

## THE SPIRIT OF INDUSTRY.

## A TALE OF HUMBLE LIFE.

Tom Rayland was one of the five children of an industrious carpenter. When he was about five years old, he fell ill of a complaint in the hip, which, after two years of great suffering, was at length cured, but left him lame for life, with one leg shorter than the other. During the tedious period of his illness, Hannah Rayland, his mother, was the most unremitting of nurses. She not only attended on him with the tenderest care, but toiled early and late that she might procure for him medical attendance, as well as the wine and supporting food proper for his complaint. Nor did she confine her care to his bodily wants: she paid what attention she could to his mind.

Tom was a child of amiable temper and good capacity, and profited well by his mother's instructions. He bore all his sufferings with patience, and showed a resignation and cheerfulness under them that might have been a lesson to many older persons. He had also a great aptitude for learning, and many were the weary hours of pain and langour that he beguiled by repeating the prayers and hymns his mother had taught him. Long after he was pronounced to be well, his weakness continued to be very delicate. The weakness of his frame, which prevented him from joining in the robust exercises of other children, gave him a precocity, and an unusual sensitiveness; and the care and tenderness with which he was treated, instead of spoiling his temper, and making him selfish, only increased the affectionateness of his disposition. His brothers and sisters, instead of being jealous of him, as one who absorbed more than his share of the parental fondness, felt that his infirmity was a double claim on their affection—so that lame Tom was the cherished darling of the family; and not only of his family, but also of the whole neighbourhood. Tom was a general favourite, and every one was glad to show a kindness to the little lame boy, who was always blithe and good-natured.

But time will run on, and children, if they live, will cease to be children: and the time came when it was necessary for Tom to be thinking how he could gain his own living. His brother Dick was working with a blacksmith, and was earning good wages; and Joe, only a year older

than himself, was learning to be a carpenter under his father, and was already able to pay his parents for his board. Even his sisters could earn something by needlework, and by assisting their mother, who took in washing. But poor Tom could do nothing; he had neither strength nor agility for any laborious active work; and although he was fifteen, he was still so short that he looked like a boy of twelve. His secret ambition was to be a schoolmaster; but he plainly saw that the difficulties in the way were quite insurmountable, and that it was, therefore, necessary for him to turn his mind to something else. But what was there, except the being a shoemaker, to which he could turn? His hard fortune seemed to have shaped him for nothing else. A shoemaker, therefore, he was to be; and his parents thought themselves fortunate in finding a neighbour who would teach him his trade for a trifle; and who promised, that, at the end of the first year, he would pay him wages for his work.

Tom worked with his master, but continued to live with his parents; and a proud and happy fellow was Tom. He had now something to do. He had a station, though a lowly one, in society. He was no longer a lounge and a loiterer, eating the bread of idleness, while his brothers, like industrious bees, were gathering honey from the hive. To be sure, he was not as yet gathering much honey, but still he was in the way to do so. And during the year of his novitiate, how he would reckon up his wages for the year to come, and expatiate in imagination on the happiness he should feel in bringing his earnings home to his mother! He, moreover, built castles in the air, and saw, in his mind's eye, the large shop-window well filled with boots and shoes; the neat back parlour, with his old father and mother sitting one on each side the snug fireplace; his sisters—in short, nobody was forgot, and Tom's castle was well filled with his friends. But he did not sit still to build his castles. On the contrary, he applied himself the more earnestly to his business. His heart was in his work; and when at last he had achieved the mighty feat of making an entire shoe, who so elated as Tom? The shoe was brought home to be shown and admired, and Hannah, in the pride of her heart, exclaimed, "Well, who would have thought lame Tom was half so clever?"

The young carpenter and blacksmith gave their meed of approbation; and the latter declared, that "although he had made many hundred shoes, yet none of them came up to Tom's." Before the year was out, Tom was become an expert workman. He was now to reap the fruits of his diligence, and to enter on his wages; and out of these he was to pay his parents for his board. What a consequential person now was Tom, living on his own means! He held his head so erect, that the neighbours said one to another, "Really, Tom Rayland is beginning to grow a little."

Tom, however, did not relax in his steady industrious habits. The only extravagance he allowed himself was the purchase of a canvass bag to hold his money, when he should get it. Quarter-day at last came; but Tom's ardour was a little checked his master had not the money ready to pay him—he must wait till next quarter-day. But before that arrived, his master ran off, leaving the debt to poor Tom, with many others, unpaid.

Here was, indeed, a blow! For the last six months he had sat down to his dinner in the happy consciousness that he was earning his meals. But now he was as penniless as ever, and still dependent on the kindness of his friends. He entered the house just as the family were beginning to partake of their frugal meal; and his father, not perhaps understanding the state of Tom's feelings, said something on the subject of the loss of his wages, which Tom felt as a tacit reproach to himself for being still a burden on his parents. His heart rose in his throat; he could scarcely breathe, much less swallow; and getting up from table, he said he was not hungry, and would go into the workshop. In a short time he returned for his hat, which he had left in the room. His mother marked the extreme dejection of his countenance.—"Come, come," said she, "don't take on about the loss of your wages: thank God we are able to afford you your meals as before; so sit down and take a bit."

"I cannot eat, indeed, mother," he replied; "I never was less hungry in my life." She saw that his heart was full of grief, and urged him no more, and he went out of the house.

At the end of an hour, when he did not return, Hannah began to be uneasy, and asked some of her neighbours if they had