

He that had Received the Five Talents.

look for the affections, which it inevitably entailed two generations ago.

The honest smith was one of those old-fashioned people who found complete satisfaction in the uninterrupted industry of their trade, and the quiet affections of home. His ideas of life were limited within this narrow range; and the great world outside, to which he foresaw that he must commit his son, was peopled with all the terrors of a vast unknown. To the poor father, therefore, the thought of his boy wandering into the trackless region came at times like a hideous nightmare. He had put off the evil day as long as a practical decision was not required; but now Fate had appeared, as it comes at last to all, with the inexorable demand to defer the settlement no longer. The parish school had closed a few days before for the summer vacation. The smith's son had gone through all that the school was competent to teach, and it would simply be a waste of time to send him back after the holidays. He had shown a remarkable aptitude for Arithmetic, and the schoolmaster had given him some private instruction in Geometry and Algebra, which he seemed to take up as fast as his teacher could carry him on.