## A MESSAGE.

Grey sea, rippled yet by the south wind still!
I have a message for thee, grey sea-mist!
Sailing off thence from the home shore,
I trust thee with the secret of my heart.

Crowding all sail, a gallant ship glides past;
Oh! I can hear the dash and the roar of her keel,
Might wear southward, bringing me to her
"Unto the land-locked Mediterranean Sea."

For there, along the Algiers coast, there lies
A little vessel, with a bright sheen
The transparent sea-shell, the purest air
That fans the sails is breathed by her I love.

Her pleasure boat glides on from bay to bay,
Bearing her fairest and best along with her;
O sea! I am with him always on her deck,
Beside her, as thou art ever beside me.

A thousand miles thy waves have parted us!
Yet, thou grey mist you seem from me to her,
I live to think to dost collect me thus;
And now, I charge thee be my messenger.

Choose no ... seven night hour, when the stars are
Bright
Above her head, when all the waters round
Are tuned and tuned to harmony with night,—
Then be thy chaste upon her spirit bound:

Thus take her being in a tender thrall;
And when she, waking, yields to the control,
Do thou her lover to her thoughts recall:
Speak for me to her gracious, gentle soul!

Intrude not on one bright day's happiness;
Sometimes at eve approach her lonely hour,
Venturing her bosom softly to oppress
With feelings wherein mine new own the power.

The yearning for the One beloved and far,
The confidant hope of joy which come not yet;
Yet: on thy dark wave with a quiet star
Of hope—that we may meet as we have met.

Tell her my heart with less of her can know
No one of love; that chance changes not
Less than the storms and tides which some and go
After the deep and overlasting sea.

*—The Cornhill Magazine.*

# READY-MONEY MORTIBOY

## A MATTER-OF-FACT STORY.

CHAPTER XXI.—CONTINUED.

"Look at that," said Mr. Baxis one day to Frank—"that's a fellow, aint it? I lay you a new hat I don't have that here a week, night, and I shall ask sixty guineas for it.

"I not the one that has been in the shop some time?" Frank said.

"No, it aint; but it's the own brother to it, and there's two more of the family—only they aint done up yet," said the dealer, pulling down two other canvases from a rack.

Frank opened his eyes—wide.

The pictures were landscapes in the style of Claude. The first was crowded all over, respectably dirty, and looked certainly a hundred years old. The paint of the other two was scarcely dry.

"It would have deceived me, I believe," said Frank.

"Deceive anybody," said Mr. Baxis. "Now, you wouldn't look at that picture and think it's only a month old, would you? That's all it is. It was like these here two a month ago. I've sold four or five of 'em."

"It would not do to sell them to intimate friends, would it?" said Frank.

"Drat that. I send 'em about the country. I've bought everything lately at an old maiden lady's at Bexley Heath, and described the place to the customers; but I think I've had it up about. Give us a good name, now, and a place for still to come from."

Frank thought a moment, and suggested Compton Green.

"Compton Green!" asked Mr. Baxis.

"It's five miles from Market Basing, in Holmshire," said Frank.

"Well, I'll try Compton Green. I've got a customer coming to look at some pictures to-day. I hope it'll be as lucky as Bexley Heath has been. Jack and Bill soon furnishes now, I think, from there; so it's time we had a change.

"Do," said Frank. "It has one advantage, at all events, nobody will know it."

"Now I'm going to show my customers this Claude. I was 11 gs. a dozen as good. It cost me fifteen pounds; and it wasn't intended a bit from where we stand. I want some imitations. Conkin's you paint some."

Frank tried; and, after some time, succeeded, to Mr. Baxis's entire satisfaction, in imitating Old Cuyp.

"Just right exactly," said the dealer. "I'll give you ten pounds a piece for a dozen as good as that."

Frank was delighted. Here was fortune come at last.

"I'm fair and straight, I am," said the dealer. "There aint much in painting, when you've been about it a week or two. It's the doing 'em up. That's a secret as only a few of us have got. It cost me some thing, mind you, to learn it. I paid for it in a lump. Look at this picture, when I've done with it. Why, anybody, if it's worth a sovereign, that they've got, I can tell you, in doing what I do to it."

"I have heard something of Mr. Baxis's version of Old Cuyp, and in doing anything to a picture but painting it."

Frank watched the processes his picture went through with interest. He went to be fitted, and had dined, when it was done. It was to be an old picture, the supposed old curtain it was painted on must be concealed by a frame.

Then it received several coats of mastic varnish, it was rolled in yellow lake and other colours were mixed due time it down, laid on with Baxis's liberal hand. As the first coat dried, it seemed, all to pieces.

Then it was brushed over one night with a substance which was of the same colour, without number. In the morning, Frank's Old Cuyp was cracked all over.

He was astonished, and could he might be. The surface, hard and dry, was a network of very thin cracks. It was put into a real old frame of the period, the dirtiest shop window canvas and frame several days in succession, and the frame was complete.

The picture looked old and mellow; the cracks bore witness to its genuineness; it had been fitted to keep its rolling canvas from dropping to pieces as it stood; but the frame was one of a kind it always had by it, in the old manor-house at Compton Green.

"It is a simple thing when you know how to do it, aint it?" asked Mr. Baxis of Frank.

"It is, indeed," said the artist astonished at his own work in its altered guise. "It is simple."

But what that simple thing is I must not tell, or I shall have some of my younger readers trying the experiment of cracking their fathers' pictures; and it wants some practice to ensure success in making the cracks natural in appearance, and not having too many of them.

Frank set to work to make more of these imitations.

He made them to order, not being a party to any deception which his employer might practice. A dupe, as he imagined, which over Mr. Baxis wanted. What the dealer chose to do with it when the order was executed, was nothing to Frank. At the same time he had a shrewd suspicion, though Baxis said nothing, that his pictures were sold at profits not in most instances, Mr. Baxis did not always sell a copy as an original. The last imitation brought Frank ten pounds each; but they lost him his employment. Is this way.

One day, as he was going out to his tea, when he got as far as the staircase that concealed the pillory with the cage, he chanced Baxis showing some pictures to two customers; one of them was his Old Cuyp.

"Look at that, sir. I fetched 'em all came from," Baxis was saying.

"Near Market Basing?" asked a clerical gentleman, who was one of his two customers.

"That's the place, sir. I fetched 'em all away myself, I assure you."

"But there is nobody there who ever had such a picture, I am sure the thought myself."

Here was a face for the dealer.

He saw Frank, and called him. Frank had given him the issue. Frank must get him out of the scrape.

"Here, Shipley!" he winked hard—"you went down with me to fetch these pictures. Tell this gentleman the house we got 'em from. It's a genuine Cuyp as ever I sold, sir."

Frank was coming up the shop, and the old gentleman's back was turned towards him—"and it's a cheap picture at sixty guineas I would not take pounds for it."

By this time Frank was close to him.

"Tell this gentleman where we got these pictures from, every one of them. You went with me."

Baxis made a great mistake in his man. Frank was not a party to lying for hire. Besides, he knew the customer.

The old gentleman turned round, and saw him before he could speak. He fell back a step or two, shaded his eyes with his hand, looked very hard at Frank, then smiled, cordially holding out his hand—

"God bless me! Young Mr. Mellship!"

"Dr. Jenkins!" stammered Frank.

"My dear young gentleman, who ever would have thought of seeing you here!"

Frank was interrupted in a rambling apology by Mr. Baxis.

"Very clever young man—invaluable to me. He'll tell you"—here he winked again at Frank—"all about the place we fetched them from."

"Well, I have some other things to talk about with him of more importance; but perhaps he will excuse me if, to settle this, I ask where possibly at Compton Green there could be pictures without one knowing it?"

"Ah!" said Baxis, "he can tell you. Go into servants' hosuse, I forget where they are almost."

"Nowhere," said Frank, looking Dr. Jenkins—whom he knew as an old friend of his father's—full in the face. "I painted it myself."

And he was gone out of the shop. It was in vain the old clergyman and his non-in-law tried to overtake him. They soon lost sight of him in the crowded street.

CHAPTER XXII.

"I must tell you," wrote Grace to Kate, "of the great day we had at Dorington. You know all the dreadful news, because Lady has told you how Uncle Mortiboy, after he had given all his money to Dick, had a paralytic stroke, and is quite helpless now. He seems to know people, though he cannot speak. He gives a sort of a grunt for 'yes,' and frowns when he means 'no.' Though we feel sure he will never recover his faculties again, poor old man, he is not at all a suitable object to look at. He has completely lost the use of one side, and partially part of the other. His face is drawn curiously out of shape, and gives him a happy and pleased look he never had before. He actually looks as if he were smiling all the while—thing he never knew, he did not often do. They have taken him downstairs, and old Hester looks after him. Dick has moved into that little villa—which stands across his river, the only house there. He has a boat to go across in. It seems a pleasant way of getting over a river for a man who knows all about California and Texas, doesn't it? I told Mary what you mentioned about strikes—a new idea.

"Before anything was the great thing. He asked us all down to come down while he ransacked the old hotel. So down we went. We went in some noise and bustle, and we had some trouble. But we'll be even with you. Only wait a bit, my lady."

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was a goodly, and an ancient custom in Market Basing, that on a certain Saturday afternoon in the year, the children should be allowed a holiday, and a public treat, followed by a ball. Of late years, no addition had been made to this festival, for the good reason that there was no money to spare for it. The school feast and treat. It was generally a great success. The children, poor little souls, were marshalled, and marched to some field not far off, where they could not annoy the inhabitants of the town, and, said to play. At the Market Basing boys, saw no occasion, in a holiday, to do anything but make a boisterous nuisance of themselves. Boys, when they were ill-behaved, were ill; they had to be kept in, and to be ill-behaved. It was believed that Dick, instigated by Satan, the old revolutionary Satan, was not, in his figlios, if it is to be real, ought not to be made a condition of charity, actually found on the occasion of the school treat, and made a whole among them, without any condition. He was an active young fellow, did Dick.

After two or three Sundays the free seats were empty, all the old women having gone to different churches, where they could, for their religion had not had, to be, they liked it; where they sat in comfortable pews, and not on benches in the aisle; where they treated, as if, in the house of God, all men are equal, and where they called, "Sarah," they were chosen, they thrusted, they insulted, the misguided old ladies imagined; when they knelt down, they made a noise, and they disturbed Dick, crucked their aged fingers in the young man's shins.

"He is a very dreadful man," said the rector. "What shall we do with him?"

He asked the rector, he did not know what to do with him. He was a very dreadful man, and the rector was perplexed, and was not sure, if he was, he was not sure, if he was, he was not sure, if he was, he