

Pleasant Stories;
OR,
HISTORIES
OF
BEN THE SAILOR,
AND
NED THE SOLDIER.

BY W. F. SULLIVAN, A. M.

EMBELLISHED WITH THREE ELEGANT PLATES.

LONDON:

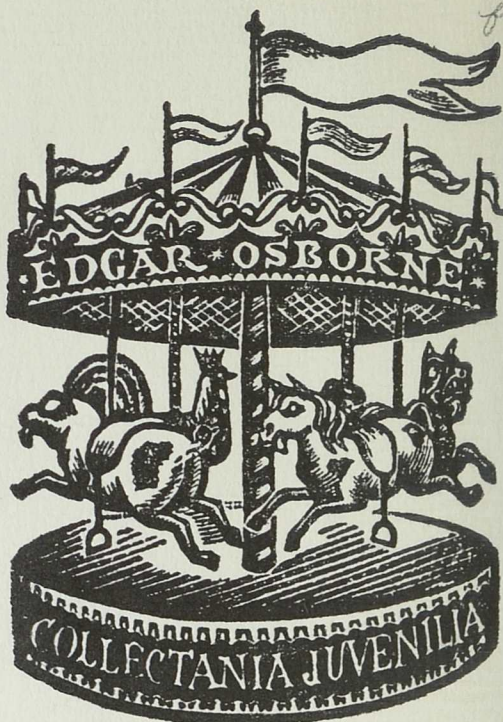
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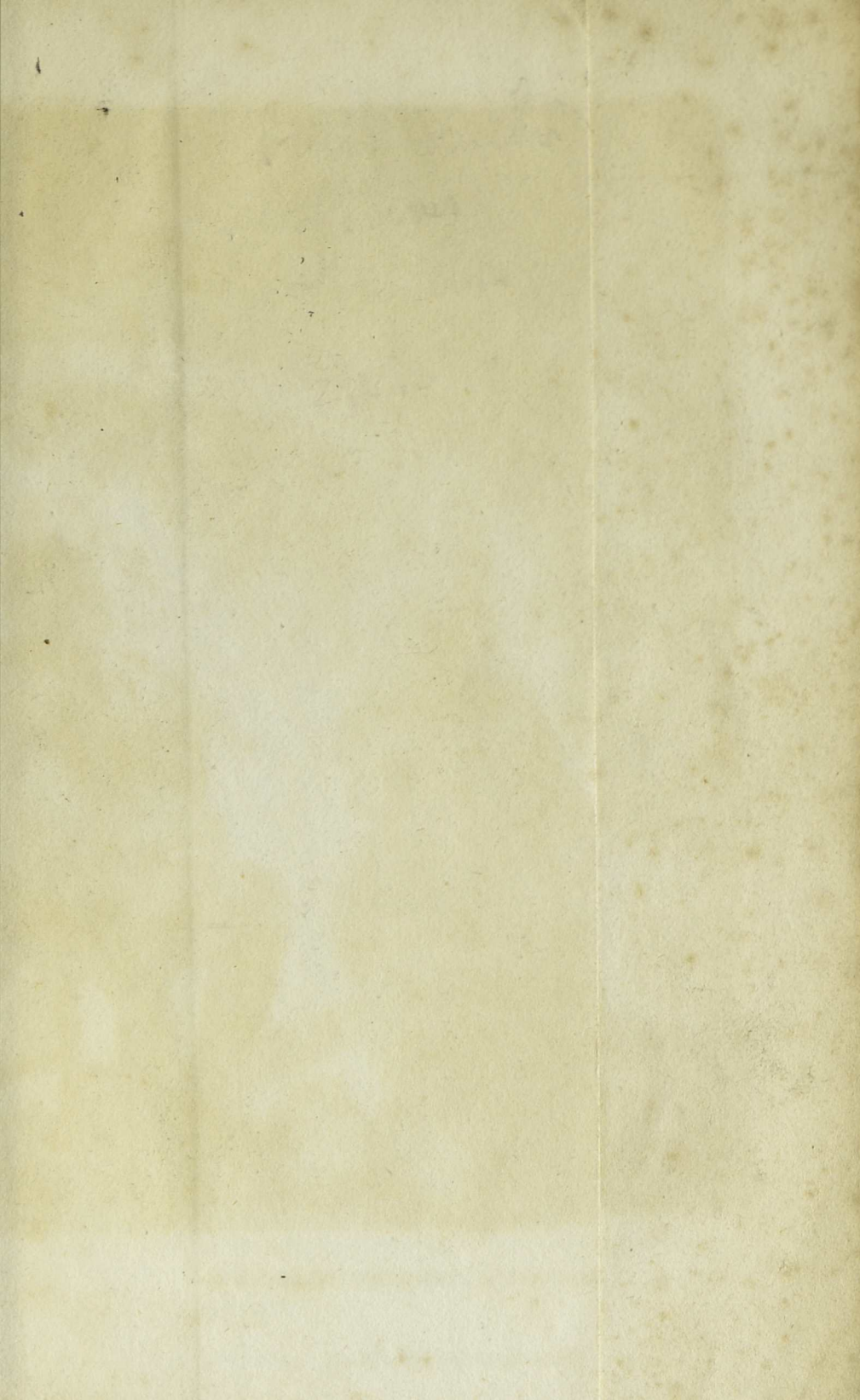
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Ben the Sailor and Ned the Soldier relating their Adventures to the Company assembled to celebrate the Christmas Holidays.

PLEASANT STORIES;

OR,

THE HISTORIES

OF

BEN THE SAILOR,

AND

NED THE SOLDIER.



CONTAINING,

NUMEROUS ENTERTAINING AND INTERESTING

Anecdotes and Adventures of Real Life;

VOUCHED AS GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC.



BY W. F. SULLIVAN, A. M.

TEACHER OF ELOCUTION AND BELLES LETTRES.



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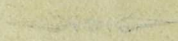
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PLEASANT STORIES;

THE HISTORY

BEN THE BAKER,

AND THE SOLDIER.

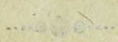


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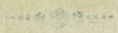
AND THE ADVENTURES OF HIS LIFE;

WRITTEN BY MISS ANNE AND MARY



BY W. T. SHEPHERD, A. M.

TEACHER OF INDIAN AND ENGLISH LETTERS.



Dean & Munday, Printers,
Threadneedle-street.

DEAN & MUNDAY, THREADNEEDLE STREET.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

PLEASANT STORIES.



AN honest, hard working farmer, of the name of Hodgson, lived near Ashford, in Kent; his family was numerous, and consisted mostly of boys. His farm was but small; and he could scarcely make both ends meet at the end of the year, much less could he save any money, As his family grew up, the girls assisted their mother in her domestic concerns, while the boys were employed with their father in the fields.

Things went on smoothly for some years, notwithstanding two of their sons, Ben and Ned, were of an unsteady, rambling disposition from their childhood. It was with great difficulty that their poor father could get them to mind their business about the farm; he

would often speak to them about their neglect, and asked them frequently how they intended to get their bread, seeing he had no money to leave them, and that they evinced no liking for any one way of life more than another. It is true, they were not of a vicious disposition; no, thanks to the care and attention of Giles Hodgson and his dame, who were really good and religious people, and who did every thing in their power for the welfare of their children, by giving them what instruction they could afford, and bringing them up in the love of truth and in the fear of God. But these two boys were a great trouble to these good parents. They were now of an age to render some assistance to their father, Ben being sixteen, and Ned almost fifteen; but they were giddy, thoughtless, fickle, and unsteady, and would settle to nothing. A neighbouring shoemaker offered to take Ben apprentice without a fee; and, accordingly, he went to him for a month or

two upon trial; but it was too sedentary a life for Ben, and he grew tired of it in less than three weeks, so that his master turned him on his father's hands, saying, he could make no good of him. This was a great grief to old Hodgson, and he would say, "Indeed, Ben, you had better stick to plough, and mind what you are reared to, than let your thoughts go rambling thus, and idling your time away; fix upon something, for idleness is the root of all evil. It is impossible you can remain innocent, if you do not find some useful employment; and what is more healthy and amusing than the life of a farmer?"

Now Ned, the other brother, was equally fickle and unsteady as Ben, but his notions were, as he thought, a little more elevated. He thought the plain simple dress of a ploughboy degrading; and even his clean Sunday suit he imagined too homely and unbecoming.

It chanced, one of the neighbour's sons, a boy of nearly his own age, was taken

as a footboy by a nobleman who lived in the vicinity; and the fine appearance he made in his round gold-laced hat, his green and crimson livery, with gold epaulettes, struck his fancy prodigiously; he had likewise heard how well the servants lived, how like gentlefolks they appeared, with a nice horse to ride about the country, and go up to town and see the world; so nothing would do, but he kept plaguing his poor father to get him to live with the young squire, and then he could be as fine as young Jemmy, his former companion.

The poor man, willing to make his children happy, if he could, was endeavouring to make interest to introduce his son to the squire's family, when his inclination suddenly altered:—it happened, that this Jemmy, this dashing footboy, had, for some fault or neglect of his, been suddenly discharged by his master, stripped of his fine livery, and dismissed without a character; the consequence was, he was obliged to return,

and was glad, to prevent his starving, to come back to drive a dung-cart, as before. This degrading sight cured Ned of his fondness for a livery; and, as his father very justly observed, service was no inheritance, and the caprice of a master a sad thing to depend upon:—

“ Now, Ned, I know your disposition; you are a very giddy, thoughtless boy, to say no worse; you are easily led away by every foolish nonsense; and, believe me, it requires more steadiness and resolution than you seem to be possessed of, to humour the whims and disposition of a proud, imperious master; and your temper might lead you into many temptations which London abounds in, and which is the ruin of many a servant; so both you and your brother had much better stick to the business you were both brought up to. Besides, you both ought to consider the pains I have taken to rear and bring you up; and now you have it in your power to return the obligation, and render your father

a service by your labour, you would be flying off. It is quite heart-breaking, and quite undutiful, wicked, and unnatural, as I may say; and, depend upon it, if you persist, you will come to no good, but break your poor mother's heart, and mine too."

This honest and pathetic appeal had some effect on the lads, who did not want for sense or natural affection, and they applied themselves to work, and assisted the father, who now began to hope he had wrought a change in their dispositions. They went on very well for several months, and might, perhaps, have remained steady at home all the remainder of their lives, had not two unfortunate circumstances occurred, which completely unhinged all their good resolutions, and rendered abortive all their father's remonstrances.

It happened that Ben Bobstay, the brother of Dame Hodgson, had now returned from sea after many years' absence. His father, it seems, had been

a ship-carpenter in Deptford-yard; and the son had been some years reared to the business, but being of a wild, roving disposition, he ran away from his father before his time was out, and entered on board a man-of-war, but he soon found he had fared much better, had he staid at home; the confinement on board was very irksome, and not being very regular and attentive, he was frequently punished. Finding, however, that he had no other alternative than to do his duty, he became attentive and steady, and at length his former misbehaviour was forgotten; understanding something of the business, he was, after several years serving before the mast, raised to be carpenter's-mate, which situation he now held, when he called to see his sister. The many years of absence, and the hardships he had undergone, had altered his countenance, and impaired his constitution so much, that he was with some difficulty brought to his sister's recollection. " Ah! brother Ben,

is it you I see at last?—Mercy on me! how you are altered for the worse!”

“I am indeed, sister,” cried Ben, “but it can’t be help’d now.—’Twas all my own seeking, I must say; and all I have gained, after six-and-twenty years of hard service, is plenty of flogging, many hard knocks, and a broken constitution. I am now paid off, and no longer fit to go to sea. I expect to be invalided, and get Greenwich; which, with what little prize-money I have got to receive, may make me tolerably comfortable in my old days.”

Ben and Ned were both present at the account the uncle gave of the fruits of his long and laborious life. He was not much above forty-five, yet by his looks he appeared near seventy. He was obliged to walk with a stick, being afflicted with the rheumatism, the effects of transition of climates, from extreme heat to intense cold.

“Now, brother,” cried old Hodgson, “I am very happy to see you come

home at last; perhaps a quiet settled life may restore you, in the course of a few months, to your former health; if you get Greenwich, as no doubt you will, the fine air of the park will brace your constitution, and make you a new man. Come, don't be down-hearted, but receive a welcome here, such as your sister and I can give."

"Why, look you, brother Hodgson," said Bobstay; "as to being down-hearted, that is, I believe, seldom the case with a thorough-bred seaman; no, no, but when I compare what I am, with what I might have been, I am, at times, partly out of my mind, as I may say. I had little time for reflection on board; and I believe sailors in general are the most thoughtless animals in existence; they earn their money (and a trifle, heaven knows, it is after all,) like horses, and they spend it like asses: so long confined on board, they are half mad when they get ashore, and they do not come to their senses till they have spent every farthing. I am a

living proof of this, and there are thousands like me, I assure you, who do not know the world till too late in the day."

"Indeed, brother," replied Hodgson, "you have suffered a great many hardships; but I hope your misfortunes will be a warning to my two boys: I assure you, I have had a hard part to play with them to keep them at home."

"What!" cried Bobstay, "are they for gadding, and not content to work at home with father in the farm? if they have the wit of a goose, they'll bide in a whole skin; ploughing the ocean is a different thing from ploughing the land; it is, as a body may say, quite a different element; and I don't think either of 'em would make good sailors, and a salt-water education would not agree with them. I wish I was as young as they are, and had so good a birth, I'd see all the ships at Old Harry before I would set my foot aboard one of them—no, no—if they know when they are well off, they'll stay where they are."

Now one would think the uncle's advice, which he very earnestly enforced in the presence of his nephews, would have checked their rambling disposition; and to have witnessed, from his appearance and from his own lips, the hardships he had suffered, would have had more effect than all their father and mother's arguments and persuasions; but Ben Bobstay, notwithstanding all he had undergone, was a sailor every inch of him; and when he became a little comfortable at the farm, he would tell such droll stories about cutting-out vessels, the hair-breadth escapes he had had, his visiting islands in the South Seas, the manners of the savages, and such-like exploits and wonders that he had seen, that the neighbouring villagers stood with open mouths, and greedy ears; for Bobstay had the traveller's talent, and did not stick at trifles.

Both Ben and Ned were greatly pleased at their uncle's humour, and the pleasant stories he would relate, some-

times in a very serious and entertaining manner; for, to say the truth, he had seen a great deal, though he had profited so little himself. They would frequently say, and whisper to themselves, what would they not give to be able to recount half as much. If they should go abroad, they would take care not to come home as he did; no, no, they would engage to return quite different men, with plenty of money and sound experience.—Such was the idle talk of those giddy, unthinking boys; the effect of inconsiderate youth and overheated imaginations.

It now happened, that one Serjeant Bounce, of the Guards, came down with a recruiting party. He was a fine looking fellow, with a great flow of words; he could wheedle, coax, and trepan, even sober, steady men, much more boys already too much inclined to waver.

The account his uncle would give of the victories of Duncan, St. Vincent,

Rodney, and latterly of Nelson, quite captivated Ben, who, forgetful of advice, and all his poor uncle's hardships, was seized with an irresistible desire of becoming a son of Neptune; and, in spite of all that was said to the contrary, thought it far more honourable and praiseworthy to plough the ocean than to turn a furrow; while Ned his brother was equally taken with the eloquence of Serjeant Bounce, who expatiated at large on his glorious achievements, the many battles he had fought, the different countries he had seen, and the pleasures and varieties of a soldier's life. The drum and fife added peculiar charms to the account, which were no sooner heard than away scampered the lads; and the flail and harrow might work by themselves that day, for they now thought more of thrashing the enemy, and driving them before them, than ingloriously thrashing in a barn, and driving their father's team.

It was indeed in an evil hour that

both the uncle and the serjeant arrived, for their presence totally overset all the good resolutions the lads had lately formed. Ben would observe, it was his uncle's own fault that he had not done much better; he'd warrant, he would not be such a fool, when there were such fine opportunities to make such prize-money, and get rewarded and promoted; while the serjeant's rhetoric, and his fine gold-laced regimentals, struck the astonished ears and eyes of silly Ned; then the drum and fife drowned all reflection, and beat completely the little remaining sense out of the poor boy's head, and made him fall an easy prey to the serjeant's artifices.

Dame Hodgson's brother, having now spent three weeks at the farm, began to think of going to Greenwich, and from thence to London, in order to get the pension, and receive what prize-money was due to him. While he was telling his sister and brother of his intention, the two boys, who had staid out later

than usual, at last came home; but what was the astonishment and grief of both the father and mother when they saw a large cockade of different colours in Ned's hat, and Serjeant Bounce immediately following them in!—"The Lord be good unto me!" exclaimed the poor father; "what do I see?—Is all my advice, all my caution, all my endeavours, thrown away at last?—Ah! you sad, ungenerous, undutiful boy! go—go—get out of my sight;—you'll break your mother's heart,—you see you have thrown her into a fainting-fit already.—Yes, yes, I see you'll be the death of us both!"

Poor Hodgson walked about almost distracted, and was at last obliged to attend to his wife, who, on recovering, uttered such a volley of incoherent abuse, that it quite exhausted her: the serjeant bore her reproaches like a veteran used to such kind of salutations. "Why, look ye, madam," said Bounce, "seeing your son a fine spirited lad, and

willing to serve his Majesty, I thought I might as well enlist him as any other recruiting-serjeant, and since he is bent on becoming a gentleman-soldier, he had better belong to the Guards than to any other marching regiment; it is far more honourable, and better pay; but to show you I scorn to wheedle or trepan any lad from his parents, on your paying me one guinea smart, five guineas for his silver-watch, and the guinea I gave him, I'll let him off, d'ye see. I'm above taking any advantage of a young man, I assure you, mistress."

"Ay, ay, so you get plenty of smart-money," said Bobstay; "that's all you care about. I know the ways of both army and navy;—but I'll pay the smart, if that will satisfy you," "Yes," replied Bounce, "it will satisfy me, if the lad is agreeable; but I think he knows better; there are hundreds who would be glad to enlist with me; but no, I'll have none of the cowardly fellows; I'll have none but picked men, such as I



The humane French officer relieving the poor Highlander's
Wife and Infant .

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can depend upon for courage and good behaviour.”

Farmer Hedgewick, their neighbour, now dropped in, and finding how matters stood, and that their uncle Bobstay had offered to pay smart, he exclaimed—“Smart, indeed! I’d pay smart with a vengeance; no, no, I’d let him smart well for it; and the only way, neighbour Hodgson, is to let your boys have their fling; it is the only way to bring them to their senses.”

Ben now summoned up courage to speak, and said—“Since brother Ned is determined to seek his fortune in the army, I’ll not stay at home, but go to sea; I like that best; and so that’s plain English.” “Well said, my brave lad,” cried the serjeant; “but why not enlist along with your brother in the same regiment?” “I don’t like the army,” replied Ben; “I’ll serve his Majesty by sea.”

“Will you?” cried Bobstay; “so you sail right in the wind’s eye, and

steer against my advice and the current of your father and mother's inclinations, who know best what's for both your good? If you do, mark my words, you'll repent it. I hope the first welcome you receive on board, will be a round dozen doubled, and a good keel-hauling into the bargain, for your disobedience and folly. I think you might have taken warning by me; I paid dear enough for my foolishness, and so will you."

"I see how it is," cried Hodgson, rubbing his eyes; "it is a bitter draught I am obliged to swallow. My wicked children's ingratitude lies heavy at my heart, but I must bear it like a Christian and a man. Seeing that all my arguments and persuasions are lost, and that nothing can keep them to their peaceful home—since they won't stay and serve their poor father—I would much rather they would serve his Majesty, Heaven bless him! than any other master, and that's the truth on't."

"A bitter draught indeed is that those

wicked, undutiful boys have given us," replied the mother; "but, I warrant you they'll both sup sorrow, and plenty of it, before it is long."

"Will you pay the smart?" asked the serjeant; "and I'll let your son go. Speak now, for I'm in haste."

"No, no," exclaimed Hedgewick, "no smart-money. Don't be a fool, neighbour, but take my advice: I warrant, you will hear of 'em being brought to the halberds, or the gangway, and there let them smart with a vengeance. 'Tis what they richly deserve."

The father would willingly have paid the money before it was too late, but the mother, vexed and disappointed, exclaimed—"Let un go, and sup sorrow by pailsful. I would not give a guinea to save his life." And away the serjeant took him, before she had time to recall her words, or recover her recollection.

The next day, the serjeant consented to accompany Ned to the farm, in order to take his farewell of his father and

mother before he departed. Many were the tears shed on all sides, for much as the lads wished to see the world, they could not behold the grief of their parents, the tears of their brothers and sisters, nor part from the place of their nativity, and, above all, from each other, without being strongly affected. Ben was resolved to go too, and accompany his uncle up to London, and they both took this opportunity of travelling part of the way in company with the serjeant, who, with Ben and his numerous recruits, were now on their march to Canterbury.

The brother protested solemnly he would do all he could to dissuade Ben from his resolution; but at no rate would he have a hand in sending him abroad. If he was determined, as he feared he was, he would give him every friendly hint and caution in his power; and that was all he could do.

The father now tenderly embraced his sons. The poor mother was speechless. “Go then, children, and God’s blessing

go with you: but I fear—I very much fear—you will pay for your obstinacy, and wish, when too late, that you had staid at home.”——The uncle and the serjeant were now obliged to separate them from the embraces of the surrounding family; and the two lads could not refrain from tears at parting.

We shall now pass over several years from the period of the boys' entering the army and navy, which was at the commencement of the last war with France, till the conclusion of the general peace of Europe, after the ever-memorable and decisive victory of Waterloo; nor shall we give an account of the different actions they were engaged in during that time by sea and land; those have already been minutely and authentically detailed, and are now in the possession of the public. Such accounts are wholly uninteresting to the majority of our young readers, and totally irrelevant to our present purpose. But the interesting adventures of the

young sailor and soldier, the various scenes they witnessed, and the different anecdotes they picked up during their travels, may be highly amusing, and, at the same time, afford a very useful and instructive lesson; and it must convince the younger part of the community, that due subordination and obedience, integrity of principle, a respect for religion, and a conscientious discharge of the duties of humanity, even in the humblest station, never fail of reward, but advance the happiness of the individual possessor of such excellent qualities.

It is natural to suppose, that on the restoration of peace, which caused so many honest tars and soldiers to return to their respective homes, Giles Hodgson and his wife, now pretty far advanced in years, were anxious to see their sons, Ben and Ned, before they died. They had long been without a letter from either, and the few they had received were by no means satisfactory;

they did not talk in raptures of the life they had chosen; they were silent on that head, and had expressed a wish to be at home by their father's fireside.

Many evenings did this good couple sit, surrounded by their family, now mostly grown up, discoursing of their absent sons, and talking of the joy that their arrival safe at home would spread among their former companions. Their patience became at last quite exhausted; they imagined some fatal accident, or death, had happened; when, one stormy winter's night, the wind howling, and the rain beating against the casement, they were pitying the fate of the poor creatures who were obliged to travel in such a tempestuous night, a loud knocking was heard about the window and door, and a hoarse, rough voice cried—“Within, there! aboard the Hodgson, ahoy!” They all started up, and one of the sons ran, and opened the door, when a distressed sailor-looking man entered, shivering, and dripping wet.

“Heaven bless you, good people,” said he; “give a poor seaman leave to warm and dry himself, and rest a bit, till the squall is over.”

“Aye, sure, and welcome, honest man,” cried Hodgson, whose eye-sight began to fail; “sit down by the fire, and dry yourself; and, wife, bring a mug of ale, and put some ginger in it, and warm it, and cut a slice or two of cold beef, with some bacon, and an onion or two; toss it up in the pan, and place it hot before the poor fellow this bitter night: he seems sadly fatigued; and I am sure he must be both cold and hungry.”

“Thank you kindly, and Heaven reward you. ’Tis a great charity, for I’m both sick and wounded, and in great distress.”

“You’ve been aboard a man of war, I suppose. I am sure I have a feeling for sailors and soldiers. I have two sons in the service, one in the army, and the other in the navy: nothing could keep them at home, but they must go abroad;

and now I know not whether they be dead or alive: 'tis several years since we had a letter from either of them.—Did you ever hear of my son, Ben Hodgson?"—

"I did; I knew him well," replied the sailor.

"I thought so," said the old man, "by your calling out our name. How came you acquainted?"

"Aboard the same ship. He was a messmate of mine; while we sailed together, he was a good lad, but very melancholy at times; he seemed not happy in his mind; he was always talking of home, and about his parents; he said, he never prospered since he left them, but always came athwart some misfortune or other; and sure enough, we had nothing but squally weather while he continued in the ship."

"Ah! my poor boy!" returned the father. "I was sure he could not forget us. I wish he was here now to partake of what cheer we should give. Perhaps

he may be buffeting the storm this very night."

"Mayhap so, and may'nt be far off neither," said the tar.

"What—in the channel?" exclaimed Hodgson.

"No, ashore, and in Kent; and not far from you," replied the sailor.

"Ah! would I could see him, the undutiful boy!" cried the old dame; "I'd give him a rare scolding, before I hugged him to my arms."

"Then scold away, mother, as fast as you can," cried Ben, throwing off an old wig and a patch from his eye, "provided you and father take me to your arms at last, and forgive me."

In an instant he was in their arms—scolding was out of the question. Such a scene was witnessed, such tears of joy were shed, as may be more easily supposed than described. The brothers and sisters jumped about, clung around him, and seemed wild with joy. The supper became quite cold, but that was soon

remedied, and down sat this now happy family to a more comfortable meal than they had taken for several years.

“I’m sure we should be quite happy, if Ned was but here; I could hope for no greater comfort on this side the grave,” said the old man.

“Never fear, father, coil up your spirits; there was a large party of the Guards arrived from the continent the day before yesterday, and who knows but Ned may be amongst them.”

“God send he may, replied Hodgson, “that would be a joyful sight to have you all once more about me.”

In this manner they spent the remainder of the evening, when a good warm bed was got ready for Ben to stretch his weary limbs on.

Next morning, as foretold, Ned arrived at the farm in a corporal’s dress. He was much altered in appearance, quite weather-beaten and harrassed; and, had he not spoken to them first, they would have taken some time to recog-

father and mother, and this comfortable house over my head, it was the devil himself only could have forced me to it; though I saw my uncle before me as great an object as I am now; notwithstanding all his warning and cautions, and all entreaties, I was deaf to every thing but my own headstrong humour, and so was to take the consequence. I thought to have entered as a volunteer, and got some bounty; as I was thinking on't, I was overtaken by a press-gang, who hauled me along, and soon clapped me under hatches aboard a tender in the river; there I laid, almost suffocated, till I was shipped on board the Vanguard, a seventy-four, then riding in the Downs. There were upwards of six-hundred hands aboard; and such wicked, profane talk, I never heard before. I became dreadfully sea-sick, but was laughed at. When we put to sea, and were rolling in the Bay of Biscay, a terrible storm came on, and I gave myself up for lost; then did I

think of home—but it was too late.—In short, were I to recount all my hardships, it would fill a volume. I have been several times flogged for trifles, and sometimes for faults committed by others. I grew weary of my life, and quite melancholy. My countenance was watched. I was thought guilty of some concealed crime, by my silence and avoiding company. Of all men, sailors are the most superstitious: it had been continual foul weather since I had entered the ship, and the whole crew laid it to me, and petitioned to have me discharged, and transferred to another ship; accordingly, I was discharged in disgrace, with a round dozen across my shoulders, by way of farewell.

“ I fared much the same in three different vessels which I was made over to. This cruel treatment, I looked on as a just judgement, and have often exclaimed, ‘I deserve it all—I have brought it all on myself—I am an abandoned and wicked wretch,’ and such-like de-

sparing accents; all of which I uttered in my agony, and was overheard, and reported to my disadvantage,

“ As soon as we arrived in the West Indies, I determined, if ever I got foot on shore, to desert; an opportunity soon offered; I was sent ashore in a barge to Kingston, in Jamaica, and I ran up the country as fast as I could. I verily believe I was mad. I was caught, and brought back in three days; and my sentence was, to be flogged through the fleet. This dreadful punishment is inflicted in the following manner: you are placed at the gangway, and the boatswain's mate lays a cat o' nine tails (which is a kind of whip composed of nine pieces of whip-cord, each having nine hard knots at the end, tied to the end of a short stick,) across your naked shoulders, with all his might, so that eighty-one hard knots strike into and tear your flesh at every stroke. As soon as you have received a dozen lashes on board your own ship, you are taken in a

boat alongside another, when another boatswain's-mate descends and gives you a fresh dozen, and so on. You are thus taken from ship to ship, and receive a dozen lashes at each, even if there were twenty. Some men die before they go through half the punishment. I had only four ships to go through, but so severe was the punishment, that I carry the marks to this day, though it is several years since.

“ Nor is this all a poor seaman has to encounter; the hardships they are compelled to undergo are enough to make any man tired of his life; sent aloft in the middle of the night, and in the midst of a storm, without a dry rag on; or pumping till you drop, and if you dare to rest ever so little, roused with a hard rope's end. Many a time have I wished the enemy would pop me off, but I was not to be so happy; and I had to endure more for my obstinate disobedience.

“ The only good captain I ever sailed with was Captain Walker; he was a

brave officer, and a religious, worthy, humane man. I was, I may say, comfortable under him; but he was soon moved. I got this wound with a splinter in fighting the Americans, not long since, and it plagues me sorely. In short, I have seen enough; been in the four quarters of the world; and all for what?—to come back at last a cripple, with a broken constitution, and to be cheated out of my hard-earned wages and prize-money by swindling agents.”

Ben now ended, and Ned, his brother, the soldier, began.

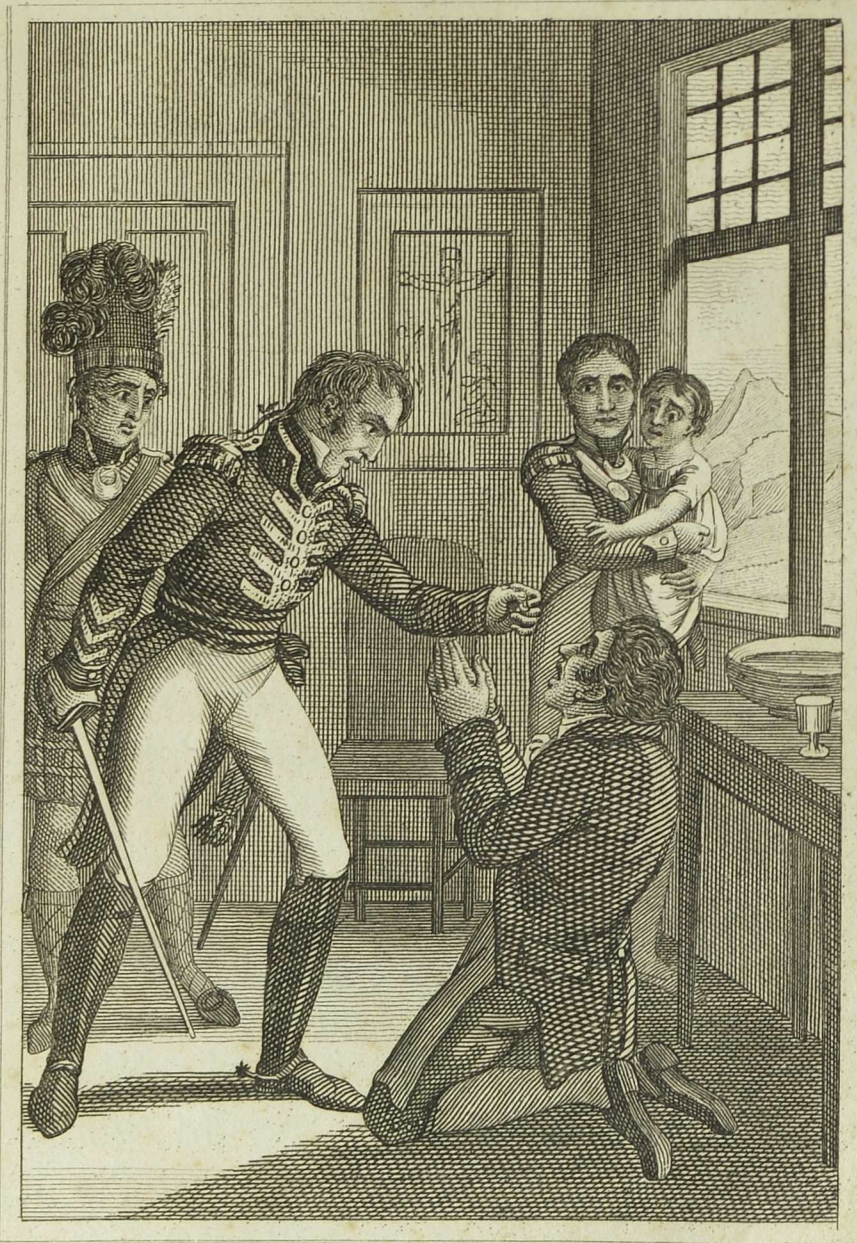
“ You expect, my good friends, a fine account of the battles I have been in, and how many of the enemy I have killed with my own hands; but I shan't use you as that rascal, Serjeant Bounce, used me and the rest of his recruits; he was the greatest rogue in Christendom. The silver-watch I had of him, he swore cost five guineas, but the works came to pieces in a week, and I was glad to get twelve shillings for it as old silver.

How much bounty do you think I received?" "Ten guineas, Ned; you told me so before you left us," said a young farmer. "So I ought; but I got no more than fifty shillings in all; all the rest went for necessaries, but which I was not allowed to furnish myself with, so paid the serjeant triple for every thing.

"I soon began to be tired of parade—never a moment to one's-self; but when ordered abroad, what work! what toil! 'tis then, indeed, the life of a soldier is beginning. You must embark in a transport, three or four hundred are crammed into a single vessel; many are drowned in getting ashore; some knocked on the head the next day; hundreds of dead bodies, and dying and wounded soldiers, stretched on the bare earth, unnoticed and unpitied, every man too busy for himself. Oh! 'tis a shocking sight! too dreadful to dwell upon. But even this is but a trifling part of the hardships and difficulties which the poor

soldiers are compelled to encounter. If you should happen to escape wounds and death, you are made to march till you drop by the road; and then, for some trifling neglect, through fatigue, perhaps, you are sentenced to receive fifty lashes; your knapsack is immediately afterwards placed on your shoulders, and you obliged to march fifteen or twenty miles in that condition.

“ Sometimes you are three days without food, or without shoes; destitute of shelter, save the canopy of heaven; and if you dare to murmur or complain, you are a mutinous scoundrel, and the cat goes to work on your back. I’ve seen ten counted between every stroke, and the drummers spread every string, and separate them with his fingers, to make them cut more distinctly. When the poor fellows have fainted, as they frequently do, water is given, and as soon as they have swallowed it, the cat begins again. These are some of the pleasures of a soldier’s life.



Sir Watkin Wynne discovering the vile plot of the Inkeeper to poison him and his party.

Pages 56 & 57.

“ But I will leave this gloomy subject, and relate something that will be more deserving of your attention. I’ll tell you a circumstance that happened while I was in Spain; the truth of it I can vouch for, as I was a prisoner at the same time.

“ You may, perhaps, remember how the late brave, but unfortunate Sir John Moore, was obliged to measure his steps back to Corunna with as much haste as possible. We had been sadly misled by false friends, to ensnare us. The French, under Marshal Soult, were 70,000 strong, and we but 23,000 poor fellows, quite worn out and harrassed. You may judge of the confusion we were in, notwithstanding the order and regulation that was enforced. Many poor fellows dropped by the way, and were made prisoners; I was one; my feet were so torn, cut, and blistered, that I could scarcely move, and so I fell into their hands; but the scene I saw afterwards made me think little of my

own situation. The wife of a poor Highlander, with her new-born babe on her breast, lay on the road, gasping for life. She was speechless, and almost frozen with cold. The French officer and his party, who passed close by, as soon as he beheld her situation, immediately halted, and ordered assistance; he wet her and the infant's mouths with some wine, and then had her placed as tenderly as possible on their baggage, where I was likewise placed, seeing the miserable condition my feet were in. As we were an advanced party, and not belonging to the main body, who were in pursuit of the British, we soon turned off the main road, and in about two hours entered into a neat village, where the troops took possession immediately of a large sumptuous mansion, in the gothic style, which the French officer no sooner entered, and seeing a fine-dressed Spanish lady reclining on a couch, with a lap-dog in her arms, than he seized the little animal, kicked it out

of the room, and placed the poor Scots-woman's infant in the lady's lap, telling her, 'it was fitter for her to nurse that poor perishing child, than her little, ugly, pampered brute.

"But nothing could prevail on this fine lady to perform so humane an office. She went about her house, wringing her hands, and thought more of her dog than the presence of the French. This provoked the officer, who treated her with no further ceremony, but instantly ordered the best bed in the house to be got ready for the poor woman and child, and every servant to wait upon her, as if she had been their mistress.

"Never was Sawney's wife treated in so grand a style; never did she fare so sumptuously; and she would have been content to have remained a prisoner all her life, to be used in such a manner. She grew quite plump and hearty in the space of a few weeks. We remained their prisoners; for it chanced that this woman and myself were the only cap-

tives this party had made. I too was treated in the most hospitable manner. I never lived so well in my life; I had a comfortable bed to myself, for the house was immensely large. But I believe I owed my treatment to the kind offices that one of our Guards afforded this same French officer, which he had the gratitude to relate to me, and was as follows:—It happened that this officer, on a former occasion, had fallen in with a party of armed Spanish peasantry, who overpowered the few soldiers who were with him, and though they surrendered to overwhelming numbers, coolly massacred all his men, and were in the very act of piking him through the body, when a British Grenadier of the Guards, passing along with his brigade, which fortunately arrived in time, seeing the transaction, rushed forward, and with the butt-end of his firelock knocked the Spaniard to the ground, took the officer's sword from the assassin, and returned it to the Frenchmen, saying, "Now,

defend yourself against your enemy, if you can.' The Spanish peasants, as ignorant as barbarous, seeing the British close upon them, took them for French, and away they scampered as fast as they could. Five-and-thirty Frenchmen lay weltering in their blood—a shocking sight!—this poor officer the only survivor! On receiving his sword, he approached the British commander, who now appeared in view, and kneeling, presented him his sword: 'No, monsieur,' replied the English colonel, 'since you owe your life to one of my brave fellows, I shall not be ungenerous enough to deprive you of your liberty, without which life is no longer valuable. Go, sir, you are free: a solitary captive is no triumph. And if, hereafter, a British priosner falls in your way, call to mind your present situation, and act accordingly.' 'You, then, are my solitary captive,' said this generous Frenchman to me; 'and, as an English soldier preserved my life, and scorned to take

me prisoner, I shall give you, and the woman and child, your liberties, and supply you with the means of making to the nearest sea-port, where some vessel may take you on board, and convey you to England.' And I assure you, my friends, monsieur was as good as his word. We arrived in safety at Corunna, but no British vessel was there, all our troops had embarked; but at length we got on board a Portugueze schooner, which took us safe to Lisbon.

“How different was the behaviour of one of our Highlanders to a Frenchman whom he had overcome. When his disabled enemy cried out, ‘Quarter Quarter!’ the unfeeling wretch replied, ‘Hoot! hoot awa, mon! I’ve nae time to stay to quarter ye, I’ll cut ye in twa!’ And with that, he inhumanly hewed the poor suppliant down.”

“I’ll say that for our seamen,” cried Ben, “’tis not the rudest and the roughest fellows, but the most intrepid and the bravest, that are the most humane.

Where are there such brave men as our British tars? and yet there are none more generous and kind-hearted to an enemy. Our boats are out after an engagement to pick up all who have fallen overboard, as it frequently happens that many poor fellows are carried away with the masts or rigging; friend or foe, 'tis all one to Jack; if a brother tar requires help, 'tis nothing to him whether he be French, Spanish, or English."

When Ben had finished speaking, the party broke up; but before they departed, the brothers invited them all to come on the morrow, promising to continue the history of their travels; an invitation which was gladly accepted.

The next evening, agreeably to their appointment, a very numerous party assembled at Farmer Hodgson's, all eager to hear the further adventures of the two brothers. The young ones, in particular, were delighted with the tales they told, and to which they paid the greatest attention.

“How comes it, Ben,” said one of their former companions, who was now of a serious turn, “that soldiers and sailors are in general so prophane, and such cursers and swearers? I am often surprised at the victories you gain, and that Heaven prospers our arms, when they are committed to hands so impious.”

“Why, to say the real truth, neighbour Wilson,” replied Ben, “your remark is very just, and a very proper one too; but all I can say, is,—for I don’t mean to defend the custom, which I own is too common, and too wicked to admit of any vindication,—I believe it arises from a bad habit, and from want of thought, for Jack, in general, is not much given to reflection; ay, and I will say it, to the neglect of our chaplains in general, who, to say no worse of them, are so very remiss in their duty, that they are soon totally disregarded by the men.”—

“But is it not also the fault of the captain?” said Wilson, “since it is his place to make every man perform his duty.”

“Certainly, my friend,” returned the sailor; “but the captain has a great deal on his mind, and may not always remember.” “That’s a poor excuse,” said Wilson. “However,” continued Ben, “it is the chaplain’s business to perform his duty without bidding. I remember a captain—Walker, I think his name was,—I once sailed with, who had succeeded to the ship, and to the most disorderly crew I ever saw. He was a very good, and religious man. Finding the chaplain neglect prayers, as usual, he took his prayer-book, and went through the service himself; when the chaplain appeared, he told him, that in future he would dispense with his services; and that he might return to his cabin, where he would confine him till he was discharged for neglect of duty.

The captain kept his word, and by his steady perseverance, soon wrought a wonderful change among the ship’s company. He would sooner punish a man for swearing than for any thing

else. Thus he proceeded, till the whole of the crew, from the most profligate, became the most regular and orderly of any in the fleet."

"Your story, brother," said the soldier, "reminds me of another, which I know to be a fact. A regiment, which happened to lie along with us, had an adjutant who was a terrible reprobate, and a very overbearing man; one of the privates belonging to his regiment said to his comrade, as the adjutant passed them, 'I'm sure, Robert, our adjutant is no gentleman; he is such a terrible swearer.' The officer turned about, and gave the soldier a furious look, and then walked on. On this, the comrade said to the poor fellow,—'I am afraid you will have cause to repent your remark.' The officer hastened home, and told his wife what the soldier had said, adding, he was determined to punish the fellow for his insolence. 'Nay, my dear,' replied his wife, 'you ought rather to thank the man. I have with pain ob-

served the horrid habit you have fallen into; and I took the liberty, yesterday, of listening to your conversation with your brother officers, over a bottle, and put it down, word for word, as you uttered it.' Upon this, she put into his hand a large sheet of paper, entirely filled, and written very closely, in which there was scarcely a line that did not contain one or two shocking oaths and unmeaning execrations. 'Take that, my dear, and read it attentively,' continued this worthy lady; 'every word is literally as you spoke it, and there is no addition, I assure you.' The adjutant took the paper; as he proceeded, he blushed; then, trembling, dropped it, and striking his forehead, exclaimed, 'Good Heaven!—is it possible? What an impious wretch am I!'—'Nay, read it to the end; and, not to mention the sin, think of the elegant and gentleman-like expressions it contains.'—'I cannot!—I cannot!—I can read no more! I'm almost shocked to death.—

Oh God! forgive me;’ He then embraced his wife, called her his guardian angel, and vowed, solemnly, on his knees, to break himself of the horrid habit.

“ In a few days after, he went to the soldier who made the remark to his comrade, and taking him by the hand, said, ‘ My worthy friend, I have come to return you thanks for the expression you made use of concerning me a few days since.’ The man trembled. ‘ Be not afraid, my honest fellow,’ continued the adjutant; ‘ I am not going to reprimand, but to reward you. You were my best friend; when you little thought of it; and in return, I have spoken to our colonel, and you are a serjeant from this hour. And from that time, the adjutant became a serious, mild, and worthy man.”

The children, as well as their parents, were greatly pleased with these stories and anecdotes, and the useful instruction they conveyed. “ Indeed,” exclaimed one of the female visitors, “ we, and our children, ought to be very much obliged

to you both for the trouble you have been at to collect all these entertaining stories. It was a pleasure to observe their looks while you were relating them. I dare say, every one of these little ones will remember every word you both have been telling them; and we shall hear scarcely any thing else from them for a month to come.

“ I am sure,” replied Ned the soldier, “ both my brother and I are very happy to oblige you; and if, while we entertain, we can improve the young folks, by cultivating good principles and good advice, and determining them, by our sad example, from obstinacy and disobedience, we are repaid. I will now relate one more, which you will all be surprised at,—how a little girl once saved the lives of a whole corps of officers: you may rely on it as a fact.—

“ During the late unfortunate Irish Rebellion, the Wicklow Mountains were infested by a desperate banditti, to the amount of some hundreds, headed by

one Dwyer, who styled himself Captain Dreadnought, and his men, Peep o' Day Boys. These men committed the most horrid depredations; cruel and fierce in their nature, they became more so by the course of life which they pursued.

“Sir Watkin Williams Wynne's corps of Ancient Britons was ordered on this service to scour the Mountains, and seize the ringleaders, and Dwyer in particular, for whose apprehension a large reward had been offered.

Now it happened that Sir Watkin, who was particularly fond of children, stopped at an inn in a village at the foot of one of these mountains. As he dismounted at the door, a little child, about five years of age, and who had before seen Sir Watkin, ran towards him; he took her in his arms, kissed her, and carried her into the parlour. The weather being warm, and he and his brother officers rather fatigued, he ordered a bowl of negus to be made. The landlord was some time in preparing

it, and the little girl was sent to hasten it; when she returned, she was very pale, and looked in a serious manner at Sir Watkyn. Presently the landlord appeared with the bowl. On seeing his daughter, he said, 'What do you do there, Miss? come away, and don't tease the gentlemen.'—'Oh, let her stay,' replied Sir Watkin; 'she and I are old acquaintance.' The landlord left the room, and Sir Watkin filled the glasses; on going to drink, the little girl caught his arm, and cried out,—'Don't! don't! you'll be sick!' Alarmed at this, the glasses were instantly emptied into the bowl, and the surgeon was desired to examine it. As soon as the sediment had settled, he poured off the wine, and on looking at the dregs, to the surprise and horror of all present, he declared a quantity of arsenic was mixed with the sugar and ginger. The bowl was carefully wiped, and the bell was rung. The landlord entered. 'Make another bowl immediately,' exclaimed Sir Wat-

kin, 'for we are in haste: the last was excellent.' The landlord took up the bowl with a trembling hand, saying, — 'It shall be ready in a moment.

"When he returned with the other bowl, Sir Watkin arose, and fastened the door.' 'Now, my honest, worthy fellow, you must drink our healths, and his Majesty's; and success to his arms, and confusion to all rebels and traitors.' The landlord, trembling, took the bowl, repeated the toast, and just tasting, put the bowl down again, saying,—'You'll excuse me, gentlemen, I am very busy; and I never touch any wine or spirits in a morning.'—'Nay, nay, my fine fellow,' said Sir Watkin, 'we cannot excuse you; you must take a hearty pull: 'tis of your own making; and if it is only as good as the last——' 'I assure you, your honour, that it is equally good as the other.'—'Then drink,' cried the colonel.—'Dear sir, I can't; you must pardon me: pray excuse me.'—'Drink, villain! immediately,' exclaimed the en-

raged Sir Watkin, drawing his sword, 'or this moment is your last!' The landlord fell on his knees, and begging for mercy, confessed that he was privately leagued with Dwyer and his associates, who had made him promise to poison all the soldiers that came to his house. Sir Watkin instantly ordered the wretch to be bound, hand and foot, and an escort of his corps to convey him to the county-jail.

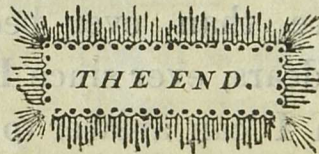
When Sir Watkin departed, he took the little girl who had so providentially saved their lives, away with him, to provide for her for life; and I believe, such is his care, that she now resides at his country mansion in Denbighshire.

"Thus you see how kindness to children is sometimes repaid; for my part, I have more than ever been partial to the little dears, ever since I heard the story, which I can answer to be an authentic one."

The whole company were highly gratified by their tales, and, after returning

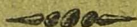
their thanks to the brothers, they broke up; but before they departed, most of them obtained a promise from both Ned and Ben, that they would return the visits they had received.

The brothers, restored to the confidence of their parents, relatives, and friends, became steady and serious men. They applied themselves to their former youthful occupations, but their constitutions were broken by the fatigues they had undergone, which rendered them incapable of great exertions, and often made them repent the day they left their father's house to roam in foreign countries, and to waste the best period of their lives.



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