

"When Benjamin Levi first came to this town, he was too insignificant to obtain the notice of any one. He commenced business amongst us as printer's devil, to the editor of the *Jamaica Observer*,—a violent party paper, which most strenuously opposed the abolition of the slave-trade, and denounced the few benevolent men who set their faces against that abhorred traffic, (of which, unfortunately, I was one,) as traitors to Great Britain, and enemies to their country. This paper had a great circulation through the Island, and was generally patronized by all the rich planters and merchants in the place.

"From printing abusive articles in this vile, illiberal paper, Levi took to writing them, and made himself so necessary to his master that he became in time, sole manager of the affair. At his death, Mr. Hart left him the paper as a reward for his signal services in the cause of humanity. The paper, always a worthless vehicle for party strife, became, under the new editor's management, a perfect sink of iniquity, a receptacle for all that was low in morals and base in practice. Through the medium of its pages the most malicious slanders were constantly propagated against the characters of the best and most respectable of our citizens; and this species of stabbing in the dark was read with avidity, even by those who knew Benjamin Levi's statements to be perfectly false. But he, being an adept in the weakness of man's sinful nature, acted upon that vile maxim put forth by one as worldly and as unfeeling as himself—'Divide and rule,'—and division and strife he has made amongst us, God knows. His falsehoods and artful insinuations, have separated chief friends, and the author of the mischief quietly enjoys the distress he has occasioned; and continues to gain a comfortable independence, by preying upon the characters of his neighbors."

"You have described a very amiable personage," said Robert, "a sort of moral hyena. But why do you suffer such a biped to exist among you? Has no one the courage to pull his nose or prosecute him for libel?"

"That's all very well in the old country, sir, where if a man is ever such a bully, he must behave himself, or be kicked out of society. But in a colony like this, the thing is very different. Here, men may call one another liars, and thieves, and traitors in print, without the least fear of punishment."

"If the law denies them justice," said Robert, "why do not the injured parties meet together, and toss him and his vile paper into the bay?"

"Ah, sir!" replied the merchant, shrugging his shoulders, "it would not free us from the moral pestilence of his presence. I do not think that

water would drown him. The people twice hung him in effigy, but that public indignity offered to his person produced no effect. He only laughed at what he termed their impotent revenge. He elings to us like 'Sinbad's' old man of the sea; and it is vain to endeavor to shake him off. He has been sent amongst us as a punishment for our sins, and we must bear the infliction patiently, until God in mercy is pleased to remove him hence. Every one dreads to fall beneath his lash, and he knows his power; and such is the malignity of his nature, that he delights in abusing it."

"My uncle speaks feelingly," said the man of the counter. "Benjamin Levi has honored him (for honor I consider it) with several affectionate notices in the *Observer*, and he would gladly cut his acquaintance, and repay evil with evil by prejudicing every body he meets against his tormentor. But if the little Jew's articles in print are bad, his clothes are good enough to suit your purpose. Tell him your tale of the wheel, and he will be very civil to you; for it will furnish him with an excellent article for his next paper. And hark ye, friend! if you have any money, be sure that you conceal the fact, until your bargain is made, for if you had a hundred dollars in your pocket, he would be sure to talk you out of it."

"I should like to see this strange variety of our species," returned Robert, rising to depart.

"You will find him an amusing one, at any rate," said the former spokesman. "But remember words are but wind. The man's a great liar—don't trust him."

"What do you mean to do with yourself after you have made your purchases?" asked the old merchant, who, struck with the fine countenance of the emigrant, had taken a great fancy to him.

"I must try and get a situation as a clerk in a store," said Robert; "I write a good hand, and my poor father always considered me an excellent accountant."

"You will not want a situation long," said the merchant. "Just step in as you return from the Jew's. Perhaps I may be able to help you to a situation."

Robert returned his grateful thanks, and well pleased with the prospect of obtaining employment, he proceeded with a light heart to the Jew's.

He knocked long and loudly at a black, ugly, forbidding looking door, without receiving any answer. At length, he heard a voice calling to him from a flight of stairs above, and perceived a fat, punchy little man, standing in his shirt-sleeves at the head of the landing, which led to an upper loft.

"What do you want, young man?"

"Does one Benjamin Levi, a Jew, live here?"