

**SOWING AND
REAPING; OR, WHAT
WILL COME OF IT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649543229

Sowing and Reaping; Or, What Will Come of It by Mary Howitt

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MARY HOWITT

**SOWING AND
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BY MARY HOWITT.

AUTHOR OF "STRIVE AND THRIVE," "HOPE ON! HOPE EVER!"
ETC. ETC.

NEW-YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
448 & 445 BROADWAY.
1864.

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SOWING AND REAPING;

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CHAPTER I.

A CHARACTER.

SIXTY years ago, a tall, gloomy house, of a very dingy, unpromising aspect, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, was inhabited by Thomas Durant, one of the most sagacious lawyers of the day.

By birth he was a gentleman, the younger son of the Durants of Stanton-Combe, an old, though decayed family, in the county of Durham. The family estate was greatly encumbered by debts and mortgages, and, owing to the sudden death of his father, he was left unprovided for. Edward, the elder son, took all, excepting the mother's jointure of three thousand pounds. The younger son was penniless; and, as if to increase his difficulties, had been bred to no profession.

In talents and temper the young men were as different as in fortune. The elder brother was of weak mind, and with that pliant, easy temper

which is frequently its accompaniment; the younger was active and enterprising in mind, subtle in intellect, and by temper, resentful and implacable. He seemed naturally made to rule, and the other to submit; and such might have been their fate, had not the elder, to the amazement of every one, when the period of mourning for the father had just passed, brought home a bride—a haughty country beauty, without fortune, but impatient of any restraint, and perfectly capable, and very willing, to take the place of governor.

The first act of her supremacy was to hint that the absence of the mother was desired by her, and that her jointure was sufficient for a widow to live retiredly upon; and, furthermore, that it was her will that the brother should choose his profession; to enable him to do which, she presented him with a few hundred pounds. To live upon her jointure is what a widow looks forward to, therefore the mother said little: she acquiesced patiently. Not so the younger son. He flung back the money with ineffable disdain, and vowed to raise himself to wealth and power by his own unassisted efforts; assuring his sister-in-law, at the same time, that she should live to repent the day in which she forced him thus from the home of his ancestors. It is, as everybody knows, the commonest thing in the world for angry people to utter threats; therefore, when Mr. Thomas Durant said further, that his children should live under that roof when hers were beggars, she only laughed, and thought no more of it.

Thomas Durant went straight to London, and commenced his career by writing for lawyers. To London his mother followed him, and besought him earnestly to share the home she was still enabled to enjoy. He, however, was of that resolute temper which, when once fairly in the strife against difficulty, has a pride in the combat: he repulsed every offer of assistance, and even every expression of sympathy. The mother nevertheless, established herself near him, and, unable to force assistance upon him, or to wring from him either affection or complaint, satisfied herself by knowing that he was not only alive, but able to keep himself above want. What, therefore, he would not receive from her in her lifetime, she resolved to accumulate for him at her death; and she lived long enough, practising every possible self-denial, for accumulation to become the pleasure of her life. She lived a female miser, and at her death bequeathed him near five thousand pounds. With this sum he took chambers, and commenced the study of the law, under more prosperous circumstances than he had known before.

It would be needless to go through the succession of years in which he worked his upward way in society, extending his personal ambition as he acquired reputation in his profession.

In his fortieth year he married, and his marriage was one of those riddles which now and then occur in social life, and would defy an Edipus to solve. His wife was a fair young creature with a few thousands to her fortune,