

“‘I wish to know,’ he said, ‘all you can tell me about Bill Whyte. You were his chief friend and companion, I have heard, and are acquainted with his early history. Can you tell me aught of his parentage?’

“‘Nothing of that, Colonel,’ I said; ‘and yet I have known Bill almost ever since he knew himself.’

“And so, master, I told him all that I knew: how Bill had been first taken to us by my mother; of the purse of gold she had brought with her, which had kept us all so merry; and of the noble spirit he had shown among us when he grew up. I told him, too, of some of Bill’s early recollections; of the scarlet dress trimmed with silver, which had been brought to his mind by the sergeant’s coat the first day he wore it; of the gentleman and lady, too, whom he remembered to have lived with; and of the supposed resemblance he had found between the former and the colonel. The colonel, as I went on, was strangely agitated, master. He held an open letter in his hand, and seemed every now and then to be comparing particulars; and when I mentioned Bill’s supposed recognition of him, he actually started from off his seat.

“‘Good heavens!’ he exclaimed, ‘why was I not brought acquainted with this before?’

“I explained the why, master, and told him all about Captain Turpie; and he left me with, you may be sure, no very favorable opinion of the captain. But I must now tell you, master, a part of my story, which I had but from hearsay.

“The colonel had been getting over the worse effects of his wound, when he received a letter from a friend in England informing him that his brother-in-law, the father of Captain Turpie, had died suddenly, and that his sister, who to all appearance was fast following, had been making