

one at the hands of the sooty damsel, till I was moist to the skin, and the meat went to table as dry as a chip. Never shall I forget the look which she gave me as she passed the dining-room door—her eyes shot through me like the spit, and all because from a motive of pure and refined sympathy I had sought to add to the happiness of her and her swain. Unable to appreciate the delicacy of my motives, the ungrateful girl always took the opportunity of calling me a meddling booby, and from that unfortunate day I bore the ominous name of “sly boots,” which clung to me like a curse wherever I went. I imagined every one who looked me in the face intended to assail me with that epithet, until after long usage I began to feel myself identified with it so completely that I became miserable and unhappy, and scarcely knew whether I was deserving the hateful distinction or not. This circumstance, added to many others, at length roused my spirit, and I resolved, contrary to the admonitions of prudence and propriety, abruptly to flee from a place which had become so distressing to me. Did I seek refuge under the paternal roof?—No—that was no place for me: my presence there, under such circumstances, would have rendered still stronger the bitter feeling my father entertained towards the “vagaries” (as he called acts of sensibility) of such an adole-headed boy.

After wandering to as great a distance from these scenes as my narrow finances would allow of, I mixed among the motley group assembled at a village market, where I saw a brute of a drover belabouring an ox with a knotted stick, until the creature was almost wild with torture: my sensibility was roused, and in the fervour of my sensations, I stripped off my coat, and offered my own back as a propitiation for the sins of the poor beast. (I mean the ox, not the drover), and cried quarter for him. The merciless fellow laughed loudly, and took me at my word, and I soon experienced practically what must have been the sufferings of the afflicted animal. The surrounding boors set up a wild shout, and the ox, alarmed at the fear of being obliged to resume his part in the suffering duet, made a dash forward, and by a forcible butt of his short horns, laid me senseless amongst the mob.

When I regained my erect posture and my senses, I imagined I heard a distant cry of “sly boots,” and scarcely knew whether I was covered most with mud or shame; certain it is, I was thickly bespattered with both: and when an unfortunate cur with a tin kettle tied to his tail ran howling by me, I fancied I was as miserable as he was, and even in the face of the requital I received from the ill-bred ox, I almost wished I could have exchanged situations with the dog, thinking I could have borne with true philosophy the running accompaniment which supported and relieved his vocal performance. A little reflection soon brought me to my senses, and taught my sensibility to feel, “how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless” ox; and after a long mental struggle, I brought myself to believe that the dog might have proved as thankless as the ox.

While I was standing in this condition, “the observed of all observers,” a sedate looking gentleman, who was passing by, commiserated my appearance, and in a kind tone of voice inquired the cause of my misfortunes, seeing of course by the gentility of my dress that I was not acting in my proper sphere. After listening to the recital of my present adventure, he beckoned me to follow him, which I did without hesitation, to his residence, where, after affording me the means of a sufficient ablution, he kindly took me by the hand and led me to the drawing-room, where his wife and daughter were sitting.

After making a slight apology for bringing a perfect stranger into their presence, the worthy man presented me to them, and for the first time in my life, I felt, by

the blushes on my cheek, and other agitating sensations, that I was man enough to be sensibly touched with the beauty of the daughter, as well as by the frank mode in which she acknowledged the introduction of her papa’s protégé. She was then—(oh how vivid is the impression on my memory even now!)—she was then just in the exquisite bloom of sixteen, lovely, gentle; what attribute did not my young fancy deck her with!

I was treated with a great degree of kindness by the whole circle; and without the imputation of vanity, I may say I believe I had some claims towards being what is called attractive, possessing a very comely person and an easy, unembarrassed address, except when my peculiar feelings were called into play. In the midst of this family party, the old gentleman asked me a variety of questions as to my connections, family, and other matters: the story was painted—I could not tell part without telling all. Was I ashamed of my feelings or my conduct?—No:—still I could not readily explain a set of peculiar feelings, and relate their consequences, without the dread of incurring perhaps censure—but more certainly ridicule. I could not bear ridicule even single-handed in a *tête-à-tête*, much less could I bear it in the presence of, and perhaps administered by three at once, one of whom seemed all on a sudden to be of three times more importance to me than any other person I had ever met. If I had remained silent would not that have created suspicions that I was no better than I should be, and therefore unworthy of the kindness I had experienced. Which is the severest, ridicule or silent reproach, which might grow up into contempt? All these reflections, and many more, crowded over and agitated my mind till I could scarcely breathe: and after some further deliberation, I yielded myself up to the chance of ridicule, for the sake of indulging my love of truth and frankness. I told my whole story, from the turkey, downwards, including a variety of incidents with which I have not thought fit to fatigue my reader, and concluded with the adventure of the amorous cook maid, and my consequent flight.—The result of all this was that I grew in favour, my feelings were duly appreciated; and the only thing which called down censure, was the circumstance of my quitting my school and omitting to return to my father’s home.

I soon learnt that my worthy host was the village lawyer, and after having remained under his hospitable roof for several weeks, he proposed to communicate my situation to my father, and actually proposed to take me under his care, and educate me in his profession. My father came, and we were soon reconciled; all went on as I could wish, and my father seemed to congratulate himself on the occurrence of an accident which seemed to bid fair to be of use to me.

But to what trials was I exposed—not at the bar of justice—but at the bar of my peculiar gift of sensibility. I soon discovered that my every-day duty was completely at variance with my character. Day after day exhibited to my aching heart, the situations of many whose miseries and afflictions I felt as acutely as they themselves—but how could I alleviate them? I could not pursue my present course without seeing these things, and I could not see them without being cut to the quick; and on one occasion I sold my coat to buy bread for a starving family who had been turned out of house and home, on account of their inability to pay their rent. I was always poor, always overwhelmed with sympathetic sufferings, and my chief happiness seemed to consist in rendering myself unhappy. Years passed on in this way, and how I endured them I know not.

But there was a load-star that bound me fast to my situation. That kind creature from the first seemed to understand my character. Time had made us familiar; we read together, sang together, talked together, and walked together, and no one ever dreamt of mischief