

## SKETCHES OF VILLAGE LIFE.

*Continued from our last Number.*

## CHAPTER V.

AFFAIRS remained as described in the last chapter, when one afternoon, in the latter part of September next following the nuptials of Pestley and Cotts, a single horse and gig were seen slowly descending the hill which skirts the village to the east, until arriving at the base of the descent, a smart cut of the driver's whip lash on the flanks of the jaded animal, caused it to arouse from its slow gait and set off at a brisk pace, which progressively increased, as a repetition of the cause was applied, until the carriage dashed up under full speed to the door of the hotel.

The stranger, who was a young man, of goodly appearance, descended from his gig, and handing the reins to the ostler, and bidding him see his steed well taken care of, with a flippant air walked into the house, directing the waiter to bring in his valise and cloak after him.

He called for a private apartment, and after disencumbering himself of his outer garments, adjusting his collar, &c. &c. he returned to the door-steps of the hotel, and familiarly exchanging the common salutations of the day with those who happened to stand around, began enquiring into the history and circumstances of individuals and the various establishments of the village.

There are always enough hangers on of bar-rooms, who stand ready and eager to volunteer their services to render the very sort of information which the stranger now enquired after; and who, for the sake of gratifying their curiosity to know who the stranger is, and what business—which they generally contrive to ascertain before quitting him—as well as to gratify their natural taste for tell-taling, gather around a new-comer, the moment he arrives in a place, for this very purpose.

The person of this description who had the honor, and, to him, the exquisite pleasure of satisfying the inquisitive propensities of the traveller on this occasion, was a man of about forty years of age, of the name of Juet. He was a man of sturdy growth, coarse but familiar manners, and of an easy address. Though ignorant, he possessed an eloquent tongue, and a perpetual desire to have it forever in play; and although, as a legitimate consequence of the gratification of this desire, he uttered a great deal of nonsense, still, many of his remarks and observations were remarkably shrewd and piquant. Moreover, Mr. Juet knew every body, and about every body's business, and was always the first to tell the news of the day; and that, too, in such a

way that it was sure to lose nothing for want of proper colouring or enlargement. This trait had procured him the significant cognomen of "Old News."

Mr. Juet was of that easy disposition which made the world go well with him—or him to go well with the world, whichever way the reader will please to have it—under all circumstances. He was always "hail fellow well met," and he took much more pleasure in relating funny stories, and playing tricks—in which he was an adept—to delight a bar-room audience, than in cultivating his farm.

But Mr. Juet had also many excellent qualities. He possessed a noble and generous mind—detesting treachery and deceit in any case, and was always open hearted and strictly honest in his dealings, and a friend to be relied on in time of need.

Such is a description of the man, who, in the expectation of serving the stranger with all that might satisfy his enquiring mind, had (as he had done many times before) placed himself in a conspicuous position on the door steps, and assuming as much of a consequential air as he was capable of commanding, patiently waited to be addressed by him.

The stranger, after taking a rapid survey of the village, at length rested his eye on the sign of "Pestley, Bantwick & Co." whose store stood nearly opposite the hotel. "Pestley, Bantwick & Co.," said he slowly, "it appears to me I have somewhere heard of that firm. Pestley, let me see," continued he, musing, then turning to Juet, demanded, "is not this James Pestley?"

"That's his name, sir, at your service," replied Juet, advancing a step or two, at the same time clearing out his throat with a brisk hask, and jerking up his coat tighter round his neck and shoulders, as was his wont when preparing himself for a campaign of words; and then thinking himself entitled to commence a short harangue upon the history and circumstances of the firm, he added, "the names of the other partners are—"

"This Mr. Pestley is the same who used to teach school?" interrupted the stranger, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket and blowing his nose in a very consequential manner.

"The very same," replied Juet, "and as I was saying, the other partners—"

"I was once acquainted with Mr. Pestley, at College," again broke in the traveller, assuming an air of great importance. "He has but one arm, poor fellow! but he's no fool, that's a