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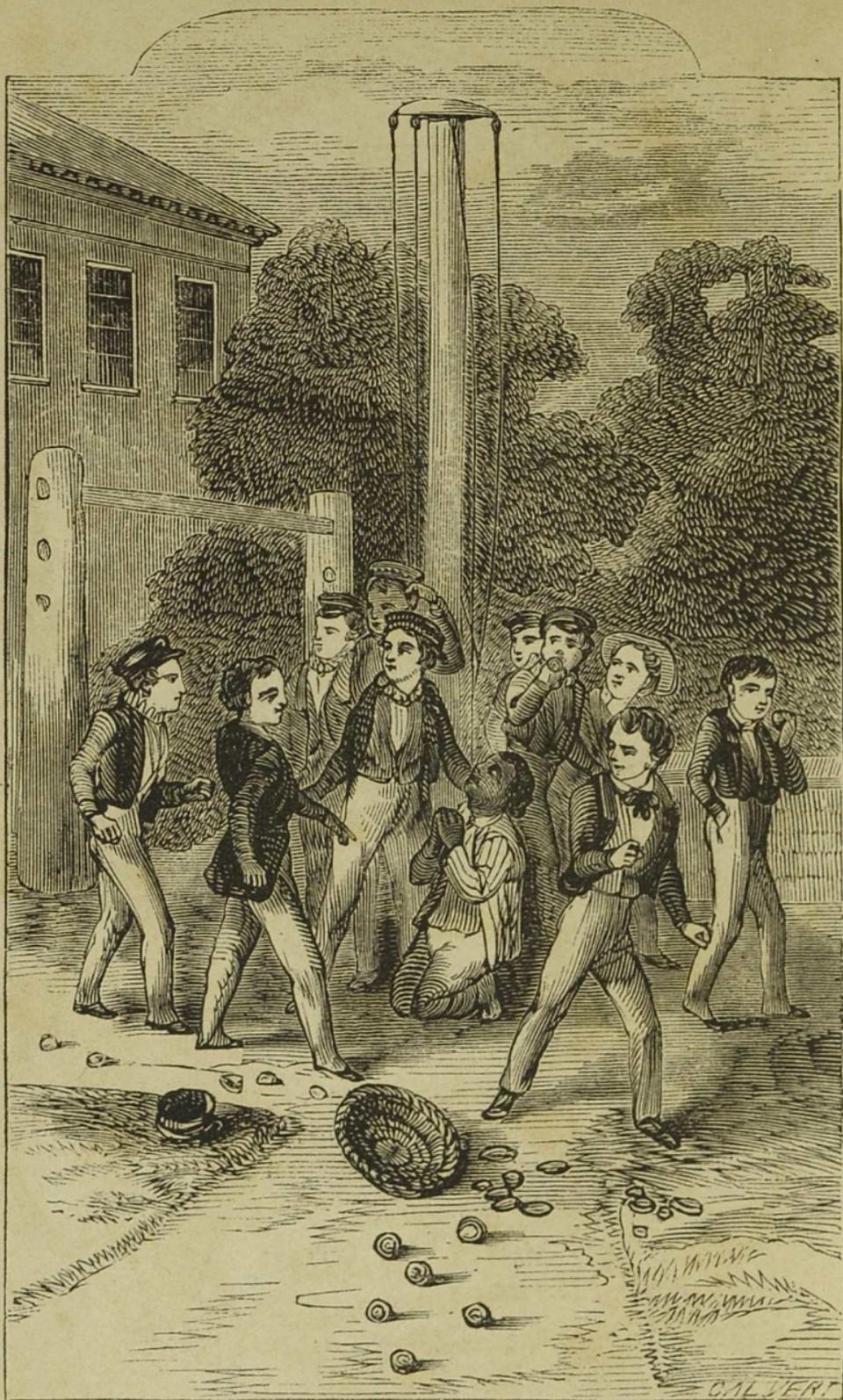
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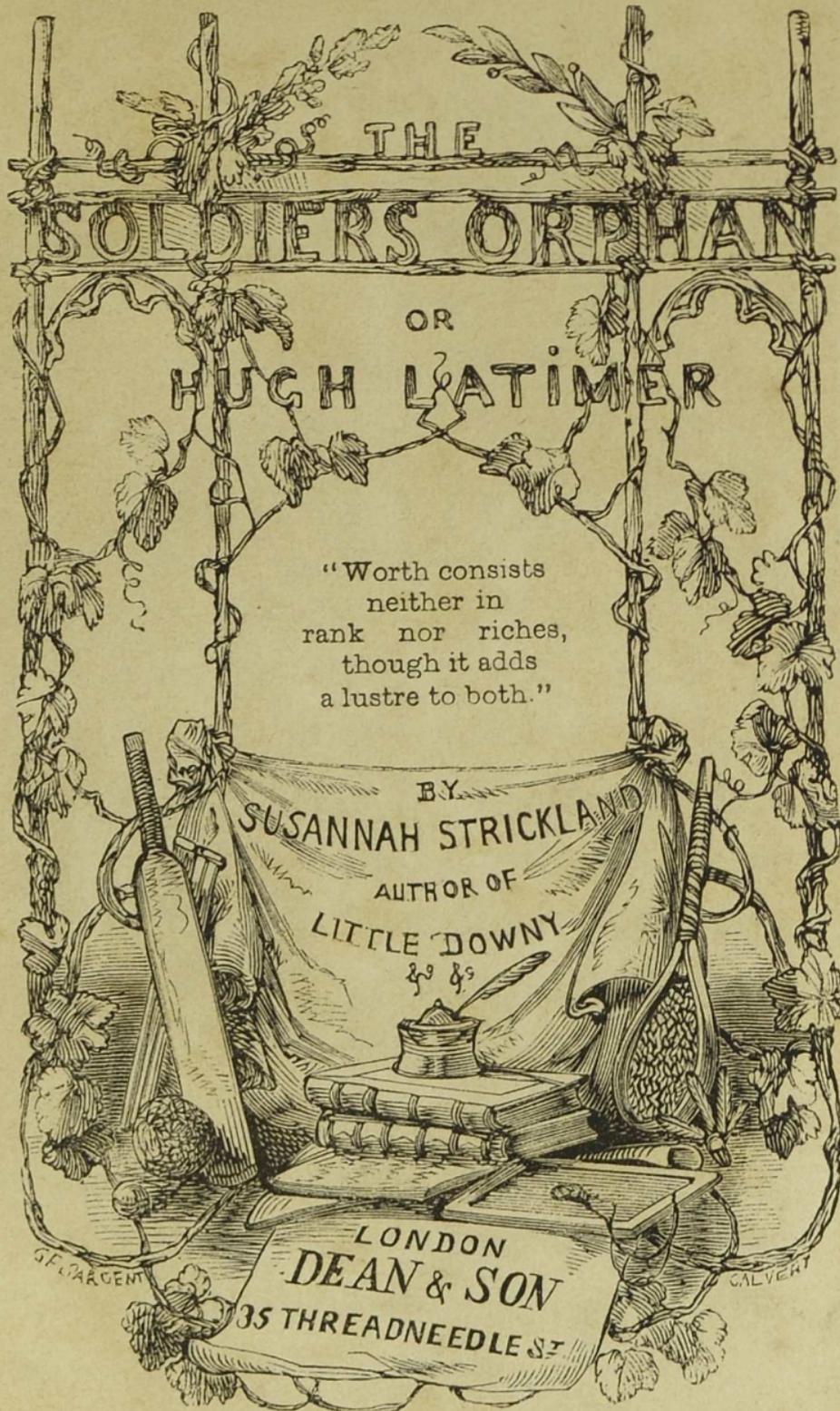
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THE
SOLDIERS ORPHAN

OR
HUGH LATIMER

"Worth consists
neither in
rank nor riches,
though it adds
a lustre to both."

BY
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AUTHOR OF
LITTLE DOWNY

S.S.

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CALVERT

THE SOLDIER'S ORPHAN;

OR,

HUGH LATIMER.

“



W HAT is the matter, that you sit away from the fire, moping in that dark corner, Hugh?" said Mrs.

Latimer to her son; a fine, tall youth, of twelve years old, "Nothing," replied Hugh, without raising his eyes, which were quite full of tears, from the book he was studying.

“But my dear child, you cannot see, where you are sitting; come here, and tell your mother who has offended you.”

“Dear mother, I do not like to tell you,” returned Hugh, without moving from his former position.

“I fear,” resumed Mrs. Latimer, “that you do not like going to school; but you should remember, if your lessons are more difficult than those you learned when under my care, that time will reward you for the pains you now take.”

“I like learning very well, but not learning at that school,” replied her son.

“And why not?”

“Dearest mother, I cannot tell you; but I shall always hate it.”

“I am afraid you are a very idle,

wayward boy," said his mother; "I had not expected this, after the many promises you made me that you would attend the better to your studies."

"It is not learning that I dislike," said Hugh, as he again turned his eyes towards his suspected lessons.

Mrs. Latimer was vexed that her son should appear so obstinate; and turning to his uncle, an old veteran soldier, who was seated by the fire, leaning on a crutch, she said, "I cannot think what is the matter with Hugh; I fear he has played truant, or joined his school-fellows in some mischief; and that it is the chastisement which he merits, that he is anticipating with so many tears."

When Hugh found that his mother suspected him of misconduct, his grief redoubled, and he sobbed aloud.

“Leave the boy to me, sister,” said old Mark Latimer; “if he has done any thing amiss, I am sure he will tell his poor old uncle.”

Shortly after, Mrs. Latimer left the room, and the old soldier, who had been, for some time, watching his nephew's changing countenance, called him to his side.

“Latimer, have you committed any fault? now tell me, truly; for you know, when you speak the truth, you need not fear punishment from your kind mother, much less from me.”

“I have done nothing wrong, that I know of,” replied his nephew.

“Why do you cry, then? if it is no crime you have committed, you need not be ashamed of telling me.”

Latimer looked wistfully up in his uncle's face: “Uncle, I do, indeed,

love you and mother dearly; but I do not like to live in a shop."

Mr. Latimer now looked surprised, and rather angry. "And pray, sir, what are your reasons for despising that which maintains you and your mother?"

Hugh looked very foolish, but, after a short silence, he replied "Before I went to that hateful school, I did not know the difference between my mother's keeping a shop, or living in any other house. I used to be as happy as the day was long; sitting by the little counter, and watching my mother wait on the customers; but now, I would rather die than live in a shop,—I hate the very sight of it."

"Then, I suppose," returned his uncle, very seriously, "that you hate your poor mother, and me; I am glad,

however, that you had the grace not to tell her the cause of your tears. Pray, who taught you these distinctions of rank."

"Oh! uncle, all the boys laugh at me, and mock me.—They call me a beggar's brat, because I am on the foundation of the school, and my mother does not pay a large sum of money yearly for my learning, as their parents do: when I come into the playground, they whisper amongst themselves so loud, that I hear them, 'Here comes old Mother Latimer's son! the woman who sells threads, needles, and tape. Instead of sending him amongst *gentlemen*, she had better bind him 'prentice to a tailor; then he can be supplied with thread from the shop.' Oh! uncle, I am so wretched, I hate my life."

“My dear boy,” said his uncle, “these trials may be somewhat severe for a child; and there are too many men who have not fortitude enough to perform their duty, because they are sneered at by the weak and foolish. But, Hugh Latimer, if you pursue virtue, and steadfastly adhere to the paths of truth, even if you were a beggar’s brat, you would, by this course, gain the esteem of the good and sensible part of mankind, and need not fear the ridicule of those who wantonly commit crime, because they think their rank shields them.”

“But, dear uncle, will not you take me from that hateful school?”

“Certainly not. A friend, by great interest, got you placed on the foundation of Mr. Vernon’s free-school, and your poor mother can scarcely afford

to clothe, much less to pay the expenses of schooling for you. Now, Latimer, let me ask you one question: Which would you prefer, to gain your living in this shop, or as a gentleman?"

"As a gentleman," returned Hugh, indignant at the idea of the shop."

"Then," resumed his uncle, "you must subdue this false pride; and as those who laugh at you will neither keep company with you, nor provide for your wants, would you not be very foolish to give up an advantage, to please them?"

Now Hugh looked very simple, and hardly knew what answer to make; he stood by his uncle's side, with his arms folded, and his eyes bent on the ground.

"Come," said his good uncle, "I see you repent of your folly; bring your

stool, and, whilst your mother is absent, I will give you a short sketch of the hardships that your brave father and I had to go through, long before we were your age."

Hugh gladly took his seat by his uncle's side; and after pausing a few minutes, Mark Latimer related the following story:—

"Your grandfather was a farmer in Essex, and I have heard him say, of a good family, reduced in circumstances; yet, though poor, he contrived to maintain his family respectably. But misfortunes are incidental to every station of life. One bitter frosty night, when we were all in bed and asleep, a fire broke out in my father's premises; nor could its dreadful progress be stopped till every thing was consumed.

All the unthrashed corn, the produce of which was to have been our whole year's support, and to have paid my poor father's rent, was entirely lost: but, what was far worse, he was so shockingly burnt in striving to save his children and property from the devouring element, that he was carried on a hurdle to the next village, and never survived that dreadful night.

“Hugh Latimer! I, like you, was but a child; but I shall never forget the screams of my poor mother, when she found her husband was a corpse, and herself and children exposed to the piercing cold.

“Some kind neighbours took us in for the night; but as all the little property my father had been saving for years, as a provision for his children, was lost in the flames, we had no ex-

pectation but of going to the poor-house. Fortunately for us, my father's landlord was a kind-hearted man. He was so good as to raise a few pounds amongst his friends, to clothe us, and to bury my poor father. He likewise gave my mother a small hovel on his estate, rent free, to live in.

“There were five of us, and I, who was the eldest of the party, but a boy of eleven years of age; yet, with these hands, I contrived to earn the scanty pittance of bread for my distressed mother and family; and if I saw a smile upon her sorrowful countenance, I was more than repaid. I not only worked the live-long day, but often till midnight, when the moon was clear, in digging peat off the cold moors.

“When I had reached my sixteenth year, I entirely supported the family,

with the assistance of your dear father, whom I loved with almost parental affection, for he was many years younger than myself. You complain, Latimer, who have never known the want of bread, or of a necessary comfort.—I have known a few potatoes serve us from week's end to week's end; yet I never once murmured, though I might have gone to service, and by that means, have lived well; but I preferred staying at home with my mother and my half-famished brothers and sisters, who looked up to me as to a father.

“Like you, I was proud, and thought I remained independent whilst I worked in the open fields. Your father had great natural abilities, and a spirit that would have done honour to any station. Some one showed him how to join letters together; and in the dark

winter nights, when we could not see to work, he not only taught himself to read, but me to write. Ah! my child! you want for no comfort, though you are poor. We never had a fire by which to warm our half-frozen limbs. The poor girls used to get up at four o'clock of a cold winter's morning, to spin by the feeble light of a lamp; and I, though I abhorred the employment, mended the shoes, and botched the clothes of the neighbouring peasants. This was the life I led, till I was nineteen years of age; when my unremitting toil was put a stop to, and the dear beings for whom I had unremittingly worked, were swept away from me by the small pox.

“My mother died first, and then the tender girls; for we had not the

means to provide them with the common necessaries of life.

“I thought my heart would have broken quite, the first time my brother Hugh and I sat down alone, in our now miserable hovel.

“All my labours then seemed light; all the cares that I had endured, nothing. Oh! how I missed, in that dreary moment, the cheerful prating of the dear girls, over their spinning-wheels. Even the poor half-starved cat looked so forlorn and miserable, that the sight of her renewed our sorrow.

“Your father, too, wept bitterly: at length, starting up, he cried, ‘I cannot live thus; Mark, there is a regiment of soldiers passing through the village, on their way for embarkation,—I will be a soldier.’

“He rushed out of the house; I followed, to persuade him not to go; but could not overtake him until he had enlisted;—and a few moments afterwards saw me follow his example.”

“Then my father was a soldier!” exclaimed Latimer, eagerly starting up.

“He was; and as brave a one as ever went into battle. It is useless to tell you all the trials we went through in our profession; the life of a common soldier, on actual service in a foreign country, is a continued series of privation, suffering, and hardship, too dreadful to be described.

“After many years of hard service, both in Germany and Spain, we each attained the rank of sergeant. My brother, like his brave commander, the Earl of Peterborough, possessed a

daring courage; he thrice saved the life of that great nobleman, at the imminent risk of his own; and was presented with a commission, as a reward for his services.

“Here he had new mortifications to encounter; the officers, considering him beneath them in birth, would not associate with him; but your father had ambition, and a spirit that, had he lived, would have made his way in spite of opposition. Such a spirit his son ought to possess.”

Here Hugh blushed deeply; and his uncle continued:—

“From those who looked down on him, your father kept himself proudly aloof; and in the performance of his duty, he held in contempt the sneers of his less high-minded comrades.

“It was in Spain that he married

your mother, who was the daughter of a lieutenant in our company; and her father never forgave her for the choice she had made. You were born in the camp, amidst the horrors of war; and, whilst yet a little wailing infant, your mother had the anguish of beholding her husband brought into the tent a mangled corpse. I thought she would have died; but the human frame is firmer under the pressure of misfortunes, than under the inroads of disease. Our officers, in compassion to Mrs. Latimer's situation, raised a subscription amongst themselves, which enabled her to return to England; and, with the help of a small pension, she was glad to open this shop, to keep herself and her ungrateful little boy from starving."

The tears sprung to the eyes of Hugh Latimer, who was not a little affected by the sad story of his father's sufferings. "And when did you, my dear uncle, leave the army?"

"Not till after the battle of Almanza, in which I lost my leg, and was thereby rendered unfit for service. I have little doubt but that I might have gained a commission, had I thought fit to persevere; but after the death of my brother, I was careless of what became of me. Like you, my dear boy, I was too proud to bear the insolence of those who actually were my inferiors in merit: You see what my false pride has brought me to; instead of living thus poorly with your dear mother, I might have been the means of supporting you both in plenty, and have gloried in beholding

my little Hugh equal his regretted father in worth."

"And he shall do so, yet," cried Hugh Latimer, flinging his arms round the veteran's neck: and wiping away the tears which, in spite of himself, glistened in Mark Latimer's eyes. "You supported my father in his youth, and I will learn night and day, that I may be able to maintain my dear uncle in his old age."

"Bless you! bless you! my boy; and a good and gracious God will add *His* to *my* feeble blessing, if you do your duty, and walk uprightly in that station of life to which it has pleased his Almighty providence to call you," replied his uncle, folding Latimer to his heart.

At this moment, his mother entered the room, when Hugh, flinging himself

into her arms, kissed her a thousand times, exclaiming, "Dearest mother, I will be a good boy: I will never repine at going to school again."

Mrs. Latimer embraced him tenderly. "I suppose, brother, I have to thank you for the change in my little boy's sentiments?"

A melancholy smile passed over the veteran's fine features, as he resumed his pipe, and Hugh returned to his tasks with double diligence.

The next morning, Latimer was one of the first at school; as he passed through the play-ground, he was greeted, as usual, by the boarders, with, "Well, Latimer: how many yards of tape have you cut this morning?"—"How many balls of worsted have you wound?"—"How many pounds of plums have you weighed

up?"—Whilst another, with what he meant to be wit, said with a sly glance—"and how many have you ate?"—"Why, child," cried a third,—“you can hardly have had time to learn your lessons, as the old woman, your mother, keeps no shop-boy.”

“Oh, you forget,” said Mat Jackson, that limping old jockey, with his fur cap, and his fierce dark eyes.”

At this insult, on the wounds his uncle had received in the service of his country, the indignation of Latimer could no longer be restrained; and darting forward, he knocked the boy down,—a roar of laughter immediate-burst from his comrades.

“Master Jackson,” exclaimed Latimer,—“you are beneath contempt, and I am sorry that I have defiled my hands with striking you.”

Now Jackson was a great coward; and though he could sneer, he dared not fight, and on this score, he was glad to pocket all his affronts, and slowly rising from the ground, he wiped away, with the greatest unconcern, the dirt off the knees of his trousers.

“Never mind, Mat,” cried a taller boy, “the fellow would be glad of your buying a farthing cake of his beggarly mother.”

“Nay,” returned Hugh, “if she were indeed a beggar, the poorest descendant of the noble house of Latimer, shall be superior to a Smith, or a Jackson!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” reiterated his insulting compeers, “see what a long pair of ears our ass has got,”—“I wonder,” said Smith, “where the child learned these quality airs; not certainly,

whilst he waited behind his mother's counter."

"There, Smith," replied Jackson, "I wonder how you can waste your words on the little plebeian; why do not you leave to his own sublime meditations, the noble descendent of the house of Latimer?"

Just then the school-bell rang, and the scholars hurried to their respective forms.

Whilst in school, Latimer heard one of the boys whisper to another that sat next him—"Do you see that handsome boy who is talking to Mr. Vernon? his uncle brought him here yesterday, to be a parlour boarder. They say he is heir to a great fortune."

The other boy raised his eyes, and Hugh could not refrain from the like curiosity; they fell on a tall gentle-

manly youth of his own age; the noble expression of whose open countenance, more forcibly declared his rank, than the wealth that he heard he was entitled to.—“Happy boy,” thought Hugh, “how will you be courted, and admired; not sneered at, and insulted, as I am!”

Latimer had never been reprimanded for neglecting his lessons, during the half year he had been at school; but always got the praises of the second master, under whose care he was. Mr. Manby was an excellent young man, and rewarded his scholars according to their merit, having been himself educated on the foundation of that school.

Latimer happened to say his lessons that day extremely well, and Mr. Manby, as he left the school turned to the

young gentlemen of his class, saying,—
“I wish, gentlemen, that you would follow the example of Latimer; he is the best boy in the third form.”—
“Y-e-s,” exclaimed the head boy of that form, with so strong a sneer, that the insult passed through the whole class.—“Never mind, Latimer,” said the good usher, (who too well understood their meaning,) as he closed the door after him—“you do your duty; and I am happy to say, that you are an ornament to this school.”

Directly the masters were gone, the whole group burst into an insulting laugh—and Jackson said, loud enough for the rest to hear—“Shall we hang him up, by cotton, thread, or tape? but I fear the ornament is too heavy to be suspended by any thing but rope-yarn.”

Their tasks being completed, the great bell summoned the happy boys to the play-ground; but Hugh felt too wretched to play, and too low spirited to return home directly; seating himself, therefore, under a tree, apart from the rest, he watched the groups of boys that leaped exultingly past him, some with hoops, some with bowls, and some engaged in the active sport of leap-frog; whilst others, older and more mercenary, were employed in changing away trinkets and trifles, which their kind friends had given them at parting; this was a practice Hugh thought so contemptible, that no persuasion could ever induce him to join in it. Whilst his eyes wandered from boy to boy, he felt some one pull his sleeve, and on turning round, he was not a little surprised to see the hand-

some youth he had noticed in school.—“My name is Montrose Grahame,” said the young gentleman, holding out his hand at the same time;—“I have shaken hands with all the gentlemen in the school but you; and I would rather be friends with you, than with any of the rest.”

“Not when you know me,” replied Hugh, drawing back.

“And why not?” returned the other.—“How, do you mean to refuse my hand?”

“I am poor—I am not a gentleman!” replied Latimer, a deep blush suffusing his cheeks.

“You have no knowledge of Montrose Grahame, if you think that poverty could alter his opinion.”

The eyes of Latimer kindled with pleasure.

“Master Grahame, I have been in this school nearly half a year, and you are the first person that ever spoke kindly to me, or without insult.”

“Then I will be your friend,” cried the impetuous Montrose,—“I will fight for you; I will make them treat you with the respect that I am sure you deserve.”

Latimer shook his head.

“You know what I heard Mr. Manby said of you, as he quitted the school-room.”

“You likewise heard the sneers of my gentlemen compeers,” returned Latimer.

“I did, and should like to know their reasons.”

Hugh fixed his eyes on the ground, and remained silent.

“Have I not told you, I shall not love you the less for being poor?” said Montrose tenderly.

“I do not doubt your goodness,” replied Hugh sorrowfully: “you might not mind poverty, but your rank is high: and before those in the same station as yourself, you might not like to own acquaintance with a boy whose mother keeps a small shop: and, Montrose Grahame, the blood of a Latimer is too proud to be reckoned a disgrace to any one.”

“You shall never be reckoned so by me,” returned the other; “I honour you for your spirit, I love you for your independence; from this moment we are friends, on the word and the hand of a Grahame.”

Latimer, the happy Latimer, returned with warmth the friendly pres-

sure of the high-spirited boy, and that day he returned home, exulting in his good fortune, forgetting all his former mortifications, in the delightful idea of having found, at last, a friend.

Weeks and months passed away, and Montrose Grahame and Hugh Latimer became inseparable companions; together they pursued their studies, together drew plans of future glory; whilst both being boys of high carriage, their comrades dared not easily affront them, though they gave them the nick name, amongst themselves, of Balaam and his Ass.

Now Montrose felt these things quite as keenly as Latimer; he hated to be laughed at; an insult addressed to him was followed by a word and a blow; but the blow was generally struck first, and his anger spoke af-

terwards, and though truly noble, he had many faults. He loved Latimer, and shielded him from ill-usage, but when engaged in conversation with gentlemen of his own rank, he felt a secret mortification in the lowly station of his young friend, and though he was far too generous to show it openly, he did not feel it the less.

One afternoon, which was a holiday, as Montrose and Latimer were walking up and down the play ground, arm in arm together, their attention was suddenly drawn to a black youth, who entered the bounds with a basket of cakes on his head.

“Who buy, who buy?—Little massa, buy cake of poor Blackey?”

It happened to be the hour when the day-scholars generally dispersed to their respective homes, and they

were gathered together in an idle ring, discussing the manner in which they intended spending the afternoon, preparatory to their leaving the play-ground. Idleness has well been denominated the root of all evil: the minds of young people, when unoccupied, are apt to waste their energies in unprofitable thoughts, which often lead to the commission of mischievous and cruel actions.

The black youth had scarcely entered the ground, before he was surrounded by a group of these idlers, who unfeelingly remarked on the dingy colour of his skin, and asked him a thousand trifling and impertinent questions.

One foolishly said, that "He ought to go to school, to learn grammar:" another, "That a magpie could speak

better English:" but Jackson, more alert, than the rest, cried out, "Come, boys, we have no money to lay out this afternoon, so let's expel him."

Then springing suddenly past the negro, he dexterously struck the arm which upheld the basket he carried on his head, and the whole contents were instantly strewed on the ground; cakes, plums, and oranges were scattered promiscuously into the dirt; and those which fell on the grass, were seized upon and instantly demolished by the unthinking boys, who never paused to consider the cruelty and dishonesty of their conduct.

What was then sport to them, was not so to the feelings of the poor negro. He stood for some moments stupified with amazement, gazing with vacant eyes upon the wreck of his

property trampled thus wantonly beneath their feet. At length the full sense of his misfortune suddenly rushed upon his mind; uttering a wild and piercing cry, he sank down upon the ground, and burying his head between his knees, wept aloud.

Some of the young gentlemen, whose hearts were not yet steeled to this pathetic appeal to their humanity, appeared sorry for the mischief they had done, and were ashamed of their past conduct; but the promoters of this cruel frolic, not in the least abashed, now tried, by every method they could suggest, to induce the negro to leave the play-ground; but the poor fellow was so overwhelmed with grief, that he appeared perfectly deaf to their arguments; and when they

had recourse to threats, he only redoubled his lamentations.

“Who has been so cruel as to ill-treat this poor black?” cried Montrose, advancing with Latimer to the scene of action.—“Surely, gentlemen, you cannot have been guilty of such a base and cowardly action?”

“It can be no business of yours,” cried Jackson, reddening; “we have not been ill-treating you: so I think you had better look to your own affairs, and not trouble your head with what does not concern either you or your minion.”

“You are mistaken, sir,” returned Montrose, his indignation burning on his cheek—“humanity compels me to take part with an unfortunate and suffering fellow-creature. How hard must be that heart,” he continued,

with increasing warmth, "who would wantonly augment his sorrows! Is it not enough that he is an exile from his own country, and, perhaps, under the control of a tyrannical master, but that you, unworthy and unfeeling that you were, should add another pang to his heart, and increase the miseries of his hard fate? Let those who have been foremost in perpetrating this base, unmanly action, look well to themselves. My arm is strong, and his wrongs may not go unpunished."

Fearing that Grahame should realize his threat, the culprits, one by one, stole away from the spot, leaving the black with his brave defender and Hugh Latimer.

"Where do you live, my poor fellow?" said the latter, gently touching the negro on the shoulder; but the

black could not answer his questions for weeping. "Come, dry your tears, Blacky," he continued, "we are your friends, and should be very sorry to increase your present distress."

The black raised his large eyes, red and bloodshot with weeping, mournfully to Hugh's face—"Alas! alas! good massa, poor Blackey has no friend." The tears rushed into the eyes of Montrose, as the unfortunate negro again renewed his pathetic lamentations.

"How I wish I had not spent my week's allowance in such nonsense as I did yesterday!" he said: "you told me, Hugh, I should soon repent of my folly. Can you lend me any money?"

"I have but six-pence," returned Hugh, producing the sum as he spoke from his pocket; "it will go but a

short way in replenishing this poor creature's basket; but if it were a guinea, he should be equally welcome to it." Then, turning to the black, who had wiped away his tears, he said—

"Here is a trifle for you, Blackey: I wish it were more, with all my heart."

"No! no!—good little massa—Pedro no take money. Massa sorry, Massa cry for poor black boy. He love kind hearts better than silver."

"The generosity of this poor creature," said Montrose, greatly affected, "ought to be a lesson to those who have so cruelly ill-treated him." Then, turning to the negro, he said,—"Pedro, whom do you serve?"

"Massa Isaac, Jew,—live there," returned Pedro, pointing down the street, "me no go home. He beat

with great stick, give no eat—speak hard words, and make poor Blackey cry;” and here the unhappy negro burst into tears.

“I have thought of an excellent plan,” cried the impetuous Montrose: “I will take this poor lad with me to my uncle, Colonel Grahame, and ask him to indemnify him for the loss he has sustained. He is too good a man, and loves me too well to refuse so reasonable a request.”—Then, motioning Latimer and the negro to follow him, he was on the point of leaving the school-bounds, when Hugh laid his hand on his arm, and detained him—

“Consider, my dear friend, what you are about. If you leave the school-bounds without a note from one of the ushers, you will be severely reprimanded by Mr. Vernon: and you have

too many enemies among the boarders, for your conduct to pass unnoticed."

"A fig for Mr. Vernon, his rod, and his bounds!" returned Montrose, putting his hand on the top of the rails which enclosed the play-ground, and springing lightly over: "If I can alleviate this poor fellow's distress, I will not mind his anger. Come, Latimer! come Pedro! follow your leader."

And away ran the ardent boy as quickly as his legs could carry him down the opposite street, followed by the negro and Latimer, who would not desert him, though he feared the result which must accrue from this daring infringement of the rules of the school.

At length, pausing before a large mansion in one of the principal streets,

Montrose gave a quick double rap at the door.

“That is my young master's knock, I'll answer for him,” said the old porter, as he unclosed the door.

“Is my uncle at home?” asked Montrose eagerly.

“Yes, Master Grahame—to you. But I should not think he has any great desire to see the strange people with you: and I shall not admit them, till I receive further orders from my master.”

“But indeed you will, George,” returned Montrose impatiently, “or I shall complain to my uncle of your impertinence, in daring to catechise his nephew. Let me pass directly.”

Before George could reply to this sally, a door opened in the hall, and a fine-looking middle-aged man, whose

gentlemanly deportment and military carriage proclaimed him to be Colonel Grahame, came out to meet them.

“What is the meaning of this unusual noise, George?” he said in a stern voice; “and who are the strangers, you are parlying with at the door?”

“Please your honour,” returned George, whose consequence seemed gently offended by the appearance of his young master’s associates, “your nephew insists on my admitting to your honour’s presence that black ragamuffin, and some shabby boy he has picked up in the streets; and I would not comply with his request without further orders from you.”

The Colonel’s surprise scarcely appeared less than his domestic’s, at beholding his nephew and heir in such strange company.

“Montrose!” said he very gravely, surveying the group before him; “what is the reason of your hasty visit this afternoon? what has put you in such a desperate heat? and who are these strangers you have brought with you?”

“To the first part of your question, uncle, I answer humanity!—this poor black is the object of it: and that young gentleman is my friend.”

“Very well, so far,” returned the Colonel, smiling at the energy with which his nephew spoke; “but whose permission had you to leave the school this afternoon?”

“The sanction of my own heart,” replied Montrose; raising his fine eyes to his uncle’s face; “and a firm belief in Colonel Grahame’s generosity.”

“My dear boy,” said his uncle,

grasping his hand, "these reasons may have satisfied you, and speak highly for the benevolence of your intentions; but I fear it will prove a very unsatisfactory one to your master. You ought not to perform one duty by sacrificing another. Had you stated your motives for leaving the school to Mr. Vernon, I am sure he would not have denied your request."

"You are right, my dear uncle," returned Montrose, blushing and looking down. "I should have done so; but was so circumstanced, I could not do it, without informing against my school-fellows: and I would rather incur the danger of a thousand floggings, than have become an informer."

He then proceeded to inform his uncle of the whole particulars, and his reasons for bringing the black home,

and concluded by saying—"I am sure, dear uncle, for my sake, you will give the poor fellow the value of his basket again."

"You shall do it yourself, my generous boy," returned the Colonel, not a little pleased at this benevolent trait in his nephew's character—then, going to his desk, took out a couple of sovereigns; "Here, Montrose, take these: give the Black what you please, and divide the rest between yourself and your young friend."

"I know which Latimer will prefer," said Montrose, putting, as he spoke, both into Pedro's hand.

Words would fail to express the lively joy felt by the poor negro, when he found himself thus unexpectedly relieved from all his terrors: his tears burst out afresh, and he wept and

laughed alternately, in his excess of gratitude.

“This poor fellow seems to possess a feeling heart,” said the Colonel, greatly moved by his emotion,—“From what country are you, Blackey?”

“Africa, massa;” replied the negro, making a low bow, in his untaught, but expressive manner.

“From what part of Africa?”

“The coast of Coromandel—from the great river,” returned the black, his eyes flashing as, perhaps, the recollections of his country awakened a thousand bitter feelings in his breast.

“And how did you come to England?” asked Colonel Grahame.

“O, in de great ship.—Serve many massas—see many country—go to France,—Massa Isaac bring to England.”

“Then he is a cruel master to you,” Blackey?”

“Iss, iss,—beat much, give little eat,—call Black, dog! Pedro hate massa,—Pedro cry,” returned the negro, in a sorrowful tone. “Me love kind massa—me no hate good man.”

“Montrose,” said his uncle, after a few minutes reflection, “if I were to take this poor negro into my service, would you be kind to him?”

“Uncle! dear uncle!” cried the delighted boy, his blue eyes filling with tears as he spoke; “you could not please me better. Let him be my servant; he will feed my dog, and take care of my pony, and work in my nice little garden, while I am at school; and when I return for the holidays, I will teach him to read and write; and

I know my friend Hugh will assist me."

"Who is this friend of yours?" said the Colonel, who had been for some minutes attentively surveying the mild countenance of Hugh Latimer; "I never had the pleasure of seeing him before."

Montrose remained silent.

"What! both tongue-tied? I suppose," continued the Colonel, with a good-natured smile, "the young gentleman is not ashamed of his name?"

"I should not deserve to be a member of a poor, but worthy family, if I were," replied Latimer, stifling the sigh which rose to his lips: "after the striking instance of generosity that I have just witnessed, I should not think Colonel Grahame was a man to despise any one on the score of poverty."

“God forbid!” returned the Colonel, slightly colouring: “I may have been guilty of such folly in my youth; but I have since learned to consider those whom Providence has wisely ordained to move in a lower sphere of life, in a more benevolent point of view. My young friend,” he continued, kindly taking his hand, “what is your name?”

“Hugh Latimer, sir.”

The Colonel slightly started, and surveyed the youth with intense interest:—“What was your father?”

“A soldier.”

“In what regiment did he serve?”

“I have forgotten,” returned Hugh; “but my uncle, Mark, could tell you. He was, however, a lieutenant in one of the regiments commanded by the brave Lord Peterborough, and was killed at the taking of Barcelona.”

“I served in Spain at the same period,” said the Colonel: “I was not present in that action. I have heard your father mentioned as a brave and deserving officer; and I dare say, had he lived, he would have risen high in his profession.—Is your mother living?”

Hugh hesitated: then, as if ashamed of his weakness, firmly replied—“Yes, sir: she keeps the little shop at the corner of this street, to maintain herself and me, and to afford an asylum to my uncle, in his old age, a veteran soldier, who lost his leg at the battle of Almanza.”

The Colonel seemed, for a few minutes, lost in thought: at length taking the hand of Latimer, he placed it in that of Montrose, and pressed them both affectionately together in his

own,—“Continue, Montrose,” he said, “to love this young gentleman; and never return for a holiday without bringing him with you.”

“I only wanted this permission to render me quite happy,” said Montrose.

“Now, my dear boy, you had better return to school,” said the Colonel, “and apologise to your master, for quitting it without his permission. I will accompany you as far as Isaac’s, the Jew’s, and try if I can release poor Pedro.”

The Colonel’s benevolent application was successful; and, for a few pounds, the Jew consented to release Pedro from his engagements to him; and before the young friends again reached the play-ground, they had the satisfaction of knowing that Pedro

was transferred into the Colonel's service.

As they walked up the stately avenue of trees that led to the school, the young friends were so well pleased with their success in their late adventure, that they forgot the storm which awaited them there; till they received from a young gentleman in the first form, a formal message from Mr. Vernon, to attend him in the hall.

"So," said Montrose, with affected gaiety, "my dear Latimer, we are fairly caught."

Before they could obey this peremptory summons, all the real culprits thronged eagerly round them, exclaiming in a breath, "Don't tell of me." "Don't say 'twas I." "Remember, Latimer, I did not upset the basket, I only eat the cakes when they were down."

“Contemptible cowards!” returned Montrose; “you did not scruple to commit a base action, but you care not who bears the punishment.” And, trying to compose his agitated countenance, he took Latimer’s arm, and entered the hall.

Mr. Vernon was seated at the upper end of the hall, in his great arm-chair, (which was fashioned somewhat after the same pattern as the celebrated Dr. Busby’s,) his right hand resting on that instrument of punishment, which he was reputed to wield so unsparingly against all delinquents, and which was an object of terror to all in his vicinity.

After surveying the two young friends for some minutes, with a stern countenance, he addressed himself to Montrose; who, conscious of his own

integrity, tried to assume a courage which he did not actually feel. "Mr. Grahame, who gave you leave to quit the bounds of the school, this afternoon?"

"No one, sir."

"Then how dared you disobey the positive orders you have received from me, never to quit them without my permission, or a note from Mr. Manby?"

"For reasons, sir, which I cannot mention," returned Montrose, modestly, but firmly: "I acknowledge I was not acting rightly, when I quitted the play-ground without your leave; but hope, as this is my first offence, your forgiveness will be extended to me."

"Not till you can give a better reason for your conduct," replied Mr. Vernon.

“I have no other reason to give.”

“Sir, you are uttering a falsehood,” returned his offended master. “Latimer, you were in Master Grahame’s company, and were with him during his absence: what induced him to disobey my commands, and break through the established rules of the school?”

“Indeed, sir, I cannot tell you; I have given my word of honour not to mention the affair. My friend has acted imprudently; but did you know the motives which influenced his conduct, I am certain you would pardon his transgression.”

“You are, truly, a pretty pair,” rejoined Mr. Vernon; “if you had not been guilty of some great offence, you would have no reason for concealing your actions. You, Latimer, are a day-scholar, and your time is conse-

quently your own, after the school-hours are over; but Mr. Grahame I shall most certainly punish."

"I will never submit to such a disgraceful mode of chastisement," cried Montrose, stepping indignantly back, while the colour mounted to his before-pallid cheek.

Mr. Manby now came forward, to intercede in his behalf; he stated that it was the first offence of the kind his pupil had committed, and he earnestly recommended Mr. Vernon to pardon him; but Mr. Vernon was a strict disciplinarian, and would not grant his request.

"If I let Grahame off," said he, "it will be the signal for every boy to commit the like offence with impunity, and I might search for my scholars half over the city; while they would

accuse me of injustice for inflicting on them a punishment I withheld from him. When they witness his disgrace, it will make them more careful for the future."

Young Grahame's eyes were slowly filling with tears, but he stood immovable, with his arms folded across his breast, and his glance fixed sadly on the ground.

Latimer implored Mr. Vernon, with tears, to forgive his friend. "Oh! sir, if it is absolutely necessary to punish one of us, punish me in his stead; this disgrace will break his heart."

"That would not be justice," said the inflexible master; "Montrose has deserved chastisement, and he shall receive it."

"Oh! sir, if you should ever become acquainted with the real motive that

induced him to commit this fault, you would be very, very sorry for it," said Latimer, with increasing agitation. "But, rather than my friend should be punished unjustly, I will tell you the whole truth."

"And by so doing, forfeit my friendship for ever," rejoined Montrose. "Cease, Latimer, to plead my cause, I would rather endure this disgraceful punishment, than forfeit my word."

"Just then, a martial step sounded in the hall, and the next minute Colonel Grahame stood by Mr. Vernon's side; and, in spite of the entreaties of his nephew, informed him of the whole transaction.

Mr. Vernon was so pleased with an explanation so satisfactory to all parties, that he instantly pardoned Montrose, and at his earnest request, pro-

mised not to chastise the real delinquents beyond an additional task on the morrow; and the happy boys, released from all their fears, returned to spend the evening together with Colonel Grahame, who lavished so many praises on Latimer, that Montrose laughingly said, that Hugh was in a fair way of stealing his uncle's heart from him.

Time rolled onward, and the two friends daily advanced in learning and merit. Latimer felt a proud conviction that if his circumstances were poor, his mind was rich in worth; that every new attainment he acquired, instead of rendering his condition more despicable in his eyes, reconciled him to it. He learned to be cheerful and agreeable, and even to those who had oppressed him; and in ceasing to regard their ungenerous sarcasms, he ceased to feel them.

He studied to forgive the faults of his fellow creatures, and he pitied their weakness, while he diligently strove to avoid falling into the same temptations, by making their foolish example serve as a warning to himself; which rendered it an easier task to control every disposition in his own heart to commit evil.

His good uncle, not content with laying down lessons of morality, enforced his precepts with quotations from Holy writ, and Hugh never omitted reading a chapter from the Bible to his uncle, morning and evening; and the comfort he derived from this sacred service, was a balm for every wound, and made him feel an ardent desire to attain to the greatest height of moral and spiritual excellence.

One evening, when reading aloud to his mother and uncle, the xiii. chapter of St. Matthew, his uncle made him pause at the 57th verse. "Hugh," said he, "oblige me by reading that verse, and the two foregoing ones, a second time;" and his nephew read in a clear voice—

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"

"And his sisters, are not they all with us? whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

"And they were offended in him."

Mark Latimer laid his hand on the book, and, looking steadfastly in his nephew's face, said, "Hugh, what do these verses recal to your mind?"

"My own weakness and folly, dear

uncle, in repining over my situation; when the Son of God, the Creator of the whole earth, condescended to take no higher station, while in this world, than the son of a poor carpenter."

"And for what purpose, do you imagine, he chose to take upon himself so lowly a condition?"

"Surely, my dear uncle," cried Hugh, his eyes sparkling, and his countenance becoming suddenly animated, "it was done to convince men of the sinful folly of despising the poor and paying homage to riches instead of virtue."

"You are right, my boy," returned Mark Latimer.—"It is to enforce the same lesson of humility that he condescended to wash the feet of his disciples; shewing them, by that action, that the moral worth of the soul

was confined to no station in life; and that virtue would alone bestow a nobility of mind, which would be perfected, through him, in another world. Without this treasure, a man's riches and station avail him nothing. A good king is called the father of his people, and is universally beloved by his subjects; while a bad king is hated, and called a tyrant, though he finds sycophants to fawn upon him and execute his commands. But a bad man is never loved—no, not even by his own children. They may fear him: but the love and respect which a child owes to a parent, can only be truly felt and rendered as a return for kindness shewn. Walk then steadfastly in the right path; my son, turn neither to the right nor to the left; but do the thing which is upright and

just, and you will win the approbation of heaven, and be in favour with all men."

"It was surely the same feeling unle, which tempted the Jews to despise their Lord for being a carpenter's son, that induced my school-fellows to insult me, because my mother kept a shop?"

"Yes, Latimer; and should any reverse of fortune reduce them to the same situation, they would then feel the weakness and folly of their present conduct. A man must possess a great mind, and have a true sense of religion, before he can be modest in prosperity, and resigned in adversity to the will of Providence. Should you ever, by perseverance and industry, recover that situation in life which we lost through unavoidable misfortunes, al-

ways bear in mind your present station and never set too much value on riches, which have once, and can again, take to themselves wings and flee away."

"I hope, dear uncle," said Hugh, "that I shall never forget the good advice you have given me.—I wish it may please God to enable me to earn a competence to support you and my dear mother in your old age;—I do not desire more."

This conversation between him and his uncle made a deep impression upon Latimer's mind; and for some time he felt indifferent to the conduct of his school-fellows, or at least that portion of them who sought to avoid him or disparage his actions. He applied himself more closely to his studies, and found in the increased knowledge they gave to his mind, an ample

return for all his exertions. He was strengthened in this mode of procedure by the conduct of his friend Montrose, whose example went far to confirm the bias of his views and inclinations: indeed, so unremitting were the two friends in their studious pursuits, that it began to be the opinion of the principal, as well as of more than one of the teachers, that the next examination would place them at the head of their respective classes.

Nor were the young friends disappointed in the expectations they had formed: the examination day came round at last, and to Montrose was awarded the highest prize, while Latimer received from the principal the well merited commendation he so richly deserved. And when the young friends parted for the Midsummer

holidays, they left each other with feelings of deepest respect on the one side, and the most friendly sentiments and bearing on the other.

The vacation was passed by Latimer in a manner that tended to banish all unpleasant reflections from his mind; in the day, he would take a ramble in the fields, and in a search after such wild flowers as he could make up into a bouquet, to please his mother, he brought into practical action the rudiments of botany that he had learned at school. He saw in the wonderful variety which nature everywhere presented to his view, the works of an omniscient and over-ruling Providence, and he now learned the true meaning of that promise of Scripture that teaches that God careth for all, and that, without His knowledge, not even a sparrow falleth to the ground.

The train of reasoning that this source of reflection induced, was, indeed a balm to the mind of Latimer, and he acknowledged to his uncle, in one of their evening's conversations, that he thought, now, he could bear up against any thing that might happen to him, in future; for he felt that he had a reliance upon Him, where protection is never wanting when asked in sincerity and in faith. Alas! poor Latimer, thy anticipations of the future sprang from a too confident estimate of thy own knowledge of thyself; but they have to be tried in the furnace of experience and actual life; we shall see in his after life, how correctly they were formed, and how they stood the trial which they were fated to experience.

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