

Cheap Repository.

THE
HISTORY
OF
TOM WHITE,
THE POSTILLION.

IN TWO PARTS.



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THE
HISTORY OF TOM WHITE
PART I.

TOM WHITE was one of the best drivers of a chaise on the Bath road. Tom was the son of an honest laborer, at a little village in Wiltshire; he was an active industrious boy, and as soon as he was big enough left his father, who was burthened with a numerous family, and went to live with farmer Hodges, a sober worthy man in the same village. He drove the waggon all the week, and on Sundays, though he was now grown up, the farmer required him to attend the Sunday School, carried on under the inspection of Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar, and also made him read his Bible in the evening, after he had seen his beasts, and would have turned him out of his service had ever gone to the ale-house for his own pleasure.

Tom by carrying some waggon loads of faggots, to the Black Bear Inn at Devizes, soon made many acquaintance in the stable-yard. He compared his own carter's frock, and thick set with nails, with the smart red jacket and tight breeches of the post-boys, and grew ashamed of his own homely dress; he was resolved to drive a chaise, to get money, and to see the world. Foolish fellow! he never considered, though it is true, a waggoner works hard all day, yet he has a quiet evening, and undisturbed rest at night. However, there must be chaise-boys as well as plough-boys, there is no great harm in the change. The evil company to which it exposed him, was the chief mischief. He left farmer Hodges, though not without sorrow at quitting his master, and got himself hired at the Black Bear.

Notwithstanding the temptations to which he was now exposed, Tom's good education stood by him for some time. At first he was frightened to hear the oaths and wicked words which are too often uttered in a stable-yard. However, though he thought it wrong, he had not the courage to reprove it, and the next to being easy at seeing others sin, is to sin ourselves. By degrees he began to think it manly, and a mark of spirit in others to swear; though the force of good habits was so strong, that at first, when he swore himself, it was with fear and in a low voice. But he was soon laughed out of his sheepishness, as they called it; and though he never became so prophane and blasphemous as some of his companions, (for he never swore in cold blood, or in mirth, as so many do) yet he would too often use a dreadful bad word when he was in a passion with his horses. And here I cannot but drop a hint on the great folly as well as wickedness of being in a great rage with poor beasts, who, not having the gift of reason, cannot be moved like human creatures, with all the wicked words that are said to them; but who, unhappily, having the gift of feeling, suffer as much as human creatures can do, at the cruel and unnecessary beatings given them. He had been bred up to think that drunkenness was a great sin, for he never saw farmer Hodges drunk in his life, and where a farmer is sober, his men are less likely to drink, or if they do, the master can reprove them with the better grace.

Tom was not naturally fond of drink, yet for the sake of being thought merry company and a hearty fellow, he often drank more than he ought. As he had been used to go to church twice on a Sunday, while he lived with the farmer, who seldom used his horses on that day, except to carry his wife to church behind him, Tom felt a little uneasy when he was sent the very first Sunday a long journey with a great family; for I cannot conceal the truth, that too many gentlefolks will travel when there is no necessity for it on a Sunday, and when Monday would answer the end just as well. This is a great grief to all good and sober people, both rich and poor. However, he kept his thoughts to himself, though he could not now and then help thinking how quietly things were going on at the farmer's, whose waggoner on a Sunday led as easy a life as if he had been a gentleman. But he soon

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lost all thoughts of this kind, and did not know a Sunday from a Monday. Tom went on prosperously, as it is called for three or four years, got plenty of money, but saved no shilling. As soon as his horses were once in the stable, whatever might see them fed for Tom. He had other things to fry. Fives, cards, cudgel-playing, laying wagers, and keeping loose company, each of which he at first disliked and then practised, ran away with all his money, and all his spare time; and though he was generally in the way as soon as the horses were ready, (because if there was no driving there was no pay) yet he did not care whether the carriage was clean or the horses looked well, if the harness was whole or the horses well shod. The certainty that the gains of tomorrow would make up for the extravagance of to-day, made him quite thoughtless and happy, for he was young, active and healthy, and never foresaw that a rainy day might come when he would want what he now squandered.

One day being a little flustered with liquor, as he was driving his return chaise through Brentford, he saw, just before him, another empty carriage, driven by one of his acquaintances: he whipped up his horses, resolving to outstrip the other, and swearing dreadfully that he would be at the Red Lion first, for a pint—done, cried the other—a wager. Both cut and spurred the poor beasts with the usual fury, as if their credit had been really at stake, or their lives had depended on this foolish contest. Tom's chaise had now got up with that of his rival, and they drove along-side of each other with great fury and many imprecations. But, in a narrow street Tom's chaise being in the middle, with his antagonist on one side, and a cart driving against him on the other, his horses reared up, the carriages got entangled, Tom roared out a great oath to the other to stop, which he either could not or would not do, but returned an horrid imprecation, that he would win the wager if he was alive. Tom's horses were in great fright, and he was thrown to the ground with great violence. As soon as he could be got from under the wheels, he was taken up senseless; his leg was broke in two places, and his body much bruised. Some people, whom the noise had brought together, put him into the post-chaise, in which the waggoner kindly assisted, but the other driver seemed careless and indifferent, and drove off, observing with

coolness, "I am sorry I have lost my pint; I should have beat him hollow, had it not been for this *little accident*." Some gentlemen who came out of the inn, after reprimanding this savage, inquired who he was, wrote to inform his master, and got him discharged: resolving that neither they nor any of their friends would ever employ him, and he was long out of place.

Tom was taken to one of those excellent hospitals with which London abounds. His agonies were dreadful, his leg was set, and a high fever came on. As soon as he was left alone to reflect on his condition, his first thought was that he should die, and his horror was inconceivable:—"Alas!" said he, "what will become of my poor soul? I am cut off in the commission of three great sins:—I was drunk, I was in a horrible passion, and I had oaths and blasphemies in my mouth." He tried to pray, but he could not, his mind was all distraction, and he thought he was so very wicked that God would not forgive him; "because," says he, "I have sinned against light and knowledge, and a sober education, and good examples, and I deserve nothing but punishment." At length he grew light-headed, and there was little hopes of his life. Whenever he came to his senses for a few minutes, he cried out, "O that my old companions could now see me, surely they would take warning by my sad fate, and repent before it is too late."

By the blessing of God on the skill of the surgeon, and the care of the nurses, he however grew better in a few days. And here let me stop to remark, what a mercy it is we live in a christian country, where the poor, when sick, or lame, or wounded, are taken as much care of as any gentry; nay, in some respects more, because in hospitals and infirmaries there are more doctors and surgeons to attend, than most private gentlefolks can afford to have at their own houses, whereas *there never was an hospital in the whole heathen world*. Blessed be God for this among the thousand other excellent fruits of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

It was eight weeks before Tom could be taken out of bed. This was a happy affliction: for this long sickness and solitude gave him time to reflect on his past life. He began seriously to hate those darling sins which had brought him to the brink of ruin. He could now pray heartily; he con-

fessed and lamented his iniquities with many tears, and began to hope that the mercies of God, through the merits of a Redeemer, might yet be extended to him, on his sincere repentance. He resolved never more to return to the same evil courses, but he did not trust in his own strength, but prayed that God would give him grace for the future, as well as pardon for the past. He remembered, and he was humbled at the thought, that he used to have short fits of repentance, and to form resolutions of amendment, in his wild and thoughtless days, and often when he had a bad head-ach after a drinking bout, or had lost his money at all-fours, he vowed never to drink or play again. But as soon as his head was well, and his pockets recruited, he forgot all his resolutions. And how should it be otherwise? for he trusted in his own strength, he never prayed to God to strengthen him, nor ever avoided the next temptation.

The case was now different. Tom began to find that *his strength was perfect weakness*, and that he could do nothing without the divine assistance, for which he prayed heartily and constantly. He sent home for his Bible, and Prayer-book, which he had not opened for two years, and which had been given him when he left the Sunday School. He spent the chief part of his time in reading them, and thus derived great comfort, as well as great knowledge. The study of the Bible filled his heart with gratitude to God who had not cut him off in the midst of his sins, but given him space for repentance; and the agonies he had lately suffered with his broken leg increased his thankfulness, that he had escaped the more dreadful pain of eternal misery. And here let me remark what encouragement this is for rich people to give away Bibles and good books, and not to lose all hope, though for a time they see little or no good effect come from it. According to all appearance, Tom's was never likely to do him any good, and yet his generous benefactor who had cast his bread upon the waters, found it after many days for this Bible which had laid untouched for years, was at last made the means of his reformation. God will work in his own good time.

As soon as he got well, and was discharged from the hospital, Tom began to think he must return to get his bread. At first he had some scruples about going back to his old

employ:—"but," says he, sensibly enough, "gentlefolks must travel, travellers must have chaises, and chaises must have drivers; 'tis a very honest calling, and I don't know that goodness belongs to one sort of business more than another; and he who can be good in a state of great temptation, provided the calling be lawful, and the temptations are not of his own seeking, and he be diligent in prayer, may be better than another man for ought I know: and *all that belongs to us is to do our duty in that state of life in which it shall please God to call us*" Tom had rubbed up his catechism at the hospital, and 'tis a pity that people don't look at their catechism sometimes when they are grown up; for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children; nay, better, for though the answers contained in it are intended for children to *repeat*, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in *practice*.

Tom now felt grieved that he was obliged to drive on Sundays. But people who are in earnest, and have their hearts in a thing, can find helps in all cases. As soon as he had set down his company at their stage, and had seen his horses fed, says Tom, "A man who takes care of his horses will generally think it right to let them rest an hour or two, at least. In every town it is a chance but there may be a church open during part of that time. If the prayers should be over, I'll try hard for the sermon; and if I dare not stay to the sermon, it is a chance but I may catch the prayers; it is worth trying for, however; and as I used to make nothing of making a push, for the sake of getting an hour to gamble, I need not grudge to take a little pains extraordinary to serve God." By this watchfulness he soon got to know the hours of service at all the towns on the road he travelled, and while the horses fed, Tom went to church, and it became a favorite proverb with him, that *prayers and provender hinder no man's journey*.

At first his companions wanted to laugh and make sport of this—but when they saw that no lad on the road was up so early and worked so hard as Tom: when they saw no chaise no neat, no glasses so bright, no harness so tight, no driver so diligent, so clean, or so civil, they found he was no subject to make sport at. Tom indeed was very careful in looking after the linch pins, in never giving his horses too

much water when they were hot; nor, whatever was his haste, would he ever gallop them up hill, strike them across the head, or when tired, cut and slash them in driving on the stones, as soon as he got into a town, as some foolish fellows do. What helped to cure Tom of these bad practices, was that remark he met with in the Bible, that *a good man is merciful to his beasts*. He was much moved on reading the Prophet Jonah, to observe what compassion the great God of heaven and earth had for poor beasts; for one of the reasons there given, why the Almighty was unwilling to destroy the city of Ninevah was, *because there was much cattle in it*. After this, Tom never could bear to see a wanton stroke inflicted.

Tom soon grew rich for one in his station; for every gentleman on the road would be driven by no other lad if *careful Tom* was to be had. Being diligent he *got* a great deal of money; being frugal, he *spent* but little; and having no vices, he *wasted* none. He soon found out that there was some meaning in that text which says, that *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*; for the same principles which make a man sober and honest, have also a natural tendency to make him healthy and rich; while a drunkard and a spendthrift can hardly escape being sick, and a beggar in the end. Vice is the parent of misery here as well as hereafter.

After a few years Tom begged a holiday, and made a visit at his native village: his good character had got thither before him. He found his father was dead, but during his long illness Tom had supplied him with money, and by allowing him a trifle every week, had had the honest satisfaction of keeping him from the parish. Farmer Hodges was still living, but being grown old and infirm, he was desirous to retire from business. He retained a great regard for his old servant, Tom; and finding he was worth money, and knowing he knew something of country business, he offered to let him a small farm at an easy rate, and promised his assistance in the management for the first year, with the loan of a small sum of money, that he might set out with a pretty stock. Tom thanked him with tears in his eyes, went back and took a handsome leave of his master, who made him a present of a horse and cart, in acknowledgment of his long and faithful

services; "for," says he, "I have saved many horses by Tom's care and attention, and I could well afford to do the same by every servant who did the same by me; and should be a richer man at the end of every year by the same generosity, provided I could meet with just and faithful servants who deserved the same rewards."

Tom was soon settled in his new farm, and in less than a year had got every thing neat and decent about him. Farmer Hodges' long experience and friendly advice, joined to his own industry and hard labor, soon brought the farm to great perfection. The regularity, sobriety, peaceableness and piety of his daily life, his constant attendance at church twice every Sunday, and his decent and devout behaviour when there, soon recommended him to the notice of Dr. Shepherd, who was still living, a pattern of zeal, activity, and benevolence to all parish priests. The Dr. soon began to hold up Tom, or as we must now more properly term him, Mr. Thomas White, to the imitation of the whole parish, and the frequent and condescending conversation of this worthy clergyman, contributed no less than his preaching to the improvement of his new parishioner.

Farmer White soon found out that a dairy could not well be carried on without a mistress, and began to think seriously of marrying; he prayed to God to direct him in so important a business. He knew that a tawdry, vain, dressy girl, was not likely to make good cheese and butter, and that a worldly and ungodly woman would make a sad wife and mistress of a family. He soon heard of a young woman, of excellent character, who had been bred up by the vicar's lady, and still lived in the family as upper maid. She was prudent, sober, industrious, and religious. Her neat, modest, and plain appearance at church, (for she was seldom seen any where else out of her master's family) was an example to all persons in her station, and never failed to recommend her to strangers, even before they had an opportunity of knowing the goodness of her character. It was her character, however, which recommended her to farmer White. He knew that *favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*:—"Aye, and not only praised but chosen too," says farmer White, as he took down his hat from the nail on which it hung, in order to go and wait

on Dr. Shepherd, to break his mind and ask his consent ; for he thought it would be a very unhandsome return for all the favors he was receiving from his minister, to decoy away his faithful servant from her place without his consent.

The worthy gentleman, though sorry to lose so valuable a member of his little family, did not scruple a moment about parting with her, when he found it would be so greatly to her advantage. Tom was agreeably surprised to hear she had saved fifty pounds by her frugality. The Doctor married them himself; farmer Hodges being present.

In the afternoon Dr. Shepherd condescended to call on farmer and Mrs. White, to give a few words of advice on the new duties they had entered into ; a common custom with him on those occasions. He often took an opportunity to drop, in the most kind and tender way, a hint on the great indecency of making marriages, christenings, and above all funerals, days of riot and excess, as is too often the case in country villages. The expectation that the vicar might possibly drop in, in his walks, on these festivities, sometimes restrained excessive drinking, and improper conversation, even among those farmers who were not restrained by higher motives, as farmer and Mrs. White were.

What the Dr. said was always in such a cheerful good-humored way, that it was sure to increase the pleasure of the day instead of damping it. " Well, farmer ;" said he, " and you, my faithful Sarah, any other friend might recommend peace and agreement to you on your marriage ; but I on the contrary recommend cares and strifes," (*see Dodd's sayings.*) The company stared—but Sarah, who knew that her old master was a facetious gentleman, and always had some good meaning behind, looked serious. " Cares and strifes, Sir," said the farmer, " what do you mean?"—" I mean," said he, " for the first, that your cares shall be who shall please God most, and your strifes, who shall serve him best, and do your duty most faithfully. Thus, all you cares and strifes being employed to the highest purposes, all petty cares and worldly strifes shall be at an end.

" Always remember, both of you, that you have a better friend than each other."—The company stared again, and thought no woman could have so good a friend as her husband. " As you have chosen each other from the best motives,"

continued the 'Doctor, "you have every reasonable ground to hope for happiness; but as this world is a soil, in which troubles and misfortunes will spring up; troubles from which you cannot save one another; then remember, 'tis the best wisdom to go to that friend who is always near, always willing, and always able to help you, and that friend is God."

"Sir," said farmer White. "I humbly thank you for all your kind instructions, of which I shall now stand more in need than ever, as I shall have more duties to fulfil. I hope the remembrance of my past offences will keep me humble, and the sense of my remaining sin will keep me watchful. I set out in the world, Sir, with what is called a good natural disposition, but I soon found to my cost that without God's grace, that will carry a man but little way. A good temper is a good thing, but nothing but the fear of God can enable one to bear up against temptation, evil company, and evil passions. The misfortune of breaking my leg, as I then thought it, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. It shewed me my own weakness, Sir, the value of the Bible, and the goodness of God. How many of my brother drivers have I seen since that time cut off in the prime of life by drinking, or by some sudden accident, while I have not only been spared, but blessed and prospered. O Sir! it would be the joy of my heart, if some of my old comrades, good-natured, civil fellows, (whom I can't help loving) could see, as I have done, the danger of evil courses before it is too late. Though they may not hearken to you, Sir, or any other *Minister*, they may believe *me*, because I have been one of them: and I can speak from experience, of the great difference there is, even as to worldly comfort, between a life of sobriety and a life of sin. I could tell them, Sir, not as a thing that I have read in a book, but as a truth I feel in my own heart, that to fear God and keep his commandments, will not only 'bring a man peace at last,' but will make him happy *now*. And I will venture to say, Sir, that all the stocks, pillories, prisons, and gibbets in the land, though so very needful to keep bad men in order, yet will never restrain a good man from committing evil, half so much as that single text, "how shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Dr. Shepherd condescended to approve of what the farmer had said, kindly shook him by the hand, and took leave.

Thomas White had always been fond of singing, but he had for many years despised that vile trash which is too often sung in a stable-yard. One Sunday evening, he heard his mistress at the Bear read some verses out of a fine book called the Spectator. He was so struck with the picture it contains of the great mercies of God, of which he had himself partaken so largely, that he took the liberty to ask her for these verses, and she being a very good-natured woman, made her daughter write out for the postillion the following

HYMN on DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

WHEN all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

O how shall words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare
That glows within thy ravish'd heart?
But thou cans't read it there.

Thy Providence my life sustain'd,
And all my wants redrest,
When in the silent womb I lay,
And hung upon the breast.

To all my weak complaints and cries,
Thy mercy lent an ear,
Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learnt
To form themselves in prayer.

Unnumber'd comforts to my soul
Thy tender care bestow'd,
Before my infant heart conceiv'd
From whom those comforts flow'd.

When in the slipp'ry path of YOUTH,
With heedless steps I ran,
Thine arms, unseen, convey'd me safe,
And led me up to MAN.

Thro' hidden dangers, toils, and deaths,
 It gently clear'd my way,
 And thro' the pleasing snares of vice,
 More to be fear'd than they.

When worn with sickness, oft hast THOU
 With health renew'd my face ;
 And when in sins and sorrow sunk,
 Reviv'd my soul with grace.

THY bounteous hands with worldly bliss,
 Has made my cup run o'er ;
 And in a kind and faithful friend
 Has doubled all my store.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
 My daily thanks employ,
 Nor is the least a thankful heart
 That tastes those gifts with joy.

Thro' ev'ry period of my life
 Thy goodness I'll pursue,
 And after death, in distant worlds,
 The glorious theme renew.

When nature fails, and day and night,
 Divide thy works no more,
 My ever grateful heart, O LORD !
 Thy mercy shall adore.

Thro' all ETERNITY to Thee,
 A joyful song I'll raise,
 For O ETERNITY's too short,
 To utter all Thy Praise.

PART II.

THE WAY TO PLENTY.

TOM WHITE, as we have shewn in the first part of this history from an idle post boy was become a respectable farmer. God had blessed his industry and he had prospered in the world. He was sober and temperate, and, as was the natural consequence, he was active and healthy. He was industrious and frugal, and he became prosperous in his circumstances. This is in the ordinary course of Providence. But it is not a certain and necessary rule. *God maketh his sun to shine on the just and the unjust.* A man who uses every honest means of thrift and industry, will, in most cases, find success attend his labors. But still *the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* God is sometimes pleased, for wise ends, to disappoint all the worldly hopes of the most upright man. His corn may be smitten by a blight. His barns may be consumed by fire. His cattle may be carried off by distemper. And to these, and other misfortunes, he is as liable as the spendthrift or the knave. Success is the *common* reward of industry, but if it were its *constant* reward, the industrious would be tempted to look no further than the present state. They would lose one strong ground of their faith. It would set aside the scripture scheme. This world would be looked on as a state of reward, instead of a state of trial, and we should forget to look to a day of final retribution.

Farmer *White* never took it into his head, that because he paid his debts, worked early and late, and ate the bread of carefulness, he was therefore to come into no *misfortune like other folk*, but was to be free from the common trials, and troubles of life. He knew that prosperity was far from being a sure mark of God's favor, and had read in good books, and especially in the Bible, of the great poverty and afflictions of the best of men. Though he was no great scholar, he had sense enough to observe, that a time of public prosperity was

not always a time of public virtue ; and he thought that what was true of a whole nation might be true of one man. So the more he prospered the more he prayed that prosperity might not corrupt his heart. And when he saw lately signs of public distress coming on, he was not half so much frightened as some others were, because he thought it might do us good in the long run ; and he was in hopes that a little poverty might bring on a little penitence. The great grace he labored after was that of a cheerful submission. He used to say that if the Lord's prayer had only contained those four little words **THY WILL BE DONE**, it would be worth more than the biggest book in the world without them.

Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar, (with whom the farmer's wife had formerly lived as housekeeper) was very fond of taking a walk with him about his grounds, and he used to say that he learnt as much from the farmer as the farmer did from him. If the Doctor happened to observe, " I am afraid these long rains will spoil this fine piece of oats," the farmer would answer, " but then, Sir, think how good it is for the grass." If the Doctor feared the wheat would be but indifferent, the farmer was sure the rye would turn out well. When grass failed, he did not doubt but turnips would be plenty. Even for floods and inundations he would find out some way to justify Providence. "'Tis better," said he, " to have our lands a little overflowed, than the springs, should be dried up, and our cattle faint for lack of water." When the drought came, he thanked God that the season would be healthy ; and high winds which frightened others, he said served to clear the air. Whoever, or whatever was wrong, he was always sure that **PROVIDENCE** was in the right. And he used to say that a man with ever so small an income if he had but frugality and temperance, and cast off all vain desires, was richer than a lord who was tormented by vanity and covetousness. When he saw others in the wrong, he did not however abuse them for it, but took care to avoid the same fault. He had sense and spirit enough to break through many old but very bad customs of his neighbors. " If a thing is wrong in itself," said he one day to farmer Hodges, " a whole parish doing it can't make it right. And as to it's being an old custom, why if it be a good one I like it the better for being old, because it has had the stamp of ages,

and the sanction of experience on it's worth. But if it be old as well as bad, that is another reason for my trying to put an end to it, that we may not mislead our children as our fathers have misled us."

THE ROOF-RAISING.

SOME years after he was settled, he built a large new barn. All the workmen were looking forward to the usual holiday of roof-raising. On this occasion it was a custom to give a dinner to the workmen, with so much liquor after it that they got so drunk, that they not only lost the remaining half day's work, but they were not always able to work the next day. Mrs. White provided a plentiful dinner for roof-raising, and gave each man his mug of beer. After a hearty meal they began to grow clamorous for more drink. The farmer said, "My lads, I don't grudge you a few gallons of ale merely for the sake of saving my liquor, though that is some consideration; but I never will, knowingly help any man to make a beast of himself. I am resolved to break through a bad custom. You are now well refreshed. If you will go cheerfully to your work, you will have a half day's pay to take on Saturday night more than you would if this afternoon were wasted in drunkenness. For this your families will be the better: whereas, were I to give you more liquor when you have already had enough, I should help to rob them of their bread. But I wish to shew you, that I have your good at heart full as much as my own profit. If you will now go to work, I will give you all another mug at night when you leave off. Thus your time will be saved, your families helped, and my ale will not go to make reasonable creatures worse than brute beasts."

Here he stopped. "You are in the right on't, master," said Tom the thatcher. "You are a hearty man, farmer," said John Plane the carpenter. "Come along, boys," said Tim. Brick the mason; so they all went merrily to work, fortified with a good dinner. There was only one drunken surley fellow who refused, that was Dick Guzzle the smith. Dick never works above two or three days in the week, and spends the other at the Red Lion. He swore that if the farmer would not let him have as much liquor as he liked at roof-raising, he would not strike another stroke, but would

leave the job unfinished, and he might get hands where he could. Farmer White took him at his word, and paid him off directly, glad enough to get rid of such a sot, whom he had only employed from pity to a large and almost starving family. When the men came for their mug in the evening, the farmer brought out the remains of the cold gammon; they made a hearty supper, and thanked him for having broke through a foolish custom, which was afterwards much left off in that parish, though Dick would not come into it, and lost most of his work.

Farmer White's labourers were often complaining, that things were so dear that they could not buy a bit of meat. He knew it was partly true, but not entirely, for it was before these very hard times. One morning he stept out to see how an outhouse which was thatching went on. He was surprised to find the work at a stand. He walked over to the thatcher's house. "Tom," said he, "I desire that piece of work may be finished directly. If a shower comes my grain will be spoiled."—"Indeed, master, I shan't work to-day, nor to-morrow neither," said Tom. "You forget that 'tis Easter Monday, and to-morrow is Easter Tuesday; and so on Wednesday I shall thatch away, master. But 'tis hard if a poor man who works all the year may not enjoy these few holidays."—"Tom," said the farmer, "when these days were first put into our prayer-book, the good men who did it, little thought that the time would come when *holiday* should mean *drunken-day*. How much dost think now I shall pay thee for this piece of thatch?"—"Why you know, master, you have let it to me by the great. I think between this and to-morrow night, as the weather is so fine I could clear about four shillings, after I have paid my boy. But thatching does not come often, and other work is not so profitable."—"Very well, Tom, and how much do you think you may spend in these two holidays?"—"Why, master, if the ale is pleasant, and the company merry, I do not expect to get off for less than three shillings."—"Tom, can you do pounds, shillings, and pence?"—"I can make a little score, master, behind the kitchen door with a bit of chalk, which is as much as I want."—"Well, Tom, add the four shillings you would have earned to the three you intend to spend, what does that make?"—"Let me see!

three and four] make [seven. Seven shillings, master.”—
 “Tom, you often tell me the times are so bad that you can never buy a bit of meat. Now here is the cost of two joints at once; to say nothing of the sin of wasting time and getting drunk.”—“I never once thought of that,” said Tom.
 “Now, Tom,” said the farmer, “If I were you, I would step over to butcher Jobbin’s, buy a shoulder of mutton, which being left for Saturday’s market you will get a little cheaper. This I would make my wife bake in a deep dish full of potatoes. I would then go to work, and when the dinner was ready I would go and enjoy it with my wife and children; you need not give the mutton to the brats; the potatoes will have all the gravy, and be very savory for them.”
 —“Aye, but I’ve got no beer, master, the times are so hard that a poor man can’t afford to brew a drop of drink now, as we used to do.”—“Times are bad, and malt is very dear, Tom, and yet both don’t prevent your throwing away seven shillings in your keeping holiday. Now send for a quart of ale, as it is to be a feast; and you will even then be four shillings richer than if you had gone to the public house. I would put by these four shillings, till I could add a couple to them: with this I would get a bushel of malt, and my wife should brew it, and you may take a pint at home of a night, which will do you more good than a gallon at the Red Lion.”—“I have a great mind to take your advice, master, but I shall be made such fun of at the Lion; they will so laugh at me if I don’t go.”—“Let those laugh that win, Tom.”—“But master, I have got a friend to meet me there.”—“Then ask your friend to come and eat a bit of cold mutton at night, and here is sixpence for another pot, if you will promise to brew a small cask of your own.”—
 “Thank you, master, and so I will; and I won’t go to the Lion. Come, boy, bring the helm, and fetch the ladder.”
 And so Tom was upon the roof in a twinkling.

THE SHEEP-SHEARING.

DR. SHEPHERD happened to say to farmer White one day that there was nothing he disliked more than the manner in which sheap-shearing and harvest home was kept by some in the parish. “What,” said the good doctor, “just when we are blest with the natural riches our land, the fleece of

our flocks; when our barns are crouded with plenty, and we have reaped the fruits of the earth in due season; is that very time to be set apart for ribaldry, and riot and drunkenness? Do we thank God for his mercies by making ourselves unworthy and unfit to enjoy them?"—"I thank you for the hint, Sir," said the farmer. "I am resolved to rejoice though, and others shall rejoice with me; And we will have a merry night on't." So Mrs. White dressed a very plentiful supper of meat and pudding; and spread out two tables. The farmer sat at the head of one, consisting of some of his neighbours and all his work-people. At the other sat his wife, with two long benches on each side of her. At these sat all the old and infirm poor, especially those who lived in the workhouse, and had no day of festivity to look forward to in the whole year but this. On the grass in the little court, sat the children of his laborers, and of the other poor, whose employment it had been to gather flowers, and dress and adorn the horns of the ram; for the farmer did not wish to put an end to any old custom if it was innocent. His own children stood by the table, and he gave them plenty of pudding, which they carried to the children of the poor, with a little draught of cider to every one. This feast, though orderly and decent, was yet hearty and cheerful. Dr. Shepherd dropped in with a good deal of company he had at his house, and they were much pleased. When the doctor saw how the aged and the infirm poor were enjoying themselves he was much moved; he shook the farmer by the hand, and said, "But thou, when thou makest a feast, call the blind, the lame, and the halt; they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be compensated at the resurrection of the just." Sir, said the farmer, "'tis no great matter of expence, I kill a sheep of my own; potatoes are as plenty as black-berries with people who have a little fore-thought. I save much more cider in the course of a year by never allowing any carousing in my kitchen, or drunkenness in my fields, than would supply many such feasts as these, so that I shall be never the poorer at Christmas. It is cheaper to make people happy than to make them drunk." The Doctor and the ladies condescended to walk from one table to the other, and heard many merry stories, but not one profane word, or one indecent song; so that he was not forced to the painful necessity

either of reproving them, or leaving them in anger. When all was over they sung the sixty-fifth psalm, and the ladies all joined in it, and when they got home to the vicarage to tea, they declared they liked it better than any concert.

THE HARD WINTER.

In the famous cold winter of the year 1795, it was edifying to see how patiently farmer White bore that long and severe frost. Many of his sheep were frozen to death, but he thanked God that he had still many left. He continued to find in-door work that his men might not be out of employ. Mrs. White was so considerate that just at that time she lessened the number of her hogs, that she might have more whey and skim milk to assist poor families. Nay, I have known her live on boiled meat for a long time together, in a sickly season, because the pot-liquor made such a supply of broth for the sick poor. As the spring came on, and things grew worse, she never had a cake, a pye, or a pudding in her house; though she used to have plenty of these good things; and will again I hope when the present scarcity is over; though she says, she will never use such white flour again, even if it should come down to five shilling a bushel.

All the parish now began to murmur. Farmer Jones was sure the frost had killed the wheat. Farmer Wilson said the rye would never come up. Brown, the maltster, insisted the barley was dead at the root. Butcher Jobbins said beef would be a shilling a pound. All declared there would not be a hop to brew with. The orchards were all blighted, hay there would be none to be had for love nor money. "I'll tell you what," said farmer White, "the season is dreadful. The crops are unpromising just now; but 'tis too early to judge. Don't let us make things worse than they are. We ought to comfort the poor, and you are driving them to despair. Don't you know how much God was displeased with the murmurs of his chosen people? And yet, when they were tired of manna he sent them quails; but all did not do. Nothing satisfies grumblers. We have a promise on our side, that there shall be seed time and harvest to the end. Let us then hope for a good day, but provide against an evil one. Let us rather prevent the evil before it comes upon us, than sink under it when it comes. Grumbling can't help us. Activity

can. Let us set about planting potatoes in ever nook and corner, in case the corn *should* fail, which however I don't believe. Let us mend our management before we are driven to it by actual want. And if we allow our honest labourers to plant a few potatoes for their families in the head lands of our ploughed fields, or other waste bits of ground, it will do us no harm, and be a great help to them." The farmer had many temptations to send his corn at an extravagant price to a *certain sea port town*; but as he knew that it was intended to export it against law, he would not be tempted to encourage unlawful gain; so he thrashed out a small mow at a time, and sold it to the neighbouring poor far below the market price. He served his own workmen first. This was the same to them as if he had raised their wages, and even better, as it was a benefit of which their families were sure to partake. If the poor in the next parish were more distressed than his own, he sold to them at the same rate. "For," said he "there is no distinction of parishes in heaven, and though charity begins at home, it ought not to end there." He has been used in good times now and then to catch a hare or a partridge as he was qualified. But he now resolved to give up that pleasure. So he parted from a couple of spaniels he had; for he said he could not bear that his dogs should be eating the meat or the milk which so many men, and women, and children wanted.

THE WHITE LOAF.

ONE day, it was about the middle of July, when things seemed to be at the dearest, and the rulers of the land had agreed to set an example of eating nothing but coarse bread, Doctor Shepherd read, before sermon, in the church, their public declaration, which the magistrates of the county sent him, and had also signed themselves. Mrs. White of course was at church, and commended it mightily. Next morning the Doctor took a walk over to the farmer's, in order to settle further plans for the relief of the parish. He was much surprised to meet Mrs. White's little maid Sally with a very small white loaf which she had been buying at a shop. He said nothing to the girl, as he never thought it right to expose the faults of a mistress to her servant; but walked on, resolving to give Mrs. White a severe lecture for the first

time in her life. He soon changed his mind, for on going into the kitchen the first person he saw was Tom the thatcher who had had a sad fall from a ladder; his arm, which was slipped out of his sleeve, was swelled in a frightful manner, Mrs. White was standing at the dresser making the little white loaf into a poultice, which she laid upon the swelling in a large clean old cloth.

“I ask your pardon, my good Sarah,” said the Doctor, “I ought not, however appearances were against you, to have suspected that so humble and prudent a woman as you are, would be led either to indulge any daintiness of your own, or to fly in the face of your betters, by eating white bread while they are eating brown. Whenever I come here, I see it is not needful to be rich in order to be charitable. A bountiful rich man would have sent Tom to a surgeon, who would have done no more for him than you have done; for in those inflammations the most skilful surgeon could only apply a poultice. Your kindness in dressing the wound yourself, will, I doubt not, perform the cure at the expence of that three-penny loaf and a little hog’s-lard. And I will take care that Tom shall have a good supply of rice from the subscription.”—“And he shan’t want for skim milk,” said Mrs. White, “and was he the best lord in the land, in the state he is in, a dish of good rice milk would be better for him than the richest meat.”

THE PARISH MEETING.

On the tenth of August the vestry held another meeting, to consult the best method of further assisting the poor. The abundant crops now cheered every heart. Farmer White had a mind to be a little jocular with his desponding neighbours. “Well, neighbour Jones,” said he, “all the wheat was killed I suppose. The barley all dead at the root.” Farmer Jones looked sheepish, and said, “to be sure the crops had turned out better than he thought.”—“Then,” said Dr. Shepherd, “let us learn to trust in Providence another time.”

Among other things they agreed to, subscribe for a large quantity of rice, which was to be sold out to the poor at a very low price, and Mr. White was so kind as to undertake the trouble of selling it. After their day’s work was over all who wished to buy at these reduced rates were ordered to

come to the farm on Tuesday evening. Dr. Shepherd
 dropped in at the same time, and when Mrs. White had done
 weighing her rice, the Doctor spoke as follows; "My honest
 friends, it has pleased God to visit this land with a scarcity,
 to which we have been little accustomed. There are some
 idle evil minded people who are on the watch for public dis-
 tresses, not that they may humble themselves under the
 mighty hand of God (which is the true use to be made of all
 troubles) but that they may benefit themselves by disturbing
 the public peace. These people, by riot and drunkenness,
 doubled the evil which they pretend to cure. Riot will com-
 plet our misfortunes, while peace, industry and good ma-
 nagement, will go near to cure them. Bread to be sure is
 uncommonly dear. Among the various ways of making it
 cheaper, one is to reduce the quality of it, another, to lessen
 the quantity we consume. If we cannot get enough of coarse
 wheaten bread, let us make it of another grain. Or let us
 mix one half of potatoes and one half of wheat. This last is
 what I eat in my own family. It is pleasant and wholesome.
 Our blessed Savior ate barley bread, you know as we were
 told in the last month's Sunday Reading of the Cheap Repo-
 sitory, which I hope you have all heard, as I desired the mas-
 ter of the Sunday School to read it just after evening service,
 when I know many of the parents are apt to call in
 at the school, this is a good custom, and one of those
 little books shall be often read at that time. My good women,
 I truly feel for you at this time of scarcity; and I am going
 to shew my good will, as much by my advice as my subscrip-
 tion. It is my duty as your friend, and minister, to tell
 you, that one half of your present hardships is owing to **BAD**
MANAGEMENT. I often meet your children without shoes
 and stockings, with great luncheons of the very whitest bread,
 if it were coarse, put into a dish of good onion or leak por-
 ridge, would make them an excellent breakfast. Many too
 of the very poorest of you eat your bread hot from the oven;
 this makes the difference of one loaf in five; I assure you 'tis
 what I cannot afford to do. Come, Mrs. White, you must
 assist me a little. I am not very knowing in these matters
 myself; but I know that the rich would betwice as charitable
 if the poor made a better use of their bounty. Mrs. White,

do give these poor women a little advice how to make their pittance go farther than it now does. When you lived with me you were famous for making us nice cheap dishes, and I dare say you are not less notable now you manage for yourself."—"Indeed, neighbours, (said Mrs. White) what the good Doctor said is very true. A halfpenny-worth of oatmeal or groats, with a leek or onion, out of your own garden, which costs nothing, a bit of salt, and a little coarse bread, will breakfast your whole family. It is a great mistake at any time to think a bit of meat is so ruinous, and a great load of bread so cheap. A poor man gets seven or eight shillings a week; if he is careful he brings it home. I dare not say how much of this goes for tea in the afternoon, now sugar and butter are so dear, because I should have you all upon me, but I will say that too much of this little goes even for bread from a notion that it is the hardest fare. This at all times, but particularly just now, is bad management. Dry peas to be sure have been very dear lately; but now they are plenty enough. I am certain then, that if a shilling or two of the seven or eight was laid out for a bit of coarse beef, a sheep's head, or any such thing, it would be well bestowed, I would throw a couple of pound of this into the pot, with two or three handfuls of grey peas, an onion and a little pepper. Then I would throw in cabbage, or turnip, and carrot, or any garden-stuff that was most plenty; let it stew two or three hours, and it will make a dish fit for his Majesty. The working man should have the meat; the children don't want it, the soup will be thick and substantial, and requires no bread."

RICE MILK.

"You who can get skim milk, as all our workmen can, have a great advantage. A quart of this, and a quarter of a pound of the rice you have just bought, a little bit of all-spice, and brown sugar, will make a dainty and a cheap dish."—"Bless your heart!" muttered Amy Grumble, who looked as dirty as a cinder-wench, with her face and fingers all daubed with snuff; "rice milk indeed! it is very nice to be sure for those who can dress it, but we have not a bit of coal; rice is of no use to us without firing."—"And yet," said the Doctor, "I see your tea-kettle boiling twice every day as I pass by the poor-house, and fresh butter, at eleven-pence

a-pound on your shelf."—"O dear, Sir," cried Amy, "a few sticks serve to boil the tea-kettle."—"And a few more," said the Doctor, "will boil the rice milk, and will give twice the nourishment at a quarter of the expence."

RICE PUDDING.

"Pray, Sarah," said the Doctor, "how did you use to make that pudding my children were so fond of? And I remember when it was cold, we used to have it in the parlor for supper."—"Nothing more easy," said Mrs. White, "I put half a pound of rice, two quarts of skim milk, and two ounces of brown sugar."—"Well," said the Doctor, "and how many will this dine?"—"Seven or eight, Sir".—"Very well, and what will it cost."—"Why, Sir, it did not cost you so much because we baked it at home, and I used our own milk; it will not cost above seven-pence to those who pay for both. Here too bread is saved."—"Pray, Sarah, let me put in a word," said farmer White. "I advise my men to raise each a large bed of parsnips. They are very nourishing and very profitable. Sixpennyworth of seed, well sowed and trod in, will produce more meals than four sacks of potatoes: and what is material to you who have so little ground it will not require more than an eighth part of the ground which the four sacks will take. Parsnips are very good the second day warmed in the frying-pan, and a little rasher of pork or bacon will give them a nice flavour." Dr. Shepherd now said; "as a proof of the nourishing quality of parsnips, I was reading in a history book this very day, that the American Indians make a great part of their bread of parsnips, though Indian corn is so famous; it will make a little variety too."—"I remember," said Mrs. White, "a cheap dish, so nice that it makes my mouth water. I peel some raw potatoes, slice them thin, put the slices into a deep frying-pan, or pot, with a little water, an onion, and a bit of pepper. Then I get a bone or two of a breast of mutton, or a little strip of salt pork, and put into it. Cover it down close, keep in the steam, and let it stew for an hour."—"You really get me an appetite, Mrs. White, by your dainty receipts," said the Doctor. "I am resolved to have this dish at my own table."

“I could tell you of another very good dish, and still cheaper,” answered she.—“Come, let us have it,” cried the Doctor. “I shall write all down as soon as I get home, and I will favour any body with a copy of these receipts who will call at my house.”—“And I will do more, Sir,” said Mrs. White, “for I will put any of these women in the way how to dress it the first time, if they are at a loss. But this is my dish. Take two or three pickled herrings, put them in stone jar, fill it up with potatoes, and a little water, and let it bake in the oven till it is done. I would give one hint more, added she: I have taken to use nothing but potatoe starch; and though I say it that should not say it, nobody’s linen in a common way looks better than ours.

The Doctor now said, “I am sorry for one hardship which many poor people labour under, I mean the difficulty of getting a little milk. I wish all farmers’ wives were as considerate as you are, Mrs. White. A little milk is a great comfort to the poor, especially when their children are sick. And I have known it to answer to the seller as well as to the buyer, to keep a cow or two on purpose to sell it out by the quart.”—“Sir,” said Farmer White, “I beg leave to say a word to the men, if you please, for all your advice goes to the women: If you will drink less gin you may get more meat. If you obtain from the alehouse you may many of you get a little one-way beer at home.”—“Aye, that we can, farmer,” said poor Tom the thatcher, who was now got well. “Easter Monday for that; I say no more. A word to the wise.” The farmer smiled and went on. “The number of public-houses in many parishes brings on more hunger and rags than all the taxes in it, heavy as they are. All the other evils put together hardly make up the sum of that one. We are now raising a fresh subscription for you. This will be our rule of giving. We will not give to sots, gamblers, and sablath-breakers. Those who do not set their young children to work on week days, and send them to school on Sunday, deserve little favour. No man should keep a dog till he has more food than his family wants. If he feeds them at home they rob his children; if he starves them they rob his neighbours. We have heard in a neighboring city that some people carried back the subscription loaves because they were too coarse;

but we hope better things of you." Here Betty Plane begged with all humility, to put in a word. "Certainly," said the Doctor, "we will listen to all modest complaints, and try to redress them."—"You were pleased to say, Sir," said she, "that we might find much comfort from beging coarse bits of beef. And so we might, but you do not know, Sir, that we can seldom get them, even when we had the money, and times were not so bad."—"How so, Betty?"—"Sir, when we go to butcher Jobbins for a bit of shin, or any other lean piece, his answer is, "You can't have it to day; the cook at the great house has bespoke it for gravy, or the Doctor's maid (begging your pardon, Sir,) has just ordered it for soup." Now Sir, if such kind gentlefolks were aware that this gravy and soup not only consumes a great deal of meat, (which, to be sure, those have a right to use who can pay for it) but that it takes away those coarse pieces which the poor would buy, if they bought at all, I am sure they would not do it. For indeed the rich have been very kind, and I don't know what we should have done without them."—"I thank you for the hint, Betty," said the Doctor, "and I assure you I will have no more gravy soup. My garden will supply me with soups that are both wholesomer and better. And I will answer for my lady at the great house that she will do the same. I hope this will become a general rule, and then we shall expect that the butchers will favour you in the prices of the coarse pieces, if *we* buy nothing but the prime. In our gifts we shall prefer as the farmer has told you, those who keep steadily to their work: such as come to the vestry for a loaf, and do not come to church for the sermon, we shall mark; and prefer those who come constantly whether there are any gifts or not. But there is one rule from which we never will depart. Those who have been seen aiding or abetting any RIOT, any attacks on butchers, bakers, wheat mows, mills, or millers, we will not relieve. With the quiet, contented, hard-working man, I will share my last morsel of bread. I shall only add, that though it has pleased God to send us this visitation as a punishment, yet we may convert this short trial into a lasting blessing if we all turn over a new leaf. Prosperity had made most of us careless. The thoughtless profusion of some of the rich, could only be exceeded by the idleness and bad

management of some of the poor. Let us now at last adopt that good old maxim, *every one mend one*. And may God add his blessing !”

The people now cheerfully departed with their rice, resolving, as many of them as could get milk, to put one of Mrs. White's receipts in practice that very night ; and a rare supper they had.

I hope soon to give a good account how this parish improved in ease and comfort, by their improvement in frugality and good management



* * Just published—The Two Shoemakers, Part the 6th; on the duty of carrying Religion into our Amusements. Price 1d.

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