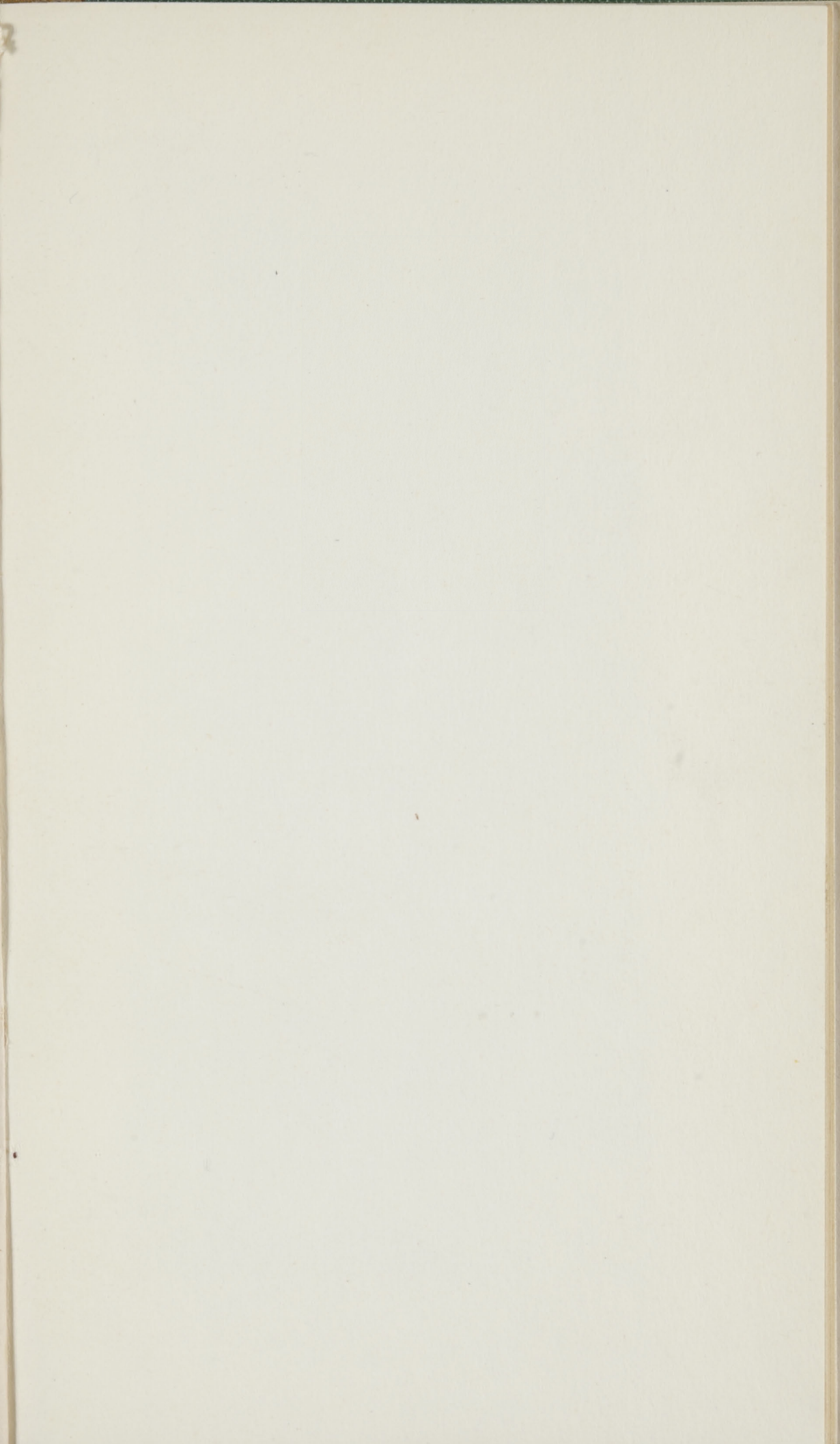


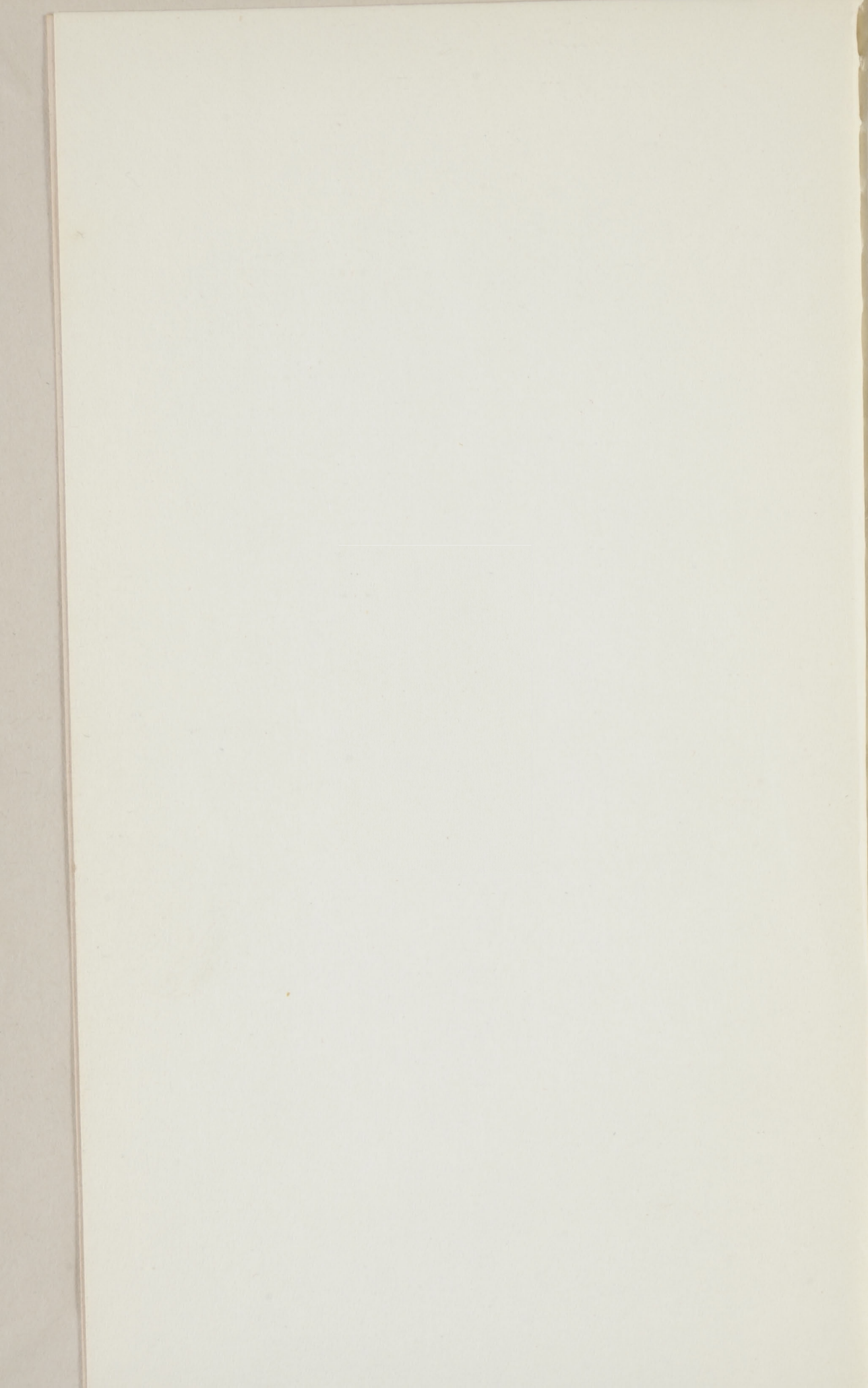
THE LIFE OF
DANIEL DANCER

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Mr Dancer terrified at the Intrusion of a Tom cat, while counting his Treasure in the Cowhouse.



Mr Dancer bringing home the Carrion Sheep he found, Upon which him & his Sister feasted a long time tho' possess'd of 3000 Pounds.

THE

STRANGE AND UNACCOUNTABLE

L I F E

OF

DANIEL DANCER,

ESQUIRE,

WHO DIED IN A SACK,

Though worth upwards of £3000 a Year.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED,
THE ECCENTRIC HISTORY

OF

BETTY BOLAINE,

Late of CANTERBURY:

*Remarkable for Avarice, Vice, Meanness, and Singular Way
of Life.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THOMAS HUGHES, 35, LUDGATE HILL;

And Sold by all Booksellers in Town and Country.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

THE LIFE
OF
DANIEL DANCER, Esq.

“Content is wealth, the riches of the mind,
And happy he who can that treasure find;
But the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods o'er his Gold; and griping still for more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor.”

DRYDEN.

IT is presumed by philosophers, that the most important study for the improvement of mankind is MAN; and this knowledge cannot be more profitably acquired, than in perusing those true examples of human life, recorded in the vicissitudes and incidents which biography presents impartially to the mind, with the direction of truth for their application to our own lives and actions, for imitation or avoidance.

In this view, however elevated or depressed the hero of the piece may be, some useful instruction may be gained, as we find ourselves more or less interested in his transactions. In relating the splendid actions of ambitious heroes, little can be adopted or imitated by the most numerous class of society; but in detailing events concomitant with the most miserable penury, a lesson is produced fraught with wisdom, the purport of which is to shew in what small estimation riches are in the eyes of God, who wisely and equally condemns to human distress, the miser that scrapes, and the spendthrift that scatters.

Avarice, the most degrading of passions to the understanding, and the most deleterious to happiness, exhibits a humiliating picture of human nature, and impressively illustrates the undeniable truth, that wealth cannot grant ease to its possessor; but, on the contrary, fills him with the most alarming fears for the safety of this imaginary good, and suggests the most consolatory reflection to forbearing poverty, whose unequal share in the distribution of wealth is more than counterbalanced by the comparison.

With this view is presented to the public, the following exact particulars of the most remarkable instances of the misery which is ever attendant on the mind cursed with the insanity of saving. It appears by the parish register, that Mr. Daniel Dancer was born in 1716, and was the eldest of four children,

three sons and a daughter. His father lived on Harrow-Weald Common, near Harrow on the Hill, where he possessed property to a considerable extent, and which his son, by the most determined and whimsical abstemiousness, increased to upwards of three thousand pounds per annum.

The years of his minority passed unnoticed, as nothing is recorded of him in his youth, that might indicate the singularity and propensity to save, which so peculiarly distinguished his maturer years; but a detail of his actions is now offered to the world, as the most perfect examples of saving knowledge, and how misery may be multiplied by self-denial, for the purpose of accumulating useless riches.

Mr. Dancer had a sister, whose disposition to reserve perfectly accorded with his own; and as they lived together many years, their stories are necessarily connected, and will furnish in the sequel, the most melancholy and degrading instance of the infirmity and folly of human nature.

The daily appearance of this lady abroad, when it happened necessity or condescension drew her out, exhibited the most perfect resemblance of one of the witches in former times; for it is certain, had not philosophy, and the extension of knowledge, long ago banished the belief in witchcraft, Miss Dancer had been taken up by the witch-finders, and most probably burned for her acquaintance with poverty, which made her appear in such a questionable form, that even the sagacious Matthew Hopkins, witch-hunter to King James, might have mistaken this bundle of rags for a correspondent with familiar spirits; for her appearance might be pronounced not to be of this fashionable world.

Her accoutrements were usually a mixture of male with female attire, tied round with a ravelling of hemp; for even in this part of her dress she studied how to make one cord last long, by untwisting it to make it go further; and thus equipped, she would sally forth armed with a broomstick or pitchfork, to check such daring marauders as had the audacity to intrude on her brother's grounds; on which occasion her neighbours observed she had more the appearance of a walking dung-hill than one of the fair sex.

The miserable hovel in which this parsimonious pair took up their earthly residence, was perfectly of a piece with themselves. Like Drake's ship, it had suffered so much by repair, and still wanted so much, that a bit of the original building could not be distinguished by the most diligent antiquary; for there was not one article of moveable which can be mentioned, but had at one time or other, been nailed to some part of the mansion, to keep out the weather; or, which Mr. and Miss Dancer deemed more troublesome, the neighbouring cats; which, strange to declare, often ventured into this house of famine, lured by the inviting scent of the vermin within, some of whom often had the temerity to dispute the antiquity of their right of possession; for it cannot be supposed that this

saving pair could think of the extravagance of keeping a cat, who daily denied themselves the natural call of appetite.

A neighbour going in one day, found Mr. Dancer pulling some nails out of the sides of his bellows; and on asking him the reason, he replied, that wanting some nails to fasten a piece of leather to a hole which time had effected in the boarding of the house, he thought he could spare some out of this useful piece of furniture, which would save buying; observing, that undertakers, trunk-makers, and bellows-makers, were the most extravagant and wasteful fellows in the world in their profusion of nails.

Miss Dancer's disposition exactly corresponded with his own, and she lived, or rather vegetated, in this delightful mansion, winter and summer, making each season keep pace with her frugal maxims; for out of a little she had learned to spare, as extravagance was in her opinion the most unpardonable fault.

The purpose of life is for refinement and improvement in some pursuit or other. This couple only lived to save money, therefore every action of theirs only tended to the accumulation of wealth; and it was a long while before they had arrived at the summit of the art of saving, by absolutely denying themselves regular repasts, however coarse in quality or scanty in quantity; for they, for a series of years, lived as sumptuously as three pounds of sticking of beef, and fourteen hard dumplings, would allow for the short space of seven days; and this supply, for years, served them week after week; and though, during hot weather in summer, the meat might urge greater expedition, and fresher supplies, yet they never were observed to relinquish their daily portion, with one cold dumpling and a draught of water. Half a bullock's head, with occasionally a few stale trotters, made broth for weeks; and this was sometimes rendered more savoury by the addition of a few picked bones which he took up in his walks, and of which he daily deprived the dogs.

Their way of life suffered no variation; one uniform application of the principle of saving pervaded every action of their lives, and was the constant object of every point of view. Their economical arrangements were constantly the same, save that now and then accident might throw something in their way, which might spare their weekly expenditure for three pounds of sticking. Mr. Dancer's constant and strict attention in his walks about his grounds, sometimes afforded him a piece of delicious viand, which the hand of more dainty and more extravagant appetite had thrown aside; not so much for the sake of variety, as for the nauseous increase of smell it had acquired; which, rendering it unfit for its former owner, seemed, when picked up, to endear it the more to the parsimonious finder, who immediately calculated on the saving it would produce to this thrifty pair in their weekly commons.

An uncommon instance of this kind occurred one summer's morning, which for many weeks discontinued the enquiries at

the butcher's shop after the allowance of neck-beef; and while it offered a change in their mode of living, gratified their darling avarice, and insatiable propensity to save money. It happened one morning, as Mr. Dancer was taking his usual walk on the common to pick up bones, sticks, or any bit of rag or other matter that might go towards repairing his clothes or his house, that he found a sheep, which had apparently died from natural disease, and most probably was in a putrid state. This was a rare prize for Mr. Dancer; and, incredible as it may appear, he took it up, and bore it home on his shoulder in triumph to his sister, who received it as the immediate gift of heaven, to bless their poor souls with a change of food; for they had not for years tasted any thing like it; and now they were likely to feast for a great length of time uncontrolled, and at no expense neither, which was the most delicate sauce that could accompany such a delicious morsel as carrion mutton to the appetite of a miser.

It was immediately skinned, and cut up, and the fat carefully laid aside, and an immense number of pies made of it, with proper seasoning; so that Mr. Dancer's house for a while resembled a perigord pye-maker's shop, preparing to pack up for exportation. On these they feasted with their accustomed frugality for several weeks, till the whole were exhausted.

When a miser finds a treasure he is sure to lock it up. Whether Mr. Dancer thought his sister extravagant in the indulgence of her stomach, at the beginning of the pye-feast, or whether it was his pleasure at the thought of living at a small expense, or at the change of diet the pies supplied, he became unusually careful of them at last, and locked them up in one of his strong coffers. The truth of this, the following anecdote will illustratively supply. The neighbours one morning observing Miss Dancer rather lower spirited than usual, kindly inquired into the cause, when, after some hesitation, she acknowledged that her brother Daniel had scolded her for eating too much of the mutton pies, and told her she was very extravagant, which she observed, with tears in her eyes, was an exceeding hard case, as she loved to save as well as himself; but what vexed her more, he had locked them up in his strong trunk, in order to make them last longer, not trusting her with the key. Miss Dancer, on the whole, seems to have been a very proper companion for her brother; for it would have been a difficult case to have matched him any where for savingness.

This couple never manifested any predeliction for any mode of worship. Religion did not teach how to save money; so that whenever Mr. Dancer happened to stray into a church or meeting, which happened sometimes in his long walks, it was only for a little rest; and he was sure to depart before the collection was to be made, as he thought the gift of a penny was parting with the seed of a guinea, which might by little and little increase to an hundred. He might indeed be deemed a

Predestinarian from the following circumstance; but, as Mr. Locke observes, "Let ever so much probability hang on one side, and a covetous man's reasoning and money in the other, it is easy to foresee which will outweigh." It was during the last illness, which terminated his sister's life, that he was importuned to afford her some medical assistance; to which he shrewdly replied, it would cost him money; and, besides, continued he, "Why should I waste my money in wickedly and wantonly trying to oppose the will of God? If the girl is come to her latter end, nothing can save her; and all I may do, will only tend to make me lose my money; and she may as well die now as at any other time. If I thought bleeding would recover her, I would open a vein myself; but I cannot think of paying for physic for dying people." The dread of incurring expense, and parting with his darling coin was insurmountable. Mr. Dancer's reasoning on the conduct of Providence, even tended towards his favorite penchant—save money.

Perhaps never having felt the inconvenience of ill health, or from that callosity of heart, ever attendant on the avaricious mind, he, at this period, allowed his sister, in her last exigency, but the usual portion of sticking of beef, with the cold hard dumpling; to which he added the miser's humanity, "If you don't like it, why go without." But Mr. Dancer's deficiency of care was very amply supplied by the late Lady Tempest, who afforded every attention and kindness necessary to the case of Miss Dancer. The latter was possessed of more than £2000, which she intended to leave Lady Tempest for her extraordinary care of her in her last illness; but she, unfortunately for Lady Tempest, expired before she could sign a will in her favor; and her property being thus left intestate, and at the disposition of the law, her two brothers wished equally to divide it with Mr. Dancer; but to this proposal he would not agree, and obstinately refused to comply with any proposal they could make; insomuch that, after a long while persevering, and obstinately refusing to come to any agreement of participation, a law-suit followed, and Mr. Dancer recovered £1040 of his sister's fortune, as the regular price of her board and lodging for thirty years, at thirty pounds per annum, and one hundred pounds for the two last years; for this charge he declared to be very reasonable, as during that time she had done nothing but eat and lie in bed. The remainder of her fortune, after these extraordinary deductions, was equally divided between the two brothers and Mr. Dancer.

It is very difficult to account for the miser's motive in saving money; for he does it at the expense of every natural gratification and reasonable indulgence, without any view of ever enjoying it; for as age advances, his thirst after riches increases; and the more he acquires, the more he still craves, and never seems to obtain the end of his pursuit; whilst, on the contrary, other passions lose themselves in enjoyment, and ultimately with the decline of advancing years, which on-

ly strengthens the miser's inordinate desire after useless riches; for, "Like the magpie he hides the gold he cannot make use of."

Mr. Dancer's calculations for saving money were systematic and regular; nothing escaped his attention to that sole object of his soul; and so rigid was his avarice, that he rarely washed his face or hands, because soap was dear, towels would wear out, and besides when dirty, were expensive washing. However, to obviate the too great inconvenience of the accumulation of filth, he would, once in two or three weeks, in summer time, repair to a neighbouring pond, and there wash himself with sand, and afterwards lie on his back in the grass to dry his skin in the sunshine.

His wardrobe might very justly boast more sorts and colours, and more substances, than the paraphernalia of a strolling company of players; and yet, notwithstanding all his curious patching, and artful contrivances of his needles, (for it was the maxim of Mr. Dancer to be his own taylor,) he sometimes succeeded so ill in covering the outward man, that his garments of many sorts could not prevent half exposing what it but partly concealed: but he generally kept them together by a strong hay-band, girt round his waist. His stockings were so much darned, that it was difficult to discern what they were for patches; for none of the original could ever be discovered; and in dirty or cold weather, they were strongly fortified with ropes of twisted hay, for which he had a happy talent. This contrivance served him for boots; and when he declined them, he could untwist them, and they served to increase the bulk of his bed.

For many years it was his opinion, that every man ought to be his own cobbler; and for this employ he had a lucky genius, which he indulged so far as to keep by him the most necessary tools for mending shoes; but these, it must be impartially observed, cost him nothing; for he had borrowed one at a time from different persons until he had possessed himself of a complete set of them, and with these he mended his own shoes so admirably, that what he wore, by the frequent jobs and coverings they had received from his thrifty hands, had become so ponderous, that running a race in them would have been impracticable; and, besides, their dimensions were so much enlarged, that they resembled hog-troughs more than shoes. To keep these on his feet, he took several yards of cord, which he twisted round his ankles in the manner the ancient Romans wore their sandals.

Linen was a luxury to which, notwithstanding his avaricious disposition, he was not quite a stranger; for at an early period of his saving career, he used to buy two shirts annually; but for some years previous to his death, he never allowed himself more than one, for which he would constantly bestow at some old clothes shop two shillings and sixpence, and was never but once known to go to so handsome a price as three

shillings. After it had got into his possession, it never underwent the necessary operation either of washing or mending; on his back it was doomed to perpetual slavery till it fell off in rags. Hence it cannot be doubted, nor will it surprise the reader to be told, that, notwithstanding Mr. Dancer's peculiarity of disposition induced him to shun the world, he never was without a numerous retinue about him, whose lively spirit, and attachment to his person, made his acquaintance, as well as his neighbours, extremely cautious of approaching him.

After his sister's death, a pair of sheets, as black as soot-bags, were discovered on the bed; but these he would never have removed; and when they were worn out, were never replaced; so that after that time he relinquished the use of linen to sleep in.

He would not allow any one to make his bed, though Lady Tempest often solicited him to permit it; and for many years his room was never swept. Towards the time of his death, it was observed to be filled with sticks, which he had stolen out of the different hedges. A considerable quantity of odd-shapen gravel-stones were also found in a bag, but for what use these were intended is unknown.

The report of his riches, and the idea of its concealment about the house, once brought a troop of house-breakers, who very easily entered, and, without any search-warrant, rummaged every corner of the place; but although this domiciliary visit cost the lives of some of them, they took away but little property. Old Dancer had been long on his guard; and his mode of hiding was so peculiar to himself, that the grand object of the thieves was never discoverable by them. Mr. Dancer concealed his treasure where no one could ever think of seeking for it. Bank notes were usually deposited with the spiders; they were hid amongst the cobwebs in the cow-house, and guineas in holes in the chimney, and about the fire place, covered with soot and ashes. Soon after the robbery, when the thieves were apprehended, and to be tried, it being very necessary that Mr. Dancer should attend the trial, Lady Tempest requested, that, in order to appear a little decent, he should change his shirt, and she would lend him a clean one. "No, no, (he replied,) it is not necessary. The shirt I have on is quite new; I bought it only three weeks ago, and then it was clean."

As Mr. Dancer was a man of no great delicacy of manners, it had been often doubted if ever he was in love. A certain female visitor at Lady Tempest's, once asked him if he had ever made love. To which the old hunk replied, "No, Madam; I always get it ready made. But I sha'nt come to you, I promise you."

His extreme love of money overcame every other consideration; and to this idol Mammon he even sacrificed brotherly affection. From the evident want of this principle, and to his attachment to gain, may be accounted his strange behaviour,

THE LIFE OF

as before related, to his sister at her latter end. But in one singular instance, and to the canine species too, he seemed in some measure, to forego his favorite idea of saving. This was a dog, of which he was extremely fond, and which he called by the familiar appellation of Bob, my Child. His treatment of this animal offers an instance of that inconsistency of human acting, which philosophy seeks in vain to account for.

While his self-denial was so severe, that he denied himself a penny-loaf a day, and existed entirely on Lady Tempest's pot liquor and scraps from her kitchen, of which he would cram so greedily, that he was frequently under the necessity of rolling himself on the floor before he could go to sleep, he allowed this dog a pint of milk daily; and this he paid for as it was constantly supplied by a neighbouring farmer, when he had parted with his farming-stock, and had not one cow left.

Once a complaint being made to him, that his dog Bob had worried some of his neighbour's sheep, he took the dog to a farrier's shop, and had all his teeth filed down. For this barbarous action he never gave any reason; possibly it might be to prevent the like again, as he might shrewdly guess, that any further damage from his dog's mischievous manner, might bring expenses on him, as he was certainly liable to be compelled to pay them.

He was so attentive to every thing that might turn to any advantage, however remote, that he has walked two miles, when compelled by the dictates of nature, rather than not save the manure for his own grounds.

Whenever he went out, he carefully gathered up every fragment of wood he could find. He was so remarkably careful of this article, that some carpenters, observing his eagerness after chips, contrived to place some in his road, that had been previously be-t. This stratagem did not deter Dancer from carefully pocketing the bits of timber; and though besmeared with something as aromatic as ever came out of Pandora's box, they found their way to his store-room, where he deposited all his gatherings as carefully as if they had been worthy of being presented to the British Museum.

His sister being dead, and finding himself lonesome, he hired a man for his companion: and in his choice he shewed much discernment: for his man, Griffiths, was a proper counterpart of himself—both miserable alike. When they went out, they took different roads, though both followed the same occupation; only that the servant indulged more taste for strong beer, a liquor which Mr. Dancer carefully avoided, as costing money; but Griffiths would tipple a little, which was the cause of much altercation at night when these saving souls met. However, Griffiths generally came loaded with bones, some of which having some fragments of flesh on, served to heighten their repast, and quieted the master's impending storm. This fellow had, by as severe parsimony as that exercised by Mr. Dancer, contrived to accumulate 500*l.* out of wages which

had never exceeded 10*l.* per annum. At the time he lived with Mr. Dancer, he was upwards of sixty, and hired himself to him for eighteen-pence a week. Every trait of so singular a character is interesting. Mr. Dancer having occasion to come to London for the purpose of investing two thousand pounds in the funds, a gentleman, who did not know him, met him near the Royal Exchange, and mistaking him for a beggar, charitably slipped a penny into his hands. Jemmy Taylor, the Borough Usurer, who stood by, was a little surprised; but Mr. Dancer seemed to understand the gentleman very well; and observing to Taylor, 'Every little helps,' he pocketed the half-pence, and walked on. Perhaps he might consider this penny as the seed of a pound, to which it might attain by gentle gradations; and as the human mind is always pleased with prospects of what it wishes, Mr. Dancer might contemplate this penny multiplying itself progressively, till it arrived at thousands; for, as Lord Chesterfield observes, Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves. In fact, the truth is, that wealth is at first acquired by very minute particles: small sums are the semina of great ones, and may very aptly be compared to seconds of time, which generate years, centuries, and even eternity itself.

Lady Tempest was the only person who had any influence over this unfortunate miser; and though she knew his fortune was at last to devolve to her and captain Holmes, yet she, with that gentleman, with the utmost solicitude, employed every contrivance to make him partake of those conveniences and indulgences, which his fortune could supply, and which his advanced years required; but all their intreaties were without effect. Where was he to get the money? How could he afford it? If it was not for some charitable assistance, how could he live? One day, however, this lady with a great deal of persuasion, prevailed on him to purchase a hat, which he did at last, of a Jew for a shilling, having worn the one he then possessed upwards of fourteen years; but yet it was too good in his eye to throw away. When Lady Tempest visited him the next time, she, to her great astonishment, perceived him still with his old hat on. On importuning him for the reason, he at last told her, that, after much solicitation, he had prevailed on his old man, Griffiths, to give him sixpence PROFIT on the hat he had purchased by her desire of the Jew, a few days before.

Mr. Dancer was very partial to trout stewed in claret, with which he used to be indulged at Lady Tempest's. That lady having some in very cold weather, sent him a plateful as a present; but lying by all night, in the morning it was congealed; and as he was very liable to the tooth-ache, he did not dare to eat it till it was warmed. How to get over this difficulty was a very serious consideration; for to light a fire was an expense he could not afford; but his thrifty genius soon, however, suggested a means of imparting a sufficient

degree of warmth to the mess for him to venture to eat it without the molestation of pain; and even without incurring the most trivial expense. In frosty weather, as it was then, he always lay in bed to keep himself warm; and a lucky thought coming into his brains, he imagined that he might impart sufficient heat to the fish to venture on eating it, if it was placed under him in bed. For this purpose, he placed the fish under his backside, being in the sauce, and between two pewter plates, and sat on it till all was sufficiently warm for him to eat it!

To those who cannot exist without every conveniency in life, and even without every artificial appendage to luxury, let them turn to this old miser, worth more than three thousand pounds per annum, who for the sake of making that still more, foregoes even that superlative comfort, a fire in winter-time! Ye spendthrifts! read this anecdote and blush.

Mr. Dancer had arrived at his 78th year, before he felt any serious cause of complaint to call in a doctor. His antipathy to the medical tribe has been already mentioned; therefore it was in vain to advise him to take any medicine, even when there was a necessity for it.

During the illness which terminated this miserable man's mispent life, in the 78th year of his age, in the month of October, 1794, Lady Tempest accidentally called on him, and found him laying in an old sack, which came up to his chin, and his head wrapped in pieces of the same materials as big as a beehive. On her remonstrating against the impropriety of such a situation, he observed, that being a very poor man, he could not afford better; and having come into the world without a shirt, he was determined to go out in the same manner. As he brought nothing with him, he did not think he had any right to carry any thing away; and the less he made use of he thought was the more acceptable to God: so that in his last moments, he made his saving notions square with his most serious thoughts. Lady Tempest then requested him to have a pillow to raise his head, which he refused; but ordered his old servant Griffiths to bring him some litter out of the stable, to raise his head, as the lady thought he would lie easier.

Though Mr. Dancer never indulged himself in the extravagant luxury of snuff-taking, yet he was always careful to solicit a pinch or two from those who did; but it was not to gratify his own nose—no such thing! it was to lay it by in a box, which he carried about him for that purpose; and when full, he would barter its contents at a neighbouring chandler's-shop for farthing candles, which he made to last him till he had replenished his box again. Mr. Dancer never suffered any light in his house, except what issued from the glimmer of the fire, unless while he was going to bed.

His opinion of the professors of physic was rather singular, and seemed to border on predestination. To use his own language, the medical tinkers were all a set of rogues; who, while they patched up one hole, always contrived to make ten, for

a better job: but he allowed the utility of surgery in repairing accidental fractures; though not often without the reflection, that they were seldom nothing else than cutting butchers.

His prejudice against the whole tribe of lawyers was determined in the extreme. Indeed, his inveteracy was the result of strongly feeling the effects of their chicanery; and his aversion to this class of men was so great, that he would even forego his own interest to gratify his resentment, as the following anecdote will prove.

Having, as was usually his half-yearly custom, agreed with an old clothes woman for a shirt for half-a-crown, as he thought, the dealer called at his house, and left him one worth three shillings; but for which he refused to pay any more than his original agreement of 2s. 6d. Notwithstanding the party urged the goodness and the fineness of the article, Mr. Dancer was impenetrable; and no more than the half crown would he pay; which the woman as peremptorily refusing, at last applied to the Court of Requests of the district, to which he was obliged to repair, although it cost him fivepence on the journey for bread and cheese, and the cost of hearing, &c. in all upwards of four shillings and sixpence. This had such an effect on his mind, that he ever afterwards held the lawyers in abhorrence; for to give, or pay, were not to be found in his vocabulary. Addition and multiplication were his favorite rules, and usury was the foundation of his good deeds.

The most delightful task of Mr. Dancer's life was to count his gold, to visit the holes where it lay deposited, and to see all was safe. On one of these nocturnal visits, he was not a little frightened, while counting the contents of one of his rich pots in the cow-house; a large Tom-cat, terrified at his untimely appearance in that place of concealment, rushing through a hole in the boarding, left him in such a panic, that he thought Old Nick himself was watching his motions. To add to his terror, in returning back to the house, he fell over something soft that lay in his way; which proved at last to be a poor Jackass lying on the ground, which had strayed in through one of the many apertures time had made in the inclosure of his estate.

Though Mr. Dancer, by his spirit of covetousness, debased himself in this sordid manner, yet he kept a mare, for which he shewed a great partiality; but he never allowed her more than two shoes at one time, deeming it an unnecessary expense to shoe the hind feet of the animal; and he used to say, it was more pleasant for a horse to feel the naked grass, than to be confined in unnatural shoes.

Mr. Dancer was the most perfect picture of human penury that perhaps ever existed, and the most singular character that ever lived; his habits were those of an hermit; and his extreme avarice rendered him as abstemious as any ascetic of the desert.

In this manner lived, and in this situation died, Danie

Dancer, Esquire, a monumental proof to the world, that the advantages of fortune, unless properly directed, will not make their possessor happy. Lady Tempest, it ought to be observed here, had but a very short enjoyment of the great accession of wealth she acquired by this miser's death; for she contracted an illness during her attendance on Mr. Dancer's last hours, that in a few months closed the period of her own life, which happened in January, 1795.

The house, or rather the heap of ruins, in which Mr. Dancer lived, and which at his death devolved to the right of Captain Holmes, was a most miserable decayed building, frightful and terrific in its outside appearance; for it had not been repaired for more than half a century. But though poor in external appearance, the ruinous fabric was very rich in the interior. It took many weeks to explore its whole contents; and Captain Holmes and Lady Tempest found it a very agreeable task to dive into the miser's secrets. One of the late Mr. Dancer's richest scrutoires was found to be a dung-heap in the cow-house, a sum little short of 2500*l.* was contained in this rich piece of manure; and in an old jacket, carefully tied and strongly nailed down to the manger, in bank-notes and gold, five hundred pounds more.

Several large bowls, filled with guineas, half guineas, and quantities of silver, were discovered at different times, in searching the corners of the house; and various parcels of bank-notes, stuffed under the covers of old chairs and cushions. In the stable, the Captain found some jugs of dollars and shillings. It was observable that Mr. Dancer used to visit this place in the dead of the night, but for what purpose even old Griffiths himself could not guess; but it was supposed, it was to rob one jug to add to a bowl which he had buried, and was nearly full, when taken up from under one of the hearth tiles.

The chimney was not left unsearched, and paid very well for the trouble; for in nineteen different holes, all filled with soot, were found various sums of money, amounting together to more than 200*l.* Bank-notes to the value of 600*l.* were found doubled up in the bottom of an old tea-pot. Over these was a bit of paper whimsically inscribed, "Not to be too hastily looked over!"

HISTORY OF BETTY BOLAINE,

WHO DIED JUNE 5, 1805, AGED EIGHTY-TWO
YEARS, WHILST EATING A BROWN CRUST,
ALTHOUGH WORTH UPWARDS
OF £20,000.



THE subject of the following pages, an extraordinary and well-known character in Kent, was born in Canterbury in the year, 1723, where her father, Mr. Noah Bolaine, had acquired an independence in the profession of an apothecary. Her education was suitable to her father's situation, but neither that, nor her family's example, could prevent her from showing early marks of the insanity of avarice and meanness, of which she very early shewed very extraordinary instances. She was then said to be pretty, and a coquette in her manner, hence it is not wonderful if she attracted many admirers, though at the same time she was so slovenly in her dress as to be the observation of all her acquaintance.

At eighteen, she lost her father, who bequeathed her 15,000*l*. in good property, and 5000*l*. to his niece, Miss Ann Bolaine. Miss Betty had now as many suitors as a young lady of her fortune might be expected to have, but not enough to suit her avarice, for it is even reported she advertised under disguised names for a partner, thereby seeking fresh connections, as the former ones dismissed themselves, finding she only jilted them for the presents they made her. On these occasions she vauntingly boasted of her conquests, and the number of strings she had to her bow, occasionally shewing the rich presents she had received.

Avarice has been aptly compared to a gull that swallows all but returns nothing, and this habit of taking favors at that time, brought her into a dilemma that might have been fatal to her freedom, had she not had very extraordinary precaution in the final part of the affair.

It happened whilst on a visit at the house of a Mrs. De Laporte in London, in the year 1745, when the city trained bands were daily mustered, that a rich grocer, a captain of one of the companies, became desperately enamoured of her on account, it is said, of her lively dancing at the Lord Mayor's ball. This gentleman, on the impulse of the moment, hastily offered her marriage. But Miss Betty was too wary to be caught easily, though according to report, she had done as well to have acceded to his offer. However, she kept him long at bay, receiving his presents, as they suited her covetous turn, and having her ready furnished apartment in town paid for by him. Whether he was in love with her person,

or most with her fortune, their parting may give leave to guess. The gentleman finding entreaties in vain to bring his design to an issue, actually one morning enticed her into a hackney coach, and by the help of his brother, whom he had persuaded to assist him, brought her to the Fleet, where marriages were then legally performed. But here she totally refused her hand, and made such a noise that the passengers interfered, and some butchers out of the market rescued her from the parson's clutches, who had already began muttering the service over his book. The captain, mortified at her refusal, though she had promised him its performance at a distant period, made his farewell bow, and left her.

This adventure gave her a distaste for London, and she returned to Canterbury. Mr. Slade, a gentleman of great fortune at Feversham, was soon after this her admirer, and offered her a coach and livery; but Miss Bolaine was too good a judge of the world to part with her independency, and right of augmenting it her own way, on such unstable grounds as this gentleman's promises. To him succeeded an attorney of Canterbury, who, by some lucky intrigue, not only won her affections, but cajoled her to give him a bond of forfeiture of 200*l.* should she afterwards change her mind. She must have been greatly prejudiced in favor of this lawyer, to grant him such a proof of the stability of her inclination, if we may judge by her former and subsequent transactions.

Whether her affections were sincere or otherwise, it is certain she took uncommon pains to convince him of their reality; yet the lawyer must have sometimes found that love had not any share in the connection; and Miss, thinking that jealousy was a necessary proof of affection, she made an objection to every thing he proposed or did, she followed him every where with a suspicious eye, seeking fresh objects for reproach to exert herself in afterwards. His house became a desert, and his life was spent in restless anxiety and domestic strife. Her jealousy carried every thing to an extremity; even his clients in the office were objects of Miss Bolaine's aversion, who reproached them with the opprobrious epithets of pimps, whores, or bawds; and made an objection to his going any where without her, and which her grotesque appearance made very objectionable, even at that time, while "youth was in her train."

We cannot help inserting here, an anecdote of her penurious meanness at this period, on the best authority. At an assembly at Canterbury, when large hoop petticoats were universally worn, the ladies complained of the inconvenience of the fashion, and agreed to lay aside their hoops for a while. Miss Bolaine objected to this proposal, fearing her saving contrivance would make her laughed at. However, her objections were overcome by her companions; and instead of a cane hoop, she exhibited a straw one, stitched with packthread and red tape, covered by an old dirty apron of her father's. This was

the accoutrement of Miss Bolaine, a lady of 20,000*l.* fortune, and the mistress of a lawyer of extensive practice in the county of Kent. It may be wondered here, how her protector could support such treatment; but the prospect of her fortune, which was constantly increasing, and the expectation of a fresh accumulation from the falling in of her mother's, who was very aged, no doubt, sweetened all his bitterness; and, in fact, she duped him so far as to make him believe she was going to stab herself for the love of him, seizing a blunt knife, and violently sticking it against her bodice, where she knew it could not penetrate. This action produced what she wished; for it made the lawyer agree to give up his bond, on condition she named the day of their union for life. A license was procured; and on the morning of their intended marriage he gave her the bond, as she was dressing herself, as he thought to go to church with him. Relying on appearances, he set out first for St. Peters, with her promise of immediately following him; where, after waiting more than two hours, he retired at last, amidst the ridicule of the spectators, who witnessed his disappointment and mortification; while she at home destroyed the bond, exulting in the idea of having outwitted a lawyer.

This action dissolved that connection, and she returned to her mother, who, poor good creature, was the reverse of her daughter. Her usage of this venerable parent is too atrocious to be laid before our readers: suffice it to say, that raising her hand against her was the least offence she disgraced herself by; for this penurious wretch daily left her mother to starve in the midst of plenty; and even when the poor old lady resigned her breath, the only eatable that was found in the house was a few musty beans. By her death, 3000*l.* more devolved to her by her father's will, and 1500*l.* to her brother, a very worthy character, whose name ought not to be mentioned with hers. Her mother, during the time of her widowhood, had accumulated 500*l.* which she bequeathed to her son; but Miss Bolaine, actuated by her usual covetous disposition, and the opportunity she had, actually forged her mother's signature, by which she converted the total sum to her own use. Her brother was not ignorant of the fact, though he never stirred in the affair, only shewed a coolness which she never forgave; for years afterwards she made a bold attempt to murder him! A fall from his horse having confined him to his room, under pretence of inquiring about his health, she made her way up stairs, when, after securing the door, she made two thrusts at him with a carving knife. By Providence's help, disabled as he was, he disarmed her, and turned her out of doors. Thus was she prevented from adding fratricide to the long catalogue of her crimes; and the gentleman, though he never forgave it, passed it over in silence, unwilling to disgrace his family. by bringing her to the punishment she merited.

Miss Farnham, sister to the Countess of Denbigh, married Mr. Bolaine, by whom he had an amiable daughter, and left her an orphan. At his death, Mrs. Bolaine thought it prudent to keep on good terms with her sister-in-law, induced no doubt, by the advantage she hoped her infant daughter might afterwards reap. But this solicitude proved fatal to the young lady; for her aunt was so delighted in causing pain and uneasiness in others, that after much oppression, this tender and beautiful girl went in a deep decline, occasioned, as their acquaintance said, by the caprice, terror and severity of her ways, which hastened her death, and removed her mother soon afterwards, regretted and lamented by all her friends.

One of Miss Bolaine's favorite amusements was making matches. As void of real friendship as sincerity, she took delight in bringing parties together, and making them miserable afterwards. Thus she secretly abetted and encouraged a young lady of considerable fortune, at Westgate, in a clandestine marriage below herself, and much against her parents inclinations: but no sooner was the ceremony performed, than she hastened to Mr. Lloyd, and advised him by all means to disinherit his daughter for her disobedience. But that gentleman, discovering more than she thought he knew of her intrigues, only forbade his children any further connection; and Miss Bolaine, from that moment, became a stranger to the house. The covetous insanity of saving, prevailed over every other consideration in her mind. About a twelvemonth after her brother's death, she went to board at Westgate Court, allured no doubt by the riches of a gentleman who resided in that neighbourhood, a widower about forty years older than herself, hectic and consumptive. She soon worked herself into his good opinion, and persuaded him to marry her. Though old, he was fond; and artful, she was kind. The wedding-clothes were made, a new chariot provided, and every thing ready, except the gentleman's settling the whole of his fortune on her; but she, too wary to yield hers on any terms, declined the connection for that time, yet consented to accept of terms of settlement. This connection was a great affliction to this gentleman's family, who finding her actuated by nothing but a desire of gain, and depending too much on her power over him, one morning in a passion pushed him violently down stairs, for having had the temerity to order something for his dinner. This coming to the knowledge of his friends, they contrived to get him out on an airing one day, and never suffered him to return; and she was soon afterwards ejected from the house. Exasperated at this, she brought an action for a breach of promise of marriage, laying her damages at 2000*l.* which was tried by Judge Chappel, and she was nonsuited, as it was proved she tacitly had refused to marry him. Still discontented, notwithstanding this gentleman bequeathed her 50*l.* and the old chariot, she sent in to the family an enormous bill of expenses soon after his death, but never obtained a shilling.

It was surprising to every one, how she could like to live any longer near the place of her nativity, where her notoriety was too conspicuous to pass unnoticed. She next took a large house in Westgate, which she advertised to let out. Her first tenant was a respectable gentleman, whose house was repairing; and she succeeded in wheedling him to pay the whole expenses of their joint house-keeping; but soon after his return home, she presented him with an extravagant bill, which imposition, though against his judgment, he was forced to comply with. She kept two servants at this time: one as penurious as herself endured her caprice, and almost starvation, near seven years; the other younger, and not so patient, lost her place one day, for having the audacity to kindle a little fire, and eat too much of the scanty fare allowed for two days. Miss Bolaine, on this occasion, threatened to stab the poor girl with her scissars; but she luckily escaped through the kitchen window, amidst the applause of the populace, who followed her mistress with execrations to the next magistrate, where the girl obtained her wages, and Miss Bolaine was severely reprimanded for her rash conduct.

Notwithstanding this forbidding temper, she still received some visits from the neighbouring gentlemen round Canterbury, amongst whom was one an exact counterpart with herself. His name was Box, and it is certain the love of money, not affection, induced this union. They existed in a large house, and with the help of a garden, which they cultivated together, made shift to supply themselves with every thing they wanted, which was but little, for even necessaries were denied, and they kept no servant. She found in him a man she could easily govern, a thorough patient slave, and one bit with the same madness of saving as herself. With this man she could eat a mouldy crust, with frowzy or stinking meat, sometimes picked up in the road, and cooked on cabbage stacks, burnt with turf, which was constantly stole from the commons by night. These, with dried furze bushes, and dead stalks from their garden, constantly supplied fuel for the year round, every day exhorting each other more and more to parsimony; and Miss Bolaine was so pleased with his saving ways, that she at last assumed his name, pleased to partake in the honor of such a penurious character. Thus for some years they lived, or rather starved together, not allowing themselves the produce of their garden till it was spoiled for want of sale, but would steal any trifle from their neighbours, which they were sure to keep till it stunk, or was rotten. As to clothing, she was never known to buy any; for what she had spunged from her admirers, and what her mother left, lasted her all her days. At this time, she was sometimes seen in a jacket, crimped round her waist, and made of bed furniture, having monkeys, mackaws, and frogs, depicted in needle-work, with a black patched petticoat, which she called being in mourning for Sir Charles H. a distant relation.

Their garden work becoming heavy, they came at last to the determination of having an assistant; and fearing that he should not have enough to do, determined on bringing out their old chariot, which had now stood by more than twenty years, and getting a couple of horses to draw it; accordingly two old blind cart-horses were purchased for eight guineas, and two or three pounds of paint used to cover the injuries time had made on the outside of this old fashioned vehicle. The first man they hired for four pounds a year, to be their factor, had no nose, and when equipped in the paraphernalia of a discharged drummer, looked very grotesque on the box. He was soon succeeded by a boy, who likewise wore the drummer's coat, but not being strong enough to do every thing, a pauper out of the road supplied his place. This poor wretch having a scabby head, was advised to lose his hair; and an old wig of his master's, furbished up to the life, had a noble appearance: but Miss Bolaine, hinting that these expenses would ruin them, her paramour was obliged to mount the box himself, and pay the coachman; who refusing to return the wig, was taken before a justice, whose sentence was, that he might keep it, as he had been prevailed on to have his hair cut off. To support all these extra expenses, Miss Bolaine's fruitful invention now first thought of lending the coach out to hire: hand-bills were accordingly issued, but her caution would not suffer any one to have it without having first secured a seat in it herself, lest any ill-disposed person should run away with such a noble equipage. This saving pair resumed all the work again themselves, Miss frequently feeding the horses, or at least taking care they should not overfeed themselves. By this economical plan, the animals became so lean, that they attracted the notice of the passengers, which was often increased by the heavy loads they had to drag; for Mr. Box having a house at St. Lawrence, in the Isle of Thanet, which was let out furnished during the summer, many materials were often in motion towards this country house. One of these journeys caused much diversion, and it is much to be lamented that Jeffery Gambado was not on the road to see it. The lady was seated amidst pickle jars, crockery, glass and tin ware, while the roof of the machine, and the box, bore a considerable share of lumber, the most prominent of which was a ladder, warming-pan, and sundry garden utensils. Mr. Box sat on one of the horses, which in the second street fell down by weakness, and immediately the whole pile overset by the other horse plunging, and the crash alarmed all the neighbourhood. They had soon plenty of assistance, and many jokes were cracked on the occasion by the standers by; however, with a deal of scolding between the pair of travellers, they were at last set a going, but not without being reproached, and told by the boys jeering, that the horses would die before night, which was somewhat verified that day, for as they arrived at Sarr, as was foretold, the horse that stumbled dropped down dead.

To hire they found too expensive, so sold the companion skeleton for a trifle, and the chariot itself for eight pounds, contenting themselves to finish the journey on foot, and have the things brought after them in a cart. She performed her half yearly journeys to London on foot, not even permitting herself the indulgence of a cart; only a little NIG, the name she called gin by, a small quantity of which, with what she could beg or purloin from her acquaintance at home, always supplied her. When it was winter, she constantly gave Mr. B. strict charge to lay a bed all day, observing that he might thereby save his fuel till she came back. Her dishonesty and pilfering disposition discovered itself on many occasions; and it is wonderful she never had her deserts for it one time or another. At the bank, where she attended for her half yearly dividends, she once received a 10l. note more than her due. It was in vain the clerk that paid her remonstrated letter after letter; she would refund nothing: but when the next half yearly assets came to be paid her, she was shamed out of part of the sum, for no more in the whole than eight guineas and a half were ever refunded.

This observable pair were fond of bathing in hot weather, but could not think of paying for the use of a machine a shilling a turn, so they adopted another mode, which was singular, and peculiar to themselves. After sauntering a long way among the sands under the cliffs, the lady wrapped herself in an old horse rug from her stable, took to the briny waves, as did her gentleman, exulting in the idea of having saved two shillings. After dressing, this rug was carefully hid under some stones for the next occasion; and in their stroll home, they carefully loaded themselves with abundance of cow's dung, which they observed the poor cottagers burn with peat or turf.

Their dispositions being so exactly alike, it is no wonder she gained such an ascendancy over him as to command his fortune, which she entirely alienated from his son by his will to herself, leaving him only one shilling! Her demeanor towards the conclusion of his life, gave him so much uneasiness, that he complained; but as he had made over his property to her many years before, to secure it from his creditors, having been a bankrupt, it was passed out of his reach; however, he made a will, as before observed; and it is a fact too notorious to be denied, that he had nothing during his last illness but cow-heel broth; and some time before he expired, she drew the bed from under him, leaving the body on the sack-ing, with the marks of blows and scratches. He was no sooner a corpse, than she shut up the house, and set off on foot for St. Lawrence, where she secured all the property; and at her return the next night, ordered the bell to be tolled only a few strokes, and it being a rule with her never to pay for any thing she could avoid, persuaded a relation of his to order the funeral, who thinking he might be in her will, foolishly did; nor

did she ever pay it, or even buy a black rag to cover her, but borrowed a black bonnet of one, and a bit of black crape of another person, which she never returned: she even converted the black gloves and hat-bands to her own use. A single circumstance of her unnatural and covetous disposition cannot be avoided here, as it shews her heart was callous to common feelings. When the undertaker's men brought the coffin, she refused to let them put the body in, saying, she would do that herself. This seeming strange, when they came to secure it with screws, they had the curiosity to peep into it, and to their astonishment found the corpse robbed of the shroud; thus she sent him out of the world as naked as he came into it.

Neither did she pay any regard to that part of his will which related to his place of interment; for instead of interring him at St. Lawrence, in his grandfather's vault, she sent him off unattended to Ramsgate; where, when the hearse arrived with the body, they found no grave dug, nor any preparation whatever for his interment. He was therefore for the moment placed in the church, and afterwards buried at the expense of a friend, in the church yard. As his certificate had never been signed, many claims were made on Miss Bolaine, who sometimes asserted, and sometimes denied, being married to him. These clamours at last brought her to ask advice of counsel, when, on being told, her repeated contradictions had placed her in danger of the pillory, she coarsely abused the gentleman, saying, she had once being too many for a lawyer, and she would abide its consequences, let it come to what it might rather than part with her money. She then sold every thing, and the creditors, after having harassed themselves a long time for nothing, at last gave up the pursuit, and left her in undisturbed possession of the property. After this affair, she had the address to get possession of a large furnished house, to keep for the proprietors, who were obliged to be abroad on affairs of consequence, which she took the liberty to let out more than two years and a half, without paying either rent or taxes.

She then returned to her own house, which had by this time so gone out of repair, that she caught the rain in dishes even in her bed-room, which served her for drink, for she never wanted water for any other occasion. A country wench was sent one day by the neighbours, to hire herself to her for a cook-maid, but Betty drove her from the door, saying, she wondered at the people's impudence, seeing she had not any thing to eat herself. Yet her industry was so great, that she seldom remained at home, even if the weather was bad. A considerable time was spent in strolling about the streets. About ten o'clock, she generally made her way to old Phillips, a shoemaker in Wincheap, who always supplied her with water for breakfast, when she ate what crusts she had picked up in the streets in her way thither. After this she would sit till dinner time, over a small pan of coals in the cobbler's shop,

when two days out of seven poor Phillips would find the dinner; and when he did not, she went to the houses of those she inspired with the idea of the great sums she would leave them in her will. The number of friends she made by these inuendoes, was very considerable; and several were of the first quality in Canterbury. Her apology usually concluded with, "Well, I'm sure, I'm lucky to catch you just at dinner-time; for as they say one volunteer is better than two pressed men." After dinner, being liberal of nothing but her company, she would make her excuse, and withdraw to make the same promises somewhere else for a dish of tea; and if not asked to stay supper, the next time she called, was sure to relate how hungry and restless she was the last night she was at their house; but if they gave her a glass of any liquor, she always blessed it with—"Well, the Lord will pay you when I am dead; I shan't forget this civility of yours."

Notwithstanding her forbidding appearance, she received many valuable presents; and though some were of perishable matters, yet she never had the heart to touch them, but even let them spoil; and after she was dead, such a warehouse was found, as perhaps could not be equalled for variety of things in decay. Many of the gifts were of considerable value, and she had the artifice to excite a kind of emulation among her friends, by relating how fond she was of such a thing, and how generous it was to send such a poor woman as she such a quantity, and so fine. Thus every one was ready to help her, little dreaming, that a reverend black coat would clear all before him!

As to articles of dress, she was never known to buy any for the last forty years of her life, except in one singular instance, and then it could not be truly called buying, for a young tradesman in the linen line, gave her out of pity a new gown; when from motives of gratitude, and to encourage him, as she said, she took another, but forgot to pay for it; but this was not the only instance of the failure of her memory, only it passed over, like many other instances of the kind, in hopes of future ample remuneration. Her washing was carried on in as singular a manner, as her extensive acquaintance made it easy to her, by taking one rag to each at a time, so that in the course of a short time, all Canterbury and its vicinity had assisted her in this necessary work; and if any refused or excused themselves from cleaning her nasty things, or she thought were backward, she would then throw out hints like, if people would stand in their own light, she could not help it; she could but be sorry for them, that they were so blind to their own interest, but perhaps they might soon repent of their error, when it was too late; and they were surely very bad people that would not wait for God's time. Thus by holding out such prospects of rewarding her friends, she contrived to slip through life with more ease, though less honorable means than the rest of the world.

Mumping and beggary must certainly have attractions which have never been discovered but by the professors, and this was the case with Betty Bolaine. Bits of candles, pinches of snuff, and matches, she was daily borrowing; so that it cost her nothing for those articles, and as for fuel, as we observed before, the streets supplied her with all she wanted, for the short time she condemned herself to be in her wretched dwelling. She was never known but once to be indisposed; and after Dr. P. had attended her for a long time, she was quite enraged at his assurance in bringing her in a bill of five guineas. She called on him one day with a guinea, but his daughter refused it; and the debt was not discharged till after her death. Wherever she visited, her friends were always sure to miss trifles, as thread, needles, tape, sugar, &c. and her dishonesty did not stop there, for she was more than once detected in bad practices; but those were all passed over on the old score of future remuneration; however, one instance may be given, as it is as authentic as nefarious. Being in London to get her dividend from the Bank, she went there accompanied by a Mrs. H. a person whose expectations were very considerable from her. The paying clerk by mistake gave her a 10l. note more than was right, which when he discovered, he applied to Mrs. H. informing her that he was under the necessity of making good the money himself. Letters on letters were written to Miss Bolaine, but to no effect; a refund of so much money was impossible to be obtained, not even when Mrs. H. went to Canterbury on this affair. However, when her dividend again became due, the clerk demanded his 10l. which she meanly denied, and meaner still, went down on her knees in the bank to this clerk, when she pulled out eight guineas and a half out of her stays, nor could entreaties or threats draw any more, notwithstanding the severe reprimand she received from him. The same lady refusing to connive at her meanness in stealing meat out of a butcher's shop in Canterbury, was threatened with the entire obliteration of her name in her will, if she ever spoke of the affair again. This lady had possessed her confidence, and put up with her caprices more than twenty-five years, making her house her home when in London, yet refused her the loan of a few pounds to save her goods from execution; and Mrs. H. not knowing the depth of her duplicity, brooked a deal more of her caprice, and suffered her depredations after this, no doubt, in hopes of being in her will at last.

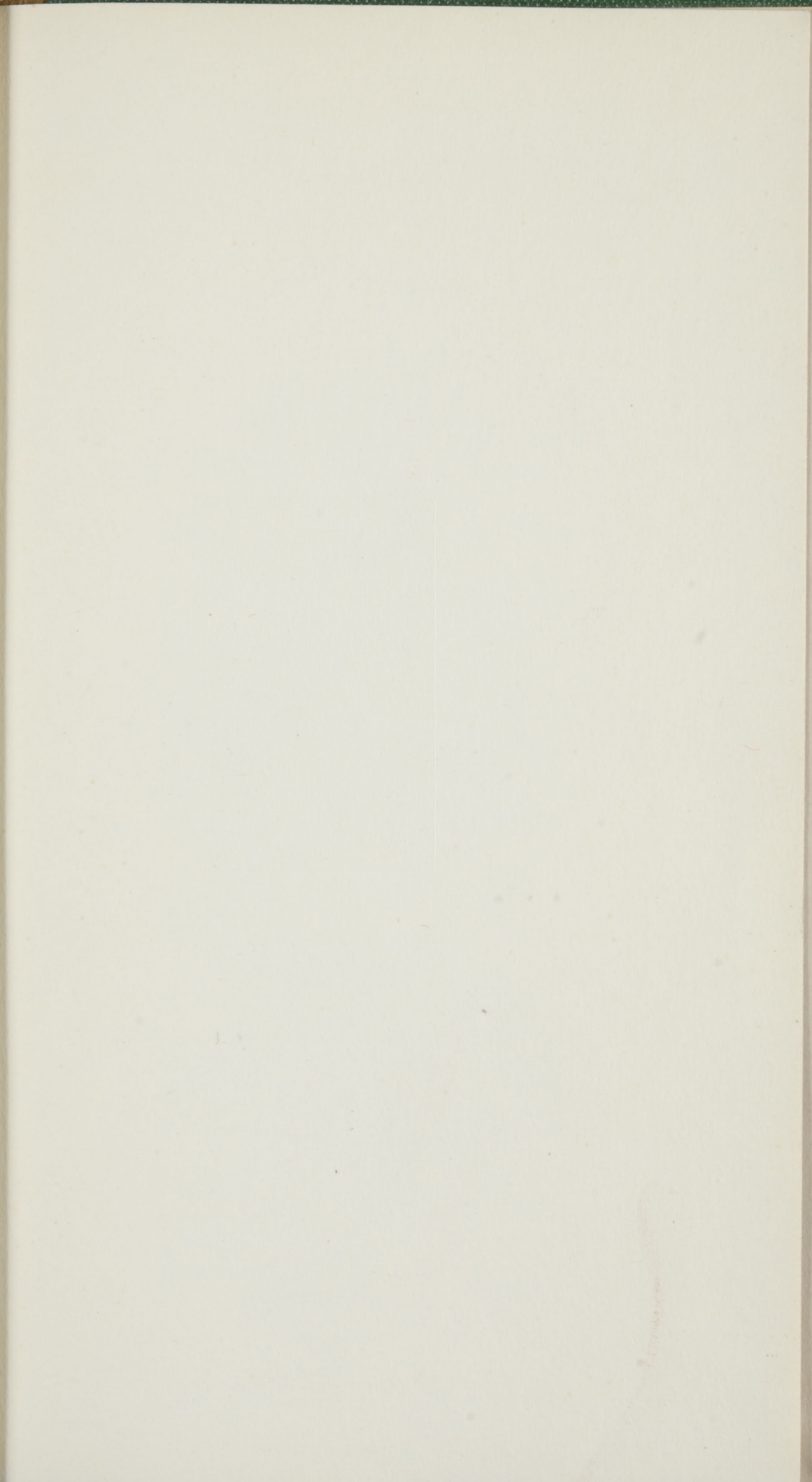
Her mind as she increased in years, seemed to give way to pilfering, and she might have had serious consequences to suffer, but she always had the good luck not to be severely noticed, only sometimes hissed and hooted at for it, which she never seemed to mind. Her general appearance was wretched in the extreme, and indicative of the greatest poverty; she would pick up crumbs, shaken from a table cloth at a door, and refuse a shilling, if sent out to her as alms, in a disdainful

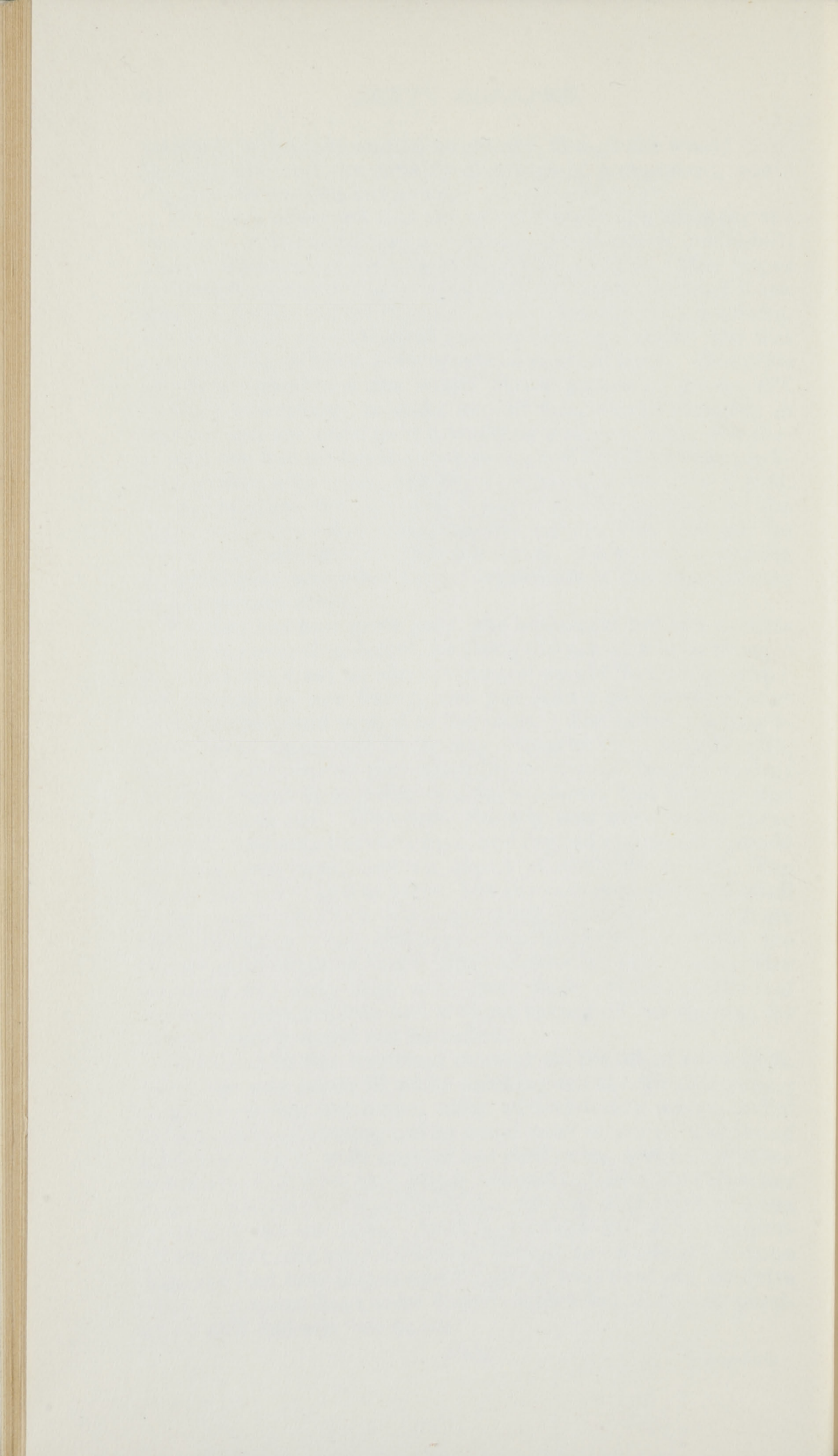
manner, saying she wanted no charity, though she would gladly have received the mouldy clearings of a cupboard, could she have remained unknown.

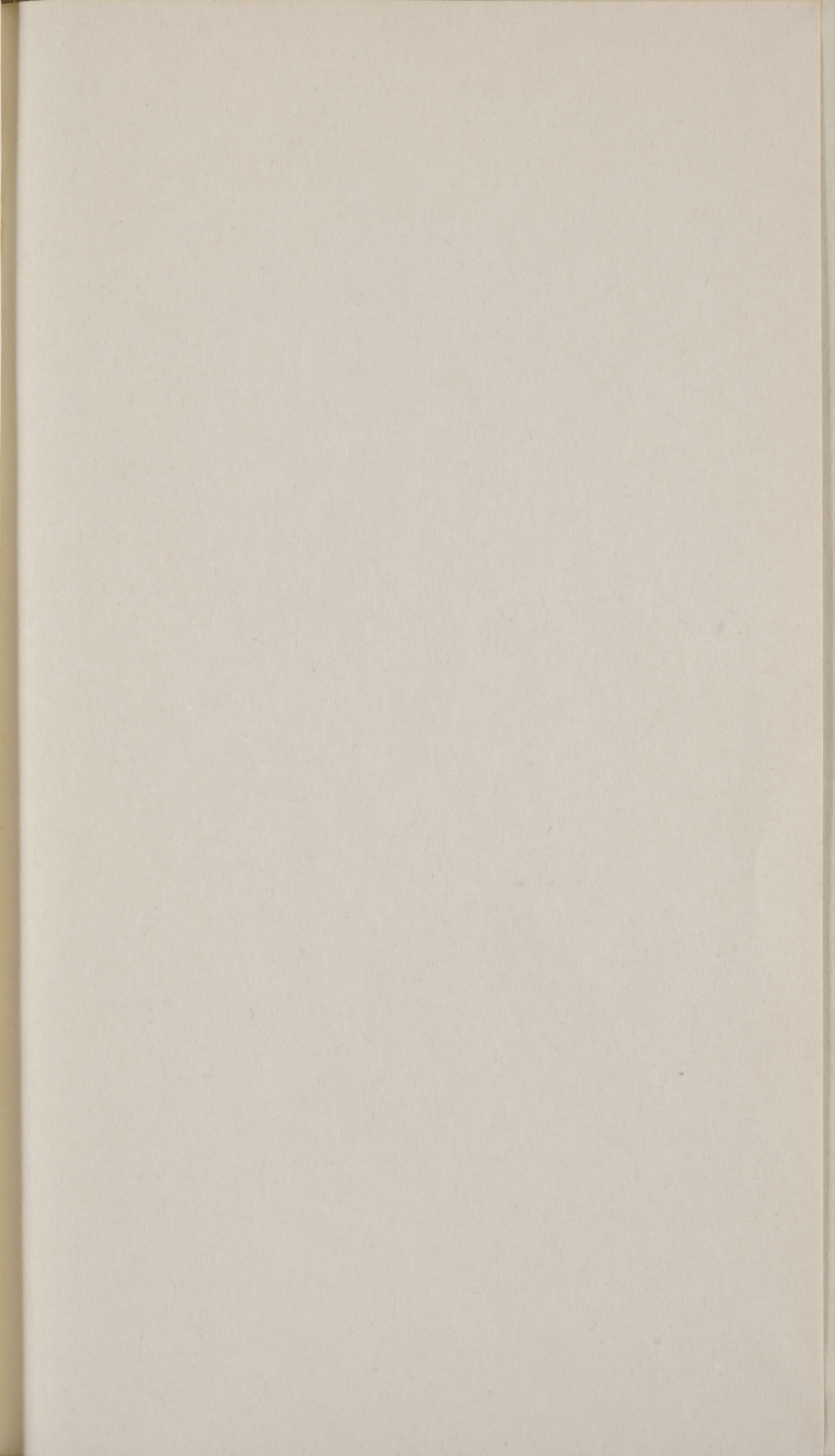
We have observed that she never bought any clothes; the covering of her head was as curious as the rest of her habiliments, which were the concomitants of penury. Her upper bonnet (for she wore two) consisted of thirty-six pieces of black stuff, curiously joined together; the under one was an old chip hat she found on a dunghill in a garden, and which she was remembered to have worn nineteen years at least. Over this covering sometimes she would throw pieces of gauze, silk brocade and tiffany, to make herself fine, as she thought; in this manner she once paid a wedding visit to a lady, who perceived she had no heels to her shoes, and that they were packed together with cord, and her pattens were not even a pair. In this manner did she call every Sunday evening on the Dean of Canterbury, stumping through the hall, and up the great staircase into the drawing-room, more like a moving dunghill than any other thing, regardless of the observations of any person there.

Finding her hair grow grey, she bethought her of a notable device to cover that defect, for Betty did not wish to be thought so old as she was; so she rummaged up old Box's wig, which not curling to her liking, she put it in a pan covered with brown paper, and took it to the oven. The baker wishing to know what dainty old Betty was going to treat herself with, took up the cover to see, when he discovered the old caxon: he soon closed it, satisfied that his customer had brought him nothing fit to eat. However, the wig was worn under these bonnets, and with her dirty face, and ragged appearance, made her look grotesque, and an object of risibility to all. The house she lived in was large, but she occupied only two small rooms below, in which were crammed four beds, and so much old furniture as made the place look like a broker's shop. On the worst of these beds she slept, to save the better ones. Her covering was only rags, and there were evident marks that she very often got into bed without taking off her rigging, for dress it surely could not be called.

She lived in this wretched manner till the 5th of June, 1805, when she was taken ill while drinking tea at a friend's house; that friend saw her home, after administering some cordial to her, and not coming out as usual next morning, was found a lifeless corpse, with most of her clothes on, and a hard piece of brown crust near her, which seemed to have fallen from her hand. Almost the last words she uttered contained a gross falsehood, for on being asked if she had any thing comfortable to drink, she answered she had nothing; while at the same time she had four dozen and a half of excellent old Madeira wine, a present from some friend, which her ill-timed parsimony still forbade her to use.







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