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***** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MEMOIRS OF HENRY HUNT, V1 *****

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[Note:The use of quotation marks in the text does not accord with modern usage. Double quotes are nested within double quotes, and where this results in 2 doublequotes closing off a speech, one is omitted. In these cases ["] has been inserted to clarify the dialogue.

Spelling of some proper names is inconsistent. These inconsistencies have not been altered--cf.

Buonaparte--Bonaparte

Collingborn--Collingbourn

Everley--Everly

Halcombe--Halcomb]

[Illustration: HENRY HUNT, ESQR.]

Engraved by T. Woolmoth from a Drawing taken in the Kings Bench Prison the Morning after Judgement was given.

Published June 5, 1820 by T. Dolby 299 Strand.

MEMOIRS
OF HENRY HUNT, ESQ.

_Written by himself, _

IN HIS MAJESTY'S JAIL AT ILCHESTER,

IN THE COUNTY of SOMERSET.

Volume I

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the Writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.

POPE.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY T. DOLBY, 299, STRAND; AND 34, WARDOUR STREET, SOHO.

1820

TO

THE RADICAL REFORMERS,

MALE AND FEMALE,

OF

ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND,

And particularly to the Reformers of Lancashire, who attended the Meeting of the 16th of August, 1819, held on St Peter's Plain at Manchester, and more especially to the Reformers of Yorkshire, in which County a Jury found me Guilty of illegally attending that Meeting, for which, the Court of King's Bench sentenced me to be imprisoned in Ilchester Jail for Two YEARS _and_ SIX MONTHS, _and at the end of that period, to enter into recognisances for my good behaviour, for Five Years, Myself in_ ONE THOUSAND POUNDS _and Two Sureties in_ FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS EACH.

* * * * *

Ilchester Jail, May 22, 1820

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, In dedicating this work to you, I will, in the first instance, briefly record the fact, that--on Monday, the 15th day of May, Mr. Justice Bayley, as senior puisne Judge of the court of King's Bench, in a _mild and gentle manner_, passed the above unexampled sentence upon me for having attended a public meeting at Manchester, by the invitation of seven hundred inhabitant householders of that town, who signed a requisition to the Boroughreeve to call the said meeting on the 16th day of August last, for the purpose _"of taking into consideration the best and most legal means of obtaining a reform in the Commons House of Parliament."_ This meeting was no sooner assembled to the number of one hundred and fifty thousand persons, young and old of both sexes, in the most peaceable and orderly manner, than they were assailed by the Manchester yeomanry cavalry, who charged the multitude, sword in hand, and without the slightest provocation or resistance on the part of the people (as was clearly proved by the trial at York), aided by two troops of the Cheshire yeomanry, the 15th hussars, the 81st regiment of foot, and two pieces of flying artillery, sabred, trampled upon, and dispersed the unoffending and unresisting people, when 14 persons were killed and upwards of 600 wounded. I, and eleven others, having, by a mere miracle, escaped the military execution intended for us, were seized and confined in solitary dungeons in the New Bailey, for eleven days and nights, under a pretended charge of high treason. At the end of that time, upon a final examination, I was sent under a military escort, upwards of fifty miles, to Lancaster Castle, although bail was ready, and waiting to be put in for me. After this sentence was passed, I was sent to the King's Bench Prison, where I was confined till four o'clock on the Wednesday following, when I was conveyed in a chaise to this prison, where I arrived at ten o'clock the same night, being a distance of 120 miles. Thus, after having been

confined in _three separate jails_ since the 16th of August--the New Bailey, at Manchester, Lancaster Castle, and the King's Bench, I am doomed finally to be incarcerated in a dungeon of this, the _fourth jail_, for two years and six months, while _Hulton_ of _Hulton_, and those benevolent gentlemen of the Manchester yeomanry cavalry, are at large, without even the chance of any proceedings, that might lead to the punishment of their crimes, being instituted against them. Yet, we are gravely told from the bench, that the laws are equally administered to the _rich_ and to the _poor_; of the truth of which assertion, the above will, in future ages, appear as an unexampled specimen.

In addressing this work to you, my brave, patient, and persecuted friends, I hope to have an opportunity of communicating with you once a month, during my incarceration, and during the progress of the work, I shall take care to avoid all exaggerated statements. I shall confine myself to a strict relation of facts, and I shall be very particular not to gloss over or slight any one political or public act of my life you shall be in possession of the faithful history of _that man_ whom you have so unanimously honoured by the denomination of your _champion_, and in whose incarceration a deadly blow is, with savage ferocity, aimed at your rights and liberties--one who, during his whole political career, will be found to have been the consistent and undeviating advocate of _real_ or _radical reform_, one who always, under every difficulty, at all times and seasons, boldly and unequivocally claimed for the people, the right of every man to have a vote for the members of the Commons House of Parliament, and who never, under any circumstances, paltered or compromised the great constitutional principle that "_no Englishman should be taxed without his own consent_." Even when its most zealous professed advocates had abandoned the intention of maintaining this proposition, even at the risk of losing the friendship of his dearest political connections, he stood firm upon the solid basis of that incontrovertible principle, "_equal justice and freedom to all_." No pretended expediency, no crafty policy, although urged with the greatest force and zeal, by the most experienced and acute reasoners, neither flattery, bribes, nor threats, could ever, for one moment, shake his determination to support the principle Of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, or in other words, the right of every freeman to have a share by his representative in the making of those laws, by which his life, his liberty, and his property, are to be governed and disposed of. I allude, more particularly, to the meeting of delegates, (by some called deputies) in London, some time in the beginning of the year 1817. The principle of _Universal Suffrage_ was nothing new. I claim no merit in having proposed any thing novel--this right is as old as the constitution of England; it had been advocated by Sir Robert, afterwards Lord Raymond, by Sir William Jones, and afterwards, with great perseverance and ability, by the Duke of Richmond, who brought a bill into the House of Lords, in which he claimed this right for the people, and proposed to carry it into execution. At that time, however, no part of the people had petitioned for it, and the bill was thrown out. At that period, the attention of the populace of the metropolis was directed to other matters--they were engaged in Lord George Gordon's disgraceful riots. The Duke of Richmond, disgusted at the apathy of the reformers, to which he attributed the failure of his favourite measure, soon afterwards accepted a place as master general of the ordnance, and became a complete tool of the

ministers. The cause of reform languished till the year 1816, although Major Cartwright, Sir F. Burdett, Mr. Cobbett, myself, and many others, had made frequent efforts to call the people's attention to the only measure calculated to check the progress--the fatal progress of corruption, and its consequent effects, unjust and unnecessary war, profligate expenditure, the funding or swindling system, and the rapid annual increase of a ruinous and irredeemable debt. It will be said that these subjects will naturally be included in, and make part of, my history. They certainly will, but there is one circumstance connected with the events of 1816 and 1817, which is very imperfectly known to any of the reformers, and which I feel it a duty to detail to them all before I proceed any further.

In the latter end of the year 1815 and the beginning of the year 1816, the evil effects of the war began to be severely felt amongst all classes throughout the country; and, in the North of England, it was particularly felt by those employed in the manufactories. Great disturbances prevailed, and the Luddites, as they were called, committed repeated depredations, by destroying the machinery of their employers. This ultimately led to the employment of spies and informers, by the agents of the government; by which means, many of the unhappy men were convicted and executed. Major Cartwright and Mr. Cobbett, in the most laudable and praiseworthy manner, endeavoured, by their writings, and the Major, I believe, by going amongst them personally, to draw the attention of the starving manufacturers to the real cause of their distress, and recommended them to petition for reform instead of destroying the machinery. This had the desired effect, and petitions drawn up by the Major, praying for reform in the Commons House of Parliament, and demanding suffrage for those who paid taxes, poured in from all quarters. In the beginning of November some persons in London advertised and called a public meeting of the distressed inhabitants of the metropolis, to be held in Spafields, on the 15th; this originated with Dr. Watson and some of those who called themselves Spenceans. As I have learned since, they sent invitations to Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, myself, and Lord Cochrane, and even to Mr. Waithman, and several other political characters, earnestly requesting them to attend the meeting, to advise with and to assist their distressed fellow creatures, as to the best means of obtaining relief. In the mean time, the parties calling the meeting had drawn up and prepared a memorial to the Prince Regent, which was, if passed, to have been carried immediately to Carlton House, by the whole of the meeting, and presented in person to the Regent. When the day arrived, of all the persons invited as political characters to the meeting, I was the only one who attended, and, having prevailed upon those who called the meeting to abandon their famous memorial, and to relinquish the plan of going in a body to Carlton House, I proposed the resolutions and the petition to his Royal Highness the Prince; which the next day I caused to be presented to him by Lord Sidmouth: on the following day his Royal Highness was pleased so far to comply with the request of the petitioners as to send Four Thousand Pounds as a subscription to the Spitalfields Soup Committee. The resolutions proposed by me, and unanimously passed by the most numerous meeting ever held in this country, avowed the principle of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE; and the petition to the Regent claimed his pecuniary assistance, as an immediate and temporary relief; but declared that the petitioners

had no hope or expectation of permanent prosperity and happiness, till a reform of Parliament was effected, which would give to _every man_ a vote in the representation. This was, therefore, the first time that _universal suffrage_ was petitioned for at a public meeting; and I had the honour, and I shall ever feel a pride in the reflection, of being the first man who publicly proposed at a meeting of the reformers this measure, and of having caused to be presented the first petition to the throne, praying the Prince to assist the people in recovering their right of universal suffrage, in the election of members of the House of Commons. You must all recollect the infamous manner in which I was attacked and assailed by the whole of the daily London Press at that time, with the single exception of _the Statesman_. However, the reformers of the north, south, east, and west, became instantly alive to the appeal that was made to them in the resolutions passed at Spa Fields; public meetings were held, and petitions to the House of Commons were signed, all praying for _universal suffrage_; and, by the time of the meeting of Parliament, the delegates from petitioning bodies came up to town, in consequence of a circular letter signed by Sir Francis Burdett, to consult, and to settle upon the extent of suffrage and other matters to be recommended, for the adoption of all the petitioning bodies of reformers throughout the country. This was most unnecessary, for they had, _one and all_, already adopted the principle, and followed the example, set them by the inhabitants of the metropolis at Spa Fields. When the delegates were arrived from _Scotland, Yorkshire, Lancashire,_ and most of the counties in the north, from _Bath, Bristol,_ and other places in the west, with the petitions entrusted to them, the signatures to which, together with those of the petitions previously sent up, did not amount to less than half a million; I came to town as the delegate from Bath and Bristol, both of which cities had held public meetings, most numerous attended, and passed similar resolutions to those agreed to at Spa Fields. The Reformers from each of those cities had sent me up a petition, to be presented to the House of Commons, praying for _universal suffrage_, one signed by 24,000 and the other by 25,000 persons. To be brief here, (for I shall detail the circumstances more fully hereafter, as they make a most important epoch of my life); the delegates met, 63 in number, at the Crown and Anchor, Major Cartwright in the chair, who, together with Mr. Jones Burdett, attended as a deputation from the Hampden Club. The Major, in opening the business of the day, stated that the members of the Hampden Club, with Sir Francis Burdett at their head, had come to a resolution to support suffrage to the extent of householders, _and no further,_ and that they recommended the adoption of this plan to the delegates. The Major was particularly eloquent, and went out of the usual course of a chairman, by requesting, almost as a personal favour to himself, that the delegates would adopt the recommendation of the Hampden Club. Mr. Cobbett then rose, and, in a speech replete with every argument which this most clear and powerful reasoner could suggest, proposed the first resolution, that the meeting should adopt the recommendation of the Hampden Club, and agree to recommend the reformers to petition to the extent of _householder suffrage only;_ urging, as Major Cartwright had done before, the necessity of agreeing to this plan, because Sir F. Burdett had positively refused to support any petitions for universal suffrage. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Jno. Allen, my brother delegate, from Bath, although he had positive instructions not to agree to any thing short of universal suffrage; but Mr. Cobbett's powerful

though fallacious reasoning, had convinced him, of the necessity of curtailing the right to householders only. I rose and moved an amendment, substituting _universal_ for _householder suffrage_, and, with all the reasoning and energy in my power, I combated the arguments of my friends Cobbett and Major Cartwright, deprecating the narrow-minded policy that would deprive 3-4ths of the population of the inherent birthright of every freeman. My proposition, and the whole of the arguments I used in its support, were received by a very large majority of the delegates with enthusiastic approbation; so much so, that it convinced Mr. Cobbett of the folly as well as the inutility of persisting in his motion. My amendment having been seconded by Mr. Hulme, from Bolton in Lancashire, and being supported by a very ingenious argument of my brave friend and fellow prisoner (now in Lincoln Castle) Mr. Bamford, Mr. Cobbett rose and begged to withdraw his motion, he having been convinced of the practicability of universal suffrage by the speech of Mr. Bamford, who had at the time only said a few words upon that subject. The question was put, and _principle_ carried it against _policy_, there being for my amendment I think 60, and only 3 for the householder plan. Thus then, my friends, whether I was right or whether I was wrong, I not only was the first to propose the adoption of the wild and visionary scheme of _universal suffrage_ at a great public meeting, but I also stood firm to the cause, when those who have since so ably advocated the principle, were (in evil hour) from policy about to abandon it. Let, therefore, all the blame of the reformers having so determinedly advocated the wild and visionary scheme of _universal suffrage_ rest upon my shoulders, which, thank God, are quite broad enough to bear it without feeling it in any degree burdensome, particularly as Sir F. Burdett has at length come fully up to our mark. From that time to this I have never deviated from, never shifted to the right or to the left, but always, at all times, through good report, and through evil report, undisguisedly enforced and maintained, with all the ability I possessed, the right of the whole of my fellow-countrymen to be fairly and freely represented, in the Commons House of Parliament. If there be any merit in what was then called a stubborn and pertinacious adherence to this great principle, I am only entitled to share that merit jointly with Mr. Hulme, Mr. Bamford, and the other brave and patriotic men who came from different parts of the country, as delegates. Without their manly support, this measure would have been lost, and the reformers throughout the kingdom would then have been recommended to abandon the high ground they had taken; to give up petitions, already signed by half a million of men for _universal suffrage_; and in its stead to petition for suffrage to the extent of _householders_, or to the payers of _direct taxes_ ONLY.--Having established this position, for the correctness of which I appeal to all the delegates who were present, I shall leave it for the present, although there are very important matters, and some _very curious circumstances_ connected with the events of that period, which have never yet appeared before the public, which must come out, and which will form a very material part of my history. The government, or rather the ministers, had their eye upon this meeting of delegates, and they well knew ALL that passed there; and I should not be surprised if six months of my imprisonment may be fairly placed to the account of what the editor of the Macclesfield Courier called, "my most uncompromising perseverance."--The editor of an obscure Sunday London Newspaper, in observing upon my sentence, says most exultingly, "_The game its now

up--with this man we have done, to the people we now turn:" and what do you think he means to do, how does he propose to relieve their distresses? In speaking of your prospects of relief he says "_Suffer they must for a time, it would be vain to deny this, it would be dishonest to hold out any other hope_. IT REMAINS WITH THEMSELVES WHETHER THEIR SUFFERINGS BE LONG OR SHORT." So this gentleman tells you first that the game is up, and then he consoles you by telling you that the game is in your own hands. Was there ever such paltering, ever such base and stupid attempts to delude rational beings? The Morning Post of the 23d of May, a few days after my sentence, gives vent to his malignant joy in the following words.

"The political matters of fact of the last month will descend to posterity as the proudest mementos of the age in which we live; never at any period since Trial by Jury has been the stipulation of our allegiance, never has that grand perfection of Justice been more sacredly guarded. The trial of Mr. HUNT at York is a precedent of almost unattainable impartiality in judicial proceedings. Pending that trial the reports of its progress gave radicalism a confidence it undisguisedly evinced, that the result would be favourable to its heart's worst wishes. The Lo Paens of Faction were in full rehearsal, when the bringers of evil tidings announced the triumph of Truth. The conviction of a burlesque on baronetcy was expected in sulky helplessness--but the overthrow of the CHAMPION of LIBERTY, the ORATOR whose eloquence was to have been the passing dirge of Justice--his overthrow was the overthrow of thousands. With his, hearts sunk, and menaces grew silent; the monster at his whetstone dropped the half-sharpened dagger at the conviction of Henry Hunt; and the tool of his excitement unscrewed the pike-head and threw away the musquet. I have no hesitation in declaring, that all the numerous verdicts for the Crown, that of late have asserted the majesty of Law, including the convictions of high treason, have not done HALF so much for the real interest of social quiet, as the radically never-dreamt-of conviction of ' the Lord of the Manor of Glastonbury .'"

This you see, my friends of Yorkshire, is meant to quiet the conscience of Mr. SEPTIMUS BROMLEY and his brother TALESMAN. The SPECIAL Gentlemen being above any thing of the sort. I wish some friend who lives near the said Septimus would give me a line, and tell me who and what he is, and what he says for himself. I hope some radical in his neighbourhood will send me a good and particular account of this gentleman. But I see by the Newspapers that the game is not quite up, or if it is, a new game is begun. If the Honourable House have got rid of one set of petitioners, a new set is sprung up, not of radicals to be sure, but a set of agriculturists, merchants, manufacturers, and shipowners, who all appear to be petitioning against each other, or at least each of them is petitioning for that which would add to the distress and ruin of the other. The Honourable House is placed in a very ticklish and delicate situation. It does not dare to serve the petitions of these new applicants as they did our petitions, my friends for reform--kick them out of the House; but having for the present got rid of the radicals, they have now plenty of leisure to attend to the numerous petitions of all the rest of

the community. The Yeomanry Cavalry, good souls they are in distress, and they want another CORN BILL. But then you see his Majesty's Ministers, kind-hearted creatures, and the considerate merchants, the _Barings_, and the _Ricardos_, they say this must not be. By management the _New Corn Bill_ gentry got a majority: my Lord Castlereagh is quite shocked, and even Mr. Holme Sumner, benevolent heart, he is quite astounded with the unexpected and undeserved success of his own motion. Mark their proceedings well, my friends--for you to petition I fear will be in vain, but mark their proceedings. It so very much resembles the proceedings when the last Corn Bill was passed, that I have little doubt there is foul play going on somewhere. The farmers cannot pay their _rents, rates_, and _taxes_ unless they can do it by a rise in the price of the _quartern loaf_. Baring and Ricardo do not approve of this--each of them has his scheme for the relief of the general distress, agricultural and all. Baring hints, but he only hints, at something _tangible_, he hints that _rents should be lowered_, and his brother stock-jobber, Ricardo, proposes then to pay off the national debt, by making the land-holders pay down at once 15 per cent. upon the value of their estates. The Honourable Members stare with astonishment at the propositions of these wise law-givers--and well they may. Although the "game may be up;" although the assertion of the editor of the Morning Post may be true, "that the verdict against Henry Hunt has proved the overthrow of thousands, and rendered twice as much service to the real interest of social quiet, as ALL the other verdicts for the crown put together;" yet I perceive by the language of a petition from the inhabitants of the town of Kirkeaton, presented to the Honourable House by my Lord Milton, that even the locking me up in a jail, in consequence of this verdict, has neither contributed to remove the distress, nor to put food into the mouths of the poor reformers of Kirkeaton. Good God of Heaven! what must Lord Milton be made of to present, _merely present, mind_, a petition shewing that 1729 of his constituents, in one parish had been, and were living, or rather starving, upon 11 3/4 _d_. each per week, that the average income of 1729 human beings in that county, Yorkshire, where he is their _virtual representative_, is under _one shilling_ per head per week?--Gracious God! the present member for this county, Sir Thomas Lethbridge, once declared in the Honourable House, that the language of Sir Francis Burdett made _"his hair stand on end upon his head."_ To have seen Lord Milton present such a petition as this, to have heard the officer of the Honourable House mumble out a description, a recital of the privations and cruel sufferings of my poor insulted fellow countrymen of Kirkeaton, without rising to say one word in their behalf; without calling down the vengeance of Heaven and Earth upon the heads of those who had by their acts reduced the country to such a state of wretchedness and woe; to have witnessed this, I say, although it might not have made my hair stand on end, it would, I am sure, have chilled every drop of blood in my body. I can conscientiously say, that the mere reading in the Times newspaper the account of your cruel sufferings, my poor countrymen of Kirkeaton, has given me more pain than a years' imprisonment would have done, if I could have known that you were enjoying a fair equivalent for your honest industry. Talk of imprisonment indeed! why it is a perfect Paradise compared with the wants and privations which you are doomed to endure. The situation of a prisoner in this jail, let him be confined for any thing less than high treason or murder, is heaven upon earth compared to your lot. Let us see; there is a

prisoner who is appointed to wait upon me here, an old soldier, who has enjoyed rank in the army as an adjutant, but having a large family, and meeting with many reverses of fortune, he became reduced in his circumstances, and, in consequence of great persecutions, was at length driven to seek relief from the parish. The sufferings and privations of his wife and children daily stared him in the face, without even the hope of relief; and, brooding over his unmerited persecutions and neglect, he was driven to drinking, &c. In a fit of temporary delirium he attempted to lay violent hands upon himself and wife, for which he is sentenced to be imprisoned here for twelve months. His wife and family are supported by the parish; and I will now tell you what he receives for his week's allowance, exclusive of clothes, lodging, fire, and washing, all found by the county. He gets _one pound and a half of good bread and one penny every day_. Ten pounds and a half of good white bread, and sevenpence to purchase potatoes and salt, or milk, per week. Bread and pence, at the very lowest, two shillings and six-pence per week. Now, if we reckon one shilling and six-pence, at the very lowest rate, for _washing, lodging, clothing_, and _firing_, which are all found in plenty and very good of the sort, he receives the value of four shillings per week. The bread, &c. is quite as much as, or rather more than, a moderate man can eat; and this person, who has seen a great deal of the world, seriously informs me that he enjoys here, happiness, ease, and comfort, compared to what he had to encounter out of prison; and as he professes to be very well pleased with waiting upon me, he dreads the approach of his release. Every person in the jail has the same allowance, and if they choose to work, the Governor enables them to earn from threepence up to one shilling a-day over.

Now, my good friends of Kirkeaton, although I will not recommend you to do any thing to get sent to jail, yet, I will tell you what I would do if I were in your situation. I would work hard from Monday to Saturday, and at the end of the week if I found that my wages were not sufficient to support myself, my wife, and children, in the common necessaries of life, I would, on the following Monday, try a fresh plan. Instead of going to work, I would go to a neighbouring magistrate, Lord Milton, or Lord Fitzwilliam, for instance, if they were within reach, and I would tell him that I had left my wife and family chargeable to the parish, as I was unable to support them by my labour; but as I knew the leaving of my family as an incumbrance upon the parish was an offence against the laws, for which I was liable to be committed to prison, and as I did not wish to give the parish officers more trouble than was absolutely necessary, I had come to request his lordship to make out my mittimus, that I might go to jail as soon and as peaceably as possible. I know what the corrupt knave of the Morning Post will say, "Ha! he is in a prison himself, and he wants now to get all his followers there also." But suppose this were the case, which it is not, you would not, could not, be worse off than Lord Milton's constituents are. But I have said this a thousand times within the last five years; nay, I always said this, seeing that a poor labouring man is twice as well off in a jail as he is out of it, as to meat, drink, washing, and lodging.

Now, my friends and fellow countrymen, the writing the history of my own life, during my confinement in a prison, will not, I trust, be considered presumption in me; because I follow the example of Sir Walter Raleigh and

many other patriotic and eminent men who have gone before me. I am not much of a copyist, but I am not ashamed of being accused of endeavouring to imitate the brave and persecuted Napoleon, who is writing his Memoirs during his imprisonment on the barren rock of St. Helena. Napoleon I esteem the most illustrious and eminent man of the present age, both as a profound statesman and a brave and matchless general. Although he never appeared to evince so sincere a desire as could be wished, to promote the universal liberty of man to the extent that I contend, and have always contended for, yet, when I reflect upon the period in which his energetic mind was allowed to have its full scope of action, and when I recollect the powerful armies and fleets that he had to contend with, and the phalanx of tyrants who were at various times leagued together against him, I am disposed not to examine too nicely and with too critical an eye the means that he used to defend himself against their unceasing endeavours to destroy him, and to restore the old tyranny of the Bourbons. He is, like myself, a prisoner, and imprisoned by the same power; only in his case they have not even the _forms_ of law to justify them in his detention. He is a prisoner upon a barren rock, but I have not the least hesitation in pronouncing him to have been, both in the cabinet and the field, as to talent and courage, unrivalled in the pages of modern or ancient history. Neither the reformers nor the people of England had any share in sending him to St. Helena, nor ought they in fairness to participate in the disgrace of his detention.

In my humble judgment, the greatest fault he ever committed was, in having too good an opinion of the justice of the boroughmongers, and relying upon the liberality of their agents, so far as to be betrayed into that net which now surrounds him. He always appeared to admire our courts of justice; but he knew nothing of our system of packing SPECIAL JURIES.

In the progress of this work I shall give a brief delineation of the political movements of the last twelve or fourteen years, or at least of those events that came within my knowledge, which I believe will include almost every thing relating to reform and the public characters who have taken any part in promoting or retarding that desirable object. These public characters consist of George the Third down to Arthur Thistlewood inclusive, who are dead and gone; of those who are yet living from George the Fourth down to Mr. Cobler Preston and Mr. Billsticker Waddington. The public events will more particularly include the History of the great Public Meetings held within the last twelve years in Wiltshire, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Middlesex, London, Westminster, Bristol, Bath, Spa-fields, Smithfield and Manchester, as well as those held at the Crown & Anchor and the Freemason's and London Taverns; and likewise of the contested elections of Bristol, Westminster, London, Bridport, Ludgershal and Preston, at all of which I took an active part, and therefore am enabled to detail many curious and interesting anecdotes, facts, intrigues, plots, under-plots, cabals, &c. which were never before presented to the public, and which circumstances, together with the secret springs and actions of those who worked in the back ground, which have hitherto been very imperfectly understood, shall be brought to light and faithfully recorded; taking due care not to betray any confidential communications. I shall, also, as is usual, or at least as is very common, give a short sketch of my ancestors, not because I can show a long line of them up to the

Conquest, (nor because I esteem this a circumstance to boast of), but I shall state facts as they have been handed down from father to son by old family documents, regardless of the sneers of those who, at the same time and in the very same breath in which they affect to ridicule and despise all distinctions of this sort, fall themselves into a much greater error and indulge in a much less excusable folly; that of holding up to public admiration, esteem and confidence, their own offspring, and bedaubing them with the most fulsome adulation merely because they are their own progeny; although every other person except themselves can clearly perceive that they neither possess talent, intellect, public spirit, nor any other qualification calculated either to amuse or to instruct. When I see a sensible man in other respects fall into an inconsistency of this sort, I am always reminded of the fable of the _Eagle, the Owl, and her young ones_. The fact is, that I am more proud of my father than of any of my ancestors, because I know him to have been an excellent and an honest man, and one who by his industry and talent became a second founder of his family. But as the object of my labours will be to give you a faithful history of my _own life_, it is of very little consequence either to you or me whether I ever had a grand father or not, except as far as relates to the coincidence of the events of the present time with those which occurred in the reigns of Charles the First and Second, and during the protectorship of Cromwell. It may not be amiss to remind you that the brave and enlightened patriot, _Prynne_, was imprisoned at Dunster Castle in _this county_ by the tyrant Charles the First. Prynne had his nose slit, and his ears cut off, for speaking and writing his mind; but it must not be forgotten, that he lived to see the _tyrant's head struck off_, and the _infamous judge_ who passed the _cruel sentence_ upon him, brought to a _just and exemplary punishment_.

In the confident hope that we shall live to see better days, our Country restored to prosperity, and its inhabitants to freedom and happiness,

I remain,

My friends and fellow-countrymen,

Your faithful and sincere humble servant,

H. HUNT.

MEMOIRS

OF HENRY HUNT.

I was born at Widdington Farm, in the parish of Upavon, in the county of Wilts, on the 6th day of Nov. 1773, and am descended from as ancient and respectable a family as any in that county, my forefather having arrived in England with, and attended William the Conqueror, as a colonel in that

army, with which he successfully invaded this country. He became possessed of very considerable estates in the counties of Wilts and Somerset, which passed from father to son, down to the period of the civil wars in the reign of Charles the First, when, in consequence of the tyrannical government of that weak and wicked prince, _resistance became a duty_; and, at length, after having by the means of _corrupt judges and packed juries_, not only amerced and incarcerated, but caused to be executed many of the wisest, bravest, and most patriotic men of the age, the tyrant was ultimately brought to justice, and forfeited his head upon a scaffold, having first been compelled to sign the death warrant for his favourite, Lord Strafford[1]. When the commonwealth was established, and Cromwell declared Lord Protector, my great great grandfather, colonel Thomas Hunt, who was in possession of those estates in Wiltshire, unfortunately took a decided and prominent part in favour of Charles the Second, who had fled, and was then remaining in France, waiting an opportunity for his restoration, and instigating those who were known to be his partisans in this country, to resist and overthrow the _government and constitution of the country as then by law established_. Charles was in constant correspondence with my forefather colonel Hunt, who together with Mr. Grove and Mr. Penruddock, were all country gentlemen of large property and considerable influence, residing in the county of Wilts, and avowed royalists firmly attached to the family of Stuart. And as it was well known by Cromwell that Charles had a number of powerful partisans in various parts of the kingdom, he took good care to have all their motions well watched, and as he kept a host of spies in his employ, they found it next to impossible to form or arrange any general plan of co-operation, without its coming to the knowledge of his agents. Many well-digested schemes had been detected and frustrated, by these watchful well-paid minions of the Protector, but the royalists were not to be deterred from their purpose, although many of them received intimation from Oliver that he was aware of all their plans and intentions: he resting satisfied with this knowledge, and the conviction that he not only kept their restless spirits in check, but that he was at all times prepared to put them down with a high hand, in case they should ever dare to break out into open violence, or attempt to put their intentions into execution. However, as Hunt, Grove, and Penruddock, with many other friends in the West, became very impatient; it was agreed to attempt a general communication by means of a meeting of the disaffected at[2] a great stag hunt, which was announced to be about to take place somewhere in the forest, in the neighbourhood of Wokingham, between Reading and Windsor. To this stag hunt all the known partisans of the house of Stuart were invited; and when assembled there in great numbers from all parts of the kingdom, it was agreed among them, that each man should raise a force agreeable to his means, some horse and some foot, by a particular day, in order to attack the troops of Cromwell, who was a great deal too wary and cunning to suffer such an extraordinary assembly, under any circumstances, and particularly of such suspicious persons as those who attended the hunt were known to be, without sending some of his agents to join them, whereby he might become acquainted with whatever project they might have in contemplation. They all departed after the hunt was over, having fixed to be ready and join in the field by a particular day. Cromwell's agents did their duty, and he was no sooner informed of the plan which was laid, than he made all due preparation for meeting any force that might be brought

into the field against him by these powerful malcontents. He not only did this, but he employed his agents to win over some of the most formidable of his adversaries, by bribes and promises. Having succeeded in this, he wrote to all the remaining conspirators, and informed them separately, that he was perfectly aware of all their plots, and of their intention to bring a force into the field against him on a particular day; he assured them that he had made all necessary preparations, not only to meet, and to defeat them with an overwhelming force of well-disciplined troops, but that he had also made friends of some of those on whom the conspirators placed their greatest reliance. He concluded by saying, that, as their project would be sure to end in discomfiture, ruin, and disgrace, he advised them to abandon their plan altogether; and in that case he promised each of the parties his pardon, and that it should be taken no further notice of. This had the desired effect with most of the numerous partisans of Charles, who had pledged themselves to take the field; for when they found that all their plans had come to the knowledge of Cromwell, they anticipated that he would be prepared to meet them with such a force as it would not be prudent in them to encounter, and, as prudence is the better part of valour, they at once abandoned their intended insurrection, and trusted to the clemency of him whom they had resolved to hurl from the eminence which they professed to say he had usurped. Not so with the three Wiltshire royalists; they also had received the circular intimation from Cromwell, but they scorned to be worse than their words, they took no notice of his proffered pardon, they each raised a troop of horse as they had promised, and having armed and accoutred their men by the time appointed, they marched into Salisbury, where Cromwell's judges were then holding the assizes, and without any further ceremony struck the first blow, by consigning the Lord Protector's judges to prison, having liberated the prisoners they were about to try.

The next day they marched into Hampshire towards the appointed rendezvous, as had been previously agreed upon; but when they arrived there, instead of meeting, as they expected, any of their friends who were parties at the stag hunt, they found Cromwell's army who had intimation of their movements, already there in considerable force, ready to overwhelm them. However, Cromwell, as usual, endeavoured to carry his point by policy; in the first instance, rather than sacrifice any lives in such an unequal conflict, he sent a flag of truce, and promised if they would lay down their arms they should be pardoned, and all officers and men might return to their homes without any molestation. A consultation and council of war was held, when Grove, Hunt, and Penruddock came to a determination to die sword in hand rather than trust to the clemency of him, whom they deemed an usurper, and they returned an answer accordingly. In the meantime, Oliver had sent some of his agents amongst the men, to whom they pointed out the desperate situation in which their commanders had placed them, and urged them at once to accept the offer of the Protector and return to their homes; and when Grove, Hunt, and Penruddock ordered their men to prepare for the attack, they one and all refused, and immediately lay down their arms, upon which they were instantly surrounded, and made prisoners; and instead of Cromwell keeping his word with these poor fellows, he ordered every common man to be instantly hung upon the boughs of trees and elsewhere, and the officers to be committed to three separate jails in the West of England upon a charge of high treason, for making war against the

troops of the Commonwealth, in order to depose the Protector, and with an intent to alter the government and constitution of the country, as by the then law established. Upon which charge they were tried, found guilty, and sentenced by the very judges whom they had before imprisoned at Salisbury, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, but upon petition their sentence was mitigated by Cromwell to that of being beheaded. Colonel Hunt was sent back after trial to be executed at this very jail, and possibly might have been confined, if not in the same room, upon the very same spot wherein his descendant is now writing the account of the transaction, which has descended by tradition and written documents to him as the heir of the family, and which written documents in proof thereof, are now in his possession. However, be that as it may, it is therein recorded that Hunt's two sisters, Elizabeth and Margery, came to visit him the night previous to his execution, which was ordered to take place at day-break the next morning. The regulations of the jail not being so strictly performed as they are now, his sister Margery slept in his bed all night, while the Colonel, who had dressed himself in her clothes, walked out of the prison unperceived with his sister Elizabeth and escaped; but, as it is recorded by himself, being a stranger in the neighbourhood, and fearful of keeping in the high-way, he had lost himself in the night and had wandered about, so that when day-light arrived he had not got so far from the jail but that he heard the bell toll for his execution. At this awful period he met a collier carrying a bag of coals upon his horse, and having ascertained by some conversation that he had with him, that he was friendly to the cause of the Stuarts and hostile to the Protector, he was induced to discover himself, and to place his person and his life in his power, of which he had no reason to repent, as the man proved faithful, and assisted him to escape to France, where he remained with the second Charles, and returned in company with him at the time of the restoration.

As the circumstances attending his escape are in my opinion very interesting, I shall give them as they have been handed down to me, although they may be by some considered as tedious in the detail; yet as they are circumstances very imperfectly recorded, only in the early editions of Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, and as they relate to events somewhat similar to the present times, wherein a prominent part was taken by one of my forefathers, I trust that they will not be esteemed superfluous, as making a component part of my memoirs, in reference to the political part taken by one of my family at this important epoch of the English history. The collier took him up behind on his horse, dressed as he was in female attire, and having struck across the country by some private roads, he arrived at his habitation, a lone cottage situated on the side of a large common, where he remained concealed, anxiously awaiting the approach of night, and dreading^[3] every moment the appearance of the officers of justice in pursuit of their victim. In the mean time the collier had procured two muskets and a blunderbuss, which he had got loaded, determined to stand by the Colonel, who, if driven to extremities, was resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible, but not to be taken again alive. But, to return to the jail; when the officers of death arrived to unbolt the door of the intended victim, what must have been their surprise and indignation to have found in his bed a woman, a brave and patriotic female, who gloried in having saved the life of a high spirited and beloved brother! With what delight have we read of the

conduct of Madame Lavalette, who saved her husband from an untimely death by similar means, who, by her virtuous devotion, rescued the victim marked out for the treacherous revenge of a weak, wicked, and pusillanimous prince; with what pleasure has every humane and patriotic bosom been roused into admiration, at the noble, generous, and successful exertions of Sir R. Wilson and his friends, to assist in snatching the life of that devoted victim, from the bloody hand of the executioner! But many brave men have voluntarily sacrificed themselves to save the life of a friend; in the pages of history, we find that many an excellent wife has done the same to save a beloved husband; but where shall we find a similar instance of disinterested devotion in a sister?--To be the descendant of such a woman--to bear the same name and belong to her family, is in itself something that I am proud to boast of. With what delight have I (while yet a boy) listened to this recital, while my father dwelt on it with rapture; his eye glistening with a dignified pride as he recounted the tale of this heroine of the family! How often have I been sent up stairs to unlock the old oak chest, and to bring down the musty records of these eventful days, that they might be unrolled either to refresh my father's memory, or to vouch for particular acts and circumstances! How many times, subsequently, has it been my lot to turn to this or that particular event, and while he enjoyed his pipe, how often did I at his command read the minute detail as I found it written, upon the old musty parchments and papers! However, to proceed, Colonel Desbrow, who then had the command of Oliver's troops at this place, was instantly informed of the flight of the prisoner; he ordered Margery to appear before him, which she did habited in her brother's clothes, and he threatened to have her executed instantly, without judge or jury, in her brother's stead, if she did not immediately inform him of the whole plot, and assist in the re-capture of her brother. She calmly replied, that she had not the least objection to comply with his demand as far as she knew of the plot. She confessed that she went into the prison to visit her brother with the intention to effect his escape if possible; that neither her brother, nor even her sister, had the slightest knowledge of her intentions till she proposed it to him in the prison, that there she found him resigned to his fate, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she at last prevailed upon him to put it into practice; that all she knew of him was, that he had left the room with her sister Elizabeth, but which way or where he was gone she knew nothing; then, with great and dignified firmness, she added, even if she had known any thing of his route, Colonel Desbrow must be aware, that as she had the courage and goodness to plan and effect his escape, no threats, not even the torture, should induce her to do any thing that might place him in their power again. Elizabeth was instantly taken into custody and examined also, but she knew nothing more than her sister. They were both consigned to the dungeon that he had quitted, and the scaffold, although it remained fixed for some days, it mourned for the loss of its victim, and the gaping multitude daily stared in vain for the consummation of the bloody sacrifice. Col. Desbrow sent off dispatches to the Government, raised a Hue and Cry to search every house they came to, and dispatched messengers to all the out-ports, so that neither pains, expense, nor trouble were spared to retake the fugitive. In the mean time the sentence of Grove and Penruddock was put in execution. They were both beheaded on the same morning, one at Exeter, and the other at some other jail. It is a very remarkable coincidence of circumstances, that at the time myself, the

lineal heir and descendant of Colonel Hunt, am confined in this jail by the state policy of the day, Colonel Desbrow, the lineal descendant of the very Colonel Desbrow, who then had the command of this district as a soldier and servant of Cromwell, is at this very time an officer in the service of the present reigning family, and, I believe, an attendant about the person of the Sovereign. Colonel Hunt remained concealed in the cottage of his protector, but when night came they were too agitated to retire to rest; they therefore barricaded the door of their little fortress as well as they could, and, having put out the lights, took their station at the bed-room window, each with a loaded firelock, and all the arms and ammunition they could muster for re-loading, preparatory to the best and most determined defence in case of necessity. In this they were ably and resolutely assisted by the wife of the collier, both of whom are recorded to have evinced the most heroic courage, coolness, and presence of mind upon this, to them, desperate and trying occasion, which qualities were soon put to the test, by the sudden and boisterous arrival of the Hue & Cry, consisting of 8 or 10 mounted troops, accompanied by an officer belonging to the Sheriff. As that which followed relating to this rencontre is described minutely, and in the most simple manner, I will give it verbatim, as I find it recorded in the family document, from which I have taken the whole narrative. Colonel Hunt and the Collier were standing at the window, each with a loaded musket; the collier's wife stood behind, with a loaded blunderbuss in one hand, and with the other she was to supply the powder and slugs, for they had no ball, for reloading. They were in this order when the commander of the gang loudly halloed and demanded admittance. This, as was agreed upon by the party within, was repeated three times before any answer was given, or any movement made from within. At length, the Collier opened the casement of the thatched cottage, and, rubbing his eyes as if he had just awoke out of his first sleep, he exclaimed, in the broad Somersetshire dialect, "What's thow want makin such a naise there?" The reply was, "We want admittance: we are the Hue and Cry, come to search every house for a prisoner that has escaped from Ilchester jail in woman's clothes." At which the Collier exclaimed, "Ha, ha, ha! what a pack of fools, to come to look for a man in woman's clothes at this time o' the night." The officer, with a stern voice, demanded immediate admittance, saying, that they had a warrant, signed by Colonel Desbrow, for searching every house; and that, unless he came down and opened the door, they would force their way in immediately; upon which the Collier turned round and said, as if speaking to his wife, "Come, dame, you must get up and strike a light, and we will let the gentlemen in presently." There was then some pretended delay in finding the tinder-box, and at length the Collier began striking the steel with the flint, and, after bestowing a few curses on the dampness of the tinder, intentionally struck down the tinderbox, tinder and all, upon which he said, "There, now, they must come in and search in the dark." All this time they were actually preparing to fire upon the Hue and Cry, and just as they had taken aim, and were upon the point of drawing their triggers, the Captain of the gang gave the Collier two or three heavy curses, and said to his men, "Come, let us be off to some more likely place: there is nobody here but that stupid fellow, that does not appear to know his right hand from his left." They therefore galloped off to search the next house, leaving to Colonel Hunt and his faithful friends in adversity, the uninterrupted possession of his safe and secure retreat;

where he remained concealed, till, in the disguise of some of the Collier's clothes, he contrived, soon afterwards, to escape to France, accompanied by his friend. He was received by Charles with open arms, with every demonstration of gratitude, and professions of future reward, in case he should succeed in re-establishing himself upon the throne of England. In the meanwhile, Cromwell, enraged at the escape of one, who had discovered such intrepid and persevering hostility to his power, confiscated the whole of his estates, kept his sisters, Elizabeth and Margery, close prisoners in this jail, and frequently threatened to execute the latter, unless Hunt would return from France, and surrender himself to his fate. This reaching the ears of Colonel Hunt in France, and fearing for the safety of such excellent sisters, he at length resolved to return and rescue them from their unpleasant and precarious situation, by resigning himself into the hands of Cromwell.--Charles remonstrated in vain, as Hunt appeared resolute in his determination. The Prince, therefore, put him under arrest, and forcibly detained him in custody to prevent him from surrendering himself. His two sisters were confined _two years._ When they were set at liberty, Charles released him from his confinement; he remained in constant attendance about his person, returned with him in the same vessel, and assisted in his restoration to the throne, which had been withheld from him during the life of Cromwell.

Colonel Hunt, as well as all his friends, expected the immediate restoration of his estates, which had been confiscated. In fact no one could have expected less than this act of justice at least, in return for his long, zealous and faithful services. But, on the contrary, the secret advisers of the grateful prince recommended to him by all means to endeavour to conciliate his enemies, and to let his friends shift for themselves, which advice he followed to the letter in this instance. As Colonel Hunt's estates had fallen into powerful hands, Charles absolutely refused to take any measures for their restoration. Thus was this faithful partisan of royalty rewarded for all his services, by one of the basest acts of ingratitude that ever disgraced the character even of a prince. How truly verified was the prophetic and sublime admonition of Scripture, "Put not your trust in princes." However, Colonel Hunt was offered the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster for life, which offer he indignantly refused, and in disgust retired into the country, where he married and passed the remainder of his life in tranquillity, accompanied by his sisters, upon a small estate in the parish of Enford in the county of Wilts, which had been overlooked by the agents of Cromwell. Here, with the property he had with his lady, and the wreck of his fortune, he sustained the character of a gentleman to a good old age, leaving an only son, to whom Queen Anne gave the colonelcy of a regiment of foot. This was the last of my family who was ever in the employment of the government, or who ever received one shilling of the public money in any capacity whatever.

This little estate descended to my grandfather, who married Miss Biggs of Stockton, and, at his death, it came, considerably encumbered, to my father, in the year 1774, the year after I was born. Finding, during the life time of his father, that this was a very poor property to live upon as a gentleman, he turned his mind to business, and to the improvement of his fortune. He married at the age of forty-one to Miss Powell who was

only nineteen, the eldest daughter of a respectable farmer of Week near Devizes, and went to live at Widdington, in the parish of Upavon, a lone farm situated upon Salisbury Plain, not within one mile of any other house whatever. The 6th day of November, 1773, gave birth to the author of these memoirs, and as I was the first born, my father having a great deal of the old family pride about him, the event was commemorated in a very memorable and extraordinary manner. It was the custom of the country to celebrate the birth of a child by inviting the friends and neighbours to partake of a _sugar-toast_ feast, which consisted of toast well baked, sliced in layers, in a large bowl, interspersed with sugar and nutmeg, well soaked in boiling ale, or what was called in that country, good old October. My father as soon as he was about to marry, anticipating the natural result, prepared and provided two hogsheads of real stingo for the occasion, it being brewed exactly fifteen bushels to the hogshead, which he liberally determined should be devoted to celebrate the happy event, which was literally carried into effect. I have very often heard those who were present, and who participated in the good cheer and rejoicing, mention these circumstances. It was usual, in that part of the country, upon these occasions, to have a day fixed and set apart for the feast, when all the neighbours were invited to partake and drink to the health of the good lady in the straw, and long life to the little stranger. But upon this occasion my father set no bounds to his joy, and determined to keep it up, which he did, till the whole to the last hoop of the stingo was gone. I have heard the nurse say that she toasted bread from morning till night for a fortnight, and that in the whole there could not have been less bread used than what was made from two bags of flour. The 6th of November was annually celebrated as long as my father lived, by a dinner which he gave to his neighbours and friends, and one thing was never forgotten, which was a bumper toast to the memory of Colonel Thomas and Miss Margery Hunt; which generally concluded by the production of the sword, which Charles the second took from his side and presented to the Colonel on his arrival in France, which my father with great pride exhibited to his friends, frequently accompanied by some part of the foregoing narrative.

My mother was of a weak and nervous constitution, and I inherited in some degree, when a child, her complaint, for I was very delicate, although remarkable for activity and high spirits. I remember about a month before I first went to school, which was at the early age of only five years and a half, I rode to Magdalen-hill fair near Winchester, a distance of thirty-one miles, and back again the same day, with my father. To ride sixty-two miles in one day for a boy not five years and a half old, which I did without any apparent fatigue, was considered rather an extraordinary omen of my future capability for active exertion. I was sent to a boarding-school at Tilshead in Wiltshire, at five and a half years of age, and, my father told me at my departure, "that I was going to begin a little world for myself." Before I mounted my poney he seriously gave me his blessing and his parting advice, which was delivered in a very emphatic manner, my mother anxiously listening, while a tear glistened in her eye. "Go," said he, "my dear, and may heaven bless and direct all your actions, so that you may grow up to be an honest, a brave, and a good man; but remember well what I now say: you must fight your own battles amongst your schoolfellows as well as you can. If I ever hear that you are quarrelsome I shall detest you, but if I find that you are a coward I will

disown and disinherit you." This was the language of one of the best of fathers to his son, a child of five years and a half old, and it speaks volumes as to the character of the man and the parent. This school, which was situated in a healthy village upon Salisbury Plain, consisted of a master and an usher, who had the care and instruction of sixty-three boys. The scholars were better fed than taught; but as a healthy situation was more looked to than their education, by the parents of those children who were sent there, the discipline was calculated to give general satisfaction. We learned to read (the Bible), to write, and cast accounts, and at the end of one year I was taken from this school.

Beyond the common-place events incident to an early initiation into the tricks and frolics of a school-boy, there occurred, during my stay at this place, nothing worthy of being introduced here; with the exception, however, of one very important circumstance, relative to the strict discipline maintained by my father, in all cases where there was the slightest deviation from truth. A violation of truth was always sure to be punished by him with the greatest severity. As the circumstance to which I allude made a strong and lasting impression upon my mind, and in a great measure laid the foundation for my general rule of action ever since, I shall faithfully record it.

During the year that I was at Tilshead I came home for the Midsummer holidays. On the last Thursday, before I returned, I accompanied my father to Devizes market, and while he was taking his dinner and selling his corn I was directed to go to Week, about half a mile distant, to dine with and see my grandfather. I set off to walk thither, but on my road there was a number of persons collected on the green, seeing some soldiers fire at a target--The firing was kept up in rapid succession. I felt alarmed and was fearful of passing them; I therefore, returned into the town, and having passed the time away in play with some boys that I met, I returned to my father at the inn and answered the questions that he put to me, relative to my grandfather, so as to make him believe that I had been there as he desired me, being ashamed to confess the truth, that I was afraid to pass the soldiers. On the following Monday, I went to school again, without thinking any more of the falsehood that I had been guilty of; however, about six o'clock in the afternoon of the next Friday, I was surprised and delighted to see my father ride up to the door of the school-yard. I ran to meet him, but he received me rather coolly, which I scarcely perceived; but he asked to see Mr. Cooper, my master, who came out and invited him to get off his horse, which he declined, and said that I might ride a little way with him on his road home, if my master had no objection, and I could walk back; which was readily assented to--All this was done with a dignified calmness which I did not comprehend. However, as I rode along, seated before him; he began to question me as to the truth of some transactions, that had passed during the holidays, and at length came to the visit to my grandfather. The whole fabrication flashed across my mind at once, and the mighty secret of all his apparent solemnity had such an effect upon my nerves that I should, I am sure, have fallen from the horse if he had not held me on.

At length, after I had confessed the whole truth, which he did not appear to believe, he broke out into the following exclamation, "you have been

guilty of an abominable falsehood, and you have now, as is always the case, told me another artful lie, in order to screen yourself from the punishment which you deserve, and to give you which I have ridden over here eight miles on purpose. Your conduct has almost broken your afflicted mother's heart, and has rendered me completely miserable. I would rather follow you to the grave than live to see you bearing the character of a liar, and I will now nearly half kill you for your infamous behaviour."

Upon which he lifted me off by the side of the road, on the down, no person being within hearing or sight, and having alighted, and tied his horse to a bush, all remonstrance and intreaties on my part proved in vain: he made me strip off my coat, and, with a smart stick, he gave me a most severe flogging. As he helped me on with my coat, and sent me back to school, I saw the big tear trickle down his noble, manly cheek; a convincing proof to me, even at that time, that he suffered much more in performing such a painful duty to save a child from disgrace, than I did in receiving such a severe, though well-merited, chastisement. Although I thought the punishment very harsh at the time, yet I felt conscious that I deserved it; and he performed the heart-rending task in such a manner as convinced me of its justice, and the more I reflected upon it the more I was satisfied that it arose from the greatest parental affection. It made the most lasting impression upon my mind, and stamped my determination, at all hazards, to speak the truth in future. The kindness of my father and mother was such, that they never mentioned the subject afterwards, till I was grown up to manhood, and thanked him for it. It was a severe but excellent lesson for me, and I have always found that as honesty is the best policy, so is truth in the end always sure to prevail. Although I know I am sent here for speaking boldly and publicly the truth, and for always under every circumstance acting up to its lovely and substantial precepts; yet I never felt more grateful than I do at this moment, to my excellent and noble-minded father, for inculcating the principle of always speaking the truth, notwithstanding that I am suffering for practising it. He used to say nothing could be more dangerous than the doctrine so frequently promulgated, "that the truth should not be spoken at all times;" thus leaving it to be inferred that falsehood was sometimes justifiable. Although, he added, there are times when it may be prudent for a man not to speak at all, yet when he does speak, nothing but a time-serving coward would hesitate to speak boldly the truth. This was the language of that man to whom I owe my existence, and from whom I imbibed, at a very early age, those principles of veracity, justice, humanity, and public spirit, the free exercise of which, although it consigned his forefather as well as his descendant to the same prison; yet, such is the consoling and heart-cheering effect of following the dictates of an honest mind, that it not only tranquillizes the passions, and checks their overflowing the due bounds of discretion, while under the influence of prosperity, but also conveys to the persecuted captive that inward satisfaction, which makes reflection, even in a prison, a source of delight, and teaches him to despise that outward shew of mirth and affected gaiety which accompany the selfish votaries of pleasure, who sacrifice every honest independent principle at the shrine of fashion, till the man is degraded to a mere time-serving pander in the Temple of Folly.

When I left this school, Mr. Cooper, the master, came round during the

holidays, as was customary, to collect his bills. My father, having settled the amount and invited him to dine, informed him of his intention to remove me to Hursley, in Hampshire; which he did at the recommendation of Sir Thomas Heathcot, whom he had met at Mr. Wyndham's, at Dinton, of whom my father rented Widdington Farm. Mr. Cooper, who was one of the best hearted and worthy men that perhaps ever lived, and who possessed as little of the pedantry and stiffness of a schoolmaster, as any man who had spent his life in such an occupation, replied, that he was very sorry to part with me, as he had no doubt I should some day make as clever, and he hoped as good, a man as my father. The only fault in me of which he had to complain was, that I was too volatile, and inattentive to my books; but he added, that he could already discover sufficient capacity to enable me, with a little steadiness, to become a very good scholar. Then, addressing himself particularly to my mother, he said, that he was bound in justice to declare, that he had not a more tractable or better-disposed boy in his school; that I was a generous and warm-hearted lad, and that my school-fellows would be sorry to hear that I was going to leave them. He spent the day with my father and mother, and in the most benignant and good-humoured manner, recounted some of the idle boyish tricks and frolicks that he had detected me in; assuring them, at the same time, that I had been punished only once during my stay with him, and that was for a venial offence, which was committed out of school hours.

Young as I was, being under seven years of age, when I left this school, I, nevertheless, formed connections and attachments, which have existed to this hour with unabated sincerity and uninterrupted friendship. And, as a gratifying proof of this fact, one of my then school fellows, Mr. Thomas Cousens, of Heytesbury, with whom I have ever since that period been on the most friendly footing, was the very first person who came to visit me after my arrival at this prison. He no sooner heard of my sentence than he mounted his horse, and before I had scarcely had time to look round my new habitation, the name of my friend Cousens was announced, who had ridden upwards of thirty miles; and, in the true spirit of disinterested genuine friendship, proffered not only his hand but his heart, to serve me in any way that lay in his power. I have indeed received innumerable proofs of kindness and sympathy from various quarters of the empire, since my arrival here; but the recollection of this prompt and efficient testimony of the sincerity of his friendship, will only be forgotten by me in the grave.

Upon the death of my grandfather, at this period, my father went to reside at Littlecot Farm, in the parish of Enford; but he still occupied Widdington Farm. Having spent two or three days, by invitation, with his landlord, Mr. Wyndham, of Dinton, where he met Sir Thomas Heathcot, of Hursley Park, who was the brother of Mrs. Wyndham, he was prevailed upon, by the joint intercession of Sir Thomas and Mr. as well as Mrs. Wyndham, to send me to be educated at Hursley, where Sir Thomas was patronising in a school a very worthy man, of the name of Alner, the brother of Mr. Alner, of Salisbury, who for so many years had the conducting and arranging the materials which composed the Western Almanack. Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham had also promised to send their three eldest sons at the same time to the same school, and one or two sons of Mr. Wyndham, of Salisbury, were also going there; and the worthy baronet, who never did a kind action by

halves, promised my father, who was a great favourite with him, that he would take the same care of me, and shew me the same attention that he did to his nephews; which promise he did not forget to perform during my stay at Hursley School, which was about two years and a half.

Mr. Alner was a remarkably good penman and accountant, as well as a great proficient in teaching the use of the globes. Here I became an adept in writing, arithmetic, and geography, which were the principal things to be learned at that school. During my stay there, I was in the frequent habit of spending the Sunday with the young Wyndham's at Hursley Park; and, as often as my father came to see me, the old baronet insisted upon his making the Lodge his home. Kindness, generosity, and hospitality, welcomed every visitor to Hursley Lodge, during the life of Sir Thomas; in fact, his philanthropy was such, that it not only extended to his own tenants, but to his brother-in-law's tenants, and to the whole of the surrounding neighbourhood. Perhaps there never were two country gentlemen, who did greater credit to the character of genuine old English hospitality, than the then owners of Hursley Lodge, in Hampshire, and Dinton House, in Wiltshire. My old school-fellow, the present proprietor of Dinton, still keeps up the character of an hospitable English country gentleman; but, alas! Hursley Lodge, since the death of old Sir Thomas----but, as I cannot say any thing favourable, either from my own knowledge, or from the report of others, I will content myself with saying nothing.

I left this school at the age of ten years. During the holidays I had frequent means of seeing, and now first began to reflect, and make my observations upon, the situation of the labouring poor of the parish of Enford; for my mother devoted a very great portion of her time to relieving the wants of those who, either through illness or accident, stood in need of assistance; and although she was herself in a very weakly state of health, yet neither inclemency of the weather, nor the distance, ever deterred her from going in person to visit, to comfort, and to assist, those of her fellow-creatures who were in distress. It was quite enough for her to know, that any of her poor neighbours were in want, to command her immediate aid. How often, when she was about to relieve some one whom they supposed to be an unworthy object, who had brought want on his own head by misconduct or crime, have I heard even my father, as well as other friends, endeavour in vain to persuade her, that her indiscriminate charity did almost as much harm as good. Her answer always was, having first quoted some amiable Christian precept, "would you leave them to starve, and thus drive them to despair? They are in want of bread; and, after I have relieved them from their present distress, I shall have some claim to their attention; and by setting them a _good Christian example_, I shall be the better enabled to enforce the mild and wholesome doctrines of religion. Surely, I shall have a much better chance of reforming and reclaiming them by the _practice of kindness_, than I should have by treating them with neglect, or casting on them the chilling and forbidding look of harshness." And here let me observe, that if there ever was a human being who acted up to the spirit and letter of Christianity, both in profession and practice, I believe my excellent departed mother to have been that mortal. Her greatest pleasure consisted in doing good; and to pour the healing balm of comfort into the wounded and afflicted breast, was to her the very essence of delight. Surrounded by every comfort

herself, her very existence appeared to depend upon her power to make others participate in those comforts: no living creature in distress was ever turned away from her door without being relieved. I could fill a volume in her praise, without being able to do her common justice.

I was now become of sufficient age, to be at once a companion and an assistant in these charitable peregrinations. There was not a threshold in the village but she had crossed at one time or another, in order to render some act of kindness or attention; and, as she passed along, the grateful inhabitants of every cottage came forth to bestow upon her their spontaneous and fervent blessings, whilst those who were rolling in wealth, and puffed up with pride, were suffered to pass unheeded by. Here it was that my little heart first began to pant for the power to do good; and I longed to receive, and to deserve such blessings, as were lavished with grateful lips upon my angelic mother by the poor of all denominations. I now began to pity their wants and sufferings, and to participate and rejoice in their happiness. When I expressed a desire for riches, to enable me to purchase such blessings as were bestowed upon her, how often did my beloved mother reprove me in the kindest manner, and endeavour to impress upon my young mind this valuable truth, that wealth did not always afford the best means of doing good. She used to say, that those who sincerely wished to do an act of charity, seldom wanted the means of doing something to relieve the wants, and soothe the afflictions, of those who were pining in wretchedness and want; for, said she, even a kind consoling word, combined with a very little personal attention, is frequently esteemed more valuable, and even proved to be more useful, than money, to those whose spirits as well as bodies are pressed down to the earth by unforeseen and frequently unmerited misfortune. These examples opened to my susceptible mind a new field for reflection, and the scenes of misery^[4] I witnessed, although at that period they were not numerous, and required to be sought for to be known, yet they created a sympathy in my young breast, which I flatter myself I have ever cherished, and from that period I may date the origin of my philanthropy. My mother saw the impression which it had made upon the mind of her son, and having kindled the sacred fire of benevolence, she took good care to fan the flame, by giving me the means of exercising those charitable feelings, which she had by her example created. Added to these, as well as all the other moral virtues, this excellent woman practised the most pious and scrupulous attention to her religious duties. Her motto was

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others shew,
That mercy shew to me."

While my mother was instilling into my mind, and teaching me to practice, the mild and lowly principles of Christianity, my father never failed to hold up for my admiration and example, the exploits of the noble, generous, brave, and renowned heroes of antiquity. Pope was his favourite author; and of all Pope's works, his Universal Prayer, and his Translation of Homer, were the theme of his never-ceasing and unqualified panegyric. The former he never failed to repeat aloud, night and morning, in the most fervent and impassioned manner. He made me learn it, and recommended me to

follow his example, by making it the daily expression of my praise and adoration of the Allwise and Supreme Disposer of events. He could repeat every line of the Iliad; and, what was more remarkable, he could begin at any one line and proceed with the greatest fluency and correctness, even to the end of any chapter or book. In short, he endeavoured to instil into my breast the _patriotic principle of disinterested love of country_. Although he was himself a man of business and of the world, he never failed to hold up for my example, those heroes who had lived and died alone for their country. Hector was his favourite warrior, and he appeared to have obtained the dearest wish of his heart when, coming into my room by accident one day, he found me reading aloud, and repeating the speech of Hector to Andromache. I was taken by surprise, and laid down the book; but he entreated me to continue the subject, and to oblige him I began the dialogue again, and he repeated the part of Andromache. Although heretofore a very shy boy, I now became warm, and at length impassioned; he encouraged me, and before we had concluded I almost fancied myself a hero. He was delighted; he took me in his arms, he embraced and caressed me; he saw that I had caught the "_electric spark_;" he wept over me with rapture, and he exclaimed aloud, in a sort of frantic extacy, "The name of HUNT will again be recorded in the page of history, and I feel that you, my dear boy, are destined to restore the fame of our family; and I hope to live to see you prove yourself worthy of your ancestors."

This brought into the room my mother, who was struck with astonishment at the unusual manner of my father. He repeated to her that he had, he thought, discovered in me such seeds as would grow up and produce fruit of future fame. She smiled in the most benignant manner, and said, he must trust to time to realize such hopes; but at all events she could answer for one thing, which was, that the seeds of humanity and philanthropy were implanted in my breast; for she had hailed, with great satisfaction, the proof that I could feel for others, and that it was a pleasure to me to relieve the wants and sufferings of my fellow creatures; and therefore, she fondly hoped, that I should make a good man and a good Christian; and addressing herself to my father, she added, "we will, my dear, trust to chance whether he ever makes a hero or not." I mention these particular incidents, to shew what pains were taken by my excellent, noble-minded father, and my amiable, tender-hearted, and affectionate mother, to instil into my young mind those precepts which each conceived would be most conducive to my future happiness. My father's great object appeared to be, to fire the young aspiring hope with deeds of honour, courage, and patriotism. My mother's more gentle nature induced her to cultivate the genial soil with the milder virtues, making Christian piety and charity the foundation of all her present and future hopes. There never lived a child that had more pains and care bestowed upon him, by his parents, than I had. My father inherited and practised the noblest qualities; he was an intelligent, industrious, strictly honest, honourable, high-spirited Englishman; the motto, taken from his favourite author, was constantly upon his lips, "An honest man is the noblest work of God." My mother may be correctly described in one short sentence, to have been a gentle, virtuous, amiable, charitable, and truly pious Christian.

Having now left the school at Hursley, where I had learned all that could be learned there, my father received from Mr. Alner, the worthy master,

very similar assurances to those he had previously received from Mr. Cooper: that I was a high-spirited, generous, volatile lad, capable of learning any thing that I chose to apply myself to; but that I was rather more fond of excelling in feats of activity, than of a strict adherence to my studies.

I was now sent to the grammar school at Andover, under the care of the Rev. Thomas Griffith, where I was to enter upon the study of the classics. My father took me on a Saturday, that being a market-day at Andover; and having introduced me to Mr. and Mrs. Griffith, he did not forget to give me the character he had received from the masters of the two schools which I had previously left; adding his own testimony, in confirmation of my being of a kind, generous, and open disposition. Mrs. Griffith received us very politely; and, as she had a very prepossessing manner, I felt pleased with the prospect before me, although I thought I saw something that I did not much like in the countenance of Mr. Griffith, who was a muscular, swarthy, dark-looking person, with rather a forbidding air. My father, having given me his blessing, took his leave, and consigned me to my new master, who led me into the school; and, as it was then past eleven o'clock, he gave me an Enfield's Speaker, and desired me to look it over, as he should not place me in any class until Monday. The school hours were up at twelve o'clock, Saturday afternoon being always a holiday, and consequently I did not consider that I had any task to learn on that day. I was therefore more employed in thinking of my mother at home, and in looking round the school, surveying my new companions, than I was with the volume. At length I caught my master's eye, and as he seemed to be smiling, as I thought at me, I returned it, as an earnest of my sense of his kindness. But alas! as it will appear, I mistook my man. He beckoned to me, and called me up to his desk, at the other end of the school. I obeyed; "Pray, Sir," said he, "what were you laughing at?" I found I was deceived, and I stood silent, unable to answer the interrogatory; upon which he gave me a severe box under the ear, which made me reel again, and nearly knocked me down. He then sternly said, "Go, Sir, to your seat, and mind your business, and in future take care how you let me catch you laughing again." This at once impressed upon my mind the ferocity and cowardice of his nature; for I had not been in the school at the time more than ten minutes. It was such an act of injustice, cruelty, and tyranny, and so very different from any thing that I had ever before experienced, that I was almost stupified with indignation; but, recovering myself a little, I was upon the point of rushing out of the school, and flying to my father, who must have been yet at the inn in the town. I looked towards the door; it stood enticingly open, and if my pride had not come to my assistance, I should most assuredly have indulged the first impulse of my resentment. From that moment to this, however, I have never thought of the circumstance, without regretting that I did not follow that impulse. However, I sat down; but, from that time, I never failed to consider him as an unjust and cruel petty tyrant; nor did I ever, for one moment afterward, look up to him even with common respect.

I continued at this place for nearly two years and a half, during which time, in common with many of my school-fellows, I had to endure the cruel, unnecessary, and wanton punishments, indiscriminately inflicted by this modern Dionysius. I soon became hardened, and set all controul at

defiance; and, instead of my pride being hurt, or being ashamed of punishment, it became a boast and a pride to brave it, and to bear it with indifference and contempt. This monster in human form would come into the school and flog half a dozen boys before he sat down, under some pretence or other; either that he had heard some noise in their bedroom the night before, or that they had not washed their hands clean; nay, he sometimes flogged a boy without ever telling him what it was for; and frequently, while his hand was in, he would, gnashing his large white teeth, which looked white from the same cause that a chimney-sweeper's teeth look so, merely because they were such a great contrast to his black fiend-like visage, he would dart his eye round the different classes to see which boy he should fix upon as his next victim. During these disgusting periods, with the exception of two or three favourites, every one's heart palpitated within his agitated breast. When this vindictive mania was upon him, myself and three or four other boys were almost certain to come in for a share. In fact, when his eye came to my class, I would almost involuntarily lay down my book, and meet his horrid gaze, as if prepared to receive a beckon from him to come out. If he passed me over, which was very seldom, it was considered as a miracle. Frequently, while he was punishing me, and while the blood was running almost in streams from my lacerated back, I have looked him steadily in the face, and I could fancy I saw him enjoying the same sort of savage ferocious delight, that a hungry wolf would discover in gorging upon the mangled vitals of the unoffending lamb. Such is the effect which tyranny produces upon the noble mind, that although I was of a tender delicate frame, and rather of a timid nature, yet I soon became so inured to punishment, that I constantly bore the most severe flogging without altering a muscle of my face, notwithstanding I frequently received from ten to twenty lashes from the recently made instrument of torture, which was composed of new _birch twigs_, each stroke from which drew the blood; and it was no uncommon thing, after I had left the room, to get some other boy to pick out the spills which were left sticking in my lacerated flesh, some of them more than half an inch long. Nay, at last it became so bad that one of the washerwomen made a serious complaint to Mrs. Griffith, about the horrid state of my linen. Mrs. Griffith's expostulations were in vain, although they were made in the most urgent and pressing manner in my hearing.

I speak of myself here, but there were several other boys, who were punished equally without justice and without mercy, as well as myself. To recite particular acts of this sort would be as disgusting as they would be tedious and uninteresting. But there was a nice lad, of the name of George Blandford, that he had literally flogged into a _hardened dunce_--he had whipped every power of learning out of him, and then he whipped him daily because he could not learn. At length his elder brother, who slept in the same room with me, planned their escape from the school. I went down stairs with them very early one morning, and having let them out I locked the doors again, and returned to my bed, without being detected. Griffith, however, called me up to his desk, and having charged me with having assisted in their escape, I boldly admitted the fact, rather than tell a lie; upon which I received a most severe flogging before he set off to reclaim the fugitives. The Blandfords escaped all pursuit, and reached their home; and fortunately for them their parents never suffered them to return. As for myself, he continued to flog, and I

continued to set him at defiance. One more act of his extreme injustice I will relate, to shew how unfit he was to have the care of children; and as a caution to parents not to place them in the power of such men, particularly under the care of such clergymen, who, while they practise every species of _tyranny, injustice, and _cruelty_, upon their pupils, contrive to escape detection by covering their real character with the garb of religion, and thus hide the most atrocious acts under the cloak of their hypocritical sanctity.

Immediately before the holidays, there was a prize to be written for, which prize was a handsome pen-knife. The Rev. Hugh Stevens, a gentleman in every respect exactly the reverse of Mr. Griffith, was the principal assistant and writing-master, who always decided which was the best written piece; and he at once declared that I was the winner. Griffith, who had never before interfered in a matter of this kind, was enraged that I should be successful, in spite of his malignant exertions always to put me back; and he insisted upon it, that a boy of the name of Butcher had written his piece better than mine, and that he should have the prize. Mr. Stevens felt indignant at this barefaced act of partiality and gross injustice, and would not become a party to it. After having expostulated some time in vain, he handed me over the prize upon his own responsibility, in the presence of the enraged parson; and desired Griffith, if he wished to favour Butcher, to do it by giving him a knife out of his own pocket, which he actually did, in order to sneak out of the business. By these repeated acts of injustice and cruelty he, however, soon lost his school. Another boy, Mrs. Griffith's own nephew, whose name was Bradley, now ran away, for setting a hollow tree on fire in the public parade, called the Acre.

To shew what acts of tyranny and oppression will drive even a lad to do, in the way of hardened resistance, observe the following instance. Seventeen of the boys were to be flogged for making a bonfire on the 5th of November, myself of course among the number; many of them were large boys, and we were left together while Griffith was busily employed making up a number of rods out of half a dozen new birch brooms, a great many dozens of which he bought every year at Weyhill fair, expressly for that purpose. While he was thus amiably occupied, although I was one of the smallest and youngest among them, I volunteered to recommend forcible resistance; and proposed, if they would all stick together, that when he came into the school we would seize him, lay him down, tie him hand and foot, and give him a good flogging, instead of taking the flogging ourselves; and I believe that I went so far as to offer to become myself the operator. This was listened to for a moment, but such is the effect of tyranny upon the human mind, that the majority were for remaining passive slaves, and accordingly we all patiently suffered him to flog us one after the other. When it came to my turn I looked him in the face, and received any punishment with a hardened indifference, which enraged him to such a degree, that he gave me a double dose; declaring at one time, as he gnashed his teeth, that he would flog me till I did cry out. In spite of his threat, however, he became tired first; for I believe I should have expired under his bloody hand before I would have uttered a single sigh or a groan. I must do my fellow-sufferers the justice to say, that the whole seventeen acted in the same manner, not one of them gratified his tender

ear with a shriek, a groan, or even a complaint.

Our play ground was the church yard, at the back of the school; a very improper place indeed for boys to amuse themselves in, as it was covered with graves, and tomb and head stones, over which it was our occupation to be constantly jumping. The churchwardens complained to Griffith of the injury done to the graves by our jumping on them, and Griffith, tyrant like, always ready to curtail any indulgence and liberty we had, however previously limited it might be, instead of appropriating a fresh play ground to our use, threatened to punish any boy who was found jumping over the tomb stones, or upon the graves, and prohibited almost every species of amusement that we had hitherto enjoyed. A consultation was held, and it was agreed, in order to be revenged upon the churchwardens, that we would all meet, in the dusk of the evening, or rather as soon as it was dark, and that every one should throw a stone into the chancel window. When the time arrived, this was religiously performed; and I believe myself and some half dozen more remained, while the rest were scampering off, and had a second throw, although the first did ample execution, and made a tremendous crash, particularly at that still hour of the night. The noise brought all the neighbours out of their houses, who perceived us flying; but we all escaped, and got into the school, without the detection of any one in particular. However, as it was known that some of the boys had done this, we were, all told by Griffith, the next day, that unless we gave up the boy or boys who did it, to be flogged, he would not grant a holiday the whole half year; and he only gave us till two o'clock in the afternoon to consider of what he had said.

During the play hours, between twelve and two o'clock, the whole time was occupied in devising expedients how to avert this dreadful denunciation, which was to deprive us of our usual holidays. At length it was declared that all expedients were in vain; and that, unless some one would undertake to bear the brunt, and sacrifice himself for the common good, they must all submit to be incarcerated within the walls of the school the whole half-year, without any recreation whatever. One of the largest boys said, if any one would volunteer to do this, the others would not only, with gratitude, subscribe the sum required to pay for mending the window, but would also subscribe a handsome sum, as a reward for him who would undertake to receive the punishment.

After this speech, silence reigned around for a time; but all eyes were soon fixed upon me, with a sort of anxious supplicating hope. I stepped forward with a determined air. I was hailed with a general cheer, and I soon realized their hopes, by boldly saying, that I would take the flogging, although it must and would no doubt be a very severe one; provided that they would subscribe to pay for mending the window, but that I scorned to receive any thing more for myself than the reward of their good opinion, and the consciousness of having made a generous sacrifice of myself, in order to relieve the whole of my school fellows from a dilemma which was in no other way to be overcome. I was cheered and caressed, and was led back to the school, a sort of willing captive, and surrendered up to the vengeance of the master, as the culprit who had been guilty of a crime very little short of, and bordering upon, sacrilege. Two or three of the boys came forward, and stated that they had been eye witnesses of the

transaction, and had seen me break the window, by throwing repeatedly at it with a hatful of stones. Although Griffith knew this to be a falsehood, as it was ascertained that it was done at one smash, by all the boys, yet, he received the communication with a savage delight; and, having put on one of his usual _smiles, a "ghastly grin_" he ordered me to prepare for the punishment due to my temerity. The very boy who had proposed the measure was selected to take me on his back, to hold me while I received the flogging, which was inflicted with such savage cruelty, and extended to such a length of time, that with some difficulty I was, by being led into the air, prevented from fainting. Now the result! after coming out of the school I was, I own, extolled by some, and caressed by others; but many laughed at my folly behind my back, some even taunted me at times with having broken the church windows; but, from first to last, they never subscribed _one penny_ towards paying for the window, and I was left to do it myself, which was accomplished by my week's allowance being stopped for the whole half-year, and the remainder was placed to my account, and sent home to my father, in the following item--"for breaking church windows 4s. 6d." And, to this very day, I bear the character in the town of Andover of being the person who, when a boy at school, broke the church windows.

This act of ingratitude was enough to have broken the public spirit of almost any one but myself. I have, from that day to this, been in the constant habit of making personal and pecuniary sacrifices for the _common good_; but human nature, as taken in the mass, was faithfully imaged, even in a school; and I can safely say, that the only reward which I have ever received, from that day to this, for all my public services, devotion, and sacrifices, consists in the substantial reflection that I have never had any selfish, sinister motives, but that I have always been actuated by the most disinterested philanthropy, and inflexible love of country. How many good men have I seen even in my own time, stand forward the zealous advocates of the people's rights, who have flitted upon the public stage but a very short period, and we have heard no more of them! what is the cause of this dereliction? The inference generally is, that all mankind are alike; none are to be trusted. But the fact is this, many really disinterested, truly patriotic men have been driven from off the field by the infamous slanders of the corrupt daily press. Many of them were men who would have faced a cannon's mouth, or would have suffered the most horrid punishment, even the torture, rather than have deserted the public cause; but they were incapable of bearing up against the malignant slanders, base assertions, and foul attacks of the public press.

There are also many who have come before the public with very patriotic feelings, and who have at the same time calculated upon receiving a public reward; at any rate, they have expected to be saved harmless in their pockets; that the expence of any public exertion would at least be repaid by those who surrounded them, and who cheered and applauded their every exertion.--But, no! so sure as a man entertains any notion or expectation of this sort, so sure is he to meet with cruel disappointment, the very first time he places himself in a situation to try the experiment. Thus, otherwise a very good man, he feels at once disgusted with public ingratitude, and not having calculated upon such conduct, and not perhaps ever having tried the experiment, _as I did_ while at school, he retires with scorn and indignation from public life, or he turns over to some new

faction in place or power, who have both the means and inclination to reward him for his apostacy.

To proceed with the narrative, Griffith did every thing he could to prevent my getting on in my studies; but I always contrived to say my lesson, even to him, so as to escape punishment; and, out of all the floggings I got at this school, I was never once punished for not learning my task. Indeed, when I had to say my lesson to Mr. Stevens, I did it with ease, and frequently left off at the head of the class, having worked my way up during his examination. In fact, when I said my lesson to Mr. Stevens, I generally left off at the head or top of the class; but when I said it to Griffith, I was sure always to finish at the bottom.

After having endured this sort of discipline nearly two years and a half, Griffith, one evening, came into the school, after having had bad sport in shooting, as if to wreak that vengeance upon the boys which the partridges had escaped. He walked up the school, throwing his eyes to the right and to the left, to seek for some proper objects; at length he fixed upon a boy of the name of Ludlow, and, having ordered him to prepare for a flogging, Ludlow expostulated, and demanded to know what he had done to justify the punishment? Griffith hesitated, and assigned some trifling reason, frivolous even had it not been unfounded; but he persisted, and gave Ludlow the flogging. As usual he called me up, and upon his ordering me to prepare, I followed the example of Ludlow, and demanded the reason; he gave me a box on the ear, and told me he would inform me after I had received the flogging. When he had given me this chastisement, as usual very severely, he said, "Now, sir, this is for what you did yesterday, and I will flog you to-morrow for what you did the day before," (mentioning at the same time some trivial circumstance,) "unless you should do something in the meanwhile to deserve it." Thus he taught me to look forward to a flogging every day for five or six days to come! This was a little too bad; to live in anticipation, nay of a certainty, of being flogged every day for the next week; and I consequently determined to embrace the first opportunity of taking French leave. I communicated my intention to Ludlow, who slept in the same room, and he, feeling indignant at the injustice done him, determined to accompany me.

The next day, being a half holiday, I was to be confined at home to learn some lines, instead of going out to walk with the rest of the boys; and Ludlow having agreed to sham illness in the morning, we hoped that we should by that means be left at home together by ourselves, and if a fair opportunity offered, we resolved that we would be off. Every thing turned out as we had anticipated. Ludlow was very ill, and Mrs. Griffith, who was a very humane, kind-hearted woman, made him lie in bed, where he was nursed with tea and toast, and other nice things that were necessary for a sick person. About three o'clock all the other boys went out with the usher, to take their after noon's walk. I was left at home, and ordered to remain in the school, to learn a very hard task out of some book, or to take a flogging in the morning. I went immediately up stairs to inform my companion that the coast was clear; he jumped out of bed, and put on his cloaths, and in a few minutes we walked down stairs, out of the back door, across the church yard; and in less than a quarter of an hour we were on our road to Weyhill, leaving Mrs. Griffith to take her patient's physic

herself, and any one that chose, to learn the lines that the Parson had set me.

As we passed along we saw our master and his friend shooting in a field adjoining the road. We began to quake for fear, but he was too busily engaged with his sport to notice us; and, creeping along under the hedge, we passed on unnoticed. Ludlow's parents lived at Devizes, a distance of twenty-seven miles from Andover; Enford, the residence of my father, was a little more than fifteen miles on the same road. We lost no time, and, having kept on a good pace, we arrived at Enford soon after six o'clock. This was some time in October, and it was quite dark before we got within sight of the house. We had agreed that Ludlow should sleep with me, and proceed on to his own house the next morning. When we reached the door my heart began to sink within me, and I was actually afraid to enter; for now I began to dread the anger of my father, which was much more terrible to me than the tyranny of Griffith. At length one of the servants, James Jukes, came by, and I begged him to go in and inform my father of my being come home. He told me that my father was from home, but he hastened in, for the purpose of informing my mother. This, however, was not necessary, for we followed him, and stood before my mother, who gave a shriek of astonishment. We told her the story, but she instantly dispatched the servant for my father, who was gone to visit a neighbour. Ludlow was very brave upon this occasion. Before my father arrived, my mother had given us a supper of Apple pie; and, as we were very tired, and as I wished to avoid the presence of my father as long as I could, we requested to go to bed; but my mother would not admit of this till he was come home.

At length, the well known knock at the door announced his approach--I never before felt such a sensation of fear as I did at this moment. He came in, and having sternly surveyed us, after a short pause, he said, "Pray gentlemen, what wind brought you here?" I was speechless; but Ludlow boldly replied, "the severity of our Master, Sir." "Well," he rejoined, "and my severity shall flog you back again to-morrow," upon which we were immediately packed off to bed, which my Mother had taken care to provide for us.

As soon as we were alone in the bed room, Ludlow began to complain of the injustice of my Father; adding, that he had no right to take him back, that he might do what he pleased as to his son, but he should not take him back. I told him this was very brave talking, but that he knew nothing of my Father if he expected to escape, either by blustering or reasoning. If, however, he was determined to proceed home, I would do any thing in my power to get him out of the house very early in the morning.--This was at once agreed upon, to be attempted at all events. We lay awake till day break, when he got up. Having put on his cloaths, we crept down stairs very quietly, and I unlocked the door, and having shaken him by the hand, and wished him better success than I was likely to meet with, he departed for Devizes. I returned to bed, and being called up in the morning, my Father, when he entered the breakfast room, demanded why Ludlow did not get up. I told him the truth, that he had been gone for four hours, and must by that time have reached his own home. My Father made no reply, but with a very stern look he left the room, as I afterwards understood from my Mother, to attend a court-leet at Updavon,

where he had engaged to meet his friend and landlord Mr. Wyndham. He informed that gentlemen of the circumstance of my having run away from school, and added, that he intended to take me back early in the morning, a step in the propriety of which Mr. Wyndham heartily concurred--However, in the course of the day, a messenger came with a letter from Griffith to my Father, which was delivered to him in the presence of his landlord. The letter was couched in the most coarse and unfeeling language; he charged my Father with being the author and instigator of all my faults, and accused him of having not only encouraged me in disobeying his orders, but also of conniving at my running away from the school.--This was a most fortunate circumstance for me, and the only thing that could have saved me from being taken back again. Mr. Wyndham told my Father that nothing on earth ought to prevail upon him to place his son again under the care of such a monster; and they now both became just as determinedly hostile to my return as they had previously been agreed that I ought to go back.

In the course of a few days, my Father rode over to Andover, and sent for Griffith down to the Star Inn, to pay him his bill. Having expostulated with him upon his conduct to me, and his still more unfeeling conduct if possible to himself; Griffith chose to bluster and bully, upon which my father coolly turned him out of the room, telling him that his gown alone saved him from the chastisement that he merited; a privilege which the parson did not choose to waive. He, therefore sneaked off, in order to save himself from being either kicked or horse-whipped. Ludlow was taken back to the School by his Father, and having subsequently formed connections, he got into business, and has lived in the own of Andover ever since. Within two years of this time Griffith's school dwindled down to nothing, and soon afterwards, execrated by every boy that had ever been under his care, he returned to Wales, from whence he came.

In detailing these occurrences of my boyhood, I have been thus particular for two purposes; first, to shew the reader the tyranny I had to encounter before I was yet thirteen years of age, and the effect it produced upon my mind, as well as the determined manner in which I resisted oppression, even at that time; and, secondly, with the hope that it will be a warning to all those who may read these memoirs, to avoid sending their children to be flogged out of every good quality, and rendered miserable, without the least chance of improvement, by one of these petty tyrants. The greatest care and circumspection should be exercised by parents, for they have a sacred duty to perform, in the selection of those with whom they intrust the care and education of their children. As to this school, it was a stain upon and a disgrace to the character of English education: in Scotland such a school would not have existed a month, and the master would have been indicted.

I was next placed under the care of the Rev. James Evans, who kept a very respectable school in Castle Street, at Salisbury. This gentleman was also a Welshman; and, as I had taken a great antipathy to Reverend Welshmen, I felt rather uncomfortable when I ascertained that he came from the land of goats. My fears, however, were groundless; he was a gentleman in every respect the reverse of him of whom I have so recently spoken. To be sure he was pedantic enough, having been all his life a school-master; but he was a humane, kind-hearted man, and his strictness was assumed, for the

purpose of maintaining by discipline a due subordination in the school. His lady, Mrs. Evans, was also a combination of good qualities, and I believe there never was a more happy couple. She delighted to make every body happy about her. As for myself, the good disposition that I took with me to Andover, was in a great measure flogged out of me there; I was become impatient of controul, and had imbibed an ungovernable spirit, which led me into difficulties and disappointments, that I should otherwise have avoided. I have often lamented the trouble that I gave this worthy man, as well as his lady, and many years back thought it my duty to take an occasion of expressing the sorrow I felt for any uneasiness that I had caused them during my stay there.

The life which I led here was a life, of pleasure compared to that which I led at the place I had quitted, and although it was impossible for me to recover that which I lost at Andover, either in disposition or in learning, yet I acquired ten times more real knowledge of books in one year at this school, under Mr. Evans, than I did at Andover in the two years and a half that I existed there. I remained nearly three years at Salisbury, at the end of which time I was become a pretty good latin scholar, and could construe Virgil and Horace with considerable ease to myself. I was an excellent penman, and a pretty good mathematician, as well as a complete master of mensuration. I had for many years been a pupil of the celebrated Mr. Goodall, and as I was acknowledged by him to have arrived at a great degree of perfection in elegantly "tripping it on the light fantastic toe," he frequently took me to exhibit at his balls, both in Salisbury and other places. I was, in good truth, excessively fond of dancing, and I was not a little proud, at one of the race balls, to be selected by Mr. Goodall, who was master of the ceremonies, to stand one of the first three couple with the Prince of Wales, (my partner Miss S. Mahon) to enable his royal Highness to accomplish the figure of _Maney Musk_, for the first time introduced at Salisbury, by his Royal Highness.

I will relate only one particular occurrence which I had to encounter at this school, and which, but for a mere accident, would have fixed upon my character an indelible stain; and I am especially induced to notice it by the circumstance of its having been grossly misrepresented by the venal part of the public press. I believe it appeared either in one or both of those sinks of corruption, those stews of falsehood, those unblushing vehicles of calumny and lies, the Morning Post and the Courier, viz. "_that Hunt, when a boy, was turned out of a school for robbing one of his schoolfellows_." Although I believe there is not one disinterested intelligent person in a thousand, who reads those papers, that ever gives the least credit to any of those atrocious falsehoods with which their columns are constantly filled, yet the baseness and cowardice of their intentions are not the less disgraceful on that account. To proceed, my bedfellow, whose name was Scott, when he arose one morning, discovered that, during the night, his Breeches had been removed from under his pillow, and his purse, which contained a guinea and two or three shillings, had been taken out of the pocket, ransacked of its contents, and then replaced under the pillow. Scott missed the money as he was getting up, and, having mentioned the thing, all the boys collected round him to hear his account of the story. There were also some boys who came out of another room up stairs, and amongst them a boy of the name of Best,

who, after having heard what Scott had to say, at once declared that it was impossible for any one but the boy who had slept with him in the same bed to have stolen the money. I instantly fired up, and endeavoured to knock down the scoundrel, who had by implication charged me with the theft. A battle ensued, in which Best got the worst of it, and amongst other things a black eye; which being perceived by Mr. Evans, when we got into the school, I was punished with an imposition for having given it to him; notwithstanding I informed the master that it arose in consequence of his having falsely charged me with a theft. Upon this an investigation took place. Scott proved that he had the money when he went to bed; I also spoke to the knowledge of that fact; all which Best urged as a presumptive proof of my guilt. Appearances were against me, and my having so suddenly attacked Best for the insinuation, rather increased than diminished those appearances.

After breakfast Mr. Evans called me into his parlour, where there was no one but himself and Mrs. Evans, and addressed me in a very solemn manner, trusting, he said, that I would instantly confess to him that _I had played some trick with the money_, and restore it to him; in which case, he would endeavour to hush the matter up as well as he could. I stood gasping with astonishment, without being able to give an immediate answer; not before believing that he had any suspicion of me. He proceeded as follows, "it is no use for you to deny it, Master Hunt, as I know those who will prove that they saw you take the money." My surprise was now turned to indignation. I protested vehemently against the truth of his assertion, and dared him to the proof. I denied, in the most solemn manner, that I knew any thing of the money, and demanded, with more than common earnestness, that he would bring forth my accusers, that I might meet them face to face.

Mrs. Evans now came forward, and earnestly entreated her husband, in common justice, if there was any person who had seen me, or if he had any proof that I took the money, or knew any thing of it, that he would bring them forward; and, if he had not, that he would at least, admit that he had no ground for saying what he had said. Mr. Evans felt the force of her observation, and seeing that I denied the fact so unequivocally, he said that he had no proof of the fact, that he had gone too far, that as circumstances appeared strong against me at first, and it appeared that I was embarrassed, he thought it best to charge me boldly with it, to induce me to confess at once. Mrs. Evans, who was a good creature, and a sincere lover of justice, possessing too a great deal of discrimination, inveighed in very strong terms against charging a boy with theft, and casting aspersions upon his character, without any foundation or proof whatever. She added, that I had been at the school nearly three[5] years, without ever having created any suspicion of my honesty, or without doing the slightest act upon which they could ground such a charge:--that she had frequently trusted me with money to execute errands and commissions for her, that I had always done it with the strictest regularity, and the most scrupulous regard to honesty; and, raising her voice, she said she would herself be bound for my innocence upon this occasion; adding, with great warmth, there was not an honester lad in the school, and that some of those who threw out dark hints of suspicion against Master Hunt, were much more likely, from their general character, to have robbed Scott than he

was.

In consequence of this tone being taken by my kind friend, whose memory I have always held, and ever shall hold, in the highest veneration, Mr. Evans slightly apologized for having asserted that he had proof of my guilt; saying in excuse that it was his duty to do every thing in his power to unravel the mystery. "You may go Master Hunt," said Mrs. Evans; and in the kindest possible manner she endeavoured to console me for the injustice I had suffered, by telling me that the thief would certainly be found out, and then those that had accused me would be ashamed of themselves.

As I walked out of the parlour up the play ground, many of my school fellows approached, to know the result of such a long conference--"Well, Hunt, is there any thing made out likely to clear up this affair?" all of them anxious to see me fairly acquitted of the charge. I exclaimed in a loud voice, "what a d----d liar that _Taffy Evans_ is--He first declared that some one had seen me take the money, and afterwards confessed it was no such thing." Mr. Evans, who had followed me out of the parlour, and had, unperceived by me, walked up his garden, which was only separated from the play ground by some pales and a slight low yew hedge, heard this as plain as any of the boys, In a very emphatic tone, and close to my elbow, he, to my utter confusion, said, "really Master Hunt! Pray, sir, go to your room, and we will settle that account as soon as we go into school," which was in a few minutes after.

I certainly now expected that I should have a severe flogging, and so did all my school fellows; but I was agreeably disappointed when he arrived in the school, by his addressing me in a very serious manner, as follows, "Master Hunt, I now set you an imposition of one hundred lines of Virgil to learn by Friday, and the next time I ever hear you make use of such words I will certainly give you a flogging." The lines were learnt, and so ended that part of the story.

As, however, no discovery was made about the money, I felt very uneasy; not that I believed any of the boys had any suspicion of me, and Scott himself constantly declared that he had not the slightest idea that I knew any thing of the matter. Notwithstanding this, there was sometimes an insinuation thrown out, which rendered my life very miserable; and Best, the boy who had first accused me, although from the drubbing he got he was deterred from repeating the assertion, yet he would frequently ask in my hearing, "_who stole Scott's money?_" A month had nearly passed, and with most of the Boys the affair began to wear off, and it was seldom mentioned; not so with me, it pressed very heavily upon my mind, and instead of being one of the most lively and cheerful boys in the school, I was now become quite serious, and even melancholy, and was frequently observed to shed tears. My Friends endeavoured to rally me out of this what they called sulky mood; I replied that I could not help it, that I should never again be happy till it was discovered who it was that took my bed-fellow's Money; and that its being lost while I was his bed fellow, certainly threw a sort of suspicion on me, that I could not get over, and to labour under which rendered me completely miserable. They all endeavoured to laugh me out of this humour, and I must say that Scott

himself did every thing in his power to relieve me; but it was all in vain, I not only grew melancholy, but I began to lose my appetite, and as I looked very thin and ill, Mrs. Evans was really somewhat alarmed, and said every thing she could to comfort me. Alas! it was all in vain, and I really began to think that I should fall a victim to a false accusation, for I had no sleep by night, nor ease by day.

[Illustration:

THE NORTH WEST VIEW OF HIS MAJESTY'S JAIL AT ILCHESTER.

Taken from the lower part of the Meadow behind the Bell Inn.

- _a. The part occupied by Mr. Hunt.
- b. The Top of the Keeper's House.
- c. The part occupied by the Debtors
- d. The part occupied by the Time people
- f. The part occupied by the Task Master & Matron
- Behind this is the part occupied by the Females
- g. The Lodge or entrance & occupied by the chief Turnkey
- h. The Keeper's stable and Chaise House._]

Mrs. Evans now proposed to send for my father, which in a few days she did. When he arrived and was informed of the circumstances, he felt greatly distressed. I was sent for into the parlour; my father was shocked at my appearing in such ill health, and the agony of his feelings was intense at the cause of my illness. He intreated me, by the love I bore towards him and my mother, to confess the truth; if I had in an unguarded moment been led into an error, the only reparation was openly to confess it, and, in that case, he offered immediately to repay Scott his money, and to make him a handsome present besides; in fact he promised to do any thing. Before he would allow me to make an answer, he went almost upon his knees, and implored me to tell him the whole truth, proffering at the same time his entire forgiveness if I had done it. I assured him, in the most serious and solemn manner, that I knew nothing whatever of the money, that it had made me very unhappy indeed, that I had had no sleep for the last eight or ten nights, and had lost my appetite, and that I was become very weak and ill; which illness he found, by feeling my pulse, was attended with a very considerable fever. He proposed to take me home for a short time, to restore my health; but this I objected to, as being likely to give a colour to the charge. It was therefore settled that I should take some medicine, prescribed by Mr. Stills[6], to calm my spirits and allay my fever.

My father returned home almost broken-hearted, and I continued in the same melancholy and hopeless state. However, in the evening of the next Sunday, a boy came running up to me almost breathless, and declared that he had discovered the thief, who had stolen the money. I eagerly entreated him to explain himself--he answered that Charles Best, together with his brother James, had just brought in a hatful of _Carraway Comfits_, which he said he had bought with five shillings, given to him by his father. The Father of these boys lived in the town, and they had been home on the Sunday, as was usual, to dine with him. They had just returned from their visit, about eight o'clock in the evening, and Charles, the eldest, the fellow who had accused me of being the thief, had now brought these comfits in

his hat, saying that his father had given him _five shillings_, which he had expended at once in this way. My friend directly declared that it was a falsehood, that his father was a cursedly stingy old fellow, and that he had never before returned with more than sixpence in his pocket; and he added, suppose his father or any other person had given him _five shillings_, it was very unlikely that he would lay it all out at once in such a manner. I requested Best to show us his purse, to see if he had any more money in it. This he declined to do; and, as his brother James began to shuffle, and did not confirm him altogether in his story, I immediately seized him by the collar, and having tripped up his heels, called for assistance to search him. This we accomplished with some difficulty, and having got at his purse, we found it contained _sixteen shillings_ in silver more. He now changed his tale, and asserted that his father had given him a _guinea_, which he had changed at Mrs. Hadding's the pie-woman; that he had purchased five shillings-worth of carraway comfits, and the sixteen shillings was the remainder of the change.

By the manner of his telling this story it was evidently false. Some of the boys accordingly kept him in custody, while myself and my friend, who had first brought me the intelligence, rushed out of the house, regardless of the consequences, and proceeded as fast as possible to the house of old Best, either to have this account confirmed or denied. On our reaching the door we knocked with great authority, and upon the servant's opening it, we marched in without any ceremony, and demanded an audience of his master immediately, as we had some very important business with him. The servant informed him of our visit, and he came out of the parlour to us, and demanded what business we could have with him at that time of night, it being then nearly nine o'clock. We first asked if his sons had been home to dine with him; he answered yes, and that they had left his house upwards of an hour ago, in order to return to the school, and he wished to know whether they had not arrived before we left it. We replied that they had. We then asked him if he had given his son Charles any money; he at once said, "Certainly not." We then asked him if he had given him a guinea; he replied, "Certainly not." His mother might have given him sixpence, but if she did it was without his knowledge. He then returned into the parlour; and we heard him ask his wife if she had given Charles any money to-day, the answer was, "No, my dear."

This was quite enough for us, and without waiting any further ceremony, we started off back to the school. In the mean time, Best, having ascertained that we were gone to his father to make enquiry, had confessed that it was he who had stolen the money out of Scott's pocket; and when we returned he was surrounded by all the boys, who were upbraiding and taunting him with his villainy; but they were all more enraged with him for his baseness in accusing me of the theft, than they were with the theft itself. I was the only one who expressed any pity for him, and had the weakness to solicit for that mercy to be shewn to him which he had denied to me. The next morning he was expelled the school; but, in consideration of his family very little was said about it--however, they soon left the town, which it was generally understood was occasioned by this unfortunate event. My father was sent for, and he came over immediately, to participate with me in the happiness I felt, at being so completely exculpated from all suspicion; and every endeavour was made to render me, as far as it was

possible, compensation for my sufferings.

I trust that this circumstance will prove to the reader the danger and the injustice of condemning any person upon mere circumstantial evidence. How cautious ought jurors upon their oaths to be, not to find men guilty upon mere circumstances; and, particularly, when their verdict may give the party over, _bound hand and foot_, and place his life or his liberty at the disposal of corrupt, wicked, cruel, and vindictive judges!

I now recovered my health and strength, and prosecuted my studies till I was nearly sixteen years of age. My father then, on condition of my taking orders, and going into the Church, proposed to send me to Oxford, and to purchase the next presentation to a living of upwards of a thousand a year, which was offered to him at that time at a very moderate price; subject to the life of the incumbent, who was upwards of seventy years of age. This I declined, as I had a great wish to be a farmer; and, at the same time, had a particular objection to the Church, an objection which principally originated in the dislike I had to Parson Griffith, and to the way in which he enforced the precepts of Christianity.

My father desired me to reflect well upon it, before I made up my mind; though I could discover that he was not at all displeased at my determination. He would not, he said, prejudice my choice, but whether I was a clergyman, or whether I was a farmer, he hoped I should make a good, a brave, and an honest man; but he added, "if you intend to be a farmer, I trust that it is not from an idea that a farmer's life is composed merely of coursing, hunting, shooting, and fishing. These alone, said he, are very well, when occasionally and moderately used as a recreation; but a farmer must learn his business before he is capable of conducting and managing a farm--for, remember the old couplet, "he that by the plough would thrive, must either hold himself or drive." I would, therefore, have you think this matter over, before you finally make your choice. If you should like to be a clergyman, I have now an opportunity of purchasing the next presentation to a good living, and you will then have secured to you for life a thousand or perhaps twelve hundred pounds a year; and you will have nothing else to do, for six days out of the seven, but hunt, shoot, and fish by day, and play cards and win the money of the farmer's wives and children by night. Although, continued he, this may appear to you, and I am ready to admit, that this is, a very inglorious sort of a life, yet it is a very easy one. All that will be expected of you is to read prayers, and preach a sermon, which will cost you three pence once a week. This is the life of modern clergymen; and they might do very well, and get on very smoothly, in this way, if they did not screw up their _tythes_ too high, and get drunk too often, so as to cause a serious complaint to be made to the bishop by some of the parishioners; which you may rest assured they never will do by you, let your conduct be ever so immoral or ever so irreligious, provided that you let the farmers have their tythes at an easy rate. Do that, and no complaint will ever be made against you to the bishop."

While my father was thus addressing me, my mother returned from visiting a poor gypsy woman, who had that morning been delivered of a fine child, under an adjoining hedge, without any other covering but one of their

small tents, which are merely composed of a sheet thrown over a few arched sticks, stuck into the ground. She came into the room just in time to hear the latter part of my father's observations, describing the life of a modern clergyman. With her accustomed charitable feeling, she said "really, my dear, although there is too much truth in the picture you have drawn, yet you have been a little too severe upon the clergy, when speaking of them in the mass. There are many excellent and worthy men, who follow the precepts of their great master, who are an ornament to that society to which they belong, and are, therefore, most deserving members of, and do great credit to, the profession which you have so indiscriminately reprobated."

"Do not tell me," said my father, "about ornaments to society; the best of them are the _drones of society_, and, without contributing any thing to the common stock, they feed upon the choicest honey, collected by the labour of the industrious bees. To be sure, when they do the duty allotted to them conscientiously, and _do not screw up their tythes too high_, they may be very necessary evils; but you are aware, my dear, that what I say is true as to most of them that we know; and I am not sorry that Henry appears to have no inclination towards that course of life."

"But," said my mother, "because some of the clergy bear the character that you say they do, is that any reason that Henry should follow their example? If he should be a clergyman, he will have great power of doing good among his parishioners; he may be a magistrate, or perhaps a Doctor of Divinity; and who knows but he may by and bye be a bishop?"

My father now began to grow impatient. "A bishop indeed!" said he, "God forbid that I should ever live to see him act in such a way as to obtain a bishopric, even if he were to go into the church."

My mother was surprised at this language, and enquired if he would not wish his son to gain the top of his profession; to which he answered sternly, (which was not often the case to my mother,) "No, indeed. I would not. The road to such preferment is generally so disgraceful, that I never wish to see him tread its path. He will never attain such an _honour_ but by the most _dishonourable_ means. Would you like to see him the tutor to the son of some nobleman? This is the first step to promotion. When he is in that situation, if his pupil should be of an abandoned character and _he_ will condescend to be his _pimp_ and the pander to his vices, laugh at his follies, and flatter his vanity: why, then, should this sprig of nobility hereafter become a minister of state, or a man in power, knowing the servility of his late tutor, and that he will make a willing tool for the administration to which he belongs, then, forsooth, he is a proper man, and may possibly become a bishop."

My mother could not believe that the highest dignities of the church were ever obtained by such disgraceful means; but my father justified his assertion by pointing out one or two living instances, that had come within the reach of his own knowledge. He also pointed out some dignitaries of the church who lived in his immediate neighbourhood, whom my mother knew, and was obliged to admit to be very profligate characters. But she, always wishing to look at the bright, instead of the dark side of

the question, called in turn to his recollection a number of very excellent and very worthy members of the church, whom they knew to be most amiable, charitable, and truly religious characters.

Thus ended this conference upon a subject which appeared to be so very important to my parents. My mother certainly had a great leaning to the desire of seeing me a clergyman, and I believe it would have been the summit of her happiness and ambition to have seen me zealously enforcing those principles of christianity, which she had so faithfully practised. My father dropped the subject at that time; but he took an early opportunity of seriously going into the matter in private, and he exhorted me to give the question a deliberate consideration, as it most materially concerned my future welfare; adding, "he that sets out wrong is more than half undone. If," said he "you intend to lead a quiet, easy life, that of a clergyman will exactly suit you. If you are disposed to make one of the common herd of mankind, and pass your time away in enjoying the sports of the field, and the recreations of a social country life, you may live and die a clergyman, and a very happy man. But if you have any ambition to be a shining character in the world, that is the very last profession I would recommend; as I am firmly persuaded that you will have no chance of becoming eminent, or exalted in rank, unless you will condescend to obtain it by the most prostituted sycophancy, and a total dereliction of every manly noble feeling of independence."

If I had been wavering in my decision, or had entertained any doubts before, this would have turned the scale; but I had already made up my mind to be a farmer, which determination I seriously and firmly communicated to my father. "Well then," said he, "you are young enough to learn, and if you will manfully set your shoulder to the wheel, I have no doubt of your soon becoming acquainted with the practical part of the profession, and when you have acquired a knowledge of the practice the theory will follow very easily. To-morrow you shall make a beginning. You are now sixteen, and no time is to be lost. God and nature have bestowed upon you a sound mind, and an active body; and if you properly apply these inestimable blessings, there is no doubt of your becoming a useful member of society, and of your making a respectable figure in the world. But never forget the maxim that I now lay down for your future guidance; recollect that 'a man can never dirt his hands about his own business;' and always bear in mind these three old Italian proverbs--first, 'Never do that by proxy, which you can do yourself.'--Second, 'Never defer till to-morrow that which can be done well to-day.'--Third, 'Never neglect small matters and expences.'"

The next morning I was called up early, and, to begin upon my labours, I drove one of the teams at plough all day. I came home very tired. Not being accustomed to labour, I found it a very different occupation from that of attending my studies at school; my feet were sore, and my heels were galled, but I was deterred from complaining, by seeing that I was merely performing the same labour that little plough boys, of eight or nine years of age, were only receiving sixpence a day for doing. Driving plough was, therefore, not only, soon learned, but it became very irksome to me; and as I thought myself full as good a man as the lad that was holding, I demanded, before the week was up, that he should change places

with me. This he refused, and that occurred which is very common upon such occasions. I threw away the whip, and having seized the handle of the plough, a struggle ensued, which led to blows. At length, the horses and plough were both abandoned, and a regular fight took place between myself and the under carter, who had been holding the plough to which I was the driver. I soon, however, compelled him to cry "hold!" and without farther ceremony I took the plough and he the whip. I mention this trivial circumstance to shew the reader that I was obliged to fight my way into a practical knowledge of agricultural pursuits; my father well knowing, from experience, that there was no other method by which I could gain a complete knowledge of farming, but by the manual performance of every branch of the profession.

Before I proceed it will not be improper to observe that, in detailing the events of my own life, I am confined to the strict limits which truth imposes upon my pen; for if I wished either to exaggerate or to embellish by any imaginary touches, such as may be admissible, and in fact such as are indulged in, by the writers of common events, I should be liable to immediate detection and exposure; because I am detailing circumstances which, although they are long past, are still in the recollection of numerous living witnesses. In fact, there is not an occurrence that I have hitherto mentioned, but what is within the knowledge and the recollection of many of those witnesses, and very many of the most important events which I shall have to detail will be familiar to hundreds. On the other hand, there are certainly many facts and anecdotes, which are only known to myself and those immediately connected with them, and these, when I arrive at them, will, I doubt not, be read with a lively interest by those who are not yet in the secret how many public and private intrigues are carried on and effected. All that I can promise is, that I will, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, which I find no ways impaired by imprisonment, record the truth; and should I, in my anxiety to speak the truth, sometimes become dull, tiresome, or tedious, I must rely upon the indulgence of the reader, to attribute it to my desire that the public should be made acquainted with those circumstances which appear to me to have materially contributed to the formation of that character which has been so vilified, abused, and misrepresented, by the venal tools, and corrupt agents, of a system of persevering, fatal misrule, such as was never equalled in any age or in any country.

To proceed--I now found that I was encountering greater difficulties than I had anticipated. Though it was very easy to learn to drive plough, yet it was a very different thing to be able to hold plough well. I returned home at night ten times more tired than I was when I drove the first day; my feet were not only sore, but my legs and arms ached ready to drop off, and my hands were in a gore of blood, and blistered all over. My poor mother began now to lament my undertaking, and threw out hints how much better and easier it would have been to have gone to Oxford, and have been now preparing myself by study to become a candidate for the black cloth, and to be a respectable clergyman, instead of being a _clod-hopper_. In the midst of her advice and admonition my mother did not forget to wash my hands and feet, and plaster up my lacerated flesh; and as soon as she had made me comfortable I retired to rest. I rose refreshed, and returned the next day with renovated vigour to my task. To be brief, I soon because a

good ploughman. My father daily witnessed with considerable anxiety my zealous and persevering exertions; and as I proceeded, he encouraged me by the most animating hopes of future prospects; he informed me that he had remarked with no small pleasure my determination to excel in every thing that I undertook; and that I set about every thing with an enthusiasm calculated to surmount all difficulties, which was, as he justly observed, the only way to attain any object, or to arrive at any degree of perfection.

I had now regularly persevered with the most assiduous industry for more than a fortnight, and although I was but a tall thin stripling, I perceived that I gathered strength with my labour; and what I at first found to be the most trying exertion and severe hard work, as I became acquainted with the art, it appeared a pleasant and cheerful occupation; for I could now turn a furrow as true and as straight as "the path of an arrow." My father, who was an excellent and an accomplished husbandman, never failed during this time to pass some part of the day with me, in order to instruct me how to set my plough, to fix the share and point, and so to regulate its various bearings as to make it, at the same time it did the work well, go easy and pleasant to the holder. This may, perhaps, be very uninteresting to many sedentary readers, and to those who are mere passing observers, and who believe that there is no art in holding plough; but they are very much mistaken who think that any body will make a farmer, and that to be a good husbandman is the natural result of living in the country. It is a very common and vulgar saying in the country, among farmers, when any one has a son that is more stupid than common, "if he will make nothing else, if he is unfit or incapable of learning any business or trade, why, he will make a parson." But to make a good farmer, a man must have served a double apprenticeship to the profession; and after that, he must be a philosopher and a chemist. No business requires the exercise of a man's patience and his reasoning faculties so much as that of a farmer. Every day, nay, every hour, produces something new, something fresh, which calls forth the active use of his reason, his exertion, and his talent. No two seasons are alike, and scarcely any two days. In every other profession or business, a clever intelligent person can calculate for any given number of hands, nearly, the work of a week, a month, or almost a year, in advance. The manufacturer or the tradesman has a constant regular routine of business for his workmen to perform; and if he be called from his home, for any length of time, he can leave orders what work almost every man shall do till his return; but the farmer's occupation, and that of all his servants, changes with the weather; nay, it becomes his peculiar care, at some periods of the year, to watch with anxiety every change of the wind, and his business to observe the direction of every cloud. But as four or five years of my life were passed in practically acquiring a knowledge of every branch of this most valuable and respectable occupation, I shall, by reciting the particular occurrences of that period, as I pass along, convince the readers of this work, of that which they little suppose to be the case, that it is absolutely necessary for a man to be a philosopher, before he can be a good farmer.

My father, having convinced himself of my capability, as well as my determination to persevere in acquiring the practical manual knowledge of

the various branches belonging to husbandry, now said that he was not only satisfied, but extremely well pleased, with the progress I had made; and, therefore, I should now have a respite from such incessant labour, and should take my poney and accompany him round the farms, to inspect and to assist him in giving directions to the workmen. A fresh plough boy was immediately found, and my driver, the vanquished under-carter, again resumed his situation between the handles of the plough, very well pleased with my removal. The scene to which I was now introduced opened to my enquiring eye a new field for observation, and what I had heretofore passed over as common occurrences, became intensely interesting to me. My father felt great delight in satisfying my eager enquiries, and, instead of being annoyed at my unceasing inquisitiveness, he encouraged me to satisfy myself, and not to leave any one subject till he had made me comprehend the cause as well as the effect.

About this time my mother, who had been for several years in a very declining state of health, from a violent nervous affection, which produced a constant oppressive head-ache, was put to bed of a son, her sixth child, and to the great joy of my father, as well as all her friends, as she recovered her strength, and the natural effects of her lying-in wore off, she appeared also to have recovered her general good health, and her usual cheerfulness. She was always benignant, kind, and affectionate, but the effects of an incessant nervous headache had produced a sombre sadness, which threw a gloom around, and affected the whole family, and prevented that sort of hilarity and cheerfulness, which was the usual companion of our abode. My father was of a generous, hospitable, sociable disposition, and was never so happy and blessed as when he had his friends surrounding him, and partaking of those comforts which he had acquired by his industry, skill, and persevering attention to his business; but even these sociable enjoyments with his friends had been very much curtailed, by my dear mother's melancholy indisposition.

The restoration of her health was hailed by my father as the greatest blessing that Divine Providence could have bestowed upon him and his family; and we were all made to join him in audibly offering up our nightly prayers and grateful acknowledgments to the allwise and beneficent Creator, for this to us the greatest of earthly blessings. My father was enraptured, and a hundred times a day, while he burst forth into sincere and extatic praise and adoration of the goodness of the Divine Being, he would enjoin us, his children, never to forget his mercy and loving kindness, in restoring his dear Elizabeth to health. He also called in his friends again, to partake of his hospitable and festive board. In fact, he would sometimes exclaim, to my mother, that he was almost too happy for a mortal, in this vale of misery and probation. My amiable mother used gently to chide him, and to tell him that the best way to manifest their gratitude to Divine Providence, for the happiness which it bestowed, was never to let a day pass over their heads without doing some good act to prove their willingness to deserve it. She would add, with her eye beaming a heavenly smile, "as our blessed Saviour has bestowed every earthly comfort upon us, let it be part of our duty and our pleasure to dispense happiness among our poorer and less fortunate neighbours; for recollect, my dear, 'that all our doings without charity are nothing worth.'"

My mother had not yet been able personally to perform any of her accustomed charitable visits since her lying in; for she was too strict an observer of her religious duties, to go from home till she had gone to the parish church, and publicly offered up her prayers and thanksgivings to her blessed Creator and Saviour. The following Sunday was fixed upon as the day for this religious ceremony. My father expostulated; saying that the church was damp, and that she had better defer it till the next Sunday, and, in the mean time, take some gentle walks abroad, to enure herself by degrees to bear the walk and the fatigue of remaining in the church during the length of the service. He expressed his great dread of her catching cold, and having a relapse in consequence; but she firmly replied, that she never feared any evil when she was performing a sacred religious duty; that God was too wise and too good to permit one of his creatures to suffer, when in the act of obeying his commands; and she urged so many pious reasons to shew the necessity of her not delaying to perform what she termed her indispensable duty, that my father silently, but very reluctantly, submitted to her decision.

But, alas! alas! my father's prophetic forebodings were but too well founded! The ways of God are just, and the dispensations of his wisdom are not to be scanned, much more disputed, by impious man; to submit to his Divine will without repining, is the imperative duty of every sincere Christian. I shall never forget the day, nor the care and anxiety of my excellent father. We set off early, in order to walk leisurely to church, that my mother should not be so heated as to render her liable to catch cold; there was my mother leaning on the right upon my father, and on the left upon me, and two of my sisters, Elizabeth and Sophia, the one about five, and the other about seven years old, skipping lightly along before us. My mother enjoyed the walk very much, and as my father led her into the church, preceded by the clergyman, upon whom we had called in our way thither, the whole congregation spontaneously rose up to greet and to welcome their best and kindest benefactress and amiable neighbour. A gleam of pleasure beamed from every eye, and the curtseys and bows that were bestowed upon her, as she passed along the aisle, most clearly shewed that they proceeded from the impulse of grateful hearts. With a heavenly smile of inward delight, and with an air of the greatest sweetness, she returned their kind salutations. It was an enviable sight, and it imparted to me such sensations of pride and delight, as have been seldom, if ever, equalled since. To see an amiable parent, upon such an occasion, receive the spontaneous willing homage of three or four hundred, the whole, of her poorer neighbours, and the sincere congratulations and kind attentions of all her friends, of this happy village, was a scene never likely to be erased from the memory; every heart appeared to leap with joy, and it seemed to me as if that the whole congregation were preparing to join in prayer, and to participate in the performance of the divine service of the afternoon, with more than usual earnestness and zealous piety.

My mother, who was a tall, thin, elegant figure, and very fair, had a roseate flush spread over her delicate features, and she looked beautiful as she knelt to offer up her grateful and sincere adoration to the omnipotent, omnipresent, merciful Disposer of All. I believe that my father was the only person amongst the whole congregation who did not, at that moment, enjoy unmixed delight. I could discover that his enquiring

eye was more frequently fixed upon my mother, than it was upon his prayer-book; a sort of uneasy doubt sat visible upon his brow, and it was plainly to be perceived that his prayers were interrupted by his meditations upon the fearful consequences which he apprehended might be the result of my mother's catching cold, by remaining within the walls of a large damp building, and that building only inhabited for a few hours once a week. But, while he was anticipating earthly misery by the loss of the greatest blessing that kind Heaven had ever bestowed upon man, my angelic mother's soul and body were alike absorbed in the most devout and earnest prayer. In the mean time, the beautiful rosy hue, that had spread such a lustre over her fair face, disappeared. My father's intense anxiety now became so obvious to me that the dreadful uneasiness of mind which he displayed drew my attention to the paleness which had succeeded the colour upon her cheek. The instant the clergyman began to pronounce the concluding prayer, "The peace of God," &c. my father flew across the seat, while my mother was yet on her knees, joining most fervently and devoutly in that beautiful sentence, and exclaimed, in a loud half whisper, which was heard all over the church, "for God's sake! are you not well, my love!" She appeared surprised at the earnestness of his manner, and rather hurt at being interrupted in her devotions; but replied, that she was very well, only a little cold. He hurried her out of the church, and scarcely gave her time to return the salutations of her neighbours, requesting her to take his and my arm, and hasten home as fast as possible, to avoid the effect of a chill which he very much feared that she had taken in the church.

When we got home she was rather fatigued, but, though the colour that had adorned her face did not return, she ate her dinner with a good appetite, and my father began to hope that his fears were groundless. His hope was soon blighted: my mother suddenly screamed out, saying that she had a violent pain in one of her feet. She complained of this pain, sometimes in one foot and sometimes in the other, till bed time; but my father, in order to hide his own forebodings, endeavoured to rally her, and in a joking way told her she was going to have the gout. She took some warm gruel, and retired early to rest.

About twelve o'clock my father came into my bedroom to awake me, and desired me to rise immediately, take my horse, and go for the family apothecary, who lived at a distance of about five miles. I, who was accustomed to rise at a moment's warning, jumped out of bed, and with the greatest haste performed the sad office. I accompanied the apothecary to her bedside before two o'clock, for I had made my poney almost fly thither and back. We found my poor father, who had been anxiously attending the progress of her disorder, in great distress. She had no sooner gone to bed than she was seized with cold chills, which continued, with alternate fever, the paroxysms of which had increased with such violence that she was already partially delirious. The next day Dr. Barvis[7], from Devizes, attended her and pronounced her in considerable danger. I mounted my poney, rode back with him, and soon returned again with the medicine he had prescribed; but my mother's disorder baffled all their skill and attention. My poor father was distracted; he never quitted her bedside for a moment; all his large farming concerns were left to the care of the servants; he desired me to go to them on the Monday morning, the day after

my mother was taken ill, and to request them all to do their best in each of their separate departments, and they were left entirely to themselves; every other thought but what was directed to the attention and care of my mother was abandoned; my father, whom I had never known to neglect seeing all his servants once a day at least, and who suffered nothing to be done unless it was under his immediate direction, would not now listen even to an inquiry about his business; his whole soul was wrapped up in his attention to my mother, whose illness he had anticipated with a presaging spirit, even before it came upon her. I was incessantly employed in going too and from the medical attendants, and assisting to wait upon my mother; and from the time of her first attack she took nothing but from the hand either of myself or my father. Her illness was now pronounced to be a determined putrid fever, and she was continually in a delirious state. Her infant son, William, had been kindly received to nurse by an excellent neighbour, Mrs. Patient of Compton, a most worthy lady, who nursed him and her own son together, with great good-nature and ease to herself.

My mother grew worse and worse, and was at length pronounced by the physician past all hopes of recovery. My poor father was frantic; he, who possessed the most manly resolution and firmness upon all other occasions, was now by excessive grief and despair reduced almost to the level of a child; he alternately wept and prayed; but he wept and prayed in vain. I was at this time under seventeen years of age, and I had scarcely time to vent my sorrow. Although I was distressed beyond measure at the suffering of my mother, yet the affliction, the indelible anguish, of my father demanded almost as much of my attention as the illness of my mother. To see his noble soul bent down to the earth, driven almost to the madness of desperation, was to me a more heart-rending spectacle than the delirium which produced a sort of stupor in my mother. She had not been sensible for any considerable period of time together for two days; and we were under dreadful apprehensions that she would be taken from us without ever recovering her reason. This my poor father dreaded excessively; yet the very thing we most prayed for, proved, when it was ultimately granted to us, our greatest affliction; so incapable are poor frail mortals of judging what is best for them under such trying circumstances.

My mother had now lain as it were in a doze for about two hours, and my father and myself, who were anxiously watching every breath, observed her awake up, as if it were from a sound sleep; she appeared to feel as if she had recovered from a trance; she spoke; and to the great joy of my father and myself she was perfectly collected. But our joy was of the most transient nature. She looked around in the most melancholy manner, and having enquired where all the children were gone, she expressed a great desire to see them before she breathed her last; for she said she was perfectly sensible of her situation, and she must see her children once more. They had all been removed to the house of a friend, as those who remained were considered in imminent danger from infection, the putrid state of my mother having assumed a very alarming appearance, and no one was now left, except my father, myself, and the nurse; the maid servant having already failed with the fever. My poor father had entreated, nay had commanded me also to save myself by flight; but upon my knees I implored him to let me remain and participate with him in performing the last sad office for my dear mother; I told him that I should break my

heart to leave him alone; for he really was now become an object of much greater pity than my dying parent.

My mother repeated so earnestly her wish to see her children, that they were immediately sent for, and she took a last sad farewell of them. They were hastened out of the room, that they might be removed at once from such a melancholy scene, and from the serious danger of contagion, arising from the dreadful state of their mother. To those who have never witnessed a parting of this sort, any attempt of mine to convey to them even a slight representation of the agony it inflicts on those who undergo it, would be in vain, for it is impossible. The great exertion of my poor mother, during this affecting scene, was such as left her almost without the power of speech; her respiration became excessively quick, and my afflicted father exclaimed, "I shall never hear her voice again!" She, however, soon recovered a little, and in the most plaintive strain lamented her approaching end, and prayed aloud to her blessed Saviour, to spare her life that she might have the happiness of seeing her children brought up. In fact, this most excellent of women appeared very much to dread the hand of death. My father now implored her to be tranquillised, and, in the most tender and affectionate manner, assured her, that of all living creatures she was, he thought, the best prepared to enter the presence of her Creator. She calmly replied that though to her knowledge she had never intentionally injured any human being, either in _thought, word, or deed_; though she had never neglected her duty to her Maker, but had always acted to the best of her judgment so as to deserve his mercy; yet, she trembled, and doubted, and feared to die. My father now observed that her voice faltered, and, to draw her attention from such a painful, heart-rending subject, he asked her if she knew me, supposing that she was becoming insensible. With the kindest look she took my hand, and gently replied, "I know him perfectly well, God bless him!" She then seized his hand also, and instantly expired, grasping both. Thus breathed the last, of as bright, as lovely, and as perfect a pattern of Christian piety as ever lived to grace society, and to adorn and bless a husband and family.

My father's sorrow was now become too intense for outward shew; he stood dumb and motionless, with his eyes fixed and rivetted upon her, in whose death he felt that he had sustained an irretrievable loss. We had both still hold of her hands; his mute, immovable figure looked like a statue; and I fancied that his heart was breaking. I seized him by the hand, and in the most supplicating manner implored him to leave the room. My extreme sorrow seemed to awake him from his trance; and I led him gently, and he followed involuntarily, out of the chamber. Having seated him in his armed chair, I knelt before him, and threw my head in his lap, there I gave a loose to my grief, and mingled my tears with those which were now flowing in streams down his manly cheeks. To endeavour to describe what I felt, upon this melancholy event, would be puerile in the extreme; none but those who have been placed in a similar situation are capable of comprehending the distress which enters the soul of such a husband and child, who had witnessed the last sad moments of such a wife and mother.

To have dwelt so long upon such a melancholy subject, may, perhaps, appear to some of my readers to be not only unnecessary, but tedious. I must, therefore, intreat their indulgence, by confessing my error, if an error

it be. At the same time I must assure them, that I believe this to have not only been the most important event of my life, but that it was a matter of more serious importance to me than all the occurrences of my previous existence multiplied ten times ten fold; and this being the case, I shall rely upon their kind forgiveness with great confidence; for I feel that every incident of my life, for many years after this, may be fairly said to have been influenced in some degree, or in some way or other, by this ever to be regretted, never to be forgotten, loss.

My father remained absorbed in melancholy, shut himself up, and refused to see any one till after the last sad office had been performed for my mother. In the mean time, he gave me instructions to overlook all the servants, and to superintend their work.

At length the day arrived for performing the ceremony of depositing her honoured remains in the family vault, which was in the chancel of the parish church. My father and myself followed as chief-mourners; and, during the performance of the funeral service, I believe there was not a dry eye amongst the numerous congregation who attended. Every one felt that he had sustained a loss. My father was so agitated, that I thought at one moment he would have thrown himself headlong into the grave, upon my mother's coffin; and it was with some difficulty that he was drawn from the sacred spot.

The maid servant was yet confined to her bed, very ill with the fever; and my eldest sister, who was about thirteen years of age, also fell sick the morning before the funeral took place. When we returned from church, we found that she had been obliged to go to bed, and the apothecary declared that she also had taken the fever. My father was very much alarmed for the consequences, and he now devoted his whole attention to the care of my sister, and left me entirely to manage his business.

The servant soon got well, in spite, as it were, of herself; for having heard the dogs howl very much one night, the circumstance made such an impression upon her weak, fearful mind, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could be persuaded that she was better. The howling of the dogs she considered as a certain omen of her death, and she gave herself up entirely to this ridiculous notion; nor could any thing short of a most excellent constitution have saved her from falling a prey to her own superstition. However, having been almost forced out of her bed, and persuaded with difficulty to put on her cloaths, she soon found, to her great astonishment, that she was as well as ever she was in her life, with the exception of being a little languid from the effects of the fever. The recovery of poor BETTY KITE was a great comfort to the whole family; for, although she was one of the plainest women in the world, and also very illiterate, and full of superstition, yet she was an unequalled servant both as to cleanliness and work. I was a great plague to her in various ways. She not being the best tempered woman in the world, I used to irritate her very much, by imitating the howling of dogs; and the complaints that she frequently made to my father of my conduct to her were truly ridiculous.

My father was now left a widower, in the prime of life; (at least he

considered himself quite in the prime of life at the age of fifty-eight) with six children, myself the least, three sisters and two brothers. With such a family, the loss of a mother is at all times, and under almost all circumstances, the most serious and irreparable; but the loss of such a mother as ours, alas it was most distressing! Ours was indeed a house of joy turned into a house of mourning; it was not the same house, it was not the same family. There stood my poor departed mother's chair, and the sight of the vacant seat perpetually called forth our tears, and sighs, and lamentations; my father would not have it removed,--but I must quit this subject, or I shall dwell upon it for ever.

My sister recovered from the fever, but there remained such a languor and weakness, that it was a long time before she could walk alone. My father dreaded her loss now almost as much as he had before dreaded that of my mother; he devoted a great portion of his time to her, and I was still left to look after his very extensive business. I shall never forget the authority I now began to assume. I was as dictatorial over the servants, and gave my commands as peremptorily, as if I had been an old farmer. Some of the old servants, who knew that my directions were improper, disputed my commands, and expostulated against my proceedings. However, like a true Jack in office, feeling that I was clothed with power, I considered this "brief authority" to be all-sufficient, and, like all other ignorant upstarts, what I was deficient in knowledge and real information, I made up in positiveness. But I soon found that by this foolish course, I lost all influence, and that I was laughed at by the old servants, who knew very well how to please my father, and I was, therefore, astonished that they did not know how to please me. My own sense now whispered to me that I must be wrong, yet, I nevertheless, appealed to my father, and complained of some of the servants having refused to comply with my directions. He enquired what those directions were, and he soon taught me that I ought to have applied for information to, and have followed the advice of, those very men with whom I had been contending. My father then pointed out to me the absolute necessity of becoming a master of my own business, and learning how to do the work myself, before I attempted to give directions to others. "This want of knowledge," said he, "causes more than half of the quarrels and squabbles that arise between the master and the servant. The moment a servant finds out that his master does not understand the nature of his business, he immediately begins to dispute his orders, and then there is an end of all authority; the master probably perseveres in his error, and insists upon it that his servant has not done his work properly, or that he has not done enough; and the moment a master orders a servant to do what is unreasonable, that moment the servant despises the master. And, unless the master knows how himself to shew the servant with his own hands the way to do any thing, he had better hold his tongue, and not find any fault whatever. I found my old neighbour Barnes," continued he, "the other day in this predicament. Although he has been for many many years a farmer, and manages his farm as well as most men, yet, as he was bred up a gardener, he does not know, nor did he ever learn, how to perform many of the laborious parts of husbandry; and I shall, I am sure, convince you, from what occurred to him, of the absolute necessity of acquiring a knowledge of every minute operation belonging to the affairs of husbandry, before you will be able to manage your business with ease to yourself, and with satisfaction to your servants. As I was riding

past the risk yard of my worthy friend and neighbour Barnes's farm, I heard him storming and blustering, quite in a rage with passion. "What is the matter, friend Barnes? what is it that has ruffed your temper so?" He was nearly choaked with passion; but at length he informed me, that one of his labourers, of the name of RODNEY, (who, by-the-bye, I believe had acquired this nick name from the circumstance of his having been a sailor, and fought under Admiral Rodney) had behaved to him in the most insolent manner.

"What has he done, neighbour Barnes?"

"Why," said he, "I found fault with the fellow several times, for not making the _Helms_ properly, for thatching the ricks, and he told me as often that he could not make them any better, and at length he put his hand into his pocket, pulled out his purse, and with an oath declared that he would make an Helm with me for a wager of a shilling." "Well, neighbour Barnes, what did you do, did you accept his offer, or did you shew him how to do it without the wager?" "Oh, no, replied he, I will send the insolent scoundrel about his business." Upon which, guessing that my neighbour did not understand how to make a helm himself, therefore could not shew the man how to do it, I said, "let me see the fellow, and talk to him a little, and hear what he has got to say for himself; and let me see whether I cannot make him do his work better." We then rode back together to the man, who was doing his work certainly not so well as it ought to have been done. "Well, Rodney," said I to him, "what is all this dispute about, between your master and you?" "Lord, Sir," replied the man, "I do the work as well as I can; but master is always finding fault, and wont show me how to do it better. I am very willing to learn, Sir, and if you will please to show me how, I will do any thing to please in my power." I then alighted from my horse, and having made some Helms, convinced the man of his error, by ocular demonstration. He was very thankful for my kindness, immediately followed my example, and did the remainder of his work to the thorough satisfaction of his master as well as with ease to himself. Barnes was now grown cool, and, while he expressed his thanks to me, he admitted the great superiority that a man who knows the practical part of his business had over one who only knew the theory."["]

This was the method my father took, to instruct me in useful knowledge; and, as my sister grew better and gained strength, he by degrees began to accompany me over his farms again, and in his rounds he made it his peculiar business to explain every part of the operations that were in progress by the servants. He appeared to take quite as much delight in cultivating my mind as he did in cultivating the soil, and no man knew better than he did how to cultivate the soil and manage a farm in all its branches. When there was any particular work to do, I always made a hand in it, and my father never failed to take pains to shew me how to do it well, and in the most scientific manner; always observing, that no man could perform his work well unless he appeared to do it easily to himself. Sowing time came, I learned to sow; haymaking time came, I learned to mow; harvest came, I learned to reap; in fact, I learned not only to plough, to sow, to reap, to mow, to pitch, to load, to make ricks, to thrash, and to winnow, but I made it my study to excel in all these things; and in recounting some of my feats of activity, strength, agility, and

perseverance in these matters, the reader will recollect that I am recording them in the life time of numerous individuals, who were eye-witnesses of these facts, and who worked side by side with me; and as I know that this work is taken in, and read, not only by my old school-fellows, but also by my old[8] work-fellows, they who peruse these pages will take into their consideration, that I am not writing, neither are they reading, a novel or a romance; that on the contrary, they are perusing the real facts that have occurred within the knowledge and the recollection of thousands.

After the labour of the day was over, and the servants had retired to their homes to obtain their natural rest, to fit them for the toils of the coming morn, my father used to read, alternately with myself, some useful or entertaining book; and he frequently lamented that I appeared to give up so much the study of my Latin books. I had all along spent a few hours, twice or three times a week, in reading the Classics with the Rev. Mr. Carrington, the clergyman of the parish, who was an excellent scholar, and a very sensible, liberal-minded, worthy man. To him I am greatly indebted for a deal of useful, sound information, and a knowledge of that portion of mankind with whom my father had never associated. Mr. now the Rev. Dr. Carrington, the Rector of Berkeley, in Gloucestershire, took great pleasure in completing my education; and at the end of one year, with the advantage of this friendly assistance, I believe sincerely that I had acquired more knowledge, both of literature and of ancient and modern history, than I should have done in seven years at college.

Although my time was so much occupied in the business of the farms, yet I longed for the refined instruction of the mind, which was conveyed with so much kindness, with so much care, and with so much assiduity, by this worthy and intelligent man. He was at that time denominated by the vulgar, illiterate, grovelling, low-bred slaves of the day, a _jacobin_; and this excellent, enlightened being, who possessed more real love of country than a _legion_ of the reptiles with which he was surrounded, was constantly exposed to the petty insults of some of his big-bellied, big-headed, empty-pated neighbours, who termed themselves loyal and constitutional subjects, and who took upon themselves to point him out as an enemy to his country, because he did not choose to shut his eyes and join in the war-whoop, the savage, stupid, idiotic cry against the patriotic efforts that were then making by the friends of liberty in France, to rescue their fellow countrymen from the accursed yoke, the double bondage of superstition and tyranny.

This was the period that the people of England, at all times and in all ages esteemed the most credulous people in the universe, were made drunk with their own ignorance and folly. Mr. Paine had now written and published his wonderful book, his "Rights of Man," and to put down, to prevent the people from reading, to prejudice the public feeling, and to misrepresent and to vilify the author and his work, the whole power of this powerful government was put in motion. I was myself at this time too young to take any active part in the proceedings; I knew nothing of politics; I loved my country, and was taught to honour my king; I knew not what to make of the violence and bigotry of faction; but I always so far stood by, and gave that support to, my tutor and friend, as to demand that

he should be heard in his own defence, when any of these brutal attacks were made upon him by his half-savage, half-human assailants. My father was a loyal, but a liberal-minded man; when he was present, the parson always had fair play; my father would combat his arguments, but he would always in return hear his reply, and, although he was a very shrewd, intelligent, well-informed man, yet I generally observed that Mr. Carrington had the best of the argument, and that he frequently convinced my father of the truth of his positions. As my father was obliged, in fairness, to admit the truth of his opponent's assertions, and the correctness of his reasonings, and the conclusions which he drew therefrom, he generally finished by putting in the plea of necessity, and defending the government and measures of Mr. Pitt, on the ground of policy. This used to enrage their audience, which consisted of the farmers of the parish and neighbourhood, among whom was frequently some upstart puppy, some ineffable coxcomb, one of their sons, perhaps, apprenticed at the neighbouring town, who came home on a Sunday, at Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, or Christmas, on a visit, and who had imbibed a double portion of the mania, in consequence of his having licked up the froth and saliva which had been vomited forth by the ministerial agents and tools of the rotten borough, or corporate town, of which his master was one of the rotten limbs. How often have I seen one of these self-sufficient cubs, with all the solemn mummery, without half the sense, of an ape, deliver what the fool vainly called his opinion, which consisted of the most stupid and senseless contradictions and assertions, generally finishing with something which he conceived to be unanswerable, "_as our mayor said!"_ How often have I felt my blood boil, to hear my worthy friend and preceptor insulted by one of these contemptible jackanapes. In fact, more than once, when I found that my friend the clergyman did not condescend even to return a look of contempt in answer to such despicable trash, I have taken up the cudgels myself; but, being fully as ignorant of such matters as my opponent, it generally followed that I retorted nothing more than flat contradictions to his assertions, and frequently I proposed to settle the dispute by an appeal to force; and sometimes it actually ended in blows. My worthy friend used at first to laugh at my zeal most heartily; but when he found that I more than once concluded by a _knock-down_ argument, he begged me to moderate my ardour, and expostulated with me upon the impropriety, as well as the absurdity, of my following the example of such contemptible opponents, by falling into the very error which he and all good and honest men must deplore, "that of resorting to brute force, instead of relying upon truth, reason, and justice."

Yet though I was warmly his friend, I own I thought the parson took up the matter too harshly against the measures of Mr. Pitt, and I could not understand many of the grounds of complaint which he made against the proceedings of government. I was taught to believe that those who promoted the Revolution and guillotined the King of France were bloody-minded fellows, and that the people of this happy country ought to do any thing rather than submit to have its streets stained with the blood of their monarch. I was in the habit of hearing all the ridiculous stories of invasion, rapine, and murder, and of listening to all the hobgoblin accounts of what we were to expect from our fellow creatures on the other side of the channel, and my young mind was worked up to such a pitch, that

I longed to become one of the number of those who were going to resist and to punish them if ever they dared to invade our happy shores; nay, I always expressed my determination, if that day should ever arrive, that I would not remain at home, wasting my time in inglorious ease and safety, while they were disfiguring the fair face of our favoured Isle with blood and conquest. My father, who had frequently heard me burst out in loud declamation and expressions of a patriotic feeling of abhorrence, and threaten defiance in case any attempt at invasion was made, began to reason with me upon this subject; and he trusted that I should never put myself forward to enter any of the volunteer corps, as they were called; adding "why, do you not see that amongst these men every idea of sincere patriotism or genuine love of country is a mere joke, a farce? Look round," said he, "and you will find that nine out of every ten persons who enter these corps do it at the command of their landlord, or some other person in power, who is a magistrate, or the immediate agent of government."

I had never before heard my father talk in this manner; but our little friend, the clergyman, appeared delighted to think that he had made a convert of him, and he expressed his pleasure upon ascertaining this fact, by hearing him talk to and admonish me in the way he did. He joined in my father's censure of the selfish motives and views of those exclusively loyal gentry, the yeomanry, and said they were a set of tools of the government, who wished to enslave the minds as well as the bodies of their fellow countrymen. "Hold! hold!" said my father to the parson, "you mistake me if you think I am a convert to your doctrine, I am a truly loyal man, and a sincere friend of the constitution both in church and state; and if I thought these volunteer corps were raised for the sole purpose of repelling the invasion of the French, I would not only wish my son to enter into one of them, but I would also go myself, old as I am, rather than live under a foreign domination. My opinion," said he, "always has been that we ought not to have meddled with the affairs of France; that we had quite enough to do to mind our own business, and if we could only take care of our own concerns, and manage them with a little more economy, and do justice by the people, and keep our magistrates and the courts of law independent, upright and impartial in their decisions, we need not dread the French, nor all the foreigners in the world put together." "Why, really, my friend," replied Mr. Carrington, "you have now been merely repeating that for which those whom you call jacobins have been contending: they wish for nothing more than you have said we all ought to have, with this exception, that they say, that the "only way to secure this is by the means of a free and equal representation."" "Ah!" said my father, "there's the rub; that word equal will never go down; do you want that equality which has caused the shedding of so much blood in France?" "No, Sir," said the parson, "we want equal justice, equal political rights; in fact all we want, and all that the people require, to make them free and happy, is equal laws and an impartial and just administration of those laws, which we shall never have while the present corrupt system lasts. However," said the clergyman to me, "my young friend, do nothing hastily; but should you go into any of the yeomanry corps, with your zealous feeling and patriotic love of country, I fear you will be woefully disappointed if you expect to find any of your comrades acting under a corresponding impulse. Their main object appears to be to

secure their corn ricks, and to keep up the price of their grain; and their landlords, who are the officers of these their tenants, encourage this measure, that they may be enabled to pay them high rents. Depend upon it nine tenths of them are actuated by this selfish feeling; therefore, let me advise you to reserve your disinterested and praiseworthy patriotism for another and a better occasion." My father said there was too much truth in our friend's observations, and under this impression I was induced to forego my design of being among the first to volunteer into one of these troops that were about to be embodied; and very much to the satisfaction of my father, as well as to that of my tutor, I resolved to redouble my attention to the business of the farm.

At this time, in the beginning of the year 1794, great alarm was raised and propagated all over the country, of the introduction of French principles. Party spirit ran high in every company and society. A great portion of the enlightened part of the community protested in very loud terms against the war, and numerous petitions were sent from various parts of the country demanding peace. The debates in parliament were very violent, and Mr. Fox, with an irresistible eloquence and a prophetic voice, foretold the disasters that were likely to follow, if such a course of hostility were pursued against the liberties of France, and he accused the ministers of making and continuing the war for the purpose of ultimately restoring the tyranny of the Bourbons, and replacing that family upon the throne. This was disclaimed by all the ministers, and Mr. Pitt broadly and unequivocally denied that they had any such intention. The opposition moved to address the King to make peace, but this was negatived by a large majority, and _war! war! war!_ eternal war against French principles! was the cry which was resounded by all the agents of the government throughout the country; and although this was lamented and deplored by every humane, thinking, rational man, yet such was the fact, that the nation was drunk with the clamour, and particularly the _lower orders_ (for they then truly merited the degrading appellation). Church and King mobs were the order of the day! Every honest man who had the courage to express his opinion, was denounced as a jacobin; and great depredations were committed in many parts of the country. Dreadful outrages of this sort had been perpetrated at Birmingham, as far back as the year 1792, by the drunken, hired, besotted populace destroying the houses and property of several worthy and patriotic, and therefore obnoxious, individuals. At Bath a very worthy man of the name of Campbell had his house pulled down by one of these drunken church-and-king mobs, merely because he took in the COURIER NEWSPAPER, published by the notorious DANIEL STEWART, who was a violent republican, and who propagated his principles and doctrines in that paper. I am informed that the _hired wretches_, who acted under authority, actually pulled down this poor fellow's house to the tune of _God save the King;_ many of the loyal inhabitants of that loyal town, who were standing by looking on, excited them to persevere, by joining in the chorus. Poor Campbell was ruined by the loss of his house and furniture, which broke his heart. The fact of his taking in the Courier was understood to have arisen from his acquaintance with Stewart, with whom he had been in the habits of intimacy when they were both JOURNEYMEN TAYLORS. This notorious DANIEL STEWART, who has made a _large fortune_ by turning his coat, and devoting the columns of the Courier to the ministers, is still the same man at the bottom of

his heart; and I understand, from those who are his pot companions, that he is as violent a _jacobin_ and supporter of revolutionary doctrines over his cup as he ever was. To call such a miserable creature as this a _radical_, would be to cast a greater stigma upon the word radical than all that Castlereagh, Brougham, and Canning ever sent forth against those who bear it. It is confidently asserted by those who profess to know his private concerns, that he has feathered his dirty nest well, and that, as the best means of securing his ill gotten pelf, he has lately invested it in the _French funds_, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds!

On the first of June in this year, 1794, the _brave sailors_ under Lord Howe defeated the French fleet, took seven sail of the line, and brought them into Spithead; and it was announced that the king and queen and the royal family were going to Portsmouth, to thank and to congratulate Lord Howe and those brave officers who had survived the dreadful slaughter of the engagement. As the _Prince of Wales_, a ninety-six gun ship of war, was to be launched upon the occasion, a great number of persons from the part of the world where I lived, which was about fifty miles from Portsmouth, were going there to see the launch, and to witness the effect of this bloody battle. I was very anxious to make one of the party, and I expressed my wish to my father, with which he positively refused to comply. This refusal arose from some little misunderstanding we had about a favourite maid servant of his who lived with us at the time, to whom I had not conducted myself with all the attention that she required. She had therefore caused that sort of shyness and distance between my father and me, which rendered my home not so pleasant as it had heretofore been, and indeed exactly the reverse of what it had been in my poor mother's life time. My father assigned as a reason for his detaining me, that there was some hay about, and although this was of very trivial moment, it being a very small quantity, yet he positively refused to give his consent to my going. I urged my plea of constant attention to business, and my extraordinary personal exertions for several years past, wherein I had done more work than almost any two of his men servants, and I demanded to know if he had ever seen me neglect his business, or shift from performing the severest labour? He admitted that he had no fault to find with me, and that he did not require that I should work so hard; nay, he added, that, so far from having any complaint to make against me for not working, he thought I tasked myself too much, and that he was fearful that I should injure myself by such excessive exertions as he had frequently witnessed. "Then pray, Sir," said I, "why will you not allow me a little recreation? this small indulgence?" I promised I would return at the end of two days. But all would not do. I found that his favourite maid had prejudiced him, and I was foolish enough to hint this to him, which he resented very warmly, and gave me a lecture in such language as I had never before received from him. At length we rose to very high words, and the dispute was of so serious a nature that he almost ordered me out of doors. It ended in my declaring that _nothing should deter me_ from going to Portsmouth, and by his declaring that, if I did, I should never enter his house again; and in order to put my threat of going out of my power, he took _my horse_, which was already saddled, instead of his own, and rode out to the other farm.

Burning with rage at this harsh, this unusual, as well as unjust

treatment, I rushed up stairs, and began dressing myself for the journey. My sister flew up stairs with tears in her eyes, and upon her knees implored me not to think of going. I coolly asked her if she had heard what passed between my father and me. She replied that she had heard it with the greatest astonishment and dismay, and that she had heard my determination with the greatest pain. Although she knew too well the cause of my father's harshness to me, and felt most acutely the reason of his ill humour, which she herself had sometimes partaken of, and had borne in silence, yet she dreaded the effect of my leaving home. However, all her expostulations were in vain; _I had made my resolve_, and that once done with me, _even then_, nothing but death would have deterred me from carrying it into effect. Having dressed myself, I saddled my father's favourite horse, as he had taken mine, and having mounted him, I was twenty miles on my road to Portsmouth in less than two hours.

I slept with a friend, and started the next morning at four o'clock, to ride the remaining thirty miles, in order to be there by eleven o'clock, which was the hour the ship was to be launched. On the other side of Andover I overtook a gentleman, of the name of NEALE, who, as well as myself, was also going to Portsmouth, to see the Royal Family. I had known him a little when a boy at school at Andover, and having soon learned each others intentions, we agreed to go in company together. We intended to have breakfasted at Winchester, but we were too early, all the windows and doors of the inns were shut, and we passed on till we came to Whiteflood, a small inn by the road side, where we got good corn for our horses, and an excellent breakfast for ourselves.

We arrived at Gosport about nine o'clock, and having put up our horses we crossed to Portsmouth about ten. The gates of the dockyard were closed, and we were told that we were too late to be launched in the man of war, that the king, queen, and three or four of the princesses were at the governor's house, and the ship would be launched at eleven precisely. I had more anxiety about being launched _in_ a ship of war, never having seen any thing of the sort before, than I had about any thing; therefore I felt greatly mortified at being too late, and I began to try the experiment of bribing the gatekeeper, who had positive orders not to let any one pass after that hour. My friend Neale, seeing it in vain to remain there, took another course, and said he would get a boat to see the launch, if he could not get into it; but as I had set my heart upon being in the ship when it was launched, I remained at the door. As soon as I was alone with the door-keeper, I renewed my application, and finding that he began to relax, I plied him close, and he soon put me in the way how to _cheat the devil_. He asked if I did not know any one who lived in the dock yard, and I instantly made up my mind to say yes, and urged him to repeat some of their names. This he did, and I was luckily saved the disgrace of telling a lie, for the second person he named was an old school-fellow of mine; and I never in my life claimed acquaintance with any old friend with so much alacrity and pleasure. A half crown now opened the gates, and in I went, a fine sunburnt country youth, and made my way to my friend's house as fast as possible. Another check! he was from home! I then hastened to the part where the majestic Prince stood upon her few remaining stocks, ready at a moment's notice for the signal of being launched into the watery element. But no entrance was to be obtained! all

communication was cut off from the dock to the vessel, except by one step ladder, strongly guarded, waiting for the arrival of the principal commissioner, who had gone to conduct the royal family to the sort of balcony that was erected to enable them to see the whole of the launch with ease and safety. I now placed myself as near as possible to the foot of this ladder, anxiously waiting the arrival of the commissioner. At length the old gentleman arrived, dressed in an admiral's uniform. The pressure of the crowd was immense; but, although it was the first crowd I had ever had to encounter, I made a dash and forced my way through, close up to the foot of the ladder and, as the old officer ascended, I sprang through the sentinels and up the steps, and held him fast by the skirt of his coat. The sentinels seized me and pulled me back, with great violence. I held fast, and down came the commissioner and myself together to the bottom of the ladder. The old boy stared, and the sentinels swore, but I still held fast. They endeavoured to release him, and struck me some hard blows. With one desperate effort, however I sprang by the commissioner, and was up the ladder like a cat. I was seized at the top to be handed back again, and as I was about to make a determined resistance, the commissioner came up and kindly released me, and after a gentle reprimand for placing him in such danger, I was permitted to remain on board and to be launched in the Prince of Wales; having got on board more than an hour after all other communication had been cut off from her: and I obtained this gratification in the presence of thousands, who hailed the success of my daring perseverance by giving me three cheers. This was the first act of my life that gained me the cheers of a large multitude, and I was not a little proud of the compliment. I believe there were upwards of a thousand persons on board, and I was struck with astonishment at the stupendous magnitude of a ship of war of the first rate. On the larboard side of this magnificent specimen of the wooden walls of old England, sat the venerable monarch George the Third with his Queen and their fine family of Princesses in all their pride and beauty, two or three of them at that time being remarkably fine young women. I believe they were accompanied by one of the princes, and on the side of the king stood the victorious hero of the day, Lord Howe, commonly called by the sailors, Black Dick. In a few minutes, unknown and unobserved by me, the signal was given, and she glided almost imperceptibly from the stocks into the middle of the harbour, thus riding most majestically dignified in the midst of applauding and admiring myriads who hailed her progress with enthusiastic cheers; the king, the queen, and the princesses all waving their handkerchiefs. Such was the beauty of this launch, and such was the skill with which it was accomplished that the only sensation which I felt was, that the other ships, that were along side of us, appeared to move gently from us. A boat now came alongside of her, being hailed by a party, of which the late John Weeks, who then kept the Bush at Bristol, was one, and he began to descend^[9] when a thought struck me, that as I was the last person, except the commissioner of the Dock-yard, who came on board, so I should like to be the first out of her; and the thought was no sooner conceived than I put it in execution.

Although there were two or three persons going down the ladder on the side of the ship before me, yet I made a spring and jumped fourteen or fifteen feet, and reached the boat first, at the imminent risk of swamping her. I did not get any cheers for this, but many a reprimand for my temerity.

But, as my poor father used at that time to say, that it was a word and a blow with me; I was very quick in forming a plan, and when I had once made up my mind, it was generally executed with the rapidity of lightening. I returned, and dined at the Fountain Inn with the party from Bath and Bristol, and in the evening I called again upon my old school fellow, whose father held some situation and lived in the dock yard, but I do not now recollect his name. He was at home, and was very happy to see me, and having introduced me to his father, mothers and sisters, together with some friends who were on a visit, I drank tea with them; and being offered it, I most willingly accepted part of his bed, a valuable acquisition to me, as a bed was not to be had, either in, or within ten miles of Portsmouth, for love or money.

Before I rose in the morning, my young friend informed me that, in the course of the forenoon, I should have an opportunity of seeing the royal family, as they were going to inspect the dock-yard, and on that account the gates were kept closed, that they might not be annoyed by the crowd, which would otherwise have impeded their progress. He said that he must not appear, but he thought I might, as a stranger, take an opportunity of getting very near them, without creating any particular notice.

I took the hint, and thanked him most cordially for the information; and when the royal party came round, I joined them without any ceremony. They were attended by very few persons, among whom were Lord Howe and the _commissioner_ to whom I had caused such a fall the day before: the latter eyed me immediately, and shook his head, but in such a good humoured way that it encouraged me to remain rather than otherwise. I therefore now joined the party, at a respectful distance. At the entrance of the cable room lay a piece of a very large cable, about six feet long, to which Lord Howe called the attention of the royal family, by stating that it was part of the cable of the _French admiral's ship_, and that it had been shot off at that length by two balls from the English fleet, which were supposed to have struck it at the same moment at six feet distance. Lord Howe also said that there was a twelve pounder ball stuck into it also, but as it lay on the ground, and they could not see it, he ordered one of the attendants to heave it upon its end. It was however, too heavy, and the man could not accomplish it, but let it fall back again. The commissioner was calling some one to assist, when I sprung forward, and having seized it, I heaved it upright in an instant; for which the gallant admiral as well as the commissioner thanked me, and I held it nearly a quarter of an hour, while the king and all the family examined it, as it was esteemed a great curiosity, and a striking proof of the heat and severity of the engagement. The king very politely now thanked me, and the queen particularly so, and expressed a desire that some one should help me to sink it down again, fearing that it was too heavy for me; but I was anxious to shew my strength, as well as my gallantry, and I sunk it into its place on the ground again, with great ease. The princesses deigned a smile, which I esteemed a very high reward. After this I went round the whole dock yard with the party, and offered my assistance whenever it was wanted, which was accepted with the greatest politeness; the princesses entering at times freely into conversation with me.

At length the commissioner took me aside, and asked me how I came into the

dock yard. I stated the fact to him as it was, and he then said he had his Majesty's command to ask my name. I told him my name, what was my occupation, and whence I came; and the king hearing that I was the son of a large Wiltshire farmer, asked me many questions relating to the crops, &c. &c. all of which I answered very much to his satisfaction, and when they departed, he politely took leave of me. The reader may easily conceive that I was not a little proud of the opportunity I had of being so near, and of having such means of conversing with, the royal party.

I forgot to notice, that the Prince of Wales, the ship which was launched the day before, had been got back again into Dock, the same afternoon, and was this day exhibited to his majesty completely copper-bottomed, which operation had been performed in twenty-four hours by the workmen in the yard; an instance of speed and of the power of well-directed and incessant labour, which never was before, and probably never has since, been equalled in the annals of ship-building. I went on board some of the captured French ships of war, that had been cleared up from the carnage of the battle for the inspection of the royal visitors; but, notwithstanding the care which had been taken to put them in a state fit to be viewed, the visible proofs of the horrible slaughter met the eye in every direction, and the recollection of the sight, even at this distance of time, makes the heart sicken.

Although I was at this time in the zenith of my loyalty, I could not avoid enquiring of myself whether all this blood and carnage, all this waste of valuable life, was absolutely necessary? Whether no means could have been devised to settle the point in dispute, without resorting to arms, and sacrificing the best blood of both countries? On the one hand, the too common feeling was, that it was absolutely necessary, and almost all those who were the loudest in their lamentations, and who appeared most to deplore the dreadful loss of so many gallant men, were at the same time the greatest advocates of the war, and boldly justified it upon the score of dire necessity; adding, that it was better a few should suffer in war, than that the whole country should be overrun by an invading army, which they would have us to believe was composed of such monsters as would never rest satisfied, unless they murdered us all, young and old, male and female. The republicans of France were described as wild beasts of the most ferocious kind, whose only delight was in blood, and who never spared either age or sex. But yet it often occurred to me, should but the opinion, the representations of my worthy friend and tutor be correct, that not the French republicans, but those who supported the war, the English ministers, were the bloody minded monsters; that they, as he asserted, were the cause of the war, in order to restore the old tyranny that had desolated France, and had for so many centuries enslaved a brave, an intelligent, and a truly gallant people? These reflections would frequently come across my mind; but we were told they were threatening to invade us, and the threat of an invasion always roused the spirit of every British heart, and made it glow with the desire to repel them.

I had now seen nearly all the sights, and as I had been absent from home four days, I began to bend my thoughts that way; but the reflection that I had left my father, not only without his leave, but also against his consent, now began to render every thing that others appeared to enjoy

very irksome to me. I, however, mustered courage, took my horse, and reached home in the afternoon of the fifth day. At the door I met my father, who received me in the most hostile manner. He lavished his imprecations upon my head, and as he burst out of the room, he, in a paroxysm of passion, ordered me to quit his house, and see his face no more. Springing by me in a menacing manner, he repeated his denunciations, declaring that I should not remain under his roof. He then went to the stable, took his horse, which I had just brought home, mounted it, and rode away towards his Farms.

Young and foolish as I was, I felt that I had given him cause of just complaint, although I thought his conduct displayed an unnecessary and unbecoming rigour, in refusing me such an indulgence in the first instance? My eldest sister implored me to endeavour to conciliate my father, and informed me how uneasy he had been since my first departure, and what a wretched house they had had at home. But his determined aspect at leaving me, the threats which he held out, and the peremptory tone in which he ordered me to depart from his house, appeared to me to admit of no alternative; and therefore, with a desperate determination I hastened up stairs, and packed up a small portmanteau, and, in less than half an hour, in spite of the entreaties of my sister, I was mounted upon my own horse, and took a final leave, as I expected, of that home where I had passed so many delightful happy days.

As I embraced my afflicted sister, who had fainted upon seeing my determination, and who was now relieved by a flood of tears, I could not refrain from calling aloud upon the angelic spirit of my dear departed mother, who had she been alive this dreadful calamity had never befallen me or our family. I tore myself from my sister, who was in an agony of grief, and who now upon her knees implored me to think of my father, and how miserable my leaving home again, under such distressing circumstances, would make him; she used all the arguments which her reason could suggest, to persuade me that it was my duty to bear with his temper, and to submit to his will, however arbitrary. But, as I was now of age, and as I had laboured incessantly in my father's business for nearly five years, and had scarcely ever left it for a day, I was mortified at his unnecessary severity, in denying me the privilege of a day or two upon such an occasion; and, besides, as my father's temper was very much altered since the death of my mother, and my home was become not at all comfortable of late, I was unfortunately not in the humour to brook such harsh treatment; nor indeed, did I know how it was possible for me to remain after his determined behaviour at quitting me. I therefore, most unwisely and most imprudently, started off as I thought to seek my fortune; determined, at all events, if I could not live in my father's house, that I would leave the kingdom.

I rode to Bath, a distance of thirty miles, in about three hours, whence, having baited my horse, I rode forward to Bristol, where I arrived and put up at the White Lion, in Broad-street, about eight o'clock; having ridden from Portsmouth to Bristol, a distance of ninety five miles, in about thirteen hours. I was not known to any one at the inn, nor to any one in Bristol except a Mr. Gresley, of whom my father rented Littlecot Farm. I found him out immediately, and he received me with great kindness,

expressing himself most happy to see me, as he had repeatedly given me invitations to come and visit him. I carefully concealed the rupture with my father, and, very luckily for me, I was in very good hands, as my friend, although an easy voluptuary, was nevertheless an amiable and a good-hearted man, and took care to check instead of encouraging me in any soft of debauchery, which a youth of my age was so likely to fall into in such a profligate city.

I began the very next day to look out for some situation amongst the captains of vessels outward bound, and I was soon introduced to a very worthy man, a friend of Mr. Gresley's, who, in the course of ten days, was about to sail to Africa in the command of a vessel upon the slave trade. I soon imparted to him my wish to go abroad in some active situation; but I bound him to secrecy, even with my friend Gresley. He professed to be very much pleased with me, but endeavoured, by every means in his power, to prevail upon me to abandon my design; and he pointed out to me, in very glowing colours, all the miseries and all the perils which were incident to a sea-faring life, and did every thing that he possibly could, to persuade me to return to my father's house. At length I told him that I was irrevocably determined to look out for a situation, and to close with the first captain who would give me a birth, and the longer the voyage the better I should be pleased with it; for I was resolved upon leaving England, as I could not bear the thoughts of remaining in this country, and an alien from the house of my father. At last, after he had ascertained that I was immutably resolved to go to sea, he at once made me an offer of taking me out as his _clerk and cabin friend_. I jumped at the offer, but told him that I had but little money, and was, perhaps, ill prepared for such a voyage. He then made one more trial to prevail upon me to return, but with as little success as before. Finding that it was in vain to reason any further, he then said that he would equip me the next morning, at his own expense, with all the necessary clothing, &c. &c. for the voyage; and he added, that if he were successful, of which he had no doubt, he would pay me something handsome for my services, which he anticipated would be very valuable to him.

The morning came without my having closed my eyes, I having been entirely occupied the whole of the night with the thoughts of my undertaking, to which I looked forward with the greatest enthusiasm, regardless of the atrocious occupation upon which I was about to enter. In fact, it did not once occur to me, that the slave trade was any worse than any other trade, so little had I thought upon it, and so little did I know of the nature of it at that time. Thousands being engaged in it, who were protected by the laws, it never came into my head that I was about to commit any moral crime. Indeed, I was driven to such a state of desperation by the quarrel which I had had with my father, and was so indignant at what I thought his cruel treatment, that I was a fit subject for any enterprise, even had it been ten times more desperate than that in which I was about to engage; and, having once made up my mind to the thing, I thought of nothing else till my trunk of clothes was ready and on board. That being effected, I went down with the captain, and took possession of my cabin and berth in the vessel, which lay off King's-road, and, as she was ready to sail with the first fair wind, I should have staid on board had not the captain insisted upon my taking leave of Mr. Gresley, and sending my horse back to

my father. Although I considered the horse as my own, and had been offered thirty guineas for him, yet such was the liberality and proper feeling of the captain, that he absolutely refused to take me unless I returned the horse, and I consequently, in his presence, hired a man to take him off the next morning.

I was to see Mr. Gresley by appointment at the White Lion at nine o'clock that evening, and was to go down with the captain, at eight the next day, to the vessel, which was to weigh anchor at ten, and drop down the Bristol Channel with the tide. The wind being fair, we expected to be off Ilfracombe the same night. Every thing was arranged; I had written home, and taken leave of my father and my sister, lamenting the cause, but rejoicing in the prospect, of my voyage; I had drank tea with the captain, and was anxiously waiting the arrival of our mutual friend Gresley to break the affair to him, and at the same time to take leave of him, when the waiter announced a gentleman enquiring for Mr. Hunt. I rose to receive, as I supposed, my friend Gresley, and was prepared to give him a brief explanation of my intentions, when, lo! who should walk in but an intimate friend of my father's, who had just arrived in his own carriage from Bath, in search of the fugitive. He immediately produced a letter from my father, not only inviting my return home, not only promising forgiveness to me, but actually intreating my forgiveness for his harshness towards me, and imploring me to hasten home, and relieve him from the terrible state of misery to which my absence had reduced him. The language of his letter was such as would have melted the heart of a much more hardened offender than I was--but, I had made an engagement with the captain, and I told my father's friend that I was sorry that he was come too late, but that no consideration whatever should make me run from the engagement which I had contracted with him, at my own particular request. It is true that I felt an irresistible impulse to embrace my beloved father again; that to be restored to his good opinion was a treasure to me, far surpassing all and every prospect that my sanguine hopes had painted in the most vivid colours upon my enthusiastic imagination, and that I felt for a moment a struggle between honour and duty; yet, I am almost ashamed to relate it, but the truth must be told, that I instantly declared that as I had gone so far, no power on earth should deter me from fulfilling my engagement with Captain ----. This worthy, warm-hearted, and disinterested fellow, however, instantly protested, that under such circumstances, with such a prospect of my being restored to my family and friends, nothing in the world should induce him to take me with him.

At this moment, my friend Gresley arrived, and heard, from the captain and my father's friend, my obstinate resolve with the greatest astonishment. He assured me that, unless I instantly gave up all thoughts of going, he would get a warrant from his friend, the mayor, to detain me by force. This was, however, unnecessary; for, after the captain's generous and manly avowal, I yielded without farther delay to the earnest entreaties of all present, and I believe that the worthy captain felt as much real delight and happiness at the result as anyone of the party. My father's friend offered to pay the captain for any expence that he had been put to on my account, but the latter positively refused to take a farthing, adding, that he should sell what he had provided for me for two hundred per cent. profit, and that he would rather lose two hundred per cent. than

forego the pleasure he felt at the idea of a reconciliation, between his young friend and his father.

The kindness of my father's letter had a great effect upon me; the expressions of sorrow which it contained at my departure, and the assurance, that he would be completely miserable till my return, recalled all his former kindness to me, and I would instantly have set out on my way home, although it was now dusk, and it rained in torrents, I had already ordered my horse to be saddled--that horse which I had the same evening paid a man twelve shillings to take back to my father's house without his master, I was now eager to mount myself, that I might fly to receive my parent's blessing, and acknowledge my error in disobeying his commands. But my friends all entreated me to defer my departure till the morning, to which I reluctantly consented, and retired to bed about twelve o'clock, after having taken a most affectionate leave of the _worthy, generous, and kind-hearted captain_. Good God! how often have I been since rivetted to the earth, as it were with astonishment, when I contemplated such a man being employed upon such a cruel, unjust, unchristian, murderous traffic as that of the _slave trade_!

I certainly retired to my bed, having ordered the ostler to get my horse ready by three o'clock; but no rest did I obtain. For the first time in my life, I now learned what it was to go to bed without being able to go to sleep; for two long hours, I tossed and turned about a thousand times, but deep had flown from my eyes. I heard the quarters strike, and the watchman go his lonely round; my thoughts were all at home, and I was wretched till I threw myself at my poor distressed father's feet, to claim with a certainty of receiving his blessing and forgiveness. I, who, but a few hours before, expected and intended to bid farewell to my native land, and to leave behind me all that was dear and valuable to me in this world; I, who was prepared to sail the next morning, almost without regret, and had thoughtlessly undertaken to become one of those who were the most horrid and most unnatural of all unnatural and horrid thieves and murderers; I, who should have gone to bed and slept as sound as a rock under such circumstances till I was called in the morning, could not, now I was about to return to my kindest friends, and to make myself and my father happy, I could not sleep one moment. Gracious God! upon what a precipice had I stood! from what a world of misery was I rescued, by the kind hand of Providence! for if I had gone upon such an errand, and if I had been instrumental in robbing one _human being or fellow creature_ of his life, or of what was more valuable to him--his LIBERTY, it would afterwards have been to me a source of never-failing misery. Thank God! I was saved from that pang. Had my father's messenger come twelve hours later, I should have been sailed, and in all probability have been a participator in such crimes as I should never have forgiven myself, for having joined in committing.

The clock struck two; I could remain in bed no longer; I jumped up, and having found my way into the yard, I roused the ostler, and having got my horse saddled, I passed Temple Gate just as the clock struck three; and without drawing bit more than once, I reached home before nine o'clock, a distance of forty-five miles. My father and my sister met me at the door; but to attempt to describe the affecting reconciliation would be only

doing an injustice to my own feelings. My poor father, however, would scarcely allow me to offer any apology for my undutiful behaviour; he took all the blame to himself; he had reflected more than I had upon the consequences of my voyage, the full particulars of which I found he knew, he having received an account of my every movement, and known all my plans, which had in confidence been communicated by the honest captain to Mr. Gresley, that he might apprise my father of them and endeavour by all the means in his power to procure for me, if possible, a reconciliation before he sailed; he being resolved to convince himself that all hopes of that desirable object were fruitless ere he permitted me to accompany him. This was an instance of the most disinterested friendship, and I have every reason to believe that he even delayed the sailing of the vessel for several days, in order to give time for Mr. Gresley to send to my father. This information Mr. Gresley communicated without delay, and my father no sooner received it, than he dispatched a confidential messenger, his neighbour, Mr. John Coward of Enford, with a strict injunction not to spare any pains to find me, and to hasten my return home.

My Father who had hitherto, since the death, of my mother, conducted himself towards me with a degree of austerity and rigid discipline not altogether calculated to conciliate my hasty disposition, now relaxed his usual strictness, and ever afterwards proved himself not only a kind parent, but an indulgent and sincere Friend.--He lamented upon this occasion the severe loss of my mother, in which I most heartily joined; for we both attributed the late dispute and separation to the want of an amiable mediator, which, if my poor mother had been alive, she would have been upon this, as she had been in many former instances, in which she had been of the greatest utility and benefit, as a peace-maker and promoter of family happiness and concord. My father, who had long since witnessed with some anxiety my aspiring disposition, now began to dread the evil consequences of those lofty notions of patriotism, and that disinterested love of country, which in my earlier years he had taken so much pains to instil into my young mind, and had been so anxious that I should imbibe. He now viewed my daring spirit with a mingled pleasure and pain; he dreaded the result of such ardent feelings, because he foresaw that they would lead me into the greatest difficulties and dangers, unless he checked them by timely control. He now freely told me that he was actuated by this motive when he refused to give me his consent to go to Portsmouth, to witness the effects of Lord Howe's brilliant victory over the French fleet. He told me, too, that he had the same object in view, when, the summer before, he refused my application, to go and see the grand review on Bagshot Heath. It was, however, at too late a period that he began to check my patriotic ardour; he had, himself, "bent the twig," and it had grown too powerfully in the direction which he had given to it to be directed to any other. Although I was no politician at that time, yet my bosom glowed with as sacred a love of country, with as strong a predilection for the rights and liberties of the people, with as pure disinterested love of truth and justice, as ever warmed the youthful heart of man.--yet, notwithstanding I was a loyal man to the backbone, I never joined in, or approved of, the persecution of any one, for holding opinions different from those which I, myself, openly professed. I knew many persons who were called _jacobins_ at this time, and although I thought them violent in their principles and professions, yet I never

quarrelled with any of them upon the score of opinion. I was always the first to stand forward to protect the oppressed; and I began sincerely to sympathise with the labouring poor. I had now, for some years, worked with them side by side, day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. I had toiled in the field with the labourers of my father; I had heard their complaints; I had witnessed their increasing privations; and although I often checked the ebullition of their discontent, which I sometimes attributed to disaffection, yet I never mocked their misery, I never persecuted or oppressed any one, because he was considered a disaffected person, or what was a synonymous term a jacobin. In fact, I sometimes got myself into very disagreeable situations, for expressing my love of fair play. Once, in particular, I remember I was in the boxes at the theatre at Salisbury, when there was a violent party call for "God save the King." I was one of the loyal who as loudly demanded this tune to be played as any loyal man in the house; after some trifling opposition the call was complied with, and the performers came forward upon the stage and sung it: there was then a call for hats off, and I have no doubt that I was as zealous in this call as any one, because, in the first place I really was a loyal man, and I was in the side boxes with a very loyal party. There was, however, one person, in the centre of the front row of the pit, who kept his hat on, and steadily refused to pull it off. This caused a great uproar, and a general call to turn him out. At length, some persons near him attempted to pull his hat off by force; but he defended himself for some time with great success, and kept his hat still on his head. By this time the national air was finished, but still there was a call to pull his hat off and to turn him out; he was surrounded now by numbers, who, urged on by those in the boxes, not only forcibly deprived him of his hat, but likewise began to use him ill. I was now as loud in my demand for _fair play_ as I had been previously for hats off. They still persisted in their endeavour to turn him out, which he as manfully resisted, although he was surrounded with a host of foes, without any one, not even his friends who were with him, offering to give any assistance. I cried shame! shame! shame! as loud as I could, and demanded fair play. He had by this time at least a dozen assailing him at once, and they had actually got him upon the spikes of the orchestra, with an intention to throw him over out of the pit among the musicians. I felt enraged and indignant at such unmanly conduct, and at length I sprung out of the box into the pit, and having rushed up to him, I dealt the cowardly crew that were attacking him some heavy falls, and soon cleared off the gang, so that the person, whom they had literally got hanging upon the spikes, was enabled to extricate himself. In effecting this, I received as well as gave many severe blows; and by some I was considered as very foolish for interfering, while all the loyal loudly blamed me for preventing his being turned out. Although I very much disapproved of the gentleman's taste and stubbornness, yet I could not look on and see a fellow man ill-used for expressing his opinion, because that opinion was contrary to my own sentiments. However, the play now proceeded, and the gentleman, Mr John Axford of Eastcot, was allowed to keep his seat and his hat on, uninterrupted, to the end of the performance.

In consequence of this circumstance, I afterwards became very intimate with Mr. Axford, who was very grateful for my assistance, and I, although I disapproved of his politics, could not but admire his independent

spirit. He was a man of a most amiable character, much intelligence, and a quick penetration; a great reader of the political history of this and the neighbouring countries, he possessed the most retentive memory, and could repeat almost all that he read. Of the French Revolution, and of Mr. Paine's Rights of Man, he was an enthusiastic admirer, and a determined enemy to the war that England was carrying on against the people of France. In fact, he was a lover of truth, justice and liberty, and therefore was of course denominated a jacobin. He lived and died railing against the unjust and unnecessary war which the ministers of England were waging against liberty in France; and as he was a warm admirer of Mr. Fox, he entered into almost all his views, and joined him in forcibly predicting all that has since occurred, as to the ruin of the country by debt and insupportable taxation. He was, indeed, a spirited and enlightened advocate of genuine freedom; and he never failed, even in the worst of times, publicly to avow his sentiments. He certainly possessed more real political knowledge, and a more correct knowledge of the situation and the affairs of the country, than any man with whom I have ever met, with the exception of Mr. Cobbett. Although I knew him for many years before I concurred in his sentiments, yet I found him a sincere friend, and a most intelligent companion, and his death was lamented more by me than that of any political acquaintance I ever had. He died before I was much of a politician, and before I appeared much in public life; but from him I learned much which I have never forgotten, and which has been, and ever will be, of the greatest service to me as a public man. Were I not to pay this well-deserved tribute to his memory, I should prove myself to have been unworthy of his friendship, and undeserving of my own approbation.

He was always denounced as a jacobin by the ignorant, and by the interested sycophants of the day; but his merit and his public spirit were duly estimated by all good and impartial men that knew him, and by no one more than by the late, the first, Marquis of Lansdown, with whom he was particularly intimate.

At this period, 1794, the whole country was greatly agitated with political discussions; every one having an eye upon the bloody and ferocious proceedings committed under the tyranny of Robespierre in Paris. This caused great alarm in England, for fear of the progress of French principles, and all the alarmists rallied round the Pitt administration, and war, war, eternal war against French principles, was the watch-word of the day. The parliament met in January, and the enormous supplies were granted almost without any opposition. Eighty thousand men were voted for the sea, forty thousand for the land-service, and likewise one hundred thousand militia, and FORTY THOUSAND SUBSIDISED GERMANS. The estimates for this service amounted to NINETEEN MILLIONS. In order to keep the people in good humour, and to make them submit to pay the enormous increase of taxation, the threat of INVASION was held out, and described with all its horrors as being about to be realised. This set the John Bulls half-mad; and, like men half-mad, half-drunk, they were ready to swallow any thing that the minister of the day prescribed. Voluntary contributions, and volunteer corps were raised all over the country. In the mean time Mr. Pitt, who had deserted the cause of reform, of which, previous to his coming into power, he had been one of the warmest and most zealous

advocates, true, _apostate-like_, took care to persecute all his former associates, who were too honest to abandon that cause which he had betrayed. In Scotland, that excellent and worthy man, Mr. Maurice Margarot, and others were transported for fourteen years for having been members of the British Convention. Mr. Thos. Walker, of Manchester, was tried on a false accusation of high treason, at Lancaster; but was honourably acquitted. Messrs Hardy, Tooke, Joyce, and Thelwall, were also indicted and tried upon a pretended charge of high treason, at the Old Bailey in London; but this premeditated cold-blooded attempt of the ministers to destroy these innocent men, their political opponents, by setting on the plea of constructive treason, was frustrated by the verdict of an honest London jury. Messrs. Tooke and Thelwall were very able, and perhaps the most powerful, advocates of liberty in England at that time; and the ministers of the day might, with some men, have justified the attempt to destroy such enemies upon the score of STATE POLICY; but their attempt upon poor HARDY, who was a simple, inoffensive, harmless, plodding shoemaker, possessing neither talent, influence, nor the smallest power to do them any harm whatever, this was a proof of the vindictive and bloody intentions of the men in office; and it caused a great sensation throughout the country, and the verdicts of the jury were hailed with pleasure by every honest thinking man in the kingdom, who was not under the influence of an unjust prejudice. The reign of terror was now proclaimed, and a great number of worthy men were imprisoned in dungeons, under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, which tyrannical proceeding greatly agitated the whole country. This, therefore, will not be an improper place, to record, and bring to the recollection of the public, _who_ were the men in power, under _whose auspices_ and by whose directions these acts were perpetrated against the lives and liberties of the people, and particularly against those who with patriotic energy opposed those measures which they foretold, with a prophetic warning voice, would bring this country to that wretched state of poverty and slavery to which it is now reduced. Although I was too young at that time to be much of a politician, and did not enter publicly into any of the measures for or against these proceedings, yet, as I shall henceforward record the particular political occurrences of each succeeding year, I shall also take care to put upon record the names of those who were at the head of the administration, and who took a prominent part in carrying them into execution. Mr. PITT may be truly said to have been the ruler of the destinies of this mighty kingdom, and by means of British gold and British blood, he ruled also the destinies of Europe. He was the administration of England.--He is gone, but there are some who are still alive, and who I hope will live long enough to be brought to justice, and to answer for the share they had in committing these atrocities upon the people. During these times LORD GRENVILLE was Secretary of State; the Hon. Henry Addington, now LORD SIDMOUTH, was Speaker of the House of Commons; Sir John Scott, now LORD ELDON, was Attorney General, and conducted these prosecutions in such a way as led to his promotion to be Lord High Chancellor of England, where he has made such an immense sum of money, and accumulated such a princely fortune. In the early part of this year, the marriage of the Duke of SUSSEX with Lady Augusta Murray was made public, which caused a great noise in the country.

During all these eventful transactions, I was labouring incessantly in my

vocation, as a farmer, and I was now become a complete master of every branch of the profession, there being no part of it that I had not performed with my own hands. Perhaps to speak of my personal exertions in this way may be deemed by many superfluous, but on reflection they will, I hope, not consider this to be the case. Hundreds, who are now living, were eye-witnesses of what I may almost call the prodigies of strength and personal labour performed by myself, and some of my father's servants, and I shall merely mention a few of the circumstances to shew the reader that in every thing I undertook I always performed it with such an enthusiasm, and determined perseverance, that nothing could resist the accomplishment of my undertakings. My father encouraged this desire that I evinced to excel, and to perform unexampled deeds of labour, and feats of strength; although he frequently expressed his fears that I should injure myself by too great bodily exertion, and by too frequently straining my muscular powers to their utmost stretch. I had undertaken and performed every species of labour, connected with a very large farming business; I had sown more acres of ground with corn in one day than any other man; I had thrashed three quarters of barley, each succeeding day, for a fortnight together, and that too at a time when some of the servants complained of the difficulty of thrashing one quarter per day; I had pitched more loads of corn in a day than had ever been recorded of any other person: in fact, my father confessed that I got more work performed by the same number of hands than he ever did when he was a young man; and for _him_ this was admitting a great deal. I did this by good words and kindness towards my fellow labourers; by always animating and cheering them on with my example; by always placing myself in the heat of the battle; by taking the most difficult and most laborious part. I always began every work by saying to those around me COME let us do this, or let us do that, instead of GO do this, or do that. My poor father always observed that it entirely depended upon which of these little monosyllables, COME or GO, was made use of, whether the work was done well or ill, expeditiously or dilatorily. When any particular work was doing, my father's servants were always in the field, and the job was begun, before those of our neighbours had yet left their homes; and in changeable weather we had frequently carried our hay or corn, and finished the rick or stack, before the rain came on, while others had yet scarcely begun and were caught by the rain in the worst situation possible. I have frequently, in the harvest time, when we anticipated rain, been up, and a mile out in the field, pitching the first load of wheat by two or before three o'clock in the morning, while the carters were harnessing and bringing out the other teams. While this load was being drawn home I had got my breakfast, and was ready to begin laying the first sheaf of the wheat-rick, which many times I had finished, though consisting of thirty large loads of sheaves, before the middle of the day; by which means, if the rain came, we had secured perhaps one hundred sacks of wheat, and these would prove worth from five to ten shillings a sack more than that which was left out to take the rain. If it proved a false alarm, and the weather was fine, we got a second rick finished by night, and thereby had secured two hundred instead of one hundred sacks of wheat in one day. It will be asked by some, how did the labourers relish this extra toil and double work? The answer is easy--perfectly well. I always took care to have them amply rewarded in proportion to their exertions; and I never failed to add something, besides good words and kind treatment, for the cheerfulness and alacrity

with which they approached and performed the task. I always made the wheat-ricks, and I have many times made two ricks, containing thirty loads in each rick, in one day. This work of making wheat-ricks, in very hot weather, which is generally the case, is much the hardest and most severe work, if done well, belonging to the farming business; and I was so thoroughly convinced of this, that I always allowed the person who afterwards made my wheat-ricks, a pint of ale as often, during the day, as he chose to ask for it. For many years had I now made all my father's ricks of hay and corn, and the wheat-ricks were the admiration of the whole country. I also thatched many of them; that is, I made the ricks by day, and I frequently thatched them by night, or at least before the common labourers came to work in the morning. I was never tired of labour and active exertions; and at this period, the labourers possessed all the strength and vigour of the English peasantry of former days. Notwithstanding they began to feel the effects of war and to suffer some privations, in consequence of the rise of price in provisions, caused by the increase of taxation, they had yet a barrel of good beer to go to in hay-making and harvest time, and the young men at least could gain a comfortable subsistence of the necessaries of life by their daily labour. Few of them, indeed, could now boast of a "pig in the sty," a treasure which they had, till very lately, always possessed; yet they could occasionally purchase a pound of bacon or other meat, although at a very considerable increase in the price. They soon, however, felt, and keenly felt, that their condition was altered, and was still rapidly altering for the worse, they consequently grew less tractable and cheerful in their dispositions; they went to their daily labour with more reluctance, and became more sullen and discontented as their privations increased; but still they were not emaciated, and become languid and weak, as most of them now are, for the want of a sufficiency of the common necessaries of life. As a proof of this, I will mention a day's work done by myself and three others, all of whom are now alive, and living in the parish of Euford; but, alas! how altered, how wretched in circumstances, compared to what they were at the time respecting which I write, when they were able and willing to do, and did accomplish, as much work with great ease in one day, as would now occupy them, I am sure, for four days. In fact, such is the alteration in their state, from having lived so badly, and worked so hard for the last twenty years, that they are become so reduced in bodily strength, that they would now feel more fatigue in doing one quarter of the work in a day than they did in performing the whole at that time. The names of the men are Barnaby Marshal, Thomas Ayres, and James Pinnels. These three men and myself have frequently winnowed large heaps of corn in a day, and we once accomplished the winnowing sixty sacks of wheat in one day--thirty sacks being considered a good day's work for four men. In one instance, two men in each of two adjoining barns had thrashed a very large heap of wheat, which had yielded so well, that we estimated each heap to contain forty sacks of the best wheat, and every one calculated upon its being two smart day's work to winnow it. However, on the day appointed to winnow one of these heaps, some time in the beginning of May, myself and some young friends in the neighbourhood, had agreed to meet in the evening, for the purpose of shooting rooks; I therefore requested the three persons above named to be in readiness to begin winnowing at or soon after five instead of six o'clock in the morning. The winnowing tackle was prepared over night, I had got the doors of the barn open before hand, and

not one of them was behind the time appointed, they well knowing that the exhilarating jug of "nut brown ale" would not be wanting upon such an occasion. As the church clock struck five every man was at his post, and the merry van went briskly round. As each well knew his duty, so that no labour should be lost, we had made such rapid progress by six o'clock, that is to say in one hour, that Ayres in a joke said, "If we continue at this rate, master, we shall be able to finish both heaps instead of one." A joke of that sort was never thrown away upon me, and accordingly, I immediately adopted the idea; for having once conceived a project, I never hesitated, but instantly began to put it in execution. I said that it was certainly two good day's work for four _common men_, but if they would back me, we would see if _we_ could not do two good days work in _one_ day. My fellow workmen, who were become almost as great enthusiasts as myself, spontaneously replied, "With all our hearts, master, if you say the word we will try, we are not afraid to attempt any thing you will undertake." Two more men were employed to bring the heap from the other barn, and add it to that which we had begun, and the result was, that when the clock struck six in the evening, we, four of us had completely winnowed and finished eighty-one sacks of best wheat, besides tailing, and had loaded the waggon with thirty of them for market the next day. I having carried the thirty sacks into the waggon myself, now washed, cleaned, and dressed myself, and had joined my friends in the field, partaking of the sport of rook shooting, before half-past six in the evening; and I took care that my three fellow-labourers should be rewarded with the first three dozen of young rooks that were killed. As a proof that the corn was well winnowed, my father sold it at the next market-day, at Devizes, for three shillings per sack higher than any other sample in the market.

I now met with a very great loss, as my worthy friend and preceptor, Mr. Carrington, the curate, with whom I had passed so many pleasant hours, and from whom I had received so much valuable information, and such good and useful advice, was about to leave the vicarage of Enford, he having been offered, and accepted, the situation of tutor to the sons of the Earl of Berkley, and as this was the likely road to preferment, I rejoiced in his success, although I very much lamented his absence. He was, to say the least of him, an excellent neighbour and a very worthy man. He was cheerful, amiable, and conciliating in his manners; he possessed a very superior understanding, which he had much improved and embellished by his application to the study of the most useful and refined literature, he having received a very liberal education; and though he was an excellent classical scholar he was neither a pedant nor a bigot; he lived a moral, sober, and rational life, worthy the example of his parishioners, and although he was not enabled to be very bountiful, having only sixty pounds a year as his salary, and his house to live in; he nevertheless honestly paid every one as he went, and saved some small trifle for a wet day. By all his neighbours he was much beloved, and his society much courted by those who knew how to estimate the value of a superior mind, and an enlightened and comprehensive understanding. He took great delight in imparting to me the knowledge which he had acquired, and when he left the parish of Enford, no one felt his loss more acutely or lamented it more sincerely than I did. Because he had the sense and the penetration to discover, and the honesty to reprobate the fatal mad-headed measures of

Mr. Pitt, he was denounced by the vulgar, the ignorant, and the bigotted, by the venal and by the corrupt as a Jacobin; but he was admired by all good and liberal men of all parties, and his society was courted by every rational, thinking, and intelligent man in the country round where he lived. The society that I met at his house was my greatest solace and comfort after the fatigues and the labours of the day. I was always welcome, and I never passed an hour in his society without having gained some useful information, or some substantial accomplishment.

Many of the young people of the village, who did not associate much with Mr. Carrington, and who were neither capable of appreciating his merits, nor of deriving pleasure from his refined society, were delighted to find that there was a gay young buck of a Clergyman, just returned from Oxford, who was to occupy the situation of my worthy friend. But, alas, what a contrast! I did not expect to find such another kind and amiable companion and friend as him that I had lost; but I anticipated that he would be a scholar, and a man of the world, and at all events a suitable associate for myself. But, as he is no more, I shall be very brief: he was, in a word, in every thing the reverse, the very opposite of Mr. Carrington. The Sunday arrived, and my father, as the principal person in the village, always anxious to be the first to shew his attention to a stranger, and particularly when that stranger was clothed in the dress of Pastor of the parish, waited upon him at the Inn or Pot-House, where he had taken up his quarters, and not only invited him to dine, but also offered him a bed and a stall for his horse till he was better provided at the Vicarage. I, of course, accompanied my father, and we had little difficulty in getting over the first introduction. He was a young man of easy manners and address, and without the least ceremony, accepted the invitation to dine, &c; but he informed us, that he had made a bargain, and had taken lodgings and intended to board, with the landlady at the Swan, as he could not bear the thoughts of living in a dull country Vicarage House by himself. We went to Church, where he dashed through the service in double quick time, and "tipped us," as he had previously informed me he would, a Rattling Sermon, as a specimen of his style of oratory. He appeared a clever thoughtless youth, of Twenty-five; but the rake, as my father said, "stood confessed in his eye," and its effects sat visible upon his brow. After dinner he took his wine like a Parson, and before he had finished a bottle he was as drunk as a Lord; so much so, that he was utterly incapable of performing the afternoon duty without exposing his situation to the whole congregation. My father was shocked at his indiscretion, and sent a hasty excuse to put off the afternoon service. As drunkenness was not encouraged, nor even tolerated, in my father's house, he was very anxious to conceal the circumstance of the young Parson having become so much intoxicated at his table as to be incapable of performing his duty; and he felt it the greater disgrace, as he was the principal Church-warden, as well as the principal parishioner. I took the hopeful and Reverend young gentleman, who had been so recently inspired by the Holy Ghost to take Priest's Orders, a walk into the fields, to recover him a little, as my father thought him a very improper guest to introduce into the drawing-room to his daughters. In the course of our walk he professed a very sincere and warm friendship for me, and promised himself a world of pleasure in my society; and he frankly and unblushingly informed me, that he had brought with him from Oxford a bad venereal

complaint, which, he added, was most unfortunate, as he was fearful that he should inoculate all the pretty damsels belonging to his new flock, which would be a cursed Bore.

I premised by saying that I should be very brief, but I fear that some of my moral male, as well as all my female, readers will think that as to this young Clergyman of the Church of England I have already said too much; but sorry am I to declare that in the little which I have said, I have drawn his character too faithfully. He lived but a short time; having soon fallen a victim to his profligate course of life. He was little more than a year, I think, the Pastor of the Parish, and he administered the sacrament, and performed all the other offices of the Curate, when the effects of his drinking did not interfere with it, and during this time he always lodged at the public house. This was a sad example for the people of the parish! The young farmers were already too much addicted to drinking, but they had been heretofore kept in check, and under some sort of controul, by the admonition and by the example of their late Clergyman, who, during all the years that he had resided there, was never known to be intoxicated, or in any way, disguised in liquor. To be sure he was a Jacobin, but he was, nevertheless, a sober, moral, amiable Man; and, although he was no bigot, he most strictly, regularly, and rigidly performed the sacred duty he had undertaken, with great satisfaction to his parishioners, and with great credit to himself, as a Man, a Clergyman, and a Christian. But, during the life of his successor, they had no Jacobin; he was a furious Church and Kingman, although a complete free thinker over his cups, and would get drunk and roar God save the King with any drunken loyalist in the district; and, to shew his zeal in this way, he entered and served as a private, and dressed in the uniform, of the Everly troop of yeomanry Cavalry just raised. He was, however, too enervated and too emaciated to acquire any knowledge of the military exercise; and, what was rather remarkable, there was another young sprig of the Church to keep him in countenance, who was also a private in the same troop of yeomanry. Although I sometimes made one of the bacchanalian party of our Curate, yet I felt most severely the difference between this society and that of Mr. Carrington.

Upon the death of this infatuated young man, another Curate was sent down by the Vicar, who was the Rev. John Prince, the Chaplain to the Magdalen, and who it was thought would be more particular in the choice of those with whom he trusted the care of the souls of his parishioners. Our new Curate arrived fresh from Oxford, and as he brought letters of recommendation to my father, from the Vicar, who was a very worthy and a most circumspect man, he invited him to his house, and he proved to be a much more rational young man than his predecessor. Though he did not evince any great knowledge of the world, yet he had mixed in good society, and I promised myself a great acquisition in his acquaintance. We soon, however, found that he had not been educated at Oxford for nothing; he had acquired a habit of taking his bottle freely, and, as he had not a very hard head, he was frequently very much intoxicated before his more robust neighbours were scarcely yet warmed with their glasses. This was a dreadful misfortune for my young friend, as well as for myself, for he was an intelligent young man when he was sober; but, the moment the wine began to operate, he was one of the completest fools in christendom; he was then

as great as a king, and always when he was the most contemptible, he fancied himself a very great man, and never failed to boast of his superiority of education, and his having taken his degree at Christ Church. This he was always sure to do when he had lost the little talent and intellect that he possessed when he was sober. At the very moment that he was looked upon with a degree of mingled *_pity_* and *_contempt_* by those around him, he was sure to assume a ridiculous superiority over his more rational companions; merely, as he professed, because he was brought up at college.

There was about this time great talk of an invasion by the French. The ministers, having granted large subsidies, and having imposed new taxes, found it necessary to frighten John Bull with the idea of being invaded. Great alarm was therefore excited throughout the country; volunteer corps and troops of yeomanry were raising all over the island. Provisions had by this time increased in price, every article of common consumption was nearly doubled, and great dissatisfaction was evinced amongst the labouring poor; there were riots in many parts of the country, and much mischief was done by burning wheat-ricks, and pulling down mills, in consequence of the high price of bread. But the dread of invasion was in every one's mouth, and nothing else was talked of. I, therefore, was one who anticipated nothing less than an immediate attempt, and I applied to my father, and requested that he would purchase me a proper charger, and let me enter into a troop of the yeomanry cavalry. He expostulated and strongly urged me to desist, and he repeated his former arguments; but I replied that I was ashamed to stand by and to look on, with my arms folded, while all the youth and vigour of the country were flying to arms in order to repel the expected attempts of a desperate and powerful invading foe. He endeavoured to convince me of the folly of my enthusiasm, urging that most of those who had enrolled themselves in the yeomanry, were solely actuated by a desire to take care of their own property, that they were impelled to take up arms merely by selfish motives, and without possessing a spark of the *_amor patriae_*. He recalled to my recollection the immense sacrifices made by our forefather, Colonel Thomas Hunt, in the reign of the Charles's; he pointed out the noble domains and productive estates that were confiscated by Cromwell, in consequence of my ancestor's zeal in the cause of his prince, and he begged me to remember how he was rewarded for his services; asking me what reason I had to expect a better fate, or a higher reward, than my forefather had obtained for all his exertions, dangers, and sacrifices, which were the loss of his estates and the ingratitude of the prince that he so faithfully served?

All this might be, and was very true, but I reasoned with myself thus: My forefather took up arms in favour of a tyrant, to support him in most arbitrary measures against his own countrymen; but my only wish is to arm myself against a foreign invader, whose great object I am told is to enslave after having conquered the people of my native land. All reasoning with me was consequently in vain. I had made up my mind not to stand idle and be a looker-on in such times; the fervour of my youth had been worked upon by the delusion of the day, and it would not admit of this restraint; therefore, without farther ceremony, in spite of my father's expostulations, I enrolled my name as a member of the Everly Troop of Yeomanry, under the command of the *_gallant_* Captain ASTLEY. I knew the

Captain to be a poor creature, and as little cut out for a warrior as any man I had ever met with; he was built like Ajax, but as for skill or valour I believed him to possess neither. I had, however, no fears of being left to be led into the field of battle by the worthy justice. In case it should ever come to that issue, I had no doubt that proper and experienced officers would be appointed to lead us on. I bought an excellent thoroughbred charger, near sixteen hands high; for, although my own horse was a very good one, and better than eight out of ten in the troop, yet, as he was rather under the regulation size, I was determined to be as well mounted as any man in the regiment, and as I was well known to be a good rider, and a bold and determined fox-hunter, the captain was very much delighted with what he was pleased to call a "wonderful acquisition to his corps." My father also, now I was entered, was as anxious as myself that I should not be outdone by any one. I therefore immediately employed a drill serjeant, who was engaged to instruct the troop in their exercise, and who had been drilling them for some time past; and before the first field-day arrived for me to attend, my instructor pronounced me fit for service, and as well disciplined as any man in the troop. Perhaps I had bestowed as much pains, and had spent as much time, as any of them, though I had been drilled only for about a fortnight, for I was at it every day two or three hours. In truth, I was an apt scholar, and being already an excellent horseman, and extremely active, I could before I had ever joined, perform most of the evolutions, and, as the serjeant said, do any thing as well as himself. He told me that in many of my brother soldiers I should meet with some stupid heavy fellows, and that he could teach me more in a day than many of them would learn in a year. The following Monday was appointed for us to assemble and have a field day, when CAPTAIN ASTLEY and LIEUTENANT SIR JOHN METHUEN POORE, who had gone to London for the purpose, were expected to attend, armed _cap-a-pie_, and dressed complete in their NEW UNIFORM, as a specimen of what we were in future to wear.

The reader will recollect that I am now about to give a faithful history of my military services; and I must therefore entreat his indulgence, while I put upon record some such circumstances, and occurrences as he will be little prepared to hear, unless it have been his fate to be a member of some volunteer corps, under the command of such officers as Captain ASTLEY, Lieutenant Sir John POORE, and Cornet DYKE. Without farther comment then, the two gallant officers, ASTLEY, and POORE, started the week before to London, to superintend the making, and to arrange with the army taylor the particulars of the _uniform_. Having been very particular in getting the taylor, breeches-maker, boot, and even spur-maker, to fit them to a T, on the Friday they both appeared, accoutred from head to toe, at Edmonds's, Somerset coffee house, in the Strand, and really cut no small "swell" as they marched up and down the coffee room. They would then take a turn down the Strand, as far as Exeter Exchange, and if, luckily for him, Polito had seen them, he might possibly have made a good bargain by chewing them amongst the other wild beasts which he exhibited to the wondering multitude. They next showed off in full uniform, with their broad swords by their sides, in the front boxes of Drury Lane Theatre; and, as the Wiltshire was one of the first regiments of yeomanry that was raised and clothed, they excited no small curiosity amongst the Londoners. On Saturday morning they again entered

the coffee room in all their trappings, and having each purchased a brace of excellent pistols, they appeared eager to begin the campaign without waiting the arrival of the French troops; and as Clark and Haines, two notorious highwaymen were at[10] this time levying their nightly contributions upon Hounslow Heath, they more than hinted their intention of capturing or killing these desperadoes, in case they should fall in with them during their march down into the country, which they had given due notice they intended to commence on that afternoon.

About two o'clock, the captain's travelling carriage and four was brought to the door of the coffee house. These circumstances were detailed to me by a gentleman present, and who really was rather alarmed at their warlike appearance and war-disposed manner and language. Having seated themselves with all their military finery in the carriage, they carefully placed their _two brace of horse pistols_ in the front pocket, taking care to leave the _butt-ends_ sticking out, threateningly visible to every eye that surveyed them. A crowd was collected round the carriage to witness the departure of these mighty warriors, whose appearance denoted a most determined conflict, in case any thing should occur to give them an opportunity of showing how worthy they were to command, and to lead into the heat of battle a body of their countrymen, who were "seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth." About four o'clock they arrived at the Bush at Staines, having taken care to pass Hounslow Heath, the half-anticipated scene of action, by day light. Having by this piece of generalship escaped the danger so far, they slept that night at Mr. White's excellent inn at Staines' Bridge. The next morning, Sunday, after taking a good breakfast, dressed and armed as before, in all their military array, they took up their pistols, which had been placed by them on the table, and then adjourned into the garden, whence they fired them into the Thames, at once to try how true they would carry the balls, and to give notice to the surrounding and astonished passengers upon the bridge that they travelled like warriors, prepared for any emergency that might arise. Having re-loaded their pistols in the presence of Mr. Joseph White, and each of them taken a glass of noyeau to exhilarate their spirits, the horses were ordered too, and the carriage was now brought to the front door. Having taken another turn round the bowling green in the garden, to exhibit themselves to the gaping multitude, who were now collected in considerable numbers upon the bridge, brought thither in consequence of the discharging of pistols on a Sunday morning, and who were waiting to see their departure, they entered the carriage in the same formal manner as they had done at the door of the Somerset coffee house, and having carefully and deliberately placed their pistols again in the front pocket, with their butt-ends, as before, appearing very prominent out of the chaise window, they proceeded on their march with a sort of solemn gravity, which excited the surprise of some few, but the laughter of the greater portion, of their beholders.

It was on a Sunday morning, about eight o'clock, when they started from Staines in this warlike attitude; their helmets glittering in the sun, like the peacock vain of his plumes. They, however, little dreamt of the disaster that was in store for them. Having passed Virginia Water, and as the postboy was taking them leisurely along up the steep hill leading to Bagshot, who should ride up to the side of the chaise but a single

highwayman, who, having ordered the boy to halt, deliberately demanded their money and watches. The yeomanry heroes looked at each other, and then at their pistols; but neither of them had the power of putting forth a hand to grasp either of them. The highwayman again hastily demanded his prize, which was immediately granted, our heroes handing over to him their purses, containing about sixty guineas and two valuable family gold watches. It is said that Sir John Poore, after having recovered a little from the fright, endeavoured to raise his inconsolable companion from the stupor in which this sad misfortune had left him, by repeating the following lines of Hudibras:

"He that fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day;
But he that is in battle slain,
Can never live to fight again,"

Capt. Astley, who was too much absorbed in ruminating upon his melancholy situation to give his friend any other answer than a long and deep sigh, could not but most sensibly feel that they were in a still worse plight than the knight of the rueful countenance ever was; for they had run away without having made any fight at all. So ashamed were they of their misadventure, that they would not have mentioned it to any one, had they not been compelled to disclose it to the landlords of the various inns they had to pass; for the unmannerly fellow had not even left them a tester to pay the turnpikes.

When they arrived at Everley, Sir John was ashamed to face the troop to tell them the story, although we were already in the field anxious to see our commanders dressed up in their new uniform. All the golden dreams of glory seemed to Sir John to have vanished by this unlucky affair, and nothing; could induce him to shew himself off to his troop, though his charger was ready to convey him to the field, and he was urged by all the expostulations and intreaties of the captain. He therefore sneaked off home to Rushall, and left the gallant captain to make the best of a bad bargain by himself.

In the mean time we had been manoeuvring, charging, and wheeling, till we were almost all tired, waiting for this exhibition. At length we were informed of the disaster by one of the serjeants, Mr. William Butcher, of Shercot, who had called at the captain's house to know what was the matter. The mighty hero at last appeared in view, mounted upon his charger, riding solemnly towards the troop, dressed in full uniform, the same which he had worn down from town, with the exception, perhaps, of _some trifling change_, which might have been rendered necessary by the disastrous fright he had received upon the road. Some admired the dress, some pitied the loss sustained by the poor captain, but myself, and many of those who surrounded me, though we felt the deep disgrace which had befallen our commander, could scarcely contain ourselves with laughter at the ridiculous figure he cut, particularly when the event of the robbery came across our thoughts. I had often heard of a hog in armour, but I had never before seen any thing that appeared to convey the representation so much to my mind as the ridiculous figure of our captain.

The very first field-day called to my recollection the sentiments of my father and the worthy clergyman, Mr. Carrington, as to the patriotism of these yeomanry corps. Their conversation was entirely about keeping up the price of corn, keeping down the price of wages, and at the same time keeping in subjugation the labourers, and silencing their dissatisfaction. As I rode home from the field the first day, I felt that there was too much truth in the assertions of Mr. Carrington and my father; I was, however, determined to do my duty to the best of my power, without troubling myself about the views and motives of my comrades, and likewise at all times to resist with all my influence, any act of aggression or oppression that might be attempted, come from whatever quarter it might. Nor was I less resolved to be always ready at a short notice to meet the enemy whenever I should be called upon.

Within one month after I had been in this troop, the labourers of Enford and the adjoining parishes, smarting under the privations and sufferings they had to endure, in consequence of the rise in the price of provisions and the low rate of wages, which latter many of the farmers had decided to keep down to the old standard, and urged on also by those who ought to have known better, and who instead of secretly exciting their poorer neighbours to acts of desperation, ought to have come forward manfully to advocate their rights; the labourers, under the secret influence of a designing man or two, all struck their work, and, having assembled in a large body, they openly avowed their intention to pull down several mills, which were pointed out, as well as to burn the corn ricks of several obnoxious individuals. I had been from home, and when I returned, I found several of the neighbouring farmers assembled at my father's, in the greatest consternation. Some of those whose premises had been pointed out for destruction were present; and, although none of my father's property was threatened, yet several of our servants had joined the rioters, who, we were informed, were assembled to the number of two or three hundred. and that they were proceeding towards Netheravon, where they meant to regale themselves at the public house till the evening, when the work of destruction was to begin. Each farmer fled to his home, in order to save what he could, but all were in the greatest dismay. A servant now came to inform us that our carter, Jerry Truman, who looked after the team at Weddington farm, had left his horses and joined the rioters, and that two men had been dispatched up to one of our shepherds upon the down, who had refused to join them in the morning, to compel him to leave his sheep, and to join them immediately.

My father, who, as well as myself, had been devising means to prevent, if possible, the threatened mischief, now said, "though none of our property is threatened, though we have had no share in oppressing the men, and though those who by their arbitrary and overbearing conduct to their servants, have greatly contributed to produce this state of things, are, now the danger approaches, the first to fly from it, and consequently, for their past infamously bad treatment of their labourers, and their recent cowardice, almost deserve what they have brought upon themselves, and that they should be left to their fate, yet, my son, it is our duty, even if it were only in pity to the poor misguided men themselves, to endeavour to avert by some prompt measure, if possible, the threatened calamity." He added, "but we must be prompt or our efforts will be in vain." I said in

answer, that I had made up my mind to proceed instantly to rescue the shepherd, who was unwilling either to leave his flock or to join the rioters; but my father advised me not to waste my time by encountering two such ruffians as we knew were gone for him; he would, he said, take his horse and proceed to put the sheep in the fold to prevent their getting into and destroying the corn; and he would have me ride with all speed to the only efficient magistrate in the neighbourhood, Mr. Webb, of Milton, to procure a warrant for the apprehension of Truman, there being no pretence for his rioting on account of the high price of provisions, because he was a young unmarried man, and had for wages ten guineas a year, and all his eatables and drink found for him in the house. "For," said he, "if we are armed with a warrant from the civil power, I think we shall stand a much better chance of preventing mischief, and perhaps bloodshed, than by any thing that will be done by the yeomanry, but I very much doubt whether the latter will muster at all, although the alarmed parties are flying in all directions to the officers, _Astley_ of _Everly_, _Poore_ of _Rushall_, and _Dyke_ of _Syrencot_ [12], for that purpose:" all of whom were also magistrates. I merely asked my father, whether I had better not apply to Mr. Astley first for a warrant, as he only lived four miles off, and in the road to Mr. Webb's, who lived eight miles distant. His answer was, "certainly not, we must not trust to chance, proceed at once to Mr. Webb's, for, while you are humdrumming with Mr. Astley, who will either be afraid or not know how to act, you will have obtained what we want from Mr. Webb in half the time." I then sprung on my horse, which, ready saddled, had stood at the gate during this conference, and, putting him to full speed, I was out of sight in a twinkling.

As I passed up the field I saw my two gentlemen striding over the fallows towards the shepherd, whom they had approached within about two hundred yards. Though I had made up my mind not to interfere with their scheme but go direct to the magistrate, yet, as they were not a quarter of a mile out of my road, I could not resist the inclination I felt to check their progress. I therefore galloped up to them, to demand where they were going over our private property. They at once boldly avowed their object to be to make our shepherd leave his flock and join them at Netheravon. I briefly expostulated, asking if they meant to compel the man to go against his will; they replied, certainly, that he had refused to accompany them in the morning, but they had now come to a determination that he should go. As I found them determined, any further parley was in vain, and I therefore jumped from my horse, which was in the habit of standing without being held, and, placing myself before them, I demanded that they should instantly desist, for they should proceed no further without violence. They, nevertheless, advanced boldly and were instantly knocked down with two blows of my fist; one of them remained quietly on the ground, the other rose to commence a conflict, but he was instantly levelled to the earth again, and they then both declared they would return with all speed and leave the shepherd unmolested if I would spare them. I only demanded that they would brush off in double quick time, with which they complied, never staying to look behind them. This certainly was a very hasty although a very successful method of taking the law into my own hands; but the case was desperate and would not admit of any common remedy.

My horse almost fled to Milton, where luckily I found the worthy and truly efficient magistrate at home. The oath was administered and the warrant made out in a few minutes, while his servant gave my panting steed a little hay and a drop of water, which enabled him to carry me back as quickly as he had brought me. As I returned, our flock of sheep were grazing, and the shepherd, having placed himself in my way, as I passed him, he gratefully thanked me for rescuing him from the danger with which he had been threatened. I reached home within one hour and a quarter, having ridden a distance of sixteen miles and procured a warrant, besides rescuing the shepherd, in that short space of time. I found my father waiting for me with the tything-man of Littlecot, Mr. Davis, who kept the Swan, an old gentleman upwards of 70 years of age; and as I was made a special constable to execute the warrant, we lost not a moment in proceeding to the scene of action. My father having got a poney ready for the old gentleman to ride with us, and a fresh horse saddled for me, we soon reached Netheravon, where we learned of the Rev. Mr. Williams that the men, to the amount of about two hundred and fifty in number, had taken possession of a large skittle ground at the back of the Red Lion; that they had been drinking for an hour, having already taken two quarts of strong beer each, and were preparing to take another quart each before they sallied forth, to put in execution the devastating scenes that they had contemplated. I contrived to communicate with the landlord, who said that they were so far intoxicated that he dared not refuse them beer, and that they had taken forcible possession of his cellar, and that nothing would give him greater relief than to get quit of such troublesome and desperate customers. I immediately formed a plan to get them out of the skittle ground, and then to lock the doors and keep them out of the public house, away from intoxicating liquors, of which they had already taken too much. I proposed to go into the skittle ground with Davis, the old constable, and seize Truman, for whose apprehension the warrant was granted; and if I could get him into the street I had no doubt but the others would follow in order to rescue him--As soon as this was effected the people in the Red Lion were to bolt and lock all their doors, and keep them out of the house. This was thought to be a desperate and a dangerous plan, but it was a desperate affair, things were drawing fast to a crisis, and it was of no use to doubt or deliberate.

Having formed my plan, I insisted upon it that my father, who was sixty years of age, should remain without with the horses. Followed by the old constable with his staff of office in his hand, I entered, and we had got up to Truman, who was in the midst of them, before we were as yet scarcely perceived by many of the groups, who were drinking, and busily arranging their plan of operations. I shewed the warrant, and having seized Truman by the collar, who turned as pale as ashes, I told him he must come instantly with me, and before he had time to reply, or even say a word, I hurried him through his companions, and I had already brought him to the door of the yard when they came rushing after him, and had actually got hold of him, before he was quite out of the door. With one determined struggle, however, I dragged him by main force into the street, and, as I had anticipated, the whole of the rioters rushed forward into the street, and made a desperate effort to rescue him. I knew them all, and notwithstanding they began to use violence, I held him firm, till I saw that they were all clear of the yard, and all the doors of the public

house were closed, My father and Davis were unable to come to my assistance, as I was now surrounded by the whole gang. Though I never felt more confident or more cool in my life, yet the situation was one not only of difficulty but of danger. But the principal object being attained, and the plan having succeeded almost to a miracle, I had only to identify some of the most determined and violent; and four of those that I knew perfectly well, two of them being my own work-people, having proceeded to collar me, while the others used considerable force to release him from the grasp I had taken of his collar, I yielded him up to their overpowering numbers; at the same time earnestly recommending to them to disperse and retire to their homes, as the military were sent for and expected every moment. Truman was one of the first to fly, and he returned to his occupation immediately; and in a very short time afterwards the whole of them had dispersed in different directions, though they might have proceeded with impunity for aught the yeomanry did, they never having assembled at all; and, in fact, although I was in the troop myself, I never thought of sending for them.

My father, and the old constable, Davis, and myself, now returned home, not a little elated with the success of our exertions in dispersing these deluded and desperate men. But my father observed, that it would not do to let the matter rest there, that the persons whom he had seen use great personal violence to me, who was acting as a peace officer, must be taught that they were not to violate the laws in such a daring manner with impunity; and he urged the propriety of my obtaining a warrant to take them before a magistrate, to answer for the breach of the peace which they had committed by assaulting me in the execution of a warrant. My father added, that their leaving their work, their assembling at the public house, and even obtaining beer almost by force, might have been overlooked, particularly as no serious mischief had followed; but the forcible and violent rescue and resistance to the execution of the warrant of a magistrate could not be overlooked; for, if we were disposed to do so, it would be an insult to Mr. Webb, the magistrate who had granted it; and if we treated him, who was the only real efficient magistrate in the district, with disrespect, we could not expect that he would be disposed in future to attend so promptly to our representations. I therefore took my horse the next morning, and rode to Milton before breakfast; and, having made the necessary depositions, he granted me a warrant for the apprehension of _Truman_ and four others, who had been particularly prominent in the rescue, namely, _Hurcot_, _Hale_, _Sheppard_, and _Rawlings_, all of whom had either struck or laid violent hands upon me.

I had returned and taken my breakfast by ten o'clock, and had just got the old constable, Davis, and was about to proceed with him to apprehend the said persons, when four of the gentlemen of the yeomanry cavalry of the Everly troop, rode boldly into the yard, and up to the door, like _brave troopers_, saying that they had heard of my having a warrant for apprehending some of the rioters, and that they were sent by Capt. Astley to aid and assist in the execution of the warrant, adding, that they were provided with ball cartridges, &c., and some to spare for me, if I chose to saddle my charger and take my holsters. I could not avoid asking the heroes, with rather a sarcastic smile, where they had kept themselves over night, and why Captain Astley had not either come or sent some of the

troop when there was some real danger, and not waited till all the parties were separated, and when there was little difficulty in securing the most desperate of the rioters? I added, that as I had not made any military show, by dressing myself up in my regimentals, when there was a real riot, I should at all events trust to the constable's staff now it was all peaceable; and I begged them to return to their officers with that message. I however requested one of them, Richard Pocock, of Enford farm, who now lives near Warminster, and whom I knew to be a tything man, to doff his regimentals, and then I would admit him to aid and assist in his civil, but I would not accept of him in his military capacity. This he immediately complied with, and we took the five persons before the magistrate, Mr. Webb, of Milton, who insisted upon committing them all to prison the same night for want of bail, though they begged very hard for mercy, in which petition I most heartily joined; but the worthy magistrate would not listen to any such thing, it wanting only a month to the Autumn Assizes, and I was therefore bound over to prosecute them, very much against my inclination, as I thereby lost at least three valuable servants during the harvest; and, as they appeared sensible of their error, I, for my own part, was contented to let them depart to their homes, but the magistrate was inexorable, declaring it to be too serious an offence to be pardoned, without the interposition of a jury.

A true bill was found against them by the grand jury at the assizes, and they were put to the bar. I appeared against them, but employed no counsel; they had engaged Mr. Jekyl, at that period one of the most eminent counsel upon the western circuit. After the court had heard the evidence of myself and Mr. Davis, Mr. Jekyl made a most eloquent appeal to the jury, a _common not_ a SPECIAL jury: he called some witnesses to their character, but no one appearing, _I offered myself_ to give three of them, who had been my father's servants, a character for sobriety and industry, with which the court and counsel appeared much pleased. Their case went to the jury, who instantly found them all guilty of the rescue and assault, upon which I addressed the Court as the prosecutor, and petitioned that they might be restored to their afflicted families, and I promised to take them back immediately into the situations which they had before occupied in my father's service. The humane judge, who participated in my feelings, after having given them a suitable admonition, and called their attention to my disinterested kindness, telling them they were entirely indebted to my humanity for the lenity he should shew them, and having paid me a most gratifying compliment, dismissed them with the punishment of a fine of a shilling each, which I immediately paid for them. The whole court were loud in their praises of my behaviour upon the occasion; but I felt ten thousand times more satisfaction in doing a generous act than I did in all the compliments which were bestowed upon me. I took the men into my father's service directly, and I can safely say that I never for one moment since had any reason to repent the exertion I made to save them from punishment. Some of them lived many years in my service, and Truman remained with me as long as I was in the farming business, and actually was one of those who followed me out of Wiltshire into Sussex, when I went to reside there, a distance of a hundred and twenty miles. Four out of the five men are still alive, and I would cheerfully trust my life in either of their hands, if it were necessary; and I sincerely believe there is not one of them but would willingly risk his life to serve me.

I am writing this account in my dungeon, at eleven o'clock at night, on the 20th of September, 1820, and it is impossible for any one who reads it not to draw a comparison between my conduct and that of my persecutors. I would not part with the sweet delightful reflection which the remembrance of this ONE act of my life conveys to my mind, for all the wealth in the possession of those who have been concerned in consigning me to be incarcerated _without mercy_ in this dungeon for TWO YEARS and SIX MONTHS; according to common calculation _full one quarter of the remaining part of my natural life_. Let the reader only consider the spirit in which I acted towards those who had violated the laws of their country, by resisting with force the warrant of a magistrate, and who had violently assaulted the peace officer in his duty in executing that warrant, and then contrast it with the vindictive proceedings against me, for having attended a public meeting, legally and constitutionally assembled, to remonstrate with the throne against the cruel privations and sufferings of the people, where no breach of the peace was committed, where not even the slightest resistance was made or even premeditated against the civil power. "Look at this picture, and look at that." I have had the consolation of being repeatedly thanked in the most earnest manner by these poor fellows, for my humanity in interposing with the court to spare them from punishment; but I have felt still a much higher pleasure when they have offered up their thanks to me for having ventured my life "to snatch them from the jaws of the gallows," when they were incautiously about to rush into them, by pulling down mills, and burning wheat ricks. These might well have been called poor deluded creatures. These men were literally deluded, and those who urged them on were _deluded_ by what was then called the liberal part of the press. In fact, almost the whole daily press of that period united in a conspiracy to delude the people, by railing at and exciting the multitude against BUTCHERS, BAKERS, and FARMERS, to whom not only the fools, but the knaves of the daily press attributed the high price of provisions.

The liberal part of the press was so ignorant and so besotted as to vomit forth its daily denunciations against the avariciousness of millers, butchers, bakers, and farmers, and to endeavour to inflame the suffering people, by teaching them that these persons conspired together to keep up the price of provisions to an unnatural height, solely to put money in their own pockets. The ministerial press of that day, under the controul of Pitt, (and he was cunning enough to contrive to bribe almost all the talent belonging to the press,) chimed in ding dong with their less cunning opponents; for they knew that it was Pitt's policy to draw the public attention from the real cause of the distress, from the real cause of the high price of provisions, which they were well aware was the enormous increase of the taxes; and by the joint efforts of the Whig and Tory press, (for there was no other at that time,) they contrived to _delude_ the poor people, the _lower orders_, to such a degree, that there was seldom half a year passed away without a considerable number of persons being consigned to an untimely end, for having been concerned in wreaking their vengeance upon some miller, farmer, butcher, or baker, or other dealer in human food. These poor fellows might truly be stiled the _deluded multitude_; and the _deluders_, the conductors of the public press, were but too successful in their efforts to continue them in

ignorance. Let any sober-minded, rational, sensible man only look back to the columns of the public press, in the years 1795, and 96--the Times for instance; let him take a file of the Times of that day, and for many many years after that, even up to 1815 and 1816, and compare the language, the stile, and the tenor of their articles with the language of the present day in the same papers. How many riots, how many hangings, how many special commissions we can trace back, all proceeding from the delusions of the public press! How many persons have lost their lives for plundering, pulling down, and burning the property of millers, butchers, and bakers; how much blood has been spilt, every drop of which blood may be fairly placed at the door of those who urged these poor fellows on, and instigated them to acts of violence against those classes of persons, by falsely accusing them of being the cause of the high price of provisions.

There is as much difference between the Times of 1795 and the Times of 1820 as there is between a drunken riotous Church-and-King-mob of 1791 to 96, pulling down and burning the property of Dr. Priestley at Birmingham, poor Campbell of Bath, burning mills, wheat ricks, destroying machinery, &c. &c., and the peaceable, sober, rational, constitutional, assemblies of the people in 1816, 1817, 1818, and 1819, deliberately petitioning the legislature to remove the burthens of the people, by abolishing sinecure places, and unnecessary pensions, and praying for a constitutional reform in the Commons' House of Parliament. My readers will excuse the digression I have made; this subject cannot be too often dwelt upon, but, as I shall have repeated opportunities of calling the attention of my fellow countrymen to this particular point, I will now proceed to the more immediate object of these memoirs.

I was now incessant in my application to every branch of the farming business, and, as I have before intimated, I performed prodigies of labour upon various occasions. My father had now taken another very large adjoining farm of nearly a thousand acres, Chisenbury farm, and was therefore become one of the largest farmers in England, yet we managed this business with the greatest ease; and what others called very severe labour, I practised as a relaxation from business, such as learning the cavalry exercise, in which I had now become a considerable adept; in fact, I bore the character of being one of the most active, and at the same time one of the most powerful, young men in the county; and my feats of activity and strength were proverbial. I would mix in the frolicks of a country wake, or revel, as they were called in Wiltshire, and contend, generally successfully, with the first proficients of the day, in wrestling jumping in sacks, backsword, or single stick playing, and have borne off many a prize. I once went to a Whitsuntide revel, with my friend and partner, Jesse Caster of Upavon, and I believe we bore off every prize--the gold-laced hat, the wrestling prize; the gold-laced hat, the backsword prize; a pair of buckskin breeches, the prize for jumping or running in sacks; the old cheese, the bowling prize; and eleven half-crowns, the prize played for at cricket in the morning: indeed I and Caster obtained every prize; and, as I gained the majority, of course I had the choice of the fairest damsel in the village at the dance in the evening. There was no exercise, no exertion, no labour that ever fatigued me. I could and did often work all day and dance all night; and this, at particular festive seasons of the year, I have followed for a week or ten

days together without ever taking off my clothes to go to bed. There was no excess of labour, heat or cold, winter or summer, that ever hurt me. I remember once going up stairs, about ten o'clock, with the rest of my father's family, but, instead of going to bed, I dressed myself, descended the window by a ladder, mounted my horse and rode to Upper Collingborn, where I had been invited to a dance, a distance of ten miles, and having danced till three o'clock in the morning I returned home, mounted the ladder into the window, and had just changed my best for my working clothes when my father called me, as the clock struck four, to get up, upon which I was out the first of the family, time enough to remove the ladder before any one saw it, so that the circumstance was never known to any one.

The young parson of the parish was generally my companion on these occasions, but as he was his own master, he went to and returned from the dance at his leisure, in fact, he generally got too top heavy before the evening was over to return home, and therefore usually slept out. I could tell some of the most ridiculous stories and curious adventures that happened to my young friend, when he was under the influence of Bacchus, but as I shall have occasion to say a great deal of this personage hereafter, I will pass it over for the present. But as, from my having lived a very great part of my life in country places, I have spent a considerable portion of my days in the society of clergymen, and as it is one of my principal objects in giving a faithful history of my life, to be particular in shewing my readers the sort of society that I kept, as well as how I was enabled to form my opinion of mankind, I shall faithfully delineate these characters, to the best of my judgment, always taking care to lean on the charitable side, and to draw occasionally a veil over the infirmities of human nature, as they were exemplified in the clergy of the church of England. I understand that some of my readers have already attributed to me a desire to lower the character of the clergymen of the established church, and they instance my description of the character of the Rev. T. Griffiths, the master of the free grammar school at Andover. But, as a proof that I have not done him any injustice, I have had confirmed, by the living testimony of many of my school-fellows, the truth as well as the lenient description that I gave of his character. Mr. Cotton of Edgerly, my tenant, and steward of my manor of Glastonbury, has been to see me since he read the account, and he says it is a most faithful picture as far as it goes; but he called to my recollection the tyrant pedagogue having pulled off the ear of two boys, one in his presence, and one in mine. John Butcher, whose father then lived at Westcombe, was one of them, and he^[11] has reminded me also of Griffiths having taken a very thick heavy slate, and with both hands broken it over the head of Dr. now Sir ---- Gibbs, of Bath, physician to the late Queen, who very fortunately had a thicker scull than boys in general, or he would in all probability have fractured it. It will therefore be seen that I did in no way exceed the truth, and, so far from wishing to degrade the clergy, I shall only reprobate those acts in which they degrade themselves. I have known many excellent clergymen, Mr. Carrington to wit, and I know many most worthy clergymen now; and I have also known some of the most abandoned of human beings, who have been a disgrace to that holy office. In due course I shall shortly detail the moral character of two clergymen of this diocese, as a specimen of human depravity, both of them

living under the nose of the bishop.

I will now proceed with my narrative. The price of corn was by this time considerably enhanced, and in consequence of a new duty, malt had risen from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. a bushel. Labourers three years before could purchase with a week's wages, two bushels of malt and a pound of hops, enough to make a nice little cask of good wholesome beer, for them to carry with them into the field, in grass mowing and harvest. That quantity was now nearly doubled also in price. Three years before they could purchase with their week's wages twelve quartern loaves; they could now only purchase with their week's wages six quartern loaves instead of twelve, the quartern loaf having now risen to one shilling. The labourers that used before to be very well off, and consequently very well satisfied, complained loudly of these hardships, and demanded higher wages; the answer of the farmer was, "it is very true that we sell our corn for a much higher price than we did, but we cannot afford to raise the wages of the labourers, for we pay all the increase of price away in taxes, and the increase in our rents, as well as in every other necessary of life, our tea, salt, iron, leather, &c.; you must, therefore, have patience, and wait for better times. Our rulers, and Mr. Pitt particularly, says we may look forward with a confident hope that we shall soon have better times for us all." Thus the poor man, from the very first year of the war, began to feel the cruel effects of high prices, and he was made to suffer this for many years without any rise in his wages. Almost all the common necessaries of life were doubled, while he was told to wait with patience from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and from year to year, still buoyed up with the false hope of better times, which were eternally promised with matchless impudence by the prime minister, who constantly boasted of the wealth and power of the nation, which he was wasting, and which he lavished with an unsparing hand, to carry on an unjust, an unnecessary, cruel, and vindictive war against the people of France, because they had made a hold, a manly, and a successful effort to throw off the galling yoke of one of the most infamous and detestable tyrannies that ever disgraced the character of an enlightened people. It was very true the landholders grew rich from the great advance in the price of land, and the farmer grew rich from the advance in the price of grain; but, alas! the labourer began to suffer, and has continued to suffer; his privations have increased in the exact proportion to the increase of taxation, from that day to this.

In the beginning of this year, (5th of April, 95,) the Prince of Wales was married to his first cousin the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, a match which was very much approved by John Bull, as she was young and beautiful, possessing all those attractions which were likely to render the marriage state happy; although there was something that John grumbled a little about, as he had not only to pay the piper, by an additional yearly salary for his Royal Highness, which was raised by the parliament to ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS PER ANNUM, but he was likewise called upon to _pay the Prince's debts_, which amounted to SIX HUNDRED AND NINETEEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY POUNDS;--DEBTS on _securities_, THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND, and _tradesmen's bills_, THREE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, was the amount of the account laid before parliament. John, however, was then in comparative prosperity, and the money was paid

with great good humour, in the hope that this wild prince would, now he was married to an amiable and a lovely woman, become more rational, and less debauched and extravagant. At this time also the trial of Mr. Hastings was brought to a conclusion; this had been going on seven years before the House of Lords, and he was now acquitted. There were considerable riots and disturbances in various parts of the country, in consequence of the high price of corn; wheat having now, for the first time in the eighteenth century, risen as high as ten shillings a bushel. The wages of the labourer in the parish of Enford still remained at six shillings a week, which caused much grumbling and many complaints, as they were become now tired of "waiting with patience for better times." The country was considerably agitated too, by a report of a mutiny in the Oxford Militia, who were quartered at Newhaven, in the neighbourhood of Brighton. This also arose in consequence of the high price of provisions. The privates of this regiment had seized a quantity of flour, and sold it to their comrades and others, at a reasonable price. I remember that this caused great alarm amongst the farmers, as they knew that without the aid of the soldiers they would not be able to keep up the price of their grain. The riot, however, was soon quelled, and those concerned in it were tried by a court martial, many of them were severely flogged, and, to the great joy of the yeomanry, two of them, COOK and PARISH, were shot. In the carrying of this sentence into execution there were great doubts entertained, by many of the officers, whether the other regiments of militia and fencibles, which were in camp there, would not join the Oxford regiment, and rescue their comrades. The greatest precautions were therefore taken. The Prince's regiment, the 10th dragoons, was marched from Hounslow and Windsor, where it was stationed to perform king's duty. The men had ball cartridges served out to them, and they were drawn up in the rear of the militia regiments, which were all flanked by the artillery with lighted matches, ready to rake them if they made the least movement; and the 10th light dragoons were supported by the Lancashire and Cinque Port fencibles. But the sentence was executed without any resistance on the 1st of June; the riot having occurred on the 17th of May.

I mention this circumstance, because it caused great agitation throughout the country, and because I am enabled to speak of the particular facts from the information which I receive from him who is now acting as my servant, and who was present doing his duty as a corporal of the said 10th regiment of dragoons, in which regiment he was a warrant officer for many years; and I find his information as to these matters most valuable to me. Gracious God! what scenes has he been an eye-witness of! This persecuted man was promoted to the 18th regiment of dragoons, commanded by Col. CHARLES STEWART, the brother of Lord Castlereagh; from thence he was removed, or rather removed himself, and was made adjutant to the Somersetshire volunteers, which were commanded by HILEY ADDINGTON, the brother of Lord Sidmouth. But, having detected his commanding officer, and exposed his peculations, he was dismissed without a court martial, and by unheard-of persecutions driven to that extremity which sent him here. He has indeed a tale unfolded to me, enough to harrow up the soul of any one who has not the heart of a savage. I now know what were the feelings of the British soldiers, even at that epoch. Having arrived at that period of life which may fairly be called manhood, I felt an interest in all the political occurrences of the day, and had by means of the society of our

worthy curate, Mr. Carrington, been enabled pretty clearly to judge of the views of the different political parties and factions in the country. I was a most decided advocate for the general measures of the government, although I abhorred some of the tyrannical acts of the ministers. I was an enthusiastic admirer of our beautiful constitution, the history of which I read at that time with great avidity, believing that it was in all its material points carried practically into effect, notwithstanding my friend and tutor had so strenuously endeavoured to convince me that it was only the theory that deserved any admiration.

About this time a great many public meetings were held, and a clamour for peace was very general throughout the country; and when the king went to open the parliament he was grossly insulted, hissed, hooted, groaned at, and pelted, and one of the glasses of the state carriage was broken, supposed to have been done with a ball from an air-gun. Five hundred of the Tenth Dragoons escorted his Majesty from Windsor to Piccadilly, where the whole regiment of the Fifteenth Dragoons was assembled to conduct the King to the House of Peers to open the Parliament. After the Fifteenth had relieved the Tenth, it returned from Piccadilly, and halted at Knightsbridge barracks, which were then first occupied by it: the men had orders to remain in readiness the whole night with their horses standing saddled, and they themselves sleeping in the stable with them. That was the first time the King had ever been escorted by more than a serjeant's guard, and I think we may set it fairly down that from that time the laws of England have been passed under the protection and the influence of the military. This enabled Mr. Pitt to execute measures hostile to the liberties of the people. Two bills were immediately passed; one to prevent seditious meetings, and the other called Lord Grenville's gagging bill. The British minister was, in fact, become the ruler of the destinies of Europe; he had contrived, by means of British gold, to procure in France the committal of the most atrocious and bloody deeds that human nature is capable of, and this was inhumanly effected in order to delude mankind with the idea that any change in the form of any government, however bad and tyrannical, must always be followed by such deeds. In this he was too successful; for, by these means alone, he was enabled to alarm the timid, disgust the more rational, and prevail upon the great mass of his suffering countrymen to submit to these arbitrary acts, and to endure their present ills, however galling, rather than run the risk of greater by a change. This was the policy of the British ministry, and I sincerely believe that all the atrocities that had been committed in Paris, all the blood that had been spilt, all the massacres that had been perpetrated, were hired and paid for by British gold, drawn from the pockets of the gulled and besotted people, for the purpose, as they were made to believe, of preventing the commission of similar atrocities in our own country. In fact, the labour, the industry, and the talent of the people, the industrious and hard-working people of England, were now heavily taxed to subsidize every despot of the continent; and the wealth of the nation, drawn from the sweat of the poor man's brow, was squandered with a lavish hand, to hire and to pay every assassin and every cut throat by trade in Europe, to enable them to prolong the war against the liberties of France, and thereby to prevent a reform and redress of grievances at home. In the mean time the National Convention of France were boasting of their victories; it was asserted that they had gained twenty-seven pitched

battles, taken one hundred and sixteen strong places, ninety-one thousand prisoners, and three thousand eight hundred pieces of cannon. During this year the son of Lewis the Sixteenth died in prison, and on the twenty-eighth of July, the army of emigrants which landed at Quiberon bay was totally destroyed. A most curious circumstance also happened: Hanover made peace with France, so that our amiable allies, the good people of Hanover, made peace with the King of England's most deadly enemy. It was also in this year that Stanislaus, King of Poland resigned his crown, and his kingdom was partitioned among his rapacious neighbours, Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

This year was a very turbulent one for Great Britain, there being riots in many parts of the kingdom in consequence of the high price of bread, the quarter loaf of which continued above a shilling, during the whole year. At Salisbury symptoms of rioting broke out one market day; some of the farmers, attending the market, were hustled and insulted; some of the sacks of corn were also cut by the rioters, and the corn let about the marketplace; and the Cornet of the Everley troop of cavalry, Mr. William Dyke, of Syrencot[12], near Amesbury, one of the largest farmers in the west of England, who attended the market at Salisbury with his corn, was insulted and ill-used by the people. The windows of his carriage were broken, and the vehicle was otherwise injured, as he was escaping out of the town towards his home in the afternoon. The antipathy of the people was directed towards him particularly, because he had been very instrumental in causing the little bushel, of the Winchester measure, of eight gallons, to be introduced generally in the county of Wilts, instead of the old bushel, which contained nine gallons, and in some instances ten gallons. My father's district contained full ten gallons, and when the little bushel was established, four of our bushels made exactly five of the Winchester measure such was the aversion of my father, as well as of myself, to the new regulation, that when the law was enforced to compel every one to use it, even then we ever afterwards, to this day, put 5 bushels into each sack, so that they were always of the same size and weight as they were before the measure was altered. However, Mr. Dyke, our cornet, was singled out, on account of his being the ring-leader, in what the poor called a conspiracy to lessen the size of the bushel, and at the same time to keep up the price of corn. The mob, as they pelted his carriage with brick bats, as his horses galloped, or rather fled, through the town, intimated that if he came the next week they would serve him still worse. This was a great offence, and which was not to be borne. To pelt 'Squire Dyke, the gallant cornet of the Everly troop, was such a heinous and daring outrage, that it could not, consistently with our honour, be suffered to pass with impunity, and every one in the neighbourhood was made to tremble for the fate of the rioters. Every member of the troop, and I of course, among the rest, received a formal summons to be in readiness to join on the following Tuesday, to march to Salisbury, to quell any riot that might take place; and, at all events, to guard our gallant commander Mr. Dyke, while he went to the market to sell his corn; for it was very properly considered, that, in case the cornet of a troop of yeomanry was allowed to be deterred from attending the market to sell his grain, no farmer would in future be able to attend without being in danger, not only of losing his corn, but of having his head broken into the bargain.

The thing got wind and was the general topic of conversation all over that part of the county. The rioters had publicly intimated their intention of assembling on the next market day at Salisbury, and compelling the farmers to sell their corn at a moderate price, or abide by the consequences; and it was blazoned all over the country that the Everly troop had received orders and meant to march to Salisbury on that day, to join the Salisbury troop, for the purpose of chastising the temerity of the disorderly multitude. The bloody conflict that was anticipated caused many a manly heart to palpitate, and many a rosy cheek to lose its blooming colour and to be overspread with a pale sallow hue. The mighty battles that had caused such a sensation throughout the whole of the civilized world, the terrors that had been created by the combats which had been fought by Moreau, by Jourdan, by Wurmser, and all the other great generals upon the continent, were entirely forgotten, or thought but little of, in the vicinity of Amesbury and Everly. Nothing was talked of, or meditated upon, but the expected dreadful battle of Salisbury: the quivering and almost bloodless lip of every one who ventured to speak upon the subject, showed visible signs of terror and dismay; every face, indeed, seemed to give "dreadful note of preparation." This was my first campaign; and, as it was the only opportunity I ever had of distinguishing myself in the active service of my country in this way as a soldier, and as a volunteer yeomanry cavalry man too, I must entreat the indulgence and particular attention of the gentle reader, while I give a faithful narrative, an unvarnished tale, of the whole affair. This being the solitary instance in which I was called into the field of battle while I was in the service, I must entreat those who do me the honour to read my Memoirs, to extend their forgiveness to me if I should prove somewhat tedious; but to my fair readers, my female friends, I will promise before hand, that there shall be no over-strained description of the bloody work of war, &c.: I will faithfully relate the particulars as they actually occurred, without fear or favour; being willing to take my share of the honour as well as the odium of the fate of war.

It will be recollected, that Mr. Dyke was only a Cornet as yet in the troop, and of course it was contemplated, as is usual upon these occasions amongst the subalterns of the army, previous to an engagement, that in case of a warm contest there would be promotion. Mr. Dyke, or rather Cornet Dyke, rode over early on the Wednesday following to Captain Astley, to inform him of what had happened, and requested him to give an order for the summoning of the troop, to muster on the following Tuesday; and the place of rendezvous was fixed at the Cornet's house, as that was on the road to Salisbury. The gallant Captain complied immediately, and the orderly man was hurried off to inform the different members of the corps in time, that they might be prepared and well equipped by the important day; so that we had all of us nearly a whole week to ponder upon the probable chances of the impending conflict. The whole week was spent in surmises how it would all end; some longed for the fray, others, as I have since understood, were preparing for the worst, and occupied their time in settling their worldly affairs, so that making of wills was the best trade going for that week. My father, who knew all the parties well, kept up his spirits; for he at once confidently asserted that there would be no blood spilt, while the troop was under the command of his neighbour, Captain

Astley; and he really carried his jokes so far, that I was sometimes almost disposed to be angry myself. "Ah, my dear boy," he used to say, "it is very well for you that our friend Carrington is gone to Berkeley Castle; for if he were here he would laugh till his sides cracked to hear what is going on." I demanded, why so? "Why," said he, "your gallant Captain is run away already; he is _gone to Boreham_." The fact was, that, as soon as Dyke had left the Captain, he called his favourite servant _Douse_, without whose advice he never did any thing at that time, and having related the object of Cornet Dyke's visit, he said, "What say you, Douse, to this affair?" "Why," replied Douse, "Damn the Cornet! he is got into the scrape, and let him get out of it himself in the best way he can." Douse gave this advice more for the safety of his own carcass than for the honour of his master; for Douse, who was the groom and the constant attendant of the Captain, fancied that he himself began to smell powder already; besides he knew his man well, and he knew that his advice would be acceptable. He was right in his calculation; for the Captain, drawing himself up, said, "Right, you are right, Douse! damn the fellow, as you say, let him fight his own battles, and get out of his own scrapes, as well as he can. But what shall I do, Douse? What excuse shall I make?"--"O" says Douse, "order your carriage and go to Boreham, and then you know you will be from home, and that will be a sufficient excuse." A beam of pleasure sparkled in the Captain's eye, and he at once adopted the faithful groom and valet's advice. He then wrote to Sir John Methuen Poore, the Lieutenant, and honestly told him that, as he was not concerned in Dyke's keeping up the price of his wheat, he should not attend at Salisbury, as he was going to Boreham, where he had particular business. Boreham was near Warminster, not more than 20 miles from Salisbury, and Everly was 16 miles. However, it was soon buzzed about that the Captain was from home, and that he _was gone to Boreham_--which was ever afterwards a _byword_ amongst the members of the troop when any one had sneaked out of performing his duty; the exclamation then was, "he's gone to Boreham!" Sir John Poore took the hint, and wrote to his friend Cornet Dyke, to say that he had particular business that required his presence in London, where he was going the next day. This desertion in the hour of danger, of our Captain and our Lieutenant, flew like lightning through the district, and I shall never forget my father when he related the latter circumstance to me; he could not get it out for the life of him for laughing. "However," said he, "you have got the Cornet left, and he is a _prudent man_, and I'll warrant you there is no harm will come to any of you."

At length the awful morning arrived, and by this time I really had imbibed a great deal of my father's notion of the thing, and began to think that it would, after all, turn out very little better than a hoax, or something for the public to laugh at. I own I did not like the object of the expedition much; neither did I relish the idea of going to draw my sword upon a defenceless, unarmed multitude; but my father turned it all into ridicule--he said we were only old-woman frighteners, and he quoted first some farwell lines of Pope's Homer, addressed by Hector to Andromache, before he went out to meet Achilles; then he quoted Hudibras, and then he would give a few lines of the character of Falstaff, the then again of Bobadil. The fatal day was, however, come, and I mounted in good time to proceed to the rendezvous at our Cornet's house at Syrencot.[12] As I rode

along with some of my comrades, I could not avoid cracking a few jokes about the nature of our expedition, and the unsoldier-like service on which we were about to be employed. I shall never forget the serious or rather gloomy appearance of my neighbour and friend, honest John Coward, of Longstreet; his naturally long dark visage was extended to a more than usual length, and the tender pathetic way in which he took leave of Jenny at the door, as he mounted his charger, was a genuine specimen of the mock heroic. At length he entreated me not to make fun of such a momentous and solemn undertaking; then fetching a deep sigh, he said he prayed to God that it might all end well, and that no lives might be lost. In this mood we arrived in front of Mr. Cornet Dyke's house, where we found the horses being led about of some few of the troop, who had got there before us. Being invited to alight, and take some refreshment, we dismounted, and gave our horses to the care of the men who were attending in considerable numbers, for the purpose of walking them about while we regaled ourselves. They were the _thrashers_, carters_, and other _labourers_, of our Cornet, and, as they well knew the errand upon which we were going, they eyed us with no slight degree of suspicion and ill-will. We had to be sure lost our _Captain_ and our _Lieutenant_, but we consoled ourselves with the idea that we had got our Cornet safe; that he could not run away and leave us in the lurch; although my friend Coward had thrown out some dark hints, as we came along, by which it appeared to me that there was a hope in his mind, that something _would yet turn up_, to prevent us from marching at once to _danger_ and to _glory_; and I could see plainly enough that he was quite willing to forego all the flattering rewards of the latter, if he could only be sure of escaping from the former.

When we entered the house, we found such of our comrades as had arrived before us, seated round a table, enjoying a handsome cold collation, which was spread thereon for the occasion. There was cold ham, fowls tongue, &c. &c. tea, coffee, wine and beer in great profusion; and, if I recollect right, there were no less than three rooms furnished with the same substantial proof of our Cornet's hospitality: so that, as he arrived, each member of the troop was provided with a liberal allowance of good old English cheer. This being the first time that our hero had ever given a treat of any sort to the troop, it was hailed by some as an auspicious omen; and I could not help observing, to my next neighbour at the table, who was Mr. William Butcher, junior, that the brick-bats which had been levelled at our Cornet's head had at all events opened an avenue to his heart. A general laugh was caused by this remark; though it drew on us a reprimand from Butcher's uncle, who was a sergeant. I also observed to Butcher, that my friend and neighbour, Coward, not only played a good knife and fork, but did ample justice to the _Old October_. An unusual flush about the gills shewed, indeed, that his blood was beginning to circulate pretty rapidly, and by the time he had taken another glass or two he began to talk big, and crack his jokes with the best of us. As some of the party, in endeavouring to keep up their spirits, were already "half seas over," Mr. Serjeant-major Pinkey now very properly interposed; and as every one had taken what was at least quite sufficient, the things were removed, and we began to look at our watches, which showed us that time was gliding pretty quickly away, and that we ought to recommence our march. On our entrance we had been desired by the servants to make ourselves welcome, but our _Cornet_ had not yet made his appearance.

Having waited a considerable time, I took the liberty to ring the bell and desire the servant to inform his master that we were all in readiness to start, and waited only for our commander. Although generally speaking, this was considered as very proper, yet some of the older members thought it was very impertinent in _me_, who was a mere stripling at the time. The servant went up stairs to deliver the message, but still we remained without an answer; and my new acquaintance, William Butcher, having whispered to me loud enough for many of our comrades to hear, "That he should not be surprised to see our leader come forth by-and-by, like Hamlet's Ghost, armed in complete steel," this was received by some with a _smile_, by the more discreet with a _frown_. Still, however, no Cornet appeared. At length, in spite of sour looks and rebukes, I rang the bell once more, and begged the servant to let us know whether his master was coming or not.

All my father's observations now came forcibly across my mind; I began to think that his quotations from Hudibras and Shakespeare had too much truth in them; and I prepared myself for some extraordinary conduct on the part of our Commander. It was well I did so, amazed indeed should I have been. My last message had the desired effect. After we had been anxiously waiting for more than an hour, the door at length opened, and in walked the _Cornet--but, instead of being dressed in _armour_, he had not even got on his _regimentals_. To our utter astonishment, confusion and dismay, instead of marching firmly forth armed "_cap-a-pe_" with nodding plume, and his bright and trusty steel girt round his loins, eager for the fight; lo and behold! he crept slowly and solemnly along, clad in a _long flannel dressing gown and a pair of scarlet slippers_. Notwithstanding all my father had prepared me for, this scene so far surpassed all that his ridicule had anticipated, that I can solemnly aver that I had never before felt such a sensation, and as I have never since felt any thing like it, I am totally unable to describe my feelings. We were all struck motionless, and every one, as he involuntarily rose, appeared to dart a look of eager enquiry without being able to open his lips. The trembling ---- at length broke silence, and in a faltering under tone he spoke, or rather whined as follows:--"Gentlemen, I am very sorry for having kept you waiting so long." One of the troop, who had been plying the Cornet's old stingo pretty freely, interrupted him, in a voice as opposite to that of the Cornet as the roaring of a cannon is to the chirping of a cricket, and replied "Never mind, Sir, about any apology, but put on your regimentals as fast as you can, or we shall get to Salisbury after all the mischief is done." The Cornet proceeded--"I am very sorry, Gentlemen; it is very unlucky; but, about three o'clock this morning, _I was suddenly seized with such a violent pain in my bowels_, that Mrs. Dyke says it will be very imprudent for me to leave the house _in my present state_, for fear of catching cold; and in fact _I think so too_, and she insists upon it that I shall not go with you."

In the midst of this affecting scene I too was seized suddenly, but in rather a different way; for an appropriate couplet which my father had repeated in the morning, and with which I was very angry then, now came so forcibly across my memory, that not being able to suppress my feelings, I burst out into what is vulgarly called a _horse laugh_; in which I was joined by Butcher and some of my comrades. The poor Cornet, however,

pitiously proceeded, as well as a man could do with such a _twinging belly ach_, and said, "That he really was very sorry for it; but as it could not be helped now, he trusted that we would proceed under the command of Serjeant-major Pinkney, and he was quite sure that we should conduct ourselves in a manner that would do credit to the troop. He added that he would send a servant with us, who would return and let him know how matters stood, and in case his presence was absolutely necessary, he would endeavour to come over to Salisbury in his carriage, _provided that Mrs. Dyke would permit him to leave home_." Heaven and earth, here was a catastrophe! I sincerely believe, if I had not been an eye witness of this transaction, that I should have thought to this hour that some of the characters drawn by Shakespeare were ridiculously absurd and unnatural; but this scene in real life so far exceeded any thing I had ever seen represented upon the stage, that I have never since disputed the correctness of our inimitable bard, in his conceptions of human nature, and the justice with which he has delineated its various characters.

Squire Dyke now returned up stairs to his inconsolable lady, and his amiable anxious family; and having mounted our chargers we marched off towards Salisbury, with the _gallant Serjeant-major_ at our head. As we rode along, or rather marched two a-breast, my comrade was Mr. William Butcher of Urchfont, with whom I that day contracted an intimacy which lasted as long as we remained together in the same county, and which was continued by a friendly intercourse up to the period of his premature death a few years back. We were passing Bulford, about two miles before we reached Amesbury, when we observed the Serjeant-major and Butcher's uncle, who was another Serjeant, in deep and serious conference, upon which I exclaimed, by G-d, Butcher, your uncle and Pinkney are holding a council of war; and I will bet my life that some new difficulty will arise, so as after all to prevent our marching to the scene of action. I had scarcely spoken the words before our _then Commander_ fell back, and joined myself and Butcher, who were heading the troop next to the officers: and Pinkney addressed me as follows:--"We have been considering the matter over, Hunt, and Butcher thinks that we are proceeding not only upon a hazardous but a very foolish expedition; for he says that, as there is no commissioned officer with us, any act of ours will, in the eye of the law be deemed illegal. What say you to this?" Having given the wink to my friend, I replied as follows:--"I believe that Serjeant Butcher is quite right as to his law, and that in case any person should be killed, there is no doubt but we shall every man Jack of us be tried for murder. But, if you ask my opinion. I am for proceeding immediately; for we had much better be _tried and hanged_ to boot, than live to be pointed at as fools and cowards for the remainder of our days." "Ah!" exclaimed Serjeant Butcher, "that is very pretty talking for you, young fellow; but we are too old to be caught _tripping_ (I suppose he meant _swinging_) in such a way. We have made up our minds to _halt_ at Amesbury, where we will dine; and in the mean time we will send over Mr. Dyke's servant to Salisbury, and should there be any _riot_ he can return and let us know, and we can quickly be there, as Amesbury is only seven miles from thence." He likewise very prudently observed, that "it would be exceedingly foolish to march there to create a riot, when, by staying away, all danger or mischief might be avoided."

As the council of war had settled^[13] the business, all my sarcastic observations merely tended to irritate, without the least chance of

changing their final determination; and we, therefore, gallantly marched into Amesbury, where, having halted in front of Mrs. Purnell's house, the sign of the George and the Dragon, our commander gave the word for the landlady to advance, from whom he boldly demanded, whether she thought that she could provide beef steaks for sixty in half an hour, as the troop could not halt longer than an hour, they being extremely anxious to reach Salisbury. Mrs. Purnell, who was an excellent landlady, as well as an excellent woman, was too good a judge of business to turn away such a spanking order; with an engaging smile she replied, that she could hardly undertake to supply us all with beef steaks, but that, if we would dismount, she would do the best she could. The offer was hailed and accepted without further ceremony, and every man got as good a birth for his horse as circumstances would admit. Another council of war was then called, and another very grave question was discussed with all the solemnity of a camp scene, immediately preceding a battle. This momentous question was, how much each man should be allowed to drink after dinner, and, on due deliberation, it was at length resolved, and proclaimed aloud, that every one might take what beer he liked at dinner, but that no person should take more than a pint of wine after dinner. The reader will recollect that we had only marched about _three miles and a half since we had all taken such an EXHILIRATING luncheon at our Cornet's house._

At the expiration of an hour the steaks were pronounced to be ready, and we all fell to without ceremony. Mrs. Purnell at that time brewed her own ale, which was very different from the nauseous and deleterious trash that is now supplied to such houses by those common pests of society, _common brewers_. As many of the young farmers belonging to the troop had not got rid of the effects of what they had taken at their luncheon, they plied the tankard of good old nappy freely with their dinner; so much so, indeed, that before the cloth was removed there were never less than eight or ten talking loud at a time; and, long before each man had finished half a bottle of wine, three-fourths of the troop were drunk. The following scene ensued. Two of the gallant heroes, being deprived of the chance of making war upon the old women and boys at Salisbury, who had the week before pelted their Cornet, actually stripped and had a pitched battle. All command was at an end. The Serjeant-major fruitlessly endeavoured to call them to order; they were all now become too vain and too valiant to be under the controul of any one. Some had mounted their horses, and swore that they would immediately proceed to Salisbury, as they were sure Dyke's servant was killed, or he would have returned long, before; others were grinding their swords; and one, having more courage or more wine aboard than the rest, was actually seen setting his weapon upon the hone of the barber of the place. But as the servant of Cornet Dyke had now returned, to say that it was all peaceable, and no chance of a riot, some of the party actually proposed to march over to Salisbury, to shew that they were not _afraid_. As there was _no danger_, and the major part of the troop were three parts drunk, it only required a CAPTAIN BIRLEY to lead them on, and a SQUIRE HULTON to give the word, to have caused a scene in which, though it would not have been equal in atrocity and cruelty to the murders of the 16th of August, at Manchester, the blood of innocent and unarmed, although misled persons, might, and in all human probability would have been spilt. However, by the advice of myself and a few other, who had retained our senses, and who felt degraded in our own estimation by the

whole of these proceedings, the Serjeant-major ordered all present to be dismissed, and each to depart to his home in the best way he could. This was done, but the whole of this little town of Amesbury was thrown into confusion by the drunken and ridiculous proceedings of some of the men before they left it--and thus ended the battle, that was to have been, of Salisbury!

I returned to my father thoroughly abashed and ashamed of the transaction; but, when I related to him the account of the _belly-ach and long faced, dressing-gown scene_, I really thought he would have cracked his sides with laughing; and, as I had entered the troop against his wish and better judgment, he did not spare me in some of his remarks. "And now," said he, "young man, I hope you will another time be more disposed to attend to the advice of your father, who has lived so many years longer than yourself, and has been thereby enabled to form a much more correct judgement of mankind than you can possibly do." "But," added he, "that wisdom which is gained by experience is always the most lasting, and generally the most advantageous, so that it be not purchased too dear." I own I did not profit so much as I ought to have done by the sound advice of such an excellent father; but, as he used frequently to say, as an excuse for any indiscretion of mine, produced from the enthusiasm of my disposition, "Well, it cannot be helped; there is no putting old heads upon young shoulders." This was not only very liberal in him, but perfectly true; and the wise Supreme has very properly ordained that it should be so. I have, however, never ceased to regret my own imprudence and folly in not listening more attentively to the kind advice and prudent admonition of one who was so capable and so anxious to bestow it upon me.

I had now been labouring incessantly in my avocations on my father's farms for five years, in acquiring a competent knowledge of and clear insight into the farming business; and I must say that my father was at all times fully disposed to give me credit for my exertions. This season I had taken upon myself to make one of five mowers who cut down all my father's spring corn, consisting of very little short of three hundred acres of barley and oats. It being a perfectly fine harvest season, we had not, the whole time, one day sufficiently wet to stop mowing; and on a Saturday night it was all down, with the exception of one piece of oats, consisting of seventeen acres and a half; a very heavy crop growing upon newly broken or burn-baked ground. On Saturday night I proposed to my partners that we should make an effort to cut down this piece of oats on the Monday, although it lay three miles and a half from home, adjoining Everly field. This was thought to be an impracticable undertaking; each, however, promised to be there by four o'clock in the morning, and to start from home as the clock struck three. As it would take an hour to walk three miles and a half with the scythes on their backs, it was agreed that they should carry my scythe, and that I should bring the bottles and bag upon my poney.

On the Sunday I was engaged to dine and pass the day at Heytesbury, a distance of nearly twenty miles from my father's house, where I was going to meet a young lady, who was on a visit there, and to whom I was betrothed, without the consent of my father. How this betrothing came about I must now inform my readers. I had often heard my father speak in

very high terms of Miss Halcomb, the daughter of his old acquaintance, Mr. Wm. Halcomb, who kept the Bear Inn at Devizes, well known to be one of the very best inns between London and Bath, which inn had been previously kept by the late Mr. Lawrence, the father of the present Sir Thomas Lawrence, who I believe was born there. My father was always talking to my sisters in praise of the industry and the accomplishments of this young lady, particularly when any thing was not quite so well managed as it ought to be; he would then exclaim, "Ah! How much better Miss Halcomb would have done it!" My eldest sister used sometimes to reply, rather petulantly, "Why do you not invite this lady to come and see us? perhaps I should then be enabled to acquire some of her talent to please." "Well," said my father one day, "I have no objection. You shall ride with me to-morrow, and call upon her, and I will then invite Mr. Halcomb to bring his daughters and return the visit." My sister agreed to this, and, as she herself told me, she was prepared to dislike this lady, merely because my father had so often made such severe comparisons, that she had almost become a bugbear to her. Not so with me; I was already half in love with her from my father's description, although I had never seen her; and upon their return was eager to know when we should have the pleasure of seeing her and her family. The day, however, was not fixed at that time; but a remarkable circumstance ultimately produced the so much longed-for interview with this young lady, and I own I had made up my mind secretly to admire her person, as much as from my father's description, I admired her good qualities. Had my father but even slightly guessed what was working in my breast, he would never have invited Miss Halcomb to Littlecot; he having a much higher object in view for his son, both as to fortune and rank.

It is rather extraordinary, but I longed excessively to see this lady. At length the following occurrence led to the event which I had anticipated with so much anxiety. My father had ridden to London, and taken his friend Coward with him as a companion. On their return, having started early on a Sunday morning, they rode, as was my father's custom, twenty miles before breakfast, which brought them to the Windmill, at Salt Hill. They rode into the yard, and having called for the hostler, the landlord, Mr. Botham, came up to them and made his bow. Having learned, in the course of his conversation with them, that they came from the neighbourhood of Devizes, he enquired if my father knew Mr. Halcomb who kept the Bear Inn, to which my father replied, that he not only knew but was particularly intimate with him; a reply which led to a more familiar conversation.

As soon as they had finished breakfast, the landlord entered the room, and invited them to walk into the garden and take some fruit; an invitation which was accepted. From thence they had a full view of Windsor Castle, which being admired by Coward, Mr. Botham enquired if they had ever seen Windsor. The answer being in the negative,--"Well, Gentlemen," said he, "If you will favour me with your company to dinner, I will take you over in a chaise, shew you the King's farms, the Queen's dairy, &c. after which we will walk over the Castle, and go to the Chapel Royal where you will have an opportunity of seeing all the Royal Family, who are at Windsor, as they scarcely ever fail in fine weather to attend divine service." Coward's eyes sparkled with joy at the proposal, and he looked with anxious expectation for my father's answer. The latter replied that it

would have been a great treat to him, particularly to have inspected the King's farms; but that he was, nevertheless, reluctantly obliged to decline this polite offer, as they were under the necessity of reaching home the next morning, and had made arrangements for sleeping that night at Newbury, a distance of nearly forty miles from Salt Hill, much too far for their horses to take them after dinner. "If that be all the objection you have," replied Botham, "we will soon settle that: I will send a steady man on to Reading with your horses, who shall get them well cleaned and fed, and after we have seen Windsor, and you have dined and taken one of the best bottles of old port my house can produce, and drank the health of my friend Halcomb, I will put the best pair of horses I have in my stables to a post chaise, in which you shall be taken to Reading in such style as will give you a specimen of the way in which we conduct posting at the London end of the Bath road. By the time that you arrive at Reading your horses will have had good time to feed, and will be fresh to take you on to Newbury as early as you have named." Coward begged my father to accept so very excellent a proposal, and declared that it would not only be a great deal better for their horses, but a great accommodation to them; and in this Coward was very sincere, for he did not altogether like my father's long rides on horseback, as my father seldom travelled less than sixty miles a day, when upon a journey. But my father, who was a man of the world, looking Botham firmly in the face said, "I assure you, Sir, that your proposition staggers me a little. Your offer is most polite and very generous; but, as I am not in the habit of receiving such liberality from strangers, how am I to account for the pressing manner in which you have offered it? I cannot for one moment believe that a person in your respectable situation can have any unworthy motive; but you must excuse me for declining to assent to your proposition, unless you will inform me in what way I may have an opportunity of returning the compliment, or, at any rate, point out some probable motive that has induced you to proffer it." "Sir," said Botham, "I will do both; in the first place, I have received many civilities, and in fact great acts of kindness, from Mr. Halcomb which, as he has never been here, I have never had an opportunity of returning. I have, therefore, seized this occasion of being civil to one of his friends. In the next place, if you will fix a day, when I can meet Mr. Halcomb and his daughters at your house, I will pay you a visit in return with pleasure, although it is a distance of sixty miles. We innkeepers, you know, travel not only expeditiously, but very cheaply. "Enough," said my father. "Give me your hand, we will cheerfully place ourselves at your disposal till four or five o'clock in the afternoon." The business was thus settled, to the great joy of poor Coward, who was almost dumb with fear, lest my father should decline such an opportunity of seeing Windsor and the Royal Family.

To Windsor they accordingly went, and were greatly entertained with what they saw, which was every thing that was to be seen about the Castle, as Mr. Botham was well acquainted with the upper servants in attendance there; they also got a seat at the Chapel Royal, very near the Royal Family, and having spent a pleasant day, Mr. Botham kept his word, by conveying them in a post chaise to Reading, a distance of twenty miles, in about an hour and a half.

When my father returned he related this circumstance to me and my sisters;

and Coward overwhelmed us with his praises of Mr. Botham. My father then said that he would fix an early day, for Mr. Halcomb and his daughters to come and meet him. Coward observed that he must have a very great regard for his friend, to travel one hundred and twenty miles, merely to dine with him. "Ah! Coward," said my father, "You know little of mankind! it did not require any very extraordinary degree of penetration to discover that Mr. Botham entertained a greater friendship for one of the _daughters_ than he did for her father."--"Why, yes," replied Coward, "I now remember that he devoured your praises of Miss Halcomb with great avidity." "To tell you the truth," said my father, "Mr. Botham informed me that he wished for an alliance with the eldest daughter of his friend; and, as I think it a good match, and Salt Hill will be an excellent home for her, I will do every thing that lies in my power to promote their union."

For the moment, this information was death to my hopes, and seemed to strike daggers to my heart; for I was literally over head and ears in love with this unknown lady, merely from what I had heard my father say of her. But as I could not learn from my father that she had in any way encouraged the hopes of Botham, I felt, after a little reflection, no fears for the result, and without farther consideration, resolutely made up my mind to be his rival. This furnishes a striking example how liable young persons, possessing minds of a sanguine nature, are to be talked into any thing.

The day was fixed for the party, and my poor father little thought that his son, who could not by any process of reasoning be supposed to have any thing more than the common feeling which actuates the minds of young people when they anticipate meeting some friends of their own age, he little thought that his son looked forward to the day with a much more intense anxiety than either of the individuals that he expected would play so prominent a character, and on whose account the party was solely made up. The day at length arrived, and my father had made such preparations as he conceived were due to the polite attention and hospitality that he had received at the hands of Mr. Botham. My father was not one of that class of personages who are so very common, and who pride themselves upon being match makers; this being the only instance in which I ever knew him to interfere in any thing of the sort; but he, nevertheless, really appeared to enter into this scheme with all the ardour of an old proficient. I believe, however, that he did it with the best of motives, under the full impression that he was serving all parties, as it struck him that it would be an union which bid fair to promote the mutual advantage and happiness of the two families. The reader will indeed perceive that he was not an adept in the art of match making, as, had he been so, he certainly would not have communicated the secret to us young folks.

The dinner hour now approached, and a chaise drove up to the door; containing the two Miss Halcombs, accompanied by their brother, on horseback. My father having introduced them to me, Mr. Halcomb made an apology for the absence of his father who was ill, and presented a letter, which had been sent to him by the coach from Botham, directed for my father. The latter having opened and read it, he looked very grave and disconcerted, and said, addressing himself to the young lady, "I am very sorry to inform you, Madam, that I find by this letter, which I have

received from Mr. Botham, that we shall be deprived of the pleasure of his company, in consequence, as he informs me, of his unexpectedly having a large party from town, who have ordered a dinner, which totally precludes the possibility of his leaving home." This caused a slight blush upon the cheek of Miss Halcomb, who very modestly replied, "that she was sorry my father was deprived of the company of his friend; but," looking round to me and my sister, she added with a smile, "we will endeavour to bear the loss with fortitude, and spend the day as pleasantly as we can without him." It might have been very natural for me to feel an inward pleasure at the absence of one whom I had expected to meet as a rival; but to tell the truth, I felt very differently, for I at once set him down as an opponent not worth contending with, and I could not help despising him for his want of gallantry. I had also eagerly watched the countenance of the lady, to endeavour, if possible, to collect whether this Mr. Botham had made any impression upon her heart or not; and from the apathy which it manifested, I felt very little fear on his account. My father was sadly mortified at the circumstance; both at the absence of his old friend Halcomb, and his new acquaintance Botham. However, we spent a very pleasant day, and, as I had already made up my mind to be, I was over head and ears in love with the lady. My attentions, in fact, were so pointed and unreserved, that I saw that my father began to repent that he had ever had any thing to do with match making.

I found Miss Halcomb not only to possess all the good qualities that my father had ever described, but in my estimation she possessed ten thousand times more charms than my fervid imagination previously formed. My attentions were received with that politeness which was becoming an amiable, a virtuous and an accomplished female, on the first interview with a young man, to whom she had never given one thought before; but it was very flattering to me to find that those attentions were not considered obtrusive or disagreeable. I perceived that my father sat upon thorns, and that he was very much pleased to find that the young ladies declined the invitation of my sister to remain all night, although I added my intreaties to those of my sister, and this too in so earnest a manner, that my father could not refrain from saying that he should be very happy if the young ladies would remain all night with his daughter, but really he was fearful that my homely way of pressing them to stay would be considered as being very rude. Notwithstanding they had made up their minds to go, yet I could see that they were not offended at the homely way (as my father called it) in which I enforced my suit. I enlarged upon the darkness of the evening, the badness of the roads, and a thousand other obstacles which I presented to their view; but when I found that all was in vain; I seized an occasion to withdraw, while they were at tea, and taking off one of the wheels of the chaise I conveyed it unobserved into the rick yard, where I secreted it under some straw. I then returned and took my leave, saying that I had an appointment to meet some friends at a neighbouring fair, which was actually the case. Then, mounting my horse, off I rode. It happened as I had anticipated. When the horses were brought out to be put to the chaise, the boy was astonished to find that one of the hind-wheels was gone; and as it was a physical impossibility for any one to find it that night, the young ladies were obliged to accept my sister's offer, in which my father now sincerely joined, since he found that I had left home: though he did not hesitate to pronounce me to be the

culprit who had, in one of my ridiculous frolics, stolen the wheel off the chaise. Upon my return, I was charged with the act, which I freely confessed, assigning as an excuse, my fears for the safety of the young females, travelling such bad roads in such a dark night.

Within a very few days after this event, I gained Miss Halcomb's consent to ask her father's permission to pay my addresses in form; and within a week from that time, I demanded her hand in marriage. The old gentleman, however, very properly replied, that, although he had no objection to me as a son-in-law, he could not give his consent to any such hasty measure, till he had seen my father, to know if it met with his approbation. I frankly told him that he might save himself the trouble and mortification of applying to my father, who, as soon as I mentioned my attachment to Miss Halcomb, and that I had offered her my hand and heart, (which at the same time I informed him she had kindly accepted,) had thrown himself into a violent passion, and swore, that unless I gave up my prize, and abandoned all further intentions of marrying an innkeeper's daughter, he would disinherit me, and cut me off with a shilling. This was quite enough to fix my determination, and I at once told old Mr. Halcomb, that I hoped he would act a more considerate part, for, as I had gained his daughter's consent, and as I was of age, and his daughter very nearly so, all the fathers in Christendom, nor all the powers on earth, should prevent me from making her my wife. The old gentleman very clearly saw that it was of no use to endeavour to deter me from my purpose by vain vows or threats; he therefore took a more rational course; he endeavoured to win me over by persuasion; and at length, by this conciliatory conduct, and by an assurance that he would not stand personally in the way, but that he would take every means consistent with the feelings of a man of honour to soften down the rigour of my father, he prevailed upon me to give up all intention of taking any hasty or premature step, which might involve us all in very unpleasant difficulties. This was a course which was sure to succeed with me, and I promised him that I would do nothing without his knowledge. Now, I am convinced that if Mr. Halcomb had acted in the same way that my father did, if he had forbidden me his house, and endeavoured by force to prevent my access to his daughter, such was my spirit of opposition, such an abhorrence had I of being driven into or out of any measure, such an innate hatred had I of every thing like tyrannical force, that I am quite sure if he had so acted, I having got the lady's consent, I am quite sure I should have run away with her in a week, in spite of all that could have been done to prevent me. If my father, on the contrary, had taken a similar course with Mr. Halcomb, if he had kindly advised me, and endeavoured to prevail upon the by mild and gentle means, I do not say that he would, or that he ought, to, have succeeded in making me give up the lady, but I am quite clear that he would have had a much better chance of success. Nay, if he had appeared careless, and left me to myself, I was at that time of such a volatile disposition, that such a hasty attachment might possibly have been weakened, or it might have worn off by time; but the very course which he took, irrevocably fixed my fate as to marriage. I was of age, and I had always made up my mind that I was, and ought to be, my own master upon this subject. I am still of the same opinion; I still hold that parents have no right to make their children miserable by any arbitrary dictation upon a question of such vital importance as that of whom they shall marry. Parents have an undoubted right, nay it is an

imperious duty which they owe to their children, to direct their choice with respect to suitable connections, and they have a right to interpose the authority of their advice and recommendation to their children. But the law of God and of man says[14], that the parties about to be united ought to exercise their own free choice. The law says that no person shall marry who is under age, without the consent of his or her parents; and the law has very justly drawn this line. The law, therefore, very properly contemplates that no parent shall have the absolute controul over the person of a child in this matter after that child has come of age.

I have, probably, detained the reader much longer upon this subject than is either entertaining or edifying, but as this occurrence paved the way for that important part of my history, my marriage, I feel it a duty which I owe to myself, and to those who do me the honour to read these Memoirs, and more particularly to the Radicals, to be more explicit than I otherwise should be, if the venal press, and particularly the profligate Editors and Proprietors of that press, in order to gratify their political employers and partisans, had not, upon so many occasions, and with such brutal and savage coarseness, when they could neither answer my arguments nor contradict the truths that I promulgated, sought to cover their defeat and their infamy by accusing me of having deserted my wife, and left her to starve. Fearless of the consequences, I shall, therefore, as I go along, place the circumstances fairly and honestly before the public, and leave them to draw their own conclusions, as to the correctness, not to say any thing of the honesty, of the base assertions which are made by the toots of my political adversaries. At this moment, however, I will merely state briefly this fact, that, in the year 1802, more than eighteen years ago, I was separated from my wife by mutual consent. We had three children; two sons and a daughter. It was agreed that the daughter should live with the mother, and the sons with me; but that both mother and father should have free access to each of the children, and the children the same access to the parents; and as I made a most liberal settlement upon my wife, (the particulars of which I shall not withhold,) there has been no complaint uttered by either party; no living creature ever having heard me make even the slightest insinuation against my wife, or ever cast the most remote reflection upon her character or conduct; neither has it ever come to the knowledge of myself or any of my friends that my wife has spoken one disrespectful word against me. As we have both always lamented, as a misfortune, the circumstances which led to our separation, so we both have carefully abstained from heightening and adding to the poignancy of that misfortune, by mutual accusations, revilings, and recriminations, which would have been as base as they would have been proved to be unfounded. If, on the contrary, I had deserted my wife, after having, when I was first married, surrounded her by prostitutes and courtezans; if I had been intriguing with every loose and abandoned female that came within the precincts of a profligate circle; if, after having driven her from my home, friendless and unprovided for; if, after having personally insulted her, I had hired spies and informers to traduce her character; if I had employed and paid the most abandoned characters, and had suborned them to swear away her life and her honour; if, when this plot had been detected and exposed, and her innocence had been proved by the very means that I had employed to blast her reputation and to destroy her; if I had still, in the most unfeeling and unnatural manner, separated her from, and cut

off all communication with, her child, under the hollow and false pretence that she was not a proper person to be entrusted with the care of her own daughter; if, I say, I had driven her out of the country, and, having done this, if I had hired another gang of base villains, not only to dog and watch her steps, but to seduce and bribe her servants to betray her; if I had rewarded these villains, _even with my own money_, to fabricate and propagate all sorts of calumnies against her abroad, while their infamous agents at home were reiterating and magnifying those falsehoods; if I had bribed the dastardly hireling press to libel and villify her; if in fact, I had carried my persecutions and deadly hatred so far as at last _to break the heart of her daughter_; if, upon her return, I had made another atrocious attempt to destroy her by means of hired, bribed and suborned foreign witnesses; if I had done these things, or any of them, I should have been an execrable and detestable villain, and I should have merited the scorn of every man and woman in the universe: but, even then, even if I had been guilty of all these horrible and unnatural deeds, it would, even under these abhorrent circumstances, have been base in the extreme in the doubled-faced, black-hearted villains of the _Courier_, the _dull Post_ and the _mock Times_ to attack me in the way they have repeatedly done about my wife; because there are not three _such abandoned profligate unprincipled_ monsters under the canopy of heaven. Even the _virtuous_ Mr. Perry, of the Morning Chronicle, has, when an occasion offered, endeavoured to varnish over his own character by attacking me about my wife. But, when I remind Mr. Perry that his wife, or at least the person he called one of his wives, was a Miss HULL, a butcher's daughter of the above-named town of Devizes, and that I know that those "who have glass heads, should be very careful how they throw stones;" I trust he will be more guarded in future.

I now request my readers to accept my apology for this long digression, and, without further comment, I will resume the thread of my narrative. I have now introduced the reader to Miss Halcomb, who was destined to be my wife; and I also have before said that I event to send a Sunday with her at Heytesbury, a distance of nearly thirty miles from my father's house. The reader will recollect, too, that I had engaged with my father's mowers to meet them at four o'clock on the Monday, morning upwards of three miles from home, in order to attack a field of oats, of seventeen acres and a half, a very heavy crop, to see if we, (five in number,) could not cut them down the same day. The time, however, passed so delightfully and so rapidly in the society of an amiable and lovely female, to whom I was betrothed, that the clock had unobserved by me struck twelve more than half an hour; and, before I could muster up resolution enough to tear myself from the clear object of all my hopes, the respectable family, with whom my intended wife was visiting, had given me more than one hint of its being past their usual time of retiring to rest. However, upon another hint being given by the prudent matron of the family, I took my leave, and having mounted my faithful steed I bent my course over the downs, twenty miles across Salisbury Plain. As I quitted the village, or rather the rotten borough, of Heytesbury, the church clock struck _one_; Which for the first time recalled to my recollection the promise I had made, as well as my resolution to perform an uncommon day's mowing, which was to commence at twenty-three miles distance at four o'clock.

With a heart as light as a feather, I reached home at three o'clock, when my father's servant informed me that the mowers had been gone forward nearly half an hour, and that they had left the bottles to be filled and carried to the field by me. Finding that I was rather behind my time, I merely then pulled off my coat and waistcoat, and put on my frock. I did not wait to take off either my tight leather breeches, (which were the fashion at that time,) or my boots; but as soon as the servant had filled the bottles with ale, I mounted a poney, and reached the field of oats, just as the other four men were stripped and whetting their scythes in order to begin; a thing which they had never before had an opportunity of doing, throughout the whole harvest, as the first stroke was uniformly struck by myself. They waited while I threw off my frock and took off my spurs, and having unbuttoned the knees of my breeches, we set to; and in ten minutes after the sun had sunk below the horizon, the last swarth was laid flat, and not an oat left standing; a day's work which stands unrivalled in that country, and which is the more uncommon, as, in fact, there were only four scythes at work during the greater part of the day; for, it being excessively hot, one of the men, the worst mower of course, was principally employed in riding to and from the Inn at Everly, to replenish the bottles. This was indispensable, every man being allowed as much ale as he could drink, with the exception of the two last bottles, containing three quarts each, which I was obliged to prohibit from being tapped till the oats were all down, as some of my partners by this time began to discover evident symptoms of inebriety. As we finished the last stroke, a very severe flash of lightning announced the approach of a storm, which had been gathering for several hours. I advised the men to hasten home, but they declared, now that the mowing was finished, they would finish the bottles before they left the field, and they kept their words. I hurried home as fast as my pony could gallop, and got in doors just in time to escape one of the most tremendous thunder-storms I ever witnessed; my four companions got jollily drunk, and slept upon the open down, drenched in rain all night; and although I met two of them returning home, the next morning at four o'clock, in a most wretched state, yet such was their hardy nature that neither of them took the least cold.

I have detailed this day's work as the last perhaps of the sort with which I shall trouble the reader. It was, as I have already intimated, such a day's work as had never been accomplished by five mowers before, or has been since, in that part of the world; and it will be recollected that I performed my share with out having had any sleep or rest. But to me, at that time, I never appeared to want any rest--I frequently worked till ten o'clock, and after taking my supper, and conversing with my father, arranging the proceedings for the next morning, I was very often not in bed till after eleven; yet I was very commonly up and dressed again by half past 3, and never in the summer time was in bed after four. It is a very extraordinary fact, that those who labour hard in the fields all day require the least sleep; at all events the smallest quantity of time in bed; for when they get thither, they enjoy and receive as much real sleep, they receive as much real refreshment in four hours, as the indolent, the idle, or the sedentary do in double the time. When the mind is active and well employed I now find it has the same effect upon me as laborious bodily exercise, for I sleep as sound as a rock here, and when my mind is fully occupied, and kept upon a proper stretch during the day, six or

seven hours rest in bed is quite ample; but when my mind is less employed, or occupied by light reading, and not exerted in its usual way, then I require more rest in bed, and I can sleep eight or even nine hours. It is, however, very seldom indeed that I give way to such negligence and sluggishness. I go to rest usually between eleven and twelve, and I am always up before seven. I was always instructed by my father to consider indolence as one of the greatest faults; it was, in fact, a sin of the first magnitude in his vocabulary.--Indolence, he always said was the harbinger of every vice, of every evil. And the Songs of Solomon and his Proverbs were on every occasion ready to support his opinion. He would say to the sluggard, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." He would forgive many a fault in a servant, but at habitual lye in bed, he would get rid of immediately, unless he could break him of the bad habit.

My father for some time was very positive, and very determined to prevent me from marrying an Innkeeper's daughter; and at length I undertook to reason with him upon the subject. I demanded if he knew any thing in the slightest degree affecting the character of the young lady? His answer was "No; quite the reverse." I asked if he had not, at all times, and perpetually, spoken in the highest terms of her conduct, and whether he had not, in my hearing, held her up as a pattern of propriety, and an example to my sisters? All this he admitted to be true: but she had no fortune, and he had expected me to marry a lady of fortune and family; at the same time he pointed out several, whom he should have been pleased to acknowledge as his daughter-in-law. I then demanded, whether, if she were, fit to be held up by him as a pattern for his daughters, she were likely to degrade his son as his wife? But, then, she had no fortune, and she was an Innkeeper's daughter. I begged then to know if he had any thing to urge against her father? No, indeed, he was a truly honourable and upright man. Then I would reply, "how often, Sir, have I been taught by you, in the language of your favourite author Pope, to look upon " _an honest man as the noblest work of God._["] This would make him fly off, and, although he would admit this to be very true, yet he would not give his consent.

At length, having found that I persevered in my visits to the young lady, and having ascertained from my sister that I was preparing for the wedding, he addressed me as follows, one evening when we were alone:--"So, I find from your sister, that you are determined, in spite of my remonstrances, to marry Miss Halcomb? It is very true that, as you are of age, I cannot prevent your union with that young lady; the law empowers you to make your own choice; but, recollect the law does not compel me to. If you had selected Miss ---- or Miss ----," naming several young ladies of fortune, "I would have come down handsomely, and you might have lived like a gentleman; and if you had chosen to be a farmer, you might have occupied your own estate; but if you ' _make a hard bed you must lie upon it._' Although this is a vulgar saying, yet it is a very just one; and you may rely upon it that it applies to your case most pointedly." I began to be impatient, and replied warmly, that I had to thank God for a sound body and an ardent mind, and I also had to thank him, any father, for the best of instruction and example; and that he had given me a proof, by his own industry and perseverance, that a man might not only be happy, but that he might also acquire wealth, without having much capital to begin with; and

that I was not in the least afraid of the effects of lying upon a hard-bed by night, so that I had peace and comfort by day.--"Ah, my dear son," said he, "it is very true that I have devoted my life to business, and by incessant application and industry have acquired a considerable fortune;" and with tears in his eyes, he added "alas! you are now going, by one false step, to blast my fondest hopes: by this match you are going, in one hour, to beat down and destroy all the bright prospects, all my plans for promoting your future well-being and consequence in life! Do you believe, can you for a moment be so silly as to imagine, that I have toiled from morning till night, that I have laboured with such incessant assiduity, scarcely giving myself time to enjoy even my meals; and do you think that I have been so anxious, merely to get money, merely to acquire riches? Believe me, my dear son, I have never been led away by any such grovelling notions; I have had higher and more noble objects in view. In fact, and in truth, my great, my sole aim has always been to make _you a man of consequence_ in the county; and although I know that riches alone will neither make a man happy nor respected, yet without wealth I know not how a man in this country can acquire any celebrity in it. With wealth, if a man have but a common share of understanding, he is at once pronounced a wise man, and he is looked up to as a prodigy; when his own native talent alone would not more than fit him for a menial office. Look for instance at our neighbours; there is. Mr. Astley of Everly, who is surrounded by every comfort; he has at his command not only horses, servants, and carriages, but he has a numerous body of tenantry, who submit to be his mere vassals, and will do any act, however dirty or mean, at his nod. He is your commander of the troop of Yeomanry; he keeps hounds; and has many manors well stocked with game; and he is a Magistrate of the county, and ignorant as he is, yet he dispenses the laws, or rather issues his arbitrary mandates to the whole surrounding neighbourhood. In fact, he possesses great power, and _all his power is derived from his wealth alone._ Let me ask you, who know him well, what would he be without his wealth? Strip him of his estates and his riches, what would he be fit for? I wait," said he firmly, "for your honest reply."--The question was put so home and so unexpected, and when I turned my thoughts towards our gallant captain, without wealth and power, he presented to my imagination such a _forlorn, helpless, wretched being_--that I actually burst out a laughing. "Really," said my father, "I am not in a laughing mood; but tell me, seriously, if you know of any situation in life in which, either on the score of his talent, his knowledge, or his ability of any kind, he would be capable of keeping his wife and family from starving? Tell me honestly whether, if he were left to provide for himself, you do not think he would be upon the parish books in a fortnight?"

I answered that, in my opinion, no one who knew the captain would, for a moment, dispute the correctness of the conclusion which he had drawn; but, I added, "I hope, Sir, that you do not compare me to such a man as Captain Astley; and I hope, too, that you will allow me to ask you a question in return. Do you not believe, Sir, that if I, your son, were obliged to go to day-labour to-morrow, I could earn sufficient to support, not only myself, but also a wife and family, by that sort of industry and zealous application which I have always shewn in your business?" The reply was, "I know you are able and willing to do as much as any man; but, do you consider that I have given you an education which cost me upwards of five

hundred pounds, and have you spent ten years and a half of your life at the best schools, under the best masters whom I could procure you, only to enable you to earn twenty or thirty shillings a week as a day-labourer; have you, no higher ambition than that?"

I rejoined warmly, "Yes, Sir, my ambition made me always aspire to much higher things and so did the treatment which I always received from you heretofore; but now, that you talk of abandoning me to 'lie upon a hard bed,' and intimate that, unless I give up the object of my choice, I am not to expect any thing from you, the scene is changed, and, under such circumstances, my spirit would, I trust, never suffer me to be dependent upon any one, while I have health and strength to obtain an honest though a plain livelihood."

I plainly perceived that this sort of reasoning did not suit my father, he reddened, and sneeringly exclaimed, "your spirit, indeed! I suppose your spirit will ultimately induce you to drive one of your intended father-in-law's coaches; or, perhaps, you may be promoted to the situation of head-ostler, and that will be a post considerably above a day-labourer." This was said with a degree of bitter irony that was little calculated to lead me into submission. By such a course he meant to work upon my pride, but his language produced a contrary effect to that which he intended: for I found any indignation arise to such a pitch, that I sternly answered "No, sir! whatever you may think of my spirit, you will find that I inherit too much of my father's character either to degrade myself by any such course, or be intimidated by any false notions of pride, from doing that which is honourable."

Having said this, I quitted the room, without waiting for a reply, and retired to bed much earlier than usual. I was, however, too much ruffled to go to sleep, and, after having tossed and turned about for half an hour, I suddenly rose, dressed myself, walked quietly down stairs, and going into the back kitchen I put on my boots, and then went deliberately into the stable, where I saddled my horse, and in a few minutes I was on my road to Devizes. I arrived at that place just as the family were locking up to go to rest, and, while a bed was preparing for me, I explained to Miss H. the object of my visit, which was to demand her hand from her father in the morning, and to fix the day of our nuptials before I left the house. The lady had often before witnessed, with some degree of pain, the warmth of my disposition, for I was, as I have already hinted, of a sanguine, volatile nature; and she had always observed, that, when bent upon any particular object, I was never deterred, and seldom persuaded, from attempting to accomplish it; but she had never before seen me so determined and resolved upon any point as I now was. She endeavoured, nevertheless, to persuade me from so rash a step; arguing that she had little hope of her father being brought over to comply with my wishes, by means of any such peremptory arguments as I had used to her. But it was all in vain. I assured her that before I left the house, I would solicit her father's consent to fix the day for our wedding; and that, if he refused to comply, I should demand the performance of her promise, to consent at once to our union without it. She first reminded me of her being under age, and next, with a degree of firmness that I did not expect, she expressed considerable doubts about acceding to my demand,

under such circumstances. I hastily, and as firmly, added, that the day should be fixed before I left the house, _or never_. She started at my vehement and peremptory manner, and with much good sense, began to reason with me, and to shew how ill-calculated such overbearing proceedings were either to prevail upon her father, or, what was of more consequence, to secure her love. If before marriage I evinced such an arbitrary disposition, and uttered my commands in such a peremptory tone, what security, she said, should she have for my not playing the tyrant afterwards? She, therefore, not only felt it to be her duty to refuse, but really I had so alarmed her, that she could not give her consent under any such sort of threat; as her compliance would appear to come rather from terror than inclination. This was followed by her bursting into tears, occasioned by the exertion she had made to tell me her resolve. I repeated my protestations, and did every thing to soothe her fears, and, as she was now summoned by her sister to retire to rest, we parted for the night, both of us in a very wretched state of mind.

Affected as I was by her agitated feelings, my composition was of too determined a nature to allow me to give way; having once determined, nothing but death could have deterred me from persevering, and, while I was going to bed, I deliberately resolved to keep my word. Nor was this only the start of the moment; on the contrary, I am quite sure that had not the parties complied with my wish, to fix the day before I left the house, I should never have been the husband of Miss Halcomb.

I was resolved to be plain and honest with the father, and to disguise nothing from him, and in case he should refuse his consent, I was equally resolved to leave nothing untried to gain the consent of the lady; if she withheld it I had brought myself, much as I loved her, to give up for ever all hopes, all intention, of being united, or of having any further communication, with her. With this determination I went to sleep, though with full confidence that I should succeed, notwithstanding the repulse I had received from her before we parted. My fair readers, will, I fear, call me a conceited puppy for my pains; but I assure them it was not vanity; it was part of my nature to be sanguine and determined in any thing, in every thing, that I undertook; for I believed that success seldom completely crowned an enterprise, unless he who wished to obtain it had confidence that he should succeed.

When I came to the breakfast table in the morning, I could perceive that the fair object of my hopes had not enjoyed so much repose as I had done during the night. Her heart appeared to be ill at ease. I had never slept better or sounder in my life. This is another extraordinary part of my composition, or rather of my constitution; namely, the physical operation of the Mental power over the animal frame. The more intense the operation of my mind during the day, the better do I sleep at night; the greater the object which I have to accomplish in the morning, the more serene is my sleep; so that when I have any weighty business to perform that requires the exertion of my whole mental as well as bodily powers, instead of being agitated with the anxiety arising from the importance of the undertaking, I am quite the reverse, I am perfectly tranquil, I am sure to sleep well; and to awake so much refreshed in the morning, as to enable me to commence the business of the day not only with vigour, but also with my senses

quite collected, and with the greatest calmness of mind.

I appeared upon this occasion so easy and so quiet, yet altogether so determined, that I often afterwards heard my wife say that she, for the first time, began to suspect the sincerity of my passion; its ardour she never doubted. The fact was, that if I had harboured all the doubts that she did, as to the success of my application to her father, I might have felt as uneasy as she did; and should have been thereby rendered incapable of successfully combating his arguments or objections.

The moment the breakfast was over I requested a private conference with him, when I honestly told him every thing that had passed between my father and me, and that I had given up all hopes of gaining his consent, adding, that I had come to the resolution of laying the case fairly before him, but that I was determined to have his answer at once whether he would consent to our union, so that a day might be fixed, or whether he would leave me to do my best to obtain his daughter's consent, which I was resolved to do in case of his opposing my wishes.

Seeing my determination, the old gentleman answered that, although he lamented the absence of my father's sanction, yet he would keep his word with me and his daughter, and would not withhold his consent, if it were her desire that he should give it. He valued the happiness of his child he said, and, as he thought I had always acted a fair and open part with him, he would do the same by me. He would, however, leave it entirely to his daughter; if she chose to fix the day he would not object to it; and if it were so, he would do all in his power to render us happy. He likewise expressed a sincere hope that his old friend, my father, would do nothing to make us otherwise, and that he would become reconciled to the match hereafter, even if he would not give his consent before. Mr. Halcomb then, for the first time, hinted what sum he intended to give his daughter as a portion. I told him that, for the present, I would hear nothing of the sort; that, as my father would not enable me to make a settlement upon his daughter, I would trust entirely to him, and that I never wished him to mention the subject to me till we were married.

I now flew to the young lady with the joyful tidings, and was received, as I expected, with open arms; and before ten o'clock that evening the day was fixed for our wedding, about six weeks from that time. Thus was I, at the age of twenty-two, and very young and inexperienced of my age also, about to take a wife against the consent of my father, without a house, a home, or twenty pounds in the world and perfectly careless whether her father gave its five or five hundred pounds. To have a wife was my determination, and, now the day was fixed, I returned to my father's house, and entered into his business again with all my usual zeal and assiduity.

The first opportunity I informed him of the arrangement that was made, upon hearing which he flew into a violent passion, and vowed vengeance. Nor did he fail to try the last effort, which was to endeavour to make Mr. Halcomb's pride operate, so as to prevent the match. The next market day he had a private interview with him, and did every thing in his power to accomplish his object. His opponent had the best of the argument, but he

retorted his insinuations with such a degree of spirit, that, for a while, my father had hopes of success. Mr. Halcomb, however, soon crushed his hopes, by telling him that he had given me and his daughter his word, and that nothing which he had said in his anger should induce him to break it. My father when requested to see the young lady, which was readily assented to. In the course of his interview with her, he made every effort to persuade her to abandon such a "_mad project_" as he was pleased to term it, and she listened to, and answered, all his arguments with great modesty and forbearance. He urged the folly of such a match, and told her he was sure she would live to repent it; he warned her that such sudden and inconsiderate unions seldom if ever turned out well; he pointed out to her my hasty, enthusiastic, volatile disposition; he said that I had seen nothing of the world, and that, whatever might be her charms, when I got into the world I might see other objects that might induce me to repent of having been so hasty; he mentioned the probability of a large family of children, without the means of supporting them; in fact, he tried every thing that man could do; he begged, he prayed, and he threatened. All was in vain. The only promise that he could obtain from her was, that she would inform me of all he said, and that she would leave the decision to me.

This to him was worse than no promise at all, and he retired to the market room and took his dinner, perfectly dissatisfied with the little, or rather no progress which he had made. However, when the evening came, instead of calling for his horse to go home as usual, he sent for Halcomb, and told him that, as it was a dark evening, and he was not very well, if he would permit him, he would drink tea and spend the evening with his family, and take a bed there that night. Mr. Halcomb, who was a warm-hearted, generous, forgiving fellow, readily pardoned all the insulting language that he had heard in the morning, accepted his offer by a hearty shake of the hand, and without further ceremony introduced him into his private room to his family. Mrs. Halcomb, however, the mother-in-law of the lady, having learned what had passed in the morning, and expecting nothing less than a fresh attempt to frustrate the match, no sooner fixed her piercing eyes upon him, after he was seated, than she drew up, and without waiting for any explanation, began to resent the insult which he had offered to her profession. He, however, demanded a parley, and a truce to all hostility, as he was come to offer the olive branch; assuring her that as a match could not be avoided, he was determined to make the best of what must be endured. In the course of the evening he had a private interview with the young lady, and after extorting a solemn pledge from her that she would not inform me of it till we were married, he gave her his consent and promised to acknowledge her as his daughter-in-law. This solemn pledge to keep silence till our union was completed he made her give, because he wished to see how far I would go without his consent; and she kept her word; although the fact certainly came to my knowledge through a third person. My father took the first opportunity of telling me that, as I was determined to marry against his will, he should do but little for me, compared to what he would have done if I had married to please him. He would, he said, give me, or rather he would lend me, the stock upon Widdington farm, and I might begin to furnish my house as soon as I pleased; but I must do this out of the fortune which I was to have with my wife. There was a most excellent stock

upon this farm, the rent of which was three hundred pounds a year. There were^[15] fifteen or sixteen hundred of the finest Southdown sheep, the very best in the county, as this was a fine sheep farm, in fact, principally so; twelve cows; six most valuable cart horses, and all other live and dead stock complete. With this arrangement I was perfectly content, and indeed it was much better than I had any reason to expect. The farm was, in reality, a very beautiful one, with a very good house, and all necessary appendages attached to it. I now seemed to be in a fair way of obtaining the height of my ambition. This happy intelligence I lost no time in communicating to the family at Devizes, and the necessary orders ^[16] were given without delay. I left it all to the lady, as it was to be paid for out of her fortune. Few young men entered into life with fairer prospects in the farming line; very few farmers in the county had such a stock of all sorts; in truth, nothing was wanting.

The happy day at length arrived. It was the twelfth of January. My sister, who was to be one of the bride-maids, and my friend the clergyman of Enford, who was to marry us, ^[17] went over with me in a chaise. Upon retiring to rest, having undressed myself, I sat down in an easy chair, meditating upon the serious engagement into which I was to enter on the morrow. In this situation I fell fast asleep, and did not awake till three o'clock in the morning, when I had caught a dreadful cold, and was in a shivering fit, which I could not get rid of till I arose in the morning. I was excessively ill the whole of the day. We were taken to the church in a post coach, and being married we returned to breakfast, where a large party was assembled to greet us. We were engaged to dine at the Castle, at Marlborough, which Inn was kept by my wife's brother. We, the married couple, in a chaise, and two post coaches, each with four beautiful grey horses, with the rest of the party, accordingly set out to Marlborough, where we spent the day, during the whole of which I suffered great pain, being all the time extremely ill. We returned to Devizes to tea, after taking which we were to go home to Widdington. Just as we were about to start, Mr. Halcombe took me aside with his son into the next room, and holding out a canvass bag, he said, "here, my son, is all that I can afford to give you with my daughter. In this bag is a thousand pounds. I wish it were ten times as much; but, such as it is, may God grant you to enjoy it! I have no doubt but it will wear well, as it was got honestly."

This again was more than I expected, as the only time I had ever permitted him to speak about money, the old gentlemen hinted at no more than five hundred pounds; but I believe my father had said something which made him double the sum. I thanked him most heartily; not forgetting to add, that his daughter was the prize at which I had aimed, and not the money. He replied, that he should give his other daughter the same, without trenching upon what he meant to give his sons. In fact, he had at this time provided for them. However, before we parted, one of his sons, William, who was then the manager of the Bear, called me on one side, and said, that as his brother James was just going into business, if I had no particular use for the money, he should be obliged if I would lend him 500_1_. of it, upon their joint notes. I instantly complied, told out half my wife's portion, and lent it to her brother, upon his word to give me a note for it, which he did the first time that I saw him afterwards. I believe, if they had asked me for the whole thousand, I should cheerfully

have parted with it to them. The five hundred pounds remained in their hands for nearly ten years, and was not withdrawn by me till several years after my separation from my wife. I mention this circumstance merely to shew how these gentlemen felt as to my separation from their sister. In fact they as well as myself considered it to be a misfortune which ought to be lamented on all sides, rather than as a reason for entertaining any vindictive feeling towards me.

We now set off in a coach towards our future residence, Widdington Farm, a distance of ten miles. The company consisted of myself, the bride, her sister and mine, who were the two bride maids, and the clergyman. I had, by this time, completely recovered from the effect of my cold; but, what was rather remarkable, before we had accomplished half our journey, we discovered that the bride had suddenly lost her voice, without feeling any pain or illness. So completely had she lost it, that she could not articulate a single syllable, otherwise than in a whisper. I was very much alarmed at first, but as she assured us it was only a cold, and that she felt not the least pain or uneasiness whatever; and as, with perfect good humour, she congratulated me on being about to take to my home "a quiet wife," the alarm gradually passed off.

Widdington Farm lies about a mile from the turnpike road, and when the carriage turned out of the high road I was obliged, as it was dark, to get on the coach box to direct the post boys; and, after considerable difficulty, we reached the house; it being a road over which a chaise probably had not passed since my father left the farm, twenty years before this period. Although every thing was prepared comfortably for our reception, yet a lone farm, in a valley upon the downs, which compose Salisbury Plain, and not a house within a mile, was quite a different thing from the cheerful scenes to which Mrs. Hunt and her sister had been accustomed. A deep silence reigned around; not a tree nor even a bush was to be seen; and, since we left the turnpike road, the carriage having passed over the turf for nearly the last mile, the well-known sound of wheels rattling over the stones had never once vibrated upon the ears of those who were so much accustomed to it; altogether, it was so very different from every thing to which the ladies had ever before been habituated, that, even after I had introduced them into the parlour, which was well lighted up, and where the hospitable board seemed almost to invite their welcome, yet I could see that Miss Halcombe looked at her sister almost in a state of despondency, as much as to say, "God of Heaven! what enchanted castle are we come to at last?" However, when we were once seated round the table, with the door closed, the solitary gloom speedily vanished, for we soon made it appear that there was as much cheerfulness to be obtained in a lone farm house as there was in one of the most public and best frequented inns upon the Bath road. Miss Halcombe, as a matter of delicacy, had always declined to see this residence before she was married, notwithstanding I had repeatedly pressed her to ride over and give orders about the arrangement of the house, and other domestic affairs. During the first fortnight that we were married, my wife never spoke one word louder than a whisper. At the end of that time her voice returned, to the great joy of myself and all her friends. The honeymoon passed with uninterrupted felicity; in fact it was a honeymoon all the year round, and we were blessed with an endearing pledge

of our loves before the honeymoon appeared even in its wane. Nearly a year had now gone by in one unbroken scene of pleasure and gay delight. My wife was of a cheerful disposition, and fond of company, in which I most cordially participated, and consequently we were seldom without plenty of visitors. As soon as we were married I purchased two more horses and a gig; thus my establishment at once consisted of three horses and a gig, and when to these are added grey-hounds and pointers, &c. &c. the reader will perceive that I cut a dashing figure, whether at home, at the table, in the field, or on the road. I drove two thorough-bred mares in a tandem, with which I could and did accomplish, in a trot, fourteen miles within the hour; I was almost always the first in the chase, having become a subscriber to a pack of hounds; and my pointers were as well bred, and as well broken, as any sportsman's in the county.

I was now become that of which my father had always entertained the greatest dread; namely, a complete sportsman. Frequently when he called, I was from home, either hunting, shooting, or partaking of the social society which is the concomitant of those who delight in the sports of the field. He would ride round my farm, but there all was in the most regular order, and he could find no other fault with any thing he saw going on there than the absence of the master. Yet he was uneasy; for he well knew that the profits of Widdington Farm would not support such extravagance and revelry as he was pleased to call it. The stock, it is true, was in good order, and the crops were well cultivated, and thriving; never better. Still he was not ignorant of the expense attending a house always thronged with visitors, a stable and kennel full of horses and dogs, and the master entering with ardour into the sports of the field. He remonstrated; but I was young, thoughtless and giddy; my wife was the same. Rent-day came. Three hundred pounds was due to Mr. Wyndham for rent; my father knew I was not prepared; he was certain, from the manner in which I had lived, that^[18] I could not have saved any money. Without saying one word to me on the subject, he paid the rent himself. But he did not fail again to urge the strongest remonstrances. No farm in the county was in better condition, or better looked after; the times were good; and if the farm had been my own, I could just have managed to live in a very respectable way; for no man knew better how to make the most of every thing, and very few put it into practice more rigidly than I did; yet, on the other hand, I could very well manage to spend all the gains whatever they were, and as my father paid the rent, as well as stocked the farm, it was quite as good as if it were my own. My father, however, threatened me, and remonstrated with my wife, on our keeping so much company, and being guilty of such extravagance. But she could not be induced to think that we did any thing in a more extravagant way than we were bred up to, which was very true; and, as I was full as prone to the enjoyment of society as she was, we seldom refused an invitation, and never failed to return it.

Christmas arrived, and with it, of course, the social merry-making that at this time was kept up with the greatest spirit in this part of the country; where every one gave a Christmas feast, which was attended by all the neighbours for several miles round. We were invited to the first. Some difficulty presented itself with respect to Mrs. Hunt's accepting the invitation, as our daughter was only two months old; but this impediment was soon removed. The little child was in excellent health, and the nurse,

it was thought, would take great care of it in the mother's absence. This was settled as much to my satisfaction as to that of my wife: for I enjoyed little pleasure unless she was with me to partake of it.

When the day came, we mounted our horses and she being an excellent horsewoman, we galloped off to meet our friends at a distance of four miles, and we reached the place without the slightest accident, though it was one of the most severe frosts I was ever out in. About three o'clock the next morning we returned in the same way. I shall never forget the look of my father, when he saw her come into the room, and involuntarily exclaimed "for God's sake, Mrs. Hunt, where is your child?" She answered it was at home. He turned his eyes up and said no more; but I felt this as a most severe rebuke, and for the first time I began to think that a mother leaving her child was not quite so proper. He soon took an opportunity to speak to me aside, and having asked me whether I was mad, to bring my wife away from a young sucking child in such weather, he added, "you acted very prudently and firmly, I understand, when, your child was born, as to her suckling it, but now you are going to destroy the child by suffering the mother to remain from it twelve or fourteen hours at a time." I listened, indeed, to this wholesome advice; but, in the thoughtlessness of my heart, unfortunately, I passed it off without paying it that attention, to which, coming from one with such experience as my father had, it was so well entitled.

What my father alluded to, about my firm conduct when my child was born, was this. My mother having always nursed her own children, I was bred up with the notion that it ought to be so, and I still entertained the greatest antipathy to my offspring sucking any other woman but its mother.[19] My father had, on his side, already guarded me against all the arts and tricks played off by gossips, upon such an occasion. Upon this subject, therefore, I had always expressed a strong and decided feeling to my wife, in which she appeared to participate.

When the child was born, the mother was attended by the mother-in-law, and two or three matrons, besides the midwife, &c. &c. They all knew my determination about the mother nursing the child, and every attempt was apparently made to carry it into effect. At length a hint was given of some fears as to its practicability. I would not listen to it[20] for a moment. Another hint was given, and then a broader and a broader hint; but I still made light of it, and said we would persevere. On consulting with my wife I found there was no natural impediment, and that she was well disposed to exert herself, to comply with my wishes; but I found that the gossips, and particularly the mother-in-law, had been labouring to impress on her mind, not only that there was a difficulty, but that there was an inconvenience, and even impropriety. I was not to be deterred from my purpose, and did every thing in my power to persuade her to persevere. I saw that the child enjoyed the breast very much, and that it did not give the mother so much pain as I had apprehended; and my mind was, therefore, more resolved than ever to carry this point; although I had never before had to contend with such powerful antagonists as the gossips, who affected to treat my knowledge upon such matters with ridicule, and my interference in them as preposterous and indecent. I ways, however, twattle proof; I heard all they had to say, but I stuck to my point like a hero; and I took

care not to leave the house long at a time, for fear some scheme to thwart my views should be put in execution.

At the end of two days, in the evening after supper, the grand attack was made, by three matrons and the nurse, with the Dr. or mid-wife, whom they appeared to have enlisted into the service; though as he was a reasonable, intelligent man, I was not in the least afraid of his hostility, and particularly as I had previously consulted him upon the subject, and found that I was perfectly correct as to there being no natural impediment in the mother. While the Dr. was taking his grog with me, they all, according to their previously settled scheme, came down stairs in a body, and all burst upon me at once; loudly declaring, that they would not force the poor weak mother any longer to destroy herself by such a course, that the child must certainly die, that it was starved already, and that, unless I would suffer them to send for a wet nurse in the morning they would leave the house, and I might stay and kill the child myself, for that they would not remain to be witnesses of the murder.

I saw through the premeditated assault, and was immoveably silent. One said that it was cruel; another said that it was indecent; a third that it was hard-hearted; and a fourth that I did not deserve such a wife or such a child, for I wished to kill the one and break the heart of the other.

Had I not been cautioned by my excellent father, who, even to the very letter of this attack, had told me what was likely to happen, I should never have been able to withstand the treble-toned battery of their tongues. The doctor, meanwhile, said not a word, unless it was in reply to a question put by some one of the ladies, and then he took care to answer in a very equivocal manner, for he saw my usual determination settled upon my brow. I told them at last; that if they would remain below, I would go up and consult my wife; I found her bathed in tears; for they had not only prepared her for the occasion, but they had actually worked upon her fears for the safety of the child, so far as to persuade her that the child would be starved, and that she had not milk enough to keep it alive. I soothed her; I reasoned with her; for I dearly loved her. I assured her that the child was in the most perfect health, as was evident from its having never cried a minute since it was born; which was now nearly three days; that it was contented, and I was sure it would do well; and that she herself would ultimately thank me for persevering against the will of the gossips. Her tears were soon dried up, and the pretty babe being again placed by her side with my own hands, she was quite convinced that it was neither necessary nor prudent to give way always, even to gossips.

Having left the child comfortably asleep, and the mother happy, her fears being now dissipated, I returned down stairs to the enraged matrons. I found them all on the tip-toe of expectation, to hear what I had to say, I told them that I had no doubt but the mother and child would do very well, if they would leave her alone; but this enraged them more than ever. They insisted that the mother should at least have the help of a wet-nurse. "Well," said I, very calmly, but very determinedly, "if it must be so, it must. If you are of the same mind to-morrow, and the doctor confirms your opinion, that the child requires more milk, I will kill the puppies, and it shall suck my beautiful setter _Juno_, with all my heart; but, by G--d!

it shall never taste the milk of another woman, while its mother is alive, and as well able to nurse it as she now is."

I said this in such a tone, and with such a manner, as would not admit of any further reply, and the gossips all marched off to bed, abusing me for a great brute; but, as they afterwards told me, applauding me for displaying so much resolution, in spite of their cabal and plot against me being frustrated. When they were gone, the doctor, Robert Clare of Devizes, most heartily congratulated me upon my success; adding, that he never saw such a complete victory gained against such fearful odds, since he had been in the practice; which was upwards of twenty years. I have related this circumstance as a matter of duty, for the information and guidance of all young persons, who may be placed in a similar situation, and who may not have had the advantage of such good and able advice, as that which was given me by my excellent father, rather than as boasting of any merit of my own. Never was a child born that was nursed better, and thousands of blessings did the mother afterwards bestow upon me, for my perseverance, by which she was enabled to enjoy the most delightful of all sensations, that of nursing her own offspring.

Let us now return to my story. The very first time that this child ever had a moment's illness was the day after my wife returned from the first Christmas party. This illness was very severe, and it caused great restlessness; the infant was, indeed, so unwell, that Mrs. Hunt sent an excuse to the party the next day by me, she being determined to stay at home and take care of her child, in which resolution I concurred. Still I had no idea that the dear little thing would not do very well again, though I was now convinced of the propriety of my father's rebuke, and had not the least doubt in my own mind that the illness was occasioned by the mother's long absence from her child. I went to the dinner, and my father was the first to applaud Mrs. Hunt's prudence in remaining at home; although, when he heard of the illness of the child, he observed, "The experience that is bought is the best, so that it is not purchased too dear."

About eleven o'clock at night a message was brought me by a servant, to say that my child was very ill, and to beg that I would immediately return home. I mounted my horse, and reached my house half an hour before the servant, who was upon another horse. When I entered the room--Oh God! the child was lying dead in its mother's lap, and that mother was sitting speechless, with her eyes riveted upon her lifeless offspring.--I instantly caused the little delicate corpse to be removed. It had a smile upon its lip, and looked as transparent as alabaster; for it had died without a groan or a struggle. My wife sat petrified; she had never moved nor spoken since the infant had breathed its last, which was nearly an hour. The servants were fearful even to touch her or the child; she still sat motionless with her eyes fixed upon her lap, the spot whence her child had been removed, and where she had seen it breathe its last. She took not the least notice of me, neither did she oppose the removal of the child. Her look was vacant and heart-rending. I tried in vain every means to rouse her; at length I carried her to her room, and having bathed her feet in warm water, I was ultimately blessed by witnessing the return of her reason, which was accompanied by a copious flow of tears.

During the round of gaiety and pleasure which I had enjoyed since I was married, this was the first check that I had received; but young, thoughtless, and giddy, as we were, it was a most severe one, both to myself and my wife. Nor was it merely the loss of our offspring that occasioned the sorrow of my wife. Her grief was rendered infinitely more poignant by the circumstance of the deceased infant never having been baptised. The babe had, in fact, been so healthy, so perfectly free from the slightest appearance of disease, that we had never thought of sending for the clergyman of the parish to have the ceremony performed; particularly as we intended to have it christened so soon as the nineteenth of January, which was the first anniversary of our wedding day. The delay will, I am sure, be thought the more excusable, even by the most scrupulously religious persons, when I inform them, that the clergyman lived at Milton, a distance of eight miles, that he seldom came into the parish except on a Sunday, and that even then his visit was generally a flying visit, as he had two or three churches to serve on that day. He was besides an excellent sportsman, and consequently it would have been considered by me at any rate, if not by him, as a sort of crime to have broken in upon a week-day for any such purpose. But I now sincerely repented of my folly and thoughtlessness, for my wife was inconsolable. She was bred up strictly to attend to all the forms as well as the duties of religion, and she, therefore, accused herself of a heinous crime, even that of having sacrificed the soul of her infant; and then the very thoughts of having the little corpse committed to its dreary dwelling without the rites and ceremony of a christian burial, was so dreadful to her that it almost made her frantic, and she would sometimes break out into the most piteous wailings, nearly bordering upon desperation. I was myself most wretched, not so much from the loss of our child, as from the sorrow and anguish of my wife, whom I most dearly loved; but I found it necessary to stifle my own feelings, and exert all my soothing aid and persuasive powers, to calm her agonized mind. At first I was but a poor comforter. I had never thought at all of these weighty matters, and therefore I felt myself very incompetent to reason upon them in such a way as was likely to convince and console her. I had been taught, by my excellent mother, to lisp the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, and the Catechism, before I at all knew the meaning of it, and almost before I could speak plainly; I had been bred up in the Christian faith, a strict church-goer, and, such was the force of custom, that perhaps I had not ten times in the course of my life closed my eyes, after retiring to rest, without repeating the Lords Prayer and Belief; though it is probable that during all that period I had not ten times seriously directed my thoughts to investigating and reasoning upon the true import and meaning of these prayers. Such is the strength of early habits and early imbibed notions, arising from the repetition of a certain number of words and sentences thrown together, and imprinted upon the young memory, before the mind is capable of appreciating the meaning or sense of them! I had also, soon after our marriage, received the sacrament with my wife, because I was told that to go through this ceremony was proper and necessary. I did this, as thousands and tens of thousands had, I believe, done before me, from a conviction that it was right, without ever having reasoned upon the matter. And now, for the first time, at the age of twenty three, in spite of myself, or rather in my own defence, I was compelled to think and to

reason also, that I might bring comfort to my almost heart-broken wife. I reasoned thus--can this be possible, that a little innocent creature, only two months old, totally incapable of having committed any offence against God or man, having, indeed, been incapable of acting or thinking at all, can the all-wise Creator have doomed such an unoffending being to eternal punishment, because its parents have neglected to have certain forms of prayer read by a clergyman, and because it has not had performed over it the ceremony of sprinkling its forehead with water? It was not necessary for me to question farther, for I at once pronounced it to be not only preposterous but impious to believe such a thing for a moment.

Having thus satisfied my own mind, I now set about the task of convincing my wife. I found her hanging over the corpse of our child, and bathing it with her tears. The first thing which I did was to lead her from the endearing object of her inexpressible woe. I then not only used the foregoing argument, but many others of the same reasonable and natural tendency. She was, however, not easily to be brought over to my opinion, and besides, in spite of all I could say to remove the impression, she blamed herself for having left the infant at such a tender age. I also felt that in this respect I was not less censurable than she was; and I endeavoured to take all this blame upon myself, by persuading her that she would not have gone, had she not been desirous of obliging _me_. In striving to tranquillize her, I had a most arduous duty to perform, yet, painful as it was, it was at the same time the most delightful occupation that can be imagined. To console, to comfort, to cheer the drooping spirits, to heal the wounded sorrowing heart, to remove the dark and gloomy doubts, and at length to inspire and provoke a smile upon the quivering lip of her I fondly loved, was to me an entirely new scene. I could now fully comprehend the poetical expression of "the joy of grief," for this was the most extatic joy, it was a hitherto untasted pleasure, and although it was of a more sober nature than any of those pleasures in which I had till then participated, yet it made a deeper and more lasting impression than any of them had made. So strong was it, that the very recollection of what I then felt, on the first dawn of my wife's return to something like her usual serenity and cheerfulness, gives me a pleasure, even while I am locked up in my solitary dungeon, that I believe it is not the common lot of man to enjoy. Those who really know what bliss it is to communicate as well as receive true pleasure will never voluntarily inflict pain. I think I hear some of my more sceptical or prejudiced readers ask, could these be really the feelings of this man? Is this the man who only two short months before proposed to suckle his child with his mother's milk? Yes, I answer, the very same man; nor, in fact, is there, to the eye of reason, any thing contradictory in his conduct on the two occasions.

Let me now revert to my narrative. Though partly won over by the reasons which I had advanced, my wife, nevertheless, was anxious to have some confirmation of them from one of greater knowledge in such matters, and she accordingly hinted a wish to converse with the clergyman. I told her I had not the least objection if she desired it; but at the same time I could not help enquiring, what consolation she could expect to derive from one of those whom she had frequently seen inebriated at my table, and some of whom, when they were in that state, had incautiously expressed their

opinions upon such matters with so much levity as to disgust her as well as myself. This was too true, but yet the sanction of a clergyman carried great weight; custom, early-initiated custom, still proved predominant; and as I saw she had set her mind upon seeing a clergyman, before she parted with the little corpse, I did not think it either kind or prudent to throw any impediment in the way.

For three days I had scarcely left her during a single moment, and, very fortunately, as we lived in the country, we were not pestered with any formal, and worse than officious, calls of condolence. I now took my horse and rode to a friend, a neighbouring clergyman, and invited him to dine and take a bottle with me. He pleaded a previous engagement; but when I told him the object of my visit, after having, with a most enquiring eye, looked me full in the face for half a minute, to discover whether I was quizzing him or not, he burst forth with an exclamation, and then into a laugh, almost hysterical: which, having enjoyed for some time, without any interruption from me, he said, "Why really, my good fellow, I hope you have too much sense to listen seriously to the trash that is preached up upon such occasions!" I replied that he might make himself easy not only about me, but almost so with respect to Mrs. Hunt, as I had nearly argued her out of all the ridiculous notions that she had imbibed; but that yet, notwithstanding this, I should be obliged to him, as he was one of the elect, who had been inspired to take holy orders by "the Holy Ghost," if he would ride with me and confirm the good work which I had begun. To this he agreed, on condition that I would first go with him to course a brace of hares, of which he had just been informed by a shepherd. This offer I readily accepted, and we returned to dinner together to my house. Unfortunately, the parson took nearly a bottle of wine before he made up his mind to say any thing to Mrs. Hunt upon the subject for which he had been invited; and as a bottle always set his head a "wool-gathering," he made one of the most ridiculous exhibitions that can possibly be imagined. Between his desire to make Mrs. Hunt believe that he was a learned and pious divine, and at the same time his equal desire to impress upon my mind that he did not believe a word that he was preaching to her, he got into such a mess, that it was with no small trouble I was enabled to help him at all out of it; and at last the tea coming in, put an end to one of the most ludicrous scenes that ever was witnessed. It happened, very luckily, that Mrs. Hunt was a woman of good sterling sense, and a firm mind, accompanied by a very quick penetration, or he would, in his bungling desire to remove, have at least revived, if he had not confirmed, all her former doubts and scruples.

On the following evening, with considerable difficulty, I prevailed on the mother, to suffer the clerk of the parish to convey the mortal remains of the little infant in a neat coffin, and deposit it in the church-yard.

Instead of partaking in any of the long round of Christmas merry-makings which we had so unpropitiously commenced, we now spent our evenings at home; truly enjoying the greatest of earthly blessings, domestic felicity. How it is possible for those who have once tasted this, the sweetest of all human delights, how it is possible for any rational mind afterwards to submit to be whirled round in the vortex of dissipation, to tolerate, to endure, the empty, vain, comfortless, nothingness of fashionable

amusements, now appears to me to be almost inexplicable. The real felicity imparted and received in a happy domestic circle, in one evening, far, very far surpasses all the pleasures derived from the gaze and throng of crowded routs and fashionable parties in a whole year. And yet it is not practicable to convince young minds of this; perhaps it would be improper to attempt it. May we not believe that few persons, if any, can enjoy domestic bliss to its fullest extent, unless they have previously experienced all the wearisomeness, all the unmeaning bustle of the crowded, fashionable, common-place society of routs and balls? Happy, however, are they, if such there be, who have minds so constituted as to enjoy the one, without having been exposed to the previous probation of the other.

The usual serenity and cheerful disposition of my wife soon returned. She was young, blooming, fair and sprightly; and whatever pleasure I had in view, I never half enjoyed it unless she were a partaker of it. I have always been one of those mortals who think that women were formed to participate in all our rational pleasures and amusements; and therefore, with the exception of hunting, I seldom formed any scheme of pleasure where my wife could not make one of the party. Young, gay and thoughtless, as I was, and prone to enter into all the scenes of hospitable and cheerful society, (one fault of which I admit, at that period, consisted in general of much too free an indulgence of the bottle after dinner) yet, however unfashionable it might have appeared, I never admitted any such visitors at my table as rendered it necessary for females to leave the room almost as soon as the cloth was removed. No language or conversation was ever tolerated at my board, to which the most chaste female ear might not listen without a blush. In fact, no man was ever permitted to enter my door a second time who once dared to utter an indelicate double entendre in the presence of a female; even if that female were only a servant. It was, therefore, always the practice at my table for females to stay as long as they found it pleasant, without being liable to a disgusting hint to depart, in order that the men who remained might have an opportunity of disgracing themselves by obscene and loathsome conversation. What a disgrace this to the national character! what a blot upon the very name of polished society! what an everlasting stigma upon British hospitality! what an indelible stain upon English manners! I always found that young men who had been bred at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were the most difficult to keep within the bounds of decorum. The life which these men lead at college is so dissolute that few of them ever know how to relish the sweets of domestic virtuous society. This is the greatest drawback upon the religion of the country, and I blush for the name of religion while I relate it. I have, in one hour, heard more blasphemy and more lewd language at the table of one of these clergymen of the established church, than ever polluted the walls of my house in all my life. I have heard more obscenity flow from the lips of one of these hoary-headed dignified pastors of the church of England, aye, one who resides in this county too, than I ever heard come from the lips of all the reformers I was ever acquainted with in my life. I can point out half a score clergymen of this county, some of them magistrates, who are in this respect a disgrace to human nature, whose debaucheries would fill a volume, and whose daily conversation over their bottles, after they have driven their wives and families from their tables, is so degrading, and

consists of such obscenities, that it would even be scouted at the table of the bribed, queen-slandering Italian witnesses in Cotton Garden. Yet some of these canting hypocrites, I understand, now begin to prate about morality! But I ought, and I do apologize to the reader for this digression, which I was led into by the circumstance of a gentleman, who dined with me yesterday, having given me a description of one of these monstrosities, who does not live a hundred miles from this place. More, however, of this hereafter. Should it please Providence to guard me from poison and the poniard, I will plainly shew who are the violators of all morality, who are the blasphemers not only of God, but of Nature also.

My wife, as I have already said, soon recovered her wonted cheerfulness, which was in no small degree gratifying to me; and as there was also a prospect of our being blessed with another increase of our family, the loss of our first child ceased to weigh so heavily upon our spirits. My father could not refrain from expressing his satisfaction at the salutary improvement in our manner of living. We kept less expensive company, and, as he said, we appeared to live more for ourselves. Although he admitted the loss which we had sustained to be a severe one, yet, as it had operated as a check upon our giddy and extravagant mode of living, he confessed that he did not so much regret it, especially as he saw there was no great danger of the name becoming extinct.--He now often paid us a visit, and I began not merely to look upon him as a father, but likewise to enjoy his society, as one of my most valued companions and confidential friends. At my house he was always a welcome guest, and we were always received with the greatest kindness at his. I was now beginning to experience what it is to enjoy true and substantial domestic comfort, and I promised myself the greatest pleasure, as well as the greatest advantage, from this friendly intercourse with my intelligent and much-valued parent. Among other things on which he kindly admonished me, he once more pointed out to me the folly as well as the unprofitableness and ingloriousness of remaining in the yeomanry cavalry, which he strongly advised me to quit, while I could do so with credit to myself--"for," said he, "I cannot be insensible to your situation; I view with a considerable degree of alarm your sanguine disposition; and I fear that your enthusiasm will some day lead you into some serious scrape with the selfish and unpatriotic officers under whose command you have placed yourself. I know that you entertain a proper feeling upon the subject; that you are actuated by the most laudable and disinterested motive, to serve your country; but, when I reflect upon the sinister views of those who are your commanders, I dread some disagreement with your officers, that may prove very unpleasant, and then you may not be able to get rid of your engagements, without their endeavouring to fix a stigma upon you, in some way or other. I see that, already, they are all jealous of your independent spirit. Most of your comrades are the dependants and mere vassals of their officers; you are almost the only one amongst them that can say you are free from any obligation to any of them. The officers dread your spirit, and the privates envy your independence; they are most of them actuated by selfish views, while you, on the contrary, are glowing with the amor patriae, and think of nothing but how you can best serve your country. Such opposite qualities will never amalgamate together, and you may rely upon it that there is great danger in your situation." I listened more attentively to my father's reasoning than I had heretofore done,

because his predictions had proved so true that I was convinced of the correctness of his judgment, and that his superior knowledge of mankind had taught him how to estimate the views and objects of these men much better than I could. But yet I could not bear the thought of leaving the yeomanry at a time when an invasion was threatened by the French, and I therefore determined not to quit the troop till the return of peace.

During the first year of my marriage I had attended very little to the great political events which had occurred, on the continent as well as at home, but I shall slightly touch upon them here for the information of the reader.--On the 7th of Jan. 1796, the Princess Charlotte of Wales was born. Alas! poor unhappy, ill-fated, cruelly-treated princess! On the 7th of February the notorious Daniel Stewart circulated in London, for stock-swindling purposes, a forged French newspaper called l'Eclair. For this fraud he was tried and convicted in a penalty of 100_l_. on the third of July. In this year Bonaparte gained the most signal victories over Wurmser and other Austrian, Piedmontese, and Italian Commanders, and at the battles of Lodi, Castiglione, Rivoli, &c. established his character as a brave and consummate general. Spain had already, towards the end of 1795, concluded not merely a peace with France, but also entered with her into a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, which was this year followed up by her declaring war against Great Britain. In Germany, a suspension of arms was concluded between France, Bavaria, Wirtemburgh, and Baden; and Saxony and Hesse agreed to a neutrality, while in Italy peace was made by Parma, Sardinia, and Naples. Bonaparte and the republican troops under his command took not less than sixty thousand prisoners in the course of this campaign, and repeatedly drove before them all the enemies of their country. Pitt was intriguing with the Court of Russia, but the Empress Catherine being a decided enemy to him, she died suddenly, and her son PAUL, who was more friendly to his views, ascended the throne. Pitt seemed determined at all hazards not to make peace on any terms; but his cunning friend Wilberforce, and his partizans, being alarmed at the continuance of the war, the minister was obliged to please them, and delude the people. For the purpose of temporising therefore, he sent Lord Malmsbury to France, under the hollow pretence of making peace, when at the same time he had orders not to accept of any terms. But the French being aware of the true nature of his errand received him coolly, and after a stay of eight weeks he was sent packing with a "flea in his ear."

The parliament having been dissolved, the new parliament met on the 9th of October. A fresh cry of invasion was now raised, and Pitt brought forward his plan of defence. These preparations caused great alarm throughout the country, and a great bustle amongst the various corps of yeomanry. Bread had sold at a moderate rate all the year; the average price being eightpence halfpenny the quarter loaf. The loan, which was called the loyalty loan, was eighteen millions, and the amount was subscribed in fifteen hours. General Washington this year resigned the presidency of America, and retired into private life, amidst the blessings of his countrymen; a pure and spotless patriot; a friend to the liberty of mankind; and the brave assertor of those of his fellow countrymen. Thus ended the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety six.

The next year another attempt was made to negotiate a peace with the

French, but as the minister, Pitt, was not sincere, Lord Malmsbury having been sent to Lisle to treat, the French Directory soon discovered that the measure was only a cheat intended to keep down the dissatisfaction at home. The negotiation was therefore soon broken off, like the last. Ireland was in a very disturbed state, bordering upon rebellion. In the early part of this year many provincial banks stopped payment, in consequence of a demand on them for gold, and, to complete the climax of this country's degradation and disgrace, an act of national bankruptcy was declared on the twenty-seventh day of February; an order in council being issued on that day, by virtue of which the Bank of England stopped payment in cash. From that fatal hour, swindling, the most barefaced swindling, has become legalized! On the eleventh of March, the King, for the first time, refused to receive the petition of the Common Hall of the City of London upon the Throne; those who took the lead in the liveries at that time, basely surrendering the right of their fellow-citizens without a struggle; and from that hour their boasted privileges were lost, and they have ever since been degraded to the level of any common assembly. As they have never made an effort to recover this their natural right of presenting their petitions or addresses to the king upon the throne, it must be owned that they have richly merited all the taunts and sneers of the ministerial press, which have been invariably levelled at them since that period. To add to the wretched state of the country, a mutiny broke out amongst the seamen at Spithead, and then at the Nore, the latter of which proved most formidable, and some blood was shed; but at length, through the means of promises and bribes, the mutineers were induced to compromise for some additional pay.

The alarm of invasion having been renewed with redoubled zeal, the officers commanding yeomanry corps received letters or circulars from the Lord-Lieutenants of counties to enquire if, in case of the enemy landing, they would volunteer their services to the full extent of their respective military districts. Our district was Wilts, Hants, and Dorset. The day was appointed for the Everly troop to assemble, and to give their answer to this application. In the meanwhile, the officers were very busy amongst the men, particularly _Cornet Dyke_, who was our most active officer. My father informed me of this; and he at once declared that they, the brave Everly troop, would, now they were put to the test, refuse to go out of their county. I, however, stoutly maintained, that although the officers might be so disposed, it was impossible that the men in a body could prove themselves such despicable cowards; as, if they did refuse to extend their services, they would ever afterwards be ashamed to look each other in the face. My father's reply was, "mark my words. Shameful and disgraceful as it will be, yet I have heard quite sufficient to convince me that a great majority of them have been _spoken to_, and that they have made up their minds to refuse to comply with the request of the government; and now, young man, as I before told you, disgrace will be the lot of the Everly Troop. I know the officers too well to be deceived, and I should have thought that the specimen you had of their VALOUR, in the Salisbury affair, would have completely opened your eyes, unless, indeed, you are intentionally blind." I told him that I hoped they had been so gibed and scouted, in consequence of their behaviour upon that occasion, that they would be ashamed now to give an open refusal to stand forward, when they were called upon in such a public manner. "Why," said he, "one would think

it is almost impossible; but I know my men so well, that I entertain not the least doubt upon the subject; and therefore you must get out of it as well as you can; but let me give you one word of advice." I, however, began to be impatient of advice upon such a point; for, while we had been in conversation, I had, as was usual with me, made up my mind how to act, and I at once told my father that, in case they should refuse to go, I would resign, and enter instantly into some other troop, who had volunteered to extend their services. "Oh!" said my father, "what you are again ready to rush headlong into fresh difficulties! If they refuse to extend their services, it will, I own, be a very fair ground for your resignation, and then you may thank God you have had an opportunity of saving yourself from disgrace, for disgrace I was always convinced such playing at soldiers must come to at last, especially when I know what sort of officers are at your head. If you should resign, why not stay at home with your wife, and attend to your business? Depend upon it, this mode of acting will prove not only much more profitable to you, but much more honourable in the end. What can you expect if you go into another troop? Even though they have volunteered, yet you will find that ninety-nine out of a hundred of them have entered into the troop from some interested motive. Your disinterested patriotic intentions will consequently only raise you enemies in those who will not know how to appreciate your motives, and those who do comprehend those motives will only be jealous of you, because you out do them in devotion to the cause which you wish to promote. If you must be a soldier, give me up the farm, and I will buy you a commission in some regular regiment at once. You may thus chance to gain renown or an honourable death; but even there, never expect to obtain promotion, unless you can conquer your unbending spirit. Promotion is not gained by merit, but by parliamentary interest, and by servility to your superior officers. Take my advice, therefore, and if the Everly troop disgrace themselves, quit them, and think yourself well out of what I always thought was a scrape." This wise and salutary advice was not followed by me, though I could not but admit the propriety of it.

The field day arrived, and I was one of the first upon the ground, which was a beautiful sheepdrove upon the Downs, between Everly and Amesbury. I will call this my second campaign. As the several members of the corps arrived upon the ground, I eagerly accosted them, to know their determination; but most of them appeared shy, and gave evasive answers. I could, however, discover that some of them had got their cue; and these began boldly and manfully to inveigh against the want of good faith in the government, in thus striving to draw the troop into a snare. Some of them even swore that it was as bad as kidnapping; for that the terms upon which the troop had been raised were, that its services should not be required out of the county without the consent of the persons who composed it. "Aye," said I, "that is very true, and we are now, I understand, called together to be asked if we will consent, in case of an invasion, to go out of the county." My speech was broken short by some of them espying our gallant Cornet, moving majestically but slowly along, over the adjoining hill. As he approached us, he was saluted by each of the members in their turn; but, when he came up to me, I fixed my eye upon him with a scrutinizing glance, and so intent was I in endeavouring to trace if possible his thoughts, that I actually forgot to offer him the accustomed salutation, till he reminded me of my inattention, by saying, "good

morning, Mr. Hunt." I apologised for my absence of mind, but the fact was, that as I eyed our gallant commander, the _dressing-gown scene_ had involuntarily crept across my brain, and for the moment had so absorbed all my attention, that I was conscious of nothing but the ludicrous appearance of the mighty hero on the morn of the battle of Salisbury.

The bugle now sounded, to announce the approach of the gallant captain Astly, and the troop fell in and was passed through the various manoeuvres by the cornet. This being over, the cornet, after a short conference with the captain, formed us into a circle, within which, as far as I recollect, sat on their chargers, the captain, the cornet, and the Rev. Mr. Polhill, the chaplain to the troop, who held the principal farm at Everly, which he rented of our captain. Having read to us the copy of the Secretary of State's letter to Lord Pembroke, the lord-lieutenant of the county, which stated that an invasion was meditated by our implacable enemy the French, that the government anticipated almost daily an attempt to put it into execution, and that his lordship requested to know whether, in case an invasion actually occurred, the Everly troop would extend their services to the military district of Hants, Wilts and Dorset, the cornet addressed us in a long speech. In this speech the orator did not content himself with leaving the decision to our unbiassed judgments, nor even with hints of his dissatisfaction at the proposal; for he boldly expressed his decided hostility to the measure, and strongly reprobated the idea of farmers leaving their business by going out of the county. His very luminous harangue appeared wonderfully successful in convincing a great proportion of the troop that, by staying at home and looking after our farms, and protecting our own wheat ricks, we should not only be serving ourselves, but should also be supporting the government and opposing the invasion, much more effectually than we should be by marching forty or fifty miles to the coast, to meet the enemy. He proved to demonstration to his willing hearers, that it was our duty to stay at home, and consequently to send an answer to say that, as we had entered the troop for the purpose of keeping in order the turbulent in our own district, we did not feel ourselves justified in leaving the county under any circumstances. He, however concluded in a most heroical strain, by declaring that, in giving this advice to the troop, he was not actuated by any fear, (oh no!) of meeting the enemy; on the contrary, he lustily threatened that if ever they should dare to come into the county of Wilts, at least near Everly or Syrencot[12], they should receive an exemplary chastisement for their temerity, and all the world should know of what sort of men the Everly troop was composed.

I listened to this address with considerable impatience; for such was the effect of example, that I found several of those who, in the morning, had expressed their determination, at all hazards, to vote for going; now drew back; and when I looked at them during this speech I perceived that their eyes dropped down upon their holster pipes. As soon as the Cornet had concluded, I put spurs to my charger, and darted out of my place into the centre of the circle, where, having doffed my helmet, for the first time in my life I addressed myself publicly to a body of my fellow-countrymen. I began with these words: "Comrades, if not fellow-soldiers, at any rate fellow-men, fellow countrymen." I then implored them to reflect upon the consequences of sending such an answer as had been recommended by the

Cornet; and I warned them, that, if such an answer were sent, an eternal stigma would be fixed upon the character of the troop. Our conduct upon the Salisbury affair was, I told them, little known out of the county, and we had now an opportunity of wiping off the stain from our character; but if we publicly and deliberately refused to go out of our county to meet the enemy, in case of invasion, we should justly deserve to be branded as poltroons and cowards to the latest posterity. This language excited considerable signs of disapprobation, some few laid their hands upon their swords, and I recollect two of the troop, Gilbert and Workman, threatened aloud. I was, however, not to be deterred. I proceeded in my address to them, and explained the nature of the law in case of invasion; my father having taken down Blackstone's Commentaries, and read to me an extract respecting the *_posse comitatus_*. I pointed out to them, that the law compelled every man to bear arms against invaders, and that the Yeomanry Corps, who had been trained, would of course be among the first who would be compelled to act whether they would or not; and that consequently, if they did not feel a desire burning within their breasts either successfully to resist the invader, or fall gloriously in the attempt, if they did not possess any of the *_amor patriae_*, yet sound policy ought to induce them to offer voluntarily those services which the law had the power of enforcing against their will.

Although this was my first attempt to speak in public, yet, as my sentiments flowed from my heart, as they were the spontaneous effusions of an ardent spirit, burning with impatience to evince by deeds, as well as words, that I really loved my country, and was willing to lay down my life in its defence, and as I felt indignant at the attempt that had been made by the Cornet to seduce them, as I thought, from their duty, I did not want words to express myself, and I believe that it was quite as eloquent a maiden speech as is made by some Honourable Members in the Honourable House. At any rate it was prompted by a conviction of public duty, and I have never regretted it, though I believe that it made me some rancorous enemies, who have never lost an opportunity, from that day to this, of speaking ill of me behind my back, and doing me an ill turn when they had it in their power.

The Cornet scowled, and many of my comrades looked black, and muttered dissent; but no one seemed inclined to debate the question. At length, after having in vain waited a short time, to see if any one would come forward to second my proposition, our worthy Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Polhill, gracefully took off his hat, and stepped up between me and some of those who, unable to refute me, and dreading the result of my appeal, were almost disposed to draw their swords upon me for the lecture which I had given them. I shall never forget the venerable air of this truly pious man, who was upwards of seventy years of age. It commanded instant attention, and as he fixed his eye steadily upon me, the most solemn silence reigned around. All the angry passions that my speech had excited were now calmed into the most serious and silent attention, in the expectation that he was about to give me a severe reprimand for my intemperate, and, as some considered it, not only indiscreet but audacious speech. After some short pause he began. I was, at first, rather in doubt what course he meant to pursue, though, from his well known honourable and independent character, I was not in much dread. To the vexation and

astonishment of the troop, his first sentence was a warm eulogium upon what he was pleased to call my eloquent appeal to their feelings as men, and to their hearts as Englishmen; and this compliment to me he followed up with a strain of impassioned eloquence, enough to have made the veriest coward brave. He repeated all my arguments, but in a style of language far superior; and, while the tears flowed down his furrowed cheeks, he implored them to save their character from the disgrace which appeared to be hovering over them. He said, that however galling had been the words which had dropped from the lips of his young friend, yet, as he could not find any others that were more appropriate, he himself must repeat them; and must plainly tell them, that, if they returned such an answer as was recommended by the Cornet, they would deserve to be handed down to posterity as poltroons and cowards. He would, he said, go still further; they would not only deserve to be thus branded with infamy, but they would actually be so; and their pusillanimity would be a taint in the blood of their children's children. He begged, he prayed, he intreated, he implored that they would not disgrace the name of man by conduct at once so cowardly and so foolish. But he begged, prayed, intreated and implored in vain--his venerable character protected him from the boisterous disapprobation that they had shown towards me, but they heard him unmoved, or rather as hogs would have listened to the harmonious notes of Orpheus, with a _grunt_. Still persisting, however, in his efforts to wake a spark of courage in their cloddish bosoms, he declared that, when the day arrived that a foreign foe set foot upon British ground, if he could procure no other conveyance, he would crawl upon his hands and knees to the coast to meet them, and there, old and feeble as he was, he would make a bulwark of his shattered frame, to check in the first onset their daring attempt to destroy our rights and liberties. In fact, he did every thing that man could do, to persuade them to perform their duty, and to save their character from such foul irretrievable disgrace. It was, however, all in vain; for with the exception of myself and the venerable chaplain, they all held up their hands against going out of the county, and it was decided that they should send an answer to that effect to the Lord Lieutenant. I made one more effort, in a short but spirited appeal to their honour as men, to their character as Englishmen; but all remonstrance was thrown away. With one accord they stamped the degrading name of coward upon the colours of the Everly troop of Yeomanry, and I immediately handed over my sword and pistols, or rather indignantly threw them upon the ground, declaring that from that hour I no longer belonged to them, and adding that I would, the next morning, enroll my name in any corps which had extended its services to the military district, unless there was one that had volunteered for unlimited service, in which case I would enroll my name in that corps. I then shook hands with the worthy chaplain, who warmly applauded my conduct, saying that he never would attend them again upon any occasion, and that he would much rather have sacrificed his life than have lived to see so fine a body of his fellow-countrymen desert, at such a moment their duty to themselves and their country. I felt so ashamed of their conduct that I put spurs to my horse and galloped from the field in disgust, lest, by my remaining even for a short time, I should become contaminated by some portion of their vile spirit. Thus ended my military career in the Everly troop of Yeomanry, among the members of which were many private friends, for whom I entertained a very sincere regard, and who would never have disgraced

themselves in such a way had it not been for the unworthy recommendation and advice of their officers.

As my father's house lay in my way home, I called on him, to inform him of the result of the meeting. As I rode into the yard he met, me, and seeing I had left my sword behind, "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I see that it is just as I predicted." When I had related to him all that had passed, "Well!" said he, "this is really too bad to laugh at. The expedition against the old women at Salisbury was truly ludicrous; but this deliberate act of cowardice they never can get over; it must and will be blazoned throughout the whole country. You have done rightly, you had no choice; the man who after this decision remains a moment in that troop must expect to be laughed at and despised as long as he lives. But mark my words: prepare yourself for all sorts of ill nature and slander. They who have not had the spirit to follow your example will never forgive you, and to gloss over their own baseness, they will load you with all possible calumny, and will miss no opportunity to do you an injury. As by your resignation you have exposed Astley and Dyke to great odium, be careful how you get into their clutches, or they will squeeze you, rely upon it." I demanded how they could injure me? "Oh!" said my father, "you know but very little of mankind; they that seek an opportunity will seldom want an occasion to do a malicious act. You have been a great sporting crony of Astley's, and have frequently hunted with him; he keeps a pack of hounds, and has hunted over my property, and my farms, for many years, and we have sometimes, though sparingly, sported in return over his. Depend upon it, this will all be put a stop to now."

I replied that upon an average Astley had hunted ten times over my father's farms, where we had sported upon his estate once; that Mr. Astley's hounds met once a week all the season at Littlecot Furze, and that he could not start a hare upon his own estate, or any part of it, without a great chance of her running over some part of my father's property. "That is all very true," said my father, "but, if he cannot be revenged of you in any other way, he will give up his own hounds, in order that he may prevent you from coming over any part of his estate." I had often heard of a man cutting off his own nose to spite his neighbour, but I did not think that, in this instance, it was very likely to happen. "Trust me," said he, "within one month he will forbid you from going over his lands; therefore be on your guard; for be assured that I know the littleness of his soul better than you do, and he will spare no pains to be revenged upon you."

I dined with my father, and returned home in the evening, whither I found the news of the disgrace of the Everly troop had flown before me. My wife heartily approved of my conduct; for she came from the wrong stock to approve of any thing dishonourable. I was received with open arms, as I always had been; but if I had returned and told my wife that I was one of the number that had refused, in case of invasion, to go out of the county to oppose the enemy, I sincerely believe, that I should, for the first time, have met with a very different reception. At all events I should have deserved it.

On the following morning, before I was quite dressed, a messenger came

with a letter from Lord Bruce, the colonel of the regiment of Wiltshire yeomanry. I broke the seal and read a very flattering eulogium from his Lordship, on my gallant conduct in resigning my situation in the Everly troop, in consequence of the troop having, as his lordship expressed himself, disgraced itself in such a way as rendered it impossible for an honourable man to remain in it. After paying me many very high compliments, he solicited the honour of enrolling in his troop, (the Marlborough troop,) the name of a gentleman who had acted such a gallant part. After I had breakfasted, I sat down to write an answer; but before I had finished it, another messenger arrived, from an officer of the Devizes troop, to request that I would honour that corps with my name. As, however, Lord Bruce had applied first, and as in that troop I happened to have a particular friend, Mr. Thomas Hancock, the banker of Marlborough, I complied with his lordship's pressing invitation, and enrolled my name in the Marlborough troop the next day.

How true the prediction of my father was, will be seen hereafter, and it soon began to be verified. Before the week was out, I was honoured with a visit from old John Sainsbury, the Everly keeper, who served me with notices from Mr. Astley and all his vassals, not to trespass upon any part of his estates; or from henceforth I should be treated as a wilful trespasser. At the same time he informed me, that his master was grown exceedingly fond of seeing the hares very plenty upon his manors, and that he had _disposed of his hounds_. This was so precisely what my father had anticipated, that I almost began to think that he possessed some extraordinary means of becoming acquainted with the intentions of men, more than those furnished by common observation. I sent my compliments to the gallant Capt. and desired him to mark his hares, by burning them in the horns, and to teach his keepers to persuade them to stay at home; for if I caught any of them straying upon my father's property, I should certainly make them pay forfeit, and would, if I could, prevent a single one of them from returning to tell the fate of their companions. The reader will understand that the property at Everly belonging to Mr. Astley, joined my father's, without any other division than a mere furrow struck with the plough, between the arable lands; and that the division between the down lands consisted of old bound balls, which were merely small heaps of the sod thrown up together, perhaps some hundred years before; so that those who were not aware of this circumstance, might pass over the plain twenty times, without ever observing that there was any thing to mark the separation; so slight and imperceptible are the landmarks that divide all the estates that are situated upon Salisbury plain.

The first field day of the Marlborough troop came and I joined their ranks. I was fully equipped; the whole of the regiment being dressed in the same uniform as that which was worn by the Everly troop, no alteration was necessary; and as each person supplied himself, at his own expence, with uniform and accoutrements, the arms alone being given by the government, I required nothing but a sword and a brace of pistols, with which I was instantly provided. My new comrades had all volunteered to extend their services, which was my inducement for joining them; but they cut a very sorry figure in the field, both as to their accoutrements and regimentals, and they were not half so well mounted as my late comrades. I

could have selected half a score of horses out of the Everly troop that were worth the whole of those of the Marlborough; and as for their discipline, if they had been drilled every day for a year, they would not have been equal to the troop which I had left. Lord Bruce, the colonel, was a complete novice, and he suffered himself to be led by the nose by a serjeant of the 15th, of the name of Walker, who knew little more about the matter than himself. I, however, attended from day to day, without any one attempting to teach me any thing. There were certain fines levied for particular faults, in all these troops, such as for absence without sufficient cause, talking in the ranks, coming to the field too late, not being dressed in uniform, &c. &c.; but I was never reprimanded, fined, or sent to drill, while I was in the troop. We had a dinner at the Castle, at Marlborough, his Lordship in the chair; but as most of the troop were composed of his father's, Lord Aylesbury's tenants, and his dependants, and tradesmen, or belonged to the corporation of the rottenest of rotten boroughs, Marlborough and Great Bedwin, there were very few, except myself and my friends, Hancock and Hitchcock, who dared to say their souls were their own. His lordship was always very polite to me, but he did not appear to relish my delivering my sentiments, which I did with great freedom, upon these occasions. In the field, in the ranks, I knew how to conduct myself, and never failed to pay implicit attention to my duty, nor ever deviated from the strictest discipline; but, when I was at his lordship's table; or at a mess with the troop, I knew of no distinction; I never felt any other controul than that which was dictated by politeness and good manners. Perhaps, young as I was, I might have been thought to have delivered myself upon some occasions, and upon some subjects, with too much freedom; and being always bred up with the idea that nothing was so base and degrading as a slavish disposition, I might, in my endeavour to avoid this, have erred by falling too much into the opposite extreme; but the natural bent of my disposition always led me to avoid giving offence to any one intentionally. My maxim was, never to offer an insult to any one, and to be particularly careful not to say any thing to hurt the feelings of any person in an inferior station of life to my own; never to take umbrage lightly; but if anyone, be he who he might, gentle or simple, offered me a premeditated insult, always to resent it upon the spot, whatever might be the consequence of my so doing.

I now contracted a very intimate acquaintance with Mr. Thomas Hancock the Banker, and always made his house my home when I went to Marlborough, though my wife's elder brother kept the Castle Inn, where I was always welcome. This brother and myself were, however, never particularly intimate, for we were of very different dispositions. He had been, as I have often heard his father say, and himself acknowledge, a very wild, dissipated youth; but as the "wildest colts make the tamest horses," so had this gentleman put on a very sober sedate demeanour, while he was yet but a young man; and the loss of his wife, who left him with a large young family, increased rather than diminished the grave turn of his mind. His acquaintance lay mostly among the dependents and tenants of his landlord, Lord Aylesbury, and as his chief pursuit appeared to me to be directed towards amassing a fortune, and as our tastes were cast in a very different mould, our friendship, though we were upon very good terms, was not of the inseparable kind. He was very much respected among the persons whom I have before described, with whom he associated; and as he knew well

on which side his bread was buttered, he took good care to pay particular attention to the steward of Lord Aylesbury. Nor, as the "grey mare was always the better horse" in that family, did he forget to pay due court to the steward's lady, who, to my taste, was one of the most disgusting of disgusting women, both in person and manners. When he first lost his wife, who was a pretty, amiable, fascinating woman, he seemed as if he would sink under the loss, and we at one time feared that he would never recover from his dejected state. We were, however, agreeably disappointed, as we found that "time wore off the deepest afflictions;" but I own that I imbibed rather a prejudice against him, when I soon after discovered that he was upon the point of marrying another lady, a buxom widow, the very reverse sort of woman to his deceased wife. This lady was the widow of a grocer, who had left her some little property, and she was therefore too much of a lady to marry an Innkeeper, and she had sufficient influence over him to make him quit the Inn, and commence gentleman coach master before she gave him her hand.

One day, in the beginning of August in this year, just as I was preparing to commence harvest by wheat reaping, I received a message from my father, to say he wished to see me, as he was not well. I enquired of the servant whether my father was seriously indisposed, and I received for answer that he had kept his bed all day. At this season of the year, I had generally a horse standing saddled in the stable, and although my dinner was just going upon the table, I mounted, and having desired my family not to wait for me, I appeared at my father's bed-side, who lived at a distance of two miles from Widdington, in less time than that in which many persons who were called active would have put on their boots and changed their coat. I had always been bred up to act with decision, and make all my movements in quick time; and as the servant had also made no delay, my father expressed his surprise and pleasure at the rapidity with which I had attended to his wish. I found him flushed in the face, and with a strong quick pulse. He told me that he had had the misfortune to run a thorn in his leg as he was getting through a hedge the day before, that he had endeavoured in vain to extract it, that it had caused him considerable pain, and had brought on so much fever in the night as to produce delirium. He had had it fomented in the morning, and was in hopes that he was better, but now the inflammation was so much increased that he was fearful of another restless night. I begged to see his leg, and I found it to be so much inflamed, that I wished him immediately to send for the family surgeon, or some better advice. He answered that, if he were not better, he would in the morning. In the mean time, he requested me to look round his farms, and attend to his servants. I told him that I would most cheerfully do so, but that I must entreat him to let me send for some medical man. I had no opinion of our family surgeon, yet I thought, as he was a man of very extensive practice, that he would, at any rate, give my father something to abate the irritation and fever, without the possibility of doing harm. As my father would not consent to have any other person sent for, it was agreed that I should dispatch a messenger to Pewsey, a distance of five miles, while I rode round his farm, to see what the servants were doing.

As soon as I got down stairs I mounted my horse, and, not choosing to trust to the uncertainty of sending a servant, I galloped the five miles in about twenty minutes. The doctor was from home, but I soon traced him

out, and by intreaty I got him to make his old mare put her "best leg before," and he was in a very short time in my father's bed room. After having heard his statement, and examined his leg, he recommended bleeding, which was immediately performed. Young and inexperienced as I was, I suggested the propriety of some cooling cathartick; but our doctor said no; my father required sleep, he must take a little warm gruel, and he would send him some physick in the morning. As my father felt drowsy, he requested me to go home; and hoping that he should have a better night, he requested that I would look after his business next day, and that I would come and see him in the forenoon. He had a most excellent nurse in my eldest sister, who was his housekeeper; and I left him I own without any sanguine hopes of finding him much better in the morning, although I did not apprehend that any thing very serious was likely to arise from his accident.

When I got home, I told my wife that I was fearful my father was laid up for the harvest, and I must have her assistance more amongst my servants than I had before required of her, as I was convinced that I should have to attend to the whole of my father's large and extensive business as well as my own, and I must make my arrangements accordingly. Instead of waiting for the forenoon, I called upon my father before 4 o'clock the next morning. When I reached his house my sister was up; she had not been in bed since I saw her; my poor father's leg had been very painful all night, and his fever had again occasioned delirium. I found him in a burning fever, and his inflammation alarmingly increased in his leg: since I left him, he had not, he told me, slept a single moment. I at once proposed to have better advice, and urged the necessity of procuring that advice in time. But who should we get? I recommended my surgeon, Mr. Robert Clare of Devizes. My father had always professed an objection to him, because he said he was a drinking profligate character, but I pleaded that he was an intelligent surgeon, and I soon got over my father's scruples, which I had no sooner done than I was for effecting the object. Devizes was twelve miles distant, but with me the greater the distance the less delay was to be made. I therefore ordered a trustworthy servant to do his best to manage the business, and I was at Devizes and had called the doctor up and was at breakfast before the clock struck six. In ten minutes after that time our horses were at the door, and the proper medicines being prepared, I had them in my pocket and was mounted. Mr. Clare's foot was also in his stirrup, and, he was giving some directions to his assistant, when a man came galloping up to the door with one of his hands wrapped up in a handkerchief, streaming with blood. We enquired what was the matter, to which he replied that he was a birdkeeper, and that wishing to draw a charge of shot he had held the gun upside down, with the intent to shake the shot into his hand; but by some accident the gun had gone off, and the charge had passed through the middle of his hand. At this moment up came another man on horseback, to say that a neighbouring lady was taken in labour, and that the doctor or his assistant must come that moment, as "'twas missusses vust child, and mayster was vrightened out of his senses." Clare dispatched Duffet his assistant off to the good lady in the straw; and then said, "Harry, if you will get off your horse and assist me, we will manage matters for this poor fellow." "Ah," said the man, "_cut off my hand_ as quick as you can, sir, for I have left all the rooks eating my master's corn, and I long to get back again to send them about

their business." The doctor smiled as he unbound his hand, which was in a most shocking mangled state. Instead of proceeding to amputate the hand, the doctor, after having washed it in warm water, informed him that he would save his thumb and little finger, if he would stand steady while he took off the three middle fingers. "Very well, sir, if you please, but be sharp," was his reply.--I held his arm, and Mr. Clare, who was a skilful surgeon, in a very few minutes took out the three middle fingers nearly up to the wrist, and having bound up the wound and pressed the thumb and little finger nearly together, he desired the man to ride slowly home, and told him that he would see him again on his return from my father.

The doctor always rode excellent horses, and having mounted one of his very best, and the road lying over the Downs, we arrived at my father's house twenty minutes before eight o'clock. I had already ridden a distance of twenty-six miles. Mr. Clare having examined my father's leg, pronounced the case to be a serious one, and at once recommended that Mr. Grant, an eminent surgeon of Bath, should be called in, as well as Dr. Hill a physician, (for form's sake) from Devizes. He said to my father, whom he knew to be a man of an uncommonly firm mind, "I know you will not be alarmed, Sir, but we must have good advice and assistance, or your leg is in such a state that I fear amputation may be necessary. I have therefore desired your son to send or go for Mr. Grant, of Bath, to assist me, who is one of the most eminent men in the profession." My father firmly replied, "if you think, Sir, that it is absolutely necessary, never wait for Mr. Grant, but take off my leg at once."--"No, Sir," replied Clare, "I shall not advise that at present. I will do all that is necessary for you now; but let your son depart for Mr. Grant immediately. I know your son's expedition, and I know that he will be more likely to prevail upon Mr. Grant to come than any one we can send. In the mean time I will bring over Dr. Hill from Devizes, and see you in the afternoon."

This was so settled, and without delay I had changed my horse and galloped back to Devizes; with Mr. Clare, in my way to Bath. As we passed along he informed me, seriously, that my father was not merely in a dangerous state, but that he had not even the slightest hopes of his recovery. I was thunder-struck; I had hardly ever thought of such a thing. My father, at the age of 63, was one of the most healthy, vigorous, active men in the kingdom, and had scarcely ever had a day's serious illness in his life. To see him walk, ride, mount his horse, or in fact do any thing; he was so active, so alert, that his motions were more like a youth of eighteen or twenty than those of an old man; and to look upon him, no one would guess his age to be much above forty, though his hair had been as white as the driven snow for years. The truth was, that he had all his life been an active, temperate, prudent man, and at the age of sixty his constitution had never received a single shock. I have often heard him say, that he had never been ill since he had the small pox, which he caught in the natural way, when a boy at the age of eight years. In the drawing-room, he frequently shamed myself, as well as all the young men of the village; for he was the most polite and attentive man I ever saw. If a lady dropped her fan, her shawl, her handkerchief, nay even a pin, he was the first to spring to her aid and pick it up; and this he would do in less time than one of our modern yawning, lounging, dandies would take to drawl out "pray Maam shall I have the honour, &c." He would take a cheerful bottle, and

make one of the merriest of the gayest party, but never to excess; for he was arrived at that time of life that he knew how to enjoy every pleasure in moderation. He had acquired wealth sufficient for all his wants, and enough to assist a friend; and, where he had a confidence, he was unlimited in his generosity. If he saw a man persecuted unjustly, he was sure to become his friend. In one respect this had led him into a great error, he having advanced to a brewer of Bath as much as seven thousand pounds, without much better than personal security. He had the finest farms in that part of the county, and they were cultivated like gardens; no man was surrounded with brighter prospects, or was possessed of greater worldly blessings; and When Mr. Clare seriously told me that he had no hopes of his recovery, I was absolutely overpowered with astonishment and anguish, and was incapable of uttering a single sentence. "If," said he, "your father ever recovers it will be a miracle; it is too late to attempt amputation. If I had seen him yesterday, before he was bled, his life might have been saved; but my opinion is, that if the Pewsey doctor had taken a pistol and shot him through the head, he would not have been more instrumental to his death than he was at the moment when he took a pound of blood from him in the state in which his leg must have been last night. Between you and I, he is a murdered man, and I do not believe that all the surgeons on earth can save him without a miracle; but we must see what can be done. I know you will not be long riding the thirty miles, to Bath. When you return, call at my house, and leave word at what time Mr. Grant will come, and I will accompany him to Littlecot, either to-night or to-morrow morning. As you go through Devizes call likewise upon old Hill the physician, and make him ride over this afternoon. We must let him earn a guinea or two, as he wants it badly enough, and there is no chance of his doing any harm, for he will not venture to alter what I have ordered, unless I am present. As soon as Grant comes we will do our best; though I assure you I cannot give you any hopes."

As I had to ride a distance of sixty miles, I calculated the time I should be on the road, and as I was to go thither and back on the same horse, and it was very hot weather, I somewhat slackened my pace, that I might not knock up the poor animal. As I passed through Devizes, I left word for Dr. Hill to repair immediately to my father's; and without loosing one single moment for my own refreshment, I reached my friend's, at the brewery in Walcot Street, a few minutes before one o'clock, having come the thirty miles in some thing less than three hours. Two men were instantly set to clean and refresh my horse, to prepare him for my return, while I hastened to find Mr. Grant. He was visiting his patients, for he at that time had the best practice in Bath. Seeing my distress, his servant readily accompanied me to that part of the town where he was most likely to meet with his master; and we soon found the doctor, coming out of a gentleman's house in Brock Street.[21] Upon my accosting him with considerable earnestness and agitation, he invited me to return with him into the house, where I informed him of my earnest desire that he should proceed forthwith, in a chaise and four, to see, and if possible, save my father. To this pressing application he replied that, sorry as he was to be obliged to refuse, he must nevertheless do so, it being impracticable for him to leave Bath; but he added, that his old friend, Bob Clare, was as able a man, and as good a judge how to proceed in such a case, as himself or any surgeon or physician in England. I urged that it was Mr. Clare's

most particular wish that he should come; that Mr. Clare had not time to write, or he would have explained that it was a peculiar case. I then described it, together with the symptoms, as well as I could. He shook his head, and said at once, "I fear, if I could go, that I should be too late. That Pewsey doctor can kill much easier than I can cure. The taking of blood away at such a moment was most stupid, it was most damnable; he ought to have put blood into him, instead of taking it away. I fear, after that, there is no hopes. What says Bob Clare?" "I am sorry to say, sir, that you are too well agreed in your opinion; but for God's sake lose no time to fly and do your utmost to save the best of parents." He repeated that it was impossible; for that he had the most important engagements that evening, to break which would never be pardoned, either by his patients, or by the medical men who were coming over, one of them from Clifton, on purpose to meet him. He said, however, that he would recommend me to a friend, who would, perhaps, be able to attend me; and he assured me that he was a very clever man, quite as capable as himself in such an affair. No, this would not do for me; Mr. Clare wished the assistance of Mr. Grant, and I would not accept of any one else. I implored, I wept, and, in agony of supplication, I knelt and seized his knees, declaring that I would not loose my hold till he had promised to go to see my father. I offered him any sum that he might demand, and assured him that I would engage to procure such post horses, as would take him there and back in six hours. He gazed upon me with astonishment. At length he exclaimed, "your uncommon filial piety has triumphed. No money should have induced me to leave Bath under my present circumstances; but such devotedness, such unfeigned and unusual affection in a son for a father, I never before witnessed:" and turning round to the lady of the house, who, with her two daughters, had been drawn to the spot by my raving agony, he said, "I should be for ever ashamed of myself if I did not yield to the prayers of such unbounded filial affection."--Then addressing me, "return," said he, "my young friend, and inform Clare that I will take him up in the morning at six o'clock, and we will be at your father's before eight. I see that you think there is great delay in this, but nothing on earth could induce me to leave Bath before I have seen my patients here. I have an important engagement, a consultation, which will not be concluded before one in the morning. Instead of going to bed, I will start at two in a chaise with four horses, and will be at Devizes by six; and do you take care that Bob is ready, so as not to keep me waiting, for I shall be there to a minute." I could not help sighing, and looking doubtfully, and as he took my hand, I said, "are you sure that you will come? Are you sure that nothing will prevent you?" "My good lad," he replied, "in our profession we are so often put in mind of the uncertainty of life, that we are sure of nothing but _death_. But this you may rely upon, that if I am alive and able to come, I will be at Devizes at six o'clock, and at your father's by eight." I thanked him most earnestly, and enquired if I could do any thing to forward his good intention, by hiring or bespeaking the horses for his carriage. To this enquiry he replied, that his servant would take care of that; but that I might order horses to be ready for him at Devizes. I consequently assured him that four of the best post horses in the kingdom should be ready and waiting for him at Mr. Clare's door, by the time he arrived there; and this I could safely promise, as I had the interest to procure such from the Bear Inn. I now took leave of him, and he gave me the most friendly salutation; and so did the lady and her two daughters,

who had looked and listened to my entreaties with a great degree of interest. Nor had they confined themselves to silent good wishes, for they had most fervently joined in supplicating the doctor to comply with my request; and they now expressed their earnest hopes for the recovery of my father; which was balm to my ears.

I returned to my friend's, where I had left my horse; and, having taken some slight refreshment, I proceeded without loss of time towards home. Such a melancholy journey I never took before, nor have ever taken since! My mind was wholly absorbed in the reflection that it was possible I should so soon lose the best of fathers, of whose real value I seemed never to have had a true estimation till now that I felt the dread of losing him. A thousand sad forebodings hurried across my brain, and I began already to feel that I had lost the best, the truest and the most sincere friend whom I had in the world. Thus it is with poor weak mortals; they seldom know how to appreciate the most inestimable blessings, till they are in danger of being deprived of them! In this sad state I soon reached Devizes, a distance of nineteen miles, on my return, scarcely having noticed any of the objects which I had passed. I called upon Mr. Clare, and left a note for him, to be ready by six o'clock in the morning, and I ordered four of the best post horses at the Bear to be in waiting at Mr. Clare's door at that hour. Then, without making any other delay, I spurred forward, and reached my father's house within a few minutes of three o'clock. I found him much in the same state as when I left him at eight in the morning. My journey to Bath and back, sixty miles, I had completed including my stay there, in seven hours; having now ridden, in the whole, upon two horses, a distance of eighty-six miles.

My poor father, who had been anxiously expecting my return, expressed great satisfaction at my speed; and taking my hand, he said, "Ah! you are a generous, kind-hearted soul. I told your sister that, if you could find Mr. Grant in any reasonable time, you would return by three o'clock. I knew the horse would carry you the sixty miles in six hours; and I also knew that nothing on earth would delay you when your father's health, probably his life, was at stake. Well," added he, "what says Mr. Grant, will he come?" "Yes, sir, he will be here by eight o'clock in the morning or before; in the mean while, I find that Mr. Clare has ordered you to take some medicine that he has sent." "And has he not ordered any thing to be done to my leg; no fomentation or any other thing?" "No, sir." "Why then," said he, "I fear he gives it up for lost; because, unless something is done to stop the inflammation that is going on there, a mortification must follow"--and having said these words he sunk back upon his pillow, resigned and composed. His leg was not quite so painful as it had been; for the fact was, that mortification had actually taken place, when Mr. Clare first saw it in the morning.

My father now said that, after my very great exertion, in riding such a distance, which he had reckoned up, while I was gone, as being eighty-six miles, rest must be necessary for me; and he therefore did not choose that I should ride any farther, for fear I should make myself ill also; otherwise, he felt a great desire to know how the reaping went on, as neither of us had seen the reapers since they began. I gaily told him I was not at all exhausted; and that if such a thing could in the least add

to his pleasure or his comfort, I knew that I could ride to Bath and back again without any difficulty. I added, that as to the reapers, I had anticipated what would be his wish, and consequently, before I came in, I had ordered the saddle to be put upon his horse; and, after my sister had given me some tea, I intended to see all the reapers, both upon his farms and my own--"Ah, my dear son!" he replied, "it must be all yours during this harvest at any rate; no cure that can be performed upon me will enable me to get about during this harvest. I am delighted with your alacrity to please me; and, as I have full confidence in you, and know your capability, I shall not give myself one moment's uneasiness about the business."

Having taken some tea with my father and sister, I mounted the third horse, and rode round the fields, and saw every one of the reapers and other servants. I recollect that there were seventy-six reapers at work in my father's fields, and twenty-eight in mine, making in the whole one hundred and four persons, who had that day begun reaping our wheat crop, which was remarkably fine. I had an opportunity, for the first time since I left home, which was about half-past three in the morning, to call and see my wife; of whom I had not had a sight, though I had passed by the house both in going and returning to Devizes and back, and to Bath and back, four times during the day. I informed her of the true situation of my father, and told her that I should return and sit up with him all night.

By the time I had performed my task it was between nine and ten o'clock, and I had literally tired the third horse. My poor father objected so strongly to my sitting up, that about twelve o'clock I retired to an adjoining room to rest myself, but to sleep I found it impossible. I rose again at four, and after I had enquired how he had passed the night, I rode again round the farms more to pass away the hours previous to the arrival of the surgeons and the physician than for any other purpose. A little before eight, according to their appointment, they drove into the yard in Mr. Grant's chariot with four horses. Oh God! what a moment for me! I shall never forget the agitated state of my mind, divided as it was between hope and fear. At the same instant that I hastened them to the bed-room of my father, I would have given any thing to have delayed the fatal, much-dreaded decision. But no time was to be lost. Seeing the agony in which I stood speechless before them, Mr. Grant took me by the hand, and said, "my good young friend, you must exert all your courage, and be prepared for the worst; my old friend Clare has given me such a description of your father's leg, that I have no hopes of a favourable result." Old Dr. Hill, the physician, now said, "come! come! Mr. Grant, do you bear up; do not make the young man down-hearted, "there are a great many slips between the cup and the lip." It is not so bad as you imagine." Good Heaven! what a strong recollection I at this moment have, of the look of scorn and contempt which Mr. Grant bestowed upon the old Devizes physician! He did not utter a word, but his look was enough.

Having informed my father of their arrival, they all three proceeded to his bed-room; a most awful anxious moment for me, and I never before prayed so devoutly for any thing in my life, as I now did for a propitious decision from Mr. Grant. After the first salutation was over, the surgeons

began to examine his leg; and Mr. Grant pointed out to Clare a deep red streak, that passed up the inside of his thigh, quite up to the body. He asked my father whether he had any objection to have his leg opened; to which my father promptly replied "not in the least. I beg you will do any thing you think proper." Mr. Grant then said it would be necessary to make a pretty deep incision, to ascertain the state of the inflamed part. "Proceed as you please, sir," said my father, "I am quite capable of bearing pain." Mr. Clare then made an incision in the calf of his leg, three inches deep, quite down to the bone, and five or six inches in length. The flesh appeared as black as mahogany, and very little blood flowed. This my father bore without the least flinching. Some cloths were wrapped round it, and they desired him to lie down, and compose himself a little. "I will lie down, sir," he replied, "but I hope that I do not appear discomposed." All this while I stood like a statue, as pale as ashes, watching every look of Mr. Grant with intense anxiety. "Well, sir," said Mr. Grant, "I will consult with Mr. Clare, who understands these matters quite as well as I do, and, in fact, as well as any surgeon in England, and we will settle the course you shall follow. Your leg is in a dreadful state, but we will see what can be done for you."

Mr. Grant now took my father by the hand, and was wishing him good morning, when my father, holding his hand, firmly raised himself upon his bed, and said, "I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Grant, for the trouble you have taken to come such a long journey to see me; and my son will most cheerfully remunerate you. There is, however, one thing more which I shall request you to do before you leave me. It is that you will give me your candid and honest opinion of my situation. Have you any well-grounded hopes of my recovery? If you have not, you will confer a great obligation upon me by saying so." Doctor Hill, who was standing at the other side of the bed, prevented any answer, by saying, "Come! come! Mr. Hunt, you are low spirited; come! come! you must not indulge in any such notions; you will do very well again by and by." Upon which my father, turning indignantly round, replied with a firm and rather strong voice, "stand back, and keep your peace for once, Dr. Hill, and do not expose yourself--I am neither low-spirited, nor so weak as to be put off by your common-place cant. Have the modesty, at any rate, to listen with patience to what I am going to say to Mr. Grant, who appears to be a sensible, honest man, or else be so obliging as to leave the room." Then, turning back to Mr. Grant, he said, "I have, sir, contrived so to live as not to fear to die. You are a perfect stranger to me; but you have the character of knowing your profession well, and also of being a humane man; at least my son informs me that you have been induced to take this journey more from humanity than for your fee. I have therefore, a perfect reliance upon your judgment with respect to my case; you see that I have nerve to hear my fate; and it will be a great relief to my mind, and it will afford me even comparative consolation, to be informed of it from your lips, rather than be left in suspence. Nay, I appeal to your humanity, to speak the truth boldly at once, to save my poor afflicted son the pain of communicating it."

Having said this, my father paused, to receive a reply. Oh! what an agonising, heart-rending moment was this for me! Mr. Grant took my father's hand, and seriously delivered himself as follows:--"After what

you have said, sir; after the calm and manly appeal which you have made to me, and with so laudable and rational a desire to spare pain to the feelings of your son, I should be doing an injustice to my own sense of duty, and be imposing upon you, if I were to withhold any longer my honest opinion; which is this, that, as a mortification had taken place, for many hours even before Clare first saw you, and as it has approached your body, I cannot, unless some very extraordinary interposition of Providence shall occur, see any hopes of your recovery."

My father, who, during this sad speech, had looked him firmly in the face, calmly and rather cheerfully replied, "I thank you, sir, most sincerely. I am content! the Lord's will be done! Pray take care of my poor son." The last words of the Doctor had produced such an awful effect upon me, that, unperceived by them, I had sunk senseless into a chair.

As soon as I recovered a little I was led out of the room, more dead than alive; and even at this moment the words of Mr. Grant vibrate afresh upon my ear. Though I had anticipated such an answer, and had, indeed, no reason to expect any other, yet when the blow came, it was much more stunning, much more overwhelming, than I had any idea of. I was dumb with sorrow; I now, by cruel experience, understood, what dumb sorrow meant. I could neither speak nor give vent to my feelings by tears. The agony of my poor sister, who saw enough to convince her what was the fatal sentence, and who immediately went into violent hysterics, was the first thing that recalled me to myself. The sight of her distress roused me from my lethargy; yet it was with a sort of stupor that I moved to her assistance, and when she had in some degree recovered, my brain was still whirled round and bewildered. I had received such a shock that all the world appeared as one vacant blank before my eyes.

Mr. Clare, at length, called my attention to the wish of Mr Grant to return; and the chaise being brought to the door, he reminded me of the doctor's fee. I asked Clare what would be proper; to which he replied that twenty guineas would be handsome. I, however, gave him thirty, with which he expressed himself very well satisfied; and on his departure he politely requested that he might be numbered among my friends. I made my friend Clare promise to return in the evening; and poor Hill, who had eyed with a mixture of surprise and envy the large sum paid to Mr. Grant, received his two guineas for his two visits, and left the place, cursing, I have no doubt, Mr. Grant in his heart, for having spoken out so plainly as to render his future visits useless, and thereby deprived him of three or four more guineas in fees.

The moment they were gone I returned to my father, endeavouring to suppress my sorrow as much as possible. Taking me by the hand, he said, most tenderly, "My dear son, though I do not feel myself weak, yet, as we must part so soon, pass as much of your time with me as you conveniently can; for I feel at present in very sound mind, and I shall be enabled to give you some good advice, which I hope will be of lasting service to you; and, as it will be given at such a time as this, I am sure that it will sink deep into your heart. In the first place you must not give way to sorrow; for you must be a father to your sister, and to your unfortunate little brothers, who are at school in London. I shall not for one moment

repine upon my own account. I am not afraid to meet a merciful Creator; he is not the implacable being that some find it their interest to represent him. I always have had, and shall, to the last, continue to have, full and implicit confidence in his loving kindness and mercy. Be you, therefore, calm and temperate in your grief, and consider that you have a great duty to perform. It must be your task to comfort your father in his last moments, when, perhaps, by the exhaustion of his bodily powers, he may become weak in mind. If this be the Divine will, which, however, may Heaven avert, be it your care to soothe, to comfort, and to cherish; and, if possible, collect and controul my wandering senses. Promise me that you will not leave me long at a time. In you I place my trust, and I know you will not deceive me." I solemnly assured him that I would not leave the house. "Nay,["] said he, "do not say so; all our large farms, with two or three hundred servants, require your attendance, sometimes; but do not leave me long at a time. I feel no symptoms of my approaching end. Send for your wife. She will comfort and be a good companion for your sister, and will assist her to nurse me. I know that you will all make me as comfortable as you can while I remain here." To which I replied, by entreating him not to doubt my affectionate attention.

Mr. Clare and Mr. Grant had both told me that they thought it impossible that he could live more than three days at the most, as the mortification had approached the vital parts.--As he was a very hearty strong man, with a sound constitution, it was possible that he might live full three days; but, nevertheless, as some change might bring on his dissolution much sooner, he ought, they said, to lose no time in settling his affairs. He, himself, began on this subject, by saying, "You know that I made my will since your mother's death, and I see no cause to alter the distribution of my property. I have dealt fairly by all my children. You will possess the manor and estate of Glastonbury, by heirship, in addition to what I have given you. I wish to make a codicil, to appoint you a trustee, in the place of one of those whom I appointed when you were a minor." My uncle Powell, my mother's brother, who was named as a trustee, and his attorney, were, therefore, sent for, and the necessary alteration was made without delay; and without giving my father any trouble, or uneasiness whatever.

As the mortification encreased, his leg grew less painful, and in the night he had some sweet sleep; but I could not be prevailed upon to leave his bed-side for a moment. I devoured every syllable that fell from his lips; and I thought I had suffered the greatest loss if he required any thing, and I was not upon the spot to furnish him with it. My sister was quite knocked up; nature was over-powered; and as I now found the assistance of Mrs. Hunt to be absolutely necessary, she was sent for in the morning. Without her we should have been greatly at a loss; for my poor sister was now more in need of being nursed herself than able to assist in nursing my father, whom we contrived to keep perfectly easy and free from any serious pain till his death. His amazing strength of constitution went beyond the calculation of the doctors; for he lived four days and nearly five nights, after the mortification had visibly passed into his body. During the whole of this time, even to the very last, he was perfectly sensible, and not till he ceased to exist, did he cease to possess all his faculties in the soundest state.

The next morning after Mr. Grant had been, and confirmed his approaching end, he begged to have my sister's piano forte brought up into his bed room; and when he grew fatigued with giving me his kind admonitions, he was much pleased and refreshed by my sister's playing and singing. He was always passionately fond of music, and was a tolerable amateur himself, and it appeared to give him as much pleasure as ever to hear her play and sing "Angels ever bright and fair," &c. &c. Sacred music was mostly his choice upon this occasion, yet he would sometimes request a lively and cheerful air. These tunes frequently lulled him into a sweet sleep, which he now and then enjoyed for an hour at a time; during which period I never failed to watch over him with the most pious care, never suffering him to be disturbed upon any occasion.

During the whole of this time he talked of his approaching dissolution with the greatest calmness and composure; and he gave orders how he would be buried, and named those of his servants who should carry him to the church, to lay him by the side of his dear Elizabeth. He often repeated Pope's universal prayer, and frequently expressed his gratitude that he did not feel as his beloved wife Elizabeth had done at her decease, the moment of which he greatly lamented was clouded with doubts and fears; a circumstance which he had always attributed to bodily weakness; and he prayed devoutly to the author of his being not to suffer his mind to be impaired while he had life in his body. He felt that he had lived the life of an honest man, and had never failed in strictly doing his duty towards his neighbours; he declared that he had gone regularly to church, as an example to his servants and his family, but believed that one private act of devotion was more acceptable in the eyes of a beneficent and all-wise divinity, than any mere outward form of public worship. It was, he said, the greatest consolation to him in his last trial, to reflect that he had been honest and upright in all his dealings, and that in his conduct to his fellow creatures, he had uniformly kept in view the sublime precept of "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." This, he said, was his chief consolation in the hour of trial; and he most emphatically urged us to follow his example, particularly in that respect, as "honesty was the best policy." Recalling to his memory and mentioning all the little menial errors that he had committed, he assured us that they gave him not the least uneasiness; that God was too wise, too just, too good, and too forgiving, to record such faults, and to make his creatures suffer for them where they had not been vicious and premeditated.

In this way, for four days, he spent the close of his existence, principally with me; urging and inculcating every good, honest, and noble principle; cautioning me against the effects likely to result from my great enthusiasm, and pointing out to me the path which he thought would lead to happiness, honour, and renown; and he constantly offered up the most pious and devout thanks to Heaven, for having permitted him to remain so long after he had received notice of his approaching dissolution, as to enable him to give me so much good advice. He anticipated that I should do well and prosper in the world, if my daring independent spirit did not lead me into difficulties; he continued to express great doubts about the prudence of my remaining in the yeomanry cavalry; he said that he had always dreaded some great evil would arise out of it to me; and he submitted whether it would not be much to my advantage to leave it. His

death, would, he said, be a most ample reason for my quitting it, as I should have such a large business upon my hand, that it would require every moment of my time to attend to it. "And if you want an excuse," added he, "say it was one of the last wishes of your father that you should do so; but recollect, my dear son, I do not bind you down to any promise of the sort; I only throw out this hint, if you choose to make an excuse. I must, however say, that an honourable and brave man, should never think it necessary to make any excuse for doing that which he deems right and proper. You will recollect these observations and feel their justice, after I am dead and gone; when you will have no sincere friend to advise and admonish you. I own I wish I could have lived another year or two for your sake; as we were now just begun to live as father and son ought to live, upon the most friendly footing. You would have assisted and protected me in my old age; and I know, and you will so feel, that I should have been of the most important service to you. You decide too hastily; you are quick and impetuous; your young hot blood leads you on incautiously into unnecessary dangers and difficulties. The truth is, you are young; and therefore I would not have you otherwise disposed than you are. I have long discovered a noble generous spirit to be the ruling passion of your soul; and all your faults even result from an amiable and a praiseworthy enthusiastic desire to excell. You only want prudence and experience to direct you; but that experience which you might have acquired from me you must now purchase. To have lived to direct, to advise and admonish you, would have been a great happiness to me. But the Lord's will be done! I have given you a good education; I have made you a complete master of your business, as a farmer; God has blessed you with a strong mind, and a sound body; and few young men of your age will begin the world with brighter prospects; you will have a large business upon your hands, that will keep you out of idleness; though, in fact, I do not suspect you of any tendency to idleness; but I hope this fine business will keep you out of mischief. You must be a father to your poor little brothers, who are so unfortunate as to require double care. Your uncle Powell has promised that he will take care of your sisters; but be sure and give them repeated advice not to be led away, against their better judgment, to adopt his form of religion, that of a Quaker. I have not the slightest objection to the Quakers; but I have always found the church of England quite good enough for those who have been bred up in that persuasion. I do not think any one would be justified in dissenting from the church of England till he has acted up to all the Christian precepts of that church. But now, that we are on the subject of religion, and the church of England, mark what I say upon my death bed. It will, I know, sink deeper into your young mind than any thing that I could have said at any other time. Do not, my dear son, for one moment imagine that I wish to inculcate the idea that, as I approach my Maker, I profess to believe all those mummeries that I have hitherto dared to disbelieve and dispute. You know that I never joined in Saint Athanasius's Creed. All such unchristian denunciations I ever held, and I still hold, to be blasphemous impositions. Many of the forms of the church also are superstitious and ridiculous; but the moral precepts of the Christian faith are wise and good. I have never meddled in religious discussions; I have always formed my own opinion to the best of my judgment and belief; and if in any of those opinions I have erred, I have not the least shadow of doubt upon my mind that a wise, just and beneficent Creator and father of all, will

pardon my errors. I do not feel the least disposed now to investigate, or puzzle myself, in my last moments, in a vain endeavour to enquire whether I have been right or wrong; the Lord's will be done, say I, and may he in his goodness assist you to continue an honest and an upright man amongst your fellow men. Do your duty by your neighbour, and worship your Maker agreeably to the dictates of your own conscience, and you will live happy; and when the time comes (for, recollect that it must come with ALL) and when it comes with you, my dear son, may you be as well prepared as your father is to enter the presence of your Maker."

I have, I think, shewn the reader enough to impress him with the idea of the incessant pains, the unwearied exertion, of my excellent parent, to inculcate the true principles of honour, morality, and religion upon the mind of his son. He well knew that what he said upon these matters, at such an awful period, was sure to make a lasting impression upon the memory of his son: for whose benefit he appeared to live even to the last. When, at times, he became exhausted with his anxiety to serve me, he would say, "now, my dear boy, go down stairs and get some refreshment, while I meditate, while I commune with God in private, and silently adore his goodness. Come again soon; but, in the mean time, do not let any one disturb my meditations." When I crept quietly back again, I sometimes found him with his hands clasped, still in the act of silent prayer. On seeing me, he would cease, and say, "it is all well;" and then he would return to the most interesting discourse with me. At other times I found him in the most sweet and delightful sleep; his countenance as placid as in the most happy and prosperous moments of his life; as if he were blessed with health and spirits. He always awoke cheerful, and apparently refreshed, and would relate some delightful dream which he had had, frequently consisting of a happy meeting and heavenly conversation with his dear departed Elizabeth, my mother. God of heaven! what did I not feel in those interesting and trying moments! Any weeping, any gloomy sorrow in his presence, he forbid; for he said we all ought to bless the hour, and to rejoice to see a beloved parent upheld at such a moment by his Creator, so as to be enabled to die with such serenity and firmness, and to set such an example to his children. In this manner passed away three days and nights after Mr. Grant had pronounced it impossible for my father to recover. As all the medical men had agreed that it was not probable that he would survive more than two days, I had every now and then a faint hope that the strength of his constitution would overcome the mortification. Mr. Clare, however, who attended daily, repressed that hope by pronouncing it impossible for my father to live. His predictions were verified by the event. On the morning of the fourth day it was evident that my parent grew weak; his voice failed him, he had much greater difficulty in holding any conversation, and his breathing was much less frequent; yet he was calm and cheerful, and felt pleasure in hearing my sister play upon the piano-forte, which caused him a short slumber after each tune.

About the middle of the day, he desired to be alone with me; and taking my hand, with a benignant smile, he said, in a weak but tender tone, "my dearest son, your father's time for quitting this mortal life is arrived. I find that the hand of death is upon me." After a pause of half a minute, to recover from the exertion, he continued, "you will soon lose your best and truest friend. I would not wish to make you a misanthropist; I would

not, because it is unnatural at your age, have you suspect all mankind; but of this you may rest assured, that there are few, very few in the world, who will not flatter you if they can get any thing by it. There are none who will tell you of your faults with the candid kindness of a friend; some, indeed, may taunt you with them, in order to irritate and provoke you; but, before another sun rises, you will have lost the only one who must be naturally anxious to advise and admonish you with a pure and disinterested friendship. Young and sanguine as you are, you will be thrown upon the wide world, to think and act for yourself; but your prospects are bright, your father has done his best for you, and in his last moments he will pray for your success and happiness in life. My only sorrow is at leaving your little unfortunate brothers. You must be a father to them, and I have left them an ample fortune, to repay you well for any trouble you may have with them. I know you will be a kind brother to them, and I hope, in return, that they will be grateful to you. I have little dread on your account, for though you are young, yet God and your father have done their duty towards you so bountifully, that there is every prospect of your doing well in the world. I only wish I could have lived to have seen you well out of the yeomanry cavalry! Recollect my last words--you will always find 'honesty the best policy;' therefore always 'do unto others as you would that they should do unto you,' and take care so to live that, when death calls, you may be prepared to follow him, as I now am, in humble but confiding hope, and without repining."

My poor father held me firmly by the hand and looked me steadily in the face, though his eyes grew dim, and his voice was so interrupted by the difficulty of respiration, which now much increased, that he was greatly exhausted. At length he sunk gently back upon his pillow, ejaculating "the Lord's will be done; the Lord be praised." His eyes were fixed and death had overspread his face with a sombre hue; he held my hand about three hours, but never spoke more; lying all the while perfectly still, apparently without the least pain or uneasiness, either in body or mind. In this state he continued till near eight o'clock in the evening, of the 27th of August, 1797, when the best of fathers drew his last breath, and gently slid into the arms of death, without a groan, a struggle, or even a sigh, to the inexpressible grief of his affectionate and deeply-afflicted son. His hand still retained its hold of mine, and I now gave vent to that unbounded sorrow which I had heretofore suppressed and smothered, because I would not make him uneasy. It is to me in my dungeon a source of never-failing pleasure to reflect that all that it was possible for one man to do to save the life of another I did, to save his life; and at any one moment, after his doom was pronounced by the doctors, I would have sacrificed my life, nay, if I had had a thousand lives I would have died by torture a thousand times, to have saved his life. But he had taught me not only by precept, but by example, to bow to the will of God. There never lived a better man, nor a better father; nor did ever a son sustain a greater loss than I did by his death. It has been said, with great truth, that he was the second founder of his family.

After he drew his last breath, I remained kneeling by his bed-side absorbed in grief and silent prayer for nearly an hour, before any one of the family came to me. At length my wife came to my aid, and being roused by her I performed the sad sacred office of closing his eyes for ever.

I shall not make any apology to the reader, for having dwelt so long on this melancholy scene. I trust that it will prove one of the most instructive parts of my history. In fact, and in truth, I would not write another line, if I did not fondly hope that almost every part of my life may prove instructive, as well as entertaining, to my fellow creatures and the rising generation; particularly to those who may embark upon the wide, rough, boisterous, and dangerous ocean of politics. When I recite my own errors, and it has already been seen, that I have committed many and great ones, I am rewarded for the pain I feel in the recollection of them, by the hope that they may prove a beacon and a warning to those young persons who may do me the honour to read these pages; and where they find that the impulse of honourable generous feelings, unguided by prudence, has led me into a wrong course, I trust that the young reader will learn, from my mistakes, how to temper his zeal with that discretion which may enable him to steer clear of those perilous quicksands upon which I have so frequently struck.

What a great misfortune for me was the death of my father! Before I was yet twenty-four years of age, with a mind unformed, and I may say, in the common acceptation of the phrase, very young of my age; here was I left in the uncontrolled possession of one of the largest farming concerns in the kingdom! I had a young wife, and a family of my own coming on; and had five sisters and brothers, younger than myself, left without father or mother. I was immediately obliged to attend to the farms, which had had no master to look over them for the last week, that week the most busy one in the year; and I had likewise to give orders for the funeral of my departed father. Exertion was indispensable. It was no use for me to lie down and cry God help me! Necessity, however painful to my feelings, compelled me to see to every thing, because I had no friend either to do it for me, or even to assist me. The whole lay upon the hands of myself and my wife, who was of the greatest assistance to my poor sister, who almost sunk under her afflicting loss.

It was fortunately fine weather, and the wheat harvest was nearly finished before my father was buried. When the awful day of his funeral came, I performed the last sad and solemn office for him, as I had faithfully promised to him that I would, and saw him laid by the side of my poor mother in the silent grave, the tomb and vault of his ancestors, in the chancel of the parish church of Enford, in the county of Wilts.

This melancholy scene made the most lasting impression upon my memory, and such was the effect of the kind benevolent and endearing conversations which I had held with my father, during the four last days of his life, after he knew that he could not survive his illness, that for seven years afterwards, I used in my sleep to hold the most delightful converse in my dreams with the spirit of my beloved parent; in all of which he appeared most anxious for my welfare, and advised, admonished, and kindly cautioned me against every impending evil; so that he was not only the best of fathers when living, but he proved my kind and fostering guardian angel after his death. No young man ever had better advice bestowed upon him than I had; unceasing kind and paternal advice, as well as the best example. Nor was any one ever more sensible of the great and irreparable

loss he had sustained than I was; or ever more sincerely deplored the loss of a beloved parent, than I did the loss of my father. Mine was not that sort of sorrow which puts on a gloomy outside, the garb of woe, while the heart beats to a merry tune. But, though I did not assume any hypocritical outward sorrow, yet I was really and truly most sad at heart. The constant employment of the body and the full occupation of the mind is, however, always the very best antidote to grief, and those my business furnished me with, to the fullest extent. When my father died, what he rented, and what he left of his own, was nearly all the tything of Littlecot, as well as Chisenbury farm, and I was in possession of Widdington farm, about two miles distant. All the farms were now in my occupation, and, as I thought it proper to live more central, I took Chisenbury House, a large old-fashioned, handsome mansion; and as soon as I could fit it up and furnish it, I went to reside there. This was considered by some as being rather an imprudent and extravagant step; for it would require a considerable income to keep up an establishment such as a house like that demanded. The reader will be able to estimate its size, when I inform him that there were not less than fifty two windows in it to be paid for to the assessed taxes; the number of them, however, I had the prudence to reduce considerably. But, in spite of all my prudence, it could not, considering the scale on which my arrangements were formed, be otherwise than a very expensive residence. Still it was not more, perhaps, than I was fairly entitled to, as the profits arising from my large well cultivated farms enabled me to vie with men of five or six thousand a year, in my domestic establishment. My stables were stored with hunters; my kennels with dogs; my cellars were well stocked with wine and the best old October; and my table always amply furnished the best of viands to my friends. My wife, who was quite as fond of company as I was, made her female guests uniformly welcome. We kept a hospitable house, and we never wanted for company to fill it, or a parson to say grace to a good dinner. At this time we had another daughter born, and every thing went most prosperously with me in the world. My friend, Dr. Clare of Devizes, who was a sporting man, purchased at Lord Audley's sale a handsome curricle, which he offered me, and we soon struck a bargain. Curricles were all the vogue at that time; therefore a dashing young man without a curricle was nothing; and as my wife was a great driver, as well as a good horsewoman, a curricle was almost indispensable.

Let no one suppose, from reading this, that I was become a careless squanderer. The habits of economy which, almost from my infancy, I had imbibed in consequence of the example that I had always before my eyes, did not desert me even under these circumstances. By management I lived as well, kept as good a house, and had my whole establishment so arranged, as to make quite as good an appearance for a thousand or fifteen hundred a year as many persons make who spend more than thrice that sum. I had at all times plenty of money, and I had every comfort and luxury about me; but in the midst of all this apparent extravagance, I never forgot the poor. All my servants were well paid and well fed, and I scarcely ever failed to attend the parish pay table, to see that those who held the office of overseer turned no one away, who was really in distress, without affording him relief. Thus early I gained the character of being the friend of the poor. I always pleaded the cause of the widow, the orphan, the aged, and infirm; and, being the largest paymaster in the parish to

the fund of the poor, I never pleaded in vain. The idle, the indolent, and the dissolute, I left to fight their own battles; but the infirm, the aged, the widow, and the orphan never fruitlessly sued when I was present, and, as I have just said, I seldom failed to attend; if I did I was sure to hear complaints. My readers will recollect that I am writing these Memoirs during the life-time of hundreds who can speak to this fact; and I speak of it not as boasting, but with the firm conviction that it can be substantiated by hundreds who lived in the parish, and that there is not one who will contradict it. The _friend of the poor_ is a title which I earned very early in life, and I hope that I shall deserve to carry it to my grave. Sorry, however, as I should be to lose this honourable title, I would ten thousand times rather lose it than lose the heart-cheering, soul-inspiring reflection that I have always been their friend not for the name, but for the pleasure I felt in protecting and assisting my less fortunate fellow-creatures, when they were in distress. It may be said, if you are really so, why not rest satisfied with the pleasure of knowing it? Why do you sound your own trumpet, and endeavour to blazon it forth to the world? My answer is, because my being incarcerated here for _two years and six months_ has induced me to become my own historian, and I will endeavour to be so faithfully; and I feel that I have need to put upon record all my good qualities, as a set-off to balance my bad qualities. Of the latter I have disclosed a great many already, and as I proceed I shall have to record still more. Now, as we are told that charity covers a multitude of sins, if I possess this good quality of charity, and if I prove that I always exercised it, I think I should not be doing common justice to myself or to my friends, if out of false modesty I were to keep silence. Those who have read my work hitherto will not fail to have discovered that, from my early days, I have proved myself to have been animated by an ardent love of country, that I possessed a sort of inherent patriotism, without having at all entered into politics. A patriot I consider to be a man who is devoted to the laws and constitution of his country in their purity; a defender of the rights and liberties of the people, and one who does his best to promote their happiness and welfare.

Merely possessing the good quality of being charitable, by no means makes a patriot. Therefore, I am not professing any claim to patriotism, on the ground of my being at that period a friend to the poor. In the first place, I believe that charity and a sympathy for the sufferings of my fellow-creatures are inherent qualities of my breast; at any rate I know that I felt them in all their purity as long ago as I can remember. In the next place, I was taught to practice charity by the example of my amiable and excellent mother, who possessed as much christian charity, as well as piety, as any mortal that ever lived; she was, indeed the very milk of human kindness; and although my father taught me to exercise the virtue with more discretion, yet he never checked it.

When my father died he was the Vicar's churchwarden, as well as the principal overseer of the parish of Enford; and, of course, as I came into possession of his estates and farms in that parish, I continued in the parochial offices, as his substitute, till the next Easter. During that time it was a severe winter, and I exercised my own discretion, and without any ceremony raised the pay of the poor, particularly of the aged and infirm, those whose labours were done. I found their pay at two

shillings and sixpence per week each; I raised it to three and sixpence each, and in some instances, as in cases of infirmity, still higher; and, when some of the parishioners mentioned their objections, to the measure, I declined to reduce the allowance, but offered to pay out of my own pocket the advance which I had made, in case of my conduct being disapproved of at a meeting or vestry. No meeting, was, however, called; nor in this large parish, where the population is above six hundred, was there any complaint made to the magistrates by any pauper against me during the whole time I was in office.

When Easter came, I being the largest paymaster in the parish, it was my turn, by rotation, to serve the office two years longer, and my name was placed at the head of the list that was sent in to the magistrates for their approval. The practice is, for the parishioners, at the annual Easter meeting, to send in a list of three or four names, to give the magistrates a choice in the appointment of two: but as the two names that are placed first and second are those that are considered by the resident proprietors as the proper persons, and whose turn it is to serve the office, the magistrates seldom or ever, without some very substantial reason, pass them over and appoint any of the others, whose names are placed, as a mere form, below them. In this parish, which was known to be well conducted, the circumstance of passing over the recommendation of the principal inhabitant was never known to have happened. My name being the first, I had no doubt but that I should be obliged to remain in this disagreeable and troublesome office. I was, however, deceived. My disposition to give to the poor more liberal relief than had been heretofore granted to them, had been too evident during the short time that, in the winter season, I had been in office. The considerable and permanent advance that I had made to all the old people in the parish, who were no longer able to labour, had got wind, and this was canvassed amongst the magistrates, who were all farmers, some of them very large farmers in the neighbourhood; and who should be the magistrates of this district, but the valorous officers of the gallant Everly troop, Messrs. ASTLEY, POORE, and DYKE, the latter being nearly as large a farmer as myself, and employing a great number of labourers! It never entered into my head for a moment that I should be objected to; on the contrary, I should rather have expected that this worthy bench of JUSTASSES would have been pleased with the opportunity of fixing me in what was generally considered a troublesome and harassing office; one which in such a large parish would require a considerable portion of a man's time to execute it properly: even when there was least to be done, it occupied three or four hours every other Sunday to attend in the vestry room, at the pay table, to hear the complaints and to relieve the wants of those who were in distress. This I had never neglected, nor left, as others had frequently done, to the care of servants.

The parish books were returned from the justices, and lo and behold! my name was passed over, and a little apron farmer was appointed in my stead. At the first view of the case, I felt a weighty responsibility and trouble taken, as it were, off my shoulders; and I was, as I conceived, released from a great deal of labour which I had anticipated; and I heartily despised the petty malice, the little dirty insult, intended me by the magistrates, who, in their desire to annoy me, had in fact rendered me a

great service. On my speaking of it in this way to my old housekeeper, who first brought me the news, she archly addressed me as follows:--"Ah, sir! I know your heart too well to believe that this will save you any trouble. Though you are not in office, yet as you pay so much towards the relief of the poor, and feel so much for them, you will not desert them. You will, I am sure, still attend the pay table and see justice done them at any rate." This was quite enough for me. While she was speaking, a thousand ideas crowded my imagination, and like lightening, I resolved to put them into execution. I said nothing, but the next Sunday, after the service of the day was over, I attended the pay table, as I had constantly done while I held the office. It was so unusual for any one to attend but the two overseers, that it was instantly noticed by the poor who were in waiting. I sat silent, but that was quite enough; every one was paid the same as they had been the week before, when I was the paymaster; though I knew that it had been agreed upon to dock them.

There was scarcely a single servant of my own whose name was upon the books; for my wish was, that they should always earn sufficient by their labour to support their families, without going to the parish. While I was in office myself, I acted on this system, without making any remonstrance with those farmers who paid their labourers about half price, and sent them to the parish for the remaining sum which was required for their support. But I now made up my mind not to bear this grievance any longer, without an effort to remove it. I, therefore, got the overseers to call a special meeting at the vestry, to take these matters into consideration. At this meeting I proposed that every farmer in the parish should raise his servants' wages, to enable them to keep their families; at any rate those who were able bodied men. There was scarcely any objection made to this, and it was carried unanimously. But I soon found that this measure was eluded, and of course would not answer. Several of the farmers turned off half their servants, and others all of them, and hired servants out of the parish, whom they could procure for less wages. I, however, always persisted in engaging my servants to earn enough to keep themselves and families without going to the parish; which most of them did, till all sorts of provisions were risen to double if not treble their usual price.

One thing I shall here forestall, which is the fact that I continued for nine years afterwards to occupy a very great portion of the parish, and consequently to pay a great portion of the parish rates; but, though my name was placed at the head of the list and sent in to the magistrates, every Easter during that time, yet I was never appointed the overseer of the poor; and this because I had set an example of too great liberality towards them when I was in office. Notwithstanding this, I never failed to advocate, and with success, the cause of the aged, the infirm, the widow, and the orphan, not only in my own parishes, but also in those surrounding me; and every act of oppression that was practised in the district where I lived was always communicated to me, and as far as I had it in my power I obtained redress for the oppressed. I very soon, therefore became an object of suspicion and dread amongst the petty tyrants of that district; and by them I was denominated "a busy meddling fellow;" but as a set off to this, I received the thanks, the blessings of the poor, and the love of my servants, whom I looked upon as my friends and neighbours. I had as much work done for my money as any man; I paid my servants well; but I did

what was of much more consequence to my interest. I treated them with kindness, and addressed them as fellow-creatures and fellow-freemen; instead of doing as many did, and which is unhappily much too frequently the practice, to treat labourers and servants as if they were brutes and slaves. By these means I managed a very large business with the greatest ease imaginable. My servants looked up to me as a friend and protector; as one who was at all times ready to stand forward to shield them from any oppression; and, on the other hand, I placed the greatest confidence in them to guard my property and my interest: I was seldom deceived; for I not only found them faithful at that time, but they are grateful even to this day. All this I attribute solely to my always treating them with kindness and _justice_. No part of their affection did I ever obtain by any unfair or surreptitious means. I never encouraged indolence, idleness, or profligacy of any sort, and an habitual drunkard I never kept in my service.

Contrary to my father's advice, I still continued in the Marlborough Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry. His last words were, however, quite prophetic as to the danger that I was in, by remaining amongst a set of men whose notions were so very far from being actuated by a pure love of country. Still, as the threat of invasion continued to be held up to the country as likely to be executed, I could not make up my mind to quit their ranks. I felt an ardour to be one of the first to meet a foreign foe, if ever they dared to invade us, and I therefore continued to join the troop as often as it was convenient; and as I was perfectly acquainted with my duty, and resolved to perform it, I was never once fined for any breach of the rules or regulations, which were made and agreed to for the guidance of the members of the troop; and I was upon particular good terms with the commander of it, Lord Bruce, the eldest son of the Earl of Aylesbury, who always treated me with polite attention.

The officers of the Everly Troop of Yeomanry had, as they thought, offered me an insult, and one which I had no power to resent; they were his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and if they chose to mix up their revenge with their duty of conservators of the peace, I had no power to prevent it, nor, as they kept their own council, could I ever remonstrate. Aware, as I was, of the insult intended by their passing over my name; yet, as I was glad to be out of the office, and had taken such a course as would enable me to protect the poor from any partial or unjust treatment, and as I still was appointed the Vicar's Churchwarden, I felt little or no resentment on that account. I had expected neither candour, liberality nor _justice_ from them, and they had not disappointed me; I was therefore quite indifferent on that score. But as my father always had a sort of presentiment that something would turn out unpleasant to me before I got quit of the volunteer service, I was exceedingly guarded in all my movements in the Marlborough troop; and was particularly careful never to omit any part of my duty, or to do any thing in violation of the rules or regulations; and I believe that I was almost the only man in the troop that had not been fined over and over again. In fact, as the fines were very moderate--for instance, I believe it was only half a crown for being absent from the field days, and not even that if there were a reasonable excuse for non-attendance--they did not inspire the members with much dread. This was the only punishment for non-attendance.

In the midst of all my fancied security, a circumstance, however, occurred that proved all my father's prognostications to be well founded. The reader will not have forgotten that I was become an expert sportsman; and, agreeable to my usual enthusiasm in all that I undertook, he will not be surprised to hear that I was also become what is called a good shot. During the month of September I had killed one hundred and twenty brace of partridges, and I was engaged to take the first day's pheasant shooting, on the first of October, with my friend and comrade, Mr. Thos. Hancock, the banker, of Marlborough. Lord Aylesbury, the proprietor of Marlborough Forest, possessed very extensive estates and large manors round this district, almost the whole of which he made one large preserve of game; but, as it was necessary that he should keep his tools, the members of the corporation of his rottenest of rotten close boroughs, Marlborough, in good humour, he allotted one small manor, at a distance of several miles from his principal preserve, where all his tenants and the inhabitants of the town of Marlborough and their friends, were allowed to shoot and sport without interruption, whenever they pleased. To this place my friend Hancock had promised to take me for a day's sport; he himself being, as will presently appear, a very poor shot. I went to Mr. Hancock's to sleep the night previously, and, like a true and keen sportsman, I was up and dressed, eager for the sport, before it was day-light. In fact, it was necessary that we should be early, as there was a host of cockney and other sportsmen, who always sallied forth from Marlborough on that day; and as the manor was not large the ground was generally pretty thickly occupied before sun rise on the first of October; for it will be recollected that, on these gala days, "tag, rag, and bobtail," all had leave, whether they were qualified or not, and all who professed to be sportsmen hurried there, whether they had certificates or not.

My friend and myself, attended by our servants, mounted our horses, and as we rode along we passed two or three parties who were on foot, and who had got the start of us; but we soon reached farmer Edward Vezey's, of Grove, upon whose farm we intended to take our day's sport. As we had ridden a distance of four or five miles the sun was now up, and as we heard several shots fired we put up our horses and proceeded immediately to the field; being too eager sportsmen to wait to take the breakfast which Mrs. Vezey had prepared for us. The farmer informed us that the game was very plentiful; and when we entered the first stubble field, we saw a nide of fourteen pheasants run into the hedge row. This was a fine earnest of our sport; and as I had never before been a shooting where they were so plenty, I expressed great anxiety to begin the slaughter without delay. The farmer, however, checked my ardour, and increased my surprise when he told me that he had ten such nides upon his farm. The sport began; and, having a double barrelled gun, I killed a brace, a cock and a hen; my friend and the farmer both missed. The latter requested me not to kill hens, as he would procure me plenty of shots at cocks. We had with us my dogs, which were staunch and steady, and they were now pointing again. I brought down a brace of cocks with another double shot. My friends both missed again, and laughed heartily at each other; particularly when they found that I was sure to kill enough for all the party. As we proceeded I killed a leash more, so that I had three brace and a half out of the first nide of fourteen. Several of the others had been marked down, and the

farmer said we were sure to find them all again; but I proposed to look for fresh birds, instead of following those which had escaped. This was agreed to; and, at the further end of the very next field which we entered, we discovered another set running into the hedge row. When ten o'clock arrived I proposed a cessation of hostilities, that we might retire and take some breakfast; for I declared that I was ashamed to kill any more. I had had twenty shots, and had bagged nine brace and a half of cocks and one hen pheasant; having been lucky enough, as my dogs brought all their game, to save every bird without a feather being scarcely ruffled. My friends had thirty shots between them, and had killed one bird; in fact, they were altogether as bad shots as I was a good one.--Though, during the whole time, we had not been a quarter of a mile from the house, yet, I believe that while I was out, I heard at least a hundred shots fired--so thickly were we surrounded with the rotten borough sportsmen and their friends. After this we returned to the farmer's house, where Mrs. Vezey had provided an excellent breakfast, not only for us but for my dogs, which were caressed as prodigies; and the game, consisting of ten brace of cock pheasants and a hen, was spread in triumph on the floor.

Having enjoyed such a breakfast as keen sportsmen are accustomed to take, in the course of which we talked over the feats of the morning, and bestowed many well earned encomiums upon the staunchness and sagacity of my dogs, my friends proposed to start again for the field, till dinner time. I, however, positively refused to budge an inch, declaring that I would not fire another shot that day. I was, I told them, more than content with having killed ten brace of pheasants in one day, and therefore I would remain at home with Mrs. Vezey, till they returned. They tried hard to prevail upon me to accompany them, but I resisted their entreaties: they then endeavoured to rally me out of my plan, but I had made up my mind not to go out again, and consequently all their bantering was of no avail. I was not to be moved even by the good humoured jokes of the farmer, about my remaining alone with his wife; and, finding me to be immovable, they set out by themselves. At length they returned, bringing with them one solitary pheasant, though they acknowledged that they had had ten shots each; and they were afterwards candid enough to confess that the dogs had actually caught that. Nothing daunted by their bad shooting, after they had dined and taken a sufficient quantity of good old stingo, and once more tried in vain to persuade me to bear them company, they sallied forth again, for the evening's sport; the best time of the day for pheasant shooting. About eight o'clock they came back, but they had only killed another pheasant, notwithstanding they assured me that they had actually seen above one hundred. Thus had these two sportsmen only killed three pheasants in the whole day, having had between them upwards of _fifty shots;_ while I had killed ten brace at twenty shots, in about three hours. Of course I laughed at them heartily; in which I was joined most sincerely by Mrs. Vezey. I am quite certain that if I had continued in the field, and followed up the sport as my friends did, I should have killed _fifty_ pheasants instead of _twenty;_ and that too without having made them appear much thinned, so plentiful was the game in that country. After spending a very pleasant evening, we returned to Marlborough, where I slept with my friend Hancock, and shot my way home the next day; having, previously to my setting out, _equally divided the game_ between the _three_, which was always the case in those friendly parties where I made

one of the number.

This account has, I dare say, appeared to the reader to be a digression upon a trivial subject, but I shall now show him that the seemingly trifling circumstance which I have been narrating, led to a very important event of my life. About four or five days after this, I received a letter from Lord BRUCE, merely saying, "that my services were no longer required in the Marlborough Troop of Yeomanry, and he, therefore, requested that I would return my _sword and pistols_ by the bearer." I wrote a brief answer, to say that I was astonished at his communication, but that I should attend on the next field-day, for an explanation, and that I should not fail to bring my arms with me. I own that I was at a loss to conjecture the cause of this unceremonious and laconic epistle of his lordship, and I conjured up a hundred imaginary reasons for this abrupt dismissal of me from his Troop of Yeomanry. I had been in it for many months; I had never been once _fined_, or received the slightest reprimand from his lordship or either of the other officers; nor could I recollect any one instance in which I had either failed to perform or neglected my duty as a soldier. But, though I could not recollect this, I now recollected the last sad foreboding words of my dying father--_"I only wish I could have lived to see you well out of the Yeomanry Cavalry!"_

On the following day came a letter from my friend, Hancock, the banker, which unriddled the mystery. He informed me that he also had received a similar communication from our colonel, Lord Bruce; that he knew of the dismissal which had been sent to me, and that it was a current report amongst the tools of Lord Aylesbury, at Marlborough, that we were dismissed from the troop, because we had shot so many pheasants on the first of October, upon one of his lordship's manors: what I meant to do on the subject, he was, he said, desirous to know, as he should like to go hand in hand with me; at the same time vowing vengeance against our colonel. I sent him a copy of the answer which I had written to his lordship, and apprised him that I would be at his house early on the morning of the next field-day, in my uniform, as usual, to accompany him to the place of exercise.

The day arrived, and we rode together to the field where we used to perform our evolutions. It was upon one of the plains in Savernake Forest, about half a mile from his lordship's house, but within full view of it. When we reached the ground the troop was assembling, and _we_ fell into the ranks as formerly, to the utter astonishment of his lordship's vassals, who composed a great portion of the troop, and who had heard of our being discharged or dismissed, or, in plainer terms, turned out of the troop by the colonel.

After we had remained a little time, one of his lordship's _toad-eaters_ came to reconnoitre; and, as soon as he discovered us in the ranks, he retreated to carry the astounding intelligence to his patron. Messages now passed backwards and forwards, from the troop to his lordship's house, for nearly an hour before he made his appearance; a delay which had never before occurred. The cause was not only anticipated by Hancock and myself, but by all the members of the troop, and just as I was proposing to march to his lordship, since he did not appear disposed to come to us, he at

last made his appearance, riding on his charger with slow and solemn pace.

I have since understood that, during this delay, several messages passed between his lordship's house, Savernake Lodge, and Tottenham Park, the seat of his father, the Earl of Aylesbury. Before I proceed, it may not, perhaps, be amiss to make the reader acquainted with the origin of this business. It turned out that Lord Bruce had been induced to write the aforesaid letters to me and Mr. Hancock at the earnest suggestion of his father, Lord Aylesbury, who had prevailed upon him, much against his own inclination and better judgment, to turn us out of the troop; though he had no other complaint to make against me but that I was too good a shot at his father's pheasants, and consequently a very unfit person to oppose the French in case of an invasion. His lordship saw and felt the difficulty of his situation, and for a long time he held out against the entreaties of his father; but the old earl was inexorable, and I am told that his mandate was at length delivered in such a tone and such a manner, that his son did not feel it prudent to resist any longer. The particulars I subsequently learned from one of the keepers, who was present at the interview when the earl came down from London; which I understand he did on purpose. Some envious and cringing tool of his lordship's having heard of our successful day's sport at Grove, on the first of October, wrote up to him an exaggerated account of it, stating that I, in company with Mr. Hancock, had killed an immense number of pheasants upon his lordship's manors; but at the same time this worthy intelligencer took care not to state where, and upon what manor we had been sporting. The old earl, who was the most tenacious, perhaps, about his game of any man in England, no sooner got the letter than he came post from town, in a great passion; and when he arrived at Tottenham, he immediately summoned all his keepers, to demand an account of their conduct for suffering his game to be destroyed in such a way. It was in vain that they all declared that we had not been into or near any of his preserves; that we had only been shooting upon a distant manor, where his lordship did not even appoint a keeper; and which manor he had expressly appropriated for the sport of the people of his Borough of Marlborough, and their friends. This was all to no purpose; he would hear no excuse; and as soon as he found that we were in his son's troop of Yeomanry, he dispatched a messenger for him. In the mean time he threw himself into the most violent fits of passion with the keepers; so much so, that he was frequently obliged to retire and recruit himself, by reclining upon a sofa, and when he had recovered his strength a little, he returned to the charge again with redoubled violence. The keeper, who was my informant, assured me that several times they were fearful, or, more correctly speaking, expected that he would break a blood vessel, by giving himself up to such unbounded fury. It seems the family at Tottenham did not know of the precaution that is used upon such occasions, by a testy old baronet of this county, who does not live a hundred miles from Stoneaston, which I am credibly informed is as follows--whenever the baronet has one of these sudden and violent paroxysms of passion, which is not very unfrequently, her ladyship prevails upon him to sit down while she pours copious libations of cold water over his head, as the only means of cooling his blood, and saving him from the rupture of a blood vessel upon the brain. At length his lordship's son, Lord Bruce, arrived, and the same scene was repeated; and it is said, that nothing but a promise from the gallant

Colonel of the Wiltshire Regiment of Yeomanry, that he would immediately write to me and Mr. Hancock, and dismiss us from his troop, would pacify the old earl. This promise was performed in the way which I have described, by his lordship writing to each of us, to say "that he had no further occasion for our services." But now to return to the troop, which we left drawn up on the field of exercise: our colonel having at length arrived in the front of the ranks, he continued to direct his eyes quite to the opposite flank to that in which I was, and I could never catch his eye directed even askance towards me. After a considerable delay, the serjeant pulled out the roll-call, with which he proceeded till he came to the number filled by my name; he passed it over, and began to utter the name of the next man; but the name was scarcely half out of his lips, when I put spurs to my charger, and brushed up so furiously to him, that he reined back several paces ere he stopped; which he had scarcely done, with my horse's head almost in his lap, before I sternly demanded by whose authority he had passed over my name? In a tremulous voice he stammered out, that "it was done by order of Lord Bruce." I wheeled my horse suddenly round, and his head coming across the serjeant's breast nearly unhorsed him. I then rode briskly up to Lord Bruce, who reined his charger back also. I saluted him as my officer, and firmly demanded by what authority, or for what cause, he had given orders to have my name struck out of the muster-roll? Conscious of being about to persist in a dishonourable and unworthy act, after hesitating a little, he said, "Pray, Sir, did you not receive a letter from me?" I hastily answered, "Yes, and I am here to demand in person an explanation, and to know what charge you have to make against me, either as a soldier or a gentleman." He now seemed still more confused, and he looked everywhere except in my face. He then cast his eyes towards the troop, as much as to say, will you not protect me? will you not assist to get me out of this dilemma? but all was as silent as the grave, and every eye was fixed upon him. At length he mustered courage to say, "_I make no charge against you; neither do I feel myself called upon to give you any reason for my conduct. I--I, as commanding officer of this regiment, have a right to receive any man into it, or to dismiss any man from it, without assigning any reason for my so doing." _

This was a critical moment of my life. It is in vain now to lament my want of discretion. I was young--I was devoted to the service of my country--I was a soldier--I was insulted without the shadow of a pretext to justify the insult--I was wounded in the most tender part--my patriotic zeal! At such a moment I could take no counsel of cold, calculating prudence. I sternly replied, "then, my lord, you are no longer my officer--you have offered me a deliberate insult, which it seems you are not prepared to explain or apologise for; I therefore demand that satisfaction which is due from one gentleman to another; and mark me well, unless you give me that satisfaction I will post you as a coward:" upon which I took my pistols from the holsters, and was taking my sword from the belt, in order to cast them with defiance at his horse's feet, these arms being the only thing that I possessed belonging to the government. Expecting, perhaps, that I was going to make use of them in a different way, his lordship wheeled suddenly round, and clapping spurs to his charger, he was, without once looking behind him, soon out of sight; he having wheeled into the gateway of Savernake Lodge, his lordship's residence.

While this was passing, I had hurled the sword and the brace of pistols upon the ground, and my friend Hancock had moved out of the ranks and come up to me. As long as our gallant commander was visible I kept my eyes fixed upon him; and when, on his disappearance, I looked round, I found the whole troop staring with astonishment, which, when they had recovered from a little, was followed by a general laugh. My friend Hancock was talking loud and in rather a coarse way, which I checked; and then riding up to the centre, in the front of the troop, I addressed my comrades, something in the following strain:--"Gentlemen, you have lost your commander, You have seen and heard the cause. As, however, a troop without a commander is like a ship without a sail or a rudder, I, for once, will give the word. To the right wheel--dismiss--every man to his quarters." Upon this, every man made the best of his way home, and I returned to Marlborough to dine and spend the evening with my friend Hancock.

If I had paid more regard to prudence, and not acted with such precipitation, I should have put this lord so much in the wrong, that he would have had no small difficulty in satisfactorily accounting for his unwarrantable conduct; for, without much vanity, I may say, that there was not a better soldier in the regiment, a man more devoted to the service of his country, and very few indeed, if any, who would have so "greatly dared," in opposing its enemies with his fortune and his life. The affair, as it was quite natural that it should, soon got wind throughout the county, and particularly amongst the members of the various corps, the ten troops of Yeomanry. His lordship, however, did not choose to meet me, but rather preferred to settle the point in the courts of law.

In the following term a criminal information was filed against me, for challenging the noble lord and gallant colonel to fight a duel. As I could not deny the fact, I suffered judgment to go by default, rather than try the question in the Court at Salisbury; my counsel, Mr. Garrow and Mr. Burrough (the present Judges), having informed me, that it was useless to defend it, as I could not plead the provocation, however great, with any chance of obtaining a verdict. But they were of opinion that, when the affidavits on both sides came to be read, the Court would never call me up for judgment.

In this conclusion they were incorrect; but it is not wonderful that such a conclusion should have been drawn by them; for the late Lord Kenyon expressed a very great unwillingness to proceed, and, term after term, he intimated to my counsel that he hoped I had seen my error, and that I would make an apology to his lordship, which would save the Court the trouble of taking any further steps in the affair. My counsel answered, that they were not instructed to say whether I would do this or not. His lordship then stated, that in case I did so before the next term, he understood that the other party would not press for judgment; and Mr. Erskine and Mr. Vicary Gibbs, who were employed against me, added, that so far from wishing to degrade me, they did not even wish that I should make any personal apology to his lordship. If my counsel would say for me, that I admitted the offence against the law, and regretted the uneasiness that I had given to his lordship, there should be an end to the business.

This offer Lord Kenyon strongly urged my counsel to accept. Mr. Burrough, who was junior counsel, said, that he knew my feelings upon the subject so well, that he would undertake, although in my absence, to say, that I was perfectly sensible that I had been provoked to offend the laws of my country, and that he was ready to make the most ample apology to those offended laws; but that, as I considered Lord Bruce to be the aggressor, he could not, on my part, undertake to make any apology to him, and he was fearful that I should never be persuaded to do it, though he would communicate the wish of his lordship and the court upon the subject.

This affair had now been before the Court four or five terms, and had been as often put off by Lord Kenyon. In the mean time, the affair created a considerable sensation amongst all the Yeomanry Corps in the kingdom, and in none more than in the different troops of the Wiltshire Yeomanry; and the conduct of their Colonel was canvassed very freely. Every gentleman in the regiment, and, in fact, every member of the whole of the volunteer force of the country, felt that it was a common cause, as he might be placed in a similar situation, and, consequently, if I were punished, he himself might be liable to arbitrary and unjust dismissal by a superior officer. The Court felt and knew this. Many, very many, members of the Wilts regiments, declared that they would immediately resign if I were sentenced to any fine or imprisonment; and several of my particular friends and acquaintances never failed to, _what they called_, keep up my spirits, by volunteering this declaration as often as I met them. Mr. Wm. Tinker, of Lavington, with whom I was particularly intimate, and my friend, Mr. Wm. Butcher, of Erchfont, both unequivocally declared that they would not remain in the regiment another moment after I had received any sentence.

The next term came, and when my counsel were again called upon to know whether they were instructed to make the necessary apology, the answer was, that I was sorry for having violated the laws of my country, but that the illegal and unjustifiable provocation given by Lord Bruce was such, that I had declined to make any submission whatever to his lordship. Lord Kenyon begged Mr. Garrow to do his duty by his client, and make it for me; and Mr., now Lord, Erskine also begged his friend Garrow to do it, declaring he would accept the slightest acknowledgment made in his, Mr. Garrow's, own way; that he felt for me, and did by no means wish to degrade me in the slightest degree.

Mr. Garrow rose, and in a spirited manner said, "that he thought I had offered quite a sufficient apology to the offended laws of my country; and that he, for one, did not feel that, under all the circumstances, Lord Bruce was entitled to any apology whatever. If Mr. Hunt had felt disposed, of his own accord, to suffer him to say that he was sorry for having challenged his lordship, he would have done it with all his heart, without believing that the slightest stigma would have been fixed upon that gentleman's character, either as a soldier or a gentleman. But Mr. Hunt had a right to have his own feelings upon the subject, and he could not blame him; and so far from making any apology for Mr. Hunt, in his absence, without his consent, he, as his counsel, with all the respect which he entertained for the court, yet would not take upon himself to advise him to do it against his inclination."

Mr. Erskine appeared to assent to this; but Mr. Vicary Gibbs jumped up, and with great petulance said, "Well, then, my lord, we demand that he may be brought up. We pray the judgment of the court." Lord Kenyon said, it must be so, then; and he fixed a day in the following Michaelmas Term, for me to attend to receive judgment.

As this will bring me to a very important epoch in my life, I shall pass over briefly several minor occurrences, that would have been considered as great events in the history of many persons who have written an account of their own lives. I shall, however, slightly touch upon one or two circumstances which, within the last month, have been brought to my recollection in the following rather extraordinary way. A lady, travelling from London to Bath, in her road to Ilchester, accompanied by the gaoler of that place, was questioned by a fellow passenger, a gentleman, how far they were travelling westward? The gaoler, naturally enough wishing to disguise his name and occupation, answered, "I am going to Bath, sir; and that lady is going on to Ilchester." The word Ilchester was no sooner pronounced than his hearer turned to the lady, and said, "Ah! that is where Mr. Hunt is confined, and treated with so much severity. Perhaps you will see him, madam?" She replied that it was possible, as she had some slight knowledge of me, and in return she wished to be informed if he knew me. He replied that he knew me very well, and had known me ever since I was a boy, and that he also knew my father and all my relations, as well as Mrs. Hunt and her relations. This naturally enough excited the curiosity of the lady, who knew me personally only, and who was sure to see me, as she was coming to visit a gentleman at the gaol; and as for the gaoler, any information that he could get about my private affairs and my family would be a great treat, he having no knowledge of me except as a public character. His curiosity was, consequently, whetted to a very keen edge; and my readers will not have much difficulty in believing, that, during the remainder of the journey, Mr. Hunt was a subject of conversation; and I have no doubt that all the actions of my life were canvassed with great freedom and some earnestness.

This, to them, unknown gentleman was Charles Gordon Grey, Esq. of Tracey Park, near Bath, who was as communicative as our passengers could wish; and the lady's, as well as the gaoler's, curiosity was gratified almost to satiety. The lady has, however, candidly confessed to me, that, although Mr. Grey was a great political opponent of mine, yet, altogether, his account of me had prejudiced her in my favour; and she has related to me many anecdotes of my life, that had totally escaped my recollection. One of them was as follows, of which, I believe, Mr. Grey was an eye-witness, and, therefore, could speak to it with perfect accuracy. I was, as I have already informed my readers, always an enthusiast in any thing I undertook, and in nothing more so than as a hunter. One day, at the end of a very severe stag-chace, after a run of nearly thirty miles, the hounds pressed the beautiful animal so close, that they caught him as he was swimming over a deep part of the river Avon, between Salisbury and Stratford. Myself, with the master of the hounds, Michael Hicks Beach, Esq. of Netheravon, and two or three gentlemen, amongst whom was, perhaps, Mr. Gordon Grey, were up with the hounds at the time; and we were all very much distressed to see the noble animal, which was a large red deer, and

which had afforded us so much sport, becoming a prey to the hounds, without it being possible for us to save him. Mr. Beach at first urged the whipper-in to attempt it, but he declined, adding, that as he could not swim well enough to encounter so many difficulties as he should meet with, the hounds would certainly drown him, as well as the stag, if he were once to venture into the deep water. While every one was lamenting in vain the sad fate of the poor animal, which appeared nearly exhausted, as the hounds had repeatedly pulled him under the water, I had slipped on one side, hitched my horse's bridle to a stake in the hedge, and stripped in _buff_, before the rest of the sportsmen had perceived what I was doing. I sprang to the river's brink, plunged at once off the high bank into the midst of the foaming stream, and swam to the assistance of the almost expiring stag. The moment that I dashed head foremost into the stream, the remainder of the pack, which had not before ventured into the watery element, but had kept yelping and baying upon the banks, now to a dog leaped in after me. None but those who were eye-witnesses of this scene can have any idea of the danger in which I appeared to be placed. Many of the hounds, that had been worrying the stag, seeing a naked man rise as it were from out of the deep, for I had been obliged to dive several yards to break my fall from off the steep bank, instantly quitted the hold they had on the stag, and swam towards me, as if to seize upon more tempting prey. My fellow sportsmen, who had scarcely recovered from their astonishment at seeing me unexpectedly plunge into the water, and who now apprehended my inevitable destruction by the hounds seizing upon me, gave all at once an involuntary scream, and implored me to retreat as quickly as possible; but, having once made up my mind to accomplish an object, the word _retreat_ was not in my vocabulary. Nothing daunted, I swam boldly up, and faced the approaching pack, calling each hound by his name, which I fortunately knew, and, which was still more fortunate, my voice was as well known to them. I swam and fought my way through them, cheering and hallooing to them, as if in the chace. They all turned, and continued to swim with me again up to the poor stag, with the exception of one old hound, _Old Trojan_, who, unperceived, seized fast hold of me by the thumb of the right hand, which at once checked my progress and gave me great pain. I called him by his name, but it was in vain, for he held fast; upon which, with considerable effort, I dragged him under water, and seizing him by the throat with the other hand, I held him there till he let go his hold. During this struggle we both disappeared under the water together, to the great consternation of the anxious beholders. Up we came together again, but I continued to grasp him firmly with my left hand by the throat, and I, for a short time, exhibited the caitiff in this state, with his mouth open and his tongue out; to shew how completely I had subdued him, I gave him one more ducking under water and let him go: I then continued my course without further interruption towards the stag, who had, meanwhile, drifted twenty or thirty yards down with the current, which was very rapid, surrounded by every hound in the pack (twenty-two couple), with the exception of poor Old Trojan, who now kept at a very respectful distance behind us.

We soon came up to the stag; but now the most difficult part of the task commenced; now "the tug of war" began, for I had no sooner laid my hand upon the poor animal than the whole pack began their attack upon him with redoubled vigour. One of the gentlemen threw me his whip, which I applied

to the backs of the dogs with one hand, while I held the stag with the other. This, however, had little or no effect; they were too much accustomed to the lash to be driven from their game in this way. One of my friends, therefore, called out to me to take the other end, which I did, and laid on about their heads and ears lustily. Still I found that they would not let go their holds without I almost beat out their brains; and I was consequently obliged to take another course, which was this--the first hound that I came near to I grasped by the throat till he let go; and in this state, with his mouth still open, I held him a short time under water. This mode of proceeding had the desired effect, and I continued it with every hound till I set the poor animal perfectly free. By this time I was almost exhausted myself, for I had been in the water at least twenty minutes; and that too at the end of a very severe chace, in a cold day in February. My friends on the bank kept giving their advice, and amongst the number was Tom, the whipper-in, who had refused to venture into the water; and, as a punishment for his cowardice, I requested my friends either to make him hold his tongue, or throw him in and give him a ducking. In the midst of all this I recollect to have hailed the huntsman, and desired him to take my clothes off the wet meadow, and to lead my favourite mare about to keep her from taking cold. Some of my readers will wonder how I could be so much at my ease under such circumstances, and particularly as I have said I was nearly exhausted. This I shall easily explain. The hounds being all checked off, the stag, poor fellow, lay most patiently floating upon the stream; and, as I had now taken him round his velvet-skinned neck, I supported myself with great ease, and gained strength to swim with one hand while I held him with the other, till I arrived at the opposite bank, where my brother sportsmen were waiting, with the greatest anxiety, to assist in taking him out of the water. But, as the water was nearly ten feet deep, I of course could gain no footing; and as the bank was four feet above the river, those on the outside could not reach him. I contrived, however, to fasten the thongs of their whips round different parts of his body, so that they were enabled at length, with great difficulty, to drag him safe on shore, without the poor stag having received any material injury. As soon as this was accomplished, and not before, was I dragged out in the same way, with the thongs of my fellow sportsmen's whips. I was certainly so exhausted that I could not stand without holding, while they rubbed me dry with their pocket handkerchiefs; but I soon recovered, and having put on my clothes, I mounted my favourite chesnut mare, Mountebank, and rode with my friends, who all accompanied me to the [22]Inn, the _only house in the borough_ of Old Sarum, where this story is frequently related to this day.

Such is one of the anecdotes that Mr. Gordon Grey related of me, and which circumstance, with a hundred others of a similar nature, had entirely escaped my memory, and would never have been related here, had it not been for the journey in the Bath stage coach; although the mark, which Old Trojan's tooth made on the thumb of my right hand, is always present to my view, particularly when I am writing, and which mark, I observed at the time, would always bring the event to my recollection, as I should carry it with me to the grave. That I shall carry it there is certain, for it is still perfectly visible, though it was inflicted twenty-eight years ago.

Such was the man whom Lord Bruce dismissed from the Marlborough troop of

yeomanry, as unworthy to rank amongst those who had volunteered their services to repel the invasion of a powerful, menacing foreign foe! Such was the man and such was his zeal and enthusiasm--such his devoted patriotism, that, had it been practicable to lay a mine of gunpowder under the Boulogne flotilla, he would, with the same alacrity as he now rescued the stag, have dashed into the sea with a lighted torch in one hand while he swam with the other! Such was the man who would have fearlessly applied the torch to the train, and freely have blown them and himself together into the air, to have saved his country! And this was the sort of man that Lord Bruce _knew_ me to be when, to gratify the rage of his father, he undertook to dismiss me from the Wiltshire Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, because I had, forsooth, killed ten brace of pheasants at twenty shots!

Well, the day at length arrived for my attending the Court of King's Bench, to stand, for the _first time,_ upon its floor to receive judgment. Mr. Justice Garrow and Mr. Justice Burrough were my counsel; and the former made an eloquent appeal to the court, declaring that he would much rather be placed in my situation than that of the noble lord; and winding up his speech with a high eulogium upon my character, he said, that if he lived in my neighbourhood, I should be the first man that he would seek for as a friend, &c. &c. The present Lord Erskine and the late Sir Vickery Gibbs were employed to pray for the judgment of the court against me; but his lordship conducted himself with the greatest moderation and even kindness towards me, and never uttered one single offensive or unkind sentence in the whole of his eloquent harangue. But the little, waspish, black-hearted viper, Gibbs, whose malignant, vicious, and ill-looking countenance was always the index of his little mind, made a most virulent, vindictive, and cowardly attack upon me, which was so morose and unfeeling, and so uncalled for by the circumstances, that, if I had not been held back by any attorney, I should certainly have inflicted a summary and a just chastisement upon him upon the spot, by dashing back his lies, together with his teeth, down his throat. I was, however, restrained, and sentence was passed by old mumbling Grose, that I should pay ONE HUNDRED POUNDS to the King, and be committed to the custody of the Marshal of the court for SIX WEEKS. There sat, squatting upon the bench, KENYON, Chief Justice, GROSE, LAWRENCE, and LE BLANC; all four of them gone, long, long ago, to receive their sentence from the Judge of another and a higher court, the JUDGE of JUDGES; and the _Lord have mercy on them! say I._ I paid the fine immediately, and two friends, who were in court, entered into recognizances in five hundred pounds each, and myself in one thousand pounds, to keep the peace towards this gallant lord for three years.

I was handed over to a tipstaff, who very civilly conducted me and my friends in a coach to the King's Bench, which place I had the evening before been to reconnoitre with my friend Mr. Wm. Butcher, who had come to town with me, and had voluntarily become one of my bail. My friends anticipated that I should be committed to the King's Bench, as I had made up my mind not to offer any apology to Lord Bruce.

At this time Mr. Waddington was a prisoner in the King's Bench, for forestalling hops; and as he had conducted his defence before the court with great energy and considerable talent; and, as he was convicted upon

an old obsolete statute, he was not esteemed guilty of any moral crime. I had imbibed a notion that the debtors in the prison were generally a set of swindlers, and I was, therefore, anxious to avoid their society, or having anything to do with them; which feeling, however erroneous, increased my desire to become acquainted with Mr. Waddington. The chief temptation, however, undoubtedly was his being a man who had become celebrated for the spirit which he had several times evinced before the court, in defending himself against what was generally considered as a mere political prosecution. I made several inquiries about him, but I only learned that he was not within the walls, and that he had apartments over the lobby, without the gates. I was, as yet, too great a novice to comprehend what was meant by imprisonment without being in prison.

I arrived at the prison about two o'clock, and was conducted into the coffee room, kept by Mr. Davey, the Marshal's coachman, where we were soon accommodated with a very good dinner. In the mean time I had made the necessary inquiry for an apartment, but the prison was represented to be very full; and I was shewn one or two rooms, where the parties occupying them had no objection to turn out, to accommodate me, for a certain stipulated sum. Amongst the number I was shewn up into a very good room, which was occupied by a lady, who, it was said, would give up her room for ten pounds. When we entered the room she was singing very divinely, she being no less a personage than Mrs. Wells, the celebrated public singer. With great freedom she inquired which was the gentleman, me or my attorney, who accompanied me; and upon being informed that I was the prisoner, she eyed me over from head to toe, and then, with that art of which she was so much a mistress, she simpering said, that "she was loath to part with her room at any price, but that, as I appeared a nice wholesome country gentleman, I should be welcome to half of it without paying any thing." As I was not prepared to enter into a contract of that sort, I hastily retired, and left my attorney to settle the quantum of pecuniary remuneration with her.

We dined very pleasantly, I think six of us; and, before the cloth was removed, I had a visit from my friend, the Rev. John Prince, the chaplain of the Magdalen, and vicar of the parish of Enford, whose churchwarden I was. I stated to him the difficulty I had in procuring a suitable apartment; which he no sooner heard than he volunteered his services to go immediately to his friend and neighbour, the Marshal, with whom he had no doubt he should readily arrange that matter for me to my satisfaction. I was much pleased to have such an advocate as Mr. Prince, a man so well known, and so much esteemed for his piety and goodness of heart. But he soon returned, looking very grave, and said, that he could do nothing with the Marshal, who would not enter into any conversation with him upon the subject; but told him, that if Mr. Hunt wanted any thing, he was ready to do whatever lay in his power to serve him, but that his attorney was the proper person to transact such business, and that it was quite out of the worthy parson's line.

My attorney, Mr. Bird, immediately waited upon the Marshal; and, while he was gone, Mr. Prince informed me, that his old friend Jones had behaved quite rudely to him, and expressed himself very much surprised that a man of his calling should think of interfering in such matters. Poor Prince

was, therefore, fully impressed with an idea that Mr. Jones would do nothing to accommodate me, as he had quite huffed him. In ten minutes, however, Mr. Bird returned, with the news that he had settled every thing with the Marshal; that I should have an apartment over the lobby, but that I must go with him to the Marshal, and enter into security not to escape, &c. &c. I immediately complied; and, as we went along, he informed me, that I was to give a bond for five thousand pounds not to escape; and that it would not be necessary for me to return again within the walls. This I readily agreed to, and the matter was settled in ten minutes. I was to have the room over the front lobby, and the run of the key.

I returned to my friends elated with the prospect of my being so comfortable, as I had been very much disgusted with the scenes of profligacy and drunkenness that I had already witnessed within the walls. Mrs. Filewood, the principal turnkey's wife, who kept the lobby, was to prepare my bed, and get every thing ready for me in my room by ten o'clock, the time at which my friends were to leave the prison. When the hour arrived, I was shown into a very spacious room, nicely furnished, with a neat bureau bedstead, standing in one corner. My hostess, who was a pretty, modest-looking woman, was very communicative, and so attentive that I really felt quite as comfortable as if I had been at an inn. It was, in fact, much better than the apartments I had been in at the inn, in London, the Black Lion, Water Lane. There was a good fire in the room, and every thing bore the air of cleanliness and comfort, and I went to bed and slept till day-light, as sound and as well as I ever slept in my life.

As I lay in my bed, thinking of the new situation in which I was placed, I lamented that I had not overnight made some inquiries about Mr. Waddington, as I still felt very anxious to become acquainted with him; and I was devising all sorts of schemes how I could gain an introduction to him, when my hostess knocked at my door, to say that Mr. Waddington, the gentleman who lodged in the room over me, sent his compliments, and wished that I would favour him with my company to breakfast, which he would have ready in half an hour's time. This was to me a most gratifying invitation, which I cheerfully accepted with as little ceremony as it was made.

Having dressed myself I was shown into his room, which was immediately over mine; I being on the first and he on the second story. Having read a great deal about him in the papers, I had formed to myself an idea of Mr. Waddington; but instead of meeting, as I expected, a tall, stout, athletic person, I found him rather a short, thin gentleman, who approached me quite with the air and address of a foreigner. He, however, received me very politely, and having shaken each other by the hand, we had a hearty laugh at the expense of our prosecutors, and the ridiculous situation in which we were placed. From that moment all reserve was laid aside between us, and before we had finished our breakfast, we agreed to mess together during the six weeks which I had to remain: he being sentenced for six months. It was arranged that my room should be the dining and his the drawing-room, and, whoever might visit us, that he should pay the expenses of the first day, and I of the next, and so on alternately. We had our meals provided by Mr. Davey, at the coffee room, and sent to us, and we settled our bill of the preceding day every morning at breakfast. Without

once having deviated from this plan, we passed our time, for the six weeks, in the most profound harmony and good humour with each other, never having had the slightest disagreement during the whole of the period that we were together.

I soon discovered that my new acquaintance was a great politician, and that he was a decided opposition man, or rather a democrat, a sort of being which I had hitherto been taught to look upon, if not with an evil, at least with a suspicious eye. I was a professed loyal man; but, before we had been together four and twenty hours, he pronounced me to be a real democrat, without my being aware of it myself. I found him a cheerful companion, who, whatever I might think of his political feelings and information, was at any rate possessed of a great share of mercantile knowledge. His opinions upon political matters were many of them new to me; and his arguments, though there was much ingenuity in them, were not altogether calculated to carry conviction to the mind. His conversation, however, gave me an insight into many matters that I had never before had an opportunity of investigating or of hearing discussed.

On the second day, I was for the first time introduced to Henry Clifford, the barrister, who was one of Mr. Waddington's counsel, and who came to dine with us. I was very much pleased with him, and though he advocated the same principles that were professed by his client, yet he did it in such a way, and in such plain intelligible language, that every word, every sentence, carried conviction with it. He conversed of rational liberty, of freedom as the natural rights of man, and as the law of God and nature. He put the matter clearly and distinctly, undisguised by sophistry; and, as far as I could discover by his discourse, I had already an inherent love of that liberty of which he spoke: I was naturally an enthusiastic admirer of freedom, and an implacable foe to tyranny and oppression; and this I admitted to him, at the same time that I disclaimed any participation in those principles which were designated as jacobinical, and professed myself a loyal man, and a friend to my king and country.

With the greatest good-nature, Mr. Clifford smiled at my folly; "but," said he, "my worthy young friend, and I am proud to call you so, I see that you have in reality imbibed the best, the most honourable of principles; the seeds of genuine patriotism are implanted in your heart, it only requires a little time to rear them into maturity, and, I have not the least doubt but they will, ere long, produce good and useful fruit. I believe you are a really loyal man, a sincere friend to your king and country; and if I thought you were not, our acquaintance, I assure you, should be very short, but, as you are one, I hope our friendship will only cease with our lives." I shall take leave to say that this wish was accomplished to the very letter, as I ever afterwards lived in the most friendly habits of intimacy with him till the time of his decease.

Our discourse now became more general. Mr. Waddington had listened with great attention to his friend Clifford's clear and undisguised manner of initiating, as he called it, the young countryman into the science of politics; and he appeared much delighted to find that "the bait took so well." Clifford reprov'd his expression, and added, that the young

countryman, as he was pleased to term me, required nothing more than a little practical knowledge of corruption, to make him shake off all his natural prejudices, and become as good and sincere a defender of liberty as either of them.

By this time, our friend Clifford, who was then a _two-bottle man,_ had taken his glass too freely to make himself intelligible any longer, and I resisted the proposition of Mr. Waddington to uncork another bottle, as I was very much shocked to see one of the most intelligent and truly able men in the country, reduced to a mere idiot by the effect of wine. Mr. Waddington, who was naturally an abstemious man, agreed with me, and, as we had previously given a general invitation to Clifford to dine with us twice a week, we now came also to a resolution, that, in future, we would not be deprived in such a way of his instructive and agreeable society. To accomplish our purpose, we agreed, therefore, that we would limit the quantity of wine to be drank when he was at our table, and that, as soon as the quantity was gone, coffee or tea should invariably be introduced.

Our friend and guest literally reeled down stairs when he took leave of us, and I could not help observing, what a misfortune it was for such a brilliant man to drown his senses and obscure his intellect with wine. Though I had for some years, at least since I was married, kept that sort of company which led me to take my glass freely, yet I seldom took it to excess, and never to inebriate myself. This melancholy example of Mr. Clifford had a very great effect upon me. To see a man of the most brilliant talent, of the most profound erudition, so far forget himself as to become an object of pity and contempt, imbecile, and even beastly, was a sight which made a deep and lasting impression upon my mind, and I began to think that my own partial indulgence in the practice of drinking so freely after dinner was an act of great weakness and folly, which, if not checked, was likely to degenerate into one of the worst of crimes.

In these sentiments my friend Waddington agreed with me, and he readily joined in a determination never to suffer any thing of the sort to take place at our table again while we remained together. This resolution we managed to keep, though we had a difficult task to perform when Mr. Clifford and the Rev. Dr. Gabriel dined with us, which was regularly twice a week. The reverend doctor, in particular, we found it incumbent upon us to keep within strict bounds; for, when he had got a little too much wine, though he was an old man, and a dignitary of the church, it was with great difficulty we could restrain him from indulging in obscene conversation, with which my friend and myself were equally disgusted. The doctor was a wit and a scholar, but, as Mrs. Waddington and her family, as well as other amiable females both of her and my friends, frequently visited us, his language was not to be tolerated, and, consequently, I undertook one morning to remonstrate with the doctor upon the subject. He freely acknowledged his error, but attributed it to a foolish habit that he had acquired at college, of which he could never afterwards wholly break himself. At the same time, he pleaded that he never forgot himself so far as to disgrace his profession, unless he had taken too much wine--which, by the bye, was every day when he could get it. I made known to the doctor our resolution to limit him to a bottle, and that his visits were to be continued upon that understanding. To this he readily assented, and

thenceforth we found him to be a well-informed and entertaining companion, on the two days in the week that he was invited to dine with us. The doctor was reduced in circumstances, and was living within the rules. It was he who built the octagon chapel at Bath, of which he was the proprietor, and where he preached for many years. He was a man of letters, and, when sober, a perfect gentleman; but, when ever so little elevated, he betrayed, even to us comparative strangers, that he was a complete free thinker. Many of my readers will recollect the literary controversy which took place between him and, I believe, Doctor Gardiner, of Bath. I forget what were his politics, but I believe he was a Whig. One thing I perfectly recollect, which was, that when he was going to relate an obscene story or anecdote, he always gave us a preliminary intimation of it by sneezing. He was, on the whole, one of the most extraordinary of the numerous extraordinary characters that I became acquainted with while I remained at the King's Bench, during my first visit there of six weeks, in the years 1800 and 1801.

This was a very distressing season for the poor; and Mr. Waddington and myself gave a ton of potatoes to the poor prisoners in the King's Bench every week; nor, during the time that I was there, did we ever fail to relieve not only every applicant, and they were numerous, but also to seek privately for objects of distress within the walls; and wherever we found an unfortunate object, we did our best to alleviate his misery. Some we found almost naked, without clothes or even bedding; some who were pining, in secret, silent want, who were ashamed to make their wretchedness known. These we never failed to succour. The Marshal likewise assisted us in these acts of charity, and did every thing that humanity and kindness could suggest, to ameliorate the condition of the unhappy prisoners in his custody.

It being now the season when those who toil for us naturally expect some proof of our friendship and gratitude, to enable them to enjoy their long anticipated merriment, I sent home directions to Mrs. Hunt to have my usual Christmas present given to each of my servants. It consisted of a good piece of beef, some potatoes, and faggots to dress it with, the quantity given being in proportion to the size of the family. This good custom I learned from my father, and I regularly continued it every year; but it was always done, I hope, with a becoming spirit, without any ostentation. I never, as many did, caused my little charitable acts to be blazoned forth in the public newspapers. I will venture to say, that, while we were in the King's Bench, Mr. Waddington and myself gave away, privately, a larger sum, in comparison with our incomes, than, any of the publicly blazoned forth charitable men in the city of London, who were lauded up to the sky for their benevolent disposition. Every Christmas, each servant, who had worked for me during the year, received a present of beef enough to keep each person a week, which was never noticed in any of the public newspapers, though they constantly teemed with pompous accounts of the generosity, benevolence, and charity of my more opulent neighbours, who never gave half so much; in fact, who never gave a twentieth part so much as myself, in proportion to their means.

A circumstance of this sort, which happened not a hundred miles from this place, and the description of which was given to me by a farmer, has

caused me a hearty laugh. It was lately paragraphed in all the country as well as the London papers, and spread far and near, that a worthy and reverend magistrate, in this neighbourhood, had, with great liberality, given away an ox to his parishioners; some, in their great bounty, added eight or ten sheep to the boon. I was one day speaking with due praise of this act before a farmer of the neighbourhood, who had called to visit me; upon which he burst into a loud horse laugh, and exclaimed, "Oh, the old cow!" The fact was, as he informed me, that the worthy magistrate had an old Norman cow, that had done breeding, and consequently gave no more milk; and as every farmer in the country well knows that the Devil himself could not graze an old cow of this sort to make her fit for the butcher, the worthy parson very properly gave her away amongst his parishioners; and the praises of this mighty gift were hawked about in almost every newspaper in the kingdom!

I do not give any name, neither do I, in the remotest degree, bring forward the circumstance by way of taunt or ridicule. There was nothing improper in it, but the contrary; and, of course, the old cow afforded many a hearty meal, and many a porridge-pot full of good wholesome broth to those amongst whom she was divided, who, no doubt, were very thankful to the worthy justice for the present. I only mention it to shew that it "is not all gold that glitters," and how such a thing is trumpeted forth when it is once set a going. I know it is the practice of many persons to give a trifle at this time of the year, and then get one of their dependents to send, and not unfrequently they themselves send, an account of it to the county paper. Away goes the news, and a person's name is blazoned forth all over the kingdom, as a most charitable man or woman, when it often happens that a great deal of misery, poverty, wretchedness and want presents itself to their view all the year round, without their ever once extending that aid which, to bestow in private, would afford them ten times as much heart-felt pleasure, and real satisfaction, as they can gain from their ostentatious annual newspaper fraud. I have given away four times the value of this said cow, every Christmas, for ten or fifteen years together, without having ever once had, or wishing to have, my name held up in a public newspaper, as an example of charity and liberality to the poor. Yet, twenty years ago, before I was known as a reformer, when, for instance, I was in the King's Bench, a pound note, a fifth part of what Mr. Waddington and I gave away privately, besides the ton of potatoes, would have caused my name to cut a pompous figure in all the vehicles of news, both in town and country. I may, without boasting, declare, that scarcely a month in my life ever passed without my having given away more than the value of the said old cow, to relieve and assist my fellow creatures in distress; and yet the public well know how my name has been bandied about in every newspaper in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and, of late years, in almost every paper in Europe, as the greatest enemy of the poor, as their deceiver, their deluder, their plunderer! I have been held up, for political purposes, by the venal press, as a sort of ferocious monster, who longed to gorge upon the life-blood of my fellow countrymen! It will be asked by some, how comes it that _all_ the public press has been induced to represent you as a monster of this description? The answer is easy. For this plain reason: because all those who belong to the _public press,_ the _liberal press_, have been the agents or the, tools of one or the other of the two great political

factions, nick-named Whigs and Tories; because throughout the whole of my political life, I have honestly opposed the speculations, the plunderings, and frauds of the borough-mongers of both those two factions upon the people, upon the earnings of the poor; because I have never in any way been, nor ever would be, linked on to either of those factions; because I have fairly, manfully, and openly stood up for the political rights of my _poorer fellow countrymen,_ and never for one moment of my life have compromised those rights, in order to secure or promote my own interest.

I repeat again, that I have not introduced the subject of the old cow with any invidious motive. As far as the thing went it was a praiseworthy and charitable act. I have myself many times done the same thing; have fatted an old cow, and given the beef away to the poor, which has been worth, to them, from ten to fifteen pounds; very excellent meat to eat, and I have partaken of some of it in my own family; though it would have scarcely fetched any thing to have been sold to a butcher. And if this should meet the eye of the worthy justice, he will take it as it is meant, and not as any sarcasm at him, though the said justice is one of the number who was induced to sign the infamous order to exclude my female friends from visiting me; which I would fain hope he did against his own judgment, and I am sure, from the personal kindness I before received of him here, he did it much against his inclination. Some may say that my statement, of what I have done, is an egotistical digression; that I am sounding my own trumpet; and that to do so is no proof of a truly charitable disposition; but let them recollect that I am compelled to this digression, in order to do justice to my own calumniated character; let them recollect that I am writing my own history, and that, as _all the press_ of Europe has been sedulously and malignantly employed to prejudice the public against me, I owe it to myself, to my children and family, to the myriads of my fellow countrymen who have honoured me with their confidence; I owe it to them, to show, past all contradiction, that my accusers are slanderers; that my conduct deserves to be otherwise spoken of than it has been; and this duty I can perform only by speaking candidly and boldly of such facts as may tell in my favour; facts, be it remembered, which admit of being proved or disproved by thousands of living witnesses. I make no assertions which are morally or physically incapable of being refuted; I appeal to evidence, which is still in existence; and if my enemies can convict one of having, in my defence, gone beyond the limits of truth, I will be content, ever after, to listen in silence to their calumnies.

But it is now time to change the scene again to the King's Bench. I was there every day in the society of men who had not merely mixed in the busy scenes of the metropolis, but of whom I found that many had been connected with the government; many had borne a part in all the dirty tricks, frauds, perjuries, and bribery practised at elections. Of such abominations as I did not think it possible ever to have occurred, the reality was clearly proved to me, by those who had been eye witnesses of them, and who had participated in the plunder. _Circumstances_ brought me into strange company, and here I saw men of all persuasions in religion, and of all parties in politics.

The year 1800 was a very busy year, and the price of provisions was at its height, in consequence of which, there were many riots both in London and

the country. The parliamentary remedy for this evil was, an act, passed on the 12th of February, forbidding the sale of bread till four and twenty hours after it had been baked.

Towards the close of 1799, Buonaparte became the first consul of France, and he immediately wrote a letter himself to the King of England, offering to treat for peace. The British ministers, however, treated the offer with contempt, and they were sanctioned in their conduct by the legislative bodies. Oh, fatal policy! if this offer had been accepted, millions of lives might have been spared--oceans of blood and hundreds of millions of money might have been saved to the nation. Mr. Fox and Mr. Whitbread opposed the address in the House of Commons, but it was carried by 265 against 64. High debates and strong divisions took place in the Irish House of Commons, upon the Union, when Lord Castlereagh began to make a figure by his intrigues; British gold prevailed over Irish patriotism, and the majorities were in favour of the Union. Mr. Waithman now first began to figure upon the stage of politics in London, and a motion which he made, in favour of peace, was carried unanimously at a Common Hall. The House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Tierney, divided 44 for peace and 143 for war; this was on the twenty-sixth of February, and on the eleventh of May, at a field-day in Hyde Park, a shot wounded a young gentleman, who stood near the King, for whom no doubt it was intended. The same evening his Majesty was at Drury Lane theatre, when a man in the pit, whose name was Hatfield, standing up on one of the benches, fired a pistol at him; but he was pronounced to be deranged in his intellects, and he was confined accordingly.

All our magnanimous allies had by this time deserted us, with the exception of the Emperor of Germany, whose friendship was purchased by another loan of two millions of money, to be raised in taxes upon John Bull; or, to apply a more appropriate name, _John Gull_--for, so zealous were his faithful representatives in the Commons, that they voted away forty-eight millions for the service of the year; and to prevent, or rather silence any grumbling, the Habeas Corpus suspension act was passed.

On the fourteenth of June, the great battle of Marengo was fought, between the French, who were commanded by _Buonaparte_, and the Austrians under Melas, whose army he completely defeated, killing six thousand of them, and taking twelve thousand prisoners, and forty-five pieces of cannon. In this battle Napoleon proved himself not only the bravest, but the best general of the age. Immediately after this battle an armistice followed, and peace was ultimately concluded between France and Austria.

On the eighteenth of this month, July 1800, the atrocities of Governor Aris, and his abettors, in Cold Bath Field's prison, were exposed in the House of Commons, by Sir Francis Burdett; and on the fourteenth of August following, the indignant populace assembled to pull down this prison, which they very properly called the English Bastile. The conduct of Aris was such that he was driven in disgrace from his situation, and another more humane governor was appointed in his place, in order to tranquillize the people, who were justly enraged almost to desperation against this monster. What a disgrace, not only to the administration of the country, but to the character of the age to suffer a malignant fiend to have the

control over the liberties of persons sentenced to be confined in a prison! How much have those magistrates and sheriffs to answer for who suffer these devils in human shape to tyrannize over and torture the victims consigned to their custody! How necessary is it for sheriffs (high sheriffs I mean), to visit their prisons in person, and see in what manner their prisoners are treated! I do not mean a formal visit, when the gaoler has notice of his coming, that he may be prepared to deceive him. But I say it is the duty of a sheriff to go unawares, at times when he is not expected, and then to visit the prisoners by himself, taking care that those jacks in office, the turnkeys, do not go before him, to prepare the prisoners, and to caution them not to make any complaints. What a farce is kept up by the parade of visiting magistrates, who pass through a gaol, for instance, once a month, "like a cat over a harpsichord;" inquiring, most likely, in the presence of the gaoler or turnkey, if any of the prisoners have any complaint to make to the magistrates! Oh what a horrible farce is this. A planter in the West Indies may just as well expect to hear the truth if he were to enquire of the negroes, in the presence of their drivers, whether any of them have a complaint to make against any of the said negro-drivers!

When I first came to this gaol, one of the poor prisoners, who was assisting to repair my dungeon, was telling me of an act of cruel injustice and torture that had been inflicted upon him by one of the turnkeys. Upon which I said to the man, "Did you not make a complaint to the magistrates? I am sure they would not suffer a prisoner to be treated in such a way with impunity." The poor fellow looked at me very steadfastly, for some time, to see if I were in earnest; at length he replied, "Lord, Sir! you will know better after you have been here a little while. I have been here nearly two years, and I never knew any prisoner make a complaint even to the gaoler, and much less to the magistrate, without being punished for it. I never knew a man make a complaint who was not locked up, in solitary confinement, within a week afterwards, for something or other. A prisoner is sure never to get any redress, for the turnkeys will say any thing, and what one says another will swear; and the gaoler always believes them, or pretends to believe them, in preference to the prisoners; so do what they will with us we never complain."

I am sorry to say that I have found that there was too much truth in this assertion. I know it is the practice of some lords of manors, never to hire a gamekeeper unless he will engage always to swear that which, right or wrong, will convict a poacher: and I now believe that it is also a requisite qualification for a turnkey to swear that which will please the gaoler. I am quite sure it is the case in some gaols, in which, unless a turnkey will do this, he will never get promotion, or a rise in his salary, nor have his rent paid, &c. &c. The principal object of these fraternities appears to be deception; and particularly if a magistrate or a sheriff should be a conscientious, humane man, their study, their occupation is to deceive him, in which they are very likely to succeed; for a clever gaoler, surrounded by such pliant helpmates, will deceive the very devil, if he be not aware of their tricks; and how easily then may they cheat an honest, unsuspecting country justice! I have been led into this excusable digression from the recollection of Aris's exposure in the

House of Commons; and what a tale shall I have by and by to unfold, of the scenes that are perpetrated with impunity in this gaol. Some of the most atrocious acts are here made a merit of, and the gaoler even boasts of them in the public-houses, amongst his pot-companions.

To return to my narrative. On the 3d of October, the Common Hall, on the motion of Mr. Waithman, resolved to present an address to the King upon the throne, for peace; but, for the first time, the King refused to receive it, except at the levee. Thus were the livery of London deprived of their right, their ancient right, of approaching their sovereign to present their petitions to the throne. Thus were all future Common Halls reduced to the level of any common assembly by George the Third. Thus did those who took the lead in city politics concede the rights of their fellow-citizens, and surrender their proudest privileges, without a struggle. From that day to this, the Livery of London have never exercised their constitutional privilege of addressing or petitioning the throne.

Mr. Waithman and Mr. Favel have persuaded the livery not to petition the throne, because they were not permitted to present it to the throne: unlike Beckford, they had neither the courage to demand the right, nor the sincerity to give it up. By such temporising means they have altogether compromised the rights of their fellow citizens. I made one effort to rouse the livery into a sense of their duty, and moved for the appointment of a committee to search for precedents; but the Whig cabal frustrated my intentions, though I was supported by Mr. White, of the Independent Whig, and many other patriotic members of that body. By and by, I shall lay open to public view the despicable intrigues of this faction in the city of London. The mass of the livery are honest, honourable and patriotic, and real lovers of fair play; but the tricks and intrigues of the factions, who have strutted upon the boards of the Common Hall for the last twenty years, are without parallel; and, when I come to that epoch of my history at which I became a liveryman, it shall be my business to unmask many a hypocrite, and to exhibit these mock reformers in their true colours. In performing this duty I shall divest myself of every personal consideration; and in drawing the true characters of the great rivals, Wood and Waithman, I will, if possible, divest myself of prejudice, and do them both justice. The result of the last general election for the city not only speaks the sense of the livery, but it is a pretty fair criterion by which the public may estimate the value of each of these characters. The inestimable conduct of Mr. Alderman Wood, with regard to the affairs of the Queen, has placed him upon that eminence to which his honesty and public spirit so eminently entitle him.

On the third of November, the Emperor Paul of Russia laid an embargo on three hundred British ships, and sequestered all British property in the ports of Russia. Thus he who, at the commencement of the year, was our most vigorous and magnanimous ally, became, at the latter end of it, one of our most powerful and inveterate foes. British gold and British influence could, however, now command the use of the bow-string in Russia, as it had heretofore directed the use of the guillotine in France; for, on the 23d of March, he was found murdered in his chamber, and his amiable and ingenuous son, Alexander, the present tyrant, succeeded him, he being understood to be better disposed to listen to the proposals of the Cabinet of St. James's.

On the last day of this year, the Union was completed between England and Ireland, and the degradation of that brave and high spirited people was celebrated in London, on the first day of the nineteenth century, by hoisting a standard upon the Tower, and an imperial ensign was displayed by the foot guards. A new great seal was also used on account of the Union. The Imperial Parliament also met on the first day of the year, and commenced its first session.

The commencement of the new century had been celebrated the year before, on the first day of the year 1800; but it was now discovered, by the wisdom of John Gull, that the new century did not commence till the old one was finished, and therefore millions, who had before celebrated it, now performed the ceremony over again. I was then, as I now am, in a gaol, but I was in a very different gaol from this. When St. Paul's clock struck twelve, all the bells in the metropolis struck up a merry peal. I had sat up later than it was my custom, on purpose to welcome in the new year; and as Mr. Waddington was retired to rest, I had called up Filewood, the turnkey of the lobby of the King's Bench, and had treated him with a glass of grog and a pipe. Twenty years ago, at this very hour of twelve, I was smoking my pipe in a gaol. Gracious God! the scenes that I have since witnessed, how they crowd upon my memory! The recollection of that night is as familiar to my imagination as if it were yesterday. I was in a prison to be sure, but I had every accommodation that was necessary; all my friends had free access to me, from daylight till ten o'clock at night; and my family might have remained with me the whole time, day and night, if I had chosen that they should do so. I was never locked into my room, and I could at all times pass into the yard, and was within call of the turnkey and his family; and the communication to my friend Mr. Waddington's apartments was always open. In fact, it would have been truly ridiculous had it been otherwise. The same apartments which I inhabited had been previously occupied by Mr. Horne Tooke, Lord Thanet, and many other eminent political men who had fallen into the clutches of the harpies of the bar and the bench; and never did the slightest inconvenience arise to the marshal, or any of his officers, in consequence of treating such prisoners committed to his custody with that sort of consideration which made them easy and contented under unpleasant circumstances. Such liberal treatment always produced a corresponding feeling and action in the prisoners, and I never heard of any instance of disagreement between them. I know that, in our case, so far from any complaint being made on either side, Mr. Waddington, myself, and the marshal always continued, and we parted, upon the best terms, mutually satisfied with each other. But what a contrast was that to my present situation in this gaol, one of the most confined, unhealthy, and inconvenient gaols in the kingdom! Since the high sheriff came to my relief, my confinement is considerably softened, particularly by the admission of the female branches of my family: but the contrast is yet such as to beggar description. In the first place, I am shut up in a complete dungeon; it is true, I have a window, but that is rendered almost useless by its opening into a small yard, of about ten yards square, surrounded entirely by a dark wall, nearly twenty feet high. This being situated on the north side of a very high building, both light and air are excluded. I have not caught a glimpse of the sun from this yard or room,

since October. In the next place, no friend or any other person is admitted till nine in the morning, and not after four in the afternoon; so that my family, who, in consequence of Sir Charles Bampfylde's interference, are now permitted to see me, are yet compelled to submit to the inconvenience and expense of passing seventeen hours out of the four and twenty at the inn, to be enabled to see me for the remaining seven. At six o'clock in the afternoon I am locked up in solitary confinement, in my room, (some time back it was at five); all the outward doors surrounding my burying vault of a yard are also closed for the night; and, as my dungeon is situated in a remote part of the gaol, I never hear the sound of a human voice till the door of my cage is opened, at seven o'clock in the morning; so that, for thirteen hours, I have no possibility of making any one hear, let what might happen, either from illness or accident; a month back it was fifteen hours, from five till eight. To remove this unpleasant and brutal inconvenience, a worthy and considerate visiting magistrate, Aaron Moody, Esq. of Kingston, very properly ordered, amongst many other necessary improvements of my den, that a bell should be hung, to enable me to call one of the officers of the gaol, when I might want any thing; but I am now deprived of this common and necessary accommodation by the order of Mr. Gaoler, who forsooth has caused the bell to be muffled, and the wire pegged, so as to render it totally useless. The reader must find it difficult to discover the motives for this and a hundred other daily acts of petty tyranny that are practised upon me here; and, to render this conduct the more pointed, unjust, and odious, the bell which was hung at the same time, and for the same purpose, in the room of my fellow-prisoner, Mr. Kinnear, remains untouched, for his constant use and convenience. And yet I understand my gentleman gaoler complains of what he calls my attacks upon him, although he cannot deny the truth of one of my statements.

From the comparison which I have drawn, the reader will perceive, that one month's imprisonment in this bastile, is worse than a year's imprisonment in the King's Bench. In the King's Bench I enjoyed the rational society of all my friends, and I was particularly pleased with the society of Mr. Clifford. I have since suffered many great inconveniences and disappointments, which I might have avoided, if I had given credit to some of his statements, which, at the time, I thought totally impossible to be correct, but which I have since, by experience, and to my cost and sorrow, found to be true to the very letter. I was induced by him to believe many of the infamous acts attributed to the ministers and their agents, and the cruelties practised by their tools and myrmidons; but it was not possible for me to give full credence to many of the stories and anecdotes which he recounted of the Judges upon the bench, in connivance with the gentlemen at the bar. It was difficult to make me comprehend and credit, the infamous and disgraceful practice of the masters of the crown office, in procuring and packing a special jury, which he assured me was constantly and invariably done in every political cause, where the crown was the prosecutor; but he brought me so many proofs, that, at length, it was worse than self-deception to doubt it. But that the Judges upon the Bench, in violation of their solemn oaths, would lend themselves to delay, to deny, or sell justice, was a crime which I could not be persuaded to imagine was within the verge of possibility, though he solemnly assured me that all this was not only

done, but that it was the every day practice, particularly in political matters. To think that, upon the ex-parte statement of one of the counsel, a Judge would submit to make himself acquainted with the case before he came into court; to think that a Judge could be _spoken with_ privately, upon a cause that he was going to try openly in public court, that he would be influenced by unworthy motives, or take a _bribe_, was so abhorrent to every notion of justice that I had imbibed, it was to me so horrible, that I could scarcely listen with any degree of temper to his recital of numerous instances of the kind, which, he assured us, had come within his own knowledge.

If I could have had the wisdom to have listened and have improved from the excellent information that I gained from Mr. Clifford, how many painful and useless exertions I might have saved myself, how many difficulties might I have avoided! But it was not in my nature to believe such things, or to think mankind, and particularly the Judges of the land, such hypocrites, or such base tools as he represented them to be. And such is the natural feeling and habits of an Englishman, that he imbibes the notion of reverence for the Judges of the land at a very early period. We are taught this almost as early as we are taught the Lord's prayer, and it is nearly as easy to eradicate the one, as the other, such is the effect of early impressions. Poor Clifford! how often have I heard him exclaim, "of all tyrannies, that which is carried on under the _forms_ of law and justice is the worst." How well he understood the practice of the courts, and the trickery of the Judges; every word he ever communicated to me upon this subject I now believe to be true, my own experience has since confirmed it. He gave us the history, a full account, of the treatment of those persons who were confined in dungeons for political purposes under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; and amongst others he described the cruel and unnatural treatment of poor Colonel Despard, who was then confined in the Tower, and who had been imprisoned at that time for five or six years. Mr. Clifford was employed by Colonel Despard, and offered to convince me that his description of his treatment was correct, by introducing me to him any morning that I would accompany him to the Tower; which I promised to do the first opportunity, and a day was fixed accordingly for the interview.

I received frequent communications from home to say that all my large farming concerns were going on well, in fact those were glorious times for farmers; the price of corn and all sorts of agricultural produce was enormous, and as I had grown most excellent crops that season, my profits were very ample. My bailiff wrote me word, that he continued to obtain the highest price in Devizes market for my corn, both for wheat and barley, and one week he sold wheat for five guineas a sack, and barley for five pounds a quarter. This was once thrown in my face by an upstart of the name of Captain Gee, when I was standing a contested election at Bristol. The gentleman put the question to me upon the hustings, whether I had not, or whether my father had not, sold his wheat for fifty pounds a load in Marlborough market? I was saved the trouble of an answer by the observation of a sensible, shrewd mechanic, a freeman of that city; who said, "Well, and suppose he did, what has that to do with the merit or demerit of a representative who is contending for our rights and liberties? Was Mr. Hunt not justified in selling his corn for the best

price that he could obtain for it? It is only a proof that he had a good article to get a good price for it. Suppose that he had sold his wheat for five pounds a load, while other people were selling it at fifty pounds a load, do you mean to tell us, that _we here in Bristol_, should have got our flour or our bread any the cheaper for it?" The captain was silent, and my apologist continued, "Do you believe, sir, if Mr. Hunt had given away his corn, that the millers or the bakers would have sold it to us any the cheaper? then let us have no more of your nonsense; what would you have said if your old uncle, the tobacconist, had sold his tobacco for one shilling a pound while other people were selling it at three shillings a pound?" As his scheme did not answer, the captain slunk away and asked no more questions. I always felt great pride in obtaining the highest price for my _corn; because_ it was a sure proof, that I carried the best corn to the market, and the farmer who grows the greatest quantity of, and the finest, corn, not only benefits himself, but, instead of being an enemy to the poor, he is their best friend, as he contributes the largest share to the common stock of provisions for their support.

My family meanwhile remained at home, it not being deemed advisable, under such circumstances, to remove them to London, for so short a time as six weeks. Mrs. Hunt had to take care of an infant son, now about four months old, and, besides, I had no one but her to depend upon, to manage the domestic concerns of so large an establishment as I then kept up, and which was absolutely necessary for so large a farming business as I carried on. Every thing, however, went on smoothly and prosperously; and I had no lack of visitors, who were very numerous, both from London and the country, and perhaps no nobleman in London was better supplied with game than I was. I received daily presents from all quarters, particularly from the members of the yeomanry cavalry, not only of the county of Wilts, but from various other counties.

Though the whole body of the yeomanry considered themselves insulted in my person, yet the boasted resolution of those members of the Wiltshire yeomanry, who had declared that they would resign if I had any punishment inflicted upon me, was never carried into effect, with one solitary exception, which was that of my friend Mr. Wm. Butcher, who wrote from London, the day after my sentence, and sent in his resignation, assigning openly as the cause, that he would not continue in a service in which he was liable to be insulted with impunity, by the caprice of a superior officer, or liable to be prosecuted, if he resented a wanton insult with the spirit of a man of honour and a gentleman. But Wm. Tinker of Lavington, who had so often volunteered to resent what he called an insult offered to every man in the regiment, never resigned, or mentioned the subject afterward; and he, amongst all my numerous friends, was the only one who failed to send me some game, though he was a great sportsman, and did me the favour to hunt and shoot over my farms in my absence.

Unlike some other gaolers, the marshal of the King's Bench was not above his business; he never for a moment neglected his duty to the prisoners. He did not act, as if he felt it to be his only business to tyrannize over, to harrass, to oppress, to punish, and to torture those unfortunate persons who were committed to his custody. On the contrary, he took especial care to protect his prisoners from insult, imposition, or

cruelty. Instead of employing his time to devise means of annoyance against those who were placed in his custody, he occupied it in a very different manner. He knew that it was his duty (and he acted up to the letter and spirit of it) to take every means in his power to make each prisoner as comfortable as his situation would admit, and, above all, to shield him from any insult or ill treatment from the officers of the prison; and to take care that the prisoners were not imposed upon by those who served them with provisions and necessaries. He made a point of going frequently into the prison during market time, and if he found any bad meat, butter, or other provisions, brought into the prison, he would, for example sake, have it seized and destroyed; and he frequently, without previous notice, went round with his officers to examine the weights and measures, so that his prisoners were completely guarded from imposition and extortion; and a man in the King's Bench prison could lay out the little money he had to spend, to as much advantage as he could in any market in the kingdom. In fact, Mr. Jones, the marshal, was a humane as well as a charitable man, and he encouraged the prisoners to make excellent and just regulations for their own government; but the refractory, those who would not be governed by the rules of well regulated society, and who violated all moral obligations, were made to feel the weight of his power. He was a magistrate of the county of Surrey, it, therefore, was not necessary for him to perform the farce of sending for a _visiting magistrate_. Any ungovernable delinquent was brought before him, and after a fair hearing, if it appeared upon oath that he merited it, he was committed for a month to Horsemonger Lane prison, or sentenced to be confined in the refractory room. I do not remember a single instance of any one being punished by him unjustly. When it was necessary for the marshal to use severity against any man, it generally had the sanction of an immense majority of that man's fellow-prisoners. The only one that was punished, during the six weeks that I was there, was a drunken captain, who, in one of his paroxysms, had smashed all the chapel windows, and committed several other depredations upon the property of his fellow prisoners. He was put into the strong room till the next day, when he was brought up, and after an open and patient hearing, it being found that he had nothing to urge in his defence except drunkenness, he was sent to Horsemonger Lane for a month. No secret inflictions, no acts of torture were permitted in this gaol. Punishment, when requisite, was given openly, and fairly, and consistently with the true principles of justice, and every one knew what measure of it was meted out to the offender. As there are frequently a great number of profligate characters within the walls, it was highly necessary to have some good rules and regulations, _some local laws_, to protect the well-disposed, the innocent, and the unfortunate, (of whom there was always a great number) from the insults and depredations of such abandoned persons. These _local laws_, though they were administered with strict justice by Mr. Jones, yet, as far as my own observation enabled me to judge, they were invariably tempered with mercy. There were frequently six or seven, and sometimes eight hundred prisoners within the walls, and the marshal had a great responsibility upon his hands, yet every thing was conducted with liberality. He had extensive power, yet I never saw any man exercise power with more discretion and moderation than he did.

The reader will recollect that this is my opinion now, my confirmed

opinion at this period, after having been three times committed to his custody by the _Honourable_ Court of King's Bench. A second time, for having given a good thrashing to a ruffian who was hired to assault me as I was riding along the high road, and who was proved to have actually assaulted me first. The Judge, Baron Graham, upon the trial at Salisbury, instructed the jury to find me guilty of an assault, though he admitted it to be clearly proved that the fellow had committed the first assault. His argument, if so it may be called, was, that I had given him more than an equivalent beating in return: had I, he said, only struck him once, I should have been justified; but, as I had struck him three times with my fist, it was an assault; and for this I was sentenced to _three months_ to the custody of the marshal. But it will be recollected that I was then become a political character, and had been the means of calling two meetings for the county of Wilts. The third time was preparatory to my visit here--but more of these things at the proper period.

While I was in the King's Bench, many anecdotes came to my knowledge, relating to certain political characters, which it would be neither just nor prudent to mention here, and indeed it might justly be considered a breach of confidence. I must, therefore, withhold the publication of them till I have the permission of those who communicated them to me. There were also numerous most important matters, communicated to me by Mr. Henry Clifford, with whom, as the reader has already been told, I soon became closely intimate, which I do not feel justified in promulgating, as they are of an extraordinary character, and would be scarcely credited, the parties not being alive either to contradict or to confirm them.

Henry Clifford was a most intelligent man, and Doctor Gabriel was likewise an intelligent man; and these two individuals gave me a clear insight into the practice of the persons who were concerned in the courts of law, and the church. I was not more astonished at the trickery, deception, and complete delusion of the former profession, than I was at the cant and hypocrisy of the latter. I soon became a disciple of Clifford's, yet so astonished was I with his account of the mummery of the courts, and the farcical deception of what was called the administration of justice, particularly in all political matters, that I really looked with such astonishment, and sometimes with such a suspicious and unbelieving eye, that he frequently thought it necessary to bring me living proof, and incontrovertible demonstration, of the truth of his assertions; nor was it till he had done so, that he could bring me to acknowledge that I was convinced of their correctness. To the doctrine so unequivocally maintained by the worthy dignitary of the church, Dr. Gabriel, I became a convert with even still more tardiness.

Mr. Waddington was an intelligent man, and he had seen a great deal of the world. As a citizen of London, he had called a public meeting, at the Paul's Head Tavern, to _petition for peace_; and this public-spirited and truly constitutional act was at that period quite sufficient to draw down the vengeance of Pitt and his myrmidons. His ruin was decided upon by them, and he was handed over to the care of the minister's pliant, powerful and dangerous tools, the Judges of the then Court of King's Bench, the chief performer being Lloyd Lord Kenyon. Mr. Clifford assured me, that which was afterwards proved in the same court, that there was

neither law nor justice in Mr. Waddington's persecution; but that the minister had determined to destroy him for his decisive opposition to his measures in the city; and he had not the least doubt but they would accomplish the ruin of his fortune, though he was then worth one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. It will be shewn hereafter how completely this prediction was verified.

One morning, while we were at breakfast, Mr. Filewood came in, and told us that two very elegant ladies were brought into the prison for debt, and that they were in the greatest distress, as they appeared to be deserted by all their friends, and had scarcely money sufficient to procure the common necessaries of life. This was quite sufficient to induce Mr. Waddington and myself to interest ourselves in their behalf, and we made the necessary inquiries, in which we were assisted with great alacrity by the officers of the gaol, and we learned that the parties were, a gentlewoman and her daughter; the mother being arrested for a considerable sum, and being sent into the gaol, the daughter had accompanied her. A polite letter, tendering our humble aid, was sent to the ladies, accompanied with an invitation to dinner. This invitation was accepted, but a difficulty arose, as we were without the walls, and the ladies were within, which appeared at first view to be an insurmountable obstacle to their visiting us; for, although we could pass into the prison, yet no prisoner within the walls could pass out, unless by a day-rule in term time, or the special permission of the marshal, which no one expected to obtain without giving sufficient security. I, nevertheless, determined to apply to the marshal, as we were not to be driven, without an effort, from the pleasure of doing a kind action after we had once made up our minds to it. We knew the character of the marshal to be that of a gentleman, and as I felt no dread at the idea of placing myself under an obligation to such a man, I, without further ceremony, waited upon him, and communicated the circumstances and our wishes upon the subject. Without the slightest hesitation he granted my request, and having called his deputy, he demanded the reason why he had not been made acquainted with the situation of the ladies who had been brought in the night before, and he called for the books to know who the lady was, and what sum she was in for. It was found that her name was M---e, and that she was detained for three hundred pounds. I immediately offered to the marshal to become security for the sum, if he had any difficulty about it. His only answer was, "Your word, Mr. Hunt, is quite sufficient;" and turning to the officer, he said, "Recollect, sir, that Mrs. M---e and her daughter have free access to Mr. Hunt's and Mr. Waddington's apartments, to dine, drink tea, and spend the evening whenever they please to invite them; and take care also that they have a good room provided for them, if they have not already got such within the walls." Thus it was at all times with this worthy man. I never knew him interpose to prevent an act of kindness or of charity to a prisoner; but, on the contrary, he was always ready to promote their comfort, and willing to assist in relieving the distresses of those who were in affliction.

Mrs. M--- and her daughter arrived at the hour appointed. She was a tall, elegant figure, apparently upwards of fifty, and her face, though clouded by misfortune, bore evident traces of no common beauty. Her manners and address were at once graceful, dignified, and unembarrassed. Her daughter

was a pretty little interesting girl of eighteen, and, though she was very accomplished, yet it was easy to discover that she had not received that highly refined education, nor enjoyed those advantages which can only be acquired by associating with persons who have moved in the first circles of fashionable society; all which advantages her mother evidently possessed in a very eminent degree. Mrs. M---- appeared to be well acquainted with Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and some of the royal family; but as the conversation turned upon general subjects, we did not enter into any further particulars on the first visit. We confined ourselves to making arrangements for the future comfort of the ladies, while they remained within the walls, and this object, Mr. Waddington and myself, with the cheerful cooperation of the marshal, easily contrived to promote.

After a visit or two I became enthusiastically interested in the fate of Mrs. M----. I discovered that she had moved a great deal in the higher circles, and was particularly well acquainted with the ministers of the crown, and a certain great personage. As she saw that she had excited, if not an interest, at least a great curiosity in my breast, she told me that she was the natural daughter of the late, the great, Marquis of G----, and that, as her's had been a most eventful life, she would relate to me some very extraordinary incidents in it, if I would favour her with an interview some morning. This was readily assented to, and our meeting was fixed for the following day. Her history was briefly as follows:--she had been brought up by the Marquis of G----, and educated by him, with great care and tenderness. She married young, and was an early widow. After the death of her husband, she fell a victim to the seductive powers of old Harry D----s, and became his mistress, which she continued to be for many years. During that time she had an opportunity of seeing a great deal of Mr. Pitt, of whom and his associates she told me a vast number of anecdotes, which will not do to mention here. Her old paramour at length became tired of her, and a very extraordinary event led to an opportunity of shifting her off his hands, without the inconvenience of making her a settlement. A certain great personage was at that time labouring under a distressing malady. The physicians in attendance came to the conclusion, that it was necessary that their patient should have a female attendant during the night; and the finding of a proper person for the occasion was the only obstacle which interposed to prevent their carrying their wish into effect. Old Harry D----s proposed to obviate this difficulty, by making a sacrifice, as he pretended, of his favourite mistress, upon condition that an annuity of four hundred pounds should be settled upon her. This proposal was immediately accepted, and the terms were acceded to by the family of the afflicted personage. Though the wary old Scotchman was delighted to get rid of his mistress upon such advantageous terms for himself, or rather to drive such an excellent bargain, yet he all the time professed that he was making the greatest sacrifice in the world, and doing the greatest violence to his feelings, by parting with a beloved object; a sacrifice which he was induced to make solely from the love and veneration which he bore to his afflicted master. She assured us of her belief that, by these means, he obtained the greatest favours and the most splendid reward, while she, for the sum of four hundred a year, consented to submit to the embraces of a madman.

The patient recovered, and she was turned adrift, without her salary being

regularly paid. She had contracted a debt of three hundred pounds, for which she was sent to the King's Bench prison, though she convinced me, by documents that she produced, that she had at the time seven quarters of her salary, seven hundred pounds, due to her from the said great personage; less than half of which would have saved her from a gaol.

This circumstance, however extraordinary it may appear, was not only confirmed by very credible witnesses, but also by most indisputable documentary proof; and, as a confirmation of its correctness, Mr. Dundas, who was subsequently Lord Melville, a few days afterwards came in person to bail her into the rules, which I sincerely believe that he never would have done, if he had not heard of the company that she had fallen into. Mrs. M---- and her daughter were at dinner with Mr. Waddington and myself, when Mr. Dundas sent for her out; but we made him wait till she had finished her dinner, declaring that we would be her bail, rather than she should submit to receive a favour from such an unnatural being. This lady gave me a history of the then court, and she was familiar with extraordinary anecdotes relating to most of the persons connected with the ministers as well as the royal family. The recital of so much infamy and intrigue, when coupled with what I had heard from Mr. Clifford, of the practices of the law and the courts of justice, and from Dr. Gabriel, with respect to the debaucheries of the most dignified members of the church, and the hypocrisy of many of its puritanical preachers, really made me almost believe that I was got into a new world, and that the men and women of which it was composed were a different species from those with whom I had been in the habit of associating; in fact it opened to my view such scenes of villainy, fraud, hypocrisy, and injustice, practised upon mankind by those who contrived to govern them by what is called religion and law, that I involuntarily re-echoed, with an exclamation, the sentiments of Mr. Clifford, and pronounced aloud, "That there is no tyranny so infamous as that which is carried on under the forms of law and justice."

I had here an opportunity of meeting men of talent and men of experience, and particularly some eminent men of the law, who, although they were not public characters, like Mr. Clifford, and therefore did not promulgate their sentiments so publicly as he did, yet all admitted the truth of his description of the state of the courts of law; and my Lord Kenyon was spoken of with great freedom, and his decisions were canvassed with very little ceremony.

I have already mentioned, that Colonel Despard was confined in the Tower, by the Secretary of State, Lord Hobart, in virtue of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, and that Mr. Clifford had promised that he would take me to the Tower, and introduce me to the colonel. The day having at length arrived for the performance of his promise, Clifford called on me, and we walked together to London Bridge, where we took a boat to Tower stairs.

After entering our names in the book, which has been invariably the practice at the Tower, we were admitted to the apartment of Colonel Despard. He was a mild gentleman-like man.

Mr. Clifford introduced me by name, as a country friend of his, and the

colonel received me with great courtesy and politeness. During our stay he inveighed with some warmth against the injustice of his treatment, and the protracted length of his imprisonment, which he said, I think, was then nearly six years. Two beef-eaters were always in the room with him, when any person was admitted, and they never left the room, even when his wife came to see him; but, as far as was in their power, consistent with the orders which they had received, and were obliged to obey, they conducted themselves with great propriety and civility toward the colonel and his friends. He laughed heartily at the idea of a visit from me, who was at the time a prisoner in the King's Bench, and Clifford surprised him when he said, that I had entered my name "Mr. Henry Hunt, King's Bench," which I had done.

To shew me the stile in which the procession accompanied the prisoner, Mr. Clifford proposed a walk upon the terrace. He had described this ceremony to me, and it appeared so preposterous, that he saw I looked doubtful as to whether I should believe him to be serious. When he observed that I looked suspicious, he always took uncommon pains to convince me by some unequivocal proof, and this was his motive for proposing a walk. A guard of soldiers was called, and the procession was as follows:--One of the beef-eaters walked first, with his sword drawn; then followed two soldiers, carrying arms, with their bayonets fixed; then came Colonel Despard, with Mr. Clifford and myself, one on each side of him; immediately behind us marched two more soldiers, carrying arms, with fixed bayonets; and another beef-eater, with a drawn sword, brought up the rear. In this manner we walked the parade or terrace for about half an hour, taking care to speak loud, so that the whole of our conversation was heard by the beef-eaters. After our walk we sat with him a short time, and then took our leave.

Anxious to hear something more of the particulars relating to the confinement of the colonel, I called a coach, and ordered the coachman to put us down at the King's Bench, where Mr. Clifford had engaged to dine with us. As we rode along, I began to ply my companion, to inform me what desperate offence Colonel Despard had committed, which called for such rigorous treatment. His answer was this--"He served the government faithfully and zealously, as a soldier; he advanced money for them upon some foreign station; but the government was ungrateful and ungenerous to him, and in consequence of some quibble, they have refused to repay him what he advanced on their account. He complained and remonstrated, he became importunate for justice, he was considered troublesome, and for complaining they have sent him to prison, under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, as the only effectual means of answering his just complaints." "And can it be possible," I asked, "that justice will not in the end be done to this unfortunate gentleman?" "Depend upon it," replied Clifford, "he is too honest ever to gain redress. If he would crouch and truckle to his persecutors, he might not only be set at liberty, but all that they have robbed him of would be returned. This, however, he never will do. He, poor fellow! expects that when the operation of the Habeas Corpus act is restored, he will be able to bring his cruel persecutors to justice; but he will be deceived! He is marked out for one of that monster, Pitt's, victims. When he comes out, which will be when the suspension act expires, and not before, I know that he will demand to be

put upon his trial. But the ministers, who have always a corrupt majority at their beck, will easily procure an act of indemnity; and as they have nothing to charge him with, they will refuse to give him a trial, and they will laugh at him. And this is the boasted freedom of the people of England! This is the way in which the ministers serve those who oppose them! These are the methods they take, first to punish, and then to drive their opponents into violence and into acts of desperation!!! I know that he will complain, and that he has just cause of complaint, and I dread the consequence, because I know full well their arts, and the power which they have to carry their diabolical plans into execution. If he be troublesome, they will stick at nothing, and I should not be the least surprised if they were ultimately to have some of their spies to swear away his life!"

Gracious God! I little thought how prophetic these words were. Was this really the case, Mr. _Justice Best_? you were his counsel upon his trial; you must know if this were really the case!!! But more of this hereafter. After the death of poor Despard, Clifford and myself never met that I did not recall to his recollection, the prophetic conversation that took place in the coach, as we passed over London Bridge, and up the Borough, on our return from the Tower.

All the particulars of the trial and the execution of Colonel Despard are fresh in my memory; but I shall be much obliged to some friend, who may chance to read this, to send me the _Trial_ itself, through my publisher, Mr. Dolby. I shall also be much pleased, if some one will furnish me with the names of those persons who were waiting in readiness to come forward and prove that the witnesses, who swore to the facts against the colonel, were persons of the most infamous character, and not worthy to be believed upon their oaths; which persons were neglected to be called by Mr. Sergeant Best. Clifford told me their names often, but they do not occur to me now; therefore I shall be obliged to some one to furnish me with the particulars.

When we got back to the King's Bench, we were informed, by Mr. Waddington, that there had been a great inquiry for me in my absence, as some friends out of the country had been to visit me, and had, foolishly enough, made much stir in the King's Bench in their endeavour to find me. Mr. Waddington, however, having learned what was going on, satisfied their inquiries so far as to induce them to be quiet, and promise to call the next day. Some of my readers will be surprised that a prisoner should have been from home! But the fact was, that I was committed to the _custody of the Marshal of the Court_ for six weeks, and I had given him ample security for being at all times ready to appear, in case he should be called upon to produce his prisoner. They were not then so particular as they now are.

The visit to the Tower made a lasting impression upon my mind, and, after what I had witnessed, I was easily persuaded by Mr. Clifford that the account which he gave me of the treatment of other prisoners confined under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, was perfectly true. These horrible facts created in my breast a deep-rooted never-ceasing antipathy to that tyranny which is perpetrated under the disguise, under the false colour, the mere forms of law and justice, and sanctioned by the

hypocritical mummeries of superstition, instead of real religion. After dinner, Clifford described to us a scene of which he had been a spectator in the Tower, the week before, when he went there with Mrs. Despard to consult with the colonel, and to make his will; the colonel being then, and having long been labouring under a serious complaint, which had been brought on by the length of his confinement, and which was considered as dangerous by his physician. During the whole of that time the beef-eaters remained in the room so that even the sacred obligation of making his last will could not be performed, unless it was done in the presence and in the hearing of the officers of the Tower; and they actually became the subscribing witnesses to his will.

I had now become acquainted with many political characters, and I was frequently invited by Mr. Clifford to go down to Wimbledon with him, on a Sunday, to join the public parties of Mr. Horne Tooke, from whom he promised to insure me a hearty welcome. Deep-rooted vulgar prejudice against this extraordinary and highly gifted man had, however, got such possession of my feelings, that I continually made some excuse; for I had imbibed a notion that he was an artful intriguing person, of an insinuating address, who frequently led young politicians into scrapes and difficulties. My idea of him in politics was, that he was a violent Jacobin, and an enemy to his King and country; and this was quite enough to make me avoid his company. The real fact was, that I was afraid to trust myself in his society. I had no wish to become a politician, and as I found that the principles of liberty, which Mr. Clifford inculcated, had made a considerable impression upon my mind, I was afraid to encourage too far my natural propensity to resist injustice, oppression, and tyranny. I did not wish to fan the flame which Mr. Clifford's eloquence and convincing arguments had lighted in my breast. Another reason for my refusing to make one of the Wimbledon parties was, the probability that I should there meet with Sir Francis Burdett, whom I was induced to look upon almost as a political madman, a dangerous firebrand in the hands of Mr. Tooke, who appeared to me to be nothing less than a designing incendiary. Mr. Clifford took some pains to persuade me out of my ridiculous notions; yet, in the account which he gave me of Mr. Tooke's character, he in some measure confirmed me in the opinion that I had previously formed, as Mr. Tooke certainly made Sir F. Burdett a puppet to carry on his hostility against those ministers who had persecuted him, and aimed a deadly blow at his life.

Mr. Tooke was a man of profound talent, a persevering friend of liberty, and an implacable foe to the measures of Mr. Pitt. But he only supported partial, not general liberty: he was no friend of universal suffrage; he supported the householder, or rather the direct tax paying suffrage. To those who contended for universal suffrage, namely, the Duke of Richmond, Major Cartwright, and others, he made this comprehensive, intelligible reply, "You may go all the way to Windsor, if you please, but I shall stop short at Hounslow;" thus implying, that he was not prepared to give political freedom to more than one half of the people, that he would not go farther than Hounslow, which is not half way to Windsor. Sir Francis Burdett gloried in being thought a disciple of Mr. Tooke.

The Sunday parties at Wimbledon were composed of the disaffected persons

in London and Westminster. Amongst the number stood pre-eminent the noted Charing-Cross tailor, Frank Place, who was always an avowed republican _by profession;_ poor Samuel Miller, the shoemaker, in Skinner-street, Snow-hill; poor old Thomas Hardy, and many others, with whom I did not become acquainted till some time after this period, though I collected their characters from my friend Clifford. Mr. Thelwall had cut the concern, and set up in another line, that of a fashionable teacher of elocution.

At this period my taste leaned more to the sports of the field, to hunting, shooting, and fishing, than to any thing else; and as these amusements were more congenial to my habits and my large farming concerns in the country, I never, while I was the first time in prison, sought much for political information, though I necessarily heard a great deal of politics from my friends Waddington and Clifford, as well as from numerous political characters with whom I became acquainted, in consequence of their coming to visit the former gentleman. Indeed, seldom a day passed without seeing some half dozen or half score of them. Mr. Waddington's friends were almost all opposition men in politics; but his relations were one and all backbone loyalists, or rather royalists.

My young friend, William Butcher, was delighted with the society of Mr. Clifford. Butcher was a disciple of Thomas Paine; he had been bred up in a country village, where the clergyman, Mr. Evans, of Little Bedwin, who was his associate, had instilled into his mind all the principles of Paine, both political and theological, and consequently Butcher was delighted with the society that he had met with at our table. Butcher was a famous great arm-chair politician; over the bottle he would be as valiant as any man, yet he would never _act_. The reason he used to assign for never meddling in active politics was, that, except in a republic, no private citizen could ever attain the eminence of being the first man in the country; and no man, he thought, could have a proper stimulus, unless he could hope to be placed at the head of the government. Washington was his idol, and the American constitution was his creed in politics. He was enraptured to hear me listen with so much earnestness and attention to the political dogmas of Clifford, as he was pleased to call them; for Mr. Clifford never professed to wish for a republican government; he always contended that the English constitution, if it were administered in its purity, was quite good enough for Englishmen. In this opinion I then concurred with him, and from this opinion I have never once in my life swerved, up to this hour. A government of King, Lords, and Commons, so that the latter are fairly chosen by all the commons, would secure to us the full enjoyment of rational liberty. I am for that liberty which is secured and protected by the government of the laws, and not by the government of the sword. But those laws must be such as are made by the _whole_ commons, the whole people of England, and not the arbitrary laws that are made by the few for the government of the whole; not the laws that are made by the few, for the partial and unjust benefit of the few, at the expence and cost of the whole.

Mr. Clifford was the brother-in-law of Sir Charles Wolseley, the worthy Baronet's first lady being Mr. Clifford's sister. My good and excellent friend, and true radical, Sir Charles Wolseley, baronet, is, as well as

myself, the political disciple of the honest Counsellor Clifford. If Clifford, poor fellow! were now alive, how he would laugh to see two of his staunchest and most disinterested political disciples caught in the toils of the boroughmongers! But he would also laugh to see the melancholy state to which the said boroughmongers are reduced! Now they have caught us they do not know what to do with us.

Through Mr. Clifford I learned how they managed matters in the courts, and Mr. Waddington, who by this time had had considerable experience, was most violent against the injustice of the persecution which he had experienced. At this period he possessed a large quantity of hops, perhaps half the hops in the kingdom, which he had purchased upon a speculation, that there would be a very bad crop. His calculations turned out to be correct, and the hops that he had purchased at ten pounds a hundred were now worth twenty-two and twenty-three pounds. They were all in the Borough, and he was selling them off, at this advance in price, when the conspiracy was formed against him, at the head of which was Mr. Timothy Brown, of the firm of Whitbread and Brown. Mr. Pitt, in order to punish Mr. Waddington, for calling the meeting at the Paul's Head Tavern, in the City, to petition the King for peace, and the removal of ministers, lent himself and his agents to further the objects of this conspiracy of brewers against Mr. Waddington; and as Kenyon, the chief justice, was a devoted instrument of the minister's, Mr. Waddington was not only fined and sentenced to six months imprisonment, for forestalling hops, but acts of parliament were passed to permit the brewers to use foreign hops, quassia, or any other drug, or ingredient, as a substitute. By these unjustifiable and partial proceedings, the very same hops that were worth, and had been selling at, twenty-three pounds a hundred, were reduced down to five pounds, and even to three pounds a hundred.

Mr. Timothy Brown was at the head of those brewers who acted as the tools of the minister, to persecute Mr. Waddington, not for forestalling hops, but actually for standing up to do his duty in the city of London, as a liveryman, to oppose the ruinous system of ministers; and it is the best proof that can be given of his earnestness and sincerity, that they never relaxed in their persecutions against him till they had ruined him. He was a merchant, a banker at Maidstone, and a trader, and, of course, he was largely concerned in money transactions. Now the government can always silence any man in this situation, or ruin him and his credit, if he becomes really sincere in his opposition to them; and this is one good reason why we radicals have nothing to expect from merchants, bankers, and traders. The ministers have no objection to those persons who carry on a _regular whig opposition_, because that is all in the way of business. They are all in the regiment, and although they are upon what is called half-pay, yet they belong to the regiment, and are always in the expectancy of being called into active service again. The ministers generally employ some of these expectants to do their dirty work for them; and any measure that is prosecuted by the Whigs is, _at least was_, at the time of which I am speaking, thought by a great number of well-meaning but ignorant people, to be perfectly justifiable. As I pass along I shall be able to prove to the reader, how well the _factions_ manage these matters, how skilfully they always play into each other's hands, against the rights, the property, and the liberties of the people. For instance, if

the ministers want any obnoxious measure brought into parliament, such an one as, if it were to be suggested by themselves, would create a great public feeling, alarm, and hostility to it, throughout the country--to wit, if they want to carry a corn bill, to raise or keep up the price of corn three or four shillings a bushel, the effect of which is, to lay a tax of twenty or thirty millions a year upon the people who consume it, they are cunning enough to put forward one of those _shoy-hoy_ Whigs. _Sir Henry Parnell_, an Irish Whig baronet, must, forsooth, be the ostensible parent of the measure, while the ministers are professing openly to be doubtful of its expediency and policy. When all this has been done to sound the people, they, at length, with a seeming reluctance, yield to the suggestions of the landed interest, and the urgency of the state; and should the people begin to be importunate, and remonstrate against the measure, why then it is only necessary to bring upon the scene their principal _shoy-hoy, Westminster's pride,_ to wit; and if he will but just say at a Westminster meeting, "_that the measure is of little consequence either to him or his constituents_;" and if, when he is called upon in the House, by my Lord Castlereagh, to speak honestly his sentiments respecting the measure, he will get up and merely tell the Noble Lord "_that he deserves to be impeached; but that as to the corn bill it will be all the same to him whether it is passed or not, that he is as much for it as against it, but that he does not care which way it goes;_" why then the juggle is rendered complete. Oh, what a farce! What a delusion! but the ministers having got this hero on their side, the measure passes, and the people are duped and deceived. As I proceed in my history, I shall be able to shew to the public how necessary these _shoy-hoys_ are to the ministers, and how often they have successfully played them off against the people. So it was in this case. The Judges knew that there was no law against Mr. Waddington. It was, therefore, necessary to make a shew of great feeling and interest for the welfare of the people; and this Mr. Timothy Brown, who was a Whig, and a partner of Whitbread, was selected as the instrument upon this occasion. He was so selected because he bore Mr. Waddington a personal hatred, and was glad to pursue him with vindictive hostility, for a harmless joke which Mr. Waddington had played upon him. Nor did he cease his attacks upon him till he actually ruined him.

I will now explain the cause of his hatred and hostility. Mr. Waddington, who was an active, intelligent, persevering man of business, and who, besides being a banker at Maidstone, in the heart of East Kent^[23], was also engaged in the hop trade, as a hop merchant in the Borough; was a great speculator in this speculating business, which always was considered as a business of chance rather than of judgment. As, however, games of chance are greatly governed by the penetration of those who play them, Mr. Waddington payed that attention to the growth of hops, that he made it rather a game of certainty than of hazard. In the spring and summer of 1800, this gentleman thought that he discovered a considerable stagnation in the growth of the vine, as well as such a degree of disease generally, in the crop of hops near Maidstone, that he was determined to make a peregrination on foot through the gardens in all the hop districts in Kent and Sussex. He carried his determination into effect; and having made such observations as led to the conclusion, that it would be a very short crop, he made large purchases of the growers, to be delivered at a certain price when picked: this was called fore-hand bargains, and was the invariable

custom of transacting business between the farmers and the factors. Mr. Waddington then started into Worcestershire, and having made a similar survey of the growing crops in that county, and having come to a similar conclusion, he made large purchases also upon the same terms as he had done in Kent. As he returned through London he called upon his friend, Tim Brown, and, in the true spirit of friendship, he communicated to him the result of his travels, and his inspection of the hop gardens, both in Kent and Worcestershire; and, as a proof of his conviction that there would be a short crop, he informed him of the large purchases which he had made; and added, that he should still increase his stock as the season approached; advising, at the same time, his friend Brown, by all means, to lay in a good stock of old hops, and purchase early and largely of new ones.--Mr. Brown affected to hold Mr. Waddington's information very cheap, and in fact treated his advice rather with ridicule than attention.

At length picking time came, and Mr. Waddington's predictions were realised to the very letter; there being not more than a quarter of a crop grown that year. Mr. Brown had not only failed to follow his friend's advice, but, relying upon some other information, had actually neglected to lay in the usual stock for the house of Whitbread & Co. Mr. Waddington, rather piqued at the slight put upon his judgment by his friend Brown, and elated with his own success, sent Mr. Timothy Brown a GOOSE, as a quiz upon him for his want of discernment, and lack of faith in his representations. This innocent joke, which, I understand, was at that time frequently practised by speculating men in the city, so enraged Mr. Brown, that he vowed revenge; and smarting under the loss of not having had the foresight to purchase his hops earlier, before they had risen a hundred per cent. which they had now done, he became one of the remorseless persecutors of, one of the conspirators to prosecute, Mr. Waddington upon an obsolete law, for forestalling.

A verdict having been obtained against Mr. Waddington, for forestalling in Herefordshire, and being about to be tried in Kent, [24]the prosecutors moved, the Court of King's Bench to remove the venue out of Kent, upon the ground, that the farmers were prejudiced so much in favour of Mr. Waddington, that they could not obtain a fair jury. Mr. Law, who was afterwards Lord Ellenborough, was his leading counsel; and upon his argument, and the authorities which he cited, although they were strongly opposed by the counsel on the other side, yet, as the prejudice was proved, Lord Kenyon, upon the principle that the administration ought "not only to be pure, but that it should be above suspicion," made the rule absolute, and the cause was tried in Westminster Hall, by a Middlesex jury. It was mainly upon this case that I rested my application, for the court to remove the cause of the King against Hunt and nine others, for a conspiracy, out of Lancashire into Yorkshire. The Middlesex jury was, however as tractable as that in the country, and he had a second verdict against him, for which he was sentenced to the custody of the Marshal of the King's Bench.

It was while he was undergoing his sentence, that, as I have already mentioned, I became acquainted with him, and I passed my six weeks as pleasantly as I ever passed any six weeks of my life. To be sure it put me to a great expense, and a considerable loss, in taking me from my family,

home, and business; but I gained more real information, more knowledge of the world, and of men and manners; more insight into mercantile, political, and theological affairs than I should have gained in so many years, if I had continued in the country, employing my time in farming, shooting, fox hunting, and attending to the exercise of the yeomanry cavalry. It is more than probable that I should never have taken the lead, (such a lead!) in the political affairs of my country, if I had not thus early been placed in such a situation, and in such company, by the sentence of the Court of King's Bench. Before that period I had, it is true, a natural and an inherent abhorrence of tyranny and oppression, and my excellent parent had instilled into my breast a pure love of justice, and an invincible attachment for fair play; and, therefore, it is not likely that I should ever have been a tool of arbitrary power. Yet, if it had not been for this circumstance, I should never have been such an enthusiast for equal rights, and such a determined enemy to a corrupt, a sham representation.

Mr. Clifford found in me a willing, a zealous proselyte to the cause of rational liberty, and a warm admirer of the principles of universal political freedom. He recommended to my notice the political works of Paine, particularly his *“Rights of Man”*, and applauded my determination never to mingle religious with political discussions, and never to risk the cause of liberty by doing any thing which could excite religious prejudices. Mr. Clifford was a *“Catholic”*, a *“rigid Catholic”*, notwithstanding which, there never lived a more sincere friend of religion as well as of civil toleration. Some of our party were frequently introducing theological discussions; and *“some”*, who ought from their profession to have known better, denounced all religion as relics of superstition. Mr. Clifford, as well as myself and Mr. Waddington, discountenanced, and ultimately prohibited, those subjects. We each professed our faith, and we did not choose to be dictated to, any more than we wished to dictate to others, in matters of conscience.

On my return into the country, I was met at Marlborough by my friend Hancock, who accompanied me to Devizes, where we were joined by a large party of friends, at a dinner, which was provided for the occasion, at the Bear Inn. Some of my more rustic neighbours expressed great surprise to see me look so well, after coming out of a prison; their idea of which had led them to expect to see me look *“thin, pale”*, and *“emaciated”*. On the contrary, they found that I had lost none of my usual ruddy and florid appearance, and, instead of looking as if I had been fed upon bread and water, I had grown stout and fleshy, although I had taken regular exercise, and, compared with my usual habits in the country, had lived moderately, and in fact abstemiously. Yet, with all my precaution, I had so much increased in bulk, that it was very visible to all my friends who had not called on me in London.

I found my wife and children in perfect health, and they warmly greeted my return. In fact, my absence was nothing more than passing six or seven weeks in London. I found all my business going on with great regularity, my stock in good order, and my hunters in excellent condition; and as I longed to taste again the sports of the field, and to mingle in the pleasures of the chase, my favourite mare was ordered to be ready on the

following morning, at the usual hour, that I might ride to join the hounds, which threw off for the occasion within three miles of my house, as the sportsmen were to meet upon the down of my farm at Widdington.

Here I met my old brother sportsmen, who appeared rejoiced to see me once more amongst them; but they one and all declared, that my scarlet coat was grown too small for me. Some said, that I was grown a stone heavier; others, that I was increased two stone; and some bets were made, corresponding with these contending opinions; all, however, agreed, that I was increased very considerably in weight. Like a true sportsman, I knew my weight to an ounce before I went to London. It was twelve stone five pounds. In the midst of this conversation, as we were riding along I espied a hare sitting at a considerable distance; she was started, and off we went, to the music of the many pack of harriers, supported by subscription, but kept by Mr. Tinker, of Lavington.

I was more than commonly elated, and enjoyed the sport with great pleasure; in fact, I entered into the spirit of the chace with the greatest enthusiasm. My beautiful high bred hunter was in admirable condition and spirits, and appeared to participate with the rider in the full zest of the sport; she almost fled with me across the downs, keeping pace with the fleetest of the pack. The hills and vallies upon that part of Salisbury Plain very much resemble those of Sussex, in the neighbourhood of Brighton race-course. Persons unused to such countries would consider them as almost precipices. Our horses, however, as well as their riders, being accustomed to them, mounted them with apparent ease, and generally descended them at full speed. I had been spanking across the downs for nearly an hour, with the highest glee, and was going with great speed down the well known steep hill which leads into Waterdean Bottom, pressing on my mare, so that she might be enabled to ascend half way up the opposite hill by the force of the increased velocity that she had acquired in descending the other, which is the common practice of all good sportsmen and bold riders in such a country. In passing with great speed over some rather uneven rutty ground, at the bottom of the hill, I received a violent and sudden shock, by my poor beast coming all at once to a stand still. I jumped off without her falling, though she was nearly down. She stood trembling, and I was shocked to find that she had _broken both of her fore legs_: the right short off above the knee, and the other below the fetlock joint. This was a most distressing accident, and the miracle was, that she had not fallen, and I, her rider, been smashed in the fall. But her wonderful courage saved me from almost inevitable destruction, for we were going at the time with the velocity of an arrow shot out of a bow.

The other horsemen had gone on, and were soon out of sight, and I was left in this situation upon the open down, a distance of two miles from my home. Seeing the deplorable state of my poor horse, and knowing, from the nature of the injury she had sustained, that it would be impossible to recover her, I determined to proceed on foot to my home, that I might send some proper person to release her from her misery; and I had gone some little distance on my road, when, on looking round, I found the poor creature hobbling after me, indicating, that it was her wish not to be left alone and abandoned in such a pitiable state. My heart bled for my

faithful and noble beast, and I instantly attended to her apparent call upon my humanity. I took the rein, and she followed me home, nearly as fast as I could walk. When we[25] reached there, she was instantly relieved from her pain by the last sad resource, the fatal unerring ball, which, when directed by a skilful hand, produces instantaneous death, without a groan, or scarcely a convulsive struggle. I dropped a tear when she had breathed her last; consoled only by the reflection, that my life had been spared by a merciful and beneficent Creator; for had the poor animal fallen, at the swift pace she was going, my destruction must have been inevitable. What is very remarkable, I never before or since ever knew a horse break its legs, when going at full speed, without falling. But this noble animal, in the struggle, in the amazing effort to save herself from falling, when the bone of her right leg snapped, actually fractured the other. I had the fractured bones of both legs preserved, for the inspection of the curious, for many years afterwards.

This sad accident was a great drawback to the pleasure that I had promised myself in the chase during the spring of the year, subsequent to my return from the King's Bench; and to add to my mortification and disappointment, the first time I mounted my next greatest favourite hunter, I found that it was brokenwinded. I had lent her, during my _residence in town_, (for it is a farce to call it imprisonment) to a gentleman of the name of Tompkins, who lived at Oakley House, near Abingdon; and he had returned it in the state which I have described, so that my hunting was spoiled for that season.

Upon my being weighed it was not difficult to account for the lamentable fate of my lost favourite. I found that I had increased _two stone two pounds_ during my six weeks comparative inactivity in the King's Bench; for, although I had taken much more exercise than my fellow prisoner, Mr. Waddington, yet it was so very different from, and so much less than, that which I had been in the habit of taking when I was in the country, that I had increased in size and weight in the rapid manner which I have described; and to this increase must be attributed the melancholy accident which occurred to my unfortunate hunter.

My friend Tompkins, who had returned my other hunter broken-winded, in consequence of his servant's mismanagement in feeding, or his own indiscreet riding, upon being informed of the circumstance, very coolly answered, that he was sorry for it; and, in the true stile of a knowing sportsman, he proposed to accommodate me in return--not by lending me one of his hunters for the remainder of the season, but by selling me one, a young horse, as he said, of great power and promise, which would just suit me; and as a great favour he wrote me word, that he would part with it to me, as a friend, at the same price which he had given for it. He invited me to his house to see it, and I accepted his invitation, notwithstanding his sister-in-law, not knowing of his intention to _oblige_ me with it, had previously informed me that he was very much dissatisfied with his purchase; that he had a most unfavourable opinion of the grey horse, and that he would be happy to part with him at a loss, rather than not get rid of what he considered as a very bad bargain. From the lady's description of the horse and of the bad qualities for which Mr. Tompkins wished to dispose of him, I had, however, formed a more favourable opinion of him,

and I was therefore determined to trust to my own judgment, and go and see him, particularly as he was well bred. I accordingly visited Oakley for the purpose, and without one word of higgling I gave him his price, which was forty guineas, my friend assuring me that he did it to oblige me, and that he considered himself as doing me no small favour. Thus had this sporting friend, to make amends for the loss he had occasioned me, by breaking the wind of a favourite and valuable hunter, worth little less than a hundred guineas, palmed upon me, for forty guineas, as a pretended boon, a young three years old horse, which he did not think would ever be worth sixpence! So much for sporting, horse-dealing friendships! However, I had no reason to repent of my bargain. I got my horse into condition before I tried him, and he turned out one of the best and most valuable hunters in the kingdom, to the great mortification of my envious and obliging friend; for, early in the next season, when he was only four years old, the Honourable George Bowes, the brother of Lord Strathmore, offered me three hundred guineas for him. I, however, never parted with him, which I had reason to repent, for, a few days after I had refused five hundred guineas for him, my friend Wm. Butcher's horse got loose in my stable, and by a kick broke his fore leg, when I was obliged to have him killed, and so ended poor OAKLEY!

I was rather unlucky in my sporting acquaintance, as will be seen by the following circumstance. Soon after my return from my imprisonment, my friend Wm. Tinker, of Lavington, and his family came to visit me; after dinner, amongst other things that I was relating, relative to what had occurred during my stay at the King's Bench, I mentioned the toast that was usually drank first by the prisoners every day, which was, "Plaintiffs in prison, and defendants at liberty." Mrs. Tinker asked whether I and Mr. Waddington had joined in this toast? I answered, yes; and added, that I believed it was the first toast drank every day after dinner. This she set down at once for a very disloyal sentiment, because my nominal plaintiff or prosecutor was the King against Hunt, and she consequently pronounced me, as I thought in a mere joke, to be a disloyal man, a jacobin. In this opinion of hers she was confirmed, by learning that I had called upon Colonel Despard in the Tower, and hearing me inveigh, in rather warm language, against packed juries, treacherous lawyers, and corrupt judges, and also venturing to call in question, "a la Clifford," some of the measures of the heaven-born minister, she therefore set me down at once in her mind as a rank jacobin; and, as the sequel will prove, she did not fail to act upon this impression--for, about a month afterwards, I received a letter from my only paternal aunt, to say that Mrs. Tinker had informed her, that, since I had been in London, I became a disloyal man, and that I had actually drank at my own table the most disloyal toast, wishing the King to be imprisoned. All my forefathers, said my aunt, had been loyal men, and one of them, Colonel Thomas Hunt, had been by nothing short of a miracle saved from losing his head for his loyalty to King Charles the Second; as therefore I had chosen to take a different course, by professing different principles, she should alter her will, and leave that fortune which she had intended for me to some other persons. She most religiously kept her word; though in my reply I unequivocally disclaimed any intention of offering the slightest insult to the King, or saying any thing that could, without the most wanton misconstruction, be deemed disloyal. Yet I claimed the right to think for myself, and did not admit

that, because I professed the most unbounded loyalty to the King, I ought to pledge myself to a blind subserviance and attachment to all the measures of his ministers. All that I could urge against this breach of confidence, in betraying, nay, in misrepresenting a conversation at my own table, and the malignity of Mrs. Tinker's motives, were of no avail.

Although this aunt died without any children, and I was her nearest of kin, yet she made my quondam friend, Tinker, her executor, and never left me a shilling. The reader will easily conceive that this neither changed my politics nor increased my confidence in sporting friends. The fact was, that this old lady was an illegitimate daughter of my grandfather, by a relation of this Mrs. Tinker, whom he afterwards married. My grandfather had been induced to leave this daughter a very considerable patrimony, at the suggestion of my father; and, as she died without issue, it would have been only an act of justice to have restored the money to its lawful source. But the kind interference of Mrs. Tinker has sent it in another direction, and I sincerely wish it may prosper with those who have obtained it. I envy them not; I have retained my opinions, and they have got the cash--much good may it do them, I say.

Had not this Mrs. Tinker been a great croney of Mrs. Hunt's, the connexion would have ceased from this time. I was, however, always very cautious what I said afterwards, when Mrs. Tinker was of the party. By her perversion of a conversation which occurred at my own table, by her officious misrepresentation of me, she had been the cause of my losing some thousand pounds. This was the first instance in which I experienced the serious consequences of sporting liberal opinions. But it was not the only instance in which this good lady (who was always called *_mother_* by her family and friends, from her very motherly habits) had an opportunity of doing me a good turn in the same way. Another elderly lady, Mrs. Watts, of Lavington, who had voluntarily made her will, and left me property and estates, as being her nearest and only relation, upon being taken ill desired that I should be sent for; but my evil spirit, Mrs. Tinker, who was a neighbour, sent for another lady, and they contrived, as they said, to get the old lady to *_alter her will_* in her last moments, and leave her property away from me to other persons. This was effected in such *_a manner_*, and *_at such a time_*, and *_under such circumstances_*, that I should have disputed the will had I not been afraid of exposing a relation of my own, who was privy and instrumental to this mysterious transaction. It is sufficient to say, that the old lady never signed her name, although she wrote a most excellent and legible hand, this precious instrument bearing only her mark; and the maid servant, who attended her, would have proved quite sufficient to have set aside the will, and exposed the parties concerned; but, as one of them was a very near relation of mine, and one whose faults I have always been anxious to conceal and palliate, rather than expose and condemn, I put up with the loss without opposing the proof of the will. There is one fact more connected with this case, which I will state, to show to what extent the cruelty of some persons will lead them, when they wish to accomplish a bad action. The maid informed me, and offered to swear it, that her mistress had constantly, during several days illness, expressed the most urgent desire to see me, and was anxious not to sign or to do any thing about her will, till I arrived. She was, however, as repeatedly put off, by the assurance that I had been sent for, and did not choose to come, though I was the whole time

at home, at a distance of a few miles, and never received the slightest intimation of her illness till after her death.

By this circumstance I may with great fairness reckon myself minus about five thousand pounds; so that the politics which I had learned in the King's Bench were not to me a source of profit; but, on the contrary, had proved hitherto most detrimental to my pecuniary interests. But, thank God! I was never a trading politician; for if I had been such, my losses would have very soon made me a bankrupt in the cause.

At this time, however, though the sentiments which I entertained upon public matters were never concealed, but were, when occasion required, expressed openly, and without reservation, I attended much more to my business, to the sports of the field, and to my own pleasures, than I did to politics. My farming concerns were well regulated and attended to, though I spent a great portion of my time in fox-hunting and shooting, and likewise kept a great deal of company; scarcely a day in the week passed that I was not out at a party, or had one at my own house, but much more frequently at home. This period I consider as far the least interesting portion of my life. I kept an excellent table, had a good cellar of wine, and there was never any lack of visitors to partake of it. The old adage, "that fools make feasts and wise men partake of them," I cannot refrain from acknowledging to have been pretty much realized at Chisenbury House. When I look back, and recollect the train of hangers-on that constantly surrounded my table, amongst the number of whom was always a parson or two, I am induced to exclaim, in the language of Solomon, "it was all vanity and vexation of spirit!" My life was a scene of uninterrupted gaiety and dissipation--one continued round of pleasure. I had barely time to attend to my own personal concerns; for no sooner was one party of pleasure ended than another was made. The hounds met at this cover to-day, at that to-morrow, and so on through the week. Dinners, balls, plays, hunting, shooting, fishing, and driving, in addition to my large farming concerns, which required my attendance at markets and fairs, and which business I never neglected, even in this heyday of levity and vanity; all these things combined, left me no leisure to think or reflect, and scarcely time to sleep--for no sooner was one pleasure or amusement ended than I found that I had engaged to participate in another; and I joined in them all with my usual enthusiasm. In the midst of all this giddy round of mirth and folly, I enjoyed less real pleasure and satisfaction, than I had done at any former period of my life. I saw and felt that there was little sincerity in the attachment of my companions; for there was no real friendship in their hearts, though they would praise my wine, admire my viands, and bestow the most unqualified compliments upon the liberality with which they were dispensed. Their praise on this score was certainly merited; for whether it was a dinner party or a ball, at Chisenbury House, no expense or trouble was spared to make the guests happy, and to send them away delighted with the entertainment.

What a scene is this for me to look back upon. I might be said to have got into the whirlpool, into the very vortex of endless dissipation and folly! I saw and felt my error, but I knew not how to retreat. My wife, too, entered into the very marrow of this round of pleasure and gay society. The means to support all this were never wanting; for I found myself in

possession of landed property in Wilts and Somerset, at Littlecot and Glastonbury, of the value of upwards of six hundred pounds a year, besides all the large farming business which my father had left me. There was, therefore, no deficiency of money; and I owe it to myself to say, that large as was my expenditure, I took care never to live fully up to my income; but had every year something considerable to lay by or to assist a friend with.

Fond as I then was of pleasure, no man attended more strictly to his farming business than I did; and the farms of no man in the kingdom were managed better, or were in higher condition. My farms at that time were like gardens, and much cleaner and freer from weeds than most gardens; and I had the best flock of Southdown sheep in the country, bearing the very finest fleeces, the wool of which I sold for the very highest price in the kingdom. I one year sold my wool, consisting of four thousand fleeces, for a penny a pound more than was given for the boasted wool shorn from the flock of the famous Mr. Elman, of Glind, in Sussex. When, at an agricultural meeting, he was told of this fact, he very coolly answered, that his wool was most decidedly the best, and that the superiority of price which Mr. Hunt had obtained arose merely from the want of judgment in the purchaser. This question was, however, set at rest the very next year--for the wool dealer who had purchased Mr. Elman's wool, having heard of my flock, came all the way out of Sussex, from the neighbourhood of Chichester, and purchased my fleeces at three half-pence a pound more than he had given for the crack Sussex wool, and he paid for the carriage, a distance of fifty miles, into the bargain. After this, Mr. Elman never disputed the point as to the superior quality of my wool. I mention this circumstance merely to show how determined I was to excel in every thing which I undertook--at least, that I did every thing with enthusiasm. I afterwards sold eight thousand fleeces at once, to some manufacturers, Dean, Forsey, and Co. of Chard, in this county, at the highest price that any wool sold for that season. Mr. Dean subsequently purchased twenty lambs at my sale, that he might have some of the stock; which he sold to me again, when I called upon him some time afterwards. Out of this circumstance, an infamous and scurrilous falsehood was propagated in the columns of the Taunton Courier, representing me as having swindled my friend Mr. Dean out of a flock of sheep. When I come to that period of my history, I shall fully explain the affair to the satisfaction of every candid person, and I shall convince every honest man, that the columns of the Taunton Courier have been made the vehicle to promulgate the most barfaced and wanton falsehood against me, to serve a political purpose; and that, in this instance, the Taunton Courier has never been exceeded in infamy, even by the falsehoods of its brother Courier in London.

In the year 1801, I grew twelve quarters of best oats per acre, upon eight acres of poor down land, at Widdington, the rent of which was not more than ten shillings an acre. They were sown after an uncommonly fine crop of turnips, that averaged fifty tons to an acre. The land had been very highly manured, both from the farm-yard and the fold, for the turnips, which had been hoed three times. It was the heaviest and finest crop of oats that I ever saw, and they stood full six feet high in the straw. I was sitting on horseback, looking on while they were mowing them, and I recollect that when Thomas Airs, one of the mowers, who was full six feet

high, swept his scythe into the standing corn, the ears of the oats frequently struck his hat as he walked along. It was very fine weather, and they were carried in and made into a rick by themselves, without taking any rain. In the spring they were thrashed out, and all sold for seed, at three pounds a quarter. Now, as they averaged twelve quarters an acre, the sale amounted to thirty-six pounds an acre; nearly three times the value of the fee-simple of the land. There was also more than three tons of straw upon each acre, and as, during that season, straw sold at six pounds per ton, the actual value of the produce (taking off one pound a ton for the carriage of the straw) was 50_l_. per acre, while the fee-simple of the land would not have sold for 20_l_. per acre.

I have related this to shew what enormous profits were gained by good farmers at those times. About this period it was, that the late Lord Warwick, speaking in the House of Lords, of the state of insolence to which the farmers had arrived, and alluding to their extravagant course of living, assured his right honourable hearers, that some of them had reached such a pitch of luxury, that they actually drank brandy with their wine. This caused a laugh, but their lordships little knew how literally true the assertion was. His lordship alluded to a gentleman farmer, of the name of Jackson, who lived at ---- farm, in the county of Warwick, and who then always took brandy with his wine. I, too, remember a humorous farmer, and a very worthy fellow, of the name of Mackerell, of Collingbourn, who frequently afterwards did the same thing, at the principal market room at the Bear, at Devizes; at the head of which table I at that time presided every week. Mackerell used to call this liquor (brandy and wine) Lord Warwick; and another farmer used always to drink a nob of white sugar in each glass of claret; for, be it known to the reader, that I have repeatedly seen drank at that table, on a market day, by twelve or fourteen farmers, two dozen of old port, and, as a finish, two dozen of claret. Then they would mount their chargers, and off they would go in a body, each of them with two or three hundred pounds in his pocket; and the Lord have mercy upon the poor fellow who interrupted them, or failed to get out of their way upon their road home! No set of men ever carried their heads higher than they did; no set of men were ever more inflated or more purse proud, than were the great body of the farmers during these times of their boundless prosperity. For many years, the average price of wheat was fifteen shillings a Winchester bushel; and as I recollect, and shall never forget, the way in which they carried themselves during these halcyon days of their happy fortune, I should like much to have a peep into Devizes market now, of a Thursday, or into Warminster market of a Saturday, just to see the contrast, just to observe how they look, and how they conduct themselves, now they are selling their best wheat for seven shillings a bushel, which is less than half the former price, while the rent is the same, the taxes the same, and the poor rates are higher, instead of lower! At that period, it only took me a hundred sacks of wheat to pay my rent of Widdington farm. How many sacks must farmer Maslen sell now to pay his rent of the same farm! I should not wonder if three hundred sacks would fall short of paying it this year. At that epoch Mr. Pocock, who rented Enford farm of Mr. Benett, could pay his _rent_, _taxes_, and _poor rates_, for the sum at which he could sell _three hundred_ sacks of wheat. The present tenant, Mr. Fay[26], must, in this present year, 1821, sell _one thousand_ sacks of wheat, to raise the money to pay his _rent_,

taxes, and _poor rates_. What a falling off for the farmers! Let us hope that they will display somewhat more fortitude and patience, in the days of their adversity, than they did moderation, Christian forbearance, and temper, in their days of prosperity.

On the ninth of February, in this year, peace was signed, at Luneville, between our beloved ally, Austria, and France. On the second of March, the state prisoners were liberated, some of whom had been cruelly confined for many years under the suspension bill; and, on the seventeenth of March, 1801, there was a complete change in the British ministry, by a deep juggle of Mr. Pitt, who resigned. He and his colleagues were succeeded by Mr. Addington, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and his family and friends. On the twenty-first, Sir Ralph Abercromby was killed at the bloody battle of Alexandria, in Egypt; and, on the same day, negotiations for peace were entered into, between England and France, by Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto. On the second of April, the Danish fleet of twenty-eight sail, anchored off Copenhagen, was all taken or destroyed by Lord Nelson. Such was the fury of the battle, and such was the bravery with which the Danes defended themselves, that, after great carnage on both sides, some of the English ships employed on the occasion were nearly silenced by the batteries. Nelson, perceiving this, sent in a flag of truce and offered terms, which the Danish governor accepted. On the nineteenth, the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, and the Seditious Act, passed by a large majority, in both Houses of Parliament; and immediately afterwards, the ministerial indemnity bill also passed. On the sixth of May, the famous motion was made by Lord Temple, the present Marquis of Buckingham, for a new writ for Old Sarum, to exclude Mr. Horne Tooke from the House of Commons; he having been elected for that rotten borough by Lord Camelford, who was then the proprietor of it. The ground of his being ineligible to sit in the Honourable House was, that he had formerly taken priest's orders. This fact being proved, a law was passed, by which Mr. Horne Tooke was excluded from sitting in future. Lord Camelford was so enraged at this measure, that he threatened to return his black servant as the member; and it is thought he would have actually done so, if it had not been for the earnest entreaties of Lord Grenville, who was a relation of Lord Camelford. On the twenty-second of July, there was a grand review of the volunteer corps in Hyde Park. The number assembled was four thousand eight hundred.

On the first of October, preliminary articles of peace, fifteen in number, were signed, between England and France, by Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto. On the 10th of October, Old Michaelmas-day, Gen. Lauriston arrived in London, with the ratifications of the Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and France; and the General was drawn through the streets by the populace. There were very violent debates in both Houses of Parliament, against the Preliminaries of Peace. The opposition dissented from calling it a Glorious Peace; but the ministers carried it by very large majorities. During this year, the price of bread and all sorts of provisions had been remarkably high; at one period the quartern loaf sold for _one shilling_ and _tenpence halfpenny_, and the poor suffered very much throughout the country. The great mass of the people, therefore, hailed the approach of peace with France, in hopes of better times; and every one appeared rejoiced at the cessation of the horrible carnage of

war, which had been raging with so much violence. The French ministers were very well satisfied with the Court of St. James's, who had at last formally acknowledged Napoleon as the head of the French Government. Although there were many, amongst the opposition, who denounced the preliminaries as a hollow truce, declaring that if peace was concluded upon so unsatisfactory a basis, and so disadvantageous for Great Britain, the English Government would soon be obliged to violate the treaty, which must lead to fresh hostilities; I, for one, sincerely rejoiced at the return of peace; for I had long been convinced that the war was carried on, not to preserve this country from the horrors of the French revolution; that it had never been waged for any of its avowed purposes; that it had from the beginning been a war against the principles of liberty, established by the revolution in France, which had been attacked by every despotic power in Europe; every one of which powers the French troops had, under the banners of liberty, defeated over and over again. I now looked upon the object of the war with a very different eye from what I had formerly done, and I took a more correct and dispassionate view of its cause, and the intentions of those who first declared hostilities, than what I did when I first enrolled my name amongst the members of the yeomanry cavalry. I had now had time to reflect, the six weeks which I had passed in the neighbourhood of the King's Bench, where I had access to some of the most experienced and intelligent men in the kingdom, had not been spent in vain. The time that a man spends in a prison is not always thrown away, as I have found by experience; and I shall, I trust, be able to prove by and by, to the satisfaction of my numerous readers, that the time I have spent in this Bastille has been the most valuable part of my life. I never before knew what real leisure was. I have enjoyed retirement as much as any man in England; but then I have been always surrounded with my family and friends; I have never, before now, known what it was to have seven or eight hours of a day exclusively to myself. I am locked up in solitary confinement in my dungeon every night, at six o'clock, without my having the power to go to any one, and without any one having the power to come to me, excepting the turnkey, which, thank God! never happens now after locking-up time, though it used to be the case very frequently when I first came here. It is considered a violation of the rules to go near a prisoner, unless upon a great emergency, after he is locked up; but it was not deemed any violation of rules for the turnkey to be constantly coming to my dungeon, and, with an authoritative rattling of the lock of the door, marching in to say that Mr. Bridle, the gaoler, wanted a newspaper, &c. &c. However, that is all at an end, and I am never interrupted. I can sit down with a book or a pen at six o'clock, almost with a certainty of not being interrupted by any living creature, for six, seven, or eight hours at a time. My keepers think this the greatest punishment that can be inflicted upon me; but, on the contrary, I contrive to turn their malice to advantage, and make this the most valuable time of my life. Few men can boast such a luxury. I really enjoy it beyond description. No thanks to my persecutors; and I should not be surprised if, when they read this, which I know they all will, if they were to devise some means to deprive me of this comfort of retirement. I have made them feel, and I will continue to make them feel, that though I expose their petty tyranny, and their little acts of meanness towards me, yet, that my mind is above the reach of their vindictive malice. I understand that some of them are praying for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, that they may have me delivered over

to their power; that I may be left to their unrestrained will, to inflict torture upon me in secret--well! and what then? I will laugh at their torture, and make them painfully conscious of their own insignificance, even while they stand over me and inflict it.

When I was in the King's Bench, I had none of those trials. My time passed very pleasantly, and as a great portion of it passed in the best of society, amongst some of the most intelligent men of the age, my time was not thrown away. I was induced to think for myself, and to form my own opinion of public men and public measures, without placing, as I had hitherto done, an implicit reliance upon the opinions of others whom I supposed to have had more experience, and better means of judging of such matters, than I had. I began not only to think but to act, for myself. Among the many facts that I ascertained, not the least important was, "_that common fame was a common liar_." Mr. Clifford had brought me acquainted with all the tricks, frauds, and deceptions of the public press; and, to convince me that almost the whole of the public press of that day was venal and corrupt, he proved to a demonstration, by some _practical experiments_, that for a _few pounds_, any thing, however absurd, might be universally promulgated; particularly if the absurdity was in favour of the ruling powers. For instance, he wrote a paragraph, the greatest hoax that ever was, in praise of the mild and amiable manners, the courtesy, and the humanity of Harry Dundas. Now, said he, to show you how this will be promulgated by the venal press, and how it will be swallowed by John Bull, give me _five shillings_, and I will put it into the hands of one of the runners for collecting information for the papers, and you shall see it in all the newspapers, both in London and the country. I produced the crown-piece immediately, and out it came, in one of the morning papers, the next day; and as he had predicted, it was copied into all the London and country papers. Thus the humanity and suavity of one of the most unfeeling and impudent Scotchmen that ever crossed the Tweed, was cried up to the skies, and he was eulogised by some of them as the very cream of the milk of human kindness! Then as to public opinion, and the popularity of the leading characters of the day, Mr. Fox, to wit,--Mr. Clifford has a hundred times declared to me, that this great Westminster patriot was never drawn home in his carriage from the hustings in his life, by the populace, without the persons who drew him being regularly _hired_ and _paid_ for it. The price was always _thirty shillings_, to be divided amongst twenty persons, a shilling _dry_, and six-pence _wet_, each person. Clifford assured me this office, of hiring the men to draw their candidates home, was frequently allotted to him, and that it was invariably the same with Mr. Horne Tooke, and Mr. Chamberlain, alias John Wilkes; and that he would undertake to have me or Mr. Waddington drawn through the streets of London, from Whitechapel to Piccadilly, for the same sum. At this time there was in fact very little disinterested patriotism amongst the working classes of the community. They had, for so many years, been made the regular dupes of those who were called the Opposition Members of Parliament, without that faction, denominated the Whigs, having ever done any essential service for the people at large, that public feeling, amongst the labouring classes of mechanics and manufacturers, was at a very low ebb. Nor is this to be at all wondered at, because none, not one, of these great leading public characters ever professed to accomplish any thing that would openly,

tangibly, and immediately give any political rights to the people at large.--Whenever the Opposition or Whigs wished to oust their opponents, or harrass them in their places, they used to call public meetings in London, Westminster, and other places; and they never failed to get the multitude to pass any Whig resolutions which they might choose to submit to them; there never being, at that time, any body to oppose or expose their factious and party measures. The people, in London and Westminster, always supported the Opposition against the Ministers; but they had nevertheless, sense enough to discover that there was no direct intention in the Opposition to render any immediate or effectual benefit to the people. Whatever the Whigs promised, it was all remote and in perspective. It cannot, therefore, excite surprise that there should have been none of that enthusiasm which has been so evidently manifested by the people within the last seven years. How many score times have I been drawn by the populace?--and yet it never, in the whole course of my life, cost me or any of my friends, the value of a pot of porter for any thing of the sort. It is easy to account for this alteration in the popular feeling. The change has been brought about in consequence of myself, and those who have acted with me, having openly avowed our determination to endeavour to obtain for the people equal political rights, which will lead to equal justice; to procure for every sane adult a vote, an equal share in the representative branch of the government, in the Commons' House of Parliament; to procure for every man that which the constitution says he is entitled to, and that which the law presumes he has, namely, a share in choosing those Members of the People's, or Commons' House of Parliament; who have a third share in making those laws, by which the lives, the liberties, and the property of the people are regulated and disposed of.

But to return to my narrative--I was now living in the zenith of thoughtlessness, if I may be permitted to call it by so mild an appellation. I had a large income, and I contrived to live nearly, though not quite, up to it, by keeping a great deal of expensive company, and an expensive establishment, both within and without doors. In all this my wife fully participated; but I attribute no blame to her for this. It was my business and my duty to know better, and to act otherwise. There is no excuse for me, as I did know that I was leading what might be fairly and justly called a dissolute life: I do not mean to admit that there was any thing which is generally termed criminal in my conduct, but I must say, if I tell the truth, which I am determined to do at all hazards, that I led a very dissipated existence.

When I look back soberly, and divest myself of fashionable prejudices, I cannot conscientiously call it by any milder name. In fact, though my habits at that period were similar to those of thousands and thousands of fashionable families in the country, who are looked upon as most respectable and correct people, I cannot look back but with regret upon the manner in which I spent this most valuable portion of my time. Hunting, shooting, coursing, or fishing all day, and every day; and then at night, instead of passing it with my family and children in the calm, serene, delightful joys of a domestic and rational fireside, I had always a large party at home, or made one amongst the number at a friend's house. Seldom were we in bed till two or three o'clock in the morning. The next day brought sporting, and the next night a ball, or a card party, or a

drinking party; and thus I was hurried from one scene of dissipation to another, without ever allowing myself time scarcely to look round, seldom to look back, and never seriously to reflect. It was with me even in dissipation, as it was in every thing else that I engaged in, that I was enthusiastic. In this record of my errors and failings, the reader must therefore prepare himself to hear, at any rate, of some thumping faults; and although I do not deserve, and do not expect, to escape the deep censure of some, yet I rely upon the liberal indulgence of the more virtuous portion of the community, who know that it is the lot of man to err, but that it is godlike to make allowances for human infirmities, and to forgive them. And, after relating all my errors, I shall boldly say, in the language of our Saviour, "Let him that is without fault cast the first stone."

In the midst of this life of thoughtless gaiety and pleasure, I was always greatly attached to female society, and I gave the preference to those amusements where females were of the party, such as dancing, music, and those card parties where they could join. In consequence of this, I frequently escaped those Bacchanalian carousals to which many of my intimate friends and companions were strongly addicted. Not that I mean to pretend, that, when I made one of those parties, I ever flinched. No; I took my bottle as freely as any of them; but, thanks to a good constitution, never to excess, or rather never so as to become inebriated. Dancing I enjoyed, and participated in to excess. My partiality to female society led me into many extravagancies, and into some difficulties; for I could not pay moderate attention to a lady. My partner, if I admired her, received my enthusiastic attention; for, though I was a married man, yet I suffered no single man to outdo me in polite assiduities to my partner. This sometimes drew down upon me the anger, and upon one occasion the unjust suspicion, of Mrs. Hunt. A young lady, who was upon a visit in our family, had attracted my particular notice. She was handsome, elegant, lively, and fascinating, and I was at first led to pay her more marked respect, because I discovered that it excited the envy of a widow lady of Andover, who came with her on a visit to our house. She, like many of her fellows, because she never possessed any of those personal charms, or acquired accomplishments, that please all who come within the reach of their influence, was uncommonly envious of those who did; and, setting herself up as a sort of duenna to this young lady, undertook to take her to task, for receiving with so much ease and unconcern, my extremely marked attention, which she declared made my wife very unhappy.--This was, at that moment, a barefaced falsehood of the old hag, though she contrived afterwards by her arts, insinuations, and fabrications, to produce that effect in the breast of Mrs. Hunt. The old widow, whom I shall for convenience sake call Mrs. Butler, at first was successful in thwarting, as she said, her young friend's amusement, and in rendering miserable the person whom she affected to pity; but at last, by carrying her calumnies too far, she failed altogether in her diabolical schemes; for, having represented to Mrs. Hunt that she had seen me take a gross and indecent liberty with the young lady, the falsehood struck my wife so forcibly, that the object of it was very visible even to her jaundiced eye, and without ceremony she ordered her carriage, and packed the slanderer off to her own home, very properly forbidding her ever entering her door again.

Though my wife behaved with becoming spirit upon this occasion, by banishing such a fiend in human form from her house, yet the latent sparks of jealousy which had been lodged in her breast were still too visible to be concealed. I was stung by being subject to such unjust suspicions, and, instead of taking the prudent and proper course, conscious of the purity and innocence of my feelings with respect to our young visitor, I continued, nay, redoubled, my zealous devotion. Instead of healing the breach that this fracas had made, I braved it out; and what before was only the polite attention, which I was always in the habit of paying to an interesting female, became now, to all outward appearance, an enthusiastic attachment. Unfortunately, too, the young lady, feeling indignant at the groundless and unjust ideas of Mrs. Hunt, too readily fell into my views, and appeared to be very much pleased with my open and increased assiduities. This added fuel to the fire; it led to the most unpleasant consequences, and laid the foundation for those little bickerings which are too apt to create, at length, a mutual indifference. However, after having braved the affair out for a few days, the young lady returned amongst her friends, who had the sincerity and candour to represent to her the imprudence of her conduct; and this flirtation, which was so innocent in fact, but so injurious in its result, was at once put an end to. I have related this seemingly uninteresting affair, first to shew and admit the folly of which I was guilty, for folly it was, to say the least of it; and next, as a warning to my young readers, to avoid the rock of tampering with and irritating the feelings of those whom they ought to love and cherish. I sincerely believe if a man once excites jealousy in the breast of his wife, whether well founded or not, the virus that it engenders is of such a corroding nature that it is seldom, if ever, totally eradicated. Married persons, therefore, can never be too circumspect in their conduct. Though I never offered the most distant insult, or ever took even the most innocent liberty, with this young lady, yet I admit that I was guilty of an act of gross and wanton imprudence. I was guilty of great injustice to the young lady, and of greater injustice to Mrs. Hunt; and I feel at this moment, that, to induce the reader to forgive this faulty part of my conduct, will require a considerable portion of liberality and good nature, and of that amiable Christian virtue which teaches a person conscious of his own innocence, to look with charity upon the failings of others.

END OF VOL. I

ERRATA IN VOL. 1.

- [1] _for_ Stafford, _read_ Strafford.
- [2] _for_ a great, _read_ at a great.
- [3] _for_ preading, _read_ dreading.
- [4] _for_ scenes which, _read_ scenes of misery.
- [5] _for_ five, _read_ three.
- [6] _for_ Dr. Stills, _read_ Mr. Stills.
- [7] _for_ Barwis, _read_ Barvis.
- [8] _for_ loud, _read_ old.
- [9] _for_ ascend, _read_ descend.

- [10] _for_ this time, _read_ at this time.
[11] _after_ Westcombe, _read_ was one of them, and he.
[12] _for_ Sycencot, _read_ Syrencot.
[13] _for_ settled to the, _read_ settled the.
[14] _for_ say, _read_ says.
[15] _for_ wer, _read_ were.
[16] _read_ were given without delay.
[17] _read_ went over with me in a chaise.
[18] _for_ hat, _read_ that.
[19] _for_ mothers, _read_ mother.
[20] _for_ listen to, _read_ listen to it.
[21] _for_ Brook-street, _read_ Brock-street.
[22] _for_ the Bear-inn, _read_ the inn.
[23] _for_ East-street, _read_ East Kent.
[24] _read_ the prosecutors moved, the Court of King's
Bench to remove the venue out of Kent, upon
the ground, that the farmers were prejudiced
so much in favour of Mr. Waddington, that
they could not obtain a fair jury.
[25] _for_ when she reached, _read_ when we reached.
[26] _for_ Mr. Foy, _read_ Mr. Fay.

[Note: The errata listed here have been applied to this text. The page & line originally quoted have been replaced by alphabetical markers [n], which refer to similar markers placed in the text where such amendments were made.

[12] Sycencot -> Syrencot--referred to a single page/line. Syrencot is the location of Dyke's house; it occurs at 3 other places in the text--these have been changed and marked.

[16] deletes 'for furniture &c.'

[17] replaces 'went over in a chaise to Devizes the evening before.'

[24] replaces 'he moved the Court of King's Bench to remove the _venue_ out of Kent, on the score of a prejudice having been raised against him in that county.']

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