

out of a pair of berlins, once white, darted into the court and out of the court into the street. If there was one portion of Chesterfield that Skeggs admired more than another, it was that wherein he advises never to hurry through the streets, as it betokeneth not the gentleman but the man of business, and that he might not be mistaken for such, so innate with us in every degree of life is this feeling of assumption, he invariably made it a point of starting much earlier than necessary, and to saunter along with the slow and careless air of a man who wishes to impress on the world that his time is his own. It was therefore with some degree of mortification that Mr. Skeggs found himself for once compelled to use more than ordinary despatch; arrived at the next church, the minute hand pointed to ten minutes past. "Bless me," quoth Mr. Octavius to himself, "and I have yet twenty minutes walk to accomplish." What was to be done? he could not resist—off he started, fast, faster, faster still, and in less than five seconds he was fairly running—but it would not do, "What can people see in me to be staring so," thought Mr. Skeggs, but the idea originated in his own fanciful conceptions, for even at that early hour people were too busied in their own affairs to be at all conscious that such an important personage as Mr. Octavius Skeggs was hurrying past them. He knocked his hands together, stamped his feet, poured out a volume of breath and shrugged his shoulders, hoping thereby to convey the idea that the coolness of the air caused his accelerated speed; but it not happening to be a cold morning, the result was, he succeeded in attracting that attention it was so much his desire to avoid. Yet on he went, but had not proceeded far, ere he fancied he caught the sound of feet clattering behind—he was too embarrassed to ascertain the cause—it gained upon him, was at his heels, and now at his elbow—he looked down, and discovered a ragged urchin running and panting by his side; observing he was noticed, the boy looked up with a grin on his unwashed cheeks, which, correctly interpreted, meant to imply that he could run equally as fast as Mr. Octavius Skeggs—but the latter, who was at no time an admirer of juveniles, frowned fiercely on the boy, who misinterpreting the frown, only grinned in return. Skeggs frowned more fiercely, in vain, his annoyance was not to be disconcerted or driven from the performance of a feat he considered rather meriting approval than censure. Skeggs walked, so did the boy—he ran, so did his tormenter—he could not stand it, and acting on the impulse of the moment, he bestowed no very gentle box on the young gentleman's ear, at the instant when his countenance was lighted up by a broad grin, expressive of triumph. Astonished, and writhing under the effects of the blow, he flew to the road, and seizing a handful of mud, in a second Mr.

Skeggs presented the appearance of a spotted leopard. The youngster awaited not the issue, but darted across the road and fled, leaving the unfortunate Skeggs to be indebted to the kind offices of a stranger for his cleansing—a crowd having collected around him, each demanding what was the matter, how the gentleman was run over, &c. &c. Skeggs with some difficulty managed to escape, and crossing into a by-street, commenced threading his way through the back lanes—but hark, St. Sepulchre's struck the half hour; off darted Skeggs once more, the all absorbing idea, the loss of his lucrative situation before his eyes, and after knocking down an intimate female friend, spinning round an elderly lady, and capsizing an old woman's apple stall, he finally arrived at his office just three quarters of an hour behind time; and as something of importance requiring our *presence*, generally happens during our *absence*, even though that be but ten minutes, so was it that morning, and Mr. Skeggs accounted himself peculiarly fortunate in escaping with the rebuke from the governor, that if he, Skeggs, could not manage to be at the office in proper time, he, the governor, must get some one who could. * * *

Six o'clock appeared to Octavius a long while coming, but come at last it did and struck: so did Mr. Skeggs, who, popping his tools into his desk, declared he had shut up shop and was preparing to depart, when the governor rang, and requested him to make a copy of a bill of costs, which he was anxious to dispatch to his agent in the country by a gentleman leaving town by mail that evening—"just like him," muttered the disappointed Skeggs, "sure to find something for one to do when its time to leave off;" but knowing by experience there was no alternative, he "set to," and having completed the task, sent it in by Ned and was preparing to make a precipitate retreat, when the governor entered and begged Mr. Skeggs would be so *kind* as to leave the bill of costs at the Elephant-and-Castle on his way home, and without waiting a reply quitted the office; "leave it on my way home," exclaimed the unfortunate clerk, "leave it on my way home—three miles out of it—I won't stand it, I'll leave, I'll give notice tomorrow," and so saying, with the air of a man determined no longer to submit, (but which a walk to the Elephant-and-Castle, giving him time to cool, also allows him leisure to reflect that there's "nae relief," and so very prudently resolves to look over it this time)—he forced his hat on one side of his head, and strode out of the office with a touch-me-not look, to the no small admiration of Ned, the junior clerk, who felt some degree of awe at the firmness and clerly bearing of his senior, and could not help expressing to himself a hope that some day he might become as great and as dignified as Mr. Octavius. * * *

"Dear me what can have become of Mr. Skeggs,"