

fect mastery over it; and so, by a series of chances all very much out of the reach of calculation, I, who till now had never seen but dead spinets, — rickety things of chopped wainscot, lying in waste garrets from the days of the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of genteel families, — was enabled to cultivate acquaintance with the capabilities of a resuscitated spinet, vocal and all alive. It gave me the idea, when at its best, of a box full of Jew's harps, all twanging away at the full extent of their compass, and to the best of their ability. The spirit of the musician, however, made such amends for the defects of his instrument, that his evening performances, carried on when his labors for the day had closed, were exceedingly popular in the neighborhood: the rude miner paused under the windows to listen; and groups of visitors, mostly young girls, came dropping in every night to enjoy the nice fresh melodies brought out of the old musty spinet. Lovers of the fine arts draw naturally together; and one of the most frequent guests of the coffee-house was an intelligent country artist, with whom I had scraped acquaintance, and had some amusing conversation. With little Samuel the speech-maker I succeeded in forming a friendship of the superlative type; though, strange to relate, it must be to this day a profound mystery to Samuel whether his *fidus Achates* the Scotchman be a drinker of strong drink or a teetotaller. Alas for even teetotalised human nature, when placed in trying circumstances! Samuel and I had a good many cups of coffee together, and several glasses of *Sampson*, — a palatable Dudley beverage, compounded of eggs, milk, and spicery; and as on these occasions a few well-directed coppers enabled him to drive hard bargains with his mother for his share of the tippie, he was content to convert in my behalf the all-important question of the pledge into a moot-point of no particular concernment. I unfortunately left Dudley ere he