

**UNCLE JABEZ; OR,  
THE TEACHINGS OF  
ADVERSITY**

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Uncle Jabez; Or, The Teachings of Adversity by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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FIRST VISIT TO UNCLE JABEZ.





# UNCLE JABEZ;

OR,

## THE TEACHINGS OF ADVERSITY.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MARGARET BROWNING," ETC.

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# UNCLE JABEZ.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOME AND ITS INMATES.

My father was one of that numerous class of persons who may be seen regularly coming at an early hour in the morning from most of the suburban districts round London, and making their way to different parts of the great city, where they finally disappear, and are visible no more until evening. He was a clerk in a mercantile house.

It was a long walk to and fro, but my father did not mind it, so that his wife and children enjoyed the fresh country air. Perhaps the exercise did him good, after sitting all day at his desk. Then the rents were so much lower a

little way out of town, that we had a small house, and a garden, for less than we should have been obliged to pay for a couple of rooms in the crowded heart of the metropolis.

My father loved the country. I think that he had been accustomed to live there years ago. I never rightly understood, until long afterwards, what made my father so poor. He had not always been so. I once heard it said that he had been "over conscientious" with regard to some lawsuit in which he was unfortunately engaged; and I honoured him for it in my heart, but dared not ask any particulars. Uncle Jabez, of whom I shall presently have a good deal to tell, said that my father was a fool, and that he should have remembered his wife and children. But my mother replied that he had acted like a just man and a Christian, and had done what was right in the sight of God.

I never remember things being different to what they were; but my eldest brother William told me that he had a dim recollection of living in a large house, where there were many servants, and a beautiful garden, with a fountain in it, and an ancient sundial, and flowers such as he had never seen growing anywhere else: I

suppose he must have meant hot-house flowers. It was like a dream, he said. We often used to talk about that garden, but never before our parents.

My father was a man of strong faith, and possessed of a peculiarly bright and cheerful spirit; the one being the natural consequence of the other. It is Dr. Johnson, I think, who says, "that the habit of looking on the best side of everything is worth a thousand a-year." My father had that habit; but he would have quoted good Archbishop Leighton, rather than Dr. Johnson, in support of it. "Sorrow," writes the former, "is like the two-faced picture, which, beheld on the one side as painful, hath an unpleasant visage; yet go round a little, and look upon it as thy Father's will, and then it is smiling, beautiful, and lovely."

It was impossible to be dull when my father was at home. I have heard my mother make the same remark; but then he was but little at home. He had ever "a word in season," a happy thought, a cheerful suggestion that seemed to set everything in the right light. He appeared to be always looking up, and thus escaped many things which would have proved