

CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE
HISTORY

OF

Mr. Bragwell; or, the *Two Wealthy Farmers*.

PART III.



Sold by J. MARSHALL,

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The HISTORY, &c.

MR. BRAGWELL when he returned home from his visit to Mr. Worthy, as recorded in the Second Part of this History, found that he was not quite so happy as he had formerly been. The discourses of Mr. Worthy had broken in not a little on his comfort. And he began to suspect that he was not so completely in the right as his vanity had led him to believe. He seemed also to feel less satisfaction in the idle gentility of his own daughters, since he had been witness to the simplicity, modesty, and usefulness to those of Mr. Worthy. And he could not help seeing that the vulgar violence of his wife did not produce so much family happiness at home, as the humble piety and quiet diligence of Mrs. Worthy produced in the house of his friend.

Happy would it have been for Mr. Bragwell, if he had followed up those new convictions of his own mind, which would have led him to struggle against the power of evil principles in himself, and to have controuled the force of evil habits in his family. But his convictions were just strong enough to make him uneasy under his errors, without driving him to reform them. The slight impression soon wore off, and he fell back into his old practices. Still his esteem for Mr. Worthy was not at all abated by the plain dealing of that honest friend. It is true he dreaded his piercing eye. He felt that his example held out a constant reproof to himself. Yet such is the force of early affection and rooted reverence, that he longed to see him at his house. This desire, indeed, as is commonly the case, was

made up of mixed motives. He wished for the pleasure of his friend's company; he longed for that favorite triumph of a vulgar mind, an opportunity of shewing him his riches; and he thought it would raise his credit in the world, to have a man of Mr. Worthy's character at his house.

Mr. Bragwell, it is true, still went on with the same eagerness in gaining money; and the same ostentation in spending it. But though he was as covetous as ever, he was not quite so sure that it was right to be so. At Christmas, indeed, while he was actually engaged abroad in transactions with his dealers, he was not very scrupulous about the means by which he *got* his money; and while he was indulging in festivity with his friends at home, he was easy enough as to the manner in which he *spent* it. But a man can neither be making bargains, nor making feasts always; there must be some intervals between these two great objects for which worldly men may be said to live; and in some of these intervals the most worldly form, perhaps, some random plans of amendment. And though many a one may say in the fullness of enjoyment, "tomorrow shall be as this day, and more abundant;" yet hardly any man perhaps allows himself to say, even in his most secret moments; "I will *never* retire from business—I will *never* repent—I will *never* think of death, Eternity shall *never* come into my thoughts." The most that such an one probably ventures to say is, "I need not repent *yet*. I will continue such a sin a little longer, it will be time enough to think on the next world when I am no longer fit for the business or the pleasures of this."

Such was the case with Bragwell. He set up in

his own mind a general distant sort of resolution, that *some years hence*, when he should be a *few years older*, and a *few thousands richer*; when a few more of his *present schemes should be compleated*, he would then think of altering his course of life. He would then certainly set about spending a religious old age; he would reform some practices in his dealings, or perhaps quit business intirely; he would think about reading good books, and when he had compleated such and such a purchase, he would even begin to give something to the poor, but at present he really had little to spare for charity. The very reason why he should have given more, was just the cause he assigned for not giving at all, namely, the *hardness of the times*. The true grand source of charity, self-denial, never came into his head. *Spend less that you may save more*, he would have thought a shrewd maxim enough. But *spend less that you may spare more*, never entered into his book of Proverbs.

At length the time came when Mr. Worthy had promised to return his visit. It was indeed a little hastened by notice that Mr. Bragwell would have, in the course of the week, a piece of land to sell by auction; and though Mr. Worthy believed the price was likely to be above his pocket, yet he knew it was an occasion which would be likely to bring the principal Farmers of that neighbourhood together, some of whom he wanted to meet. And it was on this occasion that Mr. Bragwell prided himself, that he should shew his neighbours so sensible a man as his dear friend Mr. Worthy.

Worthy arrived at his friend's house on the Saturday, time enough to see the house and garden and grounds of Mr. Bragwell by day-light. He saw

with pleasure, for he had a warm and generous heart, those evident signs of his friend's prosperity, but as he was a man of a sober mind, and was a most exact dealer in truth, he never allowed his tongue the licence of immodest commendation, which he used to say either favoured of flattery or envy. Indeed he never rated mere worldly things so highly as to bestow upon them undue praise. His calm approbation somewhat disappointed the vanity of Mr. Bragwell, who could not help secretly suspecting that his friend, as good a man as he was, was not quite free from envy. He felt, however, very much inclined to forgive this jealousy, which he feared the sight of his ample property, and handsome habitation, must naturally awaken in the mind of a man whose own possessions were so superior. He practised the usual trick of ordinary and vulgar minds, that of pretending himself to find some fault with those things which were particularly deserving praise, when he found Worthy disposed to pass them over in silence.

When they came in to supper, he affected to talk of the comforts of Mr. Worthy's *little* parlour, by way of calling his attention to his own large one. He repeated the word *snug*, as applied to every thing at Mr. Worthy's, with the plain design to make comparisons favourable to his own more ample domains. He contrived, as he passed by to his chair, by a seeming accident, to push open the door of a large beaufet in the parlour in which all the finery was most ostentatiously set out to view. He protested, with a look of satisfaction which belied his words, that for his part he did not care a farthing for all this trumpery; and then smiling and rubbing his hands, added with an air of no

small importance, "what a good thing it is, though for people of substance, that the tax on plate was taken off. You are a happy man, Mr. Worthy, you do not feel these things, tax or no tax it is all the same to you." He took care during this speech, by a cast of his eye, to direct Mr. Worthy's attention to a great profusion of the brightest cups, saucers, and tankards, and other shining ornaments which crowded the beaufet. Mr. Worthy gravely answered, "Mr. Bragwell, it was indeed a tax which could not affect so plain a man as myself, but as it fell on a mere luxury and therefore could not hurt the poor, I was always sorry that it could not be made productive enough to be continued. A man in my middling situation, who is contented with a good glass of beer, poured from a handsome earthen mug, the glass, the mug, and the beer, all of English manufacture, will be but little disturbed at taxes on plate or on wine, but he will regret, as I do, that many old taxes are so much evaded, that new ones are continually brought on to make up the deficiencies of the former."

During supper the young ladies sat in disdainful silence, not deigning to bestow the smallest civility on so plain a man as Mr. Worthy. They left the room with their Mamma as soon as possible, being impatient to get away to ridicule their father's friend.

The Dance; or, the Christmas Merry-making.

AS soon as they were gone, Mr. Worthy asked Bragwell how his family comforts stood, and how his daughters, who, he said, were really fine young women, went on. "O, as to that," replied Bragwell, "pretty much like other men's handsome daughters,

I suppose, that is worse and worse. I really begin to apprehend that their fantastical notions have gained such a head, that after all the money I have scraped together, I shall never get them well married. Betsey has just lost as good an offer as any girl could desire, young Wilson, an honest substantial grazier as any in the county. He not only knows every thing proper for his station, but is pleasing in his behaviour, and a pretty scholar into the bargain; he reads history-books and voyages of a winter's evening to his infirm father, instead of going to the card assembly in our town; neither likes drinking nor sporting, and is a sort of favourite with our Parson, because he takes in the weekly numbers of a fine Bible with Cuts, and subscribes to the Sunday School, and makes a fuss about helping the poor, these dear times as they call them, but I think they are good times for *us* Mr. Worthy. Well, for all this, Betsey only despised him and laughed at him; but as he is both handsome and rich, I thought she might come round at last. And so I invited him to come and stay a day or two at Christmas, when we have always a little sort of merry-making here. But it would not do. He scorned to talk that palavering stuff which she has been used to in the marble covered books I told you of. He told her indeed, that it would be the happiness of his heart to live with her, which I own I thought was as much as could be expected of any man. But Miss had no notion of marrying one who was only desirous of living with her. No no, forsooth, her lover must declare himself ready to die for her, which honest Wilson was not such a fool as to offer to do. In the afternoon, however, he got a little into her favour by making

out a Rebus or two in the Lady's Diary, and she condescended to say she did not think Mr. Wilson had been so good a scholar, but he soon spoilt all again. We had a bit of a hop in the evening. The young man, though he had not much taste for those sort of gambols, yet thought he could foot it a little in the old fashioned way. So he asked Betsey to be his partner. But when he asked what dance they should call, Miss drew up her head, and in a strange gibberish, said she should dance nothing but a *Minuet de la Cour*, and ordered him to call it; Wilson stared, and honestly told her she must call it herself, for he could neither spell nor pronounce such outlandish words. I burst out a laughing, and told him, I supposed it was something like questions and commands, and if so, that was much merrier than dancing. Seeing her partner standing stock still, and not knowing how to get out of the scrape, the girl began by herself, and fell to swimming, and sinking, and capering, and flourishing, and posturing, for all the world just like the man on the slack rope at our fair. But seeing Wilson standing like a stuck pig, and we all laughing at her, she resolved to wreak her malice upon him; so with a look of rage and disdain, she advised him to go down country bumkin, with the dairy maid, who would make a much fitter partner, as well as wife, for him than she could. "I am quite of your mind, Miss," said he, "with more spirit than I thought was in him; you may make a good partner for a dance, but you would make a sad one to go through life with. I will take my leave of you, Miss, with this short story. I had lately a pretty large concern in hay-jobbing, which took me to London. I waited a good while in the Hay-market for my dealer, and

to pass the time I stepped into a sort of singing play house there, where I was grieved to the heart to see young women painted and dized out, and capering away just as you have been doing. I thought it bad enough, and wondered the quality could be entertained with such indecent mummery. But little did I think to meet with the same paint, finery, and tricks in a farm house. I will never marry a woman who despises me, nor the station in which I should place her, and so I take my leave." Poor girl how she *was* provoked! to be publicly refused and turned off, as it were, by a grazier! But it was of use to some of the other girls who have not held up their heads quite so high since, nor painted quite so red, but have condescended to speak to their equals.

"But how I run on! I forget it is Saturday night, and that I ought to be paying my workmen, who are all waiting for me without."

Saturday Night; or, the Workmen's Wages.

AS soon as Mr. Bragwell had done paying his men, Mr. Worthy said to him, "I have made it a habit, and I hope not an unprofitable one, of trying to turn to some moral use, not only all the events of daily life, but all the employments of it too. And though it occurs so often, I hardly know one that sets me a thinking more seriously than the ordinary business you have been just discharging." "Aye," said Bragwell, "it sets me thinking too, and seriously as you say, when I observe how much the price of wages is increased." "Yes, yes, you are ready enough to think of that," said Worthy, "but you say not a word of how much the value of your land is increased, and that the more

you pay, the more you can afford to pay. But the thoughts I spoke of are quite of another cast. When I call in my labourers on a Saturday night to pay them, it often brings to my mind the great and general day of account, when I, and you, and all of us, shall be called to our grand and awful reckoning, when we shall go to receive *our* wages, master, and servants, farmer and labourer. When I see that one of my men has failed of the wages he should have received, because he has been idling at a fair; another has lost a day by a drinking bout, a third confesses that though he had task-work and might have earned still more, yet he has been careless and has not his full pay to receive; this, I say, sometimes sets me on thinking whether I also have made the most of my time. And when I came to pay even the more diligent who have worked all the week; when I reflect that even these have done no more than it was their duty to do, I cannot help saying to myself, night is come, Saturday night is come. No repentance or diligence on the part of these poor men can now make a bad week's work good. This week is gone into eternity. To-morrow is the season of rest; working time is over. My life also will soon be swallowed up in eternity; soon the space allotted me for diligence, for labour, will be over. Soon will the grand question be asked, 'what hast thou done? Didst thou use thy working days to the end for which they were given?' With some such thoughts I commonly go to-bed, and they help to quicken me to a keener diligence for the next week.

Some Account of a Sunday in Mr. Bragwell's Family.

Mr. WORTHY had been for so many years used to the sober ways of his own well ordered family, that he greatly disliked to pass a Sunday in

any house of which Religion was not the governing principle. Indeed he commonly ordered his affairs, and regulated his journies with an eye to this object. "To pass a Sunday in an irreligious family," said he, "is always unpleasant, often unsafe. I seldom find I can do them any good, and they may perhaps do me some harm. At least I am giving a sanction to their manner of passing it, if I pass it in the same manner. If I reprove them, I subject myself to the charge of singularity, and of being 'righteous over much;' if I do *not* reprove them, I confirm and strengthen them in evil. And whether I reprove them or not, I certainly partake of their guilt if I spend it as they do."

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his practice, and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the Church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this should be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some awkward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for Church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, and cakes, to last through the week, as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking and boiling, and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from

Church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheese-cakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity on the present occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, when he should be struck with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a Justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a Sunday's dinner as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which these grand preparations were meant to raise, felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the Miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the Assize-Ball; they looked very scornful at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment.

In the afternoon, the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good,

and the road neither dusty nor dirty, when the Minister did not begin too early, when the young Ladies had not been disappointed of their new bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they had no smart company in the house who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the case, which, to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humour of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forbore to ask any of his usual company, well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his guest.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up as usual a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons was finished while they were singing. The young Ladies made an appointment for the afternoon with a friend in the next pew, while their Mamma took the opportunity of enquiring the character of a Dairy Maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week-day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him, he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holiday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home

upon him, if the utter neglect of his servants' principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants and the good order of families? "I put it to your conscience," said he, "Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters; who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with more rigour refuse them a little indulgence and a reasonable holiday in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a fair right to expect." Those masters who will give them half or all the Lord's Day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their work must be done; God's work may be let alone.*"

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants, turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses and fives-playing: But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do; indeed it was his wife's concern; and as she was so good a manager on other days, that she would not spare them an hour even to visit a sick father or mother, it would be hard, she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for

making the most of it. Indeed, she was so indulgent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church that they might serve the beasts, and the maids that they might get the milking done before the holiday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he must say that for his wife, she always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober, because drunkenness is a costly sin, and, to do her justice, she does not care how little they sin at her expence.

“Well,” said Mr. Worthy, “I always like to examine both sides fairly, and to see the different effects of opposite practices; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master and of profit to the servants in the long run? Your servants, ’tis likely, are very much attached to you; and very fond of living where they get their own way in so great a point.”

“O, as to that,” replied Bragwell, “you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny, and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants, so that every Quarter-day is a sort of Gaol Delivery at my house; and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment’s warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the Justice to get their wages.

“I see,” said Mr. Worthy, “that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with

their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means I commonly gain their love as well as secure their obedience. I know that with all my care I am liable to be disappointed, from the corruption that is in the world through sin. But whenever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If, by God's blessing, my servant turns out a good Christian, I have been an humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge."

Mrs. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased, as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in, all hurry and bustle, saying, if her family did not "go to bed with the Lamb" on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they "rise with the Lark" on Mondays, when so much was to be done.

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflexion. "We need not," said he, "go into the great world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farm-house. As for me and my house," continued he, "we will serve the Lord every day, but especially on Sundays. It is the day which the Lord hath made: hath made for himself; we will rejoice in it, and consider the religious use of it not only as a duty but as a privilege."

The next morning Mr. Bragwell and his friend set out early for the Golden Lion. What passed on this little journey, my readers shall hear next month.

(To be continued.)

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