

fixed upon the poor parent who was soon to leave them alone in the world. As she turned her face to the wall we could not see her, but in her dreams she murmured of her want and woe. My heart beat so loudly as almost to make an echo; it startled all within. The doctor turned towards me, and would have spoken, but again the dreamer murmured, and I heard *my own name upon her lips*. Gently she spoke it, and in sleep, but to me it was as God's announcement of eternity in rolling thunder. I felt it as the unravelment of fate; the right hand of retribution was stretched out to seize me—my hour of punishment was come. I tottered towards the bed to satisfy my sight (at that moment I would have given my life that my ears had played me false); the woman, as if destiny had determined she should confront me in death, turned towards me, her features flashed upon my eyes and blinded them, a mist was before me, I stood as a man in a dark fog—one gasp, one cold shiver, and the rest was chaos.

'I saw no more of the patient. Soon after I had been carried insensible from her chamber she died, died of grief and starvation—ANOTHER OF MY VICTIMS.

'She had been left a widow with her two fatherless boys, and out of kindness for her husband's memory she had put her name to a bill after his death to accommodate one of his former friends. Upon that bill two years before, I had arrested and thrown her into prison; there she lived friendless and penniless. Often had she sent her eldest boy to appeal to me, with the touching eloquence of childhood, for his mother's liberty; but no, I had no deity but gold; and mercy had no resting-place in my heart. I let her starve—I let her die! Oh, God! *Hers* was the final triumph.

'Never till I saw her face in her dying hour, did I know that she was the same fair and kind creature whom as a boy I had wooed and loved before my mother's death; whom as a monster I had deserted after my father had changed my worship and altered my faith, and despoiled my heart of purity of early passion, to place there Mammon's altar and Moloch's priest.

'I awoke with the brain fever which overtook me, a wild raving madman, but not so mad as to forget that I was a murderer too. The vision of that woman and her children was ever before my heart and eyes, and not less was I haunted by my other victims. Aloud I counted over the courses of those whom I had wronged and ruined. I shrieked forth imprecations upon my own head for hearts that I had blighted and homes that I had despoiled. The wife, the widow and the orphan, the husband, the father and the friend were revenged upon me with the terrible vengeance of my own voice. They bound my limbs and chained my body, but they could not prevent me from cursing myself, from crying aloud in the hell-pains of my spirit, from raving with the agony of my remorse. And now who dares say that I am not a murderer when the fiends of darkness are pointing at me, and my victims are besetting me with their cries? Look, look, look!—yonder where the sun has cleared away the cloudy mist; there they come to

torment me; see how the children weep; hark how the mothers wail in the storm. There is a hand pointing at me through the tempest, and look, my name is written in tears and blood upon the sky!"

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I could not now stay the wild ravings of the maniac, for with the conclusion of his story, and the memories which it had called up, his lucid interval had ceased.

A Clergyman.

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### VILLAGE CHORISTERS.

A pig in a string is a troublesome article to manage, two pigs in a string are more troublesome still, to a degree, perhaps, in proportion to the squares of their distances—a ram in a halter is also proverbial for obstinacy—mules are celebrated for their pertinacity, and donkeys for their stupidity; but all the pigs, rams, mules and asses in the world put together, would be more easily managed than a company of singers in a village church. About four miles from Loppington there is a village called Snatcham. The living is but small, and the rector resides and performs his duty without the aid of a curate. You cannot imagine a milder and more gentle creature than this excellent clergyman. He is quite a picture, either for pen or pencil. He is not more than five feet four inches in height, somewhat stout, but not very robust; he is nearly seventy years of age—perhaps quite by this time; his hair, what little is left of it, is as white as silver; his face is free from all wrinkles either of care or age; his voice is slender, but musical with weakness. The practical principle of his demeanour has always been—any thing for a quiet life. He would not speak a harsh word, or think an unkind thought to or of any human being; but he is now and then tempted to think that when the Apostle Paul recommended the Christians to live peaceably with all men, he put in the saving clause 'if possible,' with particular reference to village choristers. Snatcham choir is said to be the best in that county; such, at least is the opinion of the choristers themselves; and he must be a bold man who should say to the contrary. They are no doubt very sincere when they say that they never heard any better than themselves; for, to judge from their singing, one would not imagine that they had ever heard any one else. Snatcham church does not boast an organ, and it is well it does not, for if it did the whole choir would insist upon playing on it all at once; but instead of an organ it has a band of music, which has been gradually increasing for some years past. It commenced, about thirty-five years ago, with a pitch-pipe, which was presently superseded by a flute. It was soon found, however, that the dulcet notes of a single flute were quite lost amid the chaos of sounds produced by the vocal efforts of the choir, so a second flute was added by way of reinforcement; but all the flutes in the world would be no match for the double bass voice of Martin Grubb the Snatch-