

getting a little story from the book-stall as most are of sweetmeats. When he could master the art, reading was his delight. He soon exhausted his grandmother's library, which consisted of those rare works for moulding the minds of youth,—*The Family Bible*, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*. The stock of literature in the neighbourhood was as greedily devoured; and before Kitto had reached his twelfth year, he had perused most of the books within his reach. This habit compensated for the small amount of school education which he received. These days of comparative liberty soon passed. His grandmother became a paralytic, and, along with her little charge, had to be removed to the wretched dwelling of her son-in-law, whose intemperance had rendered him unfit to provide much for her comfort in old age. John had now to go to work as assistant or *hodman*, to his father. This occurred in 1814. In 1817 the event which gave a character to his future life occurred. He was carrying a load of slates, and was about to step upon the roof of a house, when he fell *thirty-five feet* to the ground. He was taken up unconscious, and continued so during a fortnight. His first sensation on recovery was most agonizing. People seemed to talk, but he could not hear; they wrote, and did not speak to him, which increased his anxious suspense; and, to complete his sufferings, those letters were put before him—"You are deaf."

The sense of hearing was never regained; and its loss was very heavy to the son of a drunken mason. He could do little for his bread. His first employment was gathering bits of ropes and iron in the mire of the harbour at low tide; but his gains were only fourpence a-week. Changing this for drawing rude pictures, his average earnings were twopence-halfpenny a-week, and eightpence at a fair. Improving, he endeavoured to write tickets for signs; and hoped, by strict attention to spelling and correct writing, to displace such as "*Logins for singel men*," "*Rooms to leet, enquair wilking*," and obtain an honest livelihood. But "great as were Kitto's difficulties in earning an honest penny, he found it more difficult to expend that penny in a satisfactory manner." His love of reading well-nigh wrecked his purse, when he ventured to invest three-pence, and once a *shilling*, in a book.

It was not easy, however, to get bread for the poor deaf boy. As a last and only resource, the poor-house was thought of, and an asylum was provided among the boys in the "Hospital of the Poor's Portion," in the town of Plymouth. He entered there in 1819, when he was fifteen years of age. By the kindness of the governor, his restraint was made less painful than he would otherwise have felt it, after enjoying the wild liberty of going where he liked. He was put to employment, and acquired the art of making list shoes. During his first year he made seventy-eight pair, besides mending others. He kept a journal at the same time, and was encouraged to write exercises, which gratified him greatly.

Amidst this shoemaking he saw in vision his future authorship.—*The Journal of a Man with Four Senses*, by John Kitto, Shoemaker, Pauper, &c. There seemed little in real life to brighten his hopes; for he was in 1821 apprenticed to a shoemaker, and released from the work-house. Though the commencement of a trade is an enlargement to a boy in humble life, Kitto felt re-

gret at leaving the hospital. He wrote in his journal the following on the occasion: "I am no longer a work-house boy! I am an apprentice. \* \* \* So I went to take a farewell look of the bed on which I used to sleep, the tripod on which I had sat so many hours, and the prayer-room. I shook hands, in idea, with the pump, the conduit at which I washed, the tree against which I leaned,—nay, the very stones on which I walked. I felt something like regret at leaving it. Man is an accommodating animal. I had so accommodated, or accustomed myself to the work-house, that I left it with some regret. I have read of a man who had grown old in prison; when he was liberated, on the accession of a new king, he petitioned to be put in prison again. Is not this a case in point, to show that man soon accommodates himself to misery?" *Appropos* of the place of prayer referred to in this extract, it is worth record, that Kitto, who could not hear the devotional exercises in which others engaged, prepared a prayer of singular excellence, considering his years and advantages, which he was in the constant habit of using at the time of worship.

The apprenticeship to a shoemaker proved to the unfortunate youth a degrading cruelty. His master was a heartless and passionate man, who vented his indignation on his poor apprentice in the most savage manner. Kitto wished he were again in the work-house, and wrote to Mr. Burnard, the governor, who had been his friend. The case was at once inquired into; and, on a written statement being sent to the bench of magistrates by the ill-used boy, his indenture was broken, and he was received again into the work-house, until some better provision could be secured. The letter produced also another effect. Its literary excellence interested several gentlemen in his behalf; and, hearing of his avidity for knowledge, they obtained for him the privilege of reading in the Public Library. Soon after he was appointed sub-librarian, when he had advantages for study, of which he largely availed himself. Kitto never entered into the amusements of youth. He early awoke to thought, and found in it abundant joy. "The customs of the country," he wrote, "have decreed that man is not competent to his own direction until he has attained the age of twenty-one, not so I! *I never was a lad*. From the time of my fall, deprived of many external sources of occupation, I had been accustomed to *think*, to think deeply,—think as I read, as I worked, or as I walked. While other boys found amusement in their tops, balls, kites, I amused myself with my book, pen, or pencil. While other lads were employed with trifles, I thought as a man, felt as a man, acted as a man." Of course, play is of advantage to youth, and aids the development of his powers, makes him stronger in frame and more sociable in spirits; yet too many arrive at manhood in years without manly thoughts and feelings. In those years Kitto was preparing for the manhood which he spent so usefully. Young man! employ your season of learning; gain principles, information, and good habits, which mould the future life.

In 1824, Mr. Groves of Exeter, took Kitto into his house as an assistant in dental surgery. This excellent gentleman, whose biography has been lately published, was pious and benevolent, deeply interested in Kitto, and did much for his welfare. Under him he received serious im-