

it made on my heart, it reconciled me at the time to my bitter lot, and lightened the pressure of the galling chain which had nearly reduced me to despair.

The intense desire I now felt to mingle with the world gave an impetus to my actions, and made me anxious to cultivate my mind, which till this moment I had suffered to lie waste, and I resolved to make the best use of the time I was still condemned to pass in my uncle's office. This earnest desire for improvement was strengthened by the excellent advice of a young man, who had just entered our office, in the capacity of engrossing clerk.

George Harrison was not distinguished by any remarkable talents, or endowed with that aspiring genius which forces its way through every obstacle, and places a man above the common mass, with which he is daily forced to associate. Yet his was no ordinary character, no every day acquaintance, with whom we may spend a pleasant hour, and care not if we ever meet in our journey through life again. He possessed an agreeable and gentlemanly person a refined, and well cultivated mind, and great delicacy of taste and manners. His feelings were acute, his heart warm and generous. The interest he felt in my welfare, endeared him to me, and we became inseparable companions.

One evening, when I had violently resisted a tyrannical command from my uncle, and vainly asserted my right to that independence which I could not, as a clerk, legally claim, Harrison ventured to remonstrate with me on the folly and imprudence of my conduct. After regarding me for some time with a glance of tender and benevolent concern, he warmly pressed my hand, and thus addressed me.

"Geoffrey, your uncle is a hard task-master, but is it not useless to resist the authority of one who can command obedience?"

"Who gave him that authority?" I exclaimed, chafing with passion.

"Providence, who awarded to you your present trials, doubtless for some wise purpose. If you studied your own interest, Geoffrey, you would yield to Mr. Moncton that respect which you owe to him as your guardian and near relation."

"Respect to him!—to my bitterest enemy! may I continue a slave all my life, when I become a passive instrument in the hands of such a merciless oppressor!"

"You have a more dangerous enemy to contend with, Geoffrey; one who bound to you by nearer ties of blood, exercises a more pernicious authority over your mind," returned my friend, not in the least discomposed by my vehement gestures.

"Yes—his sordid, selfish counterpart, his worthy son!"

George shook his head, and I looked incredulous.

"Your own headstrong will."

"Fish!" I returned, shrugging up my shoulders; "Is this your pretended friendship?"

"It is the real sentiment of an unpretending friend."

I walked hastily to and fro the narrow limits of our office, raising at every step a cloud of dust from the folds of old parchments and musty rolls of paper, which were disarranged by the violence of my motions. I was in no humour to listen to a lecture, particularly when my own faulty temper was to be, the principal subject, and to form the text. Harrison watched my movements for some time in silence, grieved by the ill reception, which I had given his well meant admonitions, but not in the least daunted by my wayward mood.

"Prithee, dear Geoffrey, leave off raising such a dust, disturbing the evil spirits which have long slumbered in that monstrous pile of professional villainy. Resume your seat, and listen attentively to me."

I took a seat near him, without relaxing a muscle of my face, while he continued:

"You are displeased with my bluntness, Geoffrey, but if you cannot bear to hear the truth from the lips of a friend, would it not be doubly galling from an enemy? Tell me candidly, do you ever expect to settle in this world?"

"I must confess that it is a forlorn hope, but one which I have at times dared to form."

"And you are taking the very course to render it a chimera."

"What would you have me do?"

"Yield to circumstances."

"Become a villain!"

"May God forbid! I should be sorry to see you so nearly resemble your uncle. But the opposition which you so constantly present to his wishes will ruin forever your own prospects, and by driving you to adopt desperate measures, may make you the being you dread."

"Go on," I cried; "you, like your erring friend, have been educated in a bitter school—your knowledge of the world is at least superior to mine, and for once I will——"

"Condescend, Geoffrey, to receive a lesson at my hands," he said, forcing a smile, as he interrupted me, and hindered my concluding the ungracious sentence. "My experience has been bought with many tears. I am willing that you should profit by it. You have suffered your personal dislike to your uncle and his son, to interfere with your studies, and deprive you of the advantages, which your situation as a clerk in this office affords—was this acting wisely? Was it not lengthening the term of your bondage, and adding an additional weight to your chain? Does not your uncle know this? Does he not laugh at the powerless efforts which you are making to burst his yoke from off your neck. In two years your clerkship will expire, and you will be your own free agent. But, with the little knowledge which you have gained of your profession, what will