

out of house and home by his father, "to do for his self," his mother having died two years before. To the inebriate house-painter, and to the woman who occupied the post of house-keeper, it probably seemed not a little unreasonable for an able-bodied youth of ten years to be dependent on the parent stem; at any rate, the most practical and ready way of expressing their sentiments was to turn the youngster out of doors, and to leave him to make the best of his resources. Finding the circumstances of his situation as distressing as they were novel, the poor boy wandered abroad hither and thither, utterly disconsolate, the harsh words of his father still ringing in his ears—that henceforth he would find neither food nor bed at home. Night after night he slept anywhere that might pass for a shelter, and furnish a lair for the homeless. He seemed to be cut off from hope and friends. Even the much-relished mud-larking becomes divested of all its fun, when, as a person's sole source of income, it is adopted as a profession. But when trouble comes as pure misfortune, a turn in the tide is almost certain to appear; and thus it happened in this instance. One day James had strayed into Catherine-street, Strand, when he was noticed by a pleasant-looking man, who stood in the doorway of a news-vendor's shop.

"My boy, do you want a place? Can you go out with newspapers?" said the stranger.

"Yes, sir, I shall be very thankful," answered James.

"Well, come in, and I'll give you a trial," added the other, leading the way into the shop.

The newspaper trade was something different in the year 1839 from what it is to-day. There was then no commodity in the market to compete with the high-priced journals, and had any seer foretold what a revolution in

journalism a few years would effect, men would have treated the prediction as the day-dream of an enthusiast. Yet people in those days, as in these, required their papers to be delivered early, and James Hampton's business hours were from 4 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. As his salary now amounted to six shillings a-week, to say nothing of gratuities from customers, etc., he was re-admitted into his father's lodgings. He remained with the news-vendor for four years, and only resigned the appointment when he received a more liberal offer from a coppersmith near Leicester-square, who allowed him fourteen shillings a-week. The coppersmith was also a kind master, as well as a religious man, and James spent two profitable years in his service. He might have remained in this situation without desiring a change, had not his father removed him, for the purpose of teaching him common house-painting.

The change which now occurred was entirely for the worse, and James soon found reason to wish that he could recall the old days which he had spent among newspapers and copper-ware. He was now entirely separated from any religious influence; and though his guardians had, meanwhile, removed from Drury-lane to the neighbourhood of Lincoln's-inn-fields, the moral atmosphere was no purer. Through several years he continued to labour at the painting business; but the life he led was a very indifferent one. His father and substitute for a mother were still drunkards; there was no home comfort; and though he paid fourteen shillings a-week for board and lodging, the boy was half-starved, and treated generally in a dog-like fashion, until he could bear the misery no longer. One Saturday a tragedy, which ended in a long separation, was enacted in his father's wretched home. The woman in charge, who was intoxicated, in her