



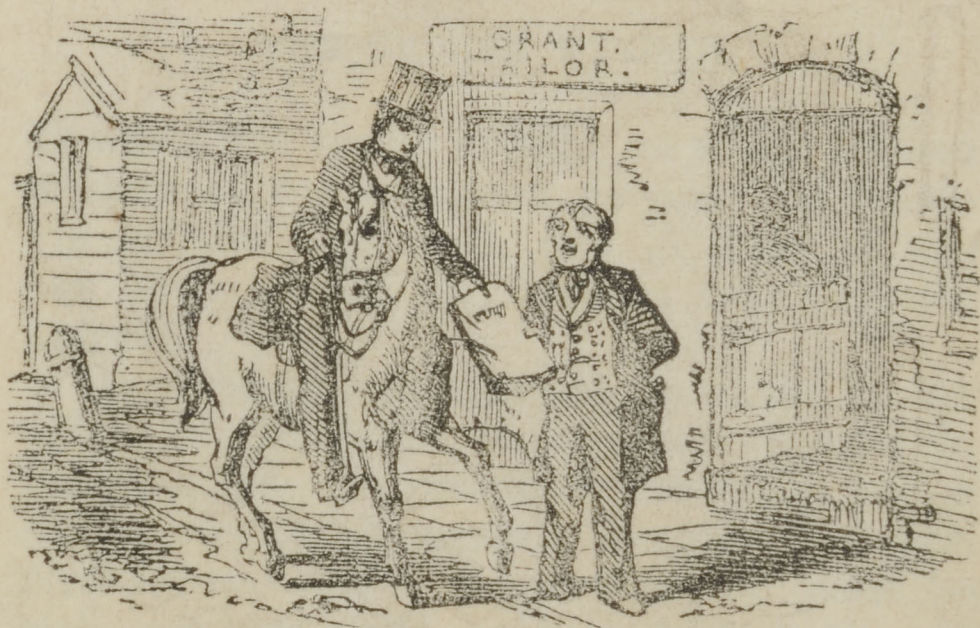


Take care—take care.

W. D. Brown

# DAVID ALLEN;

## A Village Tale.



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# David Allen; a Village Tale.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BROKEN WINDOW.

It was a fine spring evening on which a dozen or more village boys were playing and romping on the high road, just in front of the new house which Mr. Graham had built for himself.

Mr. Graham was no great favourite in the village of Greenfield, for he was a stranger in the place, and the people of Greenfield had a silly dislike to strangers. Besides this, Mr. Graham was rich:—oh, certainly he must be rich, else how could he have bought the six acre meadow, and built a new house on a part of it, and spent a wonderful sight of money as well, in laying out the rest of the ground in gardens and shrubberies? Yes, yes, Mr. Graham was rich, and the folks at Greenfield were most of them poor, labouring people; and they were rather jealous of having a rich man for a neighbour.

They might, however, have got over this feeling; but there was another and a more

natural cause for the dislike with which Mr. Graham was looked upon by his poor neighbours ; he was not always considerate or courteous towards them in his manners and speech. It is true he employed several of the poor men of Greenfield, and paid them good wages, and thus was doing them and their families real good. But he was stern and rough ; he made no scruple in telling his workmen that they were as idle a set of fellows as ever he had seen, and that they cared for nothing but their beer and their pay : and he had a way of 'ordering them about,' as they said, 'in a manner that was very hard for flesh and blood to bear.'

No one could deny that Mr. Graham was charitable to his poor neighbours when any of them were really in distress, nor that Mrs. Graham was often in the cottages around, trying, in her way, to increase the comforts of their inhabitants. But these benefits were not received very graciously, for the lady, too, had a way of finding fault, and she was apt to scold the poor women of Greenfield for not keeping their houses clean, and their children orderly and neat. And Mr. Graham had given great offence, by complaining of the pig-sties and dunghills which were stacked up close to almost all the cottage walls, and by threatening to have them removed by law.

'Let him try his hand at it,' said the people of Greenfield, young and old ; 'and we will soon see who is master. He thinks he can do everything because he has got money, but he can't though.'

Then, Mr. Graham always would wear a white hat, with a brim turned up with green beaver. Such a queer hat had never before been seen in Greenfield within the memory of man, and almost everybody in the village grinned and jeered when they first saw this queer hat, while the boys hooted and shouted after it and its wearer as they passed together along the road. And when it was found that, in spite of grins and laughter, Mr. Graham would wear his white and green hat, his conduct was looked upon as an insult to the taste and good sense of all Greenfield. So, of course, the villagers took offence at this.

There was another cause for the ill-will of the youths and boys of the village to this gentleman. Before he had bought and built upon the six acre meadow, it had been their regular play ground: and they did not see what right Mr. Graham, or any other Mister or Master had to deprive them of it.

To begin the story again, therefore, the dozen or more boys who, on that fine spring evening, were playing and romping in front of the new house, seemed highly delighted to find that Mr. Graham showed signs of being annoyed.

'Boys,' shouted the gentleman, throwing up the drawing room window before he spoke; 'go farther off, boys. You have no business to make such an uproar before any person's dwelling.'

'Shan't go for you,' drawled out a big boy from the crowd of smaller ones; 'you can't hinder us from playing here as long as we like.'

‘ We shall soon see that, my man,’ exclaimed Mr. Graham, angrily ; and he was directly afterwards seen coming out of his house with a horse-whip in his hand.

The big boy was the first to run off when he saw this instrument brandished in the air ; and the lesser ones were not slow in following his example. But if Mr. Graham fancied he had thus easily got rid of his tormentors, he was mistaken. He had scarcely returned to his house and shut down his window, before fresh shouts reached his ear ; the boys had renewed their game, taking care, however, to watch, lest the horse-whip should fall upon them unawares.

But they were in no further danger from the horse whip, for Mr. Graham felt rather ashamed of having given way to hasty anger, and resolved to take no further notice of the noisy group, wisely judging that they would leave off when they were tired, and that opposition would only prolong the annoyance.

So the boys romped and shouted until they were hoarse, and then they began to play with a ball and bat. It was a good wide road for them, and, for a time, they kept up the game merrily ; but at length the ball was struck by an unskilful hand, it bounded over the low iron railing of Mr. Graham’s front garden, straight on to one of the drawing room windows.

Smash, crash, clatter, and jingle ! The large pane of glass was broken to shivers, and the ball fell into the lap of a little girl who was



sitting at the farther side of the room. Mr. Graham started upon his feet as he heard the crash, and—this time without the horse-whip—he hastened out of the house to find out, if he could, who had done the mischief. But quick as he was, the boys were quicker. No sooner were they conscious that a window was broken, than they were off as fast as their legs could carry them; and Mr. Graham reached his garden gate only in time to see the hindermost little urchin turning round the corner.

The injured gentleman ran down the road in chase of the culprits; but it was becoming dusk, and great stone in the middle of the path escaped his notice. He tripped against it, and fell forward with great force upon the rough ground, bruising his hands, knees, and face, as he fell. There was an end of the chase; and smarting with pain, Mr. Graham limped back again to his house, declaring that the people of Greenfield were a set of savages, and vowing all sorts of vengeance against the boys of the place, especially the boy who had broken his window—if he could but find him out.

By the time he reached his drawing room, however, his bad humour had disappeared; and when his darling daughter Edith—the little girl into whose lap the offending ball had fallen—kissed his bruised hands and face, and begged him not to think any more about it, he could even laugh at his misfortune; and he gave such a funny description of his wild-goose chase, as he called it, as made her laugh

heartily too; so that it might have seemed one of the funniest things in the world to have a window smashed now and then.



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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CONFESSION.

BEFORE we get any farther, I may as well tell you, in a few words, all that need be here known about Mr. Graham. For the greater part of his life he had been a busy tradesman in busy London; and had at length saved money enough to enable him to retire from trade. He liked a country life, and having, on some occasion, passed through Greenfield, he had taken a fancy to live in that village. So he bought the six-acre meadow, and built a house, as the reader has already been told. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and his only child, Edith, who, at the time of his leaving London, was about twelve years old.

A governess, a man-servant, and three maids made up the rest of his household; while a little pony chaise, with a pony to match, occupied the stable and coach-house on one side of Mr. Graham's premises. We will now go on with our story.

The morning after the affair of the broken window, as Mr. Graham sat at breakfast with his wife and daughter, Robert, the man-servant entered, and told his master that a little boy wanted to see him very particularly.

'What is his business, and who is he?' asked Mr. Graham.

'He says his name is David Allen, sir;' Robert replied; 'but he wont give me any message; he says he would rather see you himself.'

'Very well, he must wait then; or stay, take him round to the window, and I will hear what he has got to say there.'

'Allen,' said Mrs. Graham. 'That is the name of the widow woman that keeps a mangle in the village, and sells haberdashery. She has got a boy; is it he, I wonder?'

'A lazy, impudent young rogue, like all the rest of them, I dare say,' grumbled Mr. Graham, who had not quite forgotten the broken pane of glass, and his broken skin, which was at that time ornamented with bits of black sticking plaster. 'I should not wonder if he were one of the young rascals that were playing in the road last night, and now he has the impudence to come and beg of me, likely enough. But I will soon settle *his* business.

By this time the visitor, whatever might be

his concern with Mr. Graham, was standing in front of the breakfast room window, with his hat very tightly held between his hands, and his bare head bobbing up and down, like the head of a Chinese Mandarin—such as may sometimes be seen in a shop window, bowing to all the passengers on the pavement as they pass.

Very unlike in every other respect, however, to a Chinese Mandarin, was the ten-year old light, curly-haired, blue-eyed, ruddy-faced, and stout-built little fellow, who stood nodding at the window before the breakfast party. His clothes were patchy and worn, but they were neatly put on, and even Mr. Graham, in his own mind, dismissed the thought that one of his last night's tormentors stood before him.

'Well, my boy, what is your errand?' he asked, in a milder tone than was usual with him.

'If you please, sir,'—here the boy hesitated, stammered, and looked into the very bottom of the crown of his hat, as if his message lay there, and he were trying to read it.

'Don't be afraid, my man; speak out. What do you say your name is?'

'David Allen, sir; I live down in the street and my mother keeps shop, and a mangle.'

'Well, David, and what does your mother want?' continued Mr. Graham.

''Tisn't mother wants anything, sir,' replied David; 'only she sent me to—to—'

'Bless the boy,' exclaimed Mr. Graham impatiently: 'he means to stop there all day I believe. Do tell me what you came for, and have done with it.'

‘Please sir,’ said David, with a strong effort which made his blue eyes twinkle; ‘please sir, it was I that——’ another stop.

‘That what?’ inquired Mr. Graham sharply.

‘That broke your window last night, sir,’ said the boy, with a sort of desperate resolution.

‘Oh, you did, did you?’ replied Mr. Graham; ‘well, what have you to say about it?’

‘Please sir, I am very sorry——’

‘That wont mend the glass you broke, my lad,’ said the gentleman, very sternly.

The boy fumbled in his pocket, and pulling out a little bag, answered timidly; ‘please sir, tell me how much ’tis to pay.’

‘More money than you have to spare, I expect. Do you know that it will cost ten shillings to have that window mended?’

Little David turned very red, and then very pale, when he heard this. He put his little bag on the window sill inside, and sobbed out, ‘I have not got so much money as that, sir; but I will pay it; I will indeed, if you will trust me, sir.’

‘I don’t know about that, my man,’ replied Mr. Graham harshly; ‘let me see first how much you have brought.’ Saying this, he walked to the window, took the little bag, and emptied its contents on a table.

It was a curious medley. First there was a crooked sixpence, or what had once been sixpence, worn very thin and quite smooth. Then there was a shilling, of an old coinage, but as bright and perfect as when it first came out of the mint. There were also two

silver pennies of an ancient date, and one solitary sixpence besides. This was all the silver money ; but the bag contained, also, five bright farthings, three half-pennies, three pennies, one large two-penny piece in copper, and about half a dozen old penny tokens. Altogether, the real value of David Allen's treasure might amount to three shillings.

Without speaking a word while doing it, Mr. Graham examined and counted the coins, tied them up in the bag, unlocked a drawer, put the bag in it, and locked up the drawer again. He then said very coldly and gravely, 'Well, David, this wont much more than a quarter pay for the damage done ; when do you propose to bring the rest ?'

David seemed quite disheartened by Mr. Graham's proceedings ; nevertheless, he plucked up courage to say that his mother gave him a penny a week to spend, and that sometimes he earned a few pence, which he would bring from time to time, if Mr. Graham would take the money in that way.

Mr. Graham shook his head. 'It will be a long time before I get paid at this rate,' he said ; 'we must find some better plan than this presently ; but first of all, my lad, tell me what made you come to me at all ?'

'Please sir,' David answered ; 'I knew that it was I that broke the window ; and when I went home I told mother about it ; and she said I must come and tell you.'

'Quite right of your mother ; but why did you run away last night, instead of staying to tell me of the accident then ?'

'I thought you would catch me and beat me,' replied David; 'for you seemed so cross.'

'Cross, eh?' said Mr. Graham, in his sharp manner; 'cross you thought me, did you? And dont you think, my boy, that I had a right to be cross, when a parcel of rude, ill-bred boys were making an uproar in front of my house, and would not go away when they were told? You seem a decent sort of lad, I wonder you should have been among them: pray, do you go to school?'

'No, sir, only to Sunday School at Ashton; I go there every Sunday.'

'Oh, Sunday School, eh? Well, did they never tell you there that 'evil communications corrupt good manners'?'

'Yes, sir,' said David. 'I am very sorry, sir, that I did not go away when you told us last night.'

'I dare say you are; you would not have broken my window if you had. Well, you are a good boy, though, for coming to acknowledge your fault; so we wont say any more about that. But now, about paying for it. It is not right, is it, that I should bear the loss? Your confession wont help us out there, will it?'

'No, sir,' David answered, again looking into the depth of his hat.

'Well then, what shall we do? How do you spend your time, David?'

'I help mother mangle sometimes, sir; and go errands for her.'

'Well, you can work then; suppose now you were to come and work in my garden

three hours a day, or do any other odd jobs—are you willing to work out your debt in that way?’

‘Yes, sir,’ exclaimed David, brightening up.

‘Very well,’ continued the gentleman; ‘but mind, I must have my money’s worth out of you, some way or other. I mean to be fair; and you must be fair too. Now let us reckon. What do you think three hours work from such a little fellow as you are, is worth?’

‘I don’t know, sir,’ said the boy.

‘Well, I think if we say a penny an hour, it will be high wages, wont it? however, we will say that. Then six times three are eighteen—one and sixpence a week; and five times that will make seven shillings and sixpence. You must work then three hours a day, for five whole weeks, and then, if I keep your bag and what it contains, we shall stand about square with each other. Will that do?’

‘Yes sir, if you please,’ said David; ‘when shall I come, sir?’

‘There’s no time like the present, David; you had better begin now.’

‘May I run home, and tell mother, sir?’ said the boy.

‘O, by all means; come in an hour’s time, and I will set you to work.’

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‘Poor boy,’ said Mrs. Graham, when David had disappeared; ‘you don’t mean to make him work for nothing, do you, Mr. Graham?’

‘For nothing, my dear? certainly not; he



has had his pay beforehand, has he not, in the broken window?’

Little Edith thought her father was very hard upon poor David, but she did not say so, only that her eyes told tales.

As to widow Allen, she only told David, after hearing his story, that Mr. Graham had a right to take the debt out in work if he chose, and she encouraged him to be willing and industrious.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE LITTLE GARDENER.

FOUR weeks had passed away, and the last day of the fifth was come. In all this time, David had honourably fulfilled his engagement, but very little notice had been taken of him by Mr. Graham; indeed, the sharp and quick way in which that gentleman talk quite daunted the boy, and made him glad keep out of his way as much as he could.

It was not so, however, when Miss E was in sight; for Edith always had someth merry and kind to say to little David. tell the truth, Edith was very much concern that the young gardener had to toil every day in her father's garden, and get nothing for it; and much as she respected her father, she could not help thinking that, in this case, he was not doing just as he himself would like to be served. But little girls are not always the

best judges of their parents' actions, neither are little boys ; and those are the happiest, and generally the wisest children who trust everything to the kindness and wisdom of their parents and who are scarcely able to believe that what a father or a mother does *can be* wrong.

Perhaps Edith would have said—for she was a very trusting and affectionate child—  
'I do not think papa is wrong, only I don't just understand him, and I do feel for poor David.'

Well, the five weeks had nearly passed away when Mr. Graham went into the garden where David was at work.

'So David,' he said, in his usual sharp way, 'I suppose you are very glad your time is so near out, eh?'

'No, sir,' David answered, looking up from the piece of ground he was weeding,—  
'No, sir, not particularly.'

'Take care—take care,' shouted Mr. Graham, so loud and fierce, that David changed colour and almost trembled ; 'there, see what you have done—trodden down that plant, and broken off the finest flower-stem. Why don't you use your eyes, boy ? There, there, never mind now, you cannot mend it ; but you ought to be more careful. Well, I think you have worked pretty well, all things considered ; but you are not to think I am going to pay you for it,—you have had your pay out already, you know.'

'Yes sir.'

'And the bargain was for me to keep your money-bag and all its contents?'

‘ Yes sir : but—but—’ and David burst into tears.

‘ But what ?—there, you need not cry : speak out ; I like everybody about me to speak out,—but what, my man ?’

‘ If you please, sir,’ sobbed David, ‘ I should like the bag again, sir, it was my poor father’s, sir, and he is dead ; and some of the bits of money were his, sir. Oh, wouldn’t you let me work it out, if you please ? I’ll work five weeks more, sir, for my bag.’

‘ No, no,’ replied Mr. Graham, in a much kinder voice than that in which he had hitherto spoken ; ‘ No, no, David, that wouldn’t be fair, either. Let us have what is right. But if you value the bag, and the bits of money so much, why did you bring them to me ?’

‘ I did not think you would care to keep the bag, sir,’ said the boy ; ‘ and I had no other money, and mother hadn’t either, that morning. But if you wont let me work it out, would you please to let me change some of the bits of money, as soon as I can get any to change with ?’

‘ I did not say you should not work it out, David ; and since you wish it, you shall give me ten more days—three hours a day, you know. Ten times three will be thirty pence, that is two shillings and sixpence ; and with that and what you have already done, the broken window will be paid for. You can then have back your treasure ; will that do ?’

‘ Yes sir, thank you sir,’ was all that David could say.

## CHAPTER IV.

## EDITH.

Two or three days after the new arrangement spoken of in the last chapter, Edith Graham ran down the garden steps in search of David. She had a little book in her hand, wrapped in paper. After a short search, she found the young gardener sweeping the cut grass from a sloping piece of ground in the shrubbery, which had that morning been mowed.

‘I am glad I have found you at last, David,’ she said, ‘see, here is a new book for you; mamma said I might give it you: it was bought on purpose for you.’



David very willingly took the present into his hands, and thanked the giver very heartily and sincerely for her kindness.

‘You can write your name in it when you get home, you know,’ she said; ‘and you may put in it that it was given you by Edith Graham, if you please; for I bought it yesterday at Ashton with my own money. Papa said I might; and he says you are a good boy, and he likes you because you are industrious and not sly.’

‘Did he really say so, Miss?’ asked David eagerly, and blushing while he spoke.

‘Yes, he did really; so you need not be afraid of him. It is only his way to talk a little loud and quick. He is very kind: you don’t know how much I love him.’

‘I dare say you do, Miss,’ said David, with a sigh, and sweeping the grass with double energy; ‘I dare say you do. I had a father once,’ he added, but he spoke in so low a tone that Edith did not hear what he said.

‘And you will write your name in the book then?’

David shook his head mournfully: ‘I would like you to do it, if you please, Miss Graham, I—I—cannot write.’

‘Not write! Have you never learned to write, David?’

David told her that he had not; that there was no school in Greenfield; that the nearest school where he could be taught writing was at Ashton, three miles off; and that his mother could not afford to send him there.

‘What a sad pity!’ thought Edith; and

then, to satisfy her curiosity perhaps, she led on David to talk about his home and his mother.

‘Yes,’ said David, in answer to some question of Edith’s ; ‘Oh, yes, mother was better off once, when father was alive ; but that was a long while ago.’

‘How long ?’ asked the little maid.

David could not say how long exactly : it might be five or six years.

‘Did you live in Greenfield then ?’ Edith wanted to know.

‘Yes,’ said David, ‘but not where we do now ; we lived at Up-hill Farm.’ He then went on to say that when his father died, every thing his mother had was sold ; and his mother and himself were obliged to leave their comfortable home, and go into the little cottage in the village where they now lived. Some of the people, he said, had been kind to them ; and by that means his mother had been able to buy the mangle and a small stock of goods to help her to a living ; but for all that, they they often fared very hard—‘and,’ continued David, ‘mother sometimes frets about what is to become of us ; but I shall soon be able to work and earn money, I hope.’

Edith Graham went away quite affected by David’s simple story ; and while he was making up for the few minutes he had lost, and perhaps trying to drive away his sorrowful recollections by using his broom with double industry, the young lady had found her father, and was seated on a low stool by his side, in his own little parlour or counting-

house as he called it, with her face half-resting lovingly on his knee.

‘You are a coaxing young advocate,’ said Mr. Graham, when Edith had repeated to him all she had just heard from David’s own lips; ‘but you have thrown away a good many words. I knew the history of David before to-day.’

‘Is it not a pity he cannot go to school?’ asked Edith.

‘I think it is,’ replied Mr. Graham. ‘When children do not go to school, and have no employment for their time, they often get into mischief,—do they not?’

‘David is sorry he broke that window, I am sure,’ Edith said.

‘I dare say he is; though how you should be quite sure of it I do not see so clearly. However, he has nearly worked out the price of it, so the matter is settled.’

‘Papa,’ continued the persevering girl, ‘you have plenty of money, have you not?’

‘Plenty of money for all our wants, Edith—yes, I think I have.’

‘And David and his mother are very poor,’ said Edith, softly.

‘I am afraid they are, Edith,’ her father answered, ‘and what then?’

‘Oh, papa, you know what I mean: could you not give them a little of your money?’

‘O yes, Edith, I could certainly; but why should I do so?’

‘It would do them good, and make them happy,’ replied the young lady.

‘I am not quite sure of that, my dear girl,’

said Mr. Graham : ' money has not always that effect ; and it often happens that persons who freely give money away with the hope of doing good to their fellow-creatures, are greatly disappointed. It would be very easy for me, no doubt, and it might be pleasant too, to fill up David's little bag with silver, and send him home with it : but I am not so sure that it would be really kind to him or to his mother, to do so.'

Edith looked as though she did not understand her father.

' I will try to explain to you what I mean,' continued Mr. Graham. ' After a little time, the money thus given to the poor is spent ; and they are then left in the same condition, or nearly the same, that they were before, only, perhaps, they may have more wants and greater cravings.'

' But papa,' said Edith, ' I am sure you do give money to the poor sometimes, and often.'

' Yes, my girl, to those who cannot help themselves, such as the aged and the sick. But when there are ways of earning money by honest industry and exertion, I think it is better to put the poor into some such way than to give them money for doing nothing. Do you not think so?'

Edith could not deny this, and her father went on :

' You have heard of Peter the Great ?'

' Yes, papa ; he was emperor of Russia.'

' Well, I will tell you a story about him. He once spent some weeks in a part of his country where was a large manufactory of



iron; as was his custom, he wished to learn something about this manufacture, and for that purpose, he determined to work at the forge himself. It is said that he was at his post every day, and worked harder than any of the regular workmen, until, after a short space of time, he became a good blacksmith. The last day on which he was employed he forged eighteen poods of iron.'

'What is a pood, papa?' asked Edith, interrupting her father in his story.

'A pood, my dear, is forty pounds. Well, Peter forged eighteen poods of iron, and then he bade good-bye to his fellow-workmen, for he had other business to attend to.

'Soon afterwards, Peter called upon the owner of the ironworks, and, after thanking him for the sight of his establishment, with which he said he had been much gratified, he asked,

'How much do you pay a workman for forging a pood of iron?'

'Three copecks, or an altin,' replied the ironfounder.

'Very good,' said Peter; 'then on the last day I worked for you I earned eighteen altins, and I am come to be paid.'

'The manufacturer went to his desk, and got out eighteen ducats, which he laid before the emperor: 'I cannot think of offering less to a royal workman, please your majesty,' said he.

'Put up your ducats,' said Peter; 'I will not take more than I have earned. Give me my due. It will buy me a pair of shoes, which

you may see I am in want of ;' and he lifted his foot to show that the shoes he had on were the worse for wear.

'So the eighteen altins were paid him ; and the emperor went directly to a shop, and bought a pair of shoes, which he put on with great delight. He thought he had never before had such a famous pair of shoes ; he showed them with triumph to those about him. 'See,' said he, 'how well they fit ; what good shoes they are ; I have earned them well : they were purchased by the sweat of my brow, with hammer and anvil.' There Edith, what do you think of the story ?'

'It is a very good one,' Edith answered, 'and I think I know your meaning.'

'That what is obtained by industry or exertion is more valued and more valuable than what is obtained without effort,—is not that it ?'

'Yes papa.'

'Well then, young lady, is not that a very good reason why I should not do what you seem to wish,—that is, give my money for nothing to David Allen and his mother.'

'But,' replied Edith, 'it would not be quite for nothing ; for David has worked for you, has he not, papa ? And besides, though they do work, they have not enough—not enough to eat sometimes, David says.'

'That is sad, certainly,' said Mr. Graham ; but let us see if something else cannot be done for them, instead of paying them for being idle : for that is what money is too often given away for. But first of all, I must tell you that

I do not intend to pay David—with money at least—for the work he has already done. He had his payment out beforehand, and has only worked out a debt.'

'But,' replied the persevering young advocate;—'but papa,'—and then she stopped short.

'You think me hard, I see; and it is your opinion that David's honesty and candour ought to be rewarded;—have you never been told, Edith, that 'virtue is its own reward?'

Yes Edith had heard this, but still it was quite plain that a doubt or two remained in her mind.

'I think, then, that David should be permitted to enjoy this reward, and not have his pleasure spoiled by being paid for acting properly. But as David has shown himself to be an industrious lad, as well as trustworthy, that will be a very good reason why I should try to advance him a little in the world,—dont you think so, Edith?'

O yes, Edith did think so; and she now began to think her father not at all unreasonable.

'I am willing, also,' continued Mr. Graham, 'to assist his mother, for her own sake as well as for David's; for it is plain she has good principle,—but I must assist her in my own way, and not exactly by giving her money for doing nothing. The proper way to help her, I think, is by encouraging her to use all her energies, and to do all she can for her little orphan boy as well. In part she has neglected this duty.'

Edith looked surprised.

‘I have not yet met with a single person in Greenfield,’ continued Mr. Graham, ‘who is doing all that can be done to better his own circumstances. Every one seems to think that enough has been done when a day’s work has been drawled through, and the wages have been paid. This is too much the case with Mrs. Allen. Your mother bought some goods of her yesterday, and had a bill of them. The bill was neatly enough written, and correctly cast up, by the woman herself; and yet you tell me that David cannot write or cypher. Why has not his mother taught him? I dare say now she would tell you what a sad thing it is that she is not able to pay for her boy’s schooling, and would think it very kind of any one to pay for it in her stead, when, all the while, she has been able, by a little exertion, to give him such an education as would fit him for all the common duties of life.’

‘Well, I see you are impatient to know my plans:—first of all, then, when David has fairly worked out his debt, not before, I intend that he shall continue to work for me three hours a day,—that is, if he pleases, and I will pay him for his labour. Then, as there is no other shop in Greenfield, and the people of the place are obliged to go several miles to spend their money, I think it might answer for Mrs. Allen to keep a larger stock of goods, and a greater variety; if she chooses to do so, I will assist her, and bear the risk of it.’

‘Thank you, papa,’ exclaimed Edith; ‘that *will* be better than giving money for nothing.’

‘And then,’ said Mr. Graham, ‘as it is a great pity David should grow up to be a man without knowing how to write, or to cast an account, we must encourage his mother to teach him. If she will not do it, I do not know who should. By some such means as these, we shall do more real good to David and his mother than by giving them money merely out of charity—money that would soon be spent, if not wasted. do you not think so, Edith?’

Yes, Edith was convinced that her father was right, and that, even in being generous, a good plan and a wise principle are better than no plan and no principle.

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Mr. Graham’s plans for the benefit of David Allen and his mother were soon carried into effect. When the boy had fairly earned back his little bag,—so valueless, and yet to him so precious,—with its various contents, he was told that he might continue to work in Mr. Graham’s garden, and that he should receive good payment for his future labour.

This was good news to David, and he ran home to tell it to his mother.

Soon afterwards the widow Allen had a visit from Mr. Graham, who commended her for the good principle she and her son had shown in the affair of the broken window, and praised little David for his industry and steadiness. At the same time, he gently blamed her for having neglected some other parts of

his education ; and then he made the proposal to her which he had already mentioned to Edith. I need not say that it was very thankfully accepted.

In the course of a week or two, a new stock of goods was to be seen in Mrs. Allen's window, and in the front room of her cottage, which was now altered into a neat little shop ; and, before long, the people of Greenfield discovered that they were able to buy their groceries and other necessaries of life as cheaply at Mrs. Allen's as elsewhere ; and as it was more convenient for them to have a shop so handy to their homes, the widow had no reason to complain of want of business. Before many months had passed away, she was able to pay back to Mr. Graham a part of the money he had kindly lent her to trade with.

In the meantime David, with some teaching from his mother, and much encouragement from Edith, and a little sharp looking-after from Edith's father, had made some progress in writing and arithmetic, and was looking forward with some good hope of getting on in the world in due time.

'It was a good thing, after all,' he sometimes said to himself, 'that I broke Mr. Graham's drawing-room window.'

Nonsense, David. The good thing was that you had honesty, resolution, good principle, and a mother who encouraged you to do what was right.

## CHAPTER V.

## TEMPTATION.

IF any of my young readers should imagine that David Allen's fortune is now made, without any trouble on his part, just in consequence of one act of straightforward honesty they are very much mistaken. Every day has its duties; and if we fail to act properly to-day, it will not be of much use to us that we were not overtaken in a fault yesterday.

For two years David worked steadily and industriously for his friend Mr. Graham; and when he was not thus employed, he was very useful to his mother, whose little business continued to prosper; but then a circumstance occurred which showed that even well-disposed boys are not beyond the power of temptation.

My readers will not have forgotten the rude boys in whose company David was found when he broke Mr. Graham's drawing-room window; and that there was one especially, who led on the rest—the first to begin the mischief and the first to run away from the danger. It is no uncommon thing for a bravo to be a coward.

Dick Atkins—for that was the boy's name—was one of the idlest boys in Greenfield; and he had often sneered at David for 'slaving away,' as he said, 'for his mother and *old*

*white-hat* ;' and very often would he try to entice the little fellow from his work. But against this temptation David was very strong. When, however, David had finished his work for Mr. Graham, and his mother had nothing particular for him to do, he was too often seen with Dick and Dick's companions, though he took care to play where there was no danger of breaking more windows, or of annoying his master.

Village boys often gamble : and the boys of Greenfield were fond of gambling games. They made leaden medals about the size of farthings, these they called dumps, and with them they played at pitch and toss. They gambled also with buttons in the same way. I am afraid that neither lead nor buttons were always honestly come by, for when dumps were in fashion, the folks at Greenfield had to look sharply after their leaden pipes and gutters ; and when buttons were the favourite gambling playthings, the mothers used to complain that there was no keeping these useful things on their children's clothes, nor in their work-bags neither.

But gambling with dumps and buttons leads to other gambling : and as some of the boys of Greenfield got older, they put away these childish things, and gambled with half-pence.

One summer's evening, when David had finished work at Mr. Graham's ; and his mother had nothing particular for him to do, he strolled into the village street in search of a play-fellow, and the first boy he met was Dick Atkins. Had David been wise he would have



passed him without stopping to say more than a civil 'How do you do?' or he would have crossed over to the other side, and so have avoided him altogether; for David knew that Dick was an idle, mischievous, and also a quarrelsome boy. But David, in this instance, was not wise.

'Well David,' said Dick, with a sort of sneer, 'you have done work for to-day, I suppose?'

'Yes,' replied David.

'What a big silly you are,' said the idle boy, 'to go on slaving every day. What's the good of it?'

'Money, for one thing,' David answered: 'I get money for my work.' There was a little boasting in this speech of David, I am afraid.

'Money!' exclaimed Dick, with a loud laugh; 'and I can get money without work. Look here;' and he pulled out of the pocket of his ragged trousers a small handful of half-pence; 'there you have not earned more than that to-day, I reckon, and I didn't work for it either.'

David—silly David—was proud to show that he was as well off as idle Dick, and he too put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a little purse which seemed pretty well filled:—'there,' he said.

Dick looked much as though he had a strong inclination to snatch away the purse and its contents from David, and run off with it. But he knew this would not be safe.

There was another way, however, of trying to make David's money his own.

'I'll toss up with you for a penny,' said Dick.

'No you wont,' was David's answer.

A loud scornful laugh burst from Dick's throat: 'Yah, you are afraid, you coward.'

David did not like this; and to prove that he was not a coward, he consented to play. One game led to another. At first David seemed anxious only to prove that he was not more afraid to risk his money than was Dick Atkins; but very soon the spirit of gambling came upon him, and his anxiety was to win Dick's money, if he could.

But Dick had learned ways of cheating, which made him pretty sure of keeping his own, and of obtaining possession of David's property into the bargain. And he was right in his expectations. After playing for more than an hour, David's little purse was quite emptied; and he owed Dick threepence besides. You may suppose that he did not leave off in very high glee; he was vexed with himself—not, however, that he had been so foolish and wrong as to gamble, but because he had not been clever enough or fortunate enough to win.

For two or three days after this, David was very dull. He did not like to think about his losses, and yet he was every day, and two or three times a day, put in mind of them by Dick Atkins, who took care to be in the way as David returned from work, or when he

stirred from home, to ask him for the three-pence.

‘I can’t pay you till Saturday night,’ said David; ‘I shall not have my wages till then.’

But Dick was impatient to be paid, and grumbled at having to wait so long.

It was Thursday evening, and David and his mother were having tea.

‘David, dear,’ said Mrs. Allen, ‘I wish you would mind shop for an hour or two: I want to go to Ashton.’

‘Yes mother,’ David replied; and presently he was alone in the little shop.

He did not remain alone long. The first who entered was Dick Atkins.

‘Where is your mother gone?’ he asked, in a rude tone.

David told him.

‘I say,’ were the next words of Dick, ‘I want my threepence.’

‘I told you,’ said David, with some signs of vexation, ‘that I could not pay you till Saturday night.’

‘I must have it before then,’ replied Dick insolently: ‘I want it for something particular. I must have it to-night.’

David made no reply, but set himself to work at skeining a pound of thread which he had promised to accomplish for his mother.

Dick sat himself on an empty box beside the counter and looked on.

‘Would I,’ said he, with an ugly sneer: ‘Would I? that’s all;’ but David took no notice of the words.

By and by a customer came in. It was a

little girl, for a quarter of an ounce of snuff for her granny. David weighed the snuff and put it into the old woman's box: the little girl laid three farthings on the counter, and then went out.

'I say, David,' growled Dick, 'take and pay me my money.'

But David put the three farthings into the money-drawer, and went on skeining his thread.

'You are going to cheat me out of it, are you?' Dick demanded: and David was about to return an angry reply, when in came another customer. This time it was a woman, for an ounce of tea, a pound of sugar, and a bit of cheese.

'How much, my man?' she asked, when David had served her with all she wanted, and had reckoned up the amount.

'One and threepence,' said the boy, and the customer laid down the money, put the goods into her basket, and went away.

'Now is the time,' thought Dick to himself; and then he shouted aloud, 'I say, David, you take and pay me my money, will you?'

Poor David felt very angry and very much mortified. Snatching up the shilling, he threw it hastily into the money-drawer, and then pushing the threepence towards his persevering creditor, he exclaimed, 'There, take it then, and be off.'

There was a grin of satisfaction on Dick's face as he pounced upon the money. 'Ho, ho, master sly-boots,' he cried out; 'that's the

way your mother's money goes, is it? Ho, ho!

'I dont care what you say,' David answered, 'I shall pay it back again.'

'Oh, to be sure,' said Dick, as he turned on his heel to leave the little shop: 'no doubt you will, good, honest David.'

Presently Dick's face was again thrust in at the shop door: 'Will you toss up for a penny, David?'

'No,' said David stoutly.

'There are more ways than one of getting money, arn't there?' asked Dick, with an unpleasant leer at the money-drawer; 'and you can pay it back again, you know. Ho-ho,—Ho-ho!'



## CHAPTER VI.

## AFTER-THOUGHTS AND AFTER-DEEDS.

DICK'S 'Ho-ho' rang in David's ears, and roused him to reflection. He felt then how foolish and criminal he had been. He tried, indeed, to persuade himself that he had done no wrong, for the money would be returned in a day or two, so that his mother would not be injured ; but he could not get back his peace of conscience. Besides, Dick had seen him take his mother's money ; and would have it in his power at any time to call him a thief.

*A thief!* At the very thought of that hateful name, David's face was covered with a burning blush. He thought he would tell his mother what had happened, directly on her return. But no : she would be likely to scold him ; and worse than this, would she ever trust him again? No, no ; he could not make up his mind to this ; he would pay back the money the very first opportunity he had. 'That is the only thing I can do now,' said David to himself.

It was late in the evening when Mrs. Allen got home ; and it was nearly dark. If it had not been, she must surely have found out that something was amiss with David, for he dared not look his mother in the face, and he felt uneasy in her presence.

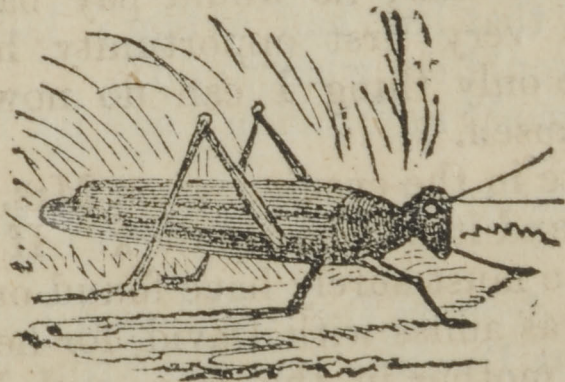
The next day, and the next, David felt his conscience troubling him ; and once or twice,

when he met Dick Atkins, he felt ready to sink, especially when Dick came up to him, and in an impudent tone asked him if he would not toss up again for a penny? and shouted 'Ho-ho' in his ears when he refused. He felt that he was in the power of that idle and mischievous lad. And so, indeed, he was.

At length Saturday came, and David's wages were paid. On Saturday night he always helped his mother in the shop; for it was generally thronged with customers then. He was prepared; and watching his opportunity, he slipped threepence of his own money into the drawer, with some which he had just taken of a customer. And oh, how light was David's heart, when he had thus restored what he had taken away.

'You need not look so cunning at me,' said David, the next time he met Dick Atkins. 'I have paid back the threepence.'

'Ho-ho!' said Dick. 'Ho-ho!'



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BANK NOTE.

ASHTON was a small town about three miles from Greenfield ; and like other towns, it had a variety of shops. Among them was the shop of Simon Grant, a tailor.

One morning, a little boy, on pony back, rode up to Simon Grant's door with a bundle under his arm, and dismounting, he entered the shop.

'There are some clothes my master wants mended,' said the boy.

'Very well,' replied the tailor ; 'I will attend to it ; and who is your master ?'

'Mr. Graham, of Greenfield.'

'O yes ; I know Mr. Graham ; I have done work for him before. What is wanted to be done ; do you know ?'

'There's a waistcoat to have fresh buttons, and a coat that has had a tear ; but master said you would see what to do.'

'Very good,' said Simon ; and he took the parcel.

'It is not tied up very cleverly,' the tailor remarked.

'I let it drop on the road,' said David—for the boy was David—'and the string broke, so I had to tie it up the best way I could as I rode along ; but the things did not catch any dirt.'



‘Very good; all right,’ replied Simon Grant; and David mounted his pony—saying ‘I am to come for them next week.’

‘They shall be ready,’ said the tailor, putting the parcel under his counter.

Later in the day, Simon had the coat and waistcoat open before him on his board, to see what repairs were needed. In the course of his examination, he felt a little extra thickness in the waistcoat pocket, and putting in his finger and thumb, he drew out a piece of paper crumpled up; and on spreading it open, he discovered that it was a five pound note.

Now Simon Grant was not a downright rogue. He bore a very fair character among his townsfolk and customers; and had any one accused him of dishonesty, he would have felt very much injured, and very angry.

But Simon Grant was poor; and the poor have many temptations, from which the rich are exempt. As he looked at the bank note, his hand trembled a little, and had any person then been watching him, it might easily have been seen that something more than usual was passing through his mind. After looking for a minute or two at the note, Simon slipped it into his own pocket.

That evening a London traveller called on Simon Grant. Simon owed this man some money; but he was not prepared to pay it; and began to make excuses and promises.

‘You said the same last time I was here,’ said the traveller angrily; ‘and I cannot give you longer credit. This account ought to have been settled six months ago. You can-

not expect me to wait any longer for the money.'

Simon said he was very sorry, but trade was bad, and other things of a like nature, which, however, did not soften the creditor, who began to threaten that if the money were not paid that very evening, he would set a lawyer to work.

Poor Simon was frightened at this; and then a temptation came into his mind.

'Wait a few minutes,' he said, 'and I will see what I can do.' He then put on his hat, and went out, as though he were going to borrow the money. In a few minutes he returned, and laid a five pound note on the counter. 'There,' he said, 'take what I owe you out of that.'

The traveller did so; and having given the change to Simon, and written 'settled' on the bill, he thanked him, and wished him 'good night.'

But there was no good night to Simon, I guess; for when we do what is wrong, conscience is apt to trouble us.

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A day or two after this, as Mr. Graham was walking in his garden, a sudden recollection came into his mind:—'What a careless block-head I was,' he exclaimed.

'What is the matter?' asked Mrs. Graham, who was by his side.

'The matter!' said he; 'why there was a

five pound note in the pocket of that waistcoat I sent to be mended.'

'Are you sure?' his wife asked.

'Quite sure. I remember quite well putting it there, the very last evening I wore the waistcoat; and that was not a week ago. Yes, I am positive the note was in the pocket when I sent it away. What a blockhead I must have been not to remember it!'

'You had better speak to David Allen about it,' said Mrs. Graham; 'he took the parcel to the tailor, you know.'

'David! what can he know about it?—However, I may as well speak to him.'

David was soon found; but he could only say that he delivered the parcel safely into the hands of Simon Grant.

'I must go over to Ashton, and see Grant,' said Mr. Graham; 'for five pounds is too much to lose;'—so the pony was put into the chaise, and Mr. Graham was soon on his way to Ashton.

One sin leads to another. Simon Grant having yielded to the temptation of using money that was not his own, had hardened himself against consequences; and when Mr. Graham had made known to him the business which brought him to Ashton, the man declared that he had not examined the clothes since they were brought to his shop; and that if the note was in the pocket then, it would be there still.

'Let us look then,' said Mr. Graham. They looked; but no note could be found.

'This is very extraordinary' said Mr. Gra

ham ; 'for I am positive the money was in the pocket when I sent it to you.'

'It might have been taken out before it reached me,' said Grant ; 'and now I think of it, the parcel looked as if it had been opened ; and the boy said he dropped it on the road.'

'Well,' replied Mr. Graham ; 'I shall inquire further into it. I believe my lad is honest ; but I do not mean to lose the money if I can help it. At any rate, I know the number of the note :—and he left the shop.'

If Mr. Graham had looked closely at the tailor when he said 'I know the number of the note,' he might have seen such marks of terror as would have caused him to suspect the truth : but his back was turned as he spoke.

'O dear—dear,' said Simon Grant ; 'I wish I hadn't done it ; but I cannot help it, now. I must keep to my story, or I shall be ruined. Perhaps he said that only to frighten me ; or if he does know the number of the note, it may be a good while before it is stopped, and may have passed through a good many hands. At least, there is a chance that I shall not be found out. At any rate, I can't help it now. I must keep to my story.'

Before Mr. Graham left Ashton, he had a number of bills printed, and a reward offered to whoever would bring to him the lost bank note. Some of these he left to be put up in Ashton, and a few he took back with him to Greenfield.

A day or two afterwards, Dick Atkins was seen talking to Mr. Graham ; and in the even-

ing it was known that David Allen had been sent away from his work in disgrace.

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‘Poor David!’ said Edith, as, standing by the very drawing room window which his ball had once broken, she watched him walking slowly and sorrowfully away from the house. ‘Poor David! do you really think, papa, that he knows anything about the money?’

‘I am afraid he does, my dear; it is quite clear that either he or Grant, the tailor, took the note from my waistcoat pocket; and Grant has a good character from all I can learn.’

‘And has not poor David?’ the young lady ventured to ask.

‘He *had*,’ replied her father; ‘and until very lately I could have trusted him with almost anything; but I find that he gambles; and it has been proved that he stole money from his mother to pay his gambling debts; and a boy who can do that will do anything.’

‘But then,’ said Mrs. Graham; ‘you know my dear, he does say he paid back the money as soon as he had it in his power.’

‘Tush!’ exclaimed the gentleman impatiently; ‘and are you so silly as to believe that? Besides, the parcel was opened between here and Ashton. *He* says that he let it fall, and it came untied. Perhaps you will believe that too?’

‘Poor boy!’ said Edith, compassionately.

‘Well; and I am very sorry for him; and

for his mother too : but this is what one gets by trying to do good to the poor. I shouldn't wonder,' continued Mr. Graham, 'if the woman knows more than she ought about this note ; but let them make the most of it. They are welcome to what they have got ; but from this time I have done with them—quite.'

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CLEARING UP.

Two months passed away. Sad, long, dreary, heavy months they were to poor David and his mother. It soon became known why David had lost his work at Mr. Graham's ; and the people of Greenfield were ready enough to take up an idle report and spread it. So David was looked upon as a little thief ; and could scarcely stir from home without being asked :—'Where is the five pound note ?'

Oh, then how did David repent himself of having made use of that threepence, and of having ever kept company with that idle and treacherous Dick Atkins,—for his testimony it was that had ruined David with his kind friends the Grahams, in the hope of getting a reward for himself.

One comfort had David :—his mother did not believe him guilty : but it was of no use for her to say this to her neighbours ; for she also was suspected of knowing more about the

missing money than she chose to tell. There was nothing for either of them but patience.

Well, two months had passed, when one day, Edith Graham ran eagerly into Mrs. Allen's little shop, whither she was soon followed by her less active but almost equally eager father.

'Where is David?' said Edith, as soon as she had breath to speak.

David was in the room behind the shop, and on hearing the sound of Edith's voice, he burst into tears.

'Mrs. Allen,' said Mr. Graham, directly he entered; 'I have to ask David's pardon and yours for the injustice I have done you both; will you forgive me?' and he held out his hand to the widow.

'What is it, sir—Oh! what is it?' was all Mrs. Allen could say.

'It is all discovered about that note,' said Mr. Graham; 'and David is as innocent as my daughter here.'

'I know that, sir;' said Mrs. Allen, somewhat coldly.

'Ah, I do now, but I did not; and I must have his forgiveness and your's for my unjust suspicions:—here David, my boy;' he continued, as he caught a glimpse of him through the open doorway: 'come David, one hearty shake of the hand; and I will tell you all about it.'

It was not a long story that Mr. Graham had to tell; but it was a joyful one to the poor widow and her son, whatever it might be to Simon Grant.

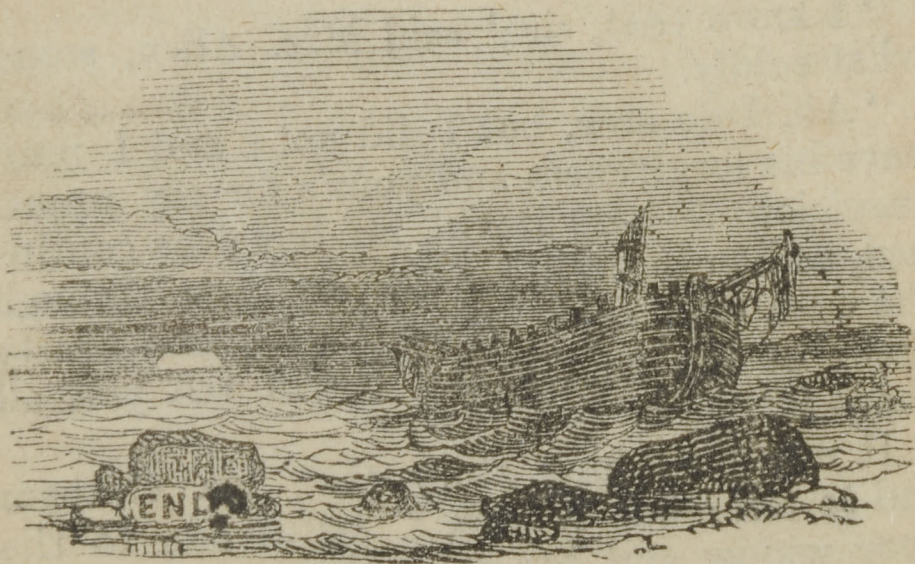
Mr. Graham *did* know the number of the

note, and he wrote to the bank to stop it when it was paid in. This had been done; and from one to another it had been traced back to Simon Grant; and then he had confessed having found the note and used it; thus clearing up David's character.

'You must come back again, David,' said Mr. Graham; 'and by and by we must see what else can be done for you.'

Do David;' said Edith; 'you will, wont you?'

Yes, David returned to Mr. Graham's; and after another year's service there, was apprenticed, at Mr. Graham's cost, to a good business; and never again, for a single hour, lost his character, either for industry or honesty. He is a man now, and prosperous; but he has never forgotten how near to ruin he was once brought by one wrong action.





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