

burial of his Jeanie, William Ainslie departed from Elsington; and what were his future fortunes no one can tell, for he never was seen or heard of again in his native place. As for the unhappy woman who was the occasion of the lamentable catastrophe which we have related, she lived to deplore the rashness of which she was guilty. Let us hope that the circumstance had an influence on her future conduct, and will not be without its moral efficacy in the minds of our readers.

SMALL BEGINNINGS.

WHO does not know the importance of trifles, so called?—and who, in the present day, when we have learned that we owe our chalky cliffs to insects, and that the same apparently insignificant creatures have gemmed the sea with islands of coral, will venture to despise “small beginnings.”

If we look closely into life, we shall find, that in it as in nature, scarcely any event is of itself unimportant, or incapable of being turned to useful account. The poet tells us that

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

And this is true; but there are also unnoticed currents and shifting winds playing over the great ocean of time, and these, if skillfully and boldly seized, may prove as important to our progress as the mighty flood-tide itself. Our readers have, doubtless, long since remarked, out of what slender threads the web of great fortunes have been woven by skillful and energetic hands, using means and seizing opportunities which the feeble or indolent either overlook or despise. A few remarkable instances of thus “compelling fortune,” we are now about to offer them—the successful result of one of which came under our own personal observation, while the heroine of another is at this present time living in France. Giving her history the precedence due to her sex, we shall begin with it, and thus show our readers the importance of a handful of wool! Eugénie was the daughter of a merchant living at Marseilles, and in her early youth married a Catalan officer, in the service of Don Carlos. She followed his fortunes through all the disastrous chances of civil war, suffering, during this period, privations and dangers, which were doubtless needful to nerve her frame and mind for the trying lot which awaited her. In one of the guerilla skirmishes of the war, he fell, and lay unburied on the mountain height; but the heroic love of his wife would not suffer his remains to be left for the carrion-crow, “or the wolf to batten o’er him.” In the silence and darkness of night, she dug a grave for him with her own hands—a task fraught with as much peril as that which threatened the Antigone of Grecian fable, or even greater; for no Creon ever equaled in barbarity the ferocious soldiery of both sides in that hateful war. Neither her sex nor her foreign birth would have saved her, had a Christino found her engaged in her holy task. Dramatic fiction surely never imagined a more terrible situation than

this, with all its adjuncts of wild mountain scenery, the gloom of darkening night, and threatening dangers—not to speak of the heart-suffering of the actor in it—the woman whose delicate hands labored to form a grave for her beloved. The task was, however, achieved in safety, and then the young widow fled, with her two infant children, into the deepest solitudes of the hills, taking refuge, finally, in an old ruined convent, situated on a steep acclivity, and visited only occasionally by shepherds, who brought their flocks from the valleys below to the mountain pastures. One can scarcely fancy a more wretched or hopeless position. She was utterly peniless; and the only comfort nature afforded her, was the abundant wood to be found near the spot. Of this, the dauntless mother laid in a good supply ere winter. She also offered to assist the shepherds in tending their sheep, and to stable them during the night in her ruined dwelling; while, in return for these pastoral services, she received from them a scanty crust and milk for her infants. The peasants, touched by her patience and industry, bore the tidings of the strange lady’s doings to their own homes in the valley; and, moved by curiosity, the women, when next they came up with food for their husbands, visited the recluse. She entered frankly into conversation with her guests.

“It is a long and weary journey for you the days you are obliged to ascend the mountain, and a great hindrance to your work?”

“Yes, señora.”

“And it must be dull in your lonely homes, when your husbands are away?”

Again an affirmative reply.

“Well, if you like, I will clear out the great refectory of the convent, and you may bring your wheels and spin here together.”

The offer was thankfully accepted, and the whole female population of the village soon assembled daily in the large airy hall, bringing their children with them. They came at the peep of dawn, and returned late at night to the dull hovels below. The contrast must have been a delightful one, from the monotony and gloom of the valley beneath. Here they had light, fresh air, warmth—wood being abundant—and the fellowship of others. At the end of each week the grateful peasants presented to their benefactress—for such, in truth, she was—a handful of spun wool each, and out of this small offering she wove her fortune. Descending occasionally to the nearest town, she sold those little wool-gatherings, and in a few months had accumulated enough to purchase the shepherds’ raw wool, and to beg for an hour’s labor, instead of the handful of material from her guests. Before the summer was over, she collected, by management and industry, enough of money to pay them for their work; and, at the next sheep-shearing, she became the purchaser of more than half the wool.

Her energy and talent inspired her poor neighbors with similar zeal and activity. They spun merrily and briskly under her eye, sure of a purchaser for the produce of their labor, without

having to wend their steps down the mountains. It is surprising what the impetus of a master-mind can achieve. Labor gained a new life from the example of the spirited Frenchwoman; every thing prospered with the mountain Arachnes; and during the second spring following her first appearance among them, Madame L—— was able to leave her children to their care, and journey, under the escort of some of her shepherd friends, to the frontier, where she contracted with one of the greatest wool-buyers of France for the produce of the next winter's spinning.

In three years the old convent was converted into a spinning-factory; became renowned throughout the north of Spain for the fineness of its produce; and proved a source of domestic comfort and prosperity to the poor peasants who had once, out of their humble means, exercised charity toward its desolate inmate.

Madame L——'s web of good fortune waxed every year. She is now a wealthy capitalist. She has four factories in Spain, and seven in France, besides cotton and flax mills in Belgium. She has by her energy, prudence, and kindness, compelled fortune; and out of a handful of wool, has extracted prosperity for herself, her children, and the many who labor for her. Her character appears to us in every respect a counterpart of that of the wise woman of the Proverbs, with a nearness of resemblance indeed surprising, when found under the influences and prejudices of western civilization. We have heard that she has not lost any of her really great qualities under the trial of prosperity, but continues as energetic, patient, and simple in her habits, as when she dwelt in desolate penury on the hills of Spain.

Above the grave, so touchingly hallowed by the circumstances of its formation, there now stands, in a wild and solitary pass near Proboda, a magnificent monument of white marble, bearing, in letters of gold, the name—"Jago L——, Aged 27." In poverty and wealth, the love of that faithful wife is changeless.

And now, transporting our readers from the Pyrenees to the palm-groves, we will endeavor to illustrate the title of our article by an Oriental tale, which, when we first heard it, recalled to our memory the once devoutly-believed stories of the *Arabian Nights*. There dwelt, many years ago, in the island of Bombay, a young Parsee, or fire-worshiper, one of the poorest of his tribe, but endowed with a sagacity as great as that of the more cultivated dame of Christendom, and with as large and benevolent a heart. This man began life with less substantial grounds for hope than the dreamer Alnaschar possessed; for whereas he of the Arabian story had a basket-full of glass and earthenware, our modern Guebre possessed but two old wine-bottles! They were, to be sure, of more value there than they are here, being articles held in great estimation in some parts of India—as, for example, in Scinde, where, when it was first occupied by the British, a couple of fowls could be obtained for an old porter-bottle. Still, it was a decidedly "small beginning" for a merchant; but he managed to

sell them advantageously; bought more; again made a profitable bargain, and became a regular *bottle wallah*—that is, seller of bottles. In a country where nature so abundantly supplies the wants of her children—where a basket of charcoal and a handful of rice form the *cuisine* of the poor, it is easier to save, than in a land where many wants consume the hard-earned pittance. Our Parsee accumulated annas till they grew into rupees, and became a thriving trader. Then the opium-trade engaged his attention. Some doubtful speculation in it was mentioned in his presence, and seeing with instinctive sagacity the probable profit, he closed with the proposal unhesitatingly; and thus—for it proved most successful—in the words of the friend who told me his history, "he cleared £10,000 by a stroke of his pen." From that moment, his rise to the summit of prosperous fortune was rapid. Nor could it be called the work of chance, or a mere caprice of destiny. He studied to meet the exigencies of his new position. He learned to speak the language, and understand, in a great measure, the commercial policy of the European strangers who rule the land. He was industrious, self-denying, and quick-witted. When we saw him, in his advancing age, he possessed, as the fruit of his own thought and energy, an income of some hundreds of thousands yearly; and he spent his wealth as liberally as he had earned it carefully. His charity scarcely knew a bound. In one year, he gave away in alms to the poor, English and natives, the enormous sum of £90,000, for which he received the thanks of the Queen of England, and her likeness set in diamonds, besides the first title of knighthood bestowed on an Oriental since the days of Saladin. He founded a noble hospital. His wife gave her jewels to form a causeway between the islands of Bombay and Salsette, many lives having been lost among the natives in making the somewhat dangerous *trajet*; and he never drove out without carrying in his carriage bags of small coin, to fling to the mendicants who thronged his path. It was while seated at his own table—in a bungalow he had purchased on the Kandallah Hills, and which he lent to our party as a place of rest during the ascent—that we first heard the story of the achievement of this wealth, and, gazing on the splendor around us, the "two bottles" appeared little else than an Eastern fable. The land for many a mile round was his; the plantations of roses, covering whole acres, and so sweetly clothing the wild mountain-side, were but a lovely portion of his merchandise—their essence but a fragrant addition to his heaps of gold. And then the luxury of this country retreat! The European furniture—the costly china dinner-service, manufactured for him, and bearing his arms and initials—the plate, and servants, and rich viands—all from such a small beginning! It was marvelous as a fairy tale.

Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy is now no more; but the memory of his good deeds is still and will be long cherished in the East.

We can not conclude our sketch of "small beginnings" without speaking of a certain singular little republic which has some claim to be remembered under such a heading, though its history is no modern instance, and will lead us some fourteen or fifteen hundred years into the shadows of the past. It is only befitting the antiquity of the tale, to say that, once upon a time, there existed a certain peasant of Dalmatia, named Marino, who was by trade a mason—a worthy, honest, industrious man, and devout according to the light vouchsafed to him. This artisan was employed in the reparation of the town of Rimini; and when his task was ended, he retreated to a neighboring mountain, built for himself a cell, and embraced the life of a hermit. After a time, his sanctity and charity were rumored abroad; and the lady of the land—the Princess of Rimini—visited his hermitage, was charmed by his piety and intelligence, and bestowed on him as a gift the high and craggy mountain where he had fixed his home: no very great bounty, if we consider that its summit, usually veiled in clouds, was covered with eternal snow; but Marino, or, as he was now styled, St. Marino, turned the barren land to good account. He invited all whom he deemed worthy of sharing his solitude; many a lowly and homeless peasant, many a wanderer seeking a precarious crust, to dwell with him in this eagle's aerie. Nor did he, as might have been supposed probable, enjoin a monastic life on them. On the contrary, he assisted and directed their labor in the construction of a town, and in the cultivation of such parts of the mountain as were capable of being rendered productive. A more useful saint never lived! As there was neither spring nor fountain on the hill, he taught them to construct huge cisterns and reservoirs, which they filled with snow-water, or left for the reception of rain. They planted vineyards on the mountain-sides, which produced excellent wine, and became in a brief space a flourishing colony.

San Marino gave them wise and just laws; lived to see his poor brethren prosperous and happy; and dying, became their tutelary saint, had a church dedicated in his name, and a statue erected to his honor.

The miniature republic of San Marino existed for centuries, free and unchanged, amid all the mutations of the governments of Italy; and Addison, in his *Travels*, gives us a pretty picture of this tiniest of independent states; to which there was but one road, a severe law prohibiting its people from making a new way up the mountain—where the chief officers of state were two *capitanos* (answering to the old Roman consuls, but chosen every six months), a commissary or lawyer, a physician and a schoolmaster—where every body had "some tincture of learning," and the ambassador of which, when sent to a foreign state, "was allowed out of the treasury *one shilling a day*!"—where the people possessed the simplicity and virtues of the golden age, and revered for centuries the memory of the peasant

who had given their forefathers a home, and bequeathed to them an inheritance of freedom and contentment.

BLEAK HOUSE.*

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XLVII.—Jo's WILL.

AS Allan Woodcourt and Jo proceed along the streets, where the high church spires and the distances are so near and clear in the morning light that the city itself seems renewed by rest, Allan revolves in his mind how and where he shall bestow his companion. "It surely is a strange fact," he considers, "that in the heart of a civilized world this creature in human form should be more difficult to dispose of than an unknown dog." But it is none the less a fact because of its strangeness, and the difficulty remains.

At first he looks behind him often, to assure himself that Jo is still really following. But, look where he will, he still beholds him close to the opposite houses, making his way with his wary hand from brick to brick and from door to door, and often, as he creeps along, glancing over at him, watchfully. Soon satisfied that the last thing in his thoughts is to give him the slip, Allan goes on considering with a less divided attention what he shall do.

A breakfast-stall at a street corner suggests the first thing to be done. He stops there, looks round, and beckons Jo. Jo crosses, and comes halting and shuffling up, slowly scooping the knuckles of his right hand round and round in the hollowed palm of his left—kneading dirt with a natural pestle and mortar. What is a dainty repast to Jo is then set before him, and he begins to gulp the coffee, and to gnaw the bread and butter; looking anxiously about him in all directions as he eats and drinks, like a scared animal.

But he is so sick and miserable, that even hunger has abandoned him. "I thought I was almost a starvin, sir," says Jo, soon putting down his food; "but I don't know nothink—not even that. I don't care for eating wittles nor yet for drinking on em." And Jo stands shivering, and looking at the breakfast wonderingly.

Allan Woodcourt lays his hands upon his pulse, and on his chest. "Draw breath, Jo!" "It draws," says Jo, "as heavy as a cart." He might add, "and rattles like it;" but he only mutters, "I'm a moving on, sir."

Allan looks about for an apothecary's shop. There is none at hand, but a tavern does as well or better. He soon obtains a little measure of wine, and gives the lad a portion of it, very carefully. He begins to revive, almost as soon as it passes his lips. "We may repeat that dose, Jo," observes Allan, after watching him with his attentive face. "So! Now we will take five minutes rest, and then go on again."

Leaving the boy sitting on the bench of the breakfast-stall, with his back against an iron rail—

* Continued from the May Number.