

word for profligacy. Ready for every mad prank that folly could devise, he gave himself up to a life of vicious indulgence, and knew no better excitement than the dice and the bottle. The largest fortune could not long withstand the heavy demands of such a prodigal, and ere Giles Grimstone had attained his thirtieth summer, he was as completely beggared in purse as he had long been in reputation. The estate which his parents had purchased by the sacrifice of soul and body to the Moloch of avarice, was scattered to the winds; and the spendthrift heir, destitute of principle, education, or industry, was thrown upon the world. Deserted by the friends of his prosperity, and despised by the worst as well as the better part of society, he retired up the country with the miserable pittance that yet remained to him; and it was while there, far removed from the temptations which had wrought his ruin, that Giles Grimstone first learned to reflect.

"But while to some minds reflection comes as an angel of light, to others its influences are those of an imp of darkness. He looked on his past life, not with remorse, but with fierce and angry contempt of himself and hatred to his old companions. He brooded over his misfortunes in vindictive silence, and, remembering that his money had been the source of all his enjoyments, and the loss of it the cause of his present degradation, he resolved to repossess himself of the magic talisman. In a word, ere he had suffered the privations of poverty for one short year, he had become a perfect miser. Strange as such a transformation may seem, it is by no means an unnatural one.—The love of money is as deeply rooted in the heart of the prodigal as in that of the miser; the only difference is, that one *scatters* for his own gratification, while the other *hoards*; but selfishness is at the bottom of the passions of both, and however diverse may seem their paths in the outset of life, it very often happens that the ruined spendthrift becomes the merest muckworm that crawls upon the surface of society. The avaricious maxims of his father, the parsimonious example of his mother, now had their full effect upon the impoverished heir; and he loved money for its own sake, as well as he had ever done for the pleasures it could purchase. There are some natures to whom prosperity is as the tropical sun, drawing forth many a poisonous reptile to bask in its beams, while adversity, like the fierce tempests which rage in the same burning climes, chases the evil creatures back to their dens, while it freshens the parched soil of the heart, and fits it to bring

forth good fruit in its season. But such was not the character of Giles Grimstone; prosperity and adversity were alike evil in their influences to him; for while success engendered many a vile thing within his bosom, misfortune, like midnight darkness, called forth many even more loathsome still.

"During his sojourn in the country, he managed to win the affections of a farmer's widow, whose fortune of a few hundred dollars was now more tempting in his eye, than thousands had seemed a few brief months before. She became his wife, and he was thus once more placed in the midst of competence, if not wealth; instead of thankfully enjoying his comforts, he bent all his thoughts to the task of heaping up money. Yet

'None are all evil—lingering round his heart,
One softer felling would not yet depart.'

"Even in the bosom of the selfish votary of avarice, paternal affection exerted its humanizing influence. The little good that existed in his nature, seemed all aroused, as he looked upon the face of his firstborn son, and listened to the feeble wail which awakened the echoes of affection in the waste places of his heart.—For the first time he was sensible of a strong emotion of love; yet, even then, the demon which he served made its voice heard within him, and whispered, that there was now another motive for amassing riches. The very tenderness which had sprung up amid the evil weeds of passion, only offered another incentive to his grasping avarice. Of his wife he thought but little. She had been the means of raising him from the dust into which he had been trampled, and thus she had fulfilled her destiny, as far as his interests were concerned. But when she became the mother of a second child—a daughter, his indifference deepened into absolute dislike; and it would be difficult to say, whether the parent or the child was the object of his greatest aversion. In proportion as he loved his boy, he detested the other claimant on his purse and heart: he wished to hoard up every thing for the one sole object of his affection.

"Years passed on in this manner. Giles Grimstone became daily more and more sordid in his character—more and more penurious in his habits, denying his family every thing but the merest necessities of life. His occupation, which was that of a drover, led him frequently from home; and during his absence he often left his wife penniless, obliging her to labour for the support of herself and her child, while he was hoarding up the very money