The History of Little Jack

by Thomas Day

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE HISTORY OF LITTLE JACK, A FOUNDLING ***

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THE HISTORY OF LITTLE JACK, A FOUNDLING.

By THOMAS DAY, Esq. AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF SANDFORD AND MERTON.

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THE HISTORY OF LITTLE JACK.

There was once a poor lame old man that lived in the midst of a wide uncultivated moor, in the north of England. He had formerly been a soldier, and had almost lost the use of one leg by a wound he had received in battle, when he was fighting against the enemies of his country. This poor man when he found himself thus disabled, built a hut of clay, which he covered with turf dug from the common. He had a little bit of ground which he made a shift to cultivate with his own hands, and which supplied him with potatoes and vegetables. Besides this, he sometimes gained a few halfpence by opening a gate for travellers, which stood near his house. He did not, indeed, get much, because few people passed that way. What he earned was, however, enough to purchase clothes and the few necessaries he wanted. But, though poor, he was strictly honest, and never failed, night and morning, to address his prayers to God; by which means he was respected by all who knew him, much more than many who were superior to him in rank and fortune. This old man had one domestic. In his walks over the common, he one day found a little kid that had lost its mother, and was almost famished with hunger: he took it home to his cottage, fed it with the produce of his garden, and nursed it till it grew strong and vigorous. Little Nan (for that was the name he gave it) returned his cares with gratitude, and became as much attached to him as a dog. All day she browzed upon the herbage

that grew around his hut, and at night reposed upon the same bed of straw with her master. Frequently did she divert him with her innocent tricks, and gambols. She would nestle her little head in his bosom, and eat out of his hand part of his scanty allowance of bread, which he never failed to divide with his favourite. The old man often beheld her with silent joy, and, in the innocent feelings of his heart, would lift his hands to heaven, and thank the Deity, that, even in the midst of poverty and distress, had raised him up one faithful friend.

One night, in the beginning of winter, the old man thought he heard the feeble cries and lamentations of a child. As he was naturally charitable, he arose and struck a light and going out of his cottage, examined on every side. It was not long before he discerned an infant, which had probably been dropped by some strolling beggar or gipsy. The old man stood amazed at the sight, and knew not what to do. “Shall I,” said he, “who find it so difficult to live at present, encumber myself with the care of a helpless infant, that will not for many years be capable of contributing to its own subsistence? And yet,” added he, softening with pity, “can I deny assistance to a human being still more miserable than myself?—Will not Providence, who feeds the birds of the wood and the beasts of the field, and who has promised to bless all those that are kind and charitable, assist my feeble endeavours?—At least, let me give it food and lodging for this night; for unless I receive it into my cottage, the poor abandoned wretch must perish with cold before the morning.” Saying this, he took it up in his arms, and perceived it was a fine healthy boy, though covered with rags; the little foundling too seemed to be sensible of his kindness, and smiling in his face, stretched out his little arms as if to embrace his benefactor.

When he had brought it into his hut, he began to be extremely embarrassed how to procure it food: but, looking at Nan, he recollected that she had just lost her kid, and saw her udder swelled with milk: he, therefore, called her to him, and, presenting the child to the teat, was overjoyed to find that it sucked as naturally as if it had really found a mother. The goat too seemed to receive pleasure from the efforts of the

child, and submitted without opposition to discharge the duties of a nurse. Contented with this experiment, the old man wrapt the child up as warmly as he could, and stretched himself out to rest, with the consciousness of having done a humane action. Early the next morning he was awakened by the cries of the child for food, which, with the assistance of his faithful Nan, he suckled as he had done the night before. And now the old man began to feel an interest in the child, which made him defer some time longer the taking measures to be delivered from its care. “Who knows,” said he, “but Providence, who has preserved this child in so wonderful a manner, may have destined it to something equally wonderful in its future life, and may bless me as the humble agent of its decrees? At least, as he grows bigger, he will be a pleasure and comfort to me in this lonely cabin, and will assist in cutting turf for fuel, and cultivating the garden.” From this time he became more and more attached to the little foundling, who, in a short time, learned to consider the old man as a parent, and delighted him with its innocent caresses. Gentle Nanny, too, the goat, seemed to adopt him with equal tenderness as her offspring: she would stretch herself out upon the ground, while he crawled upon his hands and knees towards her; and when he had satisfied his hunger by sucking, he would nestle between her legs and go to sleep in her bosom.

It was wonderful to see how this child, thus left to nature, increased in strength and vigour. Unfettered by bandages or restraints, his limbs acquired their due proportions and form; his countenance was full and florid, and gave indications of perfect health; and at an age when all other children are scarcely able to support themselves with the assistance of a nurse, this little foundling could run alone. It was true that he sometimes failed in his attempts, and fell to the ground: but the ground was soft, and as Little Jack, for so the old man called him, was not tender nor delicate, he never minded thumps or bruises, but boldly scrambled up again and pursued his way.

In a short time Little Jack was completely master of his legs; and as the summer

came on he attended his mammy, the goat, upon the common, and used to play with her for hours together, sometimes rolling under her belly, now climbing upon her back, and frisking about as if he had been really a kid. As to his clothing, Jack was not much incumbered with it; he had neither shoes, nor stockings, nor shirt; but the weather was warm, and Jack felt himself so much the lighter for every kind of exercise. In a short time after this Jack began to imitate the sounds of his papa the man, and his mama the goat; nor was it long before he learned to speak articulately. The old man, delighted with this first dawn of reason, used to place him upon his knee, and converse with him for hours together, while his pottage was slowly boiling amid the embers of a turf fire. As he grew bigger, Jack became of considerable use to his father: he could trust him to look after the gate, and open it during his absence; and as to the cookery of the family, it was not long before Jack was a complete proficient, and could make broth almost as well as his daddy himself. During the winter nights, the old man used to entertain him with stories of what he had seen during his youth; the battles and sieges he had been witness to, and the hardships he had undergone; all this he related with so much life, that Jack was never tired of listening. But what delighted him beyond measure, was to see his daddy shoulder his crutch, instead of a musket, and give the word of command. To the right—to the left—present—fire—march—halt. All this was familiar to Jack's ear as soon as he could speak, and before he was six years old, he poized and presented a broom-stick, which his daddy gave him for that purpose, with as good a grace as any soldier of his age in Europe.

The old man too instructed him in such plain and simple morals and religion as he was able to explain. "Never tell an untruth, Jack," said he, "even though you were to be flayed alive; a soldier ought never to tell a lie. Never blaspheme the name of your Maker. Never injure your neighbour, either by abusing his character, defrauding him of his property, or doing any harm to his person. In short, love and fear God; love your neighbour as yourself; and honour the King." Jack held up his head, marched

across the floor, and promised his daddy that he would always do so. But the old man, as he was something of a scholar, had a great ambition that his darling should learn to read and write; and this was a work of some difficulty, for he had neither printed book, nor pens, nor paper in his cabin. Industry, however, enables us to overcome difficulties; in the summer time, as the old man sat before his cottage, he would draw letters in the sand, and teach Jack to name them singly, until he was acquainted with the whole alphabet. He then proceeded to syllables, and after that to words: all which his little pupil learned to pronounce with great facility: and, as he had a strong propensity to imitate what he saw, he not only acquired the power of reading words, but of tracing all the letters which composed them on the sand.

When the old man found Jack so ready in learning what was proposed to him, he did not stop here, but carried his instructions further. He covered a smooth board with a thin coat of loose fine sand in an even manner; so that letters might be easily formed upon it by the finger, but still more so, and with greater exactness, with the end of a sharp-pointed stick. Upon this Jack soon learned to write; for, as he was very eager to improve, as soon as he had covered the board with letters, he smoothed the sand and began again. The old man, wishing to teach his young scholar as much as he could, looked about through the common and the fields for a slate; and was at last so fortunate as to find one. This he carefully rubbed until it became quite smooth, and then made a slate pencil of a piece which he had broken off. When the slate was finished, he began to teach Jack how to write more neatly and to make figures; and it was surprising how quickly the poor little fellow learned. As the old man knew but little of accounts he was not able to give much assistance in them, but the little he did know he soon taught Jack. Thus, without books or paper, which the poor old soldier could not buy, Jack was enabled to read, write, and do some little matter in accounts. Indeed it is quite wonderful how persons overlook the means which are in their power. We have just seen how the old man made a smooth board covered with sand, and then a slate which he had found lying upon the highway, answer all the

purposes which expensive books and papers could.

About this time, the poor goat, which had nursed Jack so faithfully, grew ill and died. He tended her with the greatest affection and assiduity during her illness, brought her the freshest herbs for food, and would frequently support her head for hours together upon his little bosom. But it was all in vain; he lost his poor mammy, as he used to call her, and was for some time inconsolable; for Jack, though his knowledge was bounded, had an uncommon degree of gratitude and affection in his temper. He was not able to talk so finely about love, tenderness, and sensibility, as many other little boys that have enjoyed greater advantages of education; but he felt the reality of them in his heart, and found it so natural to love every thing that loved him that he never even suspected it was possible to do otherwise. The poor goat was buried in the old man's garden, and thither Little Jack would often come and call upon his poor mammy Nan, and ask her why she had left him. One day, as he was thus employed, a lady happened to come by in a carriage, and overheard him before he was aware. Jack ran in an instant to open the gate; but the lady stopped and asked him who he was bemoaning and calling upon, so pitifully. Jack answered that it was his poor mammy, that was buried in the garden. The lady thought it very odd to hear of such a burial place, and therefore proceeded to question him.—"How did your mammy get her living?" said she. "She used to graze here upon the common all day long," said Jack. The lady was still more astonished; but the old man came out of his hut, and explained the whole affair to her, which surprised her very much; for though this lady had seen a great deal of the world, and had read a variety of books, it had never once entered into her head, that a child might grow strong and vigorous by sucking a goat instead of eating pap. She therefore looked at Jack with amazement, admired his brown but animated face, and praised his shape and activity. "Will you go with me, little boy?" said she, "I will take great care of you, if you behave well."—"No," said Jack, "I must stay with my daddy; he has taken care of me for many years, and now I must take care of him; otherwise I should like very

well to go with such a sweet, good-natured lady."—The lady was not displeased with Jack's answer, and putting her hand in her pocket, gave him half a crown, to buy him shoes and stockings, and pursued her journey.

Jack was not unacquainted with the use of money, as he had often been sent to the next village to purchase bread and necessaries; but he was totally unacquainted with the use of shoes and stockings, which he had never worn in his life, nor felt the want of. The next day, however, the old man bade him run to town and lay his money out as the lady had desired; for he had too much honour to think of disobeying her commands, or suffering it to be expended for any other purpose. It was not long before Jack returned; but the old man was much surprised to see him come back as bare as he went out.—"Hey, Jack!" said he, "where are the shoes and stockings which you were to purchase?"—"Daddy," answered Jack, "I went to the shop, and just tried on a pair for sport, but I thought with myself how unfair it would be that I should lay out all the money upon my own wants, without taking any care of yours; now you know, that your old jacket is almost worn out, and that you very much want another; so I laid my money out in a warm new jacket for you, because the winter is coming on, and you seem to be more afraid of the cold than formerly." Many such instances of conduct did Jack display; from which it was easy to perceive, that he had a generous temper. One failing, indeed, Jack was liable to; though a very good-natured boy, he was too jealous of his honour. His daddy had taught him the use of his hands and legs, and Jack had such a disposition for the art of boxing, that he could beat every boy in the neighbourhood of his age and size.

In this manner lived Little Jack, until he was twelve years old; at this time his poor old daddy fell sick, and became incapable of moving about. Jack did every thing he could think of for the poor man; he made his broths, he fed him with his own hands, he watched whole nights by his bed side, supporting his head, and helping him when he wanted to move. But it was all in vain; his poor daddy grew daily worse, and perceived it to be impossible that he should recover. He one day, therefore, called

Little Jack to his bedside, and pressing his hand affectionately, told him that he was just going to die. Little Jack burst into a flood of tears at this information; but his daddy desired him to compose himself, and attend to the last advice he should be able to give him. “I have lived,” said the old man, “a great many years in poverty, but I do not know that I have been worse off than if I had been rich. I have avoided perhaps many faults and many uneasinesses, which I should have incurred had I been in another situation; and though I have often wanted a meal, and always fared hard, I have enjoyed as much health and life as usually fall to the lot of my betters. I am now going to die; I feel it in every part; the breath will soon be out of my body; then I shall be put in the ground, and the worms will eat your poor old daddy.” At this Jack renewed his tears and sobbings, for he was unable to restrain them. But the old man said, “Have patience, my child; though I shall soon leave this world, I humbly hope that God will pity me, and convey me to a better place, where I shall be happier than I have ever been here. This is what I have always taught you, and this belief gives me the greatest comfort in my last moments. The only regret I feel, is for you, my dearest child, whom I leave unprovided for. But you are strong and vigorous, and almost able to get your living. As soon as I am dead, you must go to the next village, and inform the people, that they may come and bury me. You must than endeavour to get into service, and work for your living; and if you are strictly honest, and sober, I do not doubt but you will find a livelihood, and that God, who is the common father of all, if you serve and love him truly, will protect and bless you.—Adieu, my child, I grow fainter and fainter; never forget your poor old daddy, nor the example he has set you; but in every situation of life, discharge your duty, and live like a soldier and a Christian.” When the old man had with difficulty uttered these last instructions, his voice entirely failed him, his limbs grew cold and stiff, and in a few minutes he expired without a groan. Little Jack, who hung crying over his daddy, called upon him in vain, in vain endeavoured to revive him. At length he pulled off his clothes, went into his daddy’s bed, and endeavoured for many hours to

animate him with the warmth of his own body; but finding all his endeavours fruitless, he concluded that he was indeed dead, and therefore, weeping bitterly, he drest himself and went to the village as he had been ordered.

The poor little boy was thus left entirely destitute, and knew not what to do, but one of the farmers, who had been acquainted with him before, offered to take him into his house, and give him his victuals for a few months, till he could find a service. Jack thankfully accepted the offer, and served him faithfully for several months; during which time he learnt to milk, to drive the plough, and never refused any kind of work he was able to perform. But, by ill luck, this good-natured farmer contracted a fever, by overheating himself in the harvest, and died in the beginning of winter. His wife was therefore obliged to discharge her servants, and Jack was again turned loose upon the world, with only his clothes, and a shilling in his pocket, which his kind mistress had made him a present of. He was very sorry for the loss of his master; but he was now grown bigger and stronger, and thought he should easily find employment. He therefore set out upon his travels, walking all day, and inquiring at every farm-house for work. But in this attempt he was unfortunate, for nobody chose to employ a stranger; and though he lived with the greatest economy, he soon found himself in a worse situation than ever, without a farthing in his pocket, or a morsel of bread to eat. Jack, however, was not of a temper to be easily cast down; he walked resolutely on all day, but towards evening was overtaken by a violent storm of rain which wetted him to the skin before he could find a bush for shelter. Now poor Jack began to think of his old daddy, and the comforts he had formerly enjoyed upon the common, where he had always a roof to shelter him, and a slice of bread for supper. But tears and lamentations were vain; and therefore as soon as the storm was over, he pursued his journey, in hopes of finding some barn or out-house to creep into for the rest of the night. While he was thus wandering about, he saw at some distance a great light, which seemed to come from some prodigious fire. Jack did not know what this could be; but, in his present situation, he thought a

fire no disagreeable object, and therefore determined to approach it. When he came nearer, he saw a large building which seemed to spout fire and smoke at several openings, and heard an incessant noise of blows, and the rattling of chains. Jack was at first a little frightened, but summoning all his courage, he crept cautiously on to the building, and, looking through a chink, discovered several men and boys employed in blowing fires, and hammering burning masses of iron. This was a very comfortable sight to him in his present forlorn condition; so finding a door half open, he ventured in, and placed himself as near as he dared to one of the flaming furnaces. It was not long before he was discovered by one of the workmen, who asked him, roughly, what business he had there? Jack answered, with great humility, that he was a poor boy looking out for work; that he had had no food all day, and was wet with the rain; which was evident enough from the appearance of his clothes. By great good luck, the man he spoke to was good-natured, and therefore not only permitted him to stay by the fire, but gave him some broken victuals for his supper. After this, he laid himself down in a corner, and slept without disturbance till morning. He was scarcely awake the next day, when the master of the forge came in to overlook his men, who finding Jack, and hearing his story, began to reproach him as very lazy, and asked him why he did not work for his living. Jack assured him there was nothing he so earnestly desired, and that if he would please to employ him, there was nothing that he would not do to earn a subsistence. “Well, my boy,” said the master, “if this is true, you shall soon be tried; nobody need be idle here.” So calling his foreman, he ordered him to set the lad to work, and to pay him in proportion to his labour. Jack now thought himself completely happy, and worked with so much assiduity, that he soon gained a comfortable livelihood, and acquired the esteem of his master.

But unfortunately, he was a little too unreserved in his conversation, and communicated the story of his former life and education. This was great matter of diversion to all the other boys of the forge, who, whenever they were inclined to be

merry, would call him Little Jack the beggar-boy, and imitate the baaing of a goat. This was too much for his warm temper, and he never failed to resent it; by which means he was engaged in continual quarrels and combats, to the great disturbance of the house; so that his master, though in other respects perfectly satisfied with his behaviour, began to fear that he should at last be obliged to discharge him.

It happened one day that a large company of gentleman and ladies were introduced to see the works. The master attended them, and explained, with great politeness, every part of his manufacture. They viewed with astonishment the different methods by which that useful and necessary ore of iron is rendered fit for human use. They examined the furnaces where it is melted down, to disengage it from the dross with which it is mixed in the bowels of the earth, and whence it runs down in liquid torrents like fire. They beheld with equal pleasure the prodigious hammers which, moved by the force of water, mould it into massy bars for the service of man. While they were busy in examining these different processes, they were alarmed by a sudden noise of discord which broke out on the other side of the building; and the master inquiring into the cause, was told, that it was only Little Jack, who was fighting with Tom the collier. At this the master cried out in a passion, “There is no peace to be expected in the furnace while that boy is employed; send him to me, and I will instantly discharge him.” At this moment Jack appeared, all covered with blood and dirt, and stood before his angry judge in a modest but resolute posture. “Is this the reward,” said his master, “you little audacious fellow, for all my kindness? Can you never refrain a single instant from broils and fighting? But I am determined to bear it no longer; and therefore you shall never, from this hour, do a single stroke of work for me.”—“Sir,” replied Little Jack, with great humility, but yet with firmness, “I am extremely sorry to have disobliged you, nor have I ever done it willingly, since I have been here; and if the other boys would only mind their business as well as I do, and not molest me, you would not have been offended now; for, I defy them all to say, that, since I have been in the house, I have ever given any

one the least provocation, or ever refused, to the utmost of my strength, to do whatever I have been ordered."—"Indeed that's quite true," said the foreman; "I must do Little Jack the justice to say, that there is not a more honest, sober, and industrious lad about the place. Set him to do what you will, he never sculks, never grumbles, never slights his work; and if it were not for a little passion and fighting, I don't believe there would be his fellow in England."—"Well," said the master, a little mollified, "but what is the cause of all this sudden disturbance?"—"Sir," answered Jack, "it is Tom that has been abusing me, and telling me that my father was a beggar-man, and my mother a nanny-goat; and, when I desired him to be quiet, he went baaing all about the house; and this I could not bear; for, as to my father, he was an honest soldier, and if I did suck a goat, she was the best creature in the world; and I won't hear her abused while I have any strength in my body." At this harangue, the whole audience were scarcely able to refrain from laughing; and the master, with more composure, told Jack to mind his business, and threatened the other boys with punishment if they disturbed him.

But a lady who was in company seemed particularly interested about Little Jack, and when she had heard his story, said, "This must certainly be the little boy who opened a gate several years past for me upon Norcot Moor. I remember being struck with his appearance, and hearing him lament the loss of the goat that nursed him. I was very much affected then with his history, and since he deserves so good a character, if you will part with him, I will instantly take him into my service." The master replied, that he should part with him with great satisfaction to such an excellent mistress; that, indeed, the boy deserved all the commendations which had been given; but since the other lads had such a habit of plaguing, and Jack was of so impatient a temper, he despaired of ever composing their animosities. Jack was then called, and informed of the lady's offer, which he accepted with the greatest readiness, and received immediate directions to her house.

When the lady came home, she inquired concerning Jack, and found that he had

arrived some time before her. She sent for him into the parlour, and kindly entered into conversation with him concerning his situation since she had first seen him upon the common. She was greatly pleased by the feeling manner in which he described the last moments of the old Soldier; she saw very clearly that the poor boy had an excellent disposition, a warm heart, and that what he had most to dread was his hastiness of temper. She, therefore, gently, yet very forcible, laid before him the evils which follow from a quarrelsome habit; how all persons come at last to dread the company of one who is apt to fall into disputes. She told him how people are always inclined to think him in the wrong against whom complaints are most frequently made, although perhaps he may have been on the right side in every instance. She pointed out to him how willing his master was to part with him; not because he was wrong in his disputes, but because he was in so many of them. “A quarrelsome boy,” said she, “is a nuisance in a family; there is no peace where he is, and every thing is kept in constant confusion and ill blood. You know, Jack, that it is your duty, as a Christian, to forgive others their trespasses against you; if, then, you fight upon every occasion, on which you may have suffered even real injury, you disobey your blessed Saviour, by violating one of his precepts. If any of your fellow-servants should do you any harm, forgive it according to the command of our Lord; if it should be often repeated, or be of a very heinous nature, come to me, and I shall see justice done between you and him. You know you cannot be a good judge in your own case, especially when your mind is filled with anger; therefore, I forbid you to take the matter into your own hands; you must not cause noise and riot in the family by coming to blows, even where the insult you may receive has been most unprovoked.”—Jack made very faithful promises of amendment; as indeed he might very sincerely do, for except when he was hurried away for the moment, he was ever ready to confess his failing.

Jack was now in a new sphere of life. His face was washed, his hair combed, he was clothed afresh, and appeared a very smart active lad. His business was, to help in the

stable, to water the horses, to clean shoes, to perform errands, and to do all the jobs of the family; and in the discharge of these services, he soon gave universal satisfaction. He was indefatigable in doing what he was ordered, never grumbled, nor appeared out of temper, and seemed so quiet and inoffensive in his manners, that every body wondered how he had acquired the character of being quarrelsome. In a short time he became both the favourite and the drudge of the whole family; for, speak but kindly him, and call him a little soldier, and Jack was at every one's disposal. This was Jack's particular foible and vanity: at his leisure hours he would divert himself by the hour together, in poizing a dung-fork, charging with a broom-stick, and standing sentry at the stable door. Another propensity of Jack's, which now discovered itself, was an immoderate love of horses. The instant he was introduced into the stable, he attached himself so strongly to these animals, that you would have taken him for one of the same species, or at least a near relation. Jack was never tired with rubbing them down and currying them; the coachman had scarcely any business but to sit on the box; all the operations of the stable were entrusted to Little Jack, nor was it ever known that he neglected a single particular. But what give him more pleasure than all the rest, was sometimes to accompany his mistress upon a little horse, which he managed with great dexterity.

Jack discovered too a great disposition for all the useful and mechanic arts. He had served an apprenticeship already to the manufacture of iron, and of this he was almost as vain as of being a soldier. As he began to extend his knowledge of the world, he saw that nothing could be done without iron. "How would you plough the ground," said Jack; "how would you dig your garden; how would you even light a fire, dress a dinner, shoe a horse, or do the least thing in the world, if we workman at the forge did not take the trouble of preparing it for you?" Thus Jack would sometimes talk upon the dignity and importance of his own profession, to the great admiration of all the other servants.

These ideas naturally give Jack a great esteem for the profession of a blacksmith,

and in his occasional visits to the forge with the horses, he learnt to make and fix a shoe as neatly as any artist in the country.

Nor were Jack's talents confined to the manufacture of iron; his love of horses, and his interest in every thing that related to them, was so great, that it was not long before he acquired a very competent knowledge in the art of sadlery.

Jack would also sometimes observe the carpenters when they were met at work, and sometimes by stealth attempt the management of their tools; in which he succeeded as well as in every thing else; so that he was looked upon by every body as a very active, ingenious boy.

There was in the family where he now lived, a young gentleman, the nephew of his mistress, who had lost his parents, and was therefore brought up by his aunt. As Master Willets was something younger than Jack, and a very good-natured boy, he soon began to take notice of him, and be much diverted with his company. Jack, indeed, was not undeserving this attention; for although he could not boast any great advantages of education, his conduct was entirely free from all the vices to which some of the lower class of people are subject. Jack was never heard to swear, or express himself with any indecency. He was civil and respectful in his manners to all his superiors, and uniformly good-natured to his equals. In respect to the animals entrusted to his care, he not only refrained from using them ill, but was never tired with doing them good offices. Added to this, he was sober, temperate, hardy, active, and ingenious, and despised a lie as much as any of his betters. Master Willets now began to be much pleased with playing at cricket and trap-ball with Jack, who excelled at both these games. Master Willets had a little horse which Jack looked after; and, not contented with looking after him in the best manner, he used to ride him at his leisure hours with so much care and address, that in a short time he made him the most gentle and docile little animal in the country. Jack had acquired this knowledge, partly from his own experience, and partly from paying particular

attention to a traveling riding-master that had lately exhibited various feats in that neighbourhood. Jack attended him so closely, and made so good an use of his time, that he learned to imitate almost every thing he saw, and used to divert the servants and his young master, with acting the taylor’s riding to Brentford.

The young gentleman had a master who used to come three times a week to teach him accounts, and writing, and geography. Jack used to be sometimes in the room while the lessons were given, and listened according to custom with so much attention to all that passed, that he received very considerable advantage for his own improvement. He had now a little money, and he laid some of it out to purchase pens, and paper, and a slate, with which at night he used to imitate every thing he had heard and seen in the day; and his little master, who began to love him very sincerely, when he saw him so desirous of improvement, contrived, under one pretence or another, to have him generally in the room while he was receiving instruction himself.

In this manner, Jack went on for some years, leading a life very agreeable to himself, and discharging his duty very much to the satisfaction of his mistress. An unlucky accident at length happened to interrupt his tranquillity. A young gentleman came down to visit Master Willets, who, having been educated in France, and among genteel people in London, had a very great taste for finery, and a supreme contempt for all the vulgar. His dress too was a little particular, as well as his manners, for he spent half his time in adjusting his head; he wore a high, well stiffened cravat, which kept his head and neck in one position, as if he were in the pillory. His pantaloons were of the cossack fashion, wide enough to admit his body, and puckered from top to bottom; while his hessian boots were in the highest style, and polished in the most accurate manner. He usually carried several snuff-boxes; some of which might indeed be called snuff-chests, for they were too large to enter any but his coat pockets; and he ornamented many of his fingers with ponderous gold rings. Thus affectedly dressed out, he would sometimes strut about before a looking-glass for an

hour together. This young man had a supreme contempt for all the vulgar, which he did not attempt to conceal; and when he had heard the story of Jack's birth and education, he could scarcely bear to be in the same room with him. Jack soon perceived the aversion which the stranger entertained for him, and at first endeavoured to remove it, by every civility in his power; but when he found that he gained nothing by all his humility, his temper, naturally haughty, took fire, and as far as he dared, he plainly showed the resentment which he felt.

It happened one day, after Jack had received some very mortifying usage from this young gentleman, that as he was walking along the road, he met with a show-man, who was returning from a neighbouring fair with some wild beasts in a cart. Among the rest was a middle-sized monkey, who was not under cover like the rest, and played so many antic tricks, and made so many grimaces, as engaged all Jack's attention, and delighted him very much, for he always had a propensity for every species of drollery. After a variety of questions and conversation, the show-man, who probably wanted to get rid of his monkey, proposed to Jack to purchase him for half-a-crown. Jack could not resist the temptation of being master of such a droll diverting animal, and therefore agreed to the bargain. But when he was left alone with his purchase, which he led along by a chain, he soon began to repent his haste, and knew not how to dispose of him. As there was, however, no remedy, Jack brought him carefully home, and confined him safe in an out-house, which was not applied to any use. In this situation he kept him several days, without accident, and frequently visited him at his leisure hours, with apples, nuts, and such other presents as he could procure. Among the other tricks which the monkey had been taught to perform, he would rise upon his hind legs at the word of command, and bow with the greatest politeness to the company. Jack, who had found out these accomplishments in his friend, could not resist the impulse of making them serve the purposes of his resentment. He, therefore, one day dressed out his monkey in the most laughable manner: he tied a piece of stiff pasteboard about his neck; put upon

him a pair of loose canvas bags, as trowsers; and covered the lower parts of his legs and his feet with oil and lampblack, in imitation of boots. Jack then put into his hands a huge tobacco-box, which he taught him to use as a snuff-box; and stuck upon his fingers several curtain-rings; and, thus accoutred, led him about with infinite satisfaction, calling him Sir, and jabbering such broken French as he had picked up from the conversation of the visitor. It happened very unluckily, at this very instant, that the young gentleman himself passed by, and instantly saw at one glance the intended copy of himself, and all the malice of little Jack, who was leading him along, and calling to him to hold up his head, and look like a person of fashion. Rage instantly took possession of his mind; he seized a stone which lay near at hand, knocked the poor monkey upon the head, and laid him dead upon the ground. What more he might have done, is uncertain; for Jack, who was not of a temper to see calmly such an outrage committed upon an animal which he considered as his friend, flew upon him like a fury. The young gentleman received a fall in the scuffle, which, though it did him no material damage, daubed all his clothes, and totally spoiled the whole arrangement of his dress. At this instant the lady herself, who had heard the noise, came down, and the violence of poor Jack was too apparent to be excused. Jack, indeed, was very submissive to his mistress whom he was very sorry to have offended; but when he was ordered to make concessions to the young gentleman, as the only conditions upon which he could be kept in the family, he absolutely refused. He owned, indeed, that he was much to blame for resenting the provocation he had received, and endeavouring to make his mistress’s company ridiculous; but as to what he had done in defence of his friend the monkey, there were no possible arguments which could convince him he was in the least to blame; nor would he have made submission to the king himself. This unfortunate obstinacy of Jack’s was the occasion of his being discharged, very much to the regret of the lady herself, and still more to that of Master Willets. Jack therefore packed up his clothes in a little bundle, shook all his fellow-servants by the

hand, took an affectionate leave of his kind master and mistress, and once more sallied out upon his travels.

Thus Jack, by indulging the rashness of his temper, which he had promised to correct, deprived himself of a valuable service. His conduct in the whole of the affair was wrong; in the first place, he had not any right to turn another person into ridicule; and, in the next, when he had thus given the first insult, he ought not to have been so violent in taking satisfaction for the death of his monkey. But he was still farther to blame for the obstinate manner in which he resisted the request of his mistress to make some apology: he ought to have remembered that she had been for a long time his kind friend, and that he was bound to do much more at her desire than make an apology for an action in which he was wrong. Such is however the case with rash hot-headed people; they allow their passions to blind their understanding; but they almost always suffer, as Jack did in this case, for their misconduct.

He had not walked far before he came to a town, where a party of soldiers were beating up for volunteers. Jack mingled with the crowd that surrounded the recruiting serjeant, and listened with great pleasure to the sound of the fifes and drums; nor could he help mechanically holding up his head, and stepping forward with an air that shewed the trade was not entirely new to him. The serjeant soon took notice of these gestures, and seeing him a strong likely lad, came up to him, clapped him on the back, and asked him if he would enlist. “You are a brave boy,” said he, “I can see that in your looks—come along with us, and I don’t doubt but in a few weeks you’ll be as complete a soldier as those who have been in the army for years.” Jack made no answer to this, but by instantly poizing his stick, cocking his hat fiercely, and going through the whole manual exercise. “Prodigious, indeed!” cried the serjeant; “I see you have been in the army already, and can eat fire as well as any of us. But come with us, my brave lad, you shall live well, have little to do, but now and then fight for your king and country, as every gentleman ought; and in a short

time, I don't doubt but I shall see you a captain, or some great man, rolling in wealth, which you have got out of the spoils of your enemies."—"Well," said Jack, "as I am at present out of employment, and have a great respect for the character of a gentleman soldier, I will enlist directly in your regiment."—"A brave fellow, indeed," said the serjeant; "here, my boy, here is your money and your cockade;" both which he directly presented, and thus in a moment Little Jack became a soldier.

He had scarcely time to feel himself easy in his new accoutrements, before he was embarked for India in the character of a marine. This kind of life was entirely new to Jack; however, his usual activity and spirit of observation did not desert him here, and he had not been embarked many weeks, before he was perfectly acquainted with all the duty of a sailor, and in that respect equal to most on board. It happened that the ship in which he sailed touched at the Cormo Islands, in order to take in wood and water; these are some little islands near the coasts of Africa, inhabited by blacks. Jack often went on shore with the officers, attending them on their shooting parties, to carry their powder and shot, and the game they killed. All this country consists of very lofty hills, covered with trees and shrubs of various kinds, which never lose their leaves, from the perpetual warmth of the climate. Through these it is frequently difficult to force a way, and the hills themselves abound in precipices. It happened that one of the officers, whom Jack was attending upon a shooting party, took aim at some great bird, and brought it down; but as it fell into a deep valley, over some rocks which it was impossible to descend, they despaired of gaining their prey. Jack immediately, with officious haste, set off, and ran down the more level side of the hill, thinking to make a circuit, and reach the valley into which the bird had fallen. He set off, therefore; but as he was totally ignorant of the country, he, in a short time, buried himself so deep in the wood, which grew continually thicker, that he knew not which way to proceed. He then thought it most prudent to return; but this he found as difficult to effect as the other. He therefore wandered about the woods with inconceivable difficulty all day, but could never find his company, nor even

reach the shore, nor obtain the prospect of the sea. At length the night approached, and Jack, who perceived it to be impossible to do that in the dark, which he had not been able to effect in the light, lay down under a rock, and composed himself to rest as well as he was able. The next day he arose with the light, and once more attempted to regain the shore; but unfortunately he had totally lost all idea of the direction he ought to pursue, and saw nothing around him but the dismal prospect of woods, and hills, and precipices, without a guide or path. Jack now began to be very hungry; but as he had a fowling-piece with him, and powder and shot, he soon procured himself a dinner; and kindling a fire with some dry leaves and sticks, he roasted his game upon the embers, and dined as comfortably as he could be expected to do in so forlorn a situation. Finding himself much refreshed, he pursued his journey, but with as little success as ever. On the third day he, indeed, came in sight of the sea, but found that he was quite on a different side of the island from that were he had left the ship, and that neither ship nor boat was to be seen. Jack now lost all hopes of rejoining his comrades, for he knew the ship was to sail at farthest upon the third day, and would not wait for him. He, therefore, sat down very pensively upon a rock, and cast his eyes upon the vast extent of ocean which was stretched out before him. He found himself now abandoned upon a strange country, without a single friend, acquaintance, or even any one who spoke the same language. He at first thought of seeking out the natives, and making known to them his deplorable state; but he began to fear the reception he might meet with among them. They might not be pleased, he thought, with his company, and might take the liberty of treating him as the white men generally treat the blacks when they get them into their possession; that is, make him work hard with very little victuals, and knock him on the head if he attempted to run away. “And therefore,” says Jack, as he was meditating all alone, “it may, perhaps, be better for me to stay quiet where I am. It is true, indeed, I shall not have much company to talk to; but then I shall have nobody to quarrel with me, or baa, or laugh at my poor daddy and mammy. Neither do I at

present see how I shall get a livelihood, when my powder and shot are all expended; but, however, I shall hardly be starved, for I saw several kinds of fruit in the woods, and some roots which look very much like carrots. As to clothes, when mine wear out, I shall not much want new ones, for the weather is charmingly warm; and therefore, all things considered, I don't see why I should not be as happy here as in any other place."—When Jack had finished his speech, he set himself to find a lodging for the night. He had not examined far before he found a dry cavern in a rock, which he thought would prove a very comfortable residence. He therefore went to work with a hatchet he had with him, and cut some boughs of trees, which he spread upon the floor, and covered with a fine long silky kind of grass, to make himself a bed. His next care was, how to secure himself in case of any attack; for he did not know whether the island contained any wild beasts or not. He therefore cut down several branches of trees, and wove them into a kind of wicker-work, as he had seen the men do hurdles when he lived with the farmer: with this contrivance he found he could very securely barricade the entrance of his cave. And now, as the evening was again approaching, he began to feel himself hungry, and seeking along the sea shore, he found some shell-fish, which supplied him with a plentiful meal. The next day Jack arose, a little melancholy indeed, but with a resolution to struggle manfully with the difficulties of his situation. He walked into the woods, and saw several kinds of fruit and berries, some of which he began to eat and found the taste agreeable. He also dug up several species of roots, but feared to taste them, lest they should be poisonous. At length he selected one that very much resembled a potatoe, and determined to roast it in the embers, and taste a very small bit. "It can hardly," thought Jack, "do me much hurt, in so very small a quantity; and if that agrees with me, I will increase the dose." The root was fortunately extremely wholesome and nutritive, so that Jack was in a very short time tolerably secure against the danger of wanting food. In this manner did Jack lead a kind of savage, but tolerably contented life for several months; during which time he enjoyed perfect health, and was never

discovered by any of the natives. He used several times a day to visit the shore, in hopes that some ship might pass that way, and deliver him from his solitary imprisonment. This, at length happened, by the boat of an English ship, that was sailing to India, happening to touch upon the coast; Jack instantly hailed the crew, and the officer, upon hearing the story, agreed to receive him; the captain too, when he found that Jack was by no means a contemptible sailor, very willingly gave him his passage, and promised him a gratuity besides, if he behaved well.

Jack arrived in India without any accident, and relating his story, was permitted to serve in another regiment, as his own was no longer there. He soon distinguished himself by his courage and good behaviour on several occasions, and, before long, was advanced to the rank of a serjeant. In this capacity he was ordered out upon an expedition into the remote parts of the country. The little army in which he served now marched on for several weeks, through a burning climate, and in want of all the necessaries of life. At length they entered upon some extensive plains, which bordered upon the celebrated country of the Tartars. Jack was perfectly well acquainted with the history of this people, and their method of fighting. He knew them to be some of the best horsemen in the world; indefatigable in their attacks; though often repulsed, returning to the charge, and not to be invaded with impunity. He therefore took the liberty of observing to some of the officers, that nothing could be more dangerous than their rashly engaging themselves in those extensive plains, where they were every moment exposed to the attacks of cavalry, without any successful method of defence, or place of retreat, in case of any misfortune. These remonstrances were not much attended to; and after a few hours farther march, they were alarmed by the approach of a considerable body of Tartar horsemen. They, however, drew up with all the order they were able, and firing several successive vollies, endeavoured to keep the enemy at a distance. But the Tartars had no design of doing that with a considerable loss, which they were sure of doing with ease and safety. Instead therefore, of charging the Europeans, they contented themselves with

giving continual alarms, and menacing them on every side, without exposing themselves to any considerable danger. The army now attempted to retreat, hoping that they should be able to arrive at the neighbouring mountains, where they would be safe from the incursions of the horse. But in this attempt they were equally disappointed; for another body of enemies appeared on that side, and blocked their passage. The Europeans now found that they were surrounded on all sides, and that resistance was vain. The commanding officer, therefore, judged it expedient to try what could be effected by negotiation, and sent one of his officers, who understood something of the Tartar language, to treat with the general of the enemies. The Tartar chief received the Europeans with great civility, and after having gently reproached them with their ambition, in coming so far to invade a people who had never injured them, he consented upon very moderate conditions to their enlargement. But he insisted upon having their arms delivered up, except a very few which he permitted them to keep for defence in their return, and upon retaining a certain number of Europeans as hostages for the performance of the stipulated articles. Among those who were thus left with the Tartars, Jack happened to be included; and while all the rest seemed inconsolable at being thus made prisoners by a barbarous nation, he alone, accustomed to all the vicissitudes of life, retained his cheerfulness, and prepared to meet every reverse of fortune with his usual firmness.

Jack was enabled thus to support his spirits with fortitude by the recollection of the old Soldier's last advice, "to act on all occasions as became a soldier and a Christian." He felt a full reliance upon the goodness of Providence; he knew that God was infinitely wiser, and better acquainted with what was befitting each individual, than he could be himself. He looked back to the manner in which he had been supported in the solitary island, and remembered the mercy of God in freeing him from thence. He, therefore, strengthened his mind by prayer for the future, and by thanksgiving for the protection he had hitherto enjoyed.

The Tartars, among whom Jack was now to reside, constitute several different tribes

or nations, which inhabit an immense extent of country, both in Europe and Asia. Their country is in general open and uncultivated, without cities or towns, such as we see in these countries. The inhabitants themselves are a bold and hardy race of men, that live in small tents, and change their place of abode with the different seasons of the year. All their property consists in herds of cattle, which they drive along with them from place to place, and upon whose milk and flesh they subsist. They are particularly fond of horses, of which they have a small but excellent breed, hardy and indefatigable for the purposes of war; and they excel in the management of them, beyond what it is easy to conceive. Immense herds of these animals wander loose about the deserts, but marked with the particular mark of the person or tribe to which they belong. When they want any of these animals for use, a certain number of their young men jump upon their horses with nothing but a halter to guide them, each carrying in his hand a pole, with a noose of cord at the end. When they come in sight of the herd they pursue the horse they wish to take at full speed, come up with him in spite of his swiftness, and never fail to throw the noose about his neck as he runs. They are frequently known to jump upon young horses that have passed their whole life in the desert, and, with only a girth around the animal's body to hold by, maintain their seat in spite of all his violent exertions, until they have wearied him out, and reduced him to perfect obedience. Such was the nation with whom it was the lot of Jack now to reside; nor was it long before he had an opportunity of shewing his talents.

It happened that a favourite horse of the chief was taken with a violent fever, and seemed to be in immediate danger of death. The Khan, for so he is called among the Tartars, seeing his horse grow hourly worse, at length applied to the Europeans to know if they could suggest any thing for his recovery. All the officers were profoundly ignorant of farriery; but when the application was made to Jack, he desired to see the horse, and with great gravity began to feel his pulse, by passing his hand within the animal's fore-leg, which gave the Tartars a very high idea of his

ingenuity. Finding the animal in a high fever, he proposed to the Khan to let him blood, which he had learned to do very dexterously in England. He obtained permission to do as he pleased, and having by great good luck a lancet with him, he let him blood in the neck. After this operation, he covered him up, and gave him a warm potion made out of such ingredients as he could procure upon the spot, and left him quiet. In a few hours the horse began to mend, and, to the great joy of the Khan, perfectly recovered in a few days. This cure, so opportunely performed, raised the reputation of Jack so high, that every body came to consult him about their horses, and in a short time he was the universal farrier of the tribe. The Khan himself conceived so great an affection for him, that he gave him an excellent horse to ride upon, and attend him in his hunting parties; and Jack, who excelled in the art of horsemanship, managed him so well, as to gain the esteem of the whole nation.

The Tartars, though they are excellent horsemen, have no idea of managing their horses, unless by violence; but Jack in a short time, by continual care and attention, made his horse so docile and obedient to every motion of his hand and leg, that the Tartars themselves would gaze upon him with admiration, and allow themselves to be outdone. Not contented with this, he procured some iron, and made his horse shoes in the European taste; this also was matter of astonishment to all the Tartars, who are accustomed to ride their horses unshod. He next observed that the Tartar saddles were all prodigiously large and heavy, raising the horseman up to a great distance from the back of his horse. Jack set himself to work, and was not long before he had completed something like an English hunting saddle, on which he paraded before the Khan. All mankind seem to have a passion for novelty; and the Khan was so delighted with this effort of Jack’s ingenuity, that after paying him the highest compliments, he intimated a desire of having such a saddle for himself. As Jack was the most obliging creature in the world, and spared no labour to serve his friends; he went to work again, and in a short time completed a saddle still more elegant for the Khan. These exertions gained him the favour and esteem both of the

Khan and all the tribe; so that Jack was an universal favourite, and loaded with presents; while all the rest of the officers, who had never learned to make a saddle or a horse-shoe, were treated with contempt and indifference. Jack, indeed, behaved with the greatest generosity to his countrymen, and divided with them all the mutton and venison which were given him; but he could not help sometimes observing, that it was a great pity they had not learned to make a horse-shoe, instead of dancing and dressing hair.

And now an ambassador arrived from the English settlements, with an account that all the conditions of the treaty had been performed, and demanding the restitution of the prisoners. The Tartar chief was too much a man of honour to delay an instant, and they were all restored; but before they set out, Jack laboured with indefatigable zeal to finish a couple of saddles, and a dozen horseshoes, which he presented to the Khan, with many expressions of gratitude. The Khan was charmed with this proof of his affection, and in return made him a present of a couple of fine horses, and several valuable skins of beasts. Jack arrived without any accident at the English settlements, and selling his skins and horses, found himself in possession of a moderate sum of money. He now began to have a desire to return to England; and one of the officers, who had often been obliged to him during his captivity, procured him a discharge. He embarked, therefore, with all his property, on board a ship which was returning home, and in a few months was safely landed at Plymouth.

But Jack was too active and too prudent to give himself up to idleness. After considering various schemes of business, he determined to take up his old trade of manufacturing iron; and for that purpose made a journey into the North, and found his old master alive, and as active as ever. His master, who had always entertained an esteem for Jack, welcomed him with great affection, and being in want of a foreman, he engaged him at very handsome wages for that place. Jack was now indefatigable in filling his new office: inflexibly honest where the interests of his master were concerned, and at the same time humane and obliging to the men who

were under him, he gained the affection of all about him. In a few years his master was so thoroughly convinced of his merit, that growing old himself, he took Jack into partnership, and committed the management of the whole business to his care. He continued to exert the same qualities now which he had done before, by which means he improved the business so much, as to gain a considerable fortune, and become one of the most respectable manufacturers in the country. But with all his prosperity, he never discovered the least pride or haughtiness; on the contrary, he employed part of his fortune to purchase the moor where he had formerly lived, and built himself a small but convenient house, upon the very spot where his daddy's hut had formerly stood. Hither he would sometimes retire from business, and cultivate his garden with his own hands, for he hated idleness. To all his poor neighbours he was kind and liberal, relieving them in their distress, and often entertaining them at his house, where he used to dine with them with the greatest affability, and frequently relate his own story, in order to prove that it is of very little consequence how a man comes into the world provided he behaves well, and discharges his duty when he is in it.

We have thus brought Jack to an end of his toils and misfortunes; and there is every reason to suppose that his happiness was lasting, for it was deserved. Throughout all his misfortunes, after he had reached man's estate, he manifested a cheerful trust and confidence in the support and protection of Providence, and never gave way to murmurings or useless complainings. It may be observed, that all his early mishaps arose from an ungovernable temper: but that when time and experience had moderated his temper, things went well with him, and even matters, at first sight unfortunate, turned out advantageously. It was with him, as it will be with every one; a violent disposition, prone to anger, and unwilling to listen to reason, always brings a man into misfortunes; for it is not only unreasonable but unchristian. An useful lesson may be thus learned from the History of Little Jack; if our conduct be sober and honest, if we firmly and steadily persevere, without yielding to weakness

and lamentation, and, above all, if we place our trust in God's Mercy through our Blessed Redeemer, and endeavour to discover and perform his will, we are likely to obtain a comfortable condition here, certain of enjoying a good conscience in the present life, and may entertain the best founded hopes of perfect happiness in the future.

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