

"THE OILED FEATHER."

(CONCLUDED.)

CHAPTER III.

When "Polished Sam" left home on this eventful morning, he had a smile on his lip, and a bright gladsome look in his eye; and if he had the world before him, he had a bright and happy home behind him.

Believe me, good reader, that a bright and happy home is a wonderful back-up to a man when he goes forth into a hard and cold world, to make his way through the day's business as best he can. On the present occasion, "Polished Sam" was backed up by Jenny, his wife; and by little Tommy, his son; and by Polly, the servant maid; they had all smiled him forth on his journey, and they would all smile him home again; aye, and Sam would be in a hurry to get home to all these smiling folk; and when he got a rub in the market from any of the Rusty Joes who might be there, he went famously through it all, for he knew he'd soon get home to peace, and quiet, and love again. You must not think, kind reader, that Sam Parsons didn't get knocks and rubs of all kinds in the world; he came in for his share; but he slipped through them better than other folk, for he was so civil and polished in his way, that he disarmed the ill-feeling of many.

The first person Sam Parsons came in sight of was old Biddy Magrath, the woman who sold apples at the corner of the street. "Good morning, Biddy," said Sam.

"Good morning, and good luck," answered Biddy; "Is it to market ye's going to-day, Mr. Parsons?"

"Yes, Biddy, can I do anything for you?" said Sam.

"Can ye do anything for me," answered Biddy, "to be sure ye can; bring me two ounces of the best tay, and half a pound of brown sugar, and here's the money;" and so saying, Biddy pulled forth a ball of rag from her pocket, which when unrolled much after the fashion of an Egyptian mummy, developed a shilling.

"I'll get you a good cup," said Sam, as he took the shilling, "you'll never have a better cup than I wish you," and so

saying he smacked his whip, and passed, Bridget Magrath had not much of the sunshine of the world falling upon her poor wrinkled face; and it was well for she had naturally a cheerful temper; she led but a sorry life of it with the boys of the village, and Sam Parson's kind word was one of the few gleams which fell to her lot. We can understand, therefore, the multitude of blessings, wherewith Bridget overwhelmed Sam: how she called him all sorts of fine names, and at length how she subsided behind her rickety table to sell apples, if she could, all day long, but at any rate, to wait for the evening, and Sam's arrival with the "tay."

No doubt it was but a small kindness that Sam shewed, but he made a fellow creature happy by it; in fact he oiled old Biddy, as well as his wife, and child, and maid: and Bridget was not half so cross all that day, because she had the remembrance of a kindly word and genial smile to help her through.

As Sam Parsons went to market he had to surmount the same hill on which his neighbour "Rusty Joe" afterwards fared so badly: the road was just as steep, his horses' load was just as heavy, and nothing but a little oil carried Sam successfully up the hill. The wheels of Sam's waggon turned easily enough, for he had not neglected to grease them; but all the grease in the world could not make the wheels turn by themselves; it is true Sam had a little oil with him; he generally had a little bottle amongst a few odds and ends in a box attached to his waggon, but one cannot oil horse's hoofs or joints: so on the present occasion, unless Sam Parson's were possessed of something more, he had little chance of surmounting Blackford hill; indeed less chance than his neighbour "Rusty Joe" had after him, for his horses were not so strong. But Sam Parsons had another oil bottle, which was able effectually to do the work; Sam had a kind heart and word for man and beast, and this kind word carried him up the Blackford hill; yes he oiled his horses with it, and up they went. When first the team desired to stop, Sam let the poor beasts rest to recover breath; he put a couple of stones behind the waggon wheels, and when he went round and patted each of the horses on the neck; yes he, he even rubbed