

(ORIGINAL.)

## GEOFFREY MONCTON.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

THERE was a time—a good old time, when men of rank and fortune were not ashamed of owning their poor relations, and affording their protection to any person connected with them by the holy tie of consanguinity. That time is gone forever. When hospitality decreased, with the increase of modern luxuries, and modern refinements, and the best feelings of the heart were choked in the rush for precedence and the love of display, relations went out of fashion. If they were wealthy but ungentle, they were occasionally tolerated in private, but considered in public a perfect bore. If poor, they were disowned in public entirely, and treated with contempt. The titles of uncle, aunt, and cousin, which are only one degree removed from the most endearing appellations of kindred love, have become nearly obsolete, without the possessors of these unenvied titles keep a carriage and make a respectable appearance, in the world. Then and then only, are their names pronounced with reverence, and their relationship considered an honour. It is amusing to see the eagerness with which some persons assert their claims to relationship, and the intrigue and manoeuvring it calls forth in others to disown the ties of kindred. It was my misfortune to be one of those despised and insulted annoyances, a *poor relation*!

My grandfather, Geoffrey Moncton, was a wealthy merchant in the city, who, during a very long life, accumulated a fine property. He never enjoyed the wealth he toiled to realize. He began the world with a limited income, and when his hundreds multiplied into thousands, he still continued to deny himself those luxuries which, in his early career, he would have considered as criminal and extravagant indulgences. The education of his two sons was conducted on the same parsimonious scale, and he had the satisfaction, if satisfaction it was, of dying a rich man. His inheritance was equally divided between his sons, Edward and Robert. He bequeathed to the former, who was the senior by three years, his lucrative situation in the mercantile world, and the latter a handsome fortune, with a strict injunction to prosecute with diligence his legal studies.

My uncle Robert's character was stouided upon his father's, and his inclinations naturally induced him to profit by his advice. His abilities were scarcely above mediocrity, but he possessed great perseverance, and like his predecessor was certainly gifted with a talent for saving money. An old servant of my grandfather used jocosely to say of him, "Had master Robert been born a beggar he would have converted a dust cart into a carriage. The art of making money was born in him." My uncle was very successful in his profession, but his fame and his fortune bore very unequal proportions to each other; yet such is the respect which most men pay to wealth, that my uncle was as much courted as if he had been the Lord Chancellor of England. He was called the honest lawyer, simply because he was the *rich lawyer*, and few people imagined that the envied possessor of five thousand per annum, could have any inducement to undertake a dirty cause, or cheat his clients. The world believed my uncle to be an honest man. The dependent slave, who was chained all day to the desk in Robert Moncton's office, knew him to be a rogue. But his practice daily increased, and his reputation and fortune increased in proportion.

There never was a man less adapted for business than my father. Had he been brought up to my uncle's profession, he would have been a judge, for his abilities were of the first rate order. If the brothers could have exchanged situations, all would have been well. My uncle would have been the great man on 'change, my father at the bar. My uncle had a habit of saving money—my father of spending it. You would have thought the former had discovered the secret of the philosopher's stone, and the latter had ruined himself in endeavouring to find it out—one was parsimonious from choice—the other extravagant, through indulging a mistaken feeling of benevolence. The one regarded with indifference, the miseries of his fellow creatures, the other was not only keenly alive to their sufferings, but lost no opportunity of alleviating and supplying their wants. The voice of prudence was never attended to, during