"At all events, you will not entirely desert to, you will sometimes look in upon me here?"

"At all events, you will not entirely desort me, you will sometimes look in upon me here?" aid the elderly lady.

The stroller cast a glance at pretty Dinah, who was so silent and so modest, wishing in his inmost heart, that she would add her entreatles to those of her annot But gentle, formining Dinah still remained as mute as before.

Presently he took his leave of the ladies, and, quitting the 'votel, went in search of his companions, whom he found just entering the town. Then they repaired to a certain humble house of entertainment, affording accommodation for man and beast; and there took up their abode for the present.

of entertainment, affording accommodation for man and beast; and there took up their abode for the present.

On the following murning, the rest of the company, consisting of eight persons, male and temale, arrived at Blackbrook, and put up at this same lowly hostel. Jollio's dramatic troupe this same lowly hostel. Jollio's dramatic troupe was come to a nuse and astonish the Blackbrook folk during fuir time, and the festivities of approaching Chrismar Now every member of Samuel Jellico's company labored for the general weal of the concern; alternately acting as carpenters, scene-painters, promplers, copyists, property-makers, wig-dressers, costumers, and bill-stickers. The business was a fourlying one; and the manager of it being an exceedingly generous man, the people about him were made contented and happy, and were ready to do everything they could to advance his interest as well as their own.

Desmoro's services were soon enlisted. He was strong for his years, energetic, intelligent, eager to be of use to his kind benefactor, and unflagging in his industry and persoverauce. Wintover he was required to do, he seemed to winderstand it in a moment. The ind's clear brain appeared to grasp at everything, and he showed a hand as willing, and almost as cunning, as many of his elders.

'You're a smart one, snyhow, youngster!" observed a very dimunitive man, who acted a clown, and was called "Shavings." His right name was Chavring; but owing to a carcius pronunciation of its syllables, it had become "Shavings," and such it was now siways printed in the play-bills.

Woodford Chavring little heeded the unimportant fact, and quietly suffered himself to be addressed as "Woodlen Shavings." Desmoto's services were soon enlisted.

Woodford Chavring little heeded the unimportant fact, and quietly suffered himself to be addressed as "Wooden Shavings," never once addressed as "Wooden Shavings," never once correcting the ludierous perversion of his mames entreeting the ludierous perversion of his mames of the west a good natured little fellow, who made sunshine for himself and others wherever he went. He was at once the pet and the but of the whole company; but owing to his simplicity, and the gentleness of his disposition, he seldom noticed the practical jokes that were played upon him, and cartainly never complained of them. He was over forty years of lained of them, with one fair daughtor—a girl of lust fourteen summers old.

But to return to where I so clumsily broke out, in order to introduce the phove character to your notice.

your notice.

Rhavings and Ussmore, mounted on ladders, were nailing up the prosentium, helping to make a barn look like a theatre; and the former was praising the latter for his attention

mer was praising and send smartness.

"You handle a hamme" capitally, What's "You handle a hamme" capitally, What's your-name. I really never saw such a clever chap!" continued the clown, still addressing chap!" continued the clown, still addressing chap!" bero, and speaking with his mouth full of mails. "Where the dooce did you spring up nails. "Where the dooce did you spring up nails. "Been amongst us sort of folks afore.

Desmore shook his head. What's your age? Desmoto subtle in over t What's your ago ""
"No? Woll, I nover t What's your ago ""
"I'm nearly sixtoen, sir."
"I'm nearly sixtoen, sir."
"Example attitude to well, I should think you

"Yan nearly statem? Well, I should think you "Noarly sixtem? Well, I should then was; and you such a bouncing size too—thill by a whole head than me, that's overgone forty, been married, and got a daughtor." Desmoro was surprised at the clown's ungrammatics: language, and began to speculate on the probable line of business ne pursued in

on the probable that his profession.

"There's a knocker'll have to be painted on that door," the mannikin went on, pointing to accome which they were now proceeding to act.

"That ain't a part of my business, sceing as how I can't draw a straight line, strive howsomedown I will."

"I wan paint a knocker," returned Desmoro.

"I can paint a knocker," returned I

"I can paint a knocker," returned Desmoro, eagorly.
"You can, youngster!" pxolaimed Shavings, "You can, youngster!" pxolaimed Shavings, "You can, youngster!" Bloss the lad, I do think be can do everything!"

"Just you give me a brush, and some paint, "Just you give me a brush, and some paint, sir, and you shall see!" added Desmoro, confident in his own abilities as a draughtsman.

Shavings, who had instantly supplied the lad's requirements, now stood still, watching the development of the door-knocker.

"First rate, my lad!" applauded he. "Quite natural like, am't it? It strikes me that you could do almost anything you made up your mind to do. Do you think you could act?"

"If I tried, I daresay I could," was the prompt reply.

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Cosser, King Lear, Coriolanus, and a beap of

Cosser, King Leer, Coriolanus, and a heap of other chaps too noomerous to mention."

"I understand perfectly, sir, thank you. And what's being goosed?" was the curious question, put with great curnestness.

Shavings laughed—a little chirping laugh it was, with mirth and simplicity in it.

"Being goosed, my lad, means being hissed by the audionce."

Desmore lifted up his hands in mute astonishment.

mont"Ain't i making you wise, youngster?" purued his companion, all the while proceeding
with the work he had in hand. "I shall be as
good at a father to you, if you haven't got any,"
lie added, taking up a saw, and energetically
using it.

"What characters do you ennet?" inquired JI BULLE

the youth.

"You mean, what business do I play. That's the style we professionals talk," the little man answered, with a very grand air. "There's another wrinkle for you. I shall be making an Admirable Criebton of you, it strikes me, What's-your-name. But, in reply to your question, I am Air. Merryman."

"Sir?"

"Sir?"

"I'm the merryandrew of the establishm ut, who sings comic songs, and dences to amuse the British public."

"Oh, indeed!" returned Desmore, far from understanding the clown's explanation concerning himself. "I thought you spoke of your playing heavy business?"

"Ah! that's my legisimate fine; only I wasn't properly appreciated in it," rejoined the little man, with a deep sigh; "and finding such to be the case, I at once abandoned it, and took to finnly ments instead. I made my first appearance on any stage in the character of King Dick."

"King bick," repeated the youth. "I never hourd of him."

Not of the crooked-back tyrant?" exclaimed

"King Bick," Papeaged to the bound of him."

"Not of the crooked-back tyrant?" exclaimed its in Not of the hadden one more.

"That's the chap—Hand here the hammer again, will you, Tuingumderry?" he added, on the laider once more.

"My name is Desmore, it is Desmore Desmore," observed the youth very quietly, yet with a certain dignity of manner which naturally belonged to him.

"Desmore Desmore," repeated the clown, beamore of the barn, and immediately a young the door of the barn, and immediately a young the door of the barn, and immediately a young supparance before the surprised eyes of Desmonoperature of the skies.

"Dad," see said, calling upon the clown, who something to eat."

At this, Desmore drew his companion's attention to the presence of the speaker.

"Oh, it's Comfort, is it ?" said the mannikin, when he he he was the sit it it is the mannikin, before head to him, and smiled pleasantly upon here."

"Bler her is he never forgets her old father,"

"Bler her is he never forgets her old father,"

"Bler her is he never forgets her old father,"

in. Bler her i she never forgets her old father, "Bler her! she never forgets her old father," he continued, rapidly reaching the floor, and catching her in his arms. "This is my daughter, Desmoro; Comfort Chavring, or Shavings, it don't matter a brass button which," he added, with his chirping laugh, and a proud, fatherly air.

with his chirping laugh, and a proud, fatherly air.

Comfort looked up somewhat shyly, and acknowledged the presence of our here with a chine which she had a proud for here with a fullet bend of her head. Then she threw off her quiet bend of her head. Then she threw off her cloak, opened her basket, and taking hence a cource, but spouless napkin—which she spread cource, but spouless napkin—which she spread across her father's knees—a basin containing some humble Irish atew, and a knife and fork, pronounced the repast to be quite ready. Desmore's eyes were riveted on the little form bemore's eyes were riveted on the little form behalt amile and her simple manners. For Comfort was tail, with a well-proportioned, graceful fort was tail, with a well-proportioned, graceful figure, possessed of hands and feet of faultiess mould, a pale, clear complexion, and one of the most musical voices in all creation.

Desmore thrust his left band into his jacked, and began to wender whether Comfort would ever permit him to become her friend. He saw the new for the first time, and already a voice was whispering in his heart syllables that he had never heard before.

And who was she who had thus awakened in the forlorn youth's breast these strange and delicious feelings?—who had cast a gleam of

And who was she who had thus hwastened in the forlorn youth's breast these strange and dedictions feelings?—who had cast a gleam of solden sunshine across his lonely and dreary

pathway?

Only a poor stroller's child, a dancing-girl in boths, or barns, at town or country fairs?

No, no, no! Desmore could not bear to reflect on her thus, for in his opinion, she was something altogether too beautiful and pure to be gazed at by any common eyes.

"If I tried, I daresay I could," was the prompt.

Bhavings pinched his chin reflectively, and shixed his sharp, gray eyes before he replied.

"You're a fine fellow. By-and-by you'll be just the chap for a hore. Of course you'll play the leading juveniles first?"

"Leading juveniles first?"

"Leading juveniles first?"

"Leading juveniles first?"

"Leading juveniles first?"

"What are they?"

"One come out in the heavy inthe condet the youth, in suddendurable perplexity. "What are they?"

"One come out in the heavy inthe condet in the heavy business, made a dead failure of the and got joily business, made a dead failure of the and got joily business, made a dead failure of the angular."

Desmore opened while his eyes and mouth, near some sacred shrine.

Bosmitfal as the gir undoubtedly was, Dosmore opened while his wys turniness, sirs."

"Why, Macheth, King Diok, Hamlet, Julius and got joily ignorant."

Bhavings and Desmore had become very handler that bright crimson stain, which was so hate-that b

give him any pain; on the contrary quite; he could now find an excuse for seeking her presence as often as he pleased, since he had offered to instruct her in all he knew himselt. The company had been in Blackbrook a whole ortnight, during which time Manager Jellico indi won silver in plenty; and the cry of the townspeople was "Bitsy on! stay 2n!" a cry which Jellico felt considerable pleasure in attending to.

townspeople was "Stay on' stay stay to the which Jolileo felt considerable pleasure in at which Jolileo felt considerable pleasure in at tending to.

Meanwhile, Desmore, in various ways, had been making himself useful to his benefactor. It is been making himself useful to his benefactor. It is been making himself useful to his benefactor. It is been making himself useful to his benefactor. It is obtained in anything he sought to do had seldom failed in anything he sought to do had seldom failed in anything he sought to do had seldom failed in anything he sought to do had seldom failed in anything he sought to do had he posted playbilis upon the walls of the sout of town; indeed, he was ever willing sout of town; indeed, he was ever willing to demonstrate his truly grateful spirit.

Desmore, whose worldly possessions had all towns, ever willing to demonstrate his truly been tost in the late ismentable fire at Tillysbeen tost in the late is had been clothed in those united means he had been clothed in looked in the worthy manager, and with some hesitation addressed him.

"If you please, sir," he commenced, blushing the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair; "If you please, I am to the roots of his hair;

the ground.

"Hollon! Is anything the matter?" inquired

"Hollon! Is anything the manner.

Jellico, puzzled by the isd's manner.

"No, sir, nothing at all," was the sprightly
answer. And the youth's handsome face lifted
itself, looking the picture of contentment and

"That's well, my boy. Now?"
"That's well, my boy. Now?"
"Well, sir, I have it in my mind and my will to do somebody a little service...."

"Good."

"I wish to teach Comfort Shavings all I know myself, sir," was the reply, spoken in a low voice, and with some trendation.

Jolido laughed outright; but fustantly checked his mirth on seeing Desmero's increasing confusion and uneasiness.

"And Comfort is willing to learn—to become your pupil, ch?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, teach away, my lad; what on earth have I to do with the matter?"

"I want you to give me an hour's liberty every day, sir; I'll make up the lost time in some way or other, whosever you require me to do so."

"My good lad, take the hour and welcome but boware of what this teaching may probably lead to. And yet, you are over young to fall to love with any one."

Desimore opened his eyes to their fullest ex-

lead to. And yet, you are over joins to live with any one."

Desmore opened his eyes to their fullest extent. Poor lad! he was perfectly unaware of the nature of his newly-born sentiments; he did not know that he was being taught to love, and that the clown's protty daughter was instructing him in those leasons, which are so structing him in those leasons, which are so structing him in those leasons, which are so the favor secorded him by his benefactor, and at once left his presence to soek that of Comfort, to whom he communicated the welcome intelligence of which he was the bearer.

"I'm to teach you, Comfort!" he cried out, "I'm to teach you, Comfort!" he cried out, "I'm to teach you, Comfort!" he cried out, self! I've found some old volumes amongst is self. I've found som

lightened.
Well-pleased that his darling should acquire Well-pleased that his darling should acquire all the useral knowledge she could, the clown ever halied Deamoro's daily visits with unfelgned joy and gratitude. Dear, simple-minded soul, he had no suspicion that these children were unconsciously weaving links to fetter one mather's hearts!

onother's hearts!
One day, Comfort, catching sight of our hero's left hand, dropped her book in affright.
"Whatever have you done to your hand, Desmoro?" she cried. "Oh, dad, do come here and look at it!"
It was too late the court.

and look at it?

It was too late, the youth could not conceal his marked paim; so he showed it to the wondering Shavings and his daughter.

"My!" exclaimed the little man, examining that bright crimson stain, which was so hateful in Desmoro's sight. "I shall call you 'Red Hand!"

his features blancked and quivering, his secents

his features blanched and quivering, his socents unsteady and hoarse.

Comfort glanced at her tutor's face, surprised to see it so ruffied.

"Well, my boy, you'll be a marked man for the word to hide the clown. "However have you contrived to hide it from us until now?"

"I do my best to hide it from everybody," replied Desmoro, gloomily. "It was accident that showed it to Comfort just now."

"What'll you do with it when you shall set?"

inquired Shavings.

Desmoro shrugged his shoulders, his eyes fixed on his open palm. "It seems like as forcing their way and trickling down his forcing their way and trickling down his cheeks. "A crast and everlasting ban! I wish to so, whatever paln the infliction might give me!"

"And reake a great noodle of yourself at the

do so, whatever pain the infliction might strong in a mo in and make a great noodle of yourself at the same time," laughed Comfort.

Just at that moment Ralph Thethird entered the clown's ledgings. The young man looked much excited, and after the exchange of a few much excited, and after the exchange of a few words with Shavings, he withdrew, beckening besnore, who at once took his leave, and followed him into the street.

"Desmore, I am about to ask you to do me a great service," said the stroller, putting his hand on the lad's shoulder.

"I'll do i, Mr. Thetford—I'll do it, if it's within my power," he answered eagerly.

"You know that we are to leave Blackbrook to-morrow?"

to-morrow?"
"Yes, sir."
"I know I may safely confide in you," pro"I know I may safely confide in you," proceeded Ralph, with a degree of embarrassment
ceeded Ralph, with a degree of embarrassment
in his manner. "What do you think, Desmoro,
in his manner. "What do you think, Desmoro,
in his manner." What do you think, Dinah
I am going to run away with, and marry, Dinah
controlled to run away with his blinah

I am going to run away with, and marry, Dinah Tillysdale."

"You are going to run away with Miss Dinah Tillysdale, sir it repeated the youth, in amazement. "I do not comprehend you, sir."

"No? Yet you are not a dull lad. Well, I'll briefly explain myself to you. I love Dinah, whom I have managed to see daily ever since we have been in Blackbrook, and Dinah loves me; but her aunt, who accidentally discovered our secret, is almost crazy about the matter, and has imprisoned her in her chamber, and is going to send her away, heaven only knows where. Now you understand the business that we els?"

"Perfectly, I think, sir."

"Perfectly, I think, sir."

"Very good! You know the 'Eagle Hotel.' where the ladies are at present staying?"

"Yes, sir. It stands at the corner of the market-place, opposite the old Town Hall."

"Exactly!" returned Raiph, his chin in his hand, his breast full of love, and his brain distracted with a score of half-formed schemes.

"What can I do to assist yt, sir." asked. Desmore, carnestly.

"After the performance to-night, be in watting for me at the end of the Laurel 1 oad, and 1 will then instruct you how to help me."

"Be secret, Dermoro!" warned Raiph, his

will then instruct you how to help me."

"I chall observe you, sir."

"He secret, Dormoro!" warned Ralph, his cheek pale, his gny spirit much subdued.

"Don't fear me, sir."

"I never shall do so, my boy."

"Thank you, cir."

"After the performance to-night, at the end of Laurel Road, remomber!"

"I shall be there, sir."

And, with those words, the stroller walked one way, and our hero the other.

Desmoro went along musingly. He liked Ralph Thetford very much indeed, but he was asking himself whether he should be acting rightly in assisting him to carry off Dinah Thilysdale.

Desmoro had upright notions about most

main Thetford very much indeed, but he was asking himself whether he should be acting rightly in assisting him to carry off Dinah Thilysdule.

Desmore had upright notions about most things, for his grandfather's teachings had strongly inculcated in his young mind the principle of truth and honesty, and he did not like to engage himself to act in any affair that was not strictly within the pale of honor. But when he redected on crabbed hiss Tillysdale, and on he were she not quickly sautched out of him which were she not quickly sautched out of him old lady's envious and vengeful clutches he ided in his to do his very utmost in order to assist the lovers.

Accordingly, after the performance was concluded that hight, instead of eating his frugal supper, and afterwards rotaring to rest behind supper, and afterwards rotaring to rest behind where he found Ralph Thetford, furnished with where he found Ralph Thetford, furnished with a lantern, impatiently awaiting his coming.

"That's a good lad!" exclaimed the stroller.

"I felt certain you wouldn't fall me."

"I felt certain you wouldn't fall me."

"What are you going to do?" asked Desmoro, anxious to know what share he would be required to take in the night's adventure.

"Now, listen!" said Ralph. "Directly under Miss Tillysdale's bedroom window, which is of mo particular height, there is a pear tree."

"I'm following you, sir."

"I'm following you, sir."

"Now, could I climb into that tree, and reach the balcony which it overhangs, I could enter the balcony which it overhan