

He that had Received the Five Talents.

CHAPTER II.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

“ Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands ;
The smith a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands ;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.”

—*Longfellow.*

At the period when our story opens, some sixty years ago, the village of Arderholm looked precisely as it may have done for centuries, and the inhabitants went about their quiet ways as if they had not yet been touched by the faintest ripple of the vast disturbances which steam and electricity were beginning to bring about in the life of the world. In those old days, one of the most attractive houses—in truth, the only attractive house—in the village was the cottage occupied by James Forbes, the blacksmith. Standing in a plot about half-an-acre in extent, at the head of the village, near the mill, it