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JACK STEERS.

"Well, it is all up! regularly up with me now, and no mistake!"

Such was the desponding exclamation of a man who had slumped himself on a heap of granite blocks, which lay piled up for the use of the paviers, in one of the thoroughfares at the east end of the metropolis. He sat with his arms resting on his knees, and his face buried in his hands—his very attitude giving a fearful impressiveness to the hopeless language he had uttered.

"Come, move on, my good fellow!" said one of the officers of the K division, who then stood waiting for his order to be obeyed.

"Now, my hearty, move on at once; you mustn't sit here, you know," repeated the policeman, giving more authority to his tone, yet avoiding harshness in his manner; "why don't you go home?"

"It's all up with me—I'm done for now!" muttered the man, without even raising his head from his hands.

"Well, Well!" returned the officer, "if you are in trouble, I am sorry for you; but you can't sit here all night. Who are you? what's your name? where do you live?"

"Who am I? I'm a wretch that the world casts off! My name is Steers—Jack Steers. And where do I live? I can't ask me, don't talk about my home. Oh!" he added, with a groan, "I'm not quite a brute yet; I can't bear it."

"It is no use talking," said the officer; "if you don't move on I must take you in charge."

"No matter! It's all up with me," replied Steers; "take me to the station-house, or perhaps I shall find a colder and drier lodging before daylight."

After this intimation of self-destruction, the constable at once took the man to the station-house, and then resumed his beat.

Accustomed as he was to spectacles of suffering and degradation, the sitting magistrate at the police-court the en-

ding day, could not but be struck with the appearance of the man who was brought before him. His garb differed not from that of many who are every day brought up by the police—dirty, torn, and threadbare; but there was such a deep stamp of wretchedness on his countenance, such a settled look of hopelessness, that it was almost impossible to look at him without commiseration. Perhaps it was this cast of melancholy which alone prevented him from looking ferocious, for the appointments of thick bushy hair, full dark whiskers, and a beard of several days' growth, combining with an unwashed skin, would have fixed on him an appearance of unusual repulsiveness.

"John Steers," said the magistrate, after the case had been entered into, and the evidence of the policeman taken, "what have you to say to this charge? it is an awful thing to contemplate such a deed—what led you to it?"

"Drink, your worship—drink; nothing else but drink! I am a working-goldsmith; I have earned my three pounds a week; but I feel it's all up with me, or I wouldn't expose myself. I have lost my character and my work, reduced my wife and children to beggary; yet I did love my family notwithstanding—I couldn't see them starve! and"—here he faltered, but proceeded—"I did something to relieve the hunger which my own drunkenness had caused. For that, your worship, I suffered two months' imprisonment; and now they know I am a jail-bird, I cannot earn a penny. 'Tis four days since I came out; I have gone all round the trade, and could not get a job, and when I left home yesterday morning, my three little ones were crying for food. How could I go back, your worship, to a starving family, when it was all my fault?"

"Even if you were to get work," said the magistrate, "it is probable your intemperate habits would again reduce you to this condition."

"I am afraid it would," was the answer.

"If I let you go now," continued his worship, "how do I know you will not commit self-destruction? I have already sent an officer to see if your family are in the state described. Will you promise me to return to them, if the poor-box supplies their immediate wants?"

His countenance slightly relaxed, and he paused in his reply; but the tokens of despair again shaded it, and he seemed about to repeat, "It's all up," when a man who had stood among the crowd beyond the barrier, but had worked his way as near to the prisoner as possible, leaned forward and whispered, "Cheer up, John!"

He turned and caught sight of the speaker, and the sentence of hopelessness died on his lips; then turning to the magistrate, he said, "Yes, your worship, I will."

A gentleman in the court here handed ten shillings to the bench, with a request that if the officer who had been sent should find the distress existing which had been stated, it might be added to the amount given from the poor-box.

Steers was then discharged.

"Well, Jack, what do you mean to do now?" said the man just mentioned, and who had joined him as he left the court; "I know you are in a fix, but don't give up so. It's a long lane that's got no turning."