

came man together. My fancy,—*Jessy Mortimer* was before me. Her presence filled my thoughts—it overshadowed me. I could think of nothing else, I could speak of nothing else. I drank to her in bumpers, but Esau sat as calm as a judge with the black cap upon his head. I marvelled that the man had so little of what is called sympathy in his soul. He appeared before me as a dead man—a thing that moved merely as it was moved. I almost despised, and yet I trusted him, because he was connected with the part of the country to which I belonged.

Now, as I have informed you, we sat together, we drank together, and the name of *Jessy Mortimer* overcame me; but I sat till I forgot her, until I forgot myself,—my companion,—every thing! In this state I was left sitting; and when consciousness returned, I was alone, bewildered. My companion had left me. My first sensation was that of shame,—of burning shame. I felt that I had abused the time and the confidence of my employer, and the thought rendered me wretched.

It was two days before I ventured to call again at the office, where I had become a confidential clerk. My master passed me as I entered, but he neither spoke to nor noticed me. His coldness stung me. I felt my guiltiness burning over me. But my confusion was increased when I learned that I was not only discharged, but that my place was to be supplied by *Esau Taylor*!

“Impossible!” I exclaimed.

“Doom it so,” said my informant. “But you have cherished an anger that has stung you, and with all your knowledge, you are ignorant of the world, and of the people that live, breathe, and act in it. Take my counsel, and regard every man as though he were your enemy, until you have proved him to be your friend.”

There was something in his words that more than restored my wandering thoughts into their proper channel.

I found that I had performed an act of kindness towards a villain—for I had not only treated *Esau Taylor* hospitably, but knowing that in London a good coat is of as much importance as a good character, I had furnished him with wearing apparel from my own wardrobe. A few days afterwards I met him in the Strand, arrayed in my garments, and he passed me with a supercilious air, as though I were a being only fit to be despised. I walked on as though I saw him not, conscious that if he had a soul within him, it must be burning with the coals of fire which I had heaped upon his head.

I soon found it was much easier to lose a good situation than to obtain an indifferent one, and that one act of folly might accomplish what a thousand of repentances could not remove.

In a few months I found myself in a state of destitution, and while the coat which I had given to *Esau Taylor* was still glossy upon his back—mine, my last remaining one,—hung loose and forlorn upon my shoulders. Yet, although I then suffered from both cold and hunger, the words which my parents had made a portion of my character, departed not from me, and the words, “*persevere!—persevere!*” were ever in my heart, kindling, glowing as a flame, until in solitary enthusiasm I have exclaimed aloud as I wandered, (not having a roof to shelter me upon the street at midnight,) “I will persevere.”

I was glad to accept of employment as copying clerk to a law stationer, at a salary of seven shillings a-week. It was a small sum, and I have often thoughtlessly wasted many times the amount since; but it made me happy then. It

snatched, or rather it bought me from the gripe of death.—it relieved me from the pangs and the terrors of want. My situation was now sufficiently humble, but my spirit was not broken; neither had I forgotten *Jessy Mortimer*, nor did I despair of one day calling her mine.

During the days of humiliation which I am recording, I was struck with an incident, which, although trifling in itself, I shall here relate, for from it I draw a lesson which encouraged me, and made me resolve, if possible, to carry my maxim into more active practice. Frequently on a Saturday afternoon, when the labors of the week were over, instead of returning to my wretched garret, (for which I paid a shilling a-week, and which contained no furniture, save a shake-down bed and a broken chair,) I was wont to go out into the country, and to seek the silence and solitude of the woods and the green lanes. On such occasions

“My lodging was on the cold ground!”

and on the Sabbath mornings, I was wont to steal, as if unobserved, into the first country church, or other place of worship which I found open. I was there unknown; and in a congregation of English peasantry no one half of whom were in their smock frocks, there were none to observe the shabbiness of my garments. And in the plainness of every thing around me, there was something that accorded with my frame of mind, and in the midst of which I felt happier, and more at ease, than I could in the splendid cathedral, or the gaudy chapel of a great city. It was in the month of May, and the sweet blossom, like odoriferous snow, lay on the hawthorn. The lark sang over me its Sabbath hymn. The sun had just risen, and like the canopy of a celestial couch on which an angel might have reposed, the clouds, like curtains of red and gold, seemed drawn aside. I sat beneath a venerable elm tree, over which more than a hundred winters had passed, but their frosts had not nipped the majesty of its beauty. Above me a goldfinch chirped and fed its young, and they breasted ready to break away upon the wing. It chirped to them, it fluttered from branch to branch, to allure them from the nest. One bolder than the rest ventured to follow, but ignorant of the strength of its wings, it fell upon the ground. The parent bird descended, and with strange motions mourned over it, anxiously striving again to teach it to ascend and regain its nest. My first impulse was to take up the little slatterer, to climb the tree, and to replace it in the home which its first parent had built; but I lay and watched its efforts for a few minutes, again and again by a bold effort it endeavored to reach the lofty branch where its parent had poised its nest, but as often it fell upon the ground, and its little breast panted on the earth. At length it, perched upon the lowest twig, and from it to others higher and higher, turning round proudly as it ascended, as if conversing with its parent, happy in what it was achieving, until the nest was regained.

“There!” I exclaimed, “there is an example of perseverance; and a lesson is taught me by that little bird. It attempted too much at once, and its efforts were unsuccessful, it endeavored to rise step by step, and it has gained the object it desired. That bird shall be my monitor, and I will endeavor to rise step by step, even as it has done.”

I returned to London, and as I went, the attempts of the little bird were the text on which my thoughts dwell. By sedulous attention to my duties, I began to rise in the esteem of my employer, the law stationer, and he increased my salary from seven shillings to a guinea a-week.

I said unto myself, that, like the young bird, I had gained a higher branch.

Within twelve months he obtained me a situation in the office of an eminent solicitor, where I was engaged at a salary of a hundred pounds a-year. This was the scaling of another branch; and I again found myself in circumstances equal to those I had enjoyed previous to the treachery of *Esau Taylor*. I did not in order to ingratiate myself with my employer, practice the cowering system, with which my countrymen have at times been accused; but I strove to be useful, I studied to oblige, and was rewarded with his confidence and favor.

It became a part of my employment to draw up abstracts of pleadings. On one occasion, I had drawn out a brief, which was to be placed in the hands of one of the most eminent counsel at the bar. He was struck with the manner in which the task was executed, and was pleased to pronounce it the clearest, the ablest, and best arranged brief that had ever been placed in his hands. He enquired who had drawn it out, and my employer introduced me to him. He spoke to me kindly and encouragingly, and recommended me to persevere. The word rekindled every slumbering energy of my soul. I had always endeavored to do so, but now stronger impulses seemed to stir within me, and there was confidence in my hopes that I had never felt before. He suggested that I should prepare myself for the bar, and generously offered to assist me.—Through his interest and the liberality of my master, I was admitted a student of the Inner Temple. My perseverance was now more necessary than ever, and again I thought of the little bird and its successful efforts. I had gained another branch, and the topmost bough to which I aspired was now visible.

I allowed myself but five hours out of the 24 for repose, the rest I devoted to hard study, and to the duties of assistant reporter to a daily newspaper. But often in the midst of my studies, and even while noting down the strife of words in parliament, thoughts of *Jessy Mortimer* came over me, and her image was pictured on my mind, like a guardian angel revealing for a moment the brightness of its countenance. My hopes became more sanguine, and I felt an assurance that the day would come when I should call her mine.

I had many privations to encounter, and many difficulties to overcome, but for none did I turn aside; my watchword was “onward,” and in duo tempo I was called to the bar. I expected to struggle for years with the genteel misery of a briefless barrister, but the thought dismayed me not.

Before, however, I proceed farther with my own career, I shall notice that of *Esau Taylor*. There was no species of cunning, of treachery, or of meanness of which he was not capable. There was none to which he did not resort. His brother clerks hated him; for, to his other properties, he added that of a low tale-bearer. But he was plausible as *Lucifer*, and with his smooth tongue and fair professions, he succeeded in ingratiating himself into the chief place in his master’s confidence; and eventually was placed by him at the head of his establishment; and in order further to reward what he considered his singular worth and honesty, he permitted him to have a small share in the firm. But *Esau* was not one of those whom a small share, or any portion short of the whole, would satisfy. This he accomplished more easily and more speedily, than it is possible that even *né*, with all his guilty cunning, had anticipated.

The merchant from whose employment he had