

employment would flow in apace. I lodged with a worthy old widow, conscientious and devout, and ever doing her humble work consciously in the eye of the Great Taskmaster,—one of a class of persons not at all so numerous in the world as might be desirable, but sufficiently common to render it rather a marvel that some of our modern masters of fiction should never have chanced—judging from their writings—to come in contact with any of them. She had an only son, a working cabinetmaker, who used occasionally to annoy her by his silly jokes at serious things, and who was courting at this time a sweetheart who had five hundred pounds in the bank,—an immensely large sum to a man in his circumstances. He had urged his suit with such apparent success, that the marriage-day was fixed and at hand, and the house which he had engaged as his future residence fully furnished. And it was his prospective brother-in-law who was to be my new employer, so soon as the wedding should leave him leisure enough to furnish epitaphs for two tombstones recently placed in the family burying-ground. The wedding-day arrived; and, to be out of the way of the bustle and the pageant, I retired to the house of a neighbor, a carpenter, whom I had obliged by a few lessons in practical geometry and architectural drawing. The carpenter was at the wedding; and, with the whole house to myself, I was engaged in writing, when up flew the door, and in rushed my pupil the carpenter. “What has happened?” I asked. “Happened!” said the carpenter,—“Happened!! The bride’s away with another man!! The bridegroom has taken to his bed, and raves like a madman; and his poor old mother—good honest woman—is crying like a child. Do come, and see what can be done.” I accompanied him to my landlady’s, where I found the bridegroom in a paroxysm of mingled grief and rage, congratulating himself on his escape, and bemoaning his unhappy disappointment, by turns. He lay athwart the bed, which he told me in the morning he had quitted for the last time; but as I entered, he half rose, and, seizing on a pair of new shoes which had been prepared for the bride, and lay on a table beside him, he