

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROTTEN ROW.

IT was soon all settled that Cor was to leave us, and become a ship's doctor, crossing the stormy sea to and fro in all kinds of weather, whilst Phoebe and I at home watched the clouds and the winds, and often trembled for his safety. There was a good deal for us to do to get him ready to start; for he was going to be with rich people as well as poor, and he must look like a gentleman. But it was a poor outfit, after all our pains, though I pawned the old watch Margery, without telling Cor, and bought some linen with the money, that he might be something like the grand folk who might be crossing the sea to America. Phoebe made some collars, and hemmed and marked some pocket-handkerchiefs, sometimes singing over them and sometimes sighing; for the child's heart was divided between joy and sorrow.

June was half over before Cor left London, and the last evening he came to see me alone. He had been giving me some medicine, and been looking after me as my doctor. That night his face was anxious again, and his manner full of care for me.

"Miss Margery," he said, "you cannot get over that trouble."

No; my head was palsied a little, and never would be quite still again; and my hands, especially my lame hand, were nerveless and feeble. The strength I had lost in Stephen's house would never be mine again, until I became young once more, after drinking of the river of life where it flows out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

"You keep fretting about your brother," continued Cor, hesitatingly; "you cannot shake off your dread of some evil having befallen him?"

For I had kept my secret, and never said a word about Stephen since that day. How could I tell any one but God what had passed between us?

"I scarcely know whether I ought to tell you," said Cor, taking my shaking hand between both of his. "It will give you pain—great pain; but it will set your mind at ease upon that point."

"Tell me, Cor," I said, eager to hear all he had to say.

"Why, your brother Stephen is alive and well," he answered; "but he's unworthy of the name of brother. I've seen him and spoken to him. There, keep yourself calm, Miss Margery, or I'll tell you no more."

"Tell me everything," I said.

"I was going along Whitechapel," he went on, "and I saw a bill, posted up by the Emigration Society, announcing a lecture upon the Australian colonies by Stephen Bede, Esq., of Talbot Downs,