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TOWANDA:

Thursday Morning, August 26, 1858.

[From Dickens' Household Words, July 10.]

The End of Fordyce, Brothers.

As long as I can remember, I have always ged the city-taking a strange delight in andering up and down its busy streets, elwing its merchants in their favorite gatherres, and listening to the marvellous hisof many of its greatest money-makers.

these men, perhaps. because I am not of I am of that listless, aimless, dreamy which could not make money if it tried. e most promising enterprise would wither ler my touch. Few are the guineas in my eket that I can call my own, but I am well ent, and no feeling of envy arises in my ind as I listen to the musical clinking of coin comes from the open doors of the rich

My most frequent haunt is an old nook in heart of the city, which, although now own open as a public thoroughfare, must e been in former times the private garden some wealthy merchant's mansion. nee is under a low archway, built with ks of the deepest purple red, and over the way, in a white niche, stands a short, weaformer age. Passing over the orn pavement through the arch, you find a small quadrangle containing that Small care does it now receive, no one can claim it as his own. The d is black and hard-the yellow gravel and is near, fond of the children of the though little versed in their nature

ny places, and rudely carved with names dates. Sitting on this bench, and looking re you to the other side of the quadrangle. eve rests upon a short passage running unden arches, like an aisle in the old sh Exchange of Sir Thomas Gresham. the face of the brickwork-dwelling surnor these arches (now turned into offiis fixed a rain washed sun-dial, and over s a small weathercock turret that at one

their ways. Under the shade of one of

crees stands an old wooden seat, chipped

or to linger by the way. My only ing down in its progress every barrier opposed isitor is an old clerk, whose years must against it, whether erected by God or man mbered nearly ninety, but whose memo- others saw it, and watched like me, and were ear and strong, although his body is equally duzzled and paralyzed. age. He is a kind of pensioner coner than Newington fields. Here he m, and here, when the appointed time me, within sound of the familiar bells,

in the day when I ventured to give him advice about the management of a lilac pharently in a dving state, be came and ny side, pouring into my willing ear all ries that he knew about the old houses arrounded us. He soon found in me a hetic listener, who never interrupted or of his correctives the stores of a which extends over more than threeof a century of time.

familiar footsteps of the money-ma-

ampling over his head he will drop in-

ne corner of the quadrangle is a part milding with several long, dark, narusty windows, closely shut up with hea on the glass. None of the panes are like those of a house in chancery, but eral gloomy, ruined appearance would ly have given it up as a prey to desif it had not been in its present seand I obtained from my companion

ve it in his own person, though not ex-

out the middle of the last century, two merchants, whose names were James amiable gentlemen, tolerably rich, ble in their dealings, affable and bent to their servants, as I found during ransactions were large, and their coreuts very numerous; but, although an opportunity of acting upon the information ist have been constantly receiving inon, by letter and otherwise, that would doing so. Of course, we never knew exactly een valuable to them in speculations on what he did, or how he did it : but we guessed but confined their attention strictly to brought back the letter, and he made purchastrade. This building was not divided es and sales in the stock market, with more or you see it now. In that corner which less success. He never altered in his manner osed up were our counting-houses, the or appearance; never betrayed by word or instructions to prepare a statement of the room of the two brothers being on the signs to any of the clerks, his losses or his gains; floor. Thefrest of the square was used and never neglected his mechanical duties, alat was set apart as the private residence partners, who lived there together, one ducting secretly out of doors. a bachelor, and the other a widower

I have, perhaps, a strong reason for my sharpened memory—I consider myself the innocent cause of the destruction of the firm of Fordyce. Brothers, through an accident resulting from my carelessness. One afternoon I went to the Postoffice with a letter, directed to a firm in Antwerp with whom we had large dealings. I dropped it on the way. It contained a bank draft for a large amount, and, although every search was made for it that afternoon and evening, it was without success. The next morning, about eleven o'clock, it was named Barhard, with one child, a daughter, brought to our counting-house by a rather named Esther. The place was a refuge provid-short young man of singular though pleasing ed for an old and faithful, poor and nearly aspect, named Michael Armstrong. He had a long interview with the elder partner. Mr. James Fordyce, in the private room, and what transpired we never exactly knew; but the

result was, that from that hour Michael Arm-

strong took his seat in our office as the junior

I had many opportunities of observing our new companion, and used them to the best of than twenty years of age; rather short in figure my ability. His appearance was much in his favor, and he had a considerable power of thoughtful eyes. Her manners were quiet and making himself agreeable when he thought proper to use it. It was impossible to judge of his age. He might have been fifteen-he might have been thirty. His face, at times, looked old and careworn, at others, smiling and young, but there was sometimes a vacant, calculating, insincere expression in his eye, that was not pleasant. He made no friends in the place-none sought him-none did he seekand I do not think he was liked enough by any one of the clerks to be made the subject of those little pleasantries that are usually indulged in at every office. They had probably detected his ability and ambition, and they already feared him.

I thought at one time I was prejudiced against him, because I had been the chance instrument of bringing him to the place, and because his presence constantly reminded me of a gross act of carelessness, that had bro't down upon me the only rebuke I ever received from my employers. But I found out too well afterwards that my estimate of his character was correct-more correct than that of my fellowclerks, many of whom were superior to me in al months. Michael Armstrong, by care—uneducation and position, though not in discern-My constant occupation-when I was not

actively employed in the duties of the officewas watching Michael Armstrong; and I soon convinced myself, that everything he did was the result of deep, quick, keen and selfish calculation. I felt that the bringing back of the letter was not the result of any impulse of honesty, but of a conviction that it was safer and more profitable to do so, coupled with a detercontained a bell.

In this new position, more than ever, gave him optimation to make the most of his seeming virtue. What the elder Mr. Fordyce gave him, portunities of using. It was a busy time for Barnard, as she locked the wicket and walked still only known to himself, but there was occurrent. be found seated upon that old bench un- I knew not; but I judge from his liberal chartree. Sometimes I bring a book, and acter that it was something considerable; and sometimes I sit in listless repose, repec- I know that when Michael Armstorng took place with quaintly dressed shadows his place in our counting house, he was only ld stout-hearted merchants of the past. that which he willed to do from the first mo- stream to rush by without plunging into it. have more than one companion. Un- ment that he had opened the lost letter, and ascertained the firm from whom it was sent. ass to and from their work the whole There was, at times, something fearfully, awg, but they are too much occupied, or fully fascinating in watching the silent, steady ous, to give a moment's glance at the working of a will like his, and to see it break

Michael Armstrong affected to be somewhat with the place, and is the owner of the deaf-I say affected, for I have good reason ed flowers in the corner of the ground, to believe that the infirmity was put on to aid he tends with his own hands. For him in developing his many schemes. During ong, weary years he has lived in these the greater part of the day, he acted as priings, never having been out of the ci- vate secretary of the two brothers, sitting in one corner of their large room, by that window on the ground floor to the left, which is now closed up, like all the others in that portion of

the building. I have said before that the firm, were often in the receipt of early and valuable intelligence which they used for legitimate purposes of 'their trade, but never for speculations in the stock market. A good deal of our business lay in corn and sugar, and the information that the brothers got, enabled them to make large purchases and sales with great advantage. Sometimes special messengers came with letters, sometimes pigeon expresses, as was the custom in those days. Whatever words dropped from the partners table-(and they dropped with less reserve, as there was only a half-deaf secretary in the room) -were drank in by that sharp, calm, smiling, deceitful face at the winen shutters, scarcely visible through the dow. But, perhaps, his greatest opportunity was during the opening of the morning letters -many of them valuable, as coming from important correspondents abroad. Michael Armstrong's duty was to receive the key of the strong-room from the partners, when they came position. Its dismal aspect excited my to business in the morning, and to prepare the books for the clerks in the outer-offices. The strong room was just at the back of Mr. James Fordyce's chair, and as he opened the most important correspondence, reading it to his brother, who rested on the corner of the table, s were in business in these houses as there must have been a sharp eye and a sharper ear watching through the crevises of the London, although every hour rendered the pobert Fordyce. They were quiet, mid iron door behind them. The next duty that fell to Michael Armstrong, after the letters were read and sorted, was, to take any drafts that might be in them to the bankers and bring er, for a sum of many thousand pounds-an years that I was in their employment. the cash-box, which was always deposited there for safety over night. This journey gave him

Although not a favorite among the clerks, t children. I was quite a young man be became a favorite among the partners.time, but I remember everything as There was no undue partiality exhibited to- was an October night,) had the old, pale, anx- city, was, of course, materially and fatally inly as if it was only yesterday that I am wards him, for they were too scrupulously just ious expression that I have before alluded to jured by this sudden calamity.

mind at times, by the operations he was con-

bly his supposed infirmity, brought immediately before them every hour in the day, by his position as private secretary, had a natural influence, and met with adequate reward.

In this way five years passed, quietly enough to all outward appearance; but Michael Armstrong was working actively and desperately beneath the surface, and biding his time.

In those upper rooms to the right, exactly facing our counting houses, lived an old clerk, worn-out servant of the house; and the salary he received was more like a pension, for his presence was never required in the office except when he chose to render it. The daughter superintended the home of the two brothers, bour she let him out at the gate, and retired who as I have said before, lived upon the premises in those rooms over the arches.

Esther Barnard, at this time, was not more very pretty and interesting, with large, dark, timid, the natural result of life spent chiefly within these redbricked walls, in attendance upon an infirm father and two old merchants. She went out very seldom, except on Sundays and Wednesday evenings, and then only to that yold city church just beyond the gateway, whose bells are ringing even now. In the summer-time, after business-hours, she used to bring her work and sit upon this bench, under this tree; and in winter her favorite the fire. Michael Armstrong would not take place, while her father was dozing over the any supper, although pressed by Esther to do fire in a deep leathern chair, was in the dark recesses of that long window, in the corner of their sitting-room overlooking the garden .-She was very modest and retiring, never appearing more than was absolutely necessary during the day; but for all her care, many a busy pen was stopped in the office as her small light form flitted rapidly under the arched passage; and many an old heart sighed in remembrance of its bygone youthful days, while many a young heart throbbed with something more of hope and love.

In this way, the daily life went on for severceasing care-perseverance and talent, rose, day by day, in the respect and estimation of the partners. Much was entrusted to him; and, although he was not visibly promoted over the heads of his seniors, he was still the confidential clerk; and the one in whom was centered the management of the banking and financial transaction of the house. We presumed-for we knew nothing then-that he was den to shut the gate. The customary kiss was still working stealthily on the information that given at the door, and the customary laugh speculation about this period. Fortunes were Michael Armstrong, with his active, calculating was about to fall upon her. Her prayers that ing. brain, was not the man to allow the tempting night were longer than usual, and her eyes

Our firm had an important branch house at sleep. Liverpool, through which it conducted its shipping trade with America. Every six months it was the custom of one of the partners-eito pay a visit of inspection to this house, a task that usually occupied ten or twelve days. Mr. James Fordyce, about this time took his debrother Robert in charge of the London affairs. I can see them, even now shaking hands, outside that old gateway, before Mr. James stepped into the family coach in which the brothers always posted the journey. Michael Armstrong was gliding to and fro with certain required papers-unobtrucsive, but keen and narrow street, Mr. James looked out of the window just as his brother returned slowly back under the archway. I twas the last he ever seen

of him alive. For several days after Mr. James Fordyce's departure everything went on as before. started on a Friday, with a view of breaking the long, tedious journey, by spending the Sunday with some friends in Staffordshire. On the following Wednesday, towards the close of the day, a pigeon express arrived from Liverpool, bearing a communication in his handwriting. which was taken in to Mr. Robert Fordyce in his private room. No one in the office-except, doubtless, Michael Armstrong-knew for many days what that short letter contained : but we knew too well what another short letter conveyed, which was placed in melancholy haste, and silence the next morning under the pigeon's wing, and started back to Liverpool. This was in Michael Armstrong's handwriting.

Mr. James Fordyce, upon his arrival at Li verpool, had found their manager committed to large purchases in American produce without the knowledge of his principals, in the face of a market that had rapidly and extensively fallen. This gentleman's anxiety to benefit his employers was greater than his prudence; and, while finding that he had made a fearful error, he had not the courage to communicate it to

sition more ruinous. Mr. James Fordyce, after a short and anxious investigation, sent a dispatch to his brothamount a great as the house could command upon so sudden an emergency. This money was to be forwarded by a special messenger, that he had gathered, and he lost no time in without an hour's delay, in a Bank of England draft ; nothing less would serve to extricate the local branch from its pressing difficulty, ock market, they never, to the best of that through some agent, with the money that and save the firm from heavier loss. The letowledge, made use of it for that pur Mr. James Fordyce had given him when he ter arrived on Wednesday, after the bank had to die by poison, administered by his own hand. closed, and when nothing could be done until all probability, Michael Armstrong received

chouses, except the side over the arches, though he must have been much troubled in when Esther Barnard returned from church, she found Michael Armstrong waiting for her at the gateway. He seemed more thoughtful the gossip of the Exchange, and the commerand absent than usual; and his face, seen by cial coffee-rooms; and the credit of Fordyce, the flickering light of the street oil lamp, (it Brothers, high as their character stood in the

his care and industry, his manners, and proba- her gentle inquiries, as they entered the house together, he said he was merely tired with the extra labor he had undergone, consequent upon the receipt of intelligence from Mr. James Fordyce, and his natural solicitude for the welfare of the firm!

Mr. Robert Fordyce's habits-as, indeed, the habits of both the brothers-were very simple. He walked for two hours during the evening, from six to eight, and then read until nine, at which time he took a light supper, consisting of a small roll and a glass of milk : which was always brought to him by Esther, who left the little tray upon the table by side of his book. and wished good night until the morning. She then returned to Michael Armstrong, on the nights he visited her, to sit until the clock of the neighboring church struck ten, at which

On the night in question, she had placed the same simple supper ready upon her table; and. after retiring a few moments to her room, to leave her hat and cloak, she returned, and took notice Michael Armstrong particularly before answer was as before; adding, that he thought he heard her father's voice, calling her name, but he was mistaken.

They sat for some little time together over so. His mind was occupied with some hidden thought, and he appeared as if engaged in listening for some expected sound. In this way passed about half an hour, when Esther thought she heard some distant groans, accompanied by a noise, like that produced by a heavy body Michael Armstrong, who heard the noise too, a few minutes afterwards, to the room she had just left, she found Michael Armstrong entering the doorway with the light. He said he had been along the passages to make a search, but without finding anything. He appeared more composed, and advised her to dismiss the matter from her mind. They sat together more cheerfully for the next half hour, until the ten o'clock bells sounded from the neighboring church, when she went across the gar-

apartment, (the second window from the sun- the private apartments of the two brothers. dial,) burnt dimly throught the night, and died | Since the clerk's bodily weakness had increased.

watchman parading the street; but Esther

across the garden to her own room, felt a heavy

some hours before. the letters, and give out the keys. He had and I am, therefore, loth to respect him in She went, slowly and fearfully, knocked, and meant was always hidden behind the same calm. there was no answer. Knocked again with the smiling mask—the same thoughtful, deceptive, tired tremblingly with her forebodings of the sign, and he seldom used it in vain. Esther'

broke open the door. smell; the blinds still down; an oil-lamp partners, however-especially Mr. James Forthat had burnt out; a book half open upon the table : a nearly empty tumbler that con- from some cause, her father, old Barnard, felt tained milk; a roll untouched; and Mr. Ro-towards it a strange repugnance. It may have bert Fordyce, lying dead, doubled upon the been that there was some selfish feeling at the floor near a couch, the damask covering of bottom of his opposition-some natural and which he had torn and bitten. On the table, pardonable disinclination to agree to an union near the tumbler was a small, screwed-up paper, containing some of the poison from which had died; and near this was a letter directed, somewhat tremblingly, in his own handwriting to his brother James.

One of the earliest, but not the earliest in fied and collected. Though far younger than firmly, and no one seemed to have nerve or in- to believe that he had obtained his object-

Michael Armstrong took up the letter upon ! painful statement it contained. Mr. Robert Fordyce confessed to his brother that for some had turned out unsuccessful in the stock mar- and truth. ket. Unable to refund the money to meet the sudden emergency that had fallen upon the

short summons, written by Michael Armstrong, as I have said before, was tied to the pigeon,

about, instead of seventy years ago. for that—but his remarkable business aptitude, Esther thought he was ill; but, in reply to It was late on Friday night when Mr. James

Fordyce returned, having started at once upon the firm. At a preliminary meeting of his the receipt of the dispatch, and posted the creditors, he took his ground upon his long whole way. He spent an hour in silent and dearly-earned character for commercial sacred communion with his dead brother, and integrity; and asked for a fortnight, in which every one read in his fine, open, benevolent to investigate his books and assets. He obface, how thoroughly the wrong was forgiven tained it. that had shaken the foundations of the firm, and sent one of its members to a sudden grave.

He then devoted himself, night and day, to the investigation of their financial position, aided in every thing by Michael Armstrong, who was ever at his side. In the course of few days his determination was known. By closing the branch concern at Liverpool, contracting the operations, and reducing the London house. the capital remaining was sufficient to discharge all outstanding obligations, leaving a small balance upon which to re-construct the firm. This was done, and the honor of Fordyce, Brothers, was preserved.

Many of our staff, under the new arrangements, were dismissed, but the thoughtful care of Mr. Fordyce had provided them with other situations in neighboring firms. In other rethe tray to Robert's apartments. She did not spects our business went on as before, but with one exception. The confidence hitherto existshe went in; but, when she came back, she found him standing by the open doorway, look-strong, was at an end, and although the latter ing wildly and restlessly into the passage. She was still retained in his capacity as private meagain asked him anxiously if he was ill, and his cretary, he appeared to feel that he was no longer honored and trusted. I believe at this time he would gladly have left the place, but some secret power and influence seemed to compel him to remain.

He had never made friends of any of his fellow clerks, nor did he seek them now. Old Barnard's repugnance to his marriage with Esther at length took the form of open personal repugnance; and poor Esther, herself, while her heart was undoubtedly unchanged, became sometimes cold and timid in his presence; at other times loving and repentant, as if strugfalling on the ground. Esther started up; and gling with some great, fearful doubt that she did not dare confide to him. She was less deimmediately suggested the probable illness of sirons of seeking his company; and the roses her father. Esther waited not fer another on her fair young cheeks, that had grown up word, but ran for his apartment, to find him even within these old city walls, now faded sleeping calmly on his bed. On her return, before the hidden grief of her heart. God bless her; her love had fallen, indeed, upon

Mr. Fordyce seemed also to be struggling etween a variety of contending feelings. Whe ther he had set a watch upon Michael Armstrong at this period I cannot say; but while he appeared to feel his presence irksome, he seemed always anxious to have him near. Better would it have been for him if he had let him go to his ways.

It was impossible for Michael Armstrong to be ignorant of this state of things, and it only he gathered in the partners' room; and which and good night received from the old private served to make him if possible, more keen-eyed and watchful. What he thought or did was casional evidence upon the surface that seemed made and lost by stock-gambling, in a day; and hearted foreboding of some great sorrow, that to indicate the direction of his silent work-

The one who saw her most was Michael Armwere red with weeping before she went to strong. His duty, every night, was to lock up the ware-rooms and counting-houses rendering the keys to old Barnard, who placed them their Mr. James or Mr. Robert-to go down about the break of day. Its master had died this task was confided to his daughter, who executed it timidly at first, gaining courage, In the morning the porters opened the place however, by degrees, until, at last, she came to at the usual hour, and the full tide of business consider it a part of the day's labor, even pleasparture one morning for Liverpool, leaving his again set in. One of the earliest, but not the ant to look forward to. Whether Michael earliest, to arrive was Michael Armstrong. Armstrong ever really loved Esther Barnard His first inquiry was for Mr. Robert Fordyce, is more than I can say. I have to judge him who was generally in his private room to open heavily though in other and greater matters, not been seen. An hour passed and then the this. He had no faith, no hope, no heartinquiry was extended to the dwelling house .- | nothing but brain, brain, ceaseless brain; and Michael Armstrong saw Esther, and begged a small love, that I have found, ever came As the coach rolled away up the her to go and knock at Mr. Robert's door .- from a soul like this. What he thought and same result. The alarm now spread, that even beautiful face. He used his appearance something serious had happened. Esther re- as only another instrument to aid him in his denight might more than half realized, while the love for Michael Arwstrong was soon no secret clerks came up, and after a brief consultation, to the whole house, and many, while they envied him, sincerely pitied her, though they A room with a close and slightly chemical could scarcely give a reason for so doing. The dyce-looked with favor upon the match; but that threatened to deprive him in his sickness and his old age of an only daughter who was both his companion and his nurse. Be this as it may, he would not fix any definite time for the marriage, although, for his daughter's sake, he did not prohibit the visits of him upon whom the room was Michael Armstrong, calm, digni- her heart was bestowed. Michael Armstrong did not press just then for a more favorable many others, he took the lead naturally and determination, and, for this reason, I am led clination to dispute his authority. Esther stood an excuse for being upon the premises unsusanxiously amongst the crowd at the door look- pected after the business hours of the day were ing on with her whole soul starting through over. I never knew him to allow his will to be opposed, and I must, therefore, conclude, that in this instance he was satisfied with the ground the table. It was unsealed. He opened it, that had been gained. Esther, too, was hapand read in a clear, firm voice, the short and py-happy in her confidence and pure affection —happy in the presence of him she loved— as a brother. Her melancholy madness, at tappy in being powerless to penetrate behind times, was relieved with short lucid intervals. time he had largely appropriated the funds of the stony, cruel, selfish mask, that, in her trustthe firm to his own use for speculation that ing eyes seemed always lighted up with love

Our house had never entirely recovered the shock given to its credit by the violent death house, and fearing to see his brother again af- of Mr. Robert Fordyce. Rumors of our being ter perpetrating such a wrong, he had resolved in an insolvent position were occasionally bandied about the town, gaining strength with Deep silence broken by sobs and tears, fol- the maturing of a large demand; dying away the following morning. In the meantime, in lowed the reading of this letter, for the dead for a time, after it had been promptly satismerchant was loved and respected by all. A fied! Our bankers, too, began to look coldly upon us.

The rumors gradually took a more consist-That evening about half-past eight o'clock, and sent to Mr. James Fordyce at Liverpool, ent and connected form; an unfavorable con-For the next few days the business of the dition of the money market arose; the stron- clearly, and if there was indistinctness of uthouse was at a standfall. The sad event was gest houses cannot always stand against such terance, it was only towards the close. Much

payment. tance to prepare a statement of the affairs of to live and move.

If any one was disappointed at this, it was Michael Armstrong. His will for once was foiled. For reasons best known, at that time to himself, he wished, now that the house was destroyed, to have all the books and papers removed out of the reach of Mr. Fordyce. It was not to be.

Mr Fordyce, from the hour of the meeting. almost lived in his private office-room. Day after day was he seen arranging papers and making extracts from the leathern bound led-Night after night his green shaded office-lamp was lighting him through the same heavy, weary task. He had removed his writing desk from the back of the room to that window on the left of the ground floor, where Michael Armstrong used to sit. He worked chiefly alone, and seldom called in the help of his secretary, except for some intricate parts of the cash accounts.

In this way the time went quickly on, and Mr. Fordyce had arrived within a few days of the completion of his labors.

It was on a Wednesday evening-a winter's evening in the latter part of January-about half-past seven o'clock, that Mr. Fordyce and Michael Armstrong were alone together, after all the clerks had gone, at the window in that room, deeply engaged in a mass of papers.-There deemed to be an angry discussion detween them. Mr. Fordyce was pointing firmly to some white paper leaves, which shone brightly under the condeased glare of the shaded lamp. Both faces were covered with a dark veil of shadow, arising from the reflected covering of the lamp but Michael Armstrong's keen eyes flashed evily, even through the mist of that dim light. The next moment he was behind Mr. Fordyce's chair, with his hand firmly twisted in the folds of the old merchant's neckcloth. There was a short and hopeless struggle. Two arms were thrown wildly into the air; a body fell off the chair on to the ground; and Mr. James Fordyce had learned more in that instant, than all those piles of paper would have taught him if he had examined them for years. He was dead; -dead, too, without any outward marks of violence upon his body.

Nor was this all.

Esther Barnard was sitting without a light n the dark recess of her favorite window: sitting spell-bound, paralyzed, parched and speechless, gazing upon the old office window and the green-covered lamp, under the shade of which this terrible drama had just passed before her eyes. She could make no sign. The whole fearful past history of Micheal Armstrong was made clear to her as in a mirror, although the picture was shattered in a moment, as soon as formed She must have sat there the whole night through heedless of the calls of her sick father in the adjoining room, to nurse whom she had stayed away that evening from church. They found ber in the moraing in the same position with her reason partially gone.

Michael Armstrong came in the next day punctually at the business hour. He appeared even more collected than usual, for he believed all the evidence against him was now destroyed for ever. A rigid investigation was instituted on the part of the creditors; and the mind wanderings of poor Esther Barnard were of great importance in making out a case against him. It may be that her sad affliction was ordained to bring about his destruction for I do not believe that if she had retained her reason, she would ever have been induced to speak one word against him. Her heart might have broken, but her tongue would have remained silent. As it was, her accusations were gathered to gether, bit by bit-gathered as I gathered much of this story from her lips in happy intervals, filling up from imagination and personal knowledge all that seemed unconnected and obscure.

The investigation never reached the courts of law. Michael Armstrong saw with the old clearness of vision the inevitable result of the chain of evidence-saw it traced up from speculation to forgery from forger; to his oisoning of Mr. Robert Fordyce, from the poisoning to his forgery of the letter transfering the early crime, and from the letter to the destruction of the house and its last surviving representative To avoid the expected punishment-prepared as he always was for emergency—he poisoned himself in that private room before our eyes. Whether the capital, of which he had sapped the firm, had been productive or not in his hands, we never knew. He was never known to acknowledge any kindred; and no one ever acknowledged him .--He died, and made no sign; silently and sullenly, with his face to the wall.

At one time I indulged in hope that Esther Barnard might recover, and I had prepared a home for her, even without the selfish desire of being rewarded with her poor, broken heart. Her father died, and I cherished her during which she thanked me so touchingly and sweetly for supposed kindnesses, that it was more than a reward. It was my pleasure to watch for such happy moment patiently for days, and weeks, and months. In one of them she died, at last, in these arms, and, I buried her in the ground of her old church outside the gateway. Our firm was never, in anyform, restored, though I still cling to the old place. I have seen it sink gradually, step by step, until it can scarcely sink lower; but it is still near Esther. There is little happiness in growing so very old.

The old clerk told his story truthfully and adverse influences, and we were, at last, com- of it may have been the planton of an old pelled to close our transactions. We stopped man's imagination, feeding on the tradition of a few closed, dusty shutters; but it interested Contrary to general expectation, Mr. For me, because it spoke to me of a by-gone time dyce declined to call in any professional assis- and of persons and things among which I love