

ader unacquainted with the Manchester mode of business, is not to suppose that Reuben, although his stock was wedged up in a dollar, was a retail draper or haberdasher.—In magnitude considered, there are fewer such in Manchester than in any other town in the kingdom; but Reuben commenced as a wholesale merchant—one who supplies the country dealers: he always went to the markets to purchase with the money in his hand. Joseph the patriarch's brethren came to him to buy corn—and pity it is that the good old custom has too much fallen into disuse.—He made his purchases chiefly from the small manufacturers, to whom ready money was the object, and consequently bought his goods at much advantage. During his perambulations on the Borders also, he had become acquainted with the drapers in the towns upon his circuit; and at the seasons when they left Manchester, he might have been seen passing rapidly along what is now called Piccadilly, and if one whose face he knew stepped from the coach, Reuben turned suddenly round as if by accident, took the purchaser by the hand, and invited him to come to "eat and drink" with him. He was generally successful, for to resist his solicitations was a matter of difficulty, and after partaking of a frugal meal and a single glass, the stranger was invited to examine the stock in the warehouse, and seldom failed of becoming the purchaser of a part.

Within three years he had taken extensive warehouses. He had a clerk, a salesman, four warehousemen, a traveller, and a porter: he had also taken his father from the farm. Reuben had seized fortune at the mill, and he floated down with the stream. He said he never undertook a speculation but he was convinced it would be successful: he said that fortune-making was like courtship, it was never venture never win—only know what you were venturing upon.

I should have mentioned, that previous to this Priscilla had made Reuben the happy father of twin daughters, and the one they named Rachel, and the other Elizabeth.—The mother gloried in her children, and her husband looked on them with delight. He was a fortunate man and a happy one, and a cup of felicity, if it did not run over, was well filled.

In a short time, Reuben not only supplied the goods to a great extent the merchants

on the Borders, but throughout the three kingdoms; and he also exported extensively to other countries, and even to some where the importation of British goods was prohibited.

"A fig to the tariffs," he was wont to say, "the profit will cover the risk. The principle of trade is like the principle of steam—there is no restraining it."

In these speculations, however, Reuben frequently experienced the common fate of the smuggler; and the goods which he sent into countries where they were prohibited, were seized: he was of too ardent a temperament to be merely the purchaser and vender of other men's manufactures, and eventually he erected a cotton mill of his own, a few miles out of Manchester.

And here it will, perhaps, be more acceptable to the reader, that I detail the remainder of Reuben's narrative in his own words, as he related it more than thirty years afterwards. It was delivered in the Scottish accent, which a residence of more than three times ten years had not destroyed:—

"I was now," said he—alluding to the erection of the mill—"at what I had always considered as the very pinnacle of my ambition—the proprietor of a cotton-mill, and of one, too, that had cost me several thousand in completing it. I had no doubt but that it would turn out the master-speculation of my existence; for bless ye, at that period, to have a mill was to have a mine. A spinning jenny was worth its weight in rubies. There was Arkwright made a fortune like a nobleman's in a jiffy; and Robert Peel, greatly to his credit, from being a weaver lad, made a fortune that could buy up half the gentry in the country. Indeed, wealth just poured in upon the mill owners; and I must confess they werna bad times for the like o'me, that bought their calicoes, and got them dressed and printed to sell them out, as ye may judge from my having been able to erect a mill of my own before I had been many years in business. But I must confess that the mill ran between me and my wits. All the time it was building, I was out and in frae the town to see how the workmen were getting on, wet or dry, and I dare to say, that if I dreamed about it once during the twelve months it was in hands, I dreamed about it a thousand times. Many a time Priscilla has said to me—