

that her eyes might not be offended by the ignoble sight of the trade by which she lived, four great water-butts were ranked along the fence, which, being as tall as a man, and nicely arranged, and strengthened on the inner side by an accumulation of rubbish and so forth, formed a pretty effective screen. The boys indeed had their spy-holes, and were in the habit of peeping when I did not check them; but in only one place, at the corner farthest from the house, was it possible to see by accident, as it were, and without stooping or manifest prying, a small patch of the garden. This gap in the corner I had hitherto shunned, for Mrs. D—— had more than once sent me from it with a flea in my ear and hot cheeks: now, however, it became a favourite with me, and as far as I could, without courting the notice of the wretched urchins who whined and squabbled round me, I began to frequent it; sometimes leaning against the abutting fence with my back to the house, as in a fit of abstraction, and then slowly turning—when I did not fail to rake the aforesaid patch with my eyes; and sometimes taking that corner for the limit of a brisk walk to and fro, which made it natural to pause and wheel at that point.

Notwithstanding these ruses, however, and though Mrs. D——'s voice, raised in anger, frequently bore witness to her neighbourhood, it was some time before I caught a glimpse of the person, whose fate, more doleful than mine, yet not dissimilar, had awakened my interest. At length I espied her, slowly crossing the garden, with her back to me and a yoke on her shoulders. Two pails hung from the yoke, I smelled swill; and in a trice seeing in her no more than a wretched drab, in clogs and a coarse sacking-apron, I felt my philanthropy brought to the test; and without a second glance turned away in disgust. And thought no more of her.

After that I took a distaste for the gap, and I do not remember that I visited it for a week or more; when, at