

COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS
TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 1434.

UNCLE JOHN BY G. J. WHYTE MELVILLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

UNCLE JOHN.^A

A NOVEL.

BY

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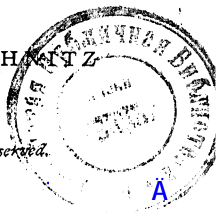
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1874.

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UNCLE JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

Desolate.

WE all know the vague sensation of dismay with which we wake in the morning after an event that has occasioned us grief, vexation, or inconvenience. The man within the man, who never goes to sleep, nor forgets himself, nor loses his head, nor fails to remind us what fools we are, has the clearest perception of that which took place yesterday, but as he can only admonish us through the medium of our faculties, until these are thoroughly aroused we escape with a dull sense of depression and misgiving, akin to nightmare, but wanting even so much of reality as there is in a dream.

The familiar objects in his bed-chamber looked strange to Lexley without her presence who had made the comfort no less than the romance of his everyday life. He rose early and went out into the morning air, striving to shake off a feeling of

gloom and despondency that common sense told him was utterly unreasonable, and that must be dispelled immediately on the arrival of the post.

Breakfasting with his pupil, the conversation could not but turn on his wife's departure, and his anxiety was no doubt relieved by their joint speculations; but the lad observed his tutor's cheek grow pale when the postman passed the window, and liked him, I think, all the better for the weakness.

Two letters were brought to the clergyman, neither of which was in Laura's handwriting, and he rose from his chair to conceal the spasm of pain that passed across his face at this disappointment.

"Of course there's no news of Mrs. Lexley, sir," said the youth's clear cheerful voice from the breakfast-table. "She didn't leave here till the country letters had gone out of London. I hope you'll have a good account by the second post, even if she don't come back herself. One misses a lady awfully at breakfast," added this young philosopher. "Men always put too much water in the teapot for a second cup."

"Of course!" exclaimed the tutor, brightening. "I never thought of that. What an idiot I was to forget about the London post! No doubt, she will