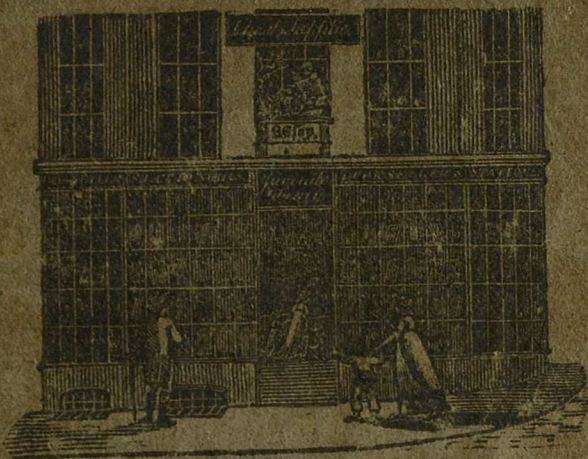


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COLONEL JACK:

THE

*HISTORY OF A BOY,
THAT NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL.*

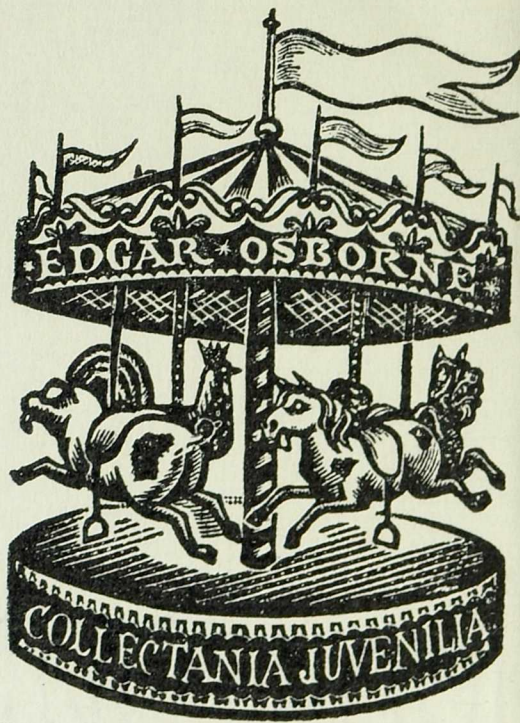
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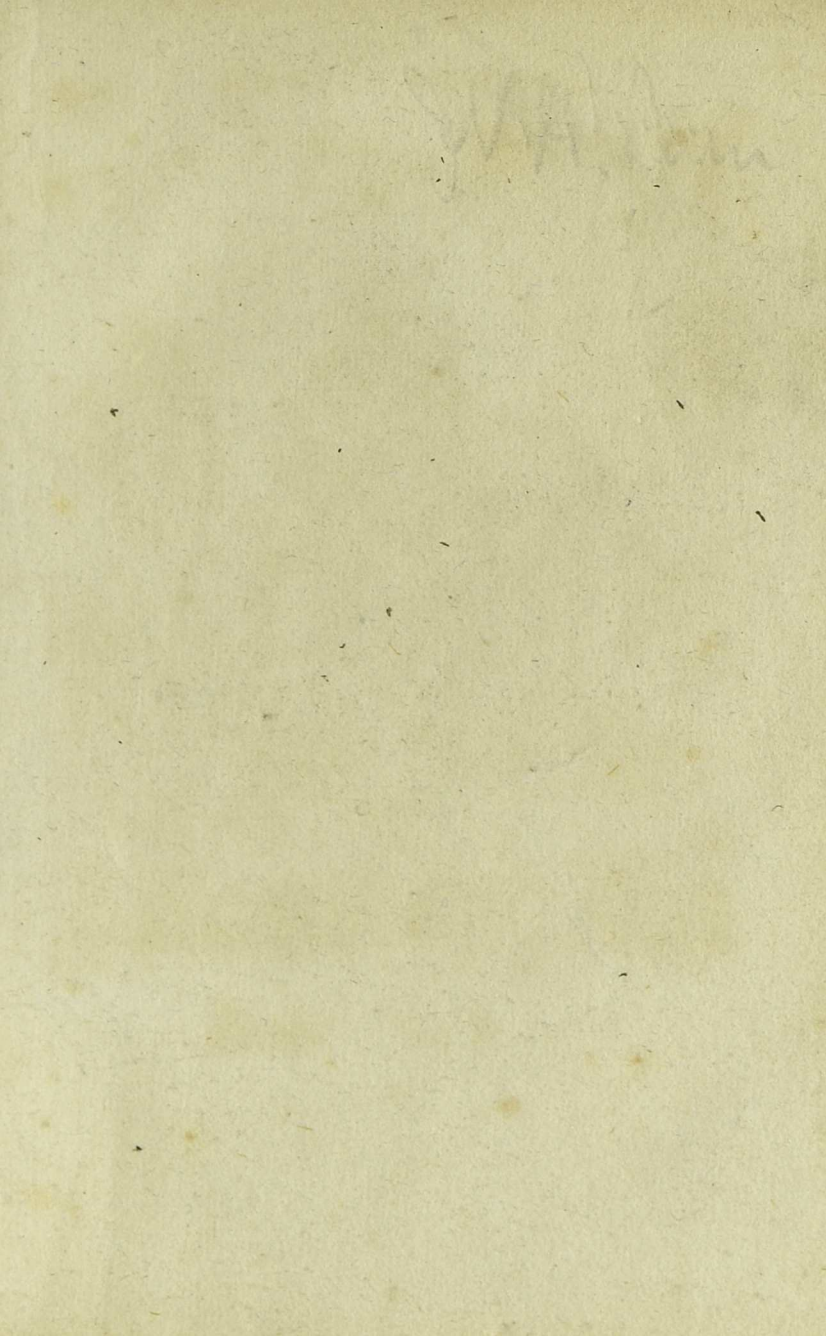
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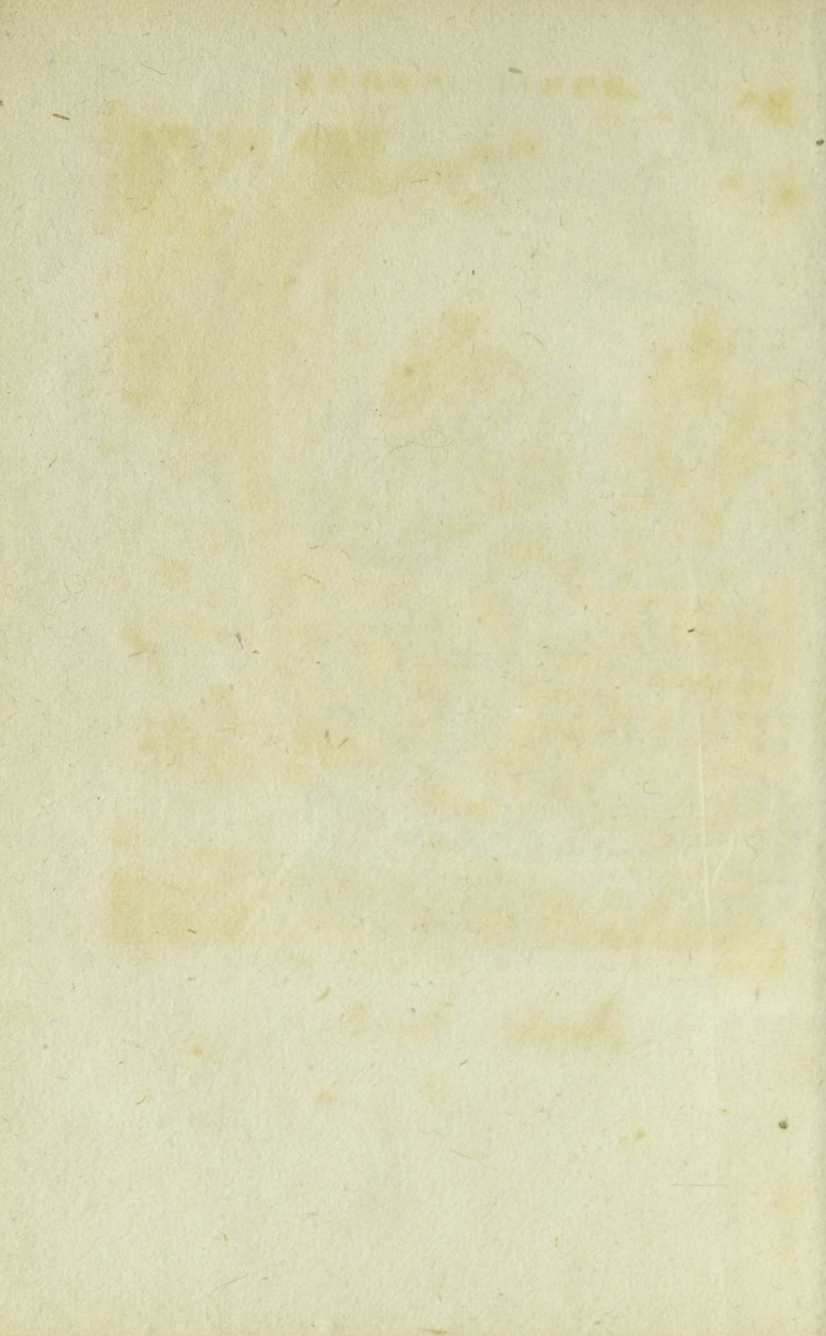
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Colonel Jack.

Published by M. J. Godwin, Dec. 1. 1809.

COLONEL JACK:

THE

HISTORY OF A BOY,

THAT

NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ROBINSON CRUSOE.

To attend to the neglected, and remember the forgotten.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR M. J. GODWIN,

At the JUVENILE LIBRARY, No. 41, Skinner-Street.

1810:

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COLONEL JACK.

I WAS brought up in the house of poor woman whom I called my nurse. Of my origin I know nothing, for I am unacquainted even with the name of my family. My nurse never called me by any other name than John. From her I learned that my father was a man of quality. She said he brought me to her while I was yet an infant, and agreed with her for a certain sum of money that she should take me off his hands for ever.

My father charged my nurse, if I lived to an age to be capable of understanding the meaning of the words, she should always take care to bid me remember I was a gentleman: and this, he said, was

all the education he would desire of her to give me. He affirmed, that he did not doubt, some time or other the very hint would inspire me with sentiments suitable to my birth, and that I would certainly act like a gentleman if I believed myself to be one. In this my father was mistaken.

My nurse was as faithful to the engagement she had entered into, as could be expected from a person who lived in such extreme poverty as she did. She bred me up carefully with her own son. He was about one year older than me, and his name was John.

I had been with my nurse about two years, when she took in another child on the same terms she had done me, and who was, like me, deserted by his parents, and his name also was John.

We lived near Goodman's Fields: in that part of the town the Johns were generally called Jack; therefore as we were

all Johns, we were all Jacks. My nurse, who may be allowed to distinguish her own son a little from the rest, would have him called captain, because he was the oldest. According to my father's desire, she had often told me I was a gentleman, therefore I thought this honour conferred on her son a great affront to me who was the only gentleman in the family, and when I heard her call him captain, I fell a crying and said, "As I was a gentleman, I would be a captain, that I would." The good woman, to keep the peace, replied, "Yes, yes, I was a gentleman, and therefore I should be above a captain, for I should be a colonel, and that was a great deal better than a captain."

Well, I was hushed with this for the present, but not thoroughly contented, till a little while after, I heard her tell her son, that I was a gentleman, and he must call me colonel. On this the boy began to cry, and said he would be called colonel. I

was highly pleased that he should cry to be called colonel, for then I was satisfied that it was above a captain. So universally is ambition seated in the minds of men, that there is not a beggar-boy but has his share of it.

We were now colonel Jack, and captain Jack. The third boy, the youngest of us Johns, was only plain Jack for several years; but by some accident our nurse heard his father was a major in the guards, and therefore she called him John the major, and afterward the major, and at last, when we began to rove about the streets together, he was called major Jack.

I was almost ten years of age, the captain eleven, and the major eight, when my nurse died. She died so very poor, that the parish were obliged to bury her. When we attended her funeral, as her son was ill, I walked as chief mourner.

This good woman being dead, we, the

three Jacks, were all turned loose on the world.

We never thought of enquiring whether the parish would provide for us; but rambled all three together about the streets. The people in Rosemary-lane, and Ratcliffe, and that way, knowing us pretty well, we got victuals easily enough, and without much begging.

For my own part, I got some reputation, as a mighty civil, honest boy; for, if I were sent of an errand, I always did it punctually and carefully. If I were trusted with any thing, I never touched it to diminish it, but made it a point of honour to be careful of whatever was committed to my charge.

Some of the poorer shopkeepers would often leave me at their doors, to look after their shops while they went up stairs to dinner. I always performed this office freely and cheerfully, and with the utmost honesty.

Captain Jack, on the contrary, was a surly ill-looking boy, without either good manners, or good humour. Whenever he was asked a question, he would reply "Yes," or "No:" no one ever got a word from him that was in the least obliging. If he were sent of an errand he would forget half of it; and if he met any boys he knew, he either stopped to play, or if he went, never came back with an answer; which was such a regardless, disobliging way, that every person spoke ill of him, and many said he would come to be hanged. Indeed he was at last obliged, as it were, to turn thief, for the mere necessity of bread to eat; for if he begged, he did it with so ill a tone, it was more like bidding them give him victuals, than intreating for it.

The major was a merry, thoughtless boy, always cheerful, and whether he had any victuals or not, he never complained. He recommended himself so well by his good

disposition, that the neighbours loved him, and he generally got food enough one where or other.

Thus, though we were so young, we made shift to keep from starving: and as for lodging, we knew nothing that belonged to a bed for many years after my nurse died; but in the summer-time we slept about the watch-houses, or on bulk-heads, or at shop-doors where we were known. In the winter we got into the ash-holes in the Glass-House in Rosemary-lane, or at another in Ratcliff Highway. Whoever is acquainted with the inside of a glass-house, and has seen the arches where they Neal the bottles after they are made, must know that those places where the ashes are thrown, and where these poor boys lie, are cavities in the brick-work, perfectly close except at the entrance, and consequently so warm that it is impossible the boys can feel any cold there, were it in Greenland, or Nova-Zembla. Therefore they lie, not

only safe, but very comfortably, the ashes excepted, which are no grievance at all to them.

Thus innocently was I passing away my time, when it happened that captain Jack fell into bad company. After he got acquainted with this wicked set, the major and I saw him no more.

The first news we heard of him, was that he had been concerned with them in a robbery, in which he was detected : but in compassion to his youth, no other punishment was ordered to be inflicted on him, than to be sent to Bridewell, and whipped three times.

When we heard he was in Bridewell, the major and I went to see him. The very day that we went, he was ordered out to be corrected, as they called it, according to his sentence. It was directed to be done very severely, and so indeed it was. The president of Bridewell, whose name I think was Sir William Turner,

during the time he was being whipped, talked a great deal to him about how young he was, and what a pity it was such a youth should come to be hanged, and how he should take warning by it.

He said much more that I cannot remember, and all the while Sir William was talking, the man with a blue badge on lashed him most unmercifully; for he was not to leave off whipping him, till Sir William knocked with a little hammer upon the table.

I was almost frightened to death, for though I could not come near to him, being but a poor boy, yet I could hear the dreadful cries he made. After it was at an end, I got leave to come to him, and then I did all I could to comfort him, but the worst was not over with him, for he was to have two more such whippings. His punishment made very sensible impressions on the major and me, though

we were so young; but the captain returned again to his wicked ways.

In about a year after this, notwithstanding he had been as much affected as I was at the captain's sufferings, and was naturally so well disposed, the major, that good-conditioned, easy boy, was wheedled away by two young thieves that frequented the glass-house apartments.

This poor unfortunate boy was not more than twelve years old when he was thus led away.

The eldest of the young thieves that brought him into this wickedness was not quite fourteen. They took him with them to Bartholomew Fair, that he might learn of them to pick pockets.

The major was elevated the next day to a strange degree. He came very early to me, who lay not far from him, and said to me—

“Colonel Jack, I want to speak with you.”

We walked out, and when we were got into a lane near the glass-house, "Look here!" said he, and shewed me his little hand almost full of money. I was surprised at the sight. And then he said, "Here, you shall have some of it;" and gave me a sixpence, and a shilling's worth of the small silver pieces. This was very welcome to me, who, as much as I was of a gentleman, and as much as I thought of myself on that account, never had a shilling of money together before in my life, not that I could call my own.

I was very earnest to know how he came by this wealth: for he had for his share, seven and sixpence in money, a silver thimble, and a silk handkerchief, which was an estate to him who never had, as I have said of myself, a shilling together in his life.

"And what will you do with it now, Jack?" said I.

"The first thing I will do with it is this:

I will go to Rag Fair, and buy me a pair of shoes and stockings."

"That is right: so will I too."

We went there immediately, and bought each of us a pair of Rag Fair stockings, for fivepence; not fivepence a pair, but fivepence together, and good stockings they were too, much above what we had been accustomed to wear, I assure you. We found it more difficult to fit ourselves with shoes; having looked a great while before we could find any good enough for us: at last we saw a shop very well stored, and of these we bought two pair for sixteen-pence.

We put them on immediately, to our great comfort; for neither of us had worn stockings that had any feet to them for a long time.

I found myself so refreshed with having a pair of warm stockings, and a pair of dry shoes, that I began to call to mind my

being a gentleman, and now I thought it began to come to pass.

“Major Jack,” said I, “you and I never had any money in our lives before; and we never had a good dinner in all our lives. What, if we should go somewhere and get some victuals? I am very hungry.”

He replied, “So we will then, I am very hungry too.”

We went to a cook’s-shop in Rosemary-lane, where we treated ourselves nobly; and I thought within myself we began to live like gentlemen, for we had three-penny-worth of boiled beef, two-penny-worth of pudding, a penny loaf of bread, and a whole pint of strong beer, which cost us seven-pence in all.

We had each of us a good mess of charming beef-broth into the bargain; and that which cheered my heart wonderfully was, all the while we were at dinner, the maid and the boy of the house, every time

they passed the open box where we sat at our dinner, would look in, and cry, "Gentlemen, do you call?" and "Do you call, gentlemen?" I say, this was as good to me as my dinner.

Not the best housekeeper in Stepney-parish, not my Lord Mayor of London, no, not the greatest man on earth, could be more happy in his own imagination than I was, though I had no greater share of this money than eighteen-pence. That night, the major and I triumphed in our new enjoyment, and slept with an undisturbed repose in the usual place, surrounded with the warmth of the glass-house fires above, which was a full amends for all the ashes and cinders we rolled in below.

The next day the major and his companions went out again, and were still successful; nor did any disaster attend them for many months.

By frequent imitation and direction, he

became as dextrous a pickpocket as either of them, and went on through a long variety of fortunes; too many to enter upon now, because I am hastening to my own story, which is at present the chief thing I have to relate.

I had learned from him in general that the business was picking of pockets, and I fancied it was not at all difficult to learn, if I did but know the manner of it, and how they went about it. With this inclination to be a thief, surrounded as I was by dishonest boys, it was not long before I was persuaded to join one of them, and become a pick-pocket myself.

I fell into an intimacy with one some years older than myself; and he was above the little fellows who went about stealing trifles and baubles at Bartholomew Fair: his aim was at higher things; even at no less than considerable sums of money, and bills for more.

He solicited me earnestly to go with

him, telling me, that after he had shewn me my trade a little, he would let me be as wicked as I pleased ; at least this was the meaning of his words : but his expression was, that after he had made me capable, I should set up for myself if I pleased, and he would only wish me good luck. He further told me if he had success, I should have my share as much as if I were a principal.

The first day I went out with my new confederate, he carried me directly into the city. We went first to the water-side, and then he led me into the long-room at the Custom-house.

His orders to me were that I should always keep in sight, and near him, but not close to him, nor to take notice of him at any time till he came to me ; and if any disturbance happened, I should by no means seem to know him, or pretend to have any thing to do with him.

I observed my orders to a tittle. While

he peered into every corner, and had his eye on every body, I kept my eye directly on him, but went always on the other side of the long-room, looking as it were for pins, and picking them up out of the dust as I could find them; but still my eye was upon my companion, who I observed was very busy among the crowds of people that stood at the board, doing business with the clerks. At length he came over to me; and stooping down as if he would take up a pin close to me, he put something into my hand, and said, "Put that up, and follow me down stairs quickly." He did not run, but shuffled along through the crowd, nor did he go down the great stairs we came in at, but a little narrow staircase at the other end of the long-room.

He went on without stopping below as I expected, nor did he speak one word to me. I followed him through innumerable passages, alleys, and dark ways, till we

were got up into Fenchurch-street, and then through Billiter-lane into Leadenhall-street, and from thence into Leadenhall-Market.

It was not a meat-market day, therefore we had room to sit down on one of the butchers' stalls, and he bid me take out what he had given me. It was a letter-case, with a French almanack stuck on the inside of it, and a great many papers in it of several kinds. We looked them over, and found there were several valuable bills in it, such as bills of exchange, and other notes: things I did not understand. Among the rest was a banker's check, as he called it, of one Sir Stephen Evans, for three hundred pounds, payable to the bearer, and at demand; beside this, there was another note for twelve pounds ten shillings, being a banker's check too, but I forget the name. There was also a bill or two written in French,

which neither of us understood, but which I afterwards learned were things of value, called foreign bills accepted.

My companion knew the nature of a banker's check well enough, and I observed he said of the check of Sir Stephen's, "This is too big for me to meddle with." When he came to the check for twelve pounds ten shillings, he said, "This will do. Come hither, Jack."

Away he ran to Lombard-street, and I after him, cramming the other papers into the letter-case. He enquired the name out immediately, and went directly to the banking-house, which he entered, and with a grave countenance presented the check. The money was paid him without any stop, or question asked. I stood on the other side of the street, looking about me as if not at all concerned with any body that way; but I observed that when he presented the check, he pulled out the

letter-case, as if he had been a merchant's boy, who was acquainted with business, and had other bills about him. They paid him the money in gold, which he made haste enough in telling over, and came away.

I then followed him into Three King Court: then we crossed back into Clement's-lane, made the best of our way to Cole Harbour at the water side, where we got a sculler for a penny to carry us over the water to St. Mary Overies' stairs, where we landed, and were safe enough.

Away we went to the fields, and sitting down on the grass, far enough out of the path, he pulled out the money. "Look here, Jack," said he, "did you ever see the like before?"

"No, never," I replied; and added very innocently, "Are we to have it all?" He replied, "We have it! Who should have it?"

“Why, must the man that lost it have none of it again? You said just now, you would let him have that other bill, which you called too big for you.”

My comrade laughed at me, and said, “You are but a little boy, but I thought you had not been such a child neither.” He then mightily gravely explained the thing to me thus,—That the bill of Sir Stephen Evans was a great bill for three hundred pounds, and told me that if he, who was such a poor boy, should venture to go for the money, they would presently conclude he had either found or stolen it, and therefore they would stop him, and take it away from him, and so bring him into trouble.

He divided the money into two exact parts, which was six pounds five shillings in each part, and then he took one pound five shillings from my part, and told me I should give him that for handsel.

“Well,” said I, “take it then, for I think you deserve it all.” However I took up the rest, saying, “What shall I do with this money now, for I have no where to put it?” “Have you no pockets,” said he. “Yes,” I replied, “but they are full of holes.”

Nothing could be more distressing than this money was to me. I carried it in my hand a good while. It was in gold, all but sixteen shillings. I mean it was in four guineas, and the sixteen shillings were more difficult to carry than the four guineas were. At last I sat down, and pulled off one of my shoes, and put the four guineas into that; but after I had walked awhile, my shoe hurt me so, I could not go on; therefore I was forced to sit down again, and take it out of my shoe, and carry it in my hand. Then I found a dirty linen rag in the street, and I took that up, and wrapped my money all together in the rag.

Well, I carried it home to my lodging in the glass-house. When I went to go to sleep, I knew not what to do with it; for I was afraid, if I let any of the boys I was with know of it, I should be robbed of it. I lay with it in my hand, and my hand in my bosom, but then sleep went from my eyes.

Every now and then dropping asleep, I dreamed that my money was lost, and started up like one affrighted. When, finding it fast in my hand, I tried to go to sleep again, but could not for a long while, and when I did, presently I would start again.

At last a fancy came into my head, that if I fell asleep, I should dream of my money, and talk of it in my sleep, and if I was overheard, they would pick it out of my bosom without waking me. After this thought came into my head, I could not sleep one wink more. Thus I passed

that night over in care and anxiety enough; and this I may say was the first night's rest I ever lost by the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches.

As soon as it was day, I got out of the hole we lay in, and rambled abroad in the fields towards Stepney. When I got there, I mused and considered what I should do with this money. Many a time I wished I had not had it, for after all my ruminating upon it, and what course I should take with it, I could not hit on any one thing, or any possible method to secure it. It perplexed me so, that at last I sat down and cried heartily.

When my crying was over, the case was the same: I had the money still, and what to do with it I could not tell. At last it came into my head that I would look out for some hole in a tree, and hide it there.

Big with this discovery, as I then thought

it, I looked round for a tree: but there were no trees there that seemed fit for my purpose; or if there were any that I wished to examine, the fields were so full of people, I was afraid they would see me if I went to hide it there. I thought every person that passed me eyed me as it were, and that two men in particular followed me to see what I intended to do.

This drove me farther off. I crossed the road at Mile-End, and, in the middle of the town, I went down a lane that leads to Bethnal-Green. When I had gone a little way down the lane, I found a foot-path over the fields, and in those fields several large trees that seemed very promising I thought.

I looked narrowly about, and at last I found one tree that had a little hole in it, pretty high, out of my reach. I climbed up the tree to get at it, and when I came

there, I put my hand in, and it appeared very secure.

I placed my treasure in the hollow of this tree, and was mighty well satisfied with what I had done. But, behold! I put my hand in again to lay it commodiously, as I thought, and of a sudden it slipped away from me. I found the tree was hollow, and my little parcel was fallen in quite out of my reach. How far it might go in I knew not, so that my money was quite gone, irrecoverably lost! There could be no room even to hope ever to see it again, for it was a vast great tree.

Young as I was, I now understood how senseless I had been, that I could not think of any way to keep my money, but I must come thus far to throw it into a hole where I could not reach it.

Well, I thrust my hand in quite up to my elbow, but no bottom was to be found, or any end of the hole or cavity. I got a

stick from off a tree, and thrust that in a great way; but it was all one. I cried, nay, roared out, I was in such a passion. I got down the tree, then up again, and again I thrust my hand in, till I scratched my arm, and made it bleed, crying all the while most violently.

Then I began to think I had not so much as a halfpenny left to buy a halfpenny roll, and I was hungry, which made me cry again. I went away in despair, crying and roaring like a little boy that had been whipped; then I went back again to the tree, and up the tree again; and thus I did several times.

The last time I climbed up the tree, I happened not to come down on the same side on which I went up and down before, but on the other side of the tree, and on the other side of the bank also. Behold! the tree had a great open place in the side of it, close to the ground, as old hollow

trees often have. I looked into the open place, and, to my inexpressible joy, there lay my money in the linen rag, all wrapped up just as I had put it into the hole. The tree being hollow all the way up, there had been some moss, or light stuff, which I had not judgment enough to know was not firm: this had given way when the money dropped out of my hand, and so it had slipped quite down at once.

I was but a child, and I rejoiced like a child, for I halloed quite out loud when I saw it.

I ran and snatched it up,—hugged and kissed the dirty rag an hundred times,—then danced and jumped about,—ran from one end of the field to the other:—in short, I knew not what I did at the time: much less can I now tell; though I shall never forget what a sinking grief it was to my heart when I thought I had lost my money, or what a flood of joy overwhelmed me when I got it again.

While I was in the first transport of my joy, I ran about, and, as I said, knew not what I did: but when that was over, I sat down, opened the linen rag the money was in, counted it, found it was all there, and then I fell a crying as savourily as I had done before when I thought I had lost it.

It ran in my head, young as I was, that it was a sad thing to take a man's bills away that were of so much value, and not to have any advantage from them either.

I remember that I ruminated very much on this, and though I did not understand it well, yet it lay upon my mind. I said every now and then to my companion,—
“Do let the gentleman have his bills
“again; do, pray do.” And so I teased him with “Do,” and “Pray, do,” till at last I cried about them.

One day, soon after this, he said to me,

“Colonel Jack, I have thought of a way how the gentleman may have his bills again, if you will be honest to me, as I was to you.”

I replied, “Indeed, Robin,” (for that was his name), “I will be very honest. Let me know how it is to be done, for I very much wish him to have his bills again.”

“Why,” said Robin, “I was told that he had left word at the clerk’s place in the Long-room, that he would give thirty pounds to any one who had the bills, and would restore them, and no questions should be asked of the person who brought them. Now, if you will go, like a poor innocent boy as you are, into the Long-room, and speak to the clerk, it may do. Tell him, if the gentleman will do as he promised, you believe you can tell him who has them. If they are civil to you, and willing to be as good as their words,

you shall have the letter-case, and give it them."

I told him I would go with all my heart. On which he said, "But, Colonel Jack, what, if they should take hold of you, and threaten to have you whipped, will you not discover me to them?"—"No," said I, "if they would whip me to death, I will not." And then he agreed to let me go.

Two things I was particularly armed with, which I resolved upon. They were, that the gentleman should have his bills again; and that, whatever happened to me, I was never to tell the name of my companion Robin. With these two pieces of honesty, for they were such in themselves, and with a manly heart, though a child's head, I went to the Custom-house the following morning.

As soon as I came to the place where the letter-case was stolen, I saw the clerk

sitting just where he had sat before ; and it ran in my head that he had sat there ever since ; but I knew no better. I went up, and stood at the writing-board, which goes up on that side of the room, and which I was just tall enough to lay my arms on.

While I stood there, one pushed me this way, and another that way, and the clerk began to look at me. Presently he called out to me, "What does that boy do there? Get you gone, Sirrah. Are you one of the rogues that stole the gentleman's letter-case?"

I loitered about near the clerk till I heard the clock strike twelve, and the room began to be thin of people. At last I saw that, though he still sat there writing, there was nobody at the board before him, as there had been all the morning. Then I came a little nearer, and presently I stood close to the board, as I had done when I first came.

He looked up from his paper, and, seeing me, said, "You have been up and down all the morning, Sirrah! what do you want? You have some business that is not very good, I doubt."

"No, I have not," replied I.

"No!" said he again. "It is well if you have not. Pray what business can you have in the Long-room, Sir; you are no merchant?"

Then I ventured to say, I wished to speak with him, if he would do me no harm for it.

On this he suddenly changed his manner, and spoke very kindly; and said,—
"I do thee harm, child?—What harm should I do thee?—What is it you wish to say? Do you know any thing of the gentleman's letter-case?"

I answered, but spoke so softly he could not hear me; on which he moved into a seat nearer me, and, opening a

little door, bid me come in to him, and he asked me again whether I knew any thing of the letter-case? I told him, I believed I did, but that indeed I had it not, nor had any hand in stealing it; and yet I knew a boy who had got it, and would have burnt it, if it had not been for me. And then I told him that I had heard say, the gentleman would be glad to have it again, and would give a good deal of money for it.

He replied, "He will so."

"But are you sure, Sir, the gentleman will not bring them into any trouble that shall return it?"

"No, you shall come to no harm, I will pass my word for it."

"Nor shall they make me bring other people into any trouble?"

"No, you shall not be asked the name of any body, nor tell who they are."

"I am but a poor boy, and I wish the

gentleman to have his bills ; and indeed, Sir, I did not take them away, nor I have not got them."

" But can you tell how the gentleman may have them?"

" If I can get them, I will bring them to you to-morrow morning."

" Can you not do it to-night?"

" I believe I may, if I knew where to come."

" Come to my house, child."

" I do not know where you live."

" Come along with me, and I will shew you."

He then took me with him into Tower-street, where he shewed me his house, and ordered me to come there at five o'clock in the evening ; which accordingly I did, and carried the letter-case with me. I was taken into a room, where this gentleman was sitting, and he asked me if I had brought the book?

I now began to cry, and said,—“ You promised you would not hurt me.”

“ Do not be afraid, child, I will not hurt thee,—poor boy,—nobody shall hurt thee.”

I then gave him the letter-case; and he went out of the room, and soon returned with a gentleman, who I found was the owner of it: he shewed it to him, and asked if that was his letter-case.

The gentleman said it was; and asked me if all the bills were in it? I told him I heard there was one gone, but I believed there were all the rest there.”

He opened the letter-case, and found every thing safe and fair, nothing defaced or diminished, except the small check, which they knew before was gone; and the owner said all was right; on which the other reminded him that he was security for me to have the money; on which the merchant gave me thirty pounds

in good golden guineas. He told the money into my hand, and when he had done, he asked me if it was right. I said I did not know, but I believed it was.—“Why,” said he, with some surprise, “cannot you tell it?”

“No, I never saw so much money in my life.”

“Why then did you tell me, you believed it was right?”

“Because I believed you would not give it me wrong.”

“Poor child!” said the gentleman from the Custom-house, “thou knowest but little of the world indeed. What art thou?”

“I am a poor boy;” (and when I said this I fell a crying).

“What is your name? But stop, I forgot I promised I would not ask your name; therefore you need not tell me.”

“My name is Jack.”

“ You have some other name besides Jack, have not you ?”

“ Yes, they call me Colonel Jack.”

“ But have you no other name ?”

“ No.”

“ Is your father or mother alive ?”

“ No, my father is dead.”

“ Where is your mother, then ?”

“ I never had a mother ; I had a nurse, but she was not my mother.”

The other gentleman, the merchant, on hearing my simple answers, said, “ I dare swear this boy was not the thief that stole my bills.”

“ Poor child ! What dost thou do for a living ?”

“ I go of errands for the people in Rosemary-lane.”

“ And what dost do for a lodging at night ?”

“ I lie at the Glass-house at night.”

“ Why, what do you lie on at the Glass-house ?”

“ The ground, and sometimes a little straw, or upon the warm ashes.”

Here the gentleman from the Custom-house said, “ This poor child is enough to make a man weep for the miseries of human nature, and be thankful for himself : he brings tears into my eyes.”

They asked me a great many more questions, to which I answered in my childish way as well as I could, and they seemed pleased with what I said ; but at last they let me go away with a heavy pocket, and I can assure you not a light heart.

When I went away, I rambled about the streets for two hours or more, and then I went back again, and sat down at the gentleman's door ; and I cried as long as I had any moisture in my head to make tears of, but never knocked at the door.

I had not sat long, I suppose, before some of the family observed me, for a maid-servant came out and talked to me, but I said little to her. At length the gentleman heard I was there, and had me called in. The owner of the bills was gone, and the gentleman was sitting alone in his parlour.

He asked me what I staid for; and I told him, I had not staid there all the while, for I had been gone a great while, and was come again.

“And what do you cry so for? I hope you have not lost the money, have you?”

“No, I have not lost it; but I am afraid I shall.”

“And does that make you cry?”

I told him yes; for that I knew I should not be able to keep it, and that they would cheat me of it.

“They, who? What sort of gangs of people art thou with?” said he.

I told him they were all boys, but very wicked boys, thieves and pick-pockets. "Such," said I, "as stole the letter case,—a sad pack, I cannot abide them."

When the gentleman heard me say that, he suddenly resolved, that he would not desert me. "It seems to be the finger of Providence, Jack," said he, "that has brought you back again to my house. It was with great unwillingness that I let you go the first time: but I was ashamed to confess what I was afraid was a weakness, before the merchant whose bills you restored. He would have said to me, *What are you mad? Will you take a thief under your wing?* and now, if he was here, I would answer him, *Yes, Sir, I will.*—You have kept very bad company, Jack, and I doubt it will cost you many a pang to unlearn all the bad lessons they have

taught you; but there is some good that I can perceive still working within you, under all your dirt and your rags; and I am determined to give you the chance, which your father, if he had not been a brute, as well as a libertine, would from the first have taken care you should have had."

The mere notion that I looked upon the first friend I ever had, seemed to enlarge my views in a moment, and make me understand things I knew nothing of before. I thought of his professing a resolution to be kind to me as a mighty benefit; but I afterwards found that I did not conceive the tenth part of the benefit or the deliverance it was to be to me. I had hitherto lived without religion, without any recollection of the great Being to whom we owe our existence, and who maintains all things we see in the beautiful order we find

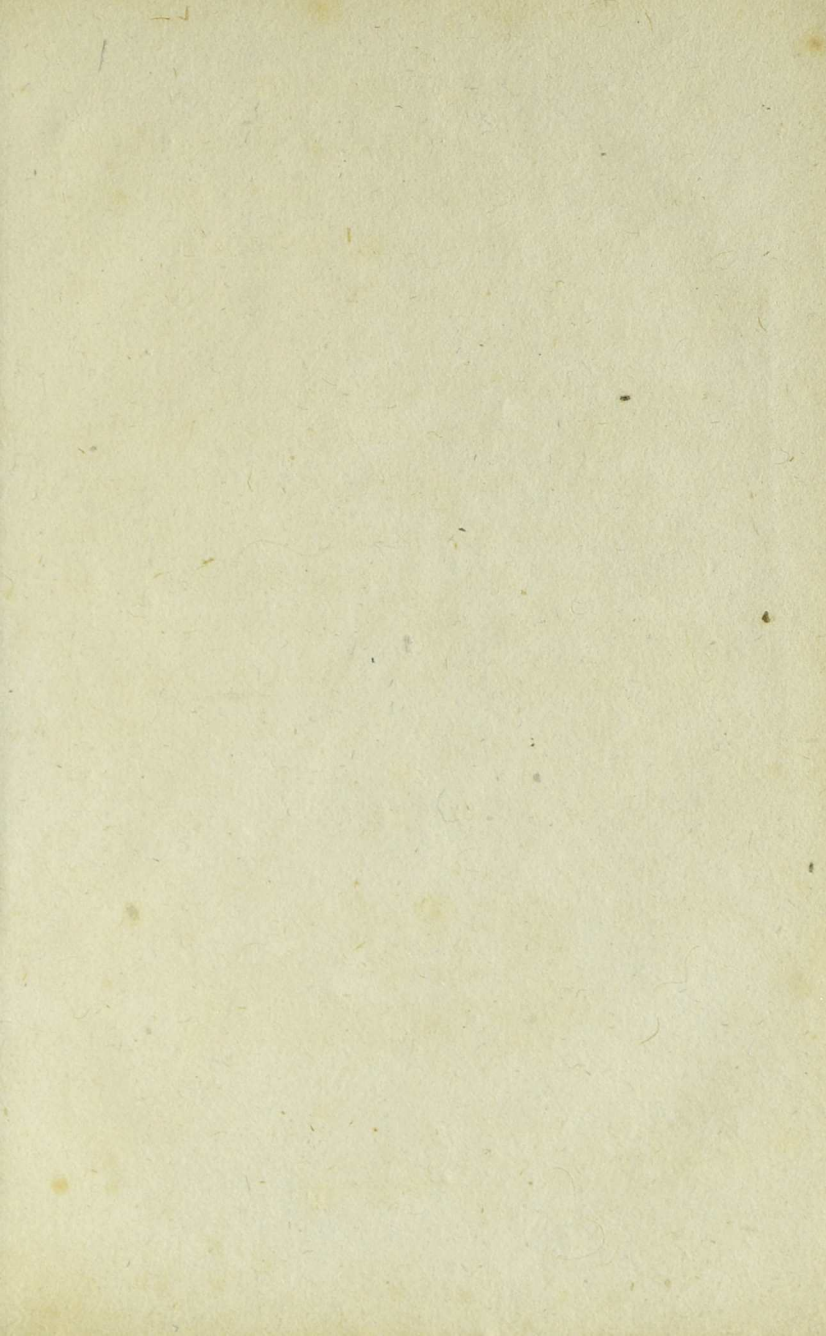
them: I had scarcely ever been within-side of a church; ragged boys, such as I was, are driven away by the beadle, just as he would drive away a dog. It was the new way in which I now learned to view all things, that kept me steady to my resolutions. I sometimes found the confinement and the labour necessary to a boy who at fifteen had every thing to learn, very trying to me; but I conquered my impatience, when I recollected not merely my only earthly friend, the gentleman at the Custom-house, but that invisible Friend, who sustained all my steps, who was with me wherever I went, and comforted me under every discouragement. He had been with me, and had observed me always, but I had not perceived him. The thought of him now served to purify my heart, to elevate my sentiments, and fix my resolution.

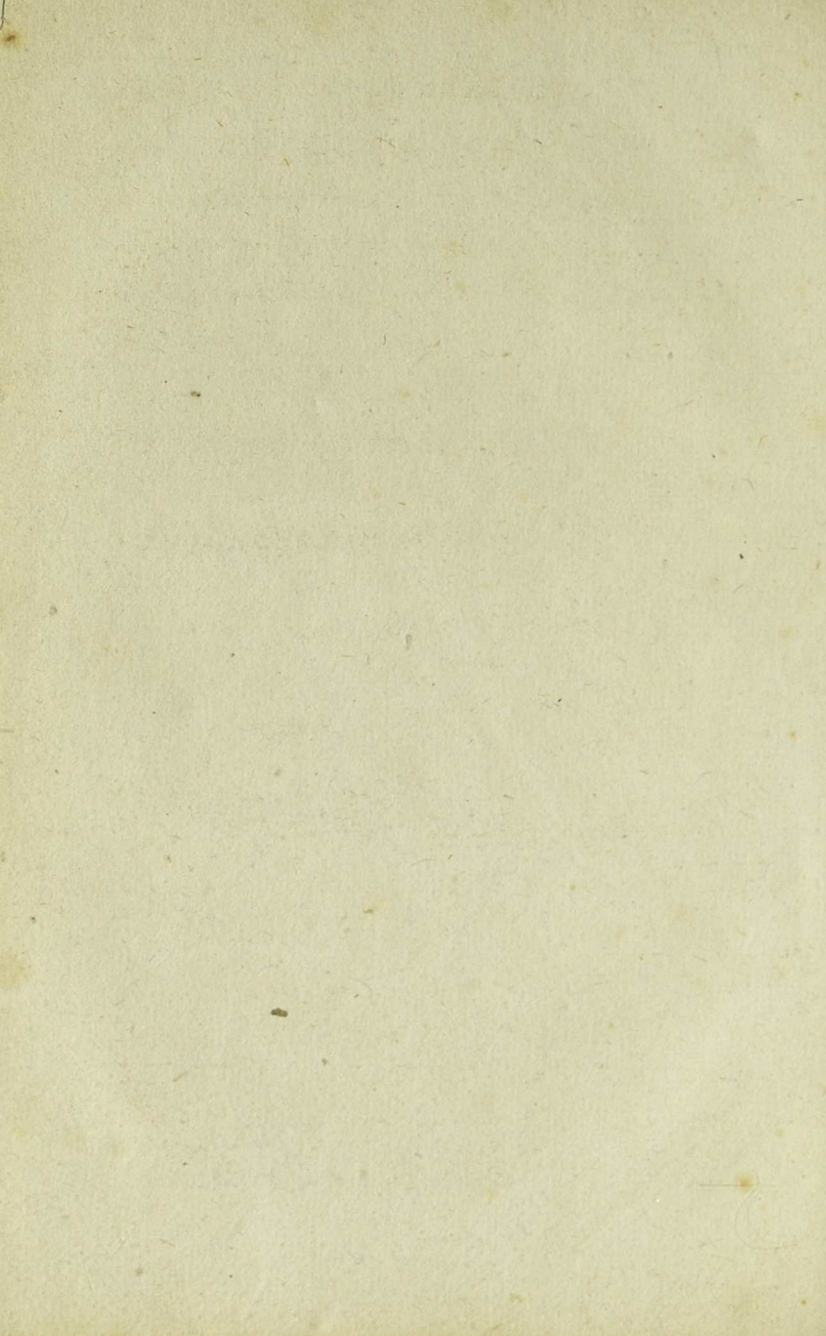
I could not endure the bare imagination of going back to my former companions and my former ignorance, and to the living loosely and at random, and without God in the world.

This was the first step of my good fortune. It was surely some good angel that suggested it to me to return again to this gentleman's house. He had been surprised with the innocence of my tale, as well as the misery of my condition, and he resolved to do something for me. Thus it was the impulse of an honest principle in returning these bills, that first drew me from the depth of my forlorn condition.— But I am writing here the history of my uneducated youth that never knew the pity or instruction of kindred or parent, and not of my better condition afterward, which grew out of a wonderful incident that the friendless and ignorant vagabond can

hardly expect to meet with. I am desirous that children hereafter should learn from my example how much they owe to the kindness of the parents that watch over them, and to the early habits of learning and a regular education. I had had many companions at the glass-house, vagabonds, pickpockets, and thieves; I had had two brothers, as I called them; these as well as myself entered early upon evil courses; and of the whole set and society, I was the only one that was reclaimed.







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