

came fond of reading; was esteemed a quick workman; and, having no desire for money beyond what was necessary to supply my wants, and I gave unrestricted indulgence to my new passion. We had each an allotted quantity of work to perform weekly.—Conscious of being able to complete it in half the time, and having yielded myself solely to my ruinous propensity to delay, I seldom did anything before the Thursday; and the remaining days were spent in hurry, bustle, and confusion. Occasionally I overrated my abilities—my task was unfinished, and I was compelled to count a *dead horse*. Week after week this grew upon me, till I was so firmly saddled, that, until the expiration of my apprenticeship, I was never completely freed from it. This was another of my curse's handmaidens."

Here he turned to me with a look of seriousness, and said—"Beware, young man, how you trust to your own strength and your own talents; for, however noble it may be to do so, let it be in the open field, before you are driven into a corner, where your arms may come in contact with the thorns and the angles of the hedges.

"About this time, too, I fell in love—yes, *fell* in love—for I just beheld the fair object, and I was a dead man, or a new man, or anything you will. Frequently as I have looked and acted like a fool, I believe I never did so strikingly as at this moment. She was a beautiful girl—a very angel of light—about five feet three inches high, and my own age. Heaven knows how I ever had courage to declare my passion; for I put it off day after day, and week after week, always preparing a new speech against the next time of meeting her, until three or four rivals stepped forward before me. At length, I did speak, and never was love more clumsily declared. I told her in three words; then looked to the ground, and again in her face most pitifully. She received my addresses just as saucily as a pretty girl could do. But it were useless to go over our courtship—it was the only happy period of my existence, and every succeeding day has been misery. Matters were eventually brought to a bearing, and the fatal day of final felicity appointed. I was yet young, and my love possessed all the madness of a first passion. She not only occupied my heart, but my whole thoughts; I could think of nothing else—speak of nothing else

—and, what was worse, do nothing else. It burned up the very capabilities of action, and rendered my native indolence yet more indolent. However, the day came; (and a better stormy day it was;) the ceremony was concluded, and the honey-moon seemed to pass away in a fortnight.

"About twelve months after our marriage Heaven (as authors say) blest our loves with a son and—I had almost said heir. Deplorable patrimony!—heir of his mother's features—the sacrifice of his father's weakness. Kean could not have touched this last burst. The father, the miserable man, parental affection, agony, remorse, repentance, were expressed in a moment.

A tear was hurrying down his withered cheek as he dashed it away with his dripping sleeve; 'I am a weak old fool,' said he, endeavouring to smile; for there was a voluble gaiety in his disposition, which his sorrow had subdued, but not extinguished. 'Y my boy! my poor dear Willie! I shall never—no, I shall never see him again!' Here again wept, and had nature not denied that luxury, I should have wept too, for the sake of company. After a pause, he again proceeded:—

'After the birth of my child, came the heathenism. I had no conscientious objections to the tenets of the established church of my country, but I belonged to no religious community. I had never thought of it as an obligation beyond that of custom: and deferred from year to year until I felt ashamed to go forward' on account of my age. My wife was a Cameronian: and to them, though I knew nothing of their principles, I had an aversion: but for her to hold up the child while I was in the place, was worse than heathenism—was unheard of in the parish. The nearest Episcopal chapel was at Kell a distance of ten miles. The child still remained unbaptized. 'It hasna a name,' said the ignorant meddlers, who had no higher idea of the ordinance. It was a source of much uneasiness to my wife, and gave rise to some family quarreling. Months succeeded weeks, and eventually the child was carried to the Episcopal church. This closed up all the slander of the town, and directed it into one channel upon my devoted he. Some said 'I wasna sound,' and all agreed 'was nae better than I should be,' while a zealous clergyman came to my father, pressing his fears that 'his son was in a