

he said within himself, that "the men of Moffat were blind." And eventually he concluded, communing with himself, that the fair Priscilla was a speculation worthy the thinking of. She wished to purchase a few yards of lace for cap borders, and such like purposes, and as Reuben sold them to her, he said to her a hundred pleasant things, and he let drop some well-timed and well-turned compliments, and she blushed as his eulogy on the lace aptly ended in praise of her own fair features. Yet this was not all; for he not only sold to her fifty per cent. cheaper than he would have parted with his goods to any other purchaser, but he politely—by what appeared a wilful sort of accident—contrived to give her a full yard into her bargain. Priscilla looked upon Reuben with more than complacency; she acknowledged, (that is to herself,) that he was the best-looking, polite, and most sensible young man she had ever seen. She resolved that in future she would deal with no one else; and indeed she had got such an excellent bargain of the lace, that she had come to the determination of again visiting his stock, and making a purchase of other articles. And, added she, to a particular friend—

"It does a body good to buy from him, for he is always so pleasant."

But Reuben saved her the trouble, for early the next day he called at her house with a silk dress under his arm. He said—

"It was the last piece of the kind he had; indeed it was a perfect beauty, equal to real India, and would become her exceedingly; and not think about the price, for that was no object."

"What then am I to think about?" thought Priscilla; and she admired the silk much, but, peradventure, if the truth were told, she admired its owner more.

Reuben spent more than two hours beneath the roof of the too-long neglected spinster: she blushed, his tongue faltered, and when he rose to depart, he had neither the silk beneath his arm, nor the cash for it in his pocket; but he shook her hand fervently, and would have saluted her fair cheek, but true love, like true genius, people say, is always modest. Priscilla, on being left, felt her heart in a very unusual tumult—and now she examined her face in a mirror, and again admired the silk which he had presented. She had heard him spoken of as a steady, thriving

and deserving young man; and it became a settled point in her mind, that if he directly popped the important question, she would be as candid with him, and at once answer—"Yes."

Reuben was frequently seen in Moffat after this, even when he brought no goods for sale, and within six months after her purchase of the lace, the sacred knot was tied between them: and at the age of forty-four years, Miss Priscilla Spottiswoode blushed into Mrs. Purves.

While following his avocation as a chapman, Reuben had accumulated rising two hundred pounds, which added to his wife's five hundred, raised his capital to seven hundred. But he was not a man to look only at the needle point of things, or whose soul would be lost in a nutshell. Onward! was the ruling principle of Reuben—he had been fortunate in all his speculations, and trusted to be so still. Never had he lost sight of the important discoveries of Arkwright, and of the improvements which were being made upon them; and while he was convinced that they would become a source of inexhaustible wealth to the nation, he still cherished the hope that they would enrich himself: he said also—and Mrs. Purves agreed with him, that travelling the country was a most uncomfortable life for a married man: he therefore sold his horse and covered cart, disposed of his stock at prime cost, and with his wife and capital removed to Manchester.

He took a room and cellar at the top of Dean Street. The upper room served them for bedchamber, parlour, kitchen, and all, while the cellar he converted into a ware-room. Perhaps, having something more than seven hundred pounds to begin the world with, some may think that he might have taken more commodious premises: but rents were becoming high in Manchester—many a merchant has begun business in a cellar—and Reuben, quoting the words of poor Richard, said—"I am but serving my time yet; we must creep before we walk."

Never was any man who prospered in the affairs of this world more diligent than Reuben Purves, and in Priscilla he found an admirable helpmate. She soon learned the name, the price, and the quality of every description of goods; and when he was necessarily absent, she could attend to the orders of customers as well as himself. The