

ed at hearing a rough voice calling for a "wee drappie of strong waters," but the countenance of open good nature from which this request proceeded, put the vision of success to flight. Almost in despair at not meeting the objects of his search, Willie began to button his great coat, and prepare for an out-of-doors reconnoitre. He had nearly reached the entrance, when his attention was arrested by a little girl of interesting appearance, who ran by him, holding a pitcher in her hand, and asked for "a quart of strong beer for Mrs. Holman."

"Holman!" muttered Willie, and he stopped short in his walk; in that moment he scarce knew how to act, but a consciousness of his conspicuous position at once determined him. He passed into the street, and impatiently awaited the return of the child. She passed—

"My pretty girl, stay a moment; I am looking for a friend of mine, a Mr. Holman, can you tell me does such a one live in this neighborhood."

"La, sir!" she replied, with the utmost simplicity; "that is my father, he has been away a long time, and only came home last night; if you come with me you shall see him."

"With all my heart, child; is any one with him?"

"No, sir, unless my mother; but, see we are at home, will you walk up stairs?"

Willie felt some secret qualms at trusting himself in the lion's den; but relying on his experience, he condescended a speech to address to his newly discovered friend, and then boldly entered the apartment shown by the child.—The moment his eye rested upon the figure which rose at his entrance, a firm conviction of his correct judgment settled on his mind—the tall—strong—thin was before him. Still more, and stranger; on a closer inspection he recognized features unseen for years, but distinctly remembered. In a moment his course was planned. "Good night, Mr. Holman," said he, "perhaps you do not remember me, Will Nixon, the old companion of your school hours and your plays."

Holman stared for an instant as if unsatisfied of his friend's identity, then starting forward, he grasped his hand warmly, and exclaimed, "Lord! Will Nixon, is this you?—Heaven bless us man, how times have changed; yes, indeed, school days have done but little good for me; Latin and Greek don't help one to bear the kicks and cuffs of this rough world, and you look as if you had not escaped without your share."

"No, no; a sorry time enough I have had of it since we played at marbles together, and some times at fisty-cuffs, all out of pure good love. But what have you been at for these dozen or two years?"

"Oh! don't ask—but you have heard perhaps how I fell in with Lucy Brooks, the Squire's daughter; the old villain swore he would hang me for shooting on his manor, and—him, I fell in love with his only child, and married her out of revenge; I sent him to his long home with sorrow, but not a bit of his land did I inherit; no, he left his daughter a shilling and for me his bitter curse; sorely has it hung upon my head, turning my brightest hours to night—yes, it seems now to unnerve my arm, and make me care as little for the world and all that is in it, as for the sighing of this north wind. I bore up against it at first; poverty stared us in the face; my child, my fair-cheeked child, sickened, pined, and died. If I would live, I must work, and then they bade me tend the village school, but the curse haunted me even there, and I was on the wide world again; guilt tempted, dissipation seized me; I could wear a laugh upon my lips when my heart was bleeding tears; I was called a *jobial*, *happy fellow*—good God! what did that cost me—years flew—clouds gathered—I was—but no matter—no matter."

"Ah! your lot has indeed been pitiful. I am sorry, very sorry for it; but I must forget that you have been my friend."

"How—why?—are you too like the rest?"

"Yes; I must do my duty, though it go hard with me. You know the Scotchman—"

"Who—Tom Brown—what of him?"

"Yes, that is his name; have you seen him lately?—I forgot to say that I was of the police—you stand accused of his murder."

"Of the police—the devil! so good a man in such a business!—Ha, ha, ha—accused of his murder!—well that is a good one—now are you serious? I came to town with him last night; he lodges in the next street; I suppose you can't take my word for it, however;—come with me and you shall see him as alive as either you or I."

"No, that would be too troublesome; just give me a direction, I will satisfy myself, and return to give you joy on the refutation of the charge."

Holman tendered his service with perfect indifference and unsuspecting, little knowing the snare which his artful friend was weaving about his feet. He sat down to await his return. Storming Willie almost intoxicated with joy at so unexpected a denouncement, descended the stairs, giving strict orders to the officers to allow no egress from the house; then selecting several stout companions, he hastened to the lodging of the unsuspecting culprit; and came down upon the astonished Scot with the suddenness of lightning and the startling effect of thunder. He was about retiring to bed, when the door opened and his unwonted visitors burst into the room. Discharging a volley of invectives against the intruders, he hobbled forward to resist their