

THE YOUNG PHILOSOPHER AND HIS PHILOSOPHY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JEST AND EARNEST."

IN a room which, sooth to say, was somewhat moved from the basement story, sat Arthur Jervis. His elbow was placed upon a small table near the fire, his head rested upon his hand, and he appeared buried in meditation. The subject of his meditation was his own situation. He was without money, and therefore without friends, and he was an author by profession. At five o'clock he was to call on a bookseller, who had promised to read his manuscript and give an answer. This would be the sixth trader in brain-work who had done these two same things—or, to speak more certainly, the last—all of which had been in the author's disfavor. Arthur Jervis amused himself bitterly by imagining, with the vivid minuteness which anxiety gives, the coming scene. He has entered the rich bookseller's door, his request to see the principal, after some careless and irritating delay, is granted. The principal is disguised in an appearance of wisdom, and commences the interview by an ominous shake of the head. The book is clever—very clever, but in the present state of the market he really could not undertake it without a name. If Mr. Jervis had done anything before, the work might take; but as it was, he must beg to decline; for the trade would never look at a first work. Mr. Jervis bows, says a few words not very distinctly, and, with a miserable affectation of proper unconcern, puts the manuscript into his pocket and walks out of the shop.

"And thus," thought Arthur, "will it be.—Five times before it has been so; and this, the sixth, will surely not be different. If I could only get before the public," exclaimed he, rising and pacing the room; "If I could but get before the public I feel that I should do. The booksellers politely advise me to publish at my own expense. At my own expense! Tenpence would not be enough—and that is about the extent of my fortune: a little more or less, it may be ninepence—it may be elevenpence! I remember," continued he, speaking aloud to himself, for lack of better company, "I remember the enthusiasm and yearning love for the world and all in it that I felt when I composed that work. It seems to me now like a pleasant dream. Then I believed men destined to reach a state but little below perfection. The prevailing vice, hatred, discord, and deceit, I

considered the necessary effects of the existing forms of society: and as these were originally founded in ignorance, so I believed that the increase of knowledge must infallibly cause their gradual fusion into those of a more rational description, and that truth and love and justice would at last over the whole world be something more than names. The present superior power of evil I considered temporary, and designed to evolve the future superior power of good; so I bore patiently with men as they were, by thinking what they might be, and would be. Charity seemed to me mere mild wisdom, and harshness but brutal folly. This was, then, my creed, which had completely saturated my mind and tinged every thought and action; and under its influence I wrote my first work. What is my creed now? I have none. Man may be improvable; but I know well that he is bad enough as it is—and when he strikes me shall I not strike again? He has done nothing to make me love him—nor will I. Whilst the world continues a deadly struggle of brother against brother, who would stand still and preach harmony of happiness, and so be trampled to death? No!" exclaimed he, pacing the room more rapidly; "I will not constitute myself a teacher of common sense when the teaching of common sense brings poverty and contempt. If I write at all I must write sincerely; and, since I find it is so difficult to publish my thoughts, I will write no more. I will descend into the arena, and cant and cheat, and love and hate, like the rest. If God have given me talents, and I use them badly, and for myself alone, let society alone be responsible! God, who gave them, knows that I began life with the best intentions; but necessity makes me a worldling."

As he uttered these words the little Dutch clock, which ornamented one side of the apartment, struck five. Arthur stopped short in his hurried walk. "It is the time of my appointment," said he, "and, before I go, this is my determination:—When the rich bookseller returns me my manuscript I will not hawk it about again. I will preserve it as a record of a former state of mind now quite passed away. Once I loved men: now I hate and despise them; and if I prudently conceal my real feeling from them, it will be only that I may more effectually turn them to my purpose."

So saying, he proceeded to his little bed-chamber, which was adjoining, poured out some cold water, and bathed his heated forehead; then changing his coat and taking up his hat, he stirred the fire carefully together,