

and locking the door of the room, put the key into his pocket, and sallied forth.

It was a cold cheerless day towards the end of February. The sky was overcast, and the countenances of the passengers seemed to have formed themselves to accord with it: every face wore an expression of care and dissatisfaction. The streets were covered with mud, which the reckless vehicles scattered on all sides; policemen walked along, scowling, as if just in the humour to catch thieves; women selling apples and gingerbread on stalls by the path-side looked miserable and not well pleased with their situation in life, and when they saw a policeman, or were obliged to move to let some rich and beautiful lady alight from her carriage, they looked still less pleased.

Arthur marked all this as he went on his way. It was the food most agreeable to his misanthropic mind. He arrived at the bookseller's, and, on sending in his name, was at once admitted.

Mr. Rawlings was seated at his desk in the counting-house. Files of letters and papers were strewn thickly around, and a huge ledger was lying open before him. He requested Arthur to take a seat, and commenced operations thus:—"Well, sir, I have read your manuscript, and like it much—very much. I should certainly imagine it to be a first work; for there is an evident want of power fully to work out the meaning; but there is stuff in it, Sir—there is stuff!"

"Ah!" thought Arthur, "after the bit of praise that every one is pleased to bestow upon me, comes the regular edition—want of name, and state of the market. People can afford to praise when they do not intend to buy. Number six will be like numbers one, two, three, four, and five!"

Mr. Rawlings having refreshed himself with a pinch of snuff, proceeded:—"But the want of name—the want of name, Sir, I must tell you, is a formidable—a very formidable objection; and, in the present state of the literary market, the chances of success are greatly against a work by a totally unknown author."

"The very words!" thought Arthur, "I could have foretold them, every one. He does not know how often I have heard them before."

Mr. Rawlings continued: "Still, as I have said, I like the book. It is good, sir; and the man who wrote it will do better. So, if we can agree about a price I should have no objection to publish; but you must be moderate. The risk is great, sir, I assure you—very great!"

Arthur was quite taken by surprise. He had

given up all hope of deriving advantage in any way from his literary labours. Alone in the world, and suffering from extreme poverty, how could he have refused anything that the bookseller had offered! He would gladly have accepted a ten-pound note; but, in a calm, self-possessed voice, and with an air of gentlemanly indifference, he named—three hundred pounds.

"Three hundred pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Rawlings. "No, no, sir; recollect I have no name to put on the title page. Come, we'll say *two* hundred for this, and *five* hundred for a work to follow it; you shall not have to complain of *me*. The book shall be a hit—a hit, sir, and by this time next year, the people will know your name well enough, or I'm mistaken."

Why should I relate how the bargain was concluded; how Arthur shook hands with the worldly bookseller, and left the shop—another man! Everything, too, seemed different;—the air warmer—the sky not so cloudy, the people more contented; and when he turned the lock of his poor apartment, and entering, saw the fire burning smilingly, as if to welcome his return, he sank into a chair and tried, but in vain, to think over soberly his new prospects. An entire change had stolen over his mind. The ferocity called forth by poverty was gone. Indignant hatred, by the magical influence of money, had become gentle disapproval. "Yes," said the young author, "I return a repentant wanderer, to my old cheering creed; and, since it is my destiny, will endeavour, in an humble spirit, to become one of the world's teachers; a learning teacher. Nor will I lose the pleasures around me, whilst telling of these far distant. Though looking forward to a bright future I will not believe the present utterly dark. I have experienced kindness, and will think better of all for the sake of one."

The old Dutch clock struck six. An hour ago Arthur Jervis was not so happy; and now he set about preparing a cup of fragrant and refreshing coffee.

MORAL. Charge not all mankind with baseness even in their existing rudimental state of progress. In ten thousand grains of sand there may be one grain of gold—and who knows but you may light on it?



PERFECTION.—He that seeks perfection on earth leaves nothing new for the saints to find in heaven.