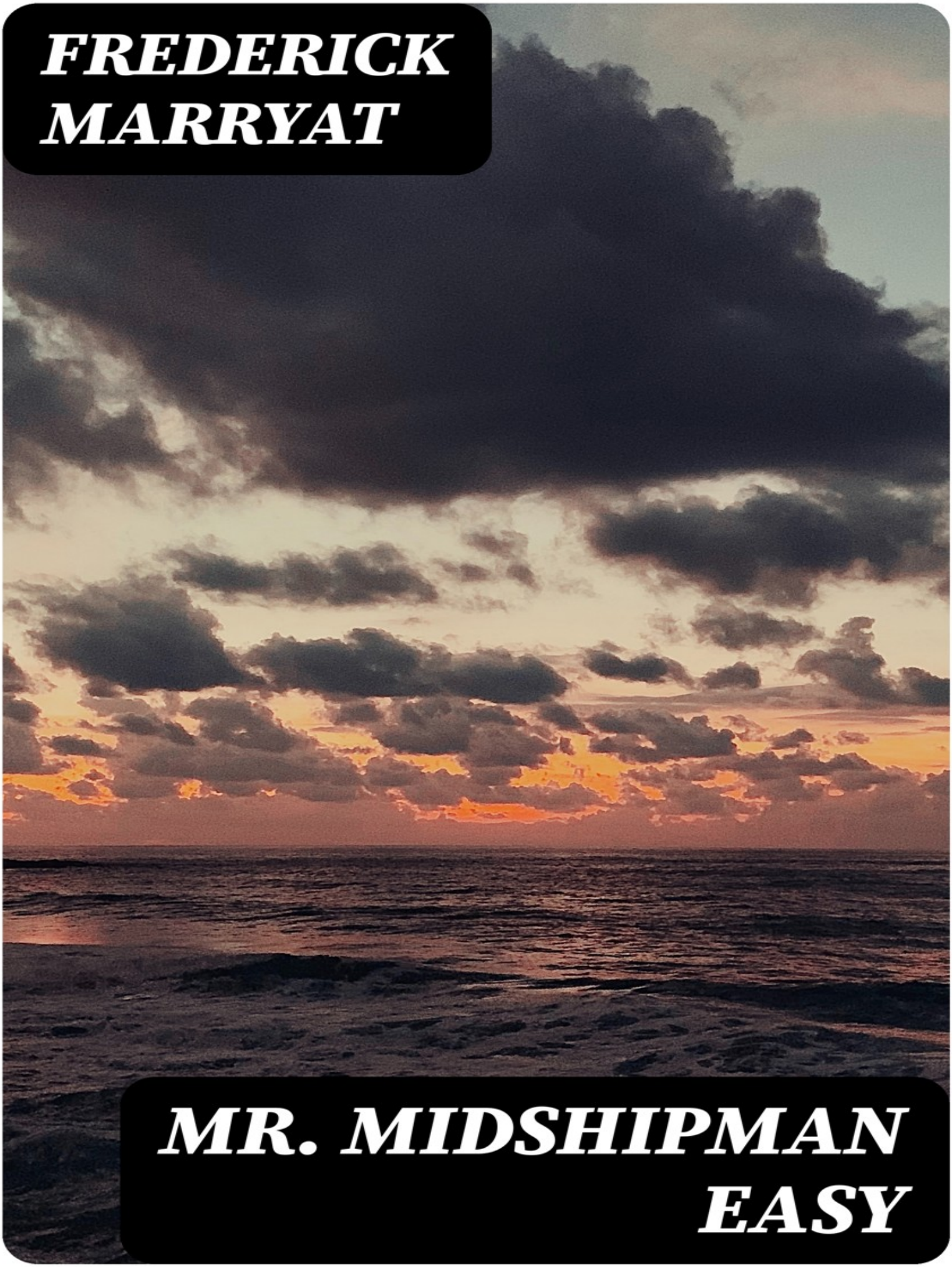
FREDERICK MARRYAT



MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY


FREDERICK
MARRYAT
MR. MIDSHIPMAN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EASY

Frederick Marryat

Mr. Midshipman Easy

Sea Adventure Novel

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Chapter Two.

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In which Mrs. Easy, as usual, has her own way.

It was the fourth day after Mrs. Easy's confinement that Mr. Easy, who was sitting by her bedside in an easy-chair, commenced as follows: "I have been thinking, my dear Mrs. Easy, about the name I shall give this child."

"Name, Mr. Easy! why, what name should you give it but your own?"

"Not so, my dear," replied Mr. Easy; "they call all names proper names, but I think that mine is not. It is the very worst name in the calendar."

"Why, what's the matter with it, Mr. Easy?"

"The matter affects me as well as the boy. Nicodemus is a long name to write at full length, and Nick is vulgar. Besides, as there will be two Nicks, they will naturally call my boy young Nick, and of course I shall be styled old Nick, which will be diabolical."

"Well, Mr. Easy, at all events then let me choose the name."

"That you shall, my dear, and it was with this view that I have mentioned the subject so early."

"I think, Mr. Easy, I will call the boy after my poor father—his name shall be Robert."

"Very well, my dear, if you wish it, it shall be Robert. You shall have your own way. But I think, my dear, upon a little consideration, you will acknowledge that there is a decided objection."

“An objection, Mr. Easy?”

“Yes, my dear; Robert may be very well, but you must reflect upon the consequences; he is certain to be called Bob.”

“Well, my dear, and suppose they do call him Bob?”

“I cannot bear even the supposition, my dear. You forget the county in which we are residing, the downs covered with sheep.”

“Why, Mr. Easy, what can sheep have to do with a Christian name?”

“There it is; women never look to consequences. My dear, they have a great deal to do with the name of Bob. I will appeal to any farmer in the county, if ninety-nine shepherds’ dogs out of one hundred are not called Bob. Now observe, your child is out of doors somewhere in the fields or plantations; you want and you call him. Instead of your child, what do you find? Why, a dozen curs at least, who come running up to you, all answering to the name of Bob, and wagging their stumps of tails. You see, Mrs. Easy, it is a dilemma not to be got over. You level your only son to the brute creation by giving him a Christian name which, from its peculiar brevity, has been monopolised by all the dogs in the county. Any other name you please, my dear, but in this one instance you must allow me to lay my positive veto.”

“Well, then, let me see—but I’ll think of it, Mr. Easy; my head aches very much just now.”

“I will think for you, my dear. What do you say to John?”

“Oh, no, Mr. Easy, such a common name?”

“A proof of its popularity, my dear. It is scriptural—we have the apostle and the baptist—we have a dozen popes who were all Johns. It is royal—we have plenty of kings who were Johns—and, moreover, it is short, and sounds honest and manly.”

“Yes, very true, my dear; but they will call him Jack.”

“Well, we have had several celebrated characters who were Jacks. There was—let me see—Jack the Giant Killer, and Jack of the Bean Stalk—and Jack—Jack—”

“Jack Spratt,” replied Mrs. Easy.

“And Jack Cade, Mrs. Easy, the great rebel—and three-fingered Jack, Mrs. Easy, the celebrated negro—and, above all, Jack Falstaff, ma’am, Jack Falstaff—honest Jack Falstaff—witty Jack Falstaff—”

“I thought, Mr. Easy, that I was to be permitted to choose the name.”

“Well, so you shall, my dear; I give it up to you. Do just as you please; but depend upon it that John is the right name. Is it not now, my dear?”

“It’s the way you always treat me, Mr. Easy; you say that you give it up, and that I shall have my own way, but I never do have it. I am sure that the child will be christened John.”

“Nay, my dear, it shall be just what you please. Now I recollect it, there were several Greek emperors who were Johns; but decide for yourself, my dear.”

“No, no,” replied Mrs. Easy, who was ill, and unable to contend any longer, “I give it up, Mr. Easy. I know how it will be, as it always is: you give me my own way as people give pieces of gold to children, it’s their own money, but they must not spend it. Pray call him John.”

“There, my dear, did not I tell you, you would be of my opinion upon reflection? I knew you would. I have given you your own way, and you tell me to call him John; so now we’re both of the same mind, and that point is settled.”

“I should like to go to sleep, Mr. Easy; I feel far from well.”

“You shall always do just as you like, my dear,” replied the husband, “and have your own way in everything. It is

the greatest pleasure I have when I yield to your wishes. I will walk in the garden. Good-bye, my dear.”

Mrs. Easy made no reply, and the philosopher quitted the room. As may easily be imagined, on the following day the boy was christened John.

Chapter Three.

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In which our hero has to wait the issue of an argument.

The reader may observe that, in general, all my first chapters are very short, and increase in length as the work advances. I mention this as a proof of my modesty and diffidence. At first, I am like a young bird just out of its mother's nest, pluming my little feathers and taking short flights. By degrees I obtain more confidence, and wing my course over hill and dale.

It is very difficult to throw any interest into a chapter on childhood. There is the same uniformity in all children until they develop. We cannot, therefore, say much relative to Jack Easy's earliest days; he sucked and threw up his milk, while the nurse blessed it for a pretty dear, slept, and sucked again. He crowed in the morning like a cock, screamed when he was washed, stared at the candle, and made wry faces with the wind. Six months passed in these innocent amusements, and then he was put into shorts. But I ought here to have remarked, that Mrs. Easy did not find herself equal to nursing her own infant, and it was necessary to look out for a substitute.

Now a commonplace person would have been satisfied with the recommendation of the medical man, who looks but to the one thing needful, which is a sufficient and wholesome supply of nourishment for the child; but Mr. Easy was a philosopher, and had latterly taken to craniology, and he descanted very learnedly with the doctor upon the effect

of his only son obtaining his nutriment from an unknown source. “Who knows,” observed Mr. Easy, “but that my son may not imbibe with his milk the very worst passions of human nature.”

“I have examined her,” replied the doctor, “and can safely recommend her.”

“That examination is only preliminary to one more important,” replied Mr. Easy. “I must examine her.”

“Examine who, Mr. Easy?” exclaimed his wife, who had lain down again on the bed.

“The nurse, my dear.”

“Examine what, Mr. Easy?” continued the lady.

“Her head, my dear,” replied the husband. “I must ascertain what her propensities are.”

“I think you had better leave her alone, Mr. Easy. She comes this evening, and I shall question her pretty severely. Dr. Middleton, what do you know of this young person?”

“I know, madam, that she is very healthy and strong, or I should not have selected her.”

“But is her character good?”

“Really, madam, I know little about her character; but you can make any inquiries you please. But at the same time I ought to observe, that if you are too particular in that point, you will have some difficulty in providing yourself.”

“Well, I shall see,” replied Mrs. Easy.

“And I shall feel,” rejoined the husband.

This parleying was interrupted by the arrival of the very person in question, who was announced by the housemaid, and was ushered in. She was a handsome, florid, healthy-looking girl, awkward and naïve in her manner, and apparently not overwise; there was more of the dove than of the serpent in her composition.

Mr. Easy, who was very anxious to make his own discoveries, was the first who spoke. “Young woman, come this way, I wish to examine your head.”

“Oh! dear me, sir, it’s quite clean, I assure you,” cried the girl, dropping a curtsey.

Dr. Middleton, who sat between the bed and Mr. Easy’s chair, rubbed his hands and laughed.

In the meantime, Mr. Easy had untied the string and taken off the cap of the young woman, and was very busy putting his fingers through her hair, during which the face of the young woman expressed fear and astonishment.

“I am glad to perceive that you have a large portion of benevolence.”

“Yes,” replied the young woman, dropping a curtsey.

“And veneration also.”

“Thanky, sir.”

“And the organ of modesty is strongly developed.”

“Yes, sir,” replied the girl, with a smile.

“That’s quite a new organ,” thought Dr. Middleton.

“Philo-progenitiveness very powerful.”

“If you please, sir, I don’t know what that is,” answered Sarah, with a curtsey.

“Nevertheless you have given us a practical illustration. Mrs. Easy, I am satisfied. Have you any questions to ask? But it is quite unnecessary.”

“To be sure, I have, Mr. Easy. Pray, young woman, what is your name?”

“Sarah, if you please, ma’am.”

“How long have you been married?”

“Married, ma’am?”

“Yes, married.”

“If you please, ma’am, I had a misfortune, ma’am,” replied the girl, casting down her eyes.

“What, have you not been married?”

“No, ma’am, not yet.”

“Good heavens! Dr. Middleton, what can you mean by bringing this person here?” exclaimed Mrs. Easy. “Not a married woman, and she has a child!”

“If you please, ma’am,” interrupted the young woman, dropping a curtsey, “it was a very little one.”

“A very little one!” explained Mrs. Easy.

“Yes, ma’am, very small indeed, and died soon after it was born.”

“Oh, Dr. Middleton!—what could you mean, Dr. Middleton?”

“My dear madam,” exclaimed the doctor, rising from his chair, “this is the only person that I could find suited to the wants of your child, and if you do not take her, I cannot answer for its life. It is true that a married woman might be procured; but married women who have a proper feeling will not desert their own children; and, as Mr. Easy asserts, and you appear to imagine, the temper and disposition of your child may be affected by the nourishment it receives, I think it more likely to be injured by the milk of a married woman who will desert her own child for the sake of gain. The misfortune which has happened to this young woman is not always a proof of a bad heart, but of strong attachment, and the overweening confidence of simplicity.”

“You are correct, doctor,” replied Mr. Easy, “and her head proves that she is a modest young woman, with strong religious feeling, kindness of disposition, and every other requisite.”

“The head may prove it all for what I know, Mr. Easy, but her conduct tells another tale.”

“She is well fitted for the situation, ma’am,” continued the doctor.

“And if you please, ma’am,” rejoined Sarah, “it was *such a little one*.”

“Shall I try the baby, ma’am?” said the monthly nurse, who had listened in silence. “It is fretting so, poor thing, and has its dear little fist right down its throat.”

Dr. Middleton gave the signal of assent, and in a few seconds Master John Easy was fixed to Sarah as tight as a leech.

“Lord love it, how hungry it is—there, there, stop it a moment, it’s choking, poor thing!”

Mrs. Easy, who was lying on her bed, rose up, and went to the child. Her first feeling was that of envy, that another should have such a pleasure which was denied to herself, the next that of delight, at the satisfaction expressed by the infant. In a few minutes the child fell back in a deep sleep. Mrs. Easy was satisfied; maternal feelings conquered all others, and Sarah was duly installed.

To make short work of it, we have said that Jack Easy in six months was in shorts. He soon afterwards began to crawl and show his legs; indeed, so indecorously, that it was evident that he had imbibed no modesty with Sarah’s milk, neither did he appear to have gained veneration or benevolence, for he snatched at everything, squeezed the kitten to death, scratched his mother, and pulled his father by the hair; notwithstanding all which, both his father and mother and the whole household declared him to be the finest and sweetest child in the universe. But if we were to narrate all the wonderful events of Jack’s childhood from the time of his birth up to the age of seven years, as chronicled by Sarah, who continued his dry nurse after he had been weaned, it would take at least three volumes folio. Jack was brought up in the way that every only child usually is—that is, he was allowed to have his own way.

Chapter Four.

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In which the Doctor prescribes going to school as a remedy for a cut finger.

“Have you no idea of putting the boy to school, Mr. Easy?” said Dr. Middleton, who had been summoned by a groom with his horse in a foam to attend immediately at Forest Hill, the name of Mr. Easy’s mansion, and who, upon his arrival, had found that Master Easy had cut his thumb. One would have thought that he had cut his head off by the agitation pervading the whole household—Mr. Easy walking up and down very uneasy, Mrs. Easy with great difficulty prevented from syncope, and all the maids bustling and passing round Mrs. Easy’s chair. Everybody appeared excited except Master Jack Easy himself, who, with a rag round his finger, and his pinafore spotted with blood, was playing at bob-cherry, and cared nothing about the matter.

“Well, what’s the matter, my little man?” said Dr. Middleton, on entering, addressing himself to Jack, as the most sensible of the whole party.

“Oh, Dr. Middleton,” interrupted Mrs. Easy, “he has cut his hand; I am sure that a nerve is divided, and then the lockjaw—”

The doctor made no reply, but examined the finger: Jack Easy continued to play bob-cherry with his right hand.

“Have you such a thing as a piece of sticking-plaster in the house, madam?” observed the doctor, after examination.

“Oh, yes—run, Mary—run, Sarah!” In a few seconds the maids appeared, Sarah bringing the sticking-plaster, and Mary following with the scissors.

“Make yourself quite easy, madam,” said Dr. Middleton, after he put on the plaster, “I will answer for no evil consequences.”

“Had I not better take him upstairs, and let him lie down a little?” replied Mrs. Easy, slipping a guinea into the doctor’s hand.

“It is not absolutely requisite, madam,” said the doctor; “but at all events he will be kept out of more mischief.”

“Come, my dear, you hear what Dr. Middleton says.”

“Yes, I heard,” replied Jack; “but I shan’t go.”

“My dear Johnny—come, love—now do, my dear Johnny.”

Johnny played bob-cherry, and made no answer.

“Come, Master Johnny,” said Sarah.

“Go away, Sarah,” said Johnny, with a back-hander.

“Oh, fie, Master Johnny!” said Mary.

“Johnny, my love,” said Mrs. Easy, in a coaxing tone, “come now—will you go?”

“I’ll go in the garden and get some more cherries,” replied Master Johnny.

“Come, then, love, we will go into the garden.” Master Johnny jumped off his chair, and took his mamma by the hand.

“What a dear, good, obedient child it is!” exclaimed Mrs. Easy: “you may lead him with a thread.”

“Yes, to pick cherries,” thought Dr. Middleton. Mrs. Easy, and Johnny, and Sarah, and Mary went into the garden, leaving Dr. Middleton alone with Mr. Easy, who had been silent during this scene. Now Dr. Middleton was a clever, sensible man, who had no wish to impose upon any one. As for his taking a guinea for putting on a piece of sticking-

plaster, his conscience was very easy on that score. His time was equally valuable, whether he were employed for something or nothing; and, moreover, he attended the poor gratis. Constantly in the house, he had seen much of Mr. John Easy, and perceived that he was a courageous, decided boy, of a naturally good disposition; but from the idiosyncrasy of the father and the doting folly of the mother, in a sure way of being spoiled. As soon, therefore, as the lady was out of hearing, he took a chair, and made the query at the commencement of the chapter, which we shall now repeat.

“Have you no idea of putting the boy to school, Mr. Easy?”

Mr. Easy crossed his legs, and clasped his hands together over his knees, as he always did when he was about to commence an argument.

“The great objection that I have to sending a boy to school, Dr. Middleton, is, that I conceive that the discipline enforced is, not only contrary to the rights of man, but also in opposition to all sound sense and common judgment. Not content with punishment, which is in itself erroneous and an infringement of social justice, they even degrade the minds of the boys still more by applying punishment to the most degraded part, adding contumely to tyranny. Of course it is intended that a boy who is sent to school should gain by precept and example but is he to learn benevolence by the angry look and the flourish of the vindictive birch—or forbearance by the cruelty of the ushers—or patience, when the masters over him are out of all patience—or modesty, when his nether parts are exposed to general examination? Is he not daily reading a lesson at variance with that equality which we all possess, but of which we are unjustly deprived? Why should there be a distinction between the

flogger and the flogged? Are they not both fashioned alike after God’s image, endowed with the same reason, having an equal right to what the world offers, and which was intended by Providence to be equally distributed? Is it not that the sacred inheritance of all, which has tyrannously and impiously been ravished from the many for the benefit of the few, and which ravishment, from long custom of iniquity and inculcation of false precepts, has too long been basely submitted to? Is it not the duty of a father to preserve his only son from imbibing these dangerous and debasing errors, which will render him only one of a vile herd who are content to suffer, provided that they live? And yet are not these very errors inculcated at school, and impressed upon their mind inversely by the birch? Do not they there receive their first lesson in slavery with the first lesson in A B C; and are not their minds thereby prostrated, so as never to rise again, but ever to bow to despotism, to cringe to rank, to think and act by the precepts of others, and to tacitly disavow that sacred equality which is our birthright? No, sir, without they can teach without resorting to such a fundamental error as flogging, my boy shall never go to school.”

And Mr. Easy threw himself back in his chair, imagining, like all philosophers, that he had said something very clever.

Dr. Middleton knew his man, and therefore patiently waited until he had exhausted his oratory.

“I will grant,” said the doctor at last, “that all you say may have great truth in it; but, Mr. Easy, do you not think that by not permitting a boy to be educated, you allow him to remain more open to that very error of which you speak? It is only education which will conquer prejudice, and enable a man to break through the trammels of custom. Now, allowing that the birch is used, yet it is at a period when the

young mind is so elastic as to soon become indifferent; and after he has attained the usual rudiments of education, you will then find him prepared to receive those lessons which you can yourself instil."

"I will teach him everything myself," replied Mr. Easy, folding his arms consequentially and determinedly.

"I do not doubt your capability, Mr. Easy; but unfortunately you will always have a difficulty which you never can get over. Excuse me, I know what you are capable of, and the boy would indeed be happy with such a preceptor, but—if I must speak plain—you must be aware as well as I am, that the maternal fondness of Mrs. Easy will always be a bar to your intention. He is already so spoiled by her, that he will not obey; and without obedience you cannot inculcate."

"I grant, my dear sir, that there is a difficulty on that point; but maternal weakness must then be overcome by paternal severity."

"May I ask how, Mr. Easy, for it appears to be impossible?"

"Impossible! By heavens, I'll make him obey, or I'll—" Here Mr. Easy stopped before the word "flog" was fairly out of his mouth—"I'll know the reason why, Dr. Middleton."

Dr. Middleton checked his inclination to laugh, and replied, "That you would hit upon some scheme, by which you would obtain the necessary power over him, I have no doubt; but what will be the consequence? The boy will consider his mother as a protector, and you as a tyrant. He will have an aversion to you, and with that aversion he will never pay respect and attention to your valuable precepts when he arrives at an age to understand them. Now it appears to me that this difficulty which you have raised may be got over. I know a very worthy clergyman who does not

use the birch; but I will write, and put the direct question to him; and then if your boy is removed from the danger arising from Mrs. Easy’s over-indulgence, in a short time he will be ready for your more important tuition.”

“I think,” replied Mr. Easy, after a pause, “that what you say merits consideration. I acknowledge that in consequence of Mrs. Easy’s nonsensical indulgence, the boy is unruly, and will not obey me at present; and if your friend does not apply the rod, I will think seriously of sending my son John to him to learn the elements.”

The doctor had gained his point by flattering the philosopher.

In a day he returned with a letter from the pedagogue in answer to one supposed to be sent to him, in which the use of the birch was indignantly disclaimed, and Mr. Easy announced to his wife, when they met that day at tea-time, his intentions with regard to his son John.

“To school, Mr. Easy? what, send Johnny to school! a mere infant to school!”

“Surely, my dear, you must be aware that at nine years it is high time that he learned to read.”

“Why he almost reads already, Mr. Easy; surely I can teach him that. Does he not, Sarah?”

“Lord bless him, yes, ma’am, he was saying his letters yesterday.”

“Oh, Mr. Easy, what can have put this in your head? Johnny dear, come here—tell me now what’s the letter A. You were singing it in the garden this morning.”

“I want some sugar,” replied Johnny, stretching his arm over the table to the sugar-basin, which was out of his reach.

“Well, my love, you shall have a great lump if you will tell me what’s the letter A.”

“A was an archer, and shot at a frog,” replied Johnny, in a surly tone.

“There now, Mr. Easy; and he can go through the whole alphabet—can’t he, Sarah?”

“That he can, the dear—can’t you, Johnny dear?”

“No,” replied Johnny.

“Yes, you can, my love; you know what’s the letter B. Now don’t you?”

“Yes,” replied Johnny.

“There, Mr. Easy, you see what the boy knows, and how obedient he is too. Come, Johnny dear, tell us what was B.”

“No, I won’t,” replied Johnny, “I want some more sugar;” and Johnny, who had climbed on a chair, spread himself over the table to reach it.

“Mercy! Sarah, pull him off—he’ll upset the urn,” screamed Mrs. Easy. Sarah caught hold of Johnny by the loins to pull him back, but Johnny, resisting the interference, turned round on his back as he lay on the table, and kicked Sarah in the face, just as she made another desperate grasp at him. The rebound from the kick, given as he lay on a smooth mahogany table, brought Johnny’s head in contact with the urn, which was upset in the opposite direction, and, notwithstanding a rapid movement on the part of Mr. Easy, he received a sufficient portion of boiling liquid on his legs to scald him severely, and induce him to stamp and swear in a very unphilosophical way. In the meantime Sarah and Mrs. Easy had caught up Johnny, and were both holding him at the same time, exclaiming and lamenting. The pain of the scald and the indifference shown towards him were too much for Mr. Easy’s temper to put up with. He snatched Johnny out of their arms, and, quite forgetting his equality and rights of man, belaboured him without mercy. Sarah flew in to interfere, and received a blow which not only

made her see a thousand stars, but sent her reeling on the floor. Mrs. Easy went off into hysterics, and Johnny howled so as to be heard at a quarter of a mile.

How long Mr. Easy would have continued it is impossible to say; but the door opened, and Mr. Easy looked up while still administering the punishment, and perceived Dr. Middleton in mute astonishment. He had promised to come in to tea, and enforce Mr. Easy's arguments, if it were necessary; but it certainly appeared to him that in the argument which Mr. Easy was then enforcing, he required no assistance. However, at the entrance of Dr. Middleton, Johnny was dropped, and lay roaring on the floor; Sarah, too, remained where she had been floored, Mrs. Easy had rolled on the floor, the urn was also on the floor, and Mr. Easy, although not floored, had not a leg to stand upon.

Never did a medical man look in more opportunely. Mr. Easy at first was not certainly of that opinion, but his legs became so painful that he soon became a convert.

Dr. Middleton, as in duty bound, first picked up Mrs. Easy, and laid her on the sofa. Sarah rose, picked up Johnny, and carried him kicking and roaring out of the room; in return for which attention she received sundry bites. The footman, who had announced the doctor, picked up the urn, that being all that was in his department. Mr. Easy threw himself panting and in agony on the other sofa, and Dr. Middleton was excessively embarrassed how to act: he perceived that Mr. Easy required his assistance, and that Mrs. Easy could do without it; but how to leave a lady who was half really and half pretendedly in hysterics, was difficult; for if he attempted to leave her, she kicked and flounced, and burst out the more. At last Dr. Middleton rang the bell, which brought the footman, who summoned all the maids, who carried Mrs. Easy upstairs, and then the doctor was able to

attend to the only patient who really required his assistance. Mr. Easy explained the affair in a few words broken into ejaculations from pain, as the doctor removed his stockings. From the applications of Dr. Middleton, Mr. Easy soon obtained bodily relief; but what annoyed him still more than his scalded legs, was the doctor having been a witness to his infringement of the equality and rights of man. Dr. Middleton perceived this, and he knew also how to pour balm into that wound.

“My dear Mr. Easy, I am very sorry that you have had this accident, for which you are indebted to Mrs. Easy’s foolish indulgence of the boy; but I am glad to perceive that you have taken up those parental duties which are inculcated by the Scriptures. Solomon says, ‘that he who spares the rod, spoils the child,’ thereby implying that it is the duty of a father to correct his children, and in a father, the so doing does not interfere with the rights of man, or any natural equality, for the son being a part or portion of the father, he is correcting his own self only; and the proof of it is, that a father, in punishing his own son, feels as much pain in so doing as if he were himself punished. It is, therefore, nothing but self-discipline, which is strictly enjoined us by the Scriptures.”

“That is exactly my opinion,” replied Mr. Easy, comforted at the doctor having so logically got him out of the scrape. “But—he shall go to school tomorrow, that I’m determined on.”

“He will have to thank Mrs. Easy for that,” replied the doctor.

“Exactly,” replied Mr. Easy. “Doctor, my legs are getting very hot again.”

“Continue to bathe them with the vinegar and water, Mr. Easy, until I send you an embrocation, which will give you

immediate relief. I will call tomorrow. By-the-bye, I am to see a little patient at Mr. Bonnycastle's: if it is any accommodation, I will take your son with me."

"It will be a great accommodation, doctor," replied Mr. Easy.

"Then, my dear sir, I will just go up and see how Mrs. Easy is, and to-morrow I will call at ten. I can wait an hour. Good-night."

"Good-night, doctor."

The doctor had his game to play with Mrs. Easy. He magnified her husband's accident—he magnified his wrath, and advised her by no means to say one word, until he was well, and more pacified. The next day he repeated this dose, and, in spite of the ejaculations of Sarah, and the tears of Mrs. Easy, who dared not venture to plead her cause, and the violent resistance of Master Johnny, who appeared to have a presentiment of what was to come, our hero was put into Dr. Middleton's chariot, and with the exception of one plate of glass, which he kicked out of the window with his feet, and for which feat, the doctor, now that he had him all to himself, boxed his ears till he was nearly blind, he was, without any further eventful occurrence, carried by the doctor's footman into the parlour of Mr. Bonnycastle.

Chapter Five.

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Jack Easy is sent to a school at which there is no flogging.

Master Jack had been plumped down in a chair by the doctor's servant, who, as he quitted him, first looked at his own hands, from which the blood was drawn in several parts, and then at Master Jack, with his teeth closed and lips compressed, as much as to say, "If I only dared, would not I, that's all?" and then walked out of the room, repaired to the carriage at the front door, when he showed his hands to the coachman, who looked down from his box in great commiseration, at the same time fully sharing his fellow-servant's indignation. But we must repair to the parlour. Dr. Middleton ran over a newspaper, while Johnny sat on the chair all of a heap, looking like a lump of sulks, with his feet on the upper front bar, and his knees almost up to his nose. He was a promising pupil, Jack.

Mr. Bonnycastle made his appearance—a tall, well-built, handsome, fair man, with a fine powdered head, dressed in solemn black, and knee buckles; his linen beautifully clean, and with a peculiar bland expression of countenance. When he smiled he showed a row of teeth white as ivory, and his mild blue eye was the *ne plus ultra* of beneficence. He was the beau-idéal of a preceptor, and it was impossible to see him and hear his mild pleasing voice, without wishing that all your sons were under his protection. He was a ripe scholar, and a good one, and at the time we speak of had the care of upwards of one hundred boys. He was

celebrated for turning them out well, and many of his pupils were rising fast in the senate, as well as distinguishing themselves in the higher professions.

Dr. Middleton, who was on intimate terms with Bonnycastle, rose as he entered the room, and they shook hands. Middleton then turned to where Jack sat, and pointing to him, said, “Look there.”

Bonnycastle smiled. “I cannot say that I have had worse, but I have almost as bad. I will apply the Promethean torch, and soon vivify that rude mass. Come, sit down, Middleton.”

“But,” said the doctor, as he resumed his chair, “tell me, Bonnycastle, how you will possibly manage to lick such a cub into shape, when you do not resort to flogging?”

“I have no opinion of flogging, and therefore I do not resort to it. The fact is, I was at Harrow myself, and was rather a pickle. I was called up as often as most boys in the school, and I perfectly recollect that eventually I cared nothing for a flogging. I had become case-hardened. It is the least effective part that you can touch a boy upon. It leaves nothing behind to refresh their memory.”

“I should have thought otherwise.”

“My dear Middleton, I can produce more effect by one caning than twenty floggings. Observe, you flog upon a part for the most part quiescent; but you cane upon all parts, from the head to the heels. Now, when once the first sting of the birch is over, then a dull sensation comes over the part, and the pain after that is nothing; whereas a good sound caning leaves sores and bruises in every part, and on all the parts which are required for muscular action. After a flogging, a boy may run out in the hours of recreation, and join his playmates as well as ever, but a good caning tells a very different tale; he cannot move one part of his body without being reminded for days by the pain of the

punishment he has undergone, and he is very careful how he is called up again."

"My dear sir, I really had an idea that you were excessively lenient," replied Middleton, laughing; "I am glad that I am under a mistake."

"Look at that cub, doctor, sitting there more like a brute than a reasonable being; do you imagine that I could ever lick it into shape without strong measures? At the same time, allow me to say, that I consider my system by far the best. At the public schools, punishment is no check; it is so trifling that it is derided: with me punishment is punishment in the true sense of the word, and the consequence is, that it is much more seldom resorted to."

"You are a terrorist, Bonnycastle."

"The two strongest impulses in our nature are fear and love. In theory, acting upon the latter is very beautiful; but in practice, I never found it to answer—and for the best of reasons, our self-love is stronger than our love for others. Now I never yet found fear to fail, for the very same reason that the other does, because with fear we act upon self-love, and nothing else."

"And yet we have many now who would introduce a system of schooling without correction; and who maintain that the present system is degrading."

"There are a great many fools in this world, doctor."

"That reminds me of this boy's father," replied Dr. Middleton; who then detailed to the pedagogue the idiosyncrasy of Mr. Easy, and all the circumstances attending Jack being sent to his school.

"There is no time to be lost then, doctor. I must conquer this young gentleman before his parents call to see him. Depend upon it, in a week I will have him obedient and well broke in."

Dr. Middleton wished Jack good-bye, and told him to be a good boy. Jack did not vouchsafe to answer. “Never mind, doctor, he will be more polished next time you call here, depend upon it,” and the doctor departed.

Although Mr. Bonnycastle was severe, he was very judicious. Mischief of all kinds was visited but by slender punishment, such as being kept in at play hours, etcetera; and he seldom interfered with the boys for fighting, although he checked decided oppression. The great *sine quâ non* with him was attention to their studies. He soon discovered the capabilities of his pupils, and he forced them accordingly; but the idle boy, the bird who “could sing and wouldn’t sing,” received no mercy. The consequence was, that he turned out the cleverest boys, and his conduct was so uniform and unvarying in its tenor, that if he was feared when they were under his control, he was invariably liked by those whom he had instructed, and they continued his friends in after life.

Mr. Bonnycastle at once perceived that it was no use coaxing our hero, and that fear was the only attribute by which he could be controlled. So, as soon as Dr. Middleton had quitted the room, he addressed him in a commanding tone, “Now, boy, what is your name?”

Jack started; he looked up at his master, perceived his eye fixed upon him, and a countenance not to be played with. Jack was no fool, and somehow or another, the discipline he had received from his father had given him some intimation of what was to come. All this put together induced Jack to condescend to answer, with his forefinger between his teeth, “Johnny.”

“And what is your other name, sir?”

Jack, who appeared to repent his condescension, did not at first answer, but he looked again in Mr. Bonnycastle’s

face, and then round the room: there was no one to help him, and he could not help himself, so he replied “Easy.”

“Do you know why you are sent to school?”

“Scalding father.”

“No; you are sent to learn to read and write.”

“But I won’t read and write,” replied Jack sulkily.

“Yes, you will and you are going to read your letters now directly.”

Jack made no answer. Mr. Bonnycastle opened a sort of book-case, and displayed to John’s astonished view a series of canes, ranged up and down like billiard cues, and continued, “Do you know what those are for?”

Jack eyed them wistfully; he had some faint idea that he was sure to be better acquainted with them but he made no answer.

“They are to teach little boys to read and write, and now I am going to teach you. You’ll soon learn. Look now here,” continued Mr. Bonnycastle, opening a book with large type, and taking a capital at the head of a chapter, about half an inch long. “Do you see that letter?”

“Yes,” replied Johnny, turning his eyes away, and picking his fingers.

“Well, that is the letter B. Do you see it? Look at it, so that you may know it again. That’s the letter B. Now tell me what that letter is.”

Jack now determined to resist, so he made no answer.

“So you cannot tell; well, then, we will try what one of these little fellows will do,” said Mr. Bonnycastle, taking down a cane. “Observe, Johnny, that’s the letter B. Now, what letter is that? Answer me directly.”

“I won’t learn to read and write.”

Whack came the cane on Johnny’s shoulders, who burst out into a roar as he writhed with pain.