

CHAPTER I.

"His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, THIS WAS A MAN."

—*Shakespeare.*

IT is night ' Not the cold, wet, chilly night, that is settling down on the forlorn-looking city outside ; not the cheerless night, that makes the news-boy gather his rags more closely about him, and stand under the projecting doorway of some dilapidated, tenantless building, as he cries "*Free Press*, only two cents : " not the awful night on which the gaunt haggard children, who thrive on starvation, crouch shiveringly around the last hissing fagot on the fire-place, with big, hungry eyes wandering over the low ceiling and the mouldy walls, or resting perchance on the wet, dirty panes, with their stuffings of tattered clothing, or gazing in a wilder longing still, on the bare shelves and the empty bread-box : Oh no ! There are no such nights as these in reality ; such a scene never existed out of the imaginations of men ; there are no cries rending the very heavens this night for bread while handfuls are being flung to pet poodles or terriers. There are no benumbed limbs aching in the dingy corners of half-tumbled down houses, no wrinkled, aged jaws chattering, no infants moaning at their mother's breasts with cold, while many a pampered lady grows peevish and irritated, if, Dobbs' forgets the jars of warm water for the end of her cosy bed. Merciful God ' and *this* is to live ! But no ! *this* is to dream !

I said it was night, so it was, but the heavy curtains were drawn, the gas was lighted, the grate-fire roared up the chimney, the lounge was supplied with its cushions, the *fauteuil* was drawn up to the fender-stool, the decanter and glass stood on the silver salver and in his velvet slippers and embroidered cap, Henry Rayne smoked the "pipe of peace" before his cheerful fire. As we intrude upon him in his sanctuary, he lays down his meerschaum, stretches his toasted limbs, and extending his hand touches the little