I would ask—”

“I know; thou wouldst ask many things, perhaps, had I time to listen. Amongst others thou wouldst ask if there is any chance of thy giving an heir to thy husband. Is it not so?”

“Yes, it is,” replied the lady, fetching her breath.

“So do I perceive by this book; but let me put one question to thee. Wouldst thou have blessings showered on thee, yet do no good? Thou art wealthy—yet what dost thou and thy husband do with these riches? Are ye liberal? No. Give, and it shall be given. I have said.”

Aristodemus waved his hand, and the lady rose to withdraw. A guinea was in her fingers, and her purse in her hand; she took out four more, and added them to the other, and laid them on the table.

“’Tis well, lady; charity shall plead for thee. Artolphe, let that money be distributed among the poor.”

I bowed in silence, and the lady retired.

“Who will say that I do no good,” observed Melchior, smiling, as soon as she was gone. “Her avarice and that of her husband are as notorious as their anxiety for children. Now, if I persuade them to be liberal, I do service.”

“But you have given her hopes.”

“I have, and the very hope will do more to further their wishes than anything else. It is despair which too often prevents those who have no children from having any. How often do you see a couple, who, after years waiting for children, have at last given up their hope, and resigned themselves to the dispensations of Providence, and then, when their anxiety has subsided, have obtained a family? Japhet, I am a shrewd observer of human nature.”

“That I believe,” replied I; “but I do not believe your last remark to be correct—but Timothy raps at the door.”

Another lady entered the room, and then started back, as if she would retreat, so surprised was she at the appearance of the Great Aristodemus; but as Timothy had turned the key, her escape was impossible. She was unknown to us, which was rather awkward; but Melchior raised his eyes from his book, and waved his hand as before, that she should be seated. With some trepidation she stated that she was a widow, whose dependence was upon an only son now at sea; that she had not heard of him for a long while, and was afraid that some accident had happened; that she was in the greatest distress—“and,” continued she, “I have nothing to offer but this ring. Can you tell me if he is yet alive?” cried she, bursting into tears; “but if you have not the art you pretend to, O do not rob a poor, friendless creature, but let me depart!”

“When did you receive your last letter from him?” said Melchior.

“It is now seven months—dated from Bahia,” replied she, pulling it out of her reticule, and covering her face with her handkerchief.

Melchior caught the address, and then turned the letter over on the other side, as it lay on the table. “Mrs Watson,” said he.

“Heavens! do you know my name?” cried the woman.

“Mrs Watson, I do not require to read your son’s letter—I know its contents.” He then turned over his book, and studied for a few seconds. “Your son is alive.”

“Thank God!” cried she, clasping her hands, and dropping her reticule.

“But you must not expect his return too soon—he is well employed.”

“Oh! I care not—he is alive—he is alive! God bless you—God bless you!”

Melchior made a sign to me, pointing to the five guineas and the reticule; and I contrived to slip them into her reticule, while she sobbed in her handkerchief.

“Enough, madam; you must go, for others require my aid.”

The poor woman rose, and offered the ring.

“Nay, nay, I want not thy money; I take from the rich, that I may distribute to the poor—but not from the widow in affliction. Open thy bag.” The widow took up her bag, and opened it. Melchior dropped in the ring, taking his wand from the table, waved it, and touched the bag. “As thou art honest, so may thy present wants be relieved. Seek, and thou shalt find.”

The widow left the room with tears of gratitude; and I must say, that I was affected with the same. When she had gone, I observed to Melchior, that up to the present he had toiled for nothing.

“Very true, Japhet; but depend upon it, if I assisted that poor woman from no other feelings than interested motives, I did well; but I tell thee candidly, I did it from compassion. We are odd mixtures of good and evil. I wage war with fools and knaves, but not with all the world. I gave that money freely—she required it; and it may be put as a set-off against my usual system of fraud, or it may not—at all events, I pleased myself.”

“But you told her that her son was alive.”

“Very true, and he may be dead; but is it not well to comfort her—even for a short time, to relieve that suspense which is worse than the actual knowledge of his death? Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.”

It would almost have appeared that this good action of Melchior met with its reward, for the astonishment of the widow at finding the gold in her reticule—her narrative of what passed, and her assertion (which she firmly believed to be true), that she had never left her reticule out of her hand, and that Melchior had only touched it with his wand, raised his reputation to that degree, that nothing else was talked about throughout the town, and, to crown all, the next day’s post brought her a letter and remittances from her son; and the grateful woman returned, and laid ten guineas on the black cloth, showering a thousand blessings upon Melchior, and almost worshipped him as a supernatural being. This was a most fortunate occurrence, and as Melchior prophesied, the harvest did now commence. In four days we had received upwards of 200 pounds, and we then thought it time that we should depart. The letters arrived, which were expected; and when we set on in a chaise and four, the crowd to see us was so great, that it was with difficulty we could pass through it.

Part 1—Chapter XIV

In which Melchior talks very much like an Astrologer, and Tim and I return to our old Trade of making up innocent Prescriptions.

We had taken our horses for the next town; but as soon as we were fairly on the road, I stopped the boys, and told them that the Great Aristodemus intended to observe the planets, and, stars that night, and that they were to proceed to a common which I mentioned. The post-boys, who were well aware of his fame, and as fully persuaded of it as everybody else, drove to the common; we descended, took off the luggage, and received directions from Melchior in their presence about the instruments, to which the boys listened with open mouths and wonderment. I paid them well, and told them they might return, which they appeared very glad to do. They reported what had occurred, and this simple method of regaining our camp, added to the astonishment of the good town of —. When they were out of sight we resumed our usual clothes, packed all up, carried away most of our effects, and hid the others in the furze to be sent for the next night, not being more than two miles from the camp. We soon arrived, and were joyfully received by Fleta and Nattée.

As we walked across the common, I observed to Melchior, “I wonder if these stars have any influence upon mortals, as it was formerly supposed?”

“Most assuredly they have,” rejoined Melchior. “I cannot read them, but I firmly believe in them.”

I made the above remark, as I had often thought that such was Melchior’s idea.

“Yes,” continued he, “every man has his destiny—such must be the case. It is known beforehand what is to happen to us by an Omniscient Being, and being known, what is it but destiny which cannot be changed? It is *fate*,” continued he, surveying the stars with his hand raised up, “and that fate is as surely written there as the sun shines upon us; but the great book is sealed, because it would not add to our happiness.”

“If, then, all is destiny, or fate, what inducement is there to do well or ill?” replied I. “We may commit all acts of evil, and say, that as it was predestined, we could not help it. Besides, would it be just that the Omniscient Being should punish us for those crimes which we cannot prevent, and which are allotted to us by destiny?”

“Japhet, you argue well; but you are in error, because, like most of those of the Christian church, you understand not the sacred writings, nor did I until I knew my wife. Her creed is, I believe, correct; and what is more, adds weight to the truths of the Bible.”

“I thought that gipsies had no religion.”

“You are not the only one who supposes so. It is true that the majority of the tribe are held by the higher castes as serfs, and are not instructed; but with—if I may use the expression—the aristocracy of them it is very different, and their creed I have adopted.”

“I should wish to hear their creed,” replied I.

“Hear it then. Original sin commenced in heaven—when the angels rebelled against their God—not on earth.”

“I will grant that sin originated first in heaven.”

“Do you think that a great, a good God, ever created any being for its destruction and eternal misery, much less an angel? Did he not foresee their rebellion?”

“I grant it.”

“This world was not peopled with the image of God until after the fall of the angels: it had its living beings, its monsters perhaps, but not a race of men with eternal souls. But it was peopled, as we see it now is, to enable the legions of angels who fell to return to their former happy state—as a pilgrimage by which they might obtain their pardons, and resume their seats in heaven. Not a child is

born, but the soul of some fallen cherub enters into the body to work out its salvation. Many do, many do not, and then they have their task to recommence anew; for the spirit once created is immortal, and cannot be destroyed; and the Almighty is all goodness, and would ever pardon.”

“Then you suppose there is no such thing as eternal punishment.”

“Eternal!—no. Punishment there is, but not eternal. When the legions of angels fell, some were not so perverse as others: they soon re-obtained their seats, even when, as children, having passed through the slight ordeal, they have been summoned back to heaven; but others who, from their infancy, show how bad were their natures, have many pilgrimages to perform before they can be purified. This is, in itself, a punishment. What other punishment they incur between their pilgrimages we know not; but this is certain, that no one was created to be punished eternally.”

“But all this is but assertion,” replied I; “where are your proofs?”

“In the Bible; some day or other I will show them to you; but now we are at the camp, and I am anxious to embrace Nattée.”

I thought for some time upon this singular creed; one, in itself, not militating against religion, but at the same time I could not call to mind any passages by which it could be supported. Still the idea was beautiful, and I dwelt upon it with pleasure. I have before observed, and indeed the reader must have gathered from my narrative, that Melchior was no common personage. Every day did I become more partial to him, and more pleased with our erratic life. What scruples I had at first, gradually wore away; the time passed quickly, and although I would occasionally call to mind the original object of my setting forth, I would satisfy myself by the reflection, that there was yet sufficient time. Little Fleta was now my constant companion when in the camp, and I amused myself with teaching her to write and read.

“Japhet,” said Timothy to me one day as we were cutting hazel broach wood in the forest, “I don’t see that you get on very fast in your search after your father.”

“No, Tim, I do not; but I am gaining a knowledge of the world which will be very useful to me when I recommence the search; and what is more, I am saving a great deal of money to enable me to prosecute it.”

“What did Melchior give you after we left?”

“Twenty guineas, which, with what I had before, make more than fifty.”

“And he gave me ten, which makes twenty, with what I had before. Seventy pounds is a large sum.”

“Yes, but soon spent, Tim. We must work a little longer. Besides, I cannot leave that little girl—she was never intended for a rope-dancer.”

“I am glad to hear you say that, Japhet, for I feel as you do—she shall share our fortunes.”

“A glorious prospect truly,” replied I, laughing; “but never mind, it would be better than her remaining here. But how are we to manage that?”

“Ay! that’s the rub; but there is time enough to think about it when we intend to quit our present occupation.”

“Well, I understand from Melchior that we are to start in a few days?”

“What is it to be, Japhet?”

“Oh! we shall be at home—we are to cure all diseases under the sun. To-morrow we commence making pills, so we may think ourselves with Mr Cophagus again.”

“Well, I do think we shall have some fun; but I hope Melchior won’t make me take my own pills to prove their good qualities—that will be no joke.”

“O no, Num is kept on purpose for that. What else is the fool good for?”

The next week was employed as we anticipated. Boxes of pills of every size, neatly labelled, bottles of various mixtures, chiefly stimulants, were corked and packed up. Powders of *anything* were put in papers; but, at all events, there was nothing hurtful in them. All was ready, and accompanied by Num (Jumbo and Fleta being left at home) we set off, Melchior assuming the dress in which we

had first met him in the waggon, and altering his appearance so completely, that he would have been taken for at least sixty years old. We now travelled on foot with our dresses in bundles, each carrying his own, except Num, who was loaded like a pack-horse, and made sore lamentations: "Can't you carry some of this?"

"No," replied I, "it is your own luggage; everyone must carry his own."

"Well, I never felt my spangled dress so heavy before. Where are we going?"

"Only a little way," replied Timothy, "and then you will have nothing more to do."

"I don't know that. When master puts on that dress, I have to swallow little things till I'm sick."

"It's all good for your health, Num."

"I'm very well, I thank'e," replied the poor fellow; "but I'm very hot and very tired."

Part 1—Chapter XV

In which Timothy makes a grand Speech, quite as true as those delivered from the Hustings—Melchior, like the Candidate, states his Pretensions for public Favour, and the Public, as usual, swallow the Bait.

Fortunately for poor Num, we were not far from the market town at which we intended to open our campaign, which we did the next morning by Num and Timothy sallying forth, the former with a large trumpet in his hand, and the latter riding on a donkey. On their arrival at the market-place, Num commenced blowing it with all his might, while Timothy, in his spangled dress, as soon as they had collected a crowd, stood upon his saddle, and harangued the people as follows:—

“Gentlemen and ladies—I have the honour to announce to you the arrival in this town of the celebrated Doctor Appallacheosmo Commetico, who has travelled farther than the sun and faster than a comet. He hath visited every part of the globe. He has smoked the calumet with the Indians of North America—he has hunted with the Araucas in the South—galloped on wild horses over the plains of Mexico, and rubbed noses with the Esquimaux. He hath used the chopsticks with the Chinese, swung the Cherok pooga with the Hindoos, and put a new nose on the Great Cham of Tartary. He hath visited and been received in every court of Europe: danced on the ice of the Neva with the Russians—led the mazurka with the Poles—waltzed with the Germans—tarantulaed with the Italians—fandangoed with the Spanish—and quadrilled with the French. He hath explored every mine in the universe, walked through every town on the Continent, examined every mountain in the world, ascended Mont Blanc, walked down the Andes, and run up the Pyrenees. He has been into every volcano in the globe, and descending by Vesuvius has been thrown up by Stromboli. He has lived more than a thousand years, and is still in the flower of his youth. He has had one hundred and forty sets of teeth one after another, and expects a new set next Christmas. His whole life has been spent in the service of mankind, and in doing good to his fellow-creatures; and having the experience of more than a thousand years, he cures more than a thousand diseases. Gentlemen, the wonderful doctor will present himself before you this evening, and will then tell you what his remedies are good for, so that you may pick and choose according to your several complaints. Ladies, the wonderful doctor can greatly assist you: he has secrets by which you may have a family if you should so wish—philters to make husbands constant, and salve to make them blind—cosmetics to remove pimples and restore to youth and beauty, and powders to keep children from squalling. Sound the trumpet, Philotas; sound, and let everybody know that the wonderful Doctor Appallacheosmo Commetico has vouchsafed to stop here and confer his blessings upon the inhabitants of this town.” Hereupon Num again blew the trumpet till he was black in the face; and Timothy, dropping on his donkey, rode away to other parts of the town, where he repeated his grandiloquent announcement, followed, as may be supposed, by a numerous cortège of little ragged boys.

About four o'clock in the afternoon. Melchior made his appearance in the market-place, attended by me, dressed as a German student, Timothy and Num in their costumes. A stage had been already prepared, and the populace had crowded round it more with the intention of laughing than of making purchases. The various packets were opened and arranged in front of the platform, I standing on one side of Melchior, Timothy on the other, and Num with his trumpet, holding on by one of the scaffold poles at the corner.

“Sound the trumpet, Philotas,” said Melchior, taking off his three-cornered hat, and making a low bow to the audience, at every blast. “Pray, Mr Fool, do you know why you sound the trumpet?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied Num, opening his goggle eyes.

“Do you know, Mr Dionysius?”

“Yes, sir, I can guess.”

“Explain, then, to the gentlemen and ladies who have honoured us with their presence.”

“Because, sir, trumpets are always sounded before great conquerors.”

“Very true, sir; but how am I a great conqueror?”

“You have conquered death, sir; and he’s a very rum customer to have to deal with.”

“Dionysius, you have answered well, and shall have some bullock’s liver for your supper—don’t forget to remind me, in case I forget it.”

“No, that I won’t, sir,” replied Timothy, rubbing his stomach, as if delighted with the idea.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” said Melchior to the audience, who were on the broad grin, “I see your souths are all open, and are waiting for the pills; but a lot too impatient—I cannot part with my medicine unless you have diseases which require their aid; and I should, indeed, be a sorry doctor, if I prescribed without knowing your complaints. *Est neutrale genus signans rem non animatam*, says Herodotus, which in English means, what is one man’s meat is another man’s poison; and further, he adds, *Ut jecur, ut onus, put ut occiput*, which is as much as to say, that what agrees with one temperament, will be injurious to another. Caution, therefore, becomes very necessary in the use of medicine; and my reputation depends upon my not permitting anyone to take what is not good for him. And now, my very dear friends, I will first beg you to observe the peculiar qualities of the contents of this little phial. You observe, that there is not more than sixty drops in it, yet will these sixty drops add ten years to a man’s life—for it will cure him of almost as many diseases. In the first place, are any of you troubled with the *ascites*, or dropsy, which, as the celebrated Galen hath declared, may be divided into three parts, the *ascites*, the *anasarca*, and the *tympanites*. The diagnostics of this disease are, swelling of the abdomen or stomach, difficulty of breathing, want of appetite, and a teasing cough. I say, have any of you this disease? None. Then I thank Heaven that you are not so afflicted.

“The next disease it is good for, is the *peripneumonia*, or inflammation on the lungs—the diagnostics or symptoms of which are, a small pulse, swelling of the eyes, and redness of the face. Say, have any of you these symptoms—if so, you have the disease. No one. I thank Heaven that you are none of you so afflicted.

“It is also a sovereign remedy for the *diarrhoea*, the diagnostics of which are, faintness, frequent gripings, rumbling in the bowels, cold sweats, and spasm.”

Here one man came forward and complained of frequent gripings—another of rumbling in the bowels, and two or three more of cold sweats.

“It is well. O I thank Heaven that I am here to administer to you myself! for what says Hippocrates? *Relativum cum antecedente concordat*, which means, that remedies quickly applied, kill the disease in its birth. Here, my friends, take it—take it—pay me only one shilling, and be thankful. When you go to rest, fail not to offer up your prayers. It is also a sovereign remedy for the dreadful *chiragra* or gout. I cured the whole corporation of city aldermen last week, by their taking three bottles each, and they presented me with the freedom of the city of London, in a gold box, which I am sorry that I have forgotten to bring with me. Now the *chiragra* may be divided into several varieties. *Gonagra*, when it attacks the knees—*chiragra*, if in the hands—*onagra*, if in the elbow—*omagra*, if in the shoulder, and *lumbago*, if in the back. All these are varieties of gout, and for all these the contents of this little bottle is a sovereign remedy; and, observe, it will keep for ever. Twenty years hence, when afflicted in your old age—and the time will come, my good people—you may take down this little phial from the shelf, and bless the hour in which you spent your shilling; for, as Eusebius declares, ‘*Verbum personate concordat cum nominativo*,’ which is as much as to say, the active will grow old, and suffer from pains in their limbs. Who, then, has pains in his limbs, or lumbago? Who, indeed, can say that he will not have them?”

After this appeal, the number of those who had pains in their limbs, or who wished to provide against such a disease, proved so great, that all our phials were disposed of, and the doctor was obliged to promise that in a few days he would have some more of this invaluable medicine ready.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I shall now offer to your notice a valuable plaster, the effects of which are miraculous. Dionysius, come hither, you have felt the benefit of this plaster; tell your case to those who are present, and mind you tell the truth.”

Hereupon Timothy stepped forward. “Ladies and gentlemen, *upon my honour*, about three weeks back I fell off the scaffold, broke my back bone into three pieces, and was carried off to a surgeon, who looked at me, and told the people to take measure for my coffin. The great doctor was not there at the time, having been sent for to consult with the king’s physicians upon the queen’s case, of *Cophagus*, or intermitting mortification of the great toe; but fortunately, just as they were putting me into a shell, my master came back, and immediately applying his sovereign plaster to my back, in five days I was able to sit up, and in ten days I returned to my duty.”

“Are you quite well now, Dionysius?”

“Quite well, sir, and my back is like whalebone.”

“Try it.”

Hereupon Dionysius threw two somersets forward, two backward, walked across the stage on his hands, and tumbled in every direction.

“You see, gentlemen, I’m quite well now, and what I have said, I assure you, *on my honour*, to be a fact.”

“I hope you’ll allow that to be a very pretty cure,” said the doctor, appealing to the audience; “and I hardly need say, that for sprains, bruises, contusions, wrenches, and dislocations, this plaster is infallible; and I will surprise you more by telling you, that I can sell it for eight-pence a sheet.”

The plaster went off rapidly, and was soon expended. The doctor went on describing his other valuable articles, and when he came to his cosmetics, etcetera, for women, we could not hand them out fast enough. “And now,” said the doctor. “I must bid you farewell for this evening.”

“I’m glad of that,” said Timothy, “for now I mean to sell my own medicine.”

“Your medicine, Mr Dionysius! what do you mean by that?”

“Mean, sir; I mean to say that I’ve got a powder of my own contriving, which is a sovereign remedy.”

“Remedy, sir, for what?”

“Why, it’s a powder to kill fleas, and what’s more, it’s just as infallible as your own.”

“Have you, indeed; and pray, sir, how did you hit upon the invention?”

“Sir, I discovered it in my sleep by accident; but I have proved it, and I will say, if properly administered, it is quite as infallible as any of yours. Ladies and gentlemen, I pledge you my honour that it will have the effect desired, and all I ask is sixpence a powder.”

“But how is it to be used, sir?”

“Used—why, like all other powders; but I won’t give the directions till I have sold some; promising, however, if my method does not succeed, to return the money.”

“Well, that is fair, Mr Dionysius; and I will take care that you keep your bargain. Will anybody purchase the fool’s powder for killing fleas.”

“Yes, I will,” replied a man on the broad grin, “here’s sixpence. Now, then, fool, how am I to use it?”

“Use it,” said Timothy, putting the sixpence in his pocket; “I’ll explain to you. You must first catch the flea, hold him so tight between the forefinger and thumb as to force him to open his mouth; when his mouth is open you must put a very little of this powder into it, and it will kill him directly.”

“Why, when I have the flea as tight as you state, I may as well kill him myself.”

“Very true, so you may, if you prefer it; but if you do not, you may use this powder, which upon my honour is infallible.”

This occasioned a great deal of mirth among the bystanders. Timothy kept his sixpence, and our exhibition for this day ended, very much to the satisfaction of Melchior, who declared he had taken more than ever he had done before in a whole week. Indeed, the whole sum amounted to 17

pounds, 10 shillings, all taken in shillings and sixpences, for articles hardly worth the odd shillings in the account; so we sat down to supper with anticipations of a good harvest, and so it proved. We stayed four days at this town, and then proceeded onwards, when the like success attended us, Timothy and I being obliged to sit up nearly the whole night to label and roll up pills, and mix medicines, which we did in a very scientific manner. Nor was it always that Melchior presided; he would very often tell his audience that business required his attendance elsewhere, to visit the sick, and that he left the explanation of his medicines and their properties to his pupil, who was far advanced in knowledge. With my prepossessing appearance, I made a great effect, more especially among the ladies, and Timothy exerted himself so much when with me, that we never failed to bring home to Melchior a great addition to his earnings—so much so, that at last he only showed himself, pretended that he was so importuned to visit sick persons, that he could stay no longer, and then leave us after the first half hour, to carry on the business for him. After six weeks of uninterrupted success, we returned to the camp which, as usual, was not very very far off.

Part 1—Chapter XVI

Important News, but not communicated—A Dissolution or Partnership takes Place.

Melchior's profits had been much more than he anticipated, and he was very liberal to Timothy and myself; indeed, he looked upon me as his right hand, and became more intimate and attached every day. We were, of course, delighted to return to the camp, after our excursion. There was so much continued bustle and excitement in our peculiar profession, that a little quiet was delightful; and I never felt more happy than when Fleta threw herself into my arms, and Nattée came forward with her usual dignity and grace, but with more than usual condescendence and kindness, bidding me welcome home. Home—alas! it was never meant for my home, or poor Fleta's—and that I felt. It was our sojourn for a time, and no more.

We had been more than a year exercising our talents in this lucrative manner, when one day, as I was sitting at the entrance to the tent, with a book in my hand, out of which Fleta was reading to me, a gipsy not belonging to our gang made his appearance. He was covered with dust, and the dew drops, hanging on his dark forehead, proved that he had travelled fast. He addressed Nattée, who was standing by, in their own language, which I did not understand; but I perceived that he asked for Melchior. After an exchange of a few sentences, Nattée expressed astonishment and alarm, put her hands over her face, and removed them as quickly, as if derogatory in her to show emotion, and then remained in deep thought. Perceiving Melchior approaching, the gipsy hastened to him, and they were soon in animated conversation. In ten minutes it was over: the gipsy went to the running brook, washed his face, took a large draught of water, and then hastened away and was soon out of sight.

Melchior, who had watched the departure of the gipsy slowly approached us. I observed him and Nattée as they met as I was certain that something important had taken place. Melchior fixed his eyes upon Nattée—she looked at him mournfully—folded her arms, and made a slight bow as if in submission, and in a low voice quoted from the Scriptures, “Whither thou goest, I will go—thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” He then walked away with her: they sat down apart, and were in earnest conversation for more than an hour.

“Japhet,” said Melchior to me, after he had quitted his wife, “what I am about to tell you will surprise you. I have trusted you with all I dare trust anyone, but there are some secrets in every man's life which had better be reserved for himself and her who is bound to him by solemn ties. We must now part. In a few days this camp will be broken up, and these people will join some other division of the tribe. For me, you will see me no more. Ask me not to explain, for I cannot.”

“And Nattée,” said I.

“Will follow my fortunes, whatever they may be—you will see her no more.”

“For myself I care not, Melchior; the world is before me, and remain with the gipsies without you I will not: but answer me one question—what is to become of little Fleta? Is she to remain with the tribe, to which she does not belong, or does she go with you?”

Melchior hesitated. “I hardly can answer; but what consequence can the welfare of a soldier's brat be to you?”

“Allowing her to be what you assert, Melchior, I am devotedly attached to that child, and could not bear that she should remain here. I am sure that you deceived me in what you stated; for the child remembers, and has told me, anecdotes of her infancy, which proves that she is of no mean family, and that she has been stolen from her friends.”

“Indeed, is her memory so good?” replied Melchior, firmly closing his teeth. “To Nattée or to me she has never hinted so much.”

“That is very probable; but a stolen child she is, Melchior, and she must not remain here.”

“Must not!”

“Yes; must not, Melchior: when you quit the tribe, you will no longer have any power, nor can you have any interest about her. She shall then choose—if she will come with me, I will take her, and nothing shall prevent me; and in so doing I do you no injustice, nor do I swerve in my fidelity.”

“How do you know that? I may have my secret reasons against it.”

“Surely you can have no interest in a soldier’s brat, Melchior?”

Melchior appeared confused and annoyed. “She is no soldier’s brat: I acknowledge, Japhet, that the child was stolen; but you must not, therefore, imply that the child was stolen by me or by my wife.”

“I never accused you, or thought you capable of it; and that is the reason why I am now surprised at the interest you take in her. If she prefers to go with you, have no more to say, but if not, I claim her; and if she consents, will resist your interference.”

“Japhet,” replied Melchior after a pause, “we must not quarrel now that we are about to part. I will give you an answer in half an hour.”

Melchior returned to Nattée, and recommenced a conversation with her, while I hastened to Fleta.

“Fleta, do you know that the camp is to be broken up, and Melchior and Nattée leave it together?”

“Indeed!” replied she with surprise. “Then what is to become of you and Timothy?”

“We must of course seek our fortunes where we can.”

“And of me?” continued she, looking me earnestly in the face with her large blue eyes. “Am I to stay here?” continued she—with alarm in her countenance.

“Not if you do not wish it, Fleta: as long as I can support you I will—that is, if you would like to live with me in preference to Melchior.”

“If I would like, Japhet! you must know I would like,—who has been so kind to me as you? Don’t leave me, Japhet.”

“I will not, Fleta; but on condition that you promise to be guided by me, and to do all I wish.”

“To do what you wish is the greatest pleasure that I have, Japhet—so I may safely promise that. What has happened?”

“That I do not know more than yourself: but Melchior tells me that he and Nattée quit the gipsy tents for ever.”

Fleta looked round to ascertain if anyone was near us, and then in a low tone said, “I understand their language, Japhet, that is, a great deal of it, although they do not think so, and I overheard what the gipsy said in part, although he was at some distance. He asked for Melchior; and when Nattée wanted to know what he wanted, he answered that he was dead; then Nattée covered up her face. I could not hear all the rest, but there was something about a *horse*.”

He was dead. Had then Melchior committed murder, and was obliged to fly the country? This appeared to me to be the most probable, when I collected the facts in my possession; and yet I could not believe it: for except that system of deceit necessary to carry on his various professions, I never found anything in Melchior’s conduct which could be considered as criminal. On the contrary, he was kind, generous, and upright in his private dealings, and in many points proved that he had a good heart. He was a riddle of inconsistency, it was certain; professionally he would cheat anybody, and disregard all truth and honesty but in his private character he was scrupulously honest, and with the exception of the assertion relative to Fleta’s birth and parentage, he had never told me a lie, that I could discover. I was summing up all these reflections in my mind, when Melchior again came up to me, and desiring the little girl to go away, he said, “Japhet, I have resolved to grant your request with respect to Fleta, but it must be on conditions.”

“Let me hear them.”

“First, then, Japhet, as you always have been honest and confiding with me, tell me now what are your intentions. Do you mean to follow up the profession which you learnt under me, or what do you intend to do?”

“Honestly, then, Melchior, I do not intend to follow up that profession, unless driven to it by necessity. I intend to seek my father.”

“And if driven to it by necessity, do you intend that Fleta shall aid you by her acquirements? In short, do you mean to take her with you as a speculation, to make the most of her, to let her sink, when she arrives at the age of woman, into vice and misery?”

“I wonder at your asking me that question, Melchior; it is the first act of injustice I have received at your hands. No; if obliged to follow up the profession, I will not allow Fleta so to do. I would sooner that she were in her grave. It is to rescue her from that very vice and misery, to take her out of a society in which she never ought to have been placed, that I take her with me.”

“And this upon your honour?”

“Yes, upon my honour. I love her as my sister, and cannot help indulging in the hope that in seeking my father I may chance to stumble upon hers.”

Melchior bit his lips. “There is another promise I must exact from you, Japhet, which is, that to a direction which I will give you, every six months you will enclose an address where you may be heard of, and also intelligence as to Fleta’s welfare and health.”

“To that I give my cheerful promise; but, Melchior, you appear to have taken, all at once, a strange interest in this little girl.”

“I wish you now to think that I do take an interest in her, provided you seek not to inquire the why and the wherefore. Will you accept of funds for her maintenance?”

“Not without necessity compels me; and then I should be glad to find, when I can no longer help her, that you are still her friend.”

“Recollect, that you will always find what is requisite by writing to the address which I shall give you before we part. That point is now settled, and on the whole I think the arrangement is good.”

Timothy had been absent during the events of the morning—when he returned, I communicated to him what had passed, and was about to take place.

“Well, Japhet, I don’t know—I do not dislike our present life, yet I am not sorry to change it; but what are we to do?”

“That remains to be considered: we have a good stock of money, fortunately, and we must husband it till we find what can be done.”

We took our suppers all together for the last time, Melchior telling us that he had determined to set off the next day. Nattée looked very melancholy, but resigned; on the contrary, little Fleta was so overjoyed, that her face, generally so mournful, was illuminated with smiles whenever our eyes met. It was delightful to see her so happy. The whole of the people in the camp had retired, and Melchior was busy making his arrangements in the tent. I did not feel inclined to sleep; I was thinking and revolving in my mind my prospects for the future; sitting, or rather lying down, for I was leaning on my elbow, at a short distance from the tents. The night was dark but clear, and the stars were brilliant. I had been watching them, and I thought upon Melchior’s ideas of destiny, and dwelling on the futile wish that I could read mine, when I perceived the approach of Nattée.

“Japhet,” said she, “you are to take the little girl with you, I find—will you be careful of her? for it would be on my conscience if she were left to the mercy of the world. She departs rejoicing, let not her joy end in tears. I depart sorrowing. I leave my people, my kin, my habits, and customs, my influence, all—but it must be so, it is my destiny. She is a good child, Japhet—promise me that you will be a friend to her—and give her this to wear in remembrance of me, but—not yet—not till we are gone—” She hesitated. “Japhet, do not let Melchior see it in your possession; he may not like me having given it away.” I took the piece of paper containing the present, and having promised all she required, “This is the last—yes—the very last time that I may behold this scene,” continued Nattée,

surveying the common, the tents, and the animals browsing. “Be it so; Japhet, good night, may you prosper!” She then turned away and entered her tent; and soon afterwards I followed her example.

The next day, Melchior was all ready. What he had packed up was contained in two small bundles. He addressed the people belonging to the gang, in their own language. Nattée did the same, and the whole of them kissed her hand. The tents, furniture, and the greatest part of his other property, were distributed among them. Jumbo and Num were made over to two of the principal men. Timothy, Fleta, and I were also ready, and intended to quit at the same time as Melchior and his wife.

“Japhet,” said Melchior, “there is yet some money due to you for our last excursion—(this was true.)—here it is—you and Timothy keep but one purse, I am aware. Good-bye, and may you prosper!”

We shook hands with Nattée and Melchior. Fleta went up to the former, and, crossing her arms, bent her head. Nattée kissed the child, and led her to Melchior. He stooped down, kissed her on the forehead, and I perceived a sign of strongly suppressed emotion as he did so. Our intended routes lay in a different direction; and when both parties had arrived to either verge of the common, we waved our hands as a last farewell, and resumed our paths again. Fleta burst into tears as she turned away from her former guardians.

Part 1—Chapter XVII

A Cabinet Council—I resolve to set up as a Gentleman, having as Legitimate Pretensions to the Rank of one as many others.

I led the little sobbing girl by the hand, and we proceeded for some time in silence. It was not until we gained the high road that Timothy interrupted my reverie, by observing, “Japhet, have you at all made up your mind what you shall do?”

“I have been reflecting, Timothy. We have lost a great deal of time. The original intention with which I left London has been almost forgotten; but it must be so no longer. I now have resolved that as soon as I have placed this poor little girl in safety, that I will prosecute my search, and never be diverted from it.”

“I cannot agree with you that we have lost time, Japhet? we had very little money when we started upon our expedition, and now we have sufficient to enable you to prosecute your plans for a long time. The question is, in what direction? We quitted London, and travelled west, in imitation, as we thought, of the *wise men*. With all deference, in my opinion, it was like *two fools*.”

“I have been thinking upon that point also, Tim, and I agree with you, I expect, from several causes, which you know as well as I do, to find my father among the higher classes of society; and the path we took when we started has led us into the very lowest. It appears to me that we cannot do better than retrace our steps. We have the means now to appear as gentlemen, and to mix in good company; and London is the very best place for us to repair to.”

“That is precisely my opinion, Japhet, with one single exception, which I will mention to you: but first tell me, have you calculated what our joint purses may amount to? It must be a very considerable sum.”

I had not examined the packet in which was the money which Melchior had given me at parting. I now opened it, and found, to my surprise, that there were Bank notes to the amount of one hundred pounds. I felt that he had given me this large sum that it might assist me in Fleta’s expenses. “With this sum,” said I, “I cannot have much less than two hundred and fifty pounds.”

“And I have more than sixty,” said Timothy. “Really, the profession was not unprofitable.”

“No,” replied I, laughing; “but recollect, Tim, that we had no outlay. The public provided us with food, our lodging cost us nothing. We have had no taxes to pay; and at the same time have taxed folly and credulity to a great extent.”

“That’s true, Japhet; and although I am glad to have the money, I am not sorry that we have abandoned the profession.”

“Nor am I, Tim; if you please, we will forget it altogether. But tell me, what was the exception you were about to make?”

“Simply this. Although upwards of three hundred pounds may be a great deal of money, yet, if we are to support the character and appearance of gentlemen, it will not last for ever. For instance, we must have our *valets*. What an expense that will be! Our clothes too—we shall soon lose our rank and station in society, without we obtain a situation under government.”

“We must make it last as long as we can, Timothy; and trust to good fortune to assist us.”

“That’s all very well, Japhet; but I had rather trust to our own prudence. Now hear what I have to say. You will be as much assisted by a *trusty* valet as by any other means. I shall, as a gentleman, be only an expense and an incumbrance; but as a valet I shall be able to play into your hands, at the same time more than one half the expense will be avoided. With your leave, therefore, I will take my proper situation, put on your livery, and thereby make myself of the greatest use.”

I could not help acknowledging the advantages to be derived from this proposal of Timothy’s; but I did not like to accept it.

“It is very kind of you, Timothy,” replied I; “but I can only look upon you as a friend and an equal.”

“There you are right and are wrong in the same breath. You are right in looking upon me as a friend, Japhet; and you would be still more right in allowing me to prove my friendship as I propose; but you are wrong in looking upon me as an equal, for I am not so either in personal appearance, education, or anything else. We are both foundlings, it is true; but you were christened after Abraham Newland, and I after the workhouse pump. You were a gentleman foundling, presenting yourself with a fifty-pound note, and good clothes. I made my appearance in rags and misery. If you find your parents, you will rise in the world; if I find mine, I shall, in all probability, have no reason to be proud of them. I therefore must insist upon having my own choice in the part I am to play in the drama, and I will prove to you that it is my right to choose. You forget that, when we started, your object was to search after your father, and I told you mine should be to look after my mother. You have selected high life as the expected sphere in which he is to be found, and I select low life as that in which I am most likely to discover the object of my search. So you perceive,” continued Tim, laughing, “that we must arrange so as to suit the views of both without parting company. Do you hunt among bag-wigs, amber-headed canes, silks and satins—I will burrow among tags and tassels, dimity and mob caps; and probably we shall both succeed in the object of our search. I leave you to hunt in the drawing-rooms, while I ferret in the kitchen. You may throw yourself on a sofa and exclaim—‘Who is my father?’ while I will sit in the cook’s lap, and ask her if she may happen to be my mother.”

This sally of Timothy’s made even Fleta laugh; and after a little more remonstrance, I consented that he should perform the part of my valet. Indeed, the more I reflected upon it, the greater appeared the advantages which might accrue from the arrangement. By the time that this point had been settled, we had arrived at the town to which we directed our steps, and took up our quarters at an inn of moderate pretensions, but of very great external cleanliness. My first object was to find out some fitting asylum for little Fleta. The landlady was a buxom, good-tempered young woman, and I gave the little girl into her charge, while Timothy and I went out on a survey. I had made up my mind to put her to some good, but not very expensive, school, if such were to be found in the vicinity. I should have preferred taking her with me to London, but I was aware how much more expensive it would be to provide for her there; and as the distance from the metropolis was but twenty miles, I could easily run down to see her occasionally. I desired the little girl to call me her brother, as such I intended to be to her in future, and not to answer every question they might put to her. There was, however, little occasion for this caution; for Fleta was, as I before observed, very unlike children in general. I then went out with Timothy to look for a tailor, that I might order our clothes, as what we had on were not either of the very best taste, or in the very best condition. We walked up the main street, and soon fell in with a tailor’s shop, over which was written in large letters—“Feodor Shneider, Tailor to his Royal Highness the Prince of Darmstadt.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.