

OLIVER TWIST;

OR, THE PARISH BOY'S PROGRESS.

BY BOZ.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

WHEREIN THE HAPPINESS OF OLIVER AND HIS FRIENDS EXPERIENCES
A SUDDEN CHECK.

SPRING flew swiftly by, and summer came; and if the village had been beautiful at first, it was now in the full glow and luxuriance of its richness. The great trees, which had looked shrunken and bare in the earlier months, had now burst into strong life and health, and, stretching forth their green arms over the thirsty ground, converted open and naked spots into choice nooks, where was a deep and pleasant shade from which to look upon the wide prospect, steeped in sunshine, which lay stretched out beyond. The earth had donned her mantle of brightest green, and shed her richest perfumes abroad. It was the prime and vigour of the year, and all things were glad and flourishing.

Still the same quiet life went on at the little cottage, and the same cheerful serenity prevailed among its inmates. Oliver had long since grown stout and healthy; but health or sickness made no difference in his warm feelings to those about him, (though they do in the feelings of a great many people,) and he was still the same gentle, attached, affectionate creature, that he had been when pain and suffering had wasted his strength, and he was dependent for every slight attention and comfort on those who tended him.

One beautiful night they had taken a longer walk than was customary with them, for the day had been unusually warm, and there was a brilliant moon, and a light wind had sprung up, which was unusually refreshing. Rose had been in high spirits too, and they had walked on in merry conversation until they had far exceeded their ordinary bounds. Mrs. Maylie was fatigued, and they returned more slowly home. The young lady, merely throwing off her simple bonnet, sat down to the piano as usual; after running abstractedly over the keys for a few minutes, she fell into a low and very solemn air, and as she played it they heard her sob as if she were weeping.

"Rose, my dear?" said the elder lady.

Rose made no reply, but played a little quicker, as though the sound had roused her from some painful thoughts.

"Rose, my love!" cried Mrs. Maylie, rising hastily, and bending over her. "What is this? Your face is bathed in tears. My dear child, what distresses you?"

"Nothing, aunt,—nothing," replied the young lady. "I don't know what it is; I can't describe it; but I feel so low to-night, and——"

"Not ill, my love?" interposed Mrs. Maylie.

"No, no! Oh, not ill!" replied Rose, shuddering as though some deadly chillness were passing over her while she spoke; "at least, I shall be better presently. Close the window, pray."

Oliver hastened to comply with the request; and the young lady, making an effort to recover her cheerfulness, strove to play some livelier tune. But her fingers dropped powerless on the keys, and, covering her face with her hands, she sank upon a sofa, and gave vent to the tears which she was now unable to repress.

"My child!" said the elder lady, folding her arms about her, "I never saw you thus before."

"I would not alarm you if I could avoid it," rejoined Rose; "but indeed I have tried very hard, and cannot help this. I fear I *am* ill, aunt."

She was, indeed; for, when candles were brought, they saw that in the very short time which had elapsed since their return home, the hue of her countenance had changed to a marble whiteness. Its expression had lost nothing of its beauty, but yet it was changed, and there was an anxious haggard look about that gentle face which it had never worn before. Another minute, and it was suffused with a crimson flush, and a heavy wildness came over the soft blue eye; again this disappeared like the shadow thrown by a passing cloud, and she was once more deadly pale.

Oliver, who watched the old lady anxiously, observed that she was alarmed by these appearances, and so, in truth, was he; but, seeing that she affected to make light of them, he endeavoured to do the same, and they so far succeeded that when Rose was persuaded by her aunt to retire for the night, she was in better spirits, and appeared even in better health, and assured them that she felt certain she would wake in the morning quite well.

"I hope, ma'am," said Oliver when Mrs. Maylie returned, "that nothing serious is the matter. Miss Maylie doesn't look well to-night, but——"

The old lady motioned him not to speak, and, sitting herself down in a dark corner of the room, remained silent for some time. At length she said, in a trembling voice,—

"I hope not, Oliver. I have been very happy with her for some years—too happy, perhaps, and it may be time that I should meet with some misfortune; but I hope it is not this."

"What misfortune, ma'am?" inquired Oliver.

"The heavy blow," said the old lady almost inarticulately, "of losing the dear girl who has so long been my comfort and happiness."

"Oh! God forbid!" exclaimed Oliver hastily.

"Amen to that, my child!" said the old lady, wringing her hands.

"Surely there is no danger of anything so dreadful!" said Oliver. "Two hours ago she was quite well."

"She is very ill now," rejoined Mrs. Maylie, "and will be worse, I am sure. My dear, dear Rose! Oh, what should I do without her!"

The lady sank beneath her desponding thoughts, and gave way to such great grief that Oliver, suppressing his own emotion, ventured to remonstrate with her, and to beg earnestly that for the sake of the dear young lady herself she would be more calm.

"And consider, ma'am," said Oliver, as the tears forced themselves into his eyes despite his efforts to the contrary; "oh! consider how young and good she is, and what pleasure and comfort she gives to all about her. I am sure—certain—quite certain—that for your sake, who are so good yourself, and for her own, and for the sake of all she makes so happy, she will not die. God will never let her die yet."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Maylie, laying her hand on Oliver's head. "You think like a child, poor boy; and although what you say may be natural, it is wrong. But you teach me my duty, notwithstanding. I had forgotten it for a moment, Oliver, and I hope I may be pardoned, for I am old, and have seen enough of illness and death to know the pain they leave to those behind. I have seen enough, too, to know that it is not always the youngest and best who are spared to those that love them; but this should give us comfort rather than sorrow, for Heaven is just, and such things teach us impressively that there is a far brighter world than this, and that the passage to it is speedy. God's will be done! but I love her, and He alone knows how well!"

Oliver was surprised to see that as Mrs. Maylie said these words she checked her lamentations as though by one struggle, and, drawing herself up as she spoke, became quite composed and firm. He was still more astonished to find that this firmness lasted, and that under all the care and watching which ensued, Mrs. Maylie was ever ready and collected, performing all the duties which devolved upon her steadily, and, to all external appearance, even cheerfully. But he was young, and did not know what strong minds are capable of under trying circumstances. How should he, indeed, when their possessors so seldom know themselves?

An anxious night ensued, and when morning came Mrs. May-

lie's predictions were but too well verified. Rose was in the first stage of a high and dangerous fever.

"We must be active, Oliver, and not give way to useless grief," said Mrs. Maylie, laying her finger on her lip as she looked steadily into his face; "this letter must be sent with all possible expedition to Mr. Losberne. It must be carried to the market-town, which is not more than four miles off by the foot-path across the fields, and thence despatched by an express on horseback straight to Chertsey. The people at the inn will undertake to do this, and I can trust you to see it done, I know."

Oliver could make no reply, but looked his anxiety to be gone at once.

"Here is another letter," said Mrs. Maylie, pausing to reflect; "but whether to send it now, or wait until I see how Rose goes on, I scarcely know. I would not forward it unless I feared the worst."

"Is it for Chertsey, too, ma'am?" inquired Oliver, impatient to execute his commission, and holding out his trembling hand for the letter.

"No," replied the old lady, giving it him mechanically. Oliver glanced at it, and saw that it was directed to Harry Maylie Esquire, at some lord's house in the country; where, he could not make out.

"Shall it go, ma'am?" asked Oliver, looking up impatiently.

"I think not," replied Mrs. Maylie, taking it back. "I will wait till to-morrow."

With these words she gave Oliver her purse, and he started off without more delay at the greatest speed he could muster.

Swiftly he ran across the fields, and down the little lanes which sometimes divided them, now almost hidden by the high corn on either side, and now emerging into an open field where the mowers and haymakers were busy at their work; nor did he stop once, save now and then for a few seconds to recover breath, until he emerged in a great heat, and covered with dust, on the little market-place of the market-town.

Here he paused, and looked about for the inn. There was a white bank, and a red brewery, and a yellow town-hall; and in one corner a large house with all the wood about it painted green, before which was the sign of "The George," to which he hastened directly it caught his eye.

Oliver spoke to a postboy who was dozing under the gateway, and who, after hearing what he wanted, referred him to the hostler; who, after hearing all he had to say again, referred him to the landlord, who was a tall gentleman in a blue neckcloth, a white hat, drab breeches, and boots with tops to match, and was leaning against a pump by the stable-door, picking his teeth with a silver tooth-pick.

This gentleman walked with much deliberation to the bar to make out the bill, which took a long time making out, and after

it was ready, and paid, a horse had to be saddled, and a man to be dressed, which took up ten good minutes more; meanwhile Oliver was in such a desperate state of impatience and anxiety that he felt as if he could have jumped upon the horse himself, and galloped away full tear to the next stage. At length all was ready, and the little parcel having been handed up, with many injunctions and entreaties for its speedy delivery, the man set spurs to his horse, and, rattling over the uneven paving of the market-place, was out of the town, and galloping along the turnpike-road in a couple of minutes.

It was something to feel certain that assistance was sent for, and that no time had been lost. Oliver hurried up the inn-yard with a somewhat lighter heart, and was turning out of the gateway when he accidentally stumbled against a tall man wrapped in a cloak, who was that moment coming out at the inn-door.

"Hah!" cried the man, fixing his eyes on Oliver, and suddenly recoiling. "What the devil's this?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oliver; "I was in a great hurry to get home, and didn't see you were coming."

"Death!" muttered the man to himself, glaring at the boy with his large dark eyes. "Who'd have thought it! Grind him to ashes! he'd start up from a marble coffin to come in my way!"

"I am sorry, sir," stammered Oliver, confused by the strange man's wild look. "I hope I have not hurt you?"

"Rot his bones!" murmured the man in a horrible passion between his clenched teeth, "if I had only had the courage to say the word, I might have been free of him in a night. Curses light upon your head, and black death upon your heart, you imp! What are you doing here?"

The man shook his fist, and gnashed his teeth, as he uttered these words incoherently, and advancing towards Oliver as if with the intention of aiming a blow at him, fell violently on the ground, writhing and foaming, in a fit.

Oliver gazed for a moment at the fearful struggles of the madman, (for such he supposed him to be,) and then darted into the house for help. Having seen him safely carried into the hotel, he turned his face homewards, running as fast as he could to make up for lost time, and recalling, with a great deal of astonishment and some fear, the extraordinary behaviour of the person from whom he had just parted.

The circumstance did not dwell in his recollection long, however; for when he reached the cottage there was enough to occupy his mind, and to drive all considerations of self completely from his memory.

Rose Maylie had rapidly grown worse, and before midnight was delirious. A medical practitioner, who resided on the spot, was in constant attendance upon her, and, after first seeing the

patient, he had taken Mrs. Maylie aside, and pronounced her disorder to be one of a most alarming nature. "In fact," he said, "it would be little short of a miracle if she recovered."

How often did Oliver start from his bed that night, and, stealing out with noiseless footstep to the staircase, listen for the slightest sound from the sick chamber! How often did a tremble shake his frame, and cold drops of terror start upon his brow, when a sudden trampling of feet caused him to fear that something too dreadful to think of had even then occurred. And what had been the fervency of all the prayers he had ever uttered, compared with those he poured forth now, in the agony and passion of his supplication, for the life and health of the gentle creature who was tottering on the deep grave's verge!

The suspense, the fearful acute suspense, of standing idly by while the life of one we dearly love is trembling in the balance—the racking thoughts that crowd upon the mind, and make the heart beat violently, and the breath come thick, by the force of the images they conjure up before it—the desperate anxiety to *be doing something* to relieve the pain, or lessen the danger which we have no power to alleviate; and the sinking of soul and spirit which the sad remembrance of our helplessness produces,—what tortures can equal these, and what reflections or efforts can, in the full tide and fever of the time, allay them!

Morning came; and the little cottage was lonely and still. People spoke in whispers; anxious faces appeared at the gate from time to time, and women and children went away in tears. All the livelong day, and for hours after it had grown dark, Oliver paced softly up and down the garden, raising his eyes every instant to the sick-chamber, and shuddering to see the darkened window looking as if death lay stretched inside. Late at night Mr. Losberne arrived. "It is hard," said the good doctor, turning away as he spoke, "so young—so much beloved—but there is very little hope."

Another morning the sun shone brightly,—as brightly as if it looked upon no misery or care; and, with every leaf and flower in full bloom about her,—with life, and health, and sounds and sights of joy surrounding her on every side, the fair young creature lay wasting fast. Oliver crept away to the old churchyard, and, sitting down on one of the green mounds, wept for her in silence.

There was such peace and beauty in the scene, so much of brightness and mirth in the sunny landscape, such blithesome music in the songs of the summer birds, such freedom in the rapid flight of the rook careering overhead, so much of life and joyousness in all, that when the boy raised his aching eyes, and looked about, the thought instinctively occurred to him that this was not a time for death; that Rose could surely never die

when humbler things were all so glad and gay; that graves were for cold and cheerless winter, not for sunlight and fragrance. He almost thought that shrouds were for the old and shrunken, and never wrapped the young and graceful form within their ghastly folds.

A knell from the church-bell broke harshly on these youthful thoughts. Another — again! It was tolling for the funeral service. A group of humble mourners entered the gate, and they wore white favours, for the corpse was young. They stood, uncovered, by a grave; and there was a mother — a mother once — among the weeping train. But the sun shone brightly, and the birds sang on.

Oliver turned homewards, thinking on the many kindnesses he had received from the young lady, and wishing that the time could come over again, that he might never cease showing her how grateful and attached he was. He had no cause for self-reproach on the score of neglect or want of thought, for he had been devoted to her service; and yet a hundred little occasions rose up before him on which he fancied he might have been more zealous and more earnest, and wished he had been. We need be careful how we deal with those about us, for every death carries with it to some small circle of survivors thoughts of so much omitted, and so little done; of so many things forgotten, and so many more which might have been repaired, that such recollections are among the bitterest we can have. There is no remorse so deep as that which is unavailing; if we would be spared its tortures let us remember this in time.

When he reached home Mrs. Maylie was sitting in the little parlour. Oliver's heart sank at sight of her, for she had never left the bedside of her niece, and he trembled to think what change could have driven her away. He learnt that she had fallen into a deep sleep, from which she would waken again either to recovery and life, or to bid them farewell, and die.

They sat, listening, and afraid to speak, for hours. The untasted meal was removed; and, with looks which showed that their thoughts were elsewhere, they watched the sun as he sank lower and lower, and at length cast over sky and earth those brilliant hues which herald his departure. Their quick ears caught the sound of an approaching footstep, and they both involuntarily darted towards the door as Mr. Losberne entered.

"What of Rose?" cried the old lady. "Tell me at once. I can bear it; anything but suspense. Oh, tell me! in the name of Heaven!"

"You must compose yourself," said the doctor, supporting her. "Be calm, my dear ma'am, pray."

"Let me go, in God's name!" gasped Mrs. Maylie. "My dear child! She is dead! She is dying!"

"No!" cried the doctor passionately. "As He is good and merciful, she will live to bless us all for years to come."

The lady fell upon her knees, and tried to fold her hands together; but the energy which had supported her so long fled to Heaven with her first thanksgiving, and she sunk back into the friendly arms which were extended to receive her.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

CONTAINS SOME INTRODUCTORY PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN WHO NOW ARRIVES UPON THE SCENE, AND A NEW ADVENTURE WHICH HAPPENED TO OLIVER.

It was almost too much happiness to bear. Oliver felt stunned and stupified by the unexpected intelligence; he could not weep, or speak, or rest. He had scarcely the power of understanding anything that had passed, until after a long ramble in the quiet evening air a burst of tears came to his relief, and he seemed to awaken all at once to a full sense of the joyful change that had occurred, and the almost insupportable load of anguish which had been taken from his breast.

The night was fast closing in when he returned homewards, laden with flowers which he had culled with peculiar care for the adornment of the sick chamber. As he walked briskly along the road, he heard behind him the noise of some vehicle approaching at a furious pace. Looking round, he saw that it was a post-chaise driven at great speed; and as the horses were galloping, and the road was narrow, he stood leaning against a gate until it should have passed him by.

As it dashed on, Oliver caught a glimpse of a man in a white nightcap, whose face seemed familiar to him, although his view was so brief that he could not identify the person. In another second or two the nightcap was thrust out of the chaise window, and a stentorian voice bellowed to the driver to stop, which he did as soon as he could pull up his horses, when the nightcap once again appeared, and the same voice called Oliver by his name.

"Here!" cried the voice. "Master Oliver, what 's the news? Miss Rose—Master O-li-ver."

"Is it you, Giles?" cried Oliver, running up to the chaise door.

Giles popped out his nightcap again, preparatory to making some reply, when he was suddenly pulled back by a young gentleman who occupied the other corner of the chaise, and who eagerly demanded what was the news.

"In a word," cried the gentleman, "better or worse?"

"Better—much better," replied Oliver hastily.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the gentleman. "You are sure?"

"Quite, sir," replied Oliver; "the change took place only a few hours ago, and Mr. Losberne says that all danger is at an end."

The gentleman said not another word, but opening the chaise-door leaped out, and, taking Oliver hurriedly by the arm, led him aside.

"This is quite certain?—there is no possibility of any mistake on your part, my boy, is there?" demanded the gentleman in a tremulous voice. "Pray do not deceive me by awakening any hopes that are not to be fulfilled."

"I would not for the world, sir," replied Oliver. "Indeed you may believe me. Mr. Losberne's words were, that she would live to bless us all for many years to come. I heard him say so."

The tears stood in Oliver's eyes as he recalled the scene which was the beginning of so much happiness, and the gentleman turned his face away, and remained silent for some minutes. Oliver thought he heard him sob more than once, but he feared to interrupt him by any farther remark,—for he could well guess what his feelings were,—and so stood apart, feigning to be occupied with his nosegay.

All this time Mr. Giles, with the white nightcap on, had been sitting upon the steps of the chaise, supporting an elbow on each knee, and wiping his eyes with a blue cotton pocket-handkerchief dotted with white spots. That the honest fellow had not been feigning emotion was abundantly demonstrated by the very red eyes with which he regarded the young gentleman, when he turned round and addressed him.

"I think you had better go on to my mother's in the chaise, Giles," said he. "I would rather walk slowly on, so as to gain a little time before I see her. You can say I am coming."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Harry," said Giles, giving a final polish to his ruffled countenance with the handkerchief, "but if you would leave the postboy to say that, I should be very much obliged to you. It wouldn't be proper for the maids to see me in this state, sir; I should never have any more authority with them if they did."

"Well," rejoined Harry Maylie, smiling, "you can do as you like. Let him go on with the portmanteaus, if you wish it, and do you follow with us. Only first exchange that nightcap for some more appropriate covering, or we shall be taken for madmen."

Mr. Giles, reminded of his unbecoming costume, snatched off and pocketed his nightcap, and substituted a hat of grave and sober shape which he took out of the chaise. This done, the postboy drove off, and Giles, Mr. Maylie, and Oliver followed at their leisure.

As they walked along, Oliver glanced from time to time with much interest and curiosity at the new-comer. He seemed about five-and-twenty years of age, and was of the middle height; his countenance was frank and handsome, and his demeanour singularly easy and prepossessing. Notwithstanding

the differences between youth and age, he bore so strong a likeness to the old lady, that Oliver would have had no great difficulty in imagining their relationship, even if he had not already spoken of her as his mother.

Mrs. Maylie was anxiously waiting to receive her son when he reached the cottage, and the meeting did not take place without great emotion on both sides.

"Oh, mother," whispered the young man, "why did you not write before?"

"I did write," replied Mrs. Maylie; "but, on reflection, I determined to keep back the letter until I had heard Mr. Losberne's opinion."

"But why," said the young man, "why run the chance of that occurring which so nearly happened? If Rose had—I cannot utter that word now—if this illness had terminated differently, how could you ever have forgiven yourself, or I been happy again?"

"If that *had* been the case, Harry," said Mrs. Maylie, "I fear your happiness would have been effectually blighted, and that your arrival here a day sooner or a day later would have been of very, very little import."

"And who can wonder if it be so, mother?" rejoined the young man; "or why should I say *if*?—It is—it is—you know it, mother—you must know it."

"I know that she well deserves the best and purest love that the heart of man can offer," said Mrs. Maylie; "I know that the devotion and affection of her nature require no ordinary return, but one that shall be deep and lasting. If I did not feel this, and know, besides, that a changed behaviour in one she loved would break her heart, I should not feel my task so difficult of performance, or have to encounter so many struggles in my own bosom, when I take what seems to me to be the strict line of duty."

"This is unkind, mother," said Harry. "Do you still suppose that I am so much a boy as not to know my own mind, or to mistake the impulses of my own soul?"

"I think, my dear fellow," returned Mrs. Maylie, laying her hand upon his shoulder, "that youth has many generous impulses which do not last, and that among them are some which, being gratified, become only the more fleeting. Above all, I think," said the lady, fixing her eyes on her son's face, "that if an enthusiastic, ardent, ambitious young man has a wife on whose name is a stain, which, though it originate in no fault of hers, may be visited by cold and sordid people upon her, and upon his children also, and, in exact proportion to his success in the world, be cast in his teeth, and made the subject of sneers against him, he may—no matter how generous and good his nature—one day repent of the connection he formed in early life, and she may have the pain and torture of knowing that he does so."

"Mother," said the young man impatiently, "he would be a mere selfish brute, unworthy alike of the name of man and of the woman you describe, who acted thus."

"You think so now, Harry," replied his mother.

"And ever will," said the young man. "The mental agony I have suffered during the last two days wrings from me the undisguised avowal to you of a passion which, as you well know, is not one of yesterday, nor one I have lightly formed. On Rose, sweet gentle girl, my heart is set as firmly as ever heart of man was set on woman. I have no thought, or view, or hope in life beyond her; and if you oppose me in this great stake, you take my peace and happiness in your hands and cast them to the wind. Mother, think better of this, and of me, and do not disregard the warm feelings of which you seem to think so little."

"Harry," said Mrs. Maylie, "it is because I think so much of warm and sensitive hearts that I would spare them from being wounded. But we have said enough, and more than enough, on this matter just now."

"Let it rest with Rose, then," interposed Harry. "You will not press these overstrained opinions of yours so far as to throw any obstacle in my way?"

"I will not," rejoined Mrs. Maylie; "but I would have you consider——"

"I have considered," was the impatient reply,— "I have considered for years,—considered almost since I have been capable of serious reflection. My feelings remain unchanged, as they ever will; and why should I suffer the pain of a delay in giving them vent, which can be productive of no earthly good? No. Before I leave this place Rose shall hear me."

"She shall," said Mrs. Maylie.

"There is something in your manner which would almost imply that she will hear me coldly, mother," said the young man anxiously.

"Not coldly," rejoined the old lady; "far from it."

"How then?" urged the young man. "She has formed no other attachment?"

"No, indeed," replied his mother. "You have, or I mistake, too strong a hold on her affections already."

"What I would say," resumed the old lady, stopping her son as he was about to speak, "is this. Before you stake your all on this chance,—before you suffer yourself to be carried to the highest point of hope, reflect for a few moments, my dear child, on Rose's history, and consider what effect the knowledge of her doubtful birth may have on her decision,—devoted as she is to us with all the intensity of her noble mind, and that perfect sacrifice of self which in all matters, great or trifling, has always been her characteristic."

"What do you mean?"

"That I leave to you to discover," replied Mrs. Maylie. "I must go back to Rose. God bless you!"

"I shall see you again to-night?" said the young man eagerly.

"By and by," replied the lady, "when I leave Rose."

"You will tell her I am here?" said Harry.

"Of course," replied Mrs. Maylie.

"And say how anxious I have been, and how much I have suffered, and how I long to see her—you will not refuse to do this, mother?"

"No," said the old lady, "I will tell her that;" and, pressing her son's hand affectionately, she hastened from the room.

Mr. Losberne and Oliver had remained at another end of the apartment while this hurried conversation was proceeding. The former now held out his hand to Harry Maylie, and hearty salutations were exchanged between them. The doctor then communicated, in reply to multifarious questions from his young friend, a precise account of his patient's situation, which was quite as consolatory and full of promise as Oliver's statement had encouraged him to hope, and to the whole of which Mr. Giles, who affected to be busy about the luggage, listened with greedy ears.

"Have you shot anything particular lately, Giles?" inquired the doctor, when he had concluded.

"Nothing particular, sir," replied Mr. Giles, colouring up to the eyes.

"Nor catching any thieves, nor identifying any house-breakers?" said the doctor maliciously.

"None at all, sir," replied Mr. Giles with much gravity.

"Well," said the doctor, "I am sorry to hear it, because you do that sort of thing so well. Pray, how is Brittle?"

"The boy is very well, sir," said Mr. Giles, recovering his usual tone of patronage, "and sends his respectful duty, sir."

"That's well," said the doctor. "Seeing you here, reminds me, Mr. Giles, that on the day before that on which I was called away so hurriedly, I executed, at the request of your good mistress, a small commission in your favour. Just step into this corner a moment, will you?"

Mr. Giles walked into the corner with much importance and some wonder, and was honoured with a short whispering conference with the doctor, on the termination of which he made a great many bows, and retired with steps of unusual stateliness. The subject matter of this conference was not disclosed in the parlour, but the kitchen was speedily enlightened concerning it; for Mr. Giles walked straight thither, and having called for a mug of ale, announced, with an air of majestic mystery which was highly effective, that it had pleased his mistress, in consideration of his gallant behaviour on the occasion of that attempted robbery, to deposit in the local savings bank the sum

of twenty-five pounds for his sole use and benefit. At this the two women servants lifted up their hands and eyes, and supposed that Mr. Giles would begin to be quite proud now; whereunto Mr. Giles, pulling out his shirt-frill, replied, "No, no"—and that if they observed at any time that he was at all haughty to his inferiors, he would thank them to tell him so. And then he made a great many other remarks, no less illustrative of his humility, which were received with equal favour and applause, and were withal as original and as much to the purpose as the remarks of great men commonly are.

Above stairs, the remainder of the evening passed cheerfully away, for the doctor was in high spirits, and however fatigued or thoughtful Harry Maylie might have been at first, he was not proof against the worthy gentleman's good humour, which displayed itself in a great variety of sallies and professional recollections, and an abundance of small jokes, which struck Oliver as being the drollest things he had ever heard, and caused him to laugh proportionately, to the evident satisfaction of the doctor, who laughed immoderately at himself, and made Harry laugh almost as heartily by the very force of sympathy. So they were as pleasant a party as, under the circumstances, they could well have been, and it was late before they retired, with light and thankful hearts, to take that rest of which, after the doubt and suspense they had recently undergone, they stood so much in need.

Oliver rose next morning in better heart, and went about his usual early occupations with more hope and pleasure than he had known for many days. The birds were once more hung out to sing in their old places, and the sweetest wild flowers that could be found were once more gathered to gladden Rose with their beauty and fragrance. The melancholy which had seemed to the sad eyes of the anxious boy to hang for days past over every object, beautiful as they all were, was dispelled as though by magic. The dew seemed to sparkle more brightly on the green leaves, the air to rustle among them with a sweeter music, and the sky itself to look more blue and bright. Such is the influence which the condition of our own thoughts exercises even over the appearance of external objects. Men who look on nature and their fellow men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and require a clearer vision.

It is worthy of remark, and Oliver did not fail to note at the time, that his morning expeditions were no longer made alone. Harry Maylie, after the very first morning when he met Oliver coming laden home, was seized with such a passion for flowers, and displayed such a taste in their arrangement, as left his young companion far behind. If Oliver were behind-hand in these respects, however, he knew where the best were to

be found, and morning after morning they scoured the country together, and brought home the fairest that blossomed. The window of the young lady's chamber was opened now, for she loved to feel the rich summer air stream in and revive her with its freshness; but there always stood in water, just inside the lattice, one particular little bunch which was made up with great care every morning. Oliver could not help noticing that the withered flowers were never thrown away, although the little vase was regularly replenished; nor could he help observing that whenever the doctor came into the garden he invariably cast his eyes up to that particular corner, and nodded his head most expressively as he set forth on his morning's walk. Pending these observations, the days were flying by, and Rose was rapidly and surely recovering.

Nor did Oliver's time hang heavy upon his hands, although the young lady had not yet left her chamber, and there were no evening walks, save now and then for a short distance with Mrs. Maylie. He applied himself with redoubled assiduity to the instructions of the white-headed old gentleman, and laboured so hard that his quick progress surprised even himself. It was while he was engaged in this pursuit that he was greatly startled and distressed by a most unexpected occurrence.

The little room in which he was accustomed to sit when busy at his books was on the ground-floor, at the back of the house. It was quite a cottage-room, with a lattice-window, around which were clusters of jessamine and honey-suckle, that crept over the casement, and filled the place with their delicious perfume. It looked into a garden, whence a wicket-gate opened into a small paddock; all beyond was fine meadow-land and wood. There was no other dwelling near, in that direction, and the prospect it commanded was very extensive.

One beautiful evening, when the first shades of twilight were beginning to settle upon the earth, Oliver sat at this window intent upon his books. He had been poring over them for some time; and as the day had been uncommonly sultry and he had exerted himself a great deal, it is no disparagement to the authors, whoever they may have been, to say that gradually and by slow degrees he fell asleep.

There is a kind of sleep that steals upon us sometimes which, while it holds the body prisoner, does not free the mind from a sense of things about it, and enable it to ramble as it pleases. So far as an overpowering heaviness, a prostration of strength, and an utter inability to control our thoughts or power of motion can be called sleep, this is it; and yet we have a consciousness of all that is going on about us, and even if we dream, words which are really spoken, or sounds which really exist at the moment, accommodate themselves with surprising readiness to our visions, until reality and imagination become so strangely blended that it is afterwards almost a matter of impossibility to separate the two. Nor is this the most striking

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Monks and the Jews

London, Richard Bentley, June 1, 1838.

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phenomenon incidental to such a state. It is an ascertained fact, that although our senses of touch and sight be for the time dead, yet our sleeping thoughts, and the visionary scenes that pass before us, will be influenced, and materially influenced, by the *mere silent presence* of some external object which may not have been near us when we closed our eyes, and of whose vicinity we have had no waking consciousness.

Oliver knew perfectly well that he was in his own little room, that his books were lying on the table before him, and that the sweet air was stirring among the creeping plants outside,—and yet he was asleep. Suddenly the scene changed, the air became close and confined, and he thought with a glow of terror that he was in the Jew's house again. There sat the hideous old man in his accustomed corner pointing at him, and whispering to another man with his face averted, who sat beside him.

"Hush, my dear!" he thought he heard the Jew say; "it is him, sure enough. Come away."

"He!" the other man seemed to answer; "could I mistake him, think you? If a crowd of devils were to put themselves into his exact shape, and he stood amongst them, there is something that would tell me how to point him out. If you buried him fifty feet deep, and took me across his grave, I should know, if there wasn't a mark above it, that he lay buried there. Wither his flesh, I should!"

The man seemed to say this with such dreadful hatred, that Oliver awoke with the fear and started up.

Good God! what was that which sent the blood tingling to his heart, and deprived him of voice or power to move! There—there—at the window—close before him—so close, that he could have almost touched him before he started back—with his eyes peering into the room, and meeting his—there stood the Jew!—and beside him, white with rage, or fear, or both, were the scowling features of the very man who had accosted him at the inn yard!

It was but an instant, a glance, a flash before his eyes, and they were gone. But they had recognised him, and he them, and their look was as firmly impressed upon his memory as if it had been deeply carved in stone, and set before him from his birth. He stood transfixed for a moment, and then, leaping from the window into the garden, called loudly for help.

LOVE, HOPE, AND JOY.

Love, Hope, and Joy, together born,
Sweet offspring of a heavenly birth,
Forsook the skies one rosy morn,
To wander for a while on earth.

Love was a fair and gentle boy,
And Hope a bright and happy thing,
And, gay as sunlight, laughing Joy
Glanced by them on his reckless wing.