

CHAPTER V.—THE OXFORD SCHOLAR.

A Clerke ther was of Oxenforde also,
 That unto logike hadde long ygo,
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he was not right fat I undertake;
 But looked holwe, and thereto soberly.
 Ful thredbare was his overest courtiepy,
 But all be that he was a philosopre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre.

CHAUCER—*Canterbury Tales*.

THAT evening Lawrence sat reading his Greek Testament by the light of a tallow dip fixed in a tin scone on the wall so as better to illumine the room. Except to those in its immediate proximity it seemed indeed

“No light but rather darkness visible.”

Laying down his book for a moment, he rose to give a drink of water to his friend—for such he now was—Dennis O’Neal.

When he returned he found that one of a group of men who had been shuffling a pack of greasy cards was looking over his book. He was a tall, dark, morose, sinister-looking man, with iron-grey hair and an unkempt grisly beard, and was smoking a short black pipe.

“Do you tell me you can read that?” he asked abruptly.

“Not much, I am sorry to say,” replied Lawrence, reaching for his book, for he began to fear that he was about to be made the victim of another stupid “practical joke,” which is generally only as much of a joke to its victim as stoning was to the poor frogs in the fable.

Matt Evans, for by that name the man was known, returned the book and soon, throwing down his cards, came and sat down on the edge of the bunk beside Lawrence.

“Where did you get that book?” he asked.

“It was my father’s,” said Lawrence, feeling a little anxious about his treasure. “It was almost his last gift.”

“Was he a clergyman?” asked Evans.

“He was a Methodist minister,” was the reply.”