LOST AND FOUND.

The Wreck.

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

Lost and Found.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY MANSION.

Mr. Edward Seaton had a pleasant house in the country, a good business in London, an affectionate wife, a darling son about five years old, and an equally beloved little daughter, two years younger; and Mr. Seaton was a happy man. No doubt his house, his business, his wife, his children and his comfortable circumstances in general all contributed, in one way or other, to make him happy: but it would be a great mistake to suppose that outward things alone, let them be ever so pleasant, can make any person happy, who has not the root of happiness within. No, no; the proverb is a true one, depend upon it, my young readers, that 'a contented mind is a continual feast.' I have known richer men than Mr. Seaton, who, though they have had quite as many of the pleasant things of this life about them, have succeeded in making themselves and all around, gloomy and uncomfortable almost every day, and all day long, by their discontent.

Oh, discontent, discontent, I would that we could banish you from our houses and homes! then it would not much signify whether those homes were cottages or family mansions.

I have a story to tell; and one that will teach, I hope, among other good lessons, that if we have not something better and more durable than worldly possessions to make us happy, we have, indeed, great cause to be sorrowful; for how often do riches make to themselves wings and flee away; and almost all earthly comforts vanish, as though they had never been.

But the story, the story! Well, let us begin with the family mansion. This was about thirty miles from London, a little more or a little less, it does not matter which. It was a rather old-fashioned, red brick house, built on gently rising ground, in the beautiful county of Kent. Around, on every side, were fine woodlands and green meadows, hop gardens, and wheat fields, divided by flourishing hedgerows; and among them, deep in the valley, was a little winding stream, which glistened and glittered in the sunshine, like a bright silver thread, when seen from the windows of the family mansion. A venerable shrubbery, and a park-like lawn, through which was a broad gravelled carriage drive leading to the hall door, shut out this pleasant house from the road. The lawn was nicely studded with groups of timber trees, which, on sunny days cast a pleasant shade upon the green sward beneath; and on many a fine evening in the summer of—no matter what year—might Mr.

and Mrs. Seaton, with their two little ones, have been seen enjoying themselves in those rural shades, resting at the foot of some aged oak or beech tree, with their little favourite spaniel, Carlo, frisking around them.

I have told you that Mr. Seaton had a good business in London; and so he had; but with the daily management of that business he had little to do. It was he who provided the money which had established that business; and it was his partner, Mr. Brooks, who had carried it on in person, and with so much success, that Mr. Seaton found himself comfortably supplied with the means of enjoying himself in his own way, on his own estate in the country, and in his own family mansion.

Not idly however. An idle man is never happy; neither is an idle child. Really to enjoy life, life must be well employed. Mr. Seaton had his farm to look after—for he was farmer as well as merchant,—his books to read; and though, as I have just said, he did not interfere with the daily management of his business, he took frequent journeys to London, and often spent hours and days in his counting-house, hard at work with ledgers and letters.

I have given you a slight sketch of Mr. Seaton's pleasant residence as seen in summer; but you know, dear young friend, there must be winter nights, as well as summer days, even in the garden of England, which some say is the county of Kent. And thus it came to pass, that instead of taking their pleasure on the green lawn and under the shade of oak

or beech,—which, at that time, would have been far from pleasant,—all the members of our small family were assembled, one frosty evening in February, in the cheerful and warm drawing-room of the family mansion.

'Papa,' said little Edward, 'will you shew us the magic lantern to-night?'

'To be sure, I will,' replied his father, laying down the newspaper; 'nothing can be better for such an evening as this.'

So the bell was rung, and James, the servant, was told to bring the lantern and the box of slides, and a clean white sheet, for the light and shadows to be cast upon from the lantern. He was told, too, to draw a large screen around the fire, and to wait to take away the table lamp when all was ready.

But before these orders could be obeyed, and the amusement proceeded with, the sound of wheels on the hard carriage road was heard approaching. Then there was a sudden stop at the hall door; and the next minute a message was brought to Mr. Seaton, who left the drawing-room in haste, and while waiting for his return, Mrs. Seaton opened a large book of pictures for the gratification of her little boy.

It was an hour before Mr. Seaton came again into the room; and then it seemed as though he had heard some unpleasant news, for his brow was clouded, and he appeared to have forgotten the engagement which had been thus interrupted.

Mrs. Seaton was the first to speak: 'May I ask,' she said, 'who is your visitor?'

'My partner, Mr. Brooks,' replied her husband.

'Mr. Brooks!—Then he will stay all night; and of course he has not dined. I had better order dinner to be taken to him in the library, unless you have done so already.'

'No,' said Mr. Seaton; 'he must return to London this evening. I have wished him good night, and he is now in the carriage;' and the words were hardly spoken when the carriage was heard moving rapidly away from the house.

'Is anything amiss in London?' the lady asked, in a low and tender tone.

'Not much,' replied her husband: 'nothing indeed of importance, I trust; so brighten your pale cheek, dearest. The worst news is that I must go to the continent in a few days.'

'To the continent, dear Edward? Then I am sure all is not right. My dear husband,' she continued, 'do not hide it from me, if you have heard bad news. You shall see how calmly I can bear it.'

'And you deserve and shall have all my confidence, my dearest Ellen; but I can really scarcely explain, just now, the cause of this sudden journey. We have some reason to fear, however, that our agents in Antwerp are going on badly; and it is necessary that one of us should shortly be on the spot to look into their affairs. I cannot say more just now; for, after all, though we have reason to suspect their honesty, we have no charge to bring against them.'

'But, dear Edward,' said his anxious wife, 'this is so very, very unexpected. Cannot Mr. Brooks go? You know,' she continued,

smiling through her tears, 'he has no wife and children to leave behind, as you have.'

'Very true, dear Ellen; and I wish he had such a dear happy wife as you are, to keep up his spirits; for he is too anxious by half.—No,' he continued, 'it would not do. He would show his anxiety too visibly for success, and besides, he is wanted in London, where nothing ever goes on well without him, and where I cannot take his place. Come, come,' he said in a more cheerful tone, 'it is not such a terrible affair, after all, this little sea-voyage. I shall not be away from you more than a week or two.'

'And when must you go, Edward?'

'Next week. I wish to be there on the fifth or sixth of March. By the way, I shall take James with me.'

'And me too, papa,' shouted little Edward, who, during the whole conversation, had glanced eagerly from one to the other of the speakers,—'and me too; do let me go with you, dear papa.'

'You go?' said Mr. Seaton, 'why it is across the sea I am going.'

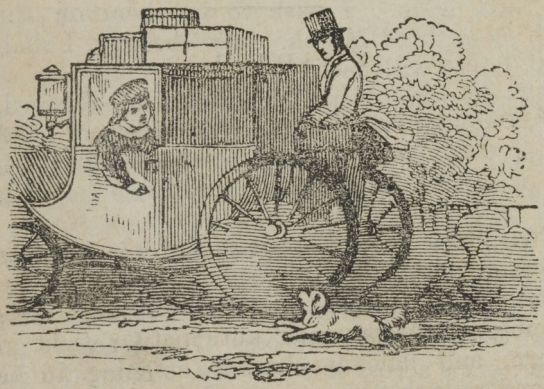
'O, I love the sea,' replied the little fellow; 'and you promised me once that I should go quite, quite across it some day. Now, did he not, mama? did you not papa?'

'Well, Edward, I certainly did make such a promise, I know; but I did not say when. You are too young yet; you would get tired.'

'No, indeed, papa, I would not be troublesome; and if James goes with you, he could take care of me when you are busy.'

Mr. Seaton paused for a minute. He was fond of his little Edward; and was anxious, too, to train him to habits of activity and courage. True, the little boy was young for such an excursion: but such an opportunity might not soon occur again,—so there was nothing more to do than to obtain 'mama's' consent to the plan. At first she said 'No,' but the 'No' was soon changed into 'Yes' when the father's influence was used in favour of the plan.

You may easily suppose, young reader, that after this, the magic lantern had lost its charms for that evening.



The travellers were to embark at Gravesend, in the Antwerp packet: and on the appointed day, a post-chaise was at Mr. Seaton's door, early in the morning, to convey them thither. was a fine warm morning for the beginning

of March, and as Mr. Seaton stepped into the chaise, he predicted a pleasant voyage, and promised a speedy return. One last kiss from his mother, and Edward was by his father's side.

The chaise was more than a mile on the road, when a barking and panting was heard at its side. Edward looked out at the window;—

'Oh, papa, here is poor Carlo come after us.'

'Indeed! then we must take him with us,' said Mr. Seaton; 'for he cannot be sent back now: but I wonder what he will say to salt water.' So the chaise was stopped, and Carlo was lifted in by the servant James.

CHAPTER II.

'BOAST NOT THYSELF OF TO-MORROW; FOR THOU KNOWEST NOT WHAT A DAY MAY BRING FORTH.'

Two days passed away; and though Mrs. Seaton felt lonely in the absence of her husband and son, she pleased herself, while busy in her domestic affairs, with anticipating their return, and fancying herself listening to the wonders little Edward would have to recount But before the day-break of the third morning, the anxious lady was awakened from a troubled sleep, by the violence with which the wind and rain beat against her windows; and as gust after gust rose and lulled but to rise

again with increasing fury, her heart sank within her. She thought of her husband and her little Edward, exposed to the fury of the storm, on the treacherous sea; and with anxious forebodings, she longed for the dawn of day. Day came; but brought no comfort with it. The wind, instead of sinking, continued to rise; and at noon, it was indeed blowing a fearful and destructive hurricane, which continued until night.

The following morning brought little relief to the sorrow-stricken lady. The wind had, indeed, sunk into a low, fitful breeze; and the sun again shone gaily over the fine landscape in front of and around the family mansion; but its bright gleams only showed, in a stronger light, the mischief wrought on the previous day. And as Mrs. Seaton walked out upon the lawn, and found it spread with great branches which had been snapped off from her favourite and beautiful trees, by the dreadful wind, as though they had been but twigs, she trembled to think how severely the power of the storm must have been felt at sea.

One source of comfort had Mrs. Seaton. It was one which she shared with the poorest, humblest Christian: but it was one from which she would not, in that day of trouble, have parted,—no not for all the riches of the world. She knew that He who commands the winds and the waves, and they obey him, says also to the afflicted and tried, 'Cast thy burden upon me, and I will sustain thee;' and that He, like as a father pities his children, pities those who fear Him. She knew that no

sorrow would befal her, but such as he himself had chosen for her real advantage, and such as He would give strength to bear. Thus, though sorrowful, hers was not a sorrow without hope; and though, when she returned from her chamber, after casting her care upon Him who cared for her—her Father and her God—I say, though at such times, her eyes were red with weeping, her heart was eased and peaceful.

But often, through a long, sad week, did this poor sorrower need to remind herself of Him who is a very present help in time of trouble; for day after day were her fears increased by the tidings which reached her. The storm had been very severe, not only in England, but also in many parts of the continent of Europe, so that every coast was strewed with wrecks. The names of many of these unfortunate vessels had been ascertained; but, as yet, 'The United Brothers,'—the packet in which Mr. Seaton and Edward, with their servant had sailed—was not mentioned. There was, therefore, a hope that it was safe. But the tenth day's post brought a letter from Mr. Seaton's partner, which almost destroyed this hope. Here is the letter:—

'Dear Madam,—I am truly sorry to inform you that, by letters received to-day from Antwerp, I find that The United Brothers had not reached port three days since. I trust, however, that nothing need be feared from the delay, further than a longer and rougher voyage than Mr. Seaton expected. The United Brothers is a stout ship, and has stood out many a rough gale. I beg, therefore, dear madam, that you will not

be uneasy; but rest assured I will make all possible inquiries, and inform you on the instant I hear of the vessel's safe arrival in port.'

This was poor comfort to Mrs. Seaton. With trembling hands she tore open the day's paper, and sought the column of shipping news, with which, of late, she had become sadly familiar. One sentence there directly caught her attention, she read but a few words of it; but they confirmed her worst fears. Almost helplessly she sank upon the floor; yet did she, in that bitter moment of anguish, find strength to say, 'Father, not my will; but thine be done.'

This was the news :—

'We regret to state, on certain authority, that The United Brothers, Antwerp packet, was wrecked off the coast of Holland in the late awful gale. The Diamond, of Liverpool, was within a mile of her when she went down; and, from the state of the weather, was unable to render any assistance. The packet's long boat was afterwards picked up by the crew of the Diamond, by which the name of the ill-fated vessel was known. The captain of the Diamond states that every person on board must have perished with her.'

Inquiries which were afterwards made, seemed to prove the correctness of this report; and neither packet nor her crew were from that time ever heard of.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE'S CHANGES.

I SHALL not attempt to describe the great sorrow felt by Mrs. Seaton when the sad and painful conviction was fully brought to her mind, that she had neither husband nor son. Great, indeed, it was. Had they, she thought been taken away by a lingering disease, and had she been permitted to close their eyes, and to follow them to the grave, she could better have borne it. But to fancy her kind, affectionate, beloved husband, and her dear, dear little Edward, struggling with death, and with *such* a death—the thought sometimes overpowered her. Many weeks, indeed, passed away before she had recovered from the effects of the dreadful shock. But time did something in calming her mind: faith in God, and love to Him did more. Even when sorrowing most deeply for her lost husband, she did not sorrow as those who have no hope. And let me tell you, my young readers, that when there is nothing in the world that can afford comfort, and peace, and hope, to a weeping mourner, the religion of the Bible—if that be in the heart—can give these and more,—it can give happiness and joy; so that Christians can say of themselves, even in very severe trials, 'though sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.'

And is not that religion worth something which can produce such effects?

I have just said that Mrs. Seaton did not sorrow without hope. She rejoiced to believe that she was parted from her beloved ones but for a little while,—to meet again where there are no partings.

But now, she had duties in the world; and she resolved to fulfil them. She had more trials also, yet to bear: but through them all she did not lose her faith in her Heavenly Father's wisdom and love; and this faith was an anchor to her soul, sure and steadfast. But let me return to my story.

Several years passed away, without much change: and Mrs. Seaton's greatest earthly solace was her little fatherless Caroline, from whom she could scarcely bear to be separated, even for an hour, and whose education she herself alone conducted.

And a lovely child was this little orphan, in mind as well as in person. Happy in her dear mother's society, she never wished for other companions. Something—but little—she remembered of her lost father and brother; and much she had heard of them, and of their being so suddenly and unexpectedly snatched away from home and life. This, at times, made her thoughtful, and, at some moments, sad: but again her spirits returned, and she seemed to think that she was—and who shall say that she was not—set apart to be the soother of her mother's sorrows;—the drop of honey in the cup of life's bitterness.

But now another trouble came. When

Caroline Seaton was about twelve years old, Mr. Brooks, the former partner of Mr. Seaton, suddenly died; and then it was discovered that the great mercantile house of Seaton and Brooks, which every body thought so rich and flourishing, was, owing to very heavy losses, and the dishonesty of agents abroad, in a state of entire ruin. I shall not trouble you, young readers, with talking about business matters, above your present comprehension, so I shall only say that, the creditors of the poor widowed lady took possession of the family mansion, and all it contained,—of the little farm which it had been Mr. Seaton's delight to cultivate for amusement and occupation, rather than profit,—and of the London house and business.

For a time, until the affairs of the estate were 'wound up,' as it is called, Mrs. Seaton was allowed a small sum of money, monthly, for the support of herself and her daughter, in lodgings which were taken for her near London: and then, when all the business was settled, they were left almost destitute, and were soon forgotten by those who had once felt proud at receiving a friendly shake of the hand and a pleasant cordial smile, from the prosperous Mr. Seaton.

And now were again proved the strength of mind, and the excellence of those principles which the deserted lady had learned from the Bible, and to which, by all the influence of her example and instructions, she had wisely and happily trained her daughter. Instead of wasting time and feeling, in vain, regrets, be-

moanings, and murmurings, as many would have done, she cheered herself, and encouraged her daughter, by thinking and speaking of the kind and wise providence of God, who, when he chastens his children with afflictions and trials, does it, not for his pleasure, but their profit; and who suffers none of them to be tempted above what they are able to bear.

And she did more besides thinking and talking. It was needful that she should find some means of support, for she had no relatives able to assist her; and as nothing seemed more promising, she at once hired a small dwelling in the neighbourhood of her late lodgings, and commenced—'a day school for young ladies.' This was an employment for which she was well fitted both by education and habit; and she soon gained the love of the few little girls who were put under her care,—some of whom may, to this day, remember with gratitude and affection the lessons they learned from their kind instructress.

Thus another series of years in our little history passed away without much further change, except that the orphan Caroline, now seventeen or eighteen years of age, endeavoured to add to the small earnings of her mother by teaching music and drawing to a few little pupils in the neighbourhood, who did not receive instruction at her mother's school.

But strive as they would, and live frugally as they did, it was as much as Caroline and her mother could do to obtain the humblest fare, and decent clothing. Little did some thoughtless ones among their pupils, who

turned to ridicule the plain dress of their kind teachers, know how many sacrifices, the purchase even of that single shawl or frock involved; and still less did they know, or could they imagine that those teachers had once shared in all the enjoyments and luxuries which riches can purchase.

But now, cheer up, little reader; I am coming to another of life's changes; and one that you will allow to be a change for the better. And if my story thus far has been a dismal one, I can promise you, if you go on reading, that you shall have sunshine as well as clouds. And let me tell you that, in this, my story is a true picture of life.

'What is this passing scene?
A peevish April day!
A little sun—a little rain,
And then night sweeps along the plain,
And all things fade away.'

One evening, as Caroline was returning from her pupils, she was accosted by an elderly gentleman, whom she remembered having met more than once, at nearly the same spot, and who had appeared to notice her with a degree of curiosity for which she could not account; and which, to say the truth, had not greatly pleased her.

He now approached her, and in a mild, pleasant tone, asked,

'Am I right in thinking I am speaking to Miss Seaton?'

Caroline replied that Seaton certainly was her name.

'I thought so,' replied the unknown gentleman, in the same kind tone; 'I thought I could not be—I hoped I was not, mistaken. Will you, Miss Seaton, allow me to accompany you home?'

'I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Sir,' said Caroline. This was meant for a refusal; but the gentleman would not take it as such.

'True,' he said, 'very true; you do not know me now; but I hope you will know me soon. Dear young lady, I knew your father, and I respected him. Nay, I am not sure that I did not love him for his excellences. You will take me home with you now, will you not?'

Caroline said No; for she wisely thought:—but no matter what she thought. She thanked

the gentleman for his kind remembrance of her dear father, and was passing on:—

'But,' said the stranger, 'you must indeed permit me, at least, to follow you. I have a very good reason for wishing it. I must see your mother; and without your help, it may be a month before I can find out where she lives. One may as well search for a needle in a truss of hay,' he continued, speaking quickly and somewhat peevishly; 'yes, I say, one might as well search for a needle in a truss of hay, as for the person one most wants to see, in this great Babylon of bricks and mortar. Here I have been a whole week in trying to find you and your mother—came all the way from Yorkshire too, to do it—and now I have found one of you, I sha'n't lose sight of you easily, I tell you. If I do, my name is not Samuel Elton.'

After this, what could Caroline do, but take his offered arm? And away they walked, up one street and down another, until they reached home—Caroline's home.

'You do not know me, madam,' said the gentleman to Mrs. Seaton, almost as soon as he entered the little sitting-room; 'how should you, indeed, when we have never before met? But I will tell you who and what I am. I am an old friend of your dear husband. We went to school together, and we travelled together, before we settled down in life,—I in Yorkshire, and he, first of all in London, and then, when his father died, on his pleasant little estate in Kent. Well, well, I will not distress you by speaking of that now,' continued he, seeing tears ready to fall;

'all that is past and gone I know; but cheer up, my good lady, there is another inheritance, you know, incorruptible, undefiled, and that passeth not away; ah, I see by your smiles that you know what I mean.

'Well, we both married: and then we lost sight of each other, till one day, fourteen or fifteen years ago, I heard of my old friend Seaton's sad end—not sad to him though, for he was prepared. I cannot tell you how it distressed me; but I had no right then to intrude my sorrow or my sympathy upon you, a stranger, but I was glad to hear that you were, as was supposed, left in good circumstances—rich. So time passed away, and I heard nothing more of you or yours (Yorkshire is an out-of-the-world place, you know, madam). I say I heard nothing more of you until last year, when I went to France, to shew my wife and daughter some of the sights, and to start my boy on his travels, as his father went thirty years ago. Well, all those things put me so much in mind of my dear old friend, that I said, I will not return home until I have made acquaintance with his widow. So when, on our way back, we landed at Dover, where I had some business to do in the way of laying out money (but I shall come to this presently), I left my ladies there, and took coach for —— I need not say where: but what was my grief when I found the dear old house shut up,—it had not been inhabited since you left it, I was told,—and learned, for the first time, how matters had gone with you. You may fancy I had not much heart for my Dover business:—but you

will be wrong though; for I had more heart than ever, and I soon settled it to my satisfaction, and packed off back again to old Yorkshire with a heavy heart. I did not remain there long; for I had to go into Kent again, and had a world of business to do in London besides; and so, between Yorkshire, and Middlesex, and Kent, the winter passed away: and now that I have found you, I hope I have pretty nearly brought my labours to a close. I see,' continued he, smiling, 'you don't quite know what to make of me, but you may have heard my name, at least. Surely my good friend Seaton sometimes thought and spoke of his old play-mate and fellow-traveller, Samuel Elton?'

'Indeed, he did,' replied Mrs. Seaton: 'and if you are indeed he—'

'I am indeed,' said the gentleman; 'and if you need witnesses, I will just run down to Yorkshire, and bring my wife and daughter—ay, and the clerk of the parish too, and the parson into the bargain, to prove it. Yes, indeed I am Samuel Elton.'

'I did not mean to doubt it, sir,' said the widow, with a slight blush for her slip of the tongue, and a good-humoured smile, at his earnestness in claiming the name; 'I should have said that there is no one in the world whom I have more desired to see than dear Edward's old friend.'

'That's right! I cannot tell you how glad that makes me,' said Mr. Elton; 'and now before I say any more, I must beg your pardon for my long history, and ask the favour of a cup of tea, for old frie

Of course the cup of tea was cheerfully provided; and half an hour or more passed away, during which time, the frank and kind manner of their new friend found its way to the hearts of Mrs. Seaton and Caroline; and they felt happy in telling the short but touching story of life's changes which they had experienced; nor did they conceal, though they made no boast of it,—their firm reliance upon the goodness of their Father in heaven, who knew their wants, and what was best for them, and who, they were sure would feed them and lead them all their lives long.

'To be sure he will,' said Mr. Elton; 'it rejoices me to see that your troubles have not driven you away from that best Friend—but why should they? Well, well; this makes me bold to speak out. I told you I had a little business to do in Kent last year; and I will tell you now what it was. I laid out a good sum of money on some property there; and among other things there is a little cottage—a pretty little place enough;—and—and—the truth is, I bought it for you, and you must go and live in it,—that is, if you like it well enough. There, now I have said it;'—and Mr. Elton wiped his forehead. The talk and the tea together, perhaps had warmed him; or it might have been something else.

'My dear Sir,' said Mrs. Seaton; that is quite impossible. It is very kind of you to think of us in this way; but no-where else than here are we likely to get a living, and—'

'A living—a living!' he exclaimed; 'why, my dear lady;—but you have not heard me

out, and I have something more to tell. You remember those agents of your husband—ah, I see you do,—and you see I have been interfering in your affairs,—well, those agents, who cheated you and your daughter and Mr. Brooks too, poor man, out of so much money, and who, besides this, have the death of two good men and that dear little fellow to answer for;—I say those agents have prospered in the world, and increased in riches, as the Bible tells us wicked men are sometimes and often permitted to do. Well, well, 'tis all right: they have their good things in this life, and flourish as the green bay-tree, while the poor Christian has his trials and his light—ay, his light affliction, dear Madam, to prepare him for the weight of glory. Yes, yes, 'tis all right.'—And Mr. Elton again wiped his forehead.

'But, about those agents:—they are now in England, living in splendour. I found this out by a sort of accident, as men in general would say; but you and I know better; it was providence. So I went to them, and set my lawyer to work as well; and the long and short of it is, my dear Madam, that I have safely lodged in the Bank of England in your name—not so much as you ought to have of your own property,—but enough to make you and your daughter comfortable for the rest of your lives, I trust. So, you see, that affair about the *living* is all settled.

'And stop,' continued Mr. Elton; 'I have not quite done. I told you I had bought some property in Kent—not your old place, Madam,

—though I believe that is for sale too, and if I had known it sooner—but I did not ; and it was not to be ;—but I have bought an estate in Kent, (*your* little cottage is part of it), and I mean to live there sometimes ; and when my boy comes from abroad, bless him,—and settles down in life as I hope he will, why, I fancy I shall give up my Yorkshire house to him, and live pretty much in Kent, with my wife and daughter ; so you see you will have some friends about you.'

There is no need for me to set down any more of this conversation. All I need tell is that the generous assistance and kindness of this old friend was gratefully and gracefully received by Mrs. Seaton and Caroline ; and that in a few weeks they were on their way to their new abode.

No one can believe or imagine, unless he has been shut up for years and years in a large busy city, how happy and light-hearted the mother and daughter were as they passed through the glorious country on a beautiful summer's day, in a post-chaise which Mr. Elton had taken care to provide for the occasion, and knew that every mile they travelled was bringing them nearer their new home : and if sometimes Caroline, ay, and even her mother said, 'I wonder what kind of a house it is ?' I am sure nobody could find fault with them.

At length they reached it. It was surely

the prettiest cottage Caroline had ever seen. A cottage! nay, it seemed a little tiny palace: but I shall not describe it here.

A neat, cheerful country woman, whose husband was a gardener, and had had charge of the premises while empty, was ready to receive the ladies, and to wait upon them in their new home. A trim gravel-path led to the cottage porch, through a large flower-garden, tastefully laid out, and in surprising order; and, passing along this, they entered the little dwelling. Mrs. Seaton looked around her, and tears flowed fast from her eyes. Who could have thought it? Her old furniture was there. Dear, kind, Mr. Elton; he knew what would please her; and he had been here and there among those into whose possession the furniture of the family mansion had fallen, and, at any price, he had bought back enough of it to stock the cottage from top to bottom. He had told the ladies that the cottage was already furnished: but he had left them to find out how.

And above all the valuable relics of old times, was one—the most valuable of all. It was a picture which had once hung up in the library of the old house, and now adorned the cottage walls. It was a painting of ———: well, well, I need not describe it here.

Happy and thankful hearts had Caroline and her mother that night; and happy and thankful did they rise the next morning to their new duties: for if you, young reader, fancy that their life thenceforward was to be an idle one, why, you are mistaken.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LETTER FROM ABROAD.

We must now leave Caroline and her mother to all the pleasures which the latest of life's changes had so unexpectedly set before them; and look in upon Mr. Elton, his wife, and his daughter, at their new country seat, where they now principally resided; and which, as I shall not describe it, you are at liberty to call by the name of Hall, Villa, Castle, Cottage, Court, or any other that you please. You are to suppose that a little more than a year has passed away since the event last recorded took place.

'I cannot think how it is,' said Mr. Elton, as he and his family were at breakfast, 'that we have not heard from Charles lately, I begin to feel uneasy about him.'

'And I have felt uneasy a long time,' said Mrs. Elton; 'it is now more than a month since we had a letter. He has not let so long a time pass without writing since we parted from him in France, two years ago. I am afraid he is ill.'

'If I thought so,' replied her husband; 'I would set off directly, and look after him; but you know, my dear, Peters would have written to us, if his master could not—No, no, there is nothing in it but a little forgetfulness, depend upon it.'

'But Peters may be ill too, or they may both be dead. Oh dear!' continued the anxious mother; 'I think it was wrong in us to let the poor boy go travelling about with nobody to take care of him. I wish he was at home again.'

'Nonsense, my dear,' replied Mr. Elton—not unkindly, though;—'Charles is man enough to take care of himself. I was younger than he, when I travelled. I wish we could hear from him notwithstanding.'

'Here comes the postman,' exclaimed Mary Elton, springing from her seat, and running to the open window, whither she beckoned the letter-carrier, 'never mind the borders, Richard,' she said, as he was carefully picking his way in and out, and backwards and forwards, in the labyrinth of fancy flower-beds, which ornamented the lawn in front of the breakfast-room.—'Never mind the borders this morning, we are impatient for the letters, Richard.'—— 'One from Charles!' she cried out, as soon as she had got the letters, 'and a good large one too. A penny for a peep, papa, when you have done with it;' and she put it, with the other letters, into her father's outstretched hand.

Very closely did Mrs. Elton and her daughter watch the countenance of Mr. Elton, as he hastily skimmed over the contents of the letter with his eye.

'Something is the matter;' thought Mrs. Elton, noticing at first a serious look of concern—almost alarm.

'All is right;' thought Mary, as she saw a smile on her father's lips as he read on.

They were both correct in their judgment. Charles Elton had been suddenly attacked by a dangerous illness, while at a lonely road-side inn in Italy, and would probably have died for want of skilful medical treatment if it had not been for the kindness of a stranger, who ——but I may as well tell the story in Charles Elton's own words.

'For days and days I got worse, with no one to take notice of me but my affectionate servant, who having tried to obtain medical help for me without success, doctored and nursed me himself as well as he was able. I am persuaded that he slept neither day nor night, except by broken snatches,—for a whole week. But all seemed useless. I got worse and worse—still continuing insensible; and poor Peters was at his wits end. And, indeed, my dear parents, I must, but for the kind providence of God, have found a grave in this strange land.

'But just when Peters was giving me up in despair, after having tried, I know not how long, and tried in vain, to insert a spoonful of chicken broth between my closed teeth, the sound of an English voice reached his ear from the room below. He sprung to his feet, and in the next minute found himself in the presence of a stranger gentleman and his servant, who proved to be, like Peters, an Englishman. The gentleman began to say something in Italian; but Peters interrupted him:—

'Sure, Sir, I heard you speak English, just now?'

'Yes, I did,' replied the stranger; 'but what is the matter, my friend? You look frightened,'

'And well I may be, sir,' exclaimed Peters; 'my master is dying up above, and I can't get a doctor for him, nor any thing else.'

'In another minute the young traveller—for he cannot be much older than myself—was by my side. Happily for me and for you, my dear parents and sister, he is not quite ignorant of the healing art, and has plenty of good sound sense, and, more than all, is one of the most unselfish men that ever breathed, I am sure. He could see my situation was sad enough, but he

did not despair of getting me through it. After satisfying Peters on this head, he insisted upon taking immediate charge of me, although he had only intended to stay an hour or two at the inn; but he is like the good Samaritan, and sets aside his own convenience, yes, and safety too, to serve me, a stranger.' * *

Charles then, in his letter, went on to say how this generous and benevolent young 'friend in need' had administered proper medicine and watched by his bedside, until the means he used were, by God's blessing, made successful in his recovery; so that, at the time of writing, he was as well as ever he had been. He said also that Edward Smith—for that was the name of his new friend—and himself had travelled together to Rome, and that it was their intention to return to England in company.

'Not that England is my friend's home,' wrote Charles; 'for that is at Amsterdam; but he has business in London. And though I know little of him, except that he has all the marks of good breeding and piety to recommend him, and that he was the means of saving my life, I am sure you will on that account alone, give him a kind and hearty welcome to your new home, of which Mary has sent me such a glowing account.'

We will now leave our friends, the Eltons, to read over the letter again and again at their leisure, and to answer it in their own way, while we turn to other matters.

CHAPTER V.

THE HISTORY OF A FOUNDLING.

It chanced, one summer day, many years before that to which our tale has brought us, that an English physician, residing at Amsterdam, was walking on the beach of a small Dutch fishing village, whither he had journeyed for the sake of health, and as much change of scene as the flat country of Holland was capable of affording. Passing by the cottage of a fisherman, the attention of Mr. Henry,—the gentleman just mentioned—was attracted by a few words of English, very imperfectly spoken by a little ragged fellow, whose features were of a different cast from those of the children around him. Mr. Henry's curiosity was excited; and entering into conversation with a man who was mending his nets at the cottage door, he learned the following particulars. I scarcely need say that they talked in the Dutchman's native language; but as I suppose my young readers are not learned in that tongue, I must translate the conversation, as well as I can, into plain English.

'Three years ago,' said the man, 'the day after the great storm of March, I put out to sea in my fishing boat, and was just throwing my nets, when I saw at a short distance a little boat tossed about by the waves like a

cork. At first I thought it was empty; but as it drifted nearer, I found that it contained a half-drowned dog, and what seemed to be a bundle of clothes, tied firmly to one of the seats of the boat.'

'And that bundle?—'

'Was yonder boy,' continued the fisherman; 'he was made fast enough, to be sure; but he had no signs of life in him; for the boat was half full, and the poor little fellow seemed drenched through and through, and had perished, as I thought, with cold and suffocation. However, I took the little boat in tow, and made home as fast as sail and oars would serve me; and with the help of my wife, the little chap came to at last, though he was all but gone, I believe.'

Did you obtain any information about him when he recovered?' inquired Mr. Henry.

'No, sir,' replied the fisherman; 'he cried sadly though, and talked in his way; but no one could understand him. He is a foreigner, that's certain.'

'True, true,' said the physician; 'he is evidently English.'

The fisherman then went on to say that, after a time, and when quite recovered from a long illness which had followed his rescue, the boy had become reconciled to his lot, and had learned much of the language of the country by hearing it, and no other, spoken,—that no inquiries had ever been made respecting him,—and that, as the little foundling had become a favourite with his own children, he had willingly brought him up with them, as one of the family.

'You would, nevertheless, part with him, perhaps, if I were to relieve you of the charge?'

'Why should you wish it?' asked the fisherman bluntly, and looking at Mr. Henry with some suspicion.

'A fair question, my friend,' returned the gentleman; 'which I will fairly answer. In the first place, I am rich, and able to afford what, to you, must be no small expense. Then I see that the boy is from my own country; my heart warmed towards him at the first sound of his voice. Besides, I may be able to discover the poor child's friends; and if I cannot do this, I am childless, and he shall be to me as a son. Does this satisfy you?'

At first the man hesitated; but convinced, at last, of the good faith of Mr. Henry, and tempted also by a large reward offered to him for his past kindness to the boy, he consented to part with the foundling; and in a few days the benevolent physician returned to Amsterdam with the boy, the dog, the clothes the boy had on when found, and the cloak in which he was wrapped.

Mindful of his engagement, Mr. Henry's first care was to try to trace the boy's connexions. But he soon found this to be an almost hopeless search,—so universal had been the devastation of the storm, and so many the vessels and barks of all sorts and sizes, which at that time were lost at sea. Once he thought he had succeeded, for he learned that an English gentleman with his wife and little boy, whose names were Smith, were passengers on board a Russian ship, which was wrecked on the Dutch coast, on the day of the fearful storm: and as the clothes the little fellow had on when found, were marked with the letters E. S., it seemed beyond doubt that he was that child. But it was also beyond doubt that the father and mother were drowned, with the greater part of the ship's crew. Mr. Henry then made inquiries in England after the relatives of that gentleman: but among all the Smiths of Smith-land (as some people would call England), not one came forward to claim the poor little foundling. So the generous physician, thinking he had done enough in the matter, gladly took the boy to his heart, and claimed him for his own, giving him, however,

the name to which he was supposed to have a natural claim—Edward Smith.

When found by Mr. Henry in the fisherman's cottage, the child had but little recollection of his early childhood, and had almost forgotten his native language. It may be that the terrible scenes of the shipwreck, and his long illness afterwards, had taken much from his memory which otherwise it would have retained. This is not a very unlikely circumstance. I have heard of instances in which older persons than this foundling have entirely forgotten the events of their past lives, and all they had previously learned,—even to the letters of the alphabet—in consequence of very severe and long-continued suffering. We need not wonder, therefore, that Edward Smith—if Smith indeed he were—took for granted all that was found out, or supposed to be found out concerning him, after several years had been spent among strangers.

And yet, now and then, he felt puzzled. When, for instance, he was first called Smith, he wondered how it was that the name was so much more strange to him than that of Edward, to which he readily answered. And when told that his poor mother was with him in the vessel when it was wrecked, he thought it strange he could not remember *that;* but, on the contrary, had some gleam of memory returning to him at times, which presented to his mind the picture of a lovely, gentle female, with a little child by her side, standing at the door of the chaise which conveyed him to the vessel, and repeatedly kissing him, and wishing him good-

bye. 'If this was not my mother,' thought the boy, 'who could it be?' But as there was no satisfactory answer to such questions as these, which he put to himself oftener than to any one else, he soon ceased to think much about them. Sometimes, however, they would intrude.

Year after year passed away, and Mr. Henry never had reason to regret his generous kindness. The boy was grateful and docile; and as education expanded his mind, he gave evidence of talents which delighted his protector, who, when the proper time arrived, regularly introduced him to the study of his own profession.

But the kind physician did not live to complete what he had thus begun. He died when Edward had been about twelve years in his family, leaving to him the larger part of the large property which he had gained by honourable skill and industry.

The foundling—Edward Smith—now arrived at manhood, felt for the first time friendless—friendless though rich. To soften the sad feelings which the death of his kind benefactor had caused, he determined to travel; and it was while thus engaged that he found himself unexpectedly called upon to cure a sick Englishman, and by that means obtained what he himself wanted—a friend.

I should tell you, my young readers, that though Charles Elton was ignorant of the history related in this chapter, when he wrote the letter of which I have just now told you, he knew all about it before he and his friend

arrived in England, and it reminded him of an affecting story his father used sometimes to tell to him when he was a boy, about an old friend of his who was shipwrecked and drowned with his little son, many years ago. But, somehow, it never happened that Charles Elton put this and that story together, so as to make a kind of little romance of them.

CHAPTER VI.

JOY AFTER SORROW.

It was near the middle of a warm day in autumn that Charles Elton and his friend were walking,—or shall I say sauntering?—along one of the pleasant bye-roads of West Kent. By some accident, which I need not stop to explain, they had been prevented from landing on the Kentish coast on their voyage homewards, but continued their course up the busy Thames, and did not leave the vessel until they reached the town of Gravesend.

'I am not sorry for the delay,' said Charles, 'for there is an ancient ruin not many miles from this place which it is worth our while to see, though it may prevent our reaching home so soon, by a day, as we intended.' And finding that to reach the ruin, they must walk some miles, the two young men had sent on their servants and luggage, intending to follow more at leisure: and leisurely, as I have just hinted, they were proceeding.'

It *is* a fine country, this Kent,—with its varied scenery of hill and dale, rich meadows and corn-fields, shady hedgerows and thick bowery woods,—with its hop-gardens here, and its cherry orchards there,—with its pretty white cottages and its gray ivy-covered village churches, its country mansion houses with their parks, its old sober looking farm-houses, with their huge corn-stacks and hay-stacks, marshalled like guards around them, and its equally venerable village ale-houses, with their gay signs overhead, and their strong oak benches and long horse-troughs in front, below. These sights are pleasant to an Englishman just returned from another country, and strange to a stranger: and no wonder that Charles Elton and his friend stopped almost every ten minutes to admire the different scenes of the ever-varying country.

'It is very odd;' said the young stranger, breaking a short silence which had stolen upon them; 'it is *very* odd, that I keep fancying this road to be familiar to me. I could almost be sure that I have travelled it before. If it were not that fancy sometimes plays us such tricks, I should,—and surely it was just at this spot,—let me remember:'—and the bewildered young man stood still, and looked anxiously and eagerly around him.

'It was here,' he continued, 'that I was once riding in a carriage, and we stopped to take in the little dog that ran barking by its side:—the little dog I have told you of. I cannot make it out, but the remembrance comes across me; and now,' he said, 'I have lost it all again.

Well, I suppose it *is* fancy, after all:' and they passed on.

Another mile, or thereabouts, brought the two young travellers to a sudden turn in the solitary road which presented to them another change of scene. On one side of them were gates of open iron-work, through which they saw, on some gently rising ground, a handsome country house, separated from the road by a large lawn, and a venerable shrubbery. A broad carriage drive, which seemed not recently to have been used, led from the iron gates to the front of the mansion.

At first sight of this scene, Edward Smith, —as we must continue to call him,—made a full stop, and gazed at it with strange emotions.

'It is a dream,' he exclaimed; 'it must be a dream! Charles! I must see more of that house.'

Charles looked at his friend with surprise.

'Come with me!' exclaimed Edward, wildly, and taking Charles by the arms as he spoke. 'I *must* see that house.'

This, happily, was easy of accomplishment; for a board at the entrance gate announced that the property was for sale, and inquiries were directed to be made at the house itself for particulars. The two friends, therefore, passed the boundary.

'There is a nearer way than this,' said Edward, in painful excitement, 'yes, there should be a nearer way than this,' he repeated, quitting the gravelled road, and dragging his friend along a narrow, overgrown path, which led into the very thickest of the shrubbery.

The path widened a little as they proceeded; but the thick foliage that covered it in, imparted to it such a gloom and chill, that Charles Elton hesitated and stopped short.

'Edward,' he said, in a low tone, 'my dear friend: what *has* come over you?'

But Edward was silent, until arriving at a small spring that bubbled up from some rock work at the side of the path, he halted, and again grasping Charles by the arm, he whispered,—'There should be a summer-house behind that fountain!'

And so there was: a few more hasty steps brought them to the front of it.

'Charles, Charles!' continued the bewildered young man to his amazed friend; 'I have sat

in that arbour with my mother, and —— yes, I know now that I had a sister: or is it all a dream?'

Then he bent over the little stream that trickled from the fountain, drank a long and cooling draught, and bathed his hot brow with its clear waters. When he arose, the unnatural fire had left his eye; and when he spoke again, his voice had regained its own pleasant tone.

'Charles,' he said; 'forgive me. I believe I have strangely forgotten myself. I am better now: let us return to the road.'

'What!' exclaimed Charles; 'will you not go on to the house?'

'Not now, not now,' replied his friend. I may perhaps at another time. I must think about it. There is something in the spot which strangely recals my infancy to mind: but—no, no, not now—let us go and find your ruins. They cannot be far off.'

But Charles had now something on his mind, which put the ruins out of it. 'That will do another day;' he said. ''Tis home—*home*, now, as fast as horses can take us there. I cannot rest until I have seen my father.'—'It must be,' he muttered inwardly:—'he *is* the son of my father's old friend;' but he kept it to himself.

They re-entered the road, and walked—no more saunteringly—to the next town.

'A post-chaise and four horses!' said Charles to the inn-keeper, as they entered the posting-house. In another half-hour, the horses were at full speed on the road.

That night, at a late hour, the travellers arrived at the new residence of Charles Elton's father: but late as was the hour, after hurriedly embracing his mother and sister, and as hastily introducing to them his friend and preserver, —Charles retired with his father, and recounted to him the events of the day: what plans they formed will presently appear. After an absence which seemed long to Mrs. Elton and Mary, they returned to the drawing-room, and the wanderer was welcomed home. But scarcely for a minute could Mr. Elton remove his eager eyes from the stranger.—'It is he,' he said to himself—'the same noble forehead, the same eye, the same smile:—he *is* the son, the lost and long-mourned son, of my old friend Seaton!'

'Will you walk a mile or two with me this morning, young men?' asked Mr. Elton, at the breakfast-table: 'or are you too tired to stretch your young legs yet?'

Of course, they were ready to accompany him; and after breakfast was over, they left the house.

And they walked here and there. First, Mr. Elton had a fine view to show, from the top of a neighbouring hill: then there was the village church—a very old one—to examine, withinside and without; then a village carpenter to call upon respecting some repairs at the house: and then they left the village, which was a mile or two from home, and walked back again by the high road.

'What a very pretty cottage!' exclaimed one of the young men, as they had reached within half a mile of Mr. Elton's house, on their return.

And it was a pretty cottage,—standing back as it did from the road-side, from which it was parted off by a light rustic fence, and a fine shrubbery of evergreens on either side of a tasteful garden blooming with rich and rare flowers.

A very pretty cottage it was, with its roof of new bright straw-thatch, its white low front almost concealed by a screen of China roses in full bloom—with its light rustic porch, and its clean, clear, diamond-paned windows, glittering in the sunshine—with its little, tiny wings of one single room on each side; the one being a fairy green-house, and the other,—it might be a library; it was too small for a drawing-room, or a breakfast-room, surely?'

'We will make a call here, if you like,' said Mr. Elton, opening the gate; 'I am acquainted with the ladies who live in this pretty cottage. Let us go in, and rest.—— Are the ladies within?' he asked of the servant-maid who opened the door to his first gentle tap.

'No, sir,' said the girl; 'please to walk in, sir,' she continued, smiling; for she knew Mr. Elton.

Kind, considerate Mr. Elton. Did he not know that this was the hour in which his lady-friends were sure to be at the village school, which had been established by Mr. Elton, and which they, with Mary Elton and

her mother, engaged to visit daily, to see that all was going on well? To be sure he did; and just now, it would have disturbed his plans, had they been found at home.

'We will walk in, nevertheless,' said Mr. Elton; and he led the way to a pleasant parlour at the right hand of the little hall:—the said parlour opening to the tiny green-house by glass doors.

'Sit down, sit down!' said he. 'Jane,' he continued; 'we will rest here a few minutes; and perhaps the ladies may come in before we go.'—And Jane, the smiling maid, shut the door, and left the visitors to themselves.

'Sit down, Mr. Smith!' he continued—looking eagerly at him all the while.

But Edward heeded him not. These old chairs!—had he never seen them before? The little work-table in the corner, the painted fire-screen, what could it all mean! Was it a dream again? Bewildered, he looked from chair to table, from table to screen, from these to his friends;—silent but eloquent were his looks. Harder and harder he drew his breath, until sobs burst from his over-full heart. Still Mr. Elton spoke not, neither did Charles.

And now another object caught the bewildered young stranger's eye. It was a picture, hanging in a recess by the window. With faltering but eager steps he reached and stood before it. It was a fine painting, representing a scene of domestic happiness. At a large table, in the centre of what appeared to be a handsome library, was seated a gentleman, with a pen held carelessly between his fingers,

over an unfinished letter, while his face was turned towards a lady at a work-table in another part of the room. At the gentleman's feet sat a little boy, busily employed in looking over a book of prints resting on his lap; while nearer to the mother—as the lady must have been—a younger child—a girl—was playing with a little dog, which lay crouching before her. Such was the picture.

For a moment did the young stranger gaze painfully at it.—'It is—it is,' he exclaimed wildly, and staggering backwards, until caught and sustained by the strong arm of Charles Elton—'it is no fancy. That is my father, that my mother, that my sister, and that myself:—the little dog, too, Carlo, and the happy home of my childhood,—my dear friends!' he exclaimed, in a tone of frantic entreaty; 'where am I? what am I? How came that picture here?'

'My dear Mr. Smith——' Mr. Elton began.

'No, no, no!' said Edward—'that is not my name. I always thought so. It is'—— and he pressed his throbbing forehead, and paused.

'Think, think again,' said Mr. Elton, in a voice almost as greatly agitated.

'Seaton—Seaton—Edward Seaton. I know it now. Yes, *that* is my name;' and he turned his face towards Mr. Elton.

But at that moment, the door had been gently opened; so quietly, that the visitors had not perceived they were no longer by themselves—and instead of Mr. Elton, the countenance of a middle aged lady, standing in

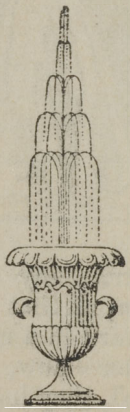
astonishment beside the chair in which that gentleman was seated, attracted the earnest gaze of the young man. One look sufficed—in another moment they were in each other's arms—'Mother—dear, dear mother!' was all he had power to say. 'Edward, my own lost Edward!' was all she could utter in reply.

I shall not write any more. You must fancy, dear reader, all that yet remains to be told;—how Edward in a moment knew Caroline to be his sister—how, when all the excess of joy was calmed, they had long histories to tell, over and over again, which none were ever tired of hearing of: past trials and mercies;—and how, though their gladness was damped

by the conviction, that he—the father and the husband—was gone to that better land where there is fulness of joy, they yet could understand what these words mean: 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' Their sorrow was, indeed, 'turned into joy.'

And Mr. Elton—kind, generous, Mr. Elton;—but I have written enough; and my story must come to an end.

So whether Edward Seaton, no longer Edward Smith—returned to Holland—whether the little cottage was found large enough for the united family—or whether Edward, with his ample fortune, purchased back the Family Mansion—let my readers decide.



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