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THE MISER AND HIS SON.

A TALE.

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*Conclusion.—Continued from our last Number.*

CHAPTER XVII.

Strange voices still are ringing in mine ears ;  
Something of shame—of anguish and reproach ;  
My brain is dark—I have forgot it all.

In a miserable attic over the kitchen in the miserable public house already described, there was a sound of deep, half suppressed, passionate weeping. A young mother weeping for her first born, who would not be pacified. The deepest fountain of love in the human heart had been stirred ; its hallowed sources abused, and violently broken up ; and the shock had been too great for the injured and afflicted possessor to bear up against patiently. Her very reason had yielded to the blow, and she lamented her loss, as a froward child laments the destruction of some favourite plaything.

Had she not been a creature of passionate impulses, the death of this babe of shame would have brought a stern joy to her bereaved mind. She would have wept—for nature speaks from the heart in tears ; but she would have blessed God, that He had removed the innocent cause of her distress from being a partaker in her guilt, a sharer of her infamy—a lasting source of regret and sorrow. But poor Mary had looked forward with intense desire to the birth of this child. It would be something for her to love and cling to—something for whose sake she could consent to live—for whom she would work and toil,—who would greet her with smiles, and feel its dependence upon her exertions. She had thought that Godfrey would love her once more for his infant's sake. Rash girl ! The love of man never returns to the forsaken object of his selfish gratification.

The night before, violent words had arisen between Mary and her brother. The ruffian was in liquor, and, urged on by the infuriated spirit of drunkenness, regardless of the entreaties of the coarse woman Strawberry, or the situation of the unfortunate girl, he had struck her repeatedly ; and the violent passion into which his brutal unkindness had hurried his victim, produced premature confinement, followed by the death of the child, a fine little

boy. Godfrey (was absent when this event took place ; and though the day was pretty far advanced, had not as yet returned. As to William Mathews, he only wished that it had pleased God to remove both mother and child, as he found her too intractable to be of any use to them.

"My child, my child !" sobbed Mary. "What have you done with him—where have you put him ? Oh, for the love of mercy ! Mrs. Strawberry ; let me look upon him !"

"Hold your peace, you foolish young creature. What do you want with the corp ? You had better lie still and be quiet, or we may chance to bury ye both in the same grave."

"Oh !" sighed the girl, burying her face in the pillow, and giving way to a fresh gush of tears, "that's too good to happen—the wretched never die—the lost are never found—the wicked are denied the rest, the deep rest of the grave. Ah ! my child, my blessed child ! let me but look upon mine own flesh and blood—let me baptize the unbaptized with my tears—and I shall feel this terrible load removed from my heart."

"It was a sad thing that it died before it got the sign of the Cross," said the woman. "Sith babes, I've heard the priest say, never see the light o' God's countenance, but the blackness of darkness abides on them for ever. Howsoever these kind o' children never come to no good, whether they live nor die—young giddy creatures should think o' that, afore they run into sin, and bring upon themselves trouble and confusion. I was exposed to great temptations in my day, and was a pretty girl too. But I never disgraced myself with the like o' that."

"Oh ! you were very good, I dare say," said Mary, coaxingly ; "and I will think you the best and kindest woman that ever lived, if you will but let me see the poor babe."

"What good will it do you to see it ? It will only make you fret. You ought to thank God that it is gone. It was a seasonable mercy that you had no right to expect. You are now just as good as ever you were—you can go into gen-