

the world, you will hold a different creed. You will find that certain fine words, very common in theory, have no existence in practice—*Independence—Honesty!* How can the one be lawfully claimed by creatures dependent upon accident for the most important events in their lives, or the other truly exercised by beings formed by nature and circumstances to prey upon their kind? Without money, your independent poor gentleman must work or starve; without money or employment, your honest gentleman must starve or steal—ha! ha!—those who pretend to neither may, by making use of their wits, obtain a comfortable competency from the fools around them, and be as honest and independent as the best."

"I should hope that I differ from you both in theory and practice," said Robert; "that is, if all I have heard of you be true."

"What!—have you been given a character of me already?" said the Jew. "This is good news—I love notoriety—why, I find that I am a person of more importance than I thought myself to be. And what did you hear of me?"

"No good," was the blunt reply.

"Better still," said the editor, rubbing his hands and pulling out his fat cheeks, as though they would burst with merriment. "I am truly independent, for I do not care one straw for what they say of me!"

Then as if the subject was not quite so agreeable as he was willing to make Robert believe, he turned to his attendant imps, and after giving them sundry unimportant orders relative to their business, he bade Robert follow him to his store, and he would endeavor to suit him with the articles he required.

"I give no credit," said the Jew, as he descended the flight of stairs. "I trade upon the ready money system."

"I shall ask none," said Robert; "what I want I can pay for."

"Indeed!" said the Jew, with an incredulous stare. "I thought you said just now, that you had lost your all."

The color burnt upon Robert's cheek—his companion marked the sudden change of his countenance, and interpreted his emotion as best pleased himself. But he made no remark—"Humph!" he thought, "I suspected as much; but if he is dishonest, what is that to me? He pays for my clothes, and what care I who keeps the key of his conscience? You may be sure that a man never brags of his honesty until he is a thief. I never vouch for the truth of a story in the *Observer* before I know it to be a lie. Well, young man," he continued, turning to Robert who had made choice of the best and most fashionable suit in the

shop, "that fine dress will make a gentleman of you at once."

"Then the block in the tailor's store opposite must be a perfect gentleman," said Robert with a sneer, "for it is accustomed to wear the very best suits."

"Do you compare yourself to a wooden block, young man?—ha! ha! there is many a true word spoken in jest. But the block opposite looks what it is not, and often passes for a man, amongst boys and women, by holding its peace. Now young gentleman be wise, and take my advice, until you get rid of that captious temper, learn to do the same."

"I feel greatly tempted to let you try the strength of my arm," said Robert angrily; "but you are really beneath contempt."

Again the Jew laughed heartily. "If you come in collision with my head, I fear that your soft cranium would never bear the shock. But this is all fun—mere *badinage*."

"I am not used to such fun," said Robert, hardly able to keep his gravity, in spite of himself.

"You have been used to walk upon stilts all your life," said the Jew; "I wanted to bring you down a peg, that's all. Come, let's settle for that handsome suit."

"What do I owe you?"

"Just forty dollars."

Benjamin looked his astonishment, as Robert promptly paid down the required sum. "I can supply you with a handsome gold watch," he said, "very cheap. Your dress is not complete without one." Robert seemed tempted to fall into the snare, when his attention was luckily diverted from the Jew, by the entrance of Marcella de Frietba. She cast an embarrassed look around the store, then stepping lightly up to the counter, she placed a ring in the Jew's hand.

"Well, my child, and what is this?"

"It belongs, sir, to a sick gentleman," said Marcella with a deep blush, which suddenly dyed her pale cheeks of a vivid red. "He sent me to see if you would let him have a little money upon it?"

"Humph. It must be a little—what did he expect to raise upon it?"

"He thought, sir, as the stone was of the first water, you would let him have ten dollars upon it, until such time as he could redeem it again."

"Fiddlstick!" said the Jew, carefully examining the stone at the open door. "These things are so easily counterfeited, that it is a hard matter to tell a real gem from an imitation. However, this is set in gold and may be worth the money," (he knew that it was worth ten times the sum,) "and I will accommodate him for your