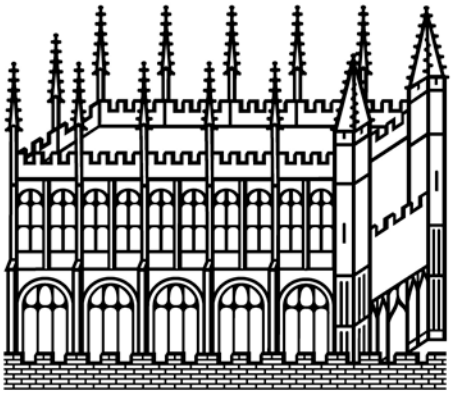
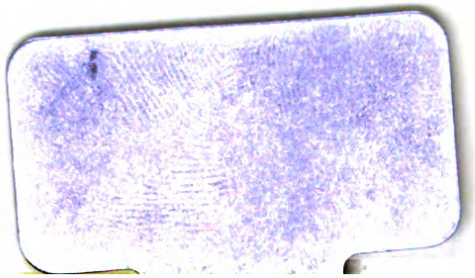


TALES AND POEMS

JOHN HARRIS.



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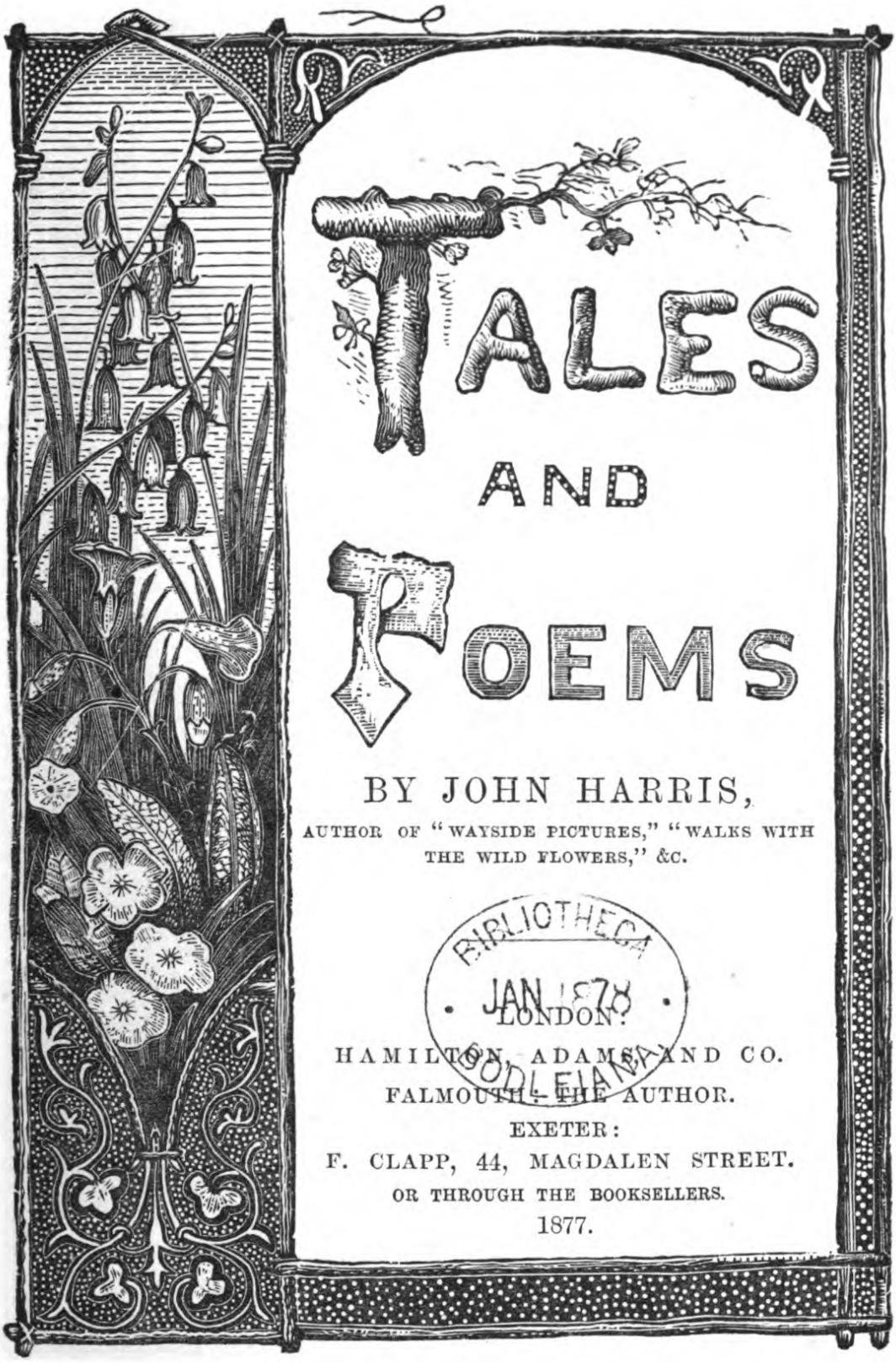
She led him down the river, where the bees
Hummed, and the sparkles of the limpid waves
Outvied the diamond, and the topaz stone.

Old William, p. 8.



TALES AND POEMS

BY JOHN HARRIS,

AUTHOR OF "WAYSIDE PICTURES," "WALKS WITH THE WILD FLOWERS," &c.

LONDON:
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.
FALMOUTH: THE AUTHOR.
EXETER:
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OR THROUGH THE BOOKSELLERS.
1877.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,
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PREFACE.

THIS is the author's twelfth volume of prose and verse, which he has published on his own responsibility, at a personal risk to himself of not less than eight hundred pounds: no inconsiderable sum for a labouring man to raise for the sale of books, who has had to work for his daily bread ever since he was nine years of age. But he has loved literature for its own sake, pursuing it under manifold outward disadvantages, encouraged sometimes by the hand of friendship, intent to benefit rather than to amuse mankind. In addition to the twelve volumes already named, he has written some forty tracts on subjects both social and religious, which have been published separately by different houses. Throughout his severe struggle from his early mining days, when he thoughtfully followed his father to and from his work, or hummed his verses sitting upon a mossy bank of the moorland previously to pencilling them on paper, to the present advanced period of his life, hope has sustained him in the conflict, as he well knows that God is the Giver of every good gift. Poetry has been his chief pursuit in summer and winter, in joy and sorrow, even from childhood to declining age; though now and then he has given his leisure time to writing prose. And how ardently, lovingly, and perseveringly he has followed his song-promptings, some of the critiques will explain at the end of this collection.

The writer is conscious that the poems in the present publication have but little claim to merit, except perhaps for their own native simplicity. He has written them more with a desire to do good than to seek honour; and he trusts that in this respect their end may be realized. Like those in his previous volumes, published between the years 1858 and the present period, they have mostly been composed out of doors, in the lanes and fields, among old rocks and ruins and solitary dells. A few of the minor pieces have been printed in some of the periodicals of the day, and others have been denied admittance.

The wood engravings in this book have been executed by the author's invalid son, who is afflicted with curvature of the spine, and consequently works in a recumbent position. This is his second appearance before the public as an engraver. As this seems to be the way which Providence has opened to him to earn his future livelihood, the author is the more desirous to encourage him in thus giving his imperfect pictures a place in these pages, believing that, as he manifestly loves the art, his future productions must gradually improve. This is a pressing reason why he publishes the present volume; and he earnestly commends his self-taught, persevering boy to the generous of his race.

The author's reason for making this volume varied with song and story is, that he is desirous of meeting as far as possible the wishes and tastes of his patrons, as it is so important to sell his books. Many of the Prose Tales in this collection are founded on facts which have been related to the writer at the firesides of the people, subject of course to a change of name and the ordinary filling up. They have nearly all been previously printed in weekly serials, and have consequently had but a very brief existence. It is surely natural that an author should be ambitious enough to desire to collect his scattered compositions together from bye-ways and newspaper files; arrange them in order where they are perhaps more likely to survive; and clothe them in more attractive and enduring habiliments. This must be his apology for their present appearance; and he trusts that at least they may not be wholly unacceptable to the youth of his own country. Several of these sketches point to the desirability of cultivating the waste lands of the United Kingdom, which perhaps will become one of the important Government questions of the future, and would surely do more for the maintenance of England's prosperity than the magnifying of her armies or the enlargement of her arsenals and prisons.

He again thanks his patrons and friends for their cheerful support, as well now as in the past; and trusts that his Tales and Poems may receive a Christian welcome.

Falmouth, Cornwall,
September 12th, 1877.

CONTENTS.

TALES.

OLD WILLIAM.

VALLEY watched by hills where the trees stood
With signs for every season—a clear well
Bubbling and bursting where the moss was bright,
Green rushes kissed each other, and fair maids
Tripped with their noontide pitchers—hawthorn bowers
Where moonlight mantled o'er the lover's cheek,

And blossoms bowed their foreheads to the winds
Wooing among the willows—a low seat
Beneath the elder, where the psalm was sung,
And the last shred of gossip gemmed with wings
To fly to farthest homesteads—a quaint stile—
A few thatched dwellings, where the ivy kept
Perpetual whisperings through the summer moons,
Where dog-rose wreaths hung o'er the rectory gate—
And scarce one meadow off, a Gothic church,
With a low tower just reaching o'er its roof,
Whence the bells pealed when Sabbaths shut the forge
And oped the gates of worship—children's songs
And old men's stories by the narrow bridge
Beside the miller's cottage—a small shop,
A barn or two, a school-house on the green—
A narrow footpath leading to the sea:
Sketch these with Fancy's pencil, and you have
Our village Malton as in former days.

Then came the railway, and the scene was changed:
The mountain was cut down with pick and bar,
And tumbled in the valley. Houses went,
And gardens lay beneath the rubbish-heap,
With unripe fruit still hanging to the boughs,
And arbours where the lovers sat at eve,
O'erwhelmed with waste for ever. Firesides fell,
Where tale and song wore out the listening Eve,
And fruitful plans had birth, whose golden grain
Waved in the sunshine of the coming hours,
And Chat sat on the cricket with sharp eyes
Twinkling on childhood's picture. All lay low,
O'erwhelmed with wreck and rubbish; and the train,
Shrieking its pastime as it rushed to worth,
Smote in unquiet shivers, like the wail
Of the tossed spirit of the outstripped Past.

One cottage was left standing, like an oak,
Where thunderbolts rushed roaring, and the wood
Sent forth its anguish to the blinding glare.
The roof was reed, close-shaven to the top:
Green ivy watched the windows, lined the porch,

And clung around the chimneys; and two trees
Stood whispering at the door of peace and rest.
Old William dwelt within, a hoary man,
As mild as Moses when the people mourned,
And, when we knew him first, was lame and weak.
Some say he was a hunter, and fell off
His dashing courser when the chase was hot,
And just escaped the grave through the soft moss
And the green rushes where he headlong fell:
But this we can't determine. Years had passed,
And sere leaves hung upon life's blasted boughs;
The keepers trembled, and his eyes were dim
When now we looked upon him: yet a grace
So clothed him like a garment, its white folds
Enwrapping all his person, as he sat
With the pure precepts of the Holy Book
Attending him like angels, whose bright hues
Gleamed in his features, that we could have knelt
With clasped hands there, but for the God he served.

He had a daughter, and no father's love
Glowed with a purer ardour. Leaves and flowers,
The clearest waters, or the twinkling stars,
The soft full moon, the light at morning-time,
The buds dew-pearled when Spring is in the meads
Or May is out a-wooing—these all fail
To shadow forth her virtue or her grace,
Too bright for earthly emblems. To her sire
She was a rose in winter when the ice
Searched every crevice, and the unseemly winds
With deafening uproar strode their stamping steeds.
She nursed him when he sickened, smoothed his bed,
Sat by his chair, and read in gentle tones
Till sleep dropped down upon him, and his soul
Was soothed with sounds of waters and green leaves
Trembling to Summer's breathing,—while she watched
The yellow moon steal o'er the waving corn,
Rustling the hymn of harvest. On bright days
She led him down the river, where the bees
Hummed, and the sparkles of the limpid waves
Outvied the diamond, and the topaz-stone,

While every moss-tuft charmed her. There the fays
Came to their evening goblet; for her heart
Nursed song within it like a pent-up bird
Which, when escaped, sings louder, sweeter still,
Filling with love the land of liberty.
And in the Sabbath silence, when the harps
Of highest angels ring across the world,
And seraphs congregate upon the hills,
And sweep along the lakes and listening leas
And trembling woods, with God in every breath,
To see them in the church among the springs
Whose rills with glory glittered, kneeling low
Before the footstool of the Infinite,
The patriarch silver-crowned, and early youth,
Tender and fair and strangely beautiful,
With all its green upon it, was a sight
To charm the vision like a vale of flowers.

Thus life passed by in beauty, every moon
Tissuing the strong cords of their tenderness,
Which grew yet stronger as the eve advanced
And twilight's gates were closing. Then a change
Came swiftly as a heated horseman comes
When woe is on the threshold, or the alarm
Of trailing engines that the fire is up
And fierce tongues flash the casement, shooting awe
In forks of flame through the beholder's brain.
Love smote her heart with his all-conquering wand,
And she was powerless in the field of sweets,
And lay among the banks, faint with perfume,
With not a cloud between her and the sky
Of perfect hope above the sea of bliss.
Like some lone rower drifting down the stream
Into a mystic glory, where the trees
Spread out their branches clothed in odorous green,
And the winds shake a thousand hidden lyres,
Till he is lost in sweetness—thus she strayed
Into the golden sunrise of delight.

There dwelt a bard among the Druid hills,
Whom Nature taught to love her. So he stole

Into her ivy porches, where the dews
And rains and winds and hissing lightning-streams
Had graven psalms upon the wondrous walls,
On leaves and twigs, moss-cups and fairy ferns,
Flower-bells and grass-blades, which he daily strove
To unravel for the benefit of man.
Few books had he, and fewer friends than books :
And so the hedges were his monitors,
And rushes where the bye-paths cross the moors,
Or sounds that haunt the dingles when the sheep
Were safely penned, and shepherd found his home
And listened to his daughter on his knee.
He called the moon his sister, and the stars
His kindred, glittering in their solemn spheres :
He found delight in darkness, and the streams
He haunted oft when glow-worms gilt the creeks,
And bats came wheeling from the upper caves.
Thus arm in arm he walked with whispering Night.
Morn hung with dewy jewels, the calm eve
Laden with treasures from the sea of sound,
Noon in her sun-drawn chariot; the great sea
Solemnly surging; wayside wood and waste;
Fire-splintered peak, where the red lightning plays
And thunder awes creation—all to him
Were full of truthful teaching, and he turned
From erring man to Nature's loftiest lore.

Yet in his own green glens and native glades,
And near his hearthstone where his harp was hung,
In gatherings great, or where the threes were found,
Men turned their backs upon him, and passed by
In cruel silence, knowing not his life.
No waif of kindness came upon the wave,
But the black billows beat his little bark,
Even when he thought to moor it to the rock
Where Fame's high temple glittered in the sun.
His mission was to them a miracle
Which blind eyes could not see or hearts believe.
And though he sang because his soul was full,
They cried, "Neglect him, and the fire will fail."
But can you stay the April buds, or still

The waters of the fountain? Nor can ye
Suppress the promptings of the son of song.
Battered and bruised, he carols yet the more.
Far off among the isles of Fancy's realm.
A bard might be whose wizard harp had power
To quell the winds of winter, or lay low
The blazing passions of the populace:
But one so near, so humble, and so still,
Whose parents lived and died among the fields,
Whose brethren ploughed and sowed and reaped their meads,
Whose sisters were their servants, labour-lagged,
Could never be the expounder of sweet airs
From wandering streams and winds and surging seas
And woods at midnight when the stars are clear,
Whom Nature owns a poet. So they fed
The sad musician with the coarsest wheat,
And soaked his crusts in water, till he longed
To sleep in silence where the daisies bloom.

She met him with his harp among the hills,
Wandering with twilight, and her heart was his.
She knew men placed small value on his song.
Nor understood his mission, though his soul
Soared far above the din of little things,
And the strong squabble of the world for gain,
Into a region beautified with truth,
Whence gales come laden with the hymns of God.
And so she loved him. Weeks and months passed by,
And all their loves were summer, when a cloud
Rose in the whirlwind, darkening half the heavens.

The moon was out upon the sounding moor,
And Silence sat among the broken crags,
White as an angel. Every rush-tuft there,
And heath-bloom hanging o'er the shining pool,
And fern-frond in the mosses, seemed a wand
Of silver wielded by the wakening wind.
Thought by a stream was sitting all apart,
His head upon his hand, and Poetry lay
Among the glow-worms, watched by Love and Truth.
Beside a rock, just on the common's edge,

Two lovers stand whose faces are too sad :
One is the bard, and one the village maid,
Old William's daughter, Mary Carringworth.
Hark, and we hear a voice behind the crag
Floating among the fleeces of the moon,
Like sighs in April when the showers are swift.

"Yes, love, I go to-morrow. O'er the seas
The bark will bear me farther, farther still,
Away from thee, away from light and life.
When winds are out, or stars, or lagging calms,
Or sun, or shade, or meteors and the moon,
I'll scan the billow-tops to read thy name,
Or list to hear it in the flapping shrouds.
Yes, I must go : it is my country's fate,
And so farewell. I know thy heart is mine."
And Mary bowed her head, and sighed, "It is."

Night in the cottage; night upon the sea.
"O father, hear the winds! The house-roof shakes,
And every rafter trembles. Sad indeed
In such a tumult to be on the waves.
O what a blinding flash! Methinks the roar
Of angry billows rattles in mine ears,
And wilder waters toss my tortured soul,
The dark deeps of affliction. Hear that peal
Of dashing thunder : how it rends and rolls,
As if it tumbled Saturn from his sphere,
And all the gods were warring! But my thoughts
Are with the sailor and his battered ship
Driven through the darkness. Will God hear us now?"

"Yes, Mary : when our troubles magnify,
And the dark thicket closes, the thorn-points
Piercing us as we tremble, and no path
Winds on before us, then He hears our prayer,
And from the holiest the Deliverer comes,
And leads us on our way until our feet
In a safe place are standing, and we hear
The trumps of triumph on the hills of home.
He oft has been my rescue on the road,

And will not fail me when my needs are most,
Or fail thee either." And old William prayed.

The outer storm blew over. Trees that rocked
And rushed stood still, and waves that beat
In thunder on the strand retired in sport,
And kissed the reefs their headlong wrath had torn.
The moon shot silver splinters o'er the peaks
Which darkness held so long in dolefulness;
Doors opened to the sun, and children played
Where flowers held up their foreheads, and green leaves
Wavered and winked in all their loveliness.
But in her heart there was a passionate blast
That song or sunshine could not lull to peace;
And ever at her feet the billows rolled,
And ever in her ears the ocean moaned.

And then the deep sent forth a singular sound,
Solemn and searching as a funeral knell,
Which smote the tree of hope as frost the flower,
Leaving it budless as a broken spar.
Some wreckage lay within the nearest cove,
Piled up grotesquely, and within the heap
The good ship's name in which the poet sailed;
And farther on, a bottle, with these words:
"We're sinking, Mary: yet I cling to hope."
The neighbours told her this one quiet eve,
As she sat reading to the dear old man;
And her head bowed as the pale lily falls
Beneath the lightning blazing from the dark.

The seasons run their rounds. The ripe corn waves
On the rejoicing hills, and in the vales
The mowers are at work, and the sharp scythes
Rustle of coming years of endless peace,
When horrid war, the enemy of good,
The curse of progress, and the bane of truth,
The Devil's engine, and the fiend of fire,
Shall be entombed with all his butcheries,
To blast the globe no longer. Come, O come,
Thou day delightsome! linger not, nor stay
On Morning's threshold: let the earth be glad.

Old William's eyes were dim, his hands were weak
His grinders long had ceased, and in the way
Fears gathered like an army spectre-strong,
And on his ears a muffled echo fell,
Murmuring from mystic passes and dim dales,
Whose borders he had reached, so soon to cross.
Nor unattended were his faltering steps:
For, lying on his threshold, with lank jaws
And eyes all fiery, was the Wolf of Want,
Whose glances sometimes awed him in his chair,
And would have awed him more but for his faith
In One who promised him his daily bread,
Which he believed as simply as a child.

Theirs was a scanty breakfast—a hard crust
Soaked in clear water. Half the maiden's share
Was put aside, though she was hungry still,
To feed her fainting father. The old man
Seemed gazing into space on some bright form
Which gave him summer smiles, and his lips moved
As if conversing with the Friend unseen.
She grieved to break the spell and tell him all,
And yet it must be uttered. So a tear
Between her eyelids glittering was wiped off,
And sitting by him she in loving tone
Told of the empty cupboard and the purse,
Elm butter-plate, milk-cup, and coffee-can;
And whether it would pain him very much
To leave their home when daylight came again,
Leaning upon her arm, to seek for rest
And food and shelter in some other place.
Dear good old man! he knew not that she meant
The workhouse walls, with all their blank array;
And if he had, in his unwavering love
And faith unfaltering would have answered, "No."

Morn and the mowers. Glory gilds the earth;
Bright bars of gold recross the silent mere,
Span the shy brooklet where the bridge is low,
Flash on the reaper's hook, and quivering gleam
O'er grass and rush where bubbling shallows glide.

The door is locked, the Gothic window barred,
The blinds are down, the fire quenched on the hearth,
The garden-wicket latched, and forth they go
Into the world, whose life is death to them.
Although the Graces from full urns of light
Pour out their silver radiance, on they go
Towards the iron gates whose horrid clank
Brands them as paupers, tearing through their souls
With blasts of agony and awe unpenned.
Bruised, broken, bended, sadly forth they steal,
Leaving behind them on the open plain
Mercy and Hope and Gentleness and Peace
Chanting among the wheat-sheaves, whose white wings
Expand not there within the workhouse walls.

"I see a bright cloud, father, where the Morn
Lifts up her glory-gates, and over it
A sea of beams is surging solemnly
Upon a shore of crimson. The great waves
Are burning mysteries, bearing on their crests
The impress of the Highest. Far away
Behind this blazing splendour must be heaven
Where all the prophets are, and thirst and woe
And hunger come not near. A little while,
And the cold workhouse will yield up its own,
And we shall reach the brightness." Bowing low,
The old man softly said, "A little while."

Nearer they come and nearer. From a curve
They see the porter's lodge, and the great gate
On which Despair, like some black ominous bird
Of huge dimensions, ever croaks in gloom,
Whetting his beak against the bended bars,
And wildly glaring into sickening space.
The inmates hear him, and their crippled lives
Languish away in lonesome listlessness,
With a child's fare for manhood, and old age
Left with the tears unwiped upon his face.
Would they so soon behold its shadowy wards,
Where ties are severed, and companionship
Is but a mockery trembling in its shroud?

Why part the old man from his loving wife,
Whose truth has warmed him more than forty years,
And in whose light the trials of the way
Have been but rising bubbles? Who could smooth
His path like her, or give her joy like him?
This snapping of the bond which God has joined
Is one of Britain's blunders, and will bring
The rain of judgment on her guilty head.
Would Mary and her father enter here,
With strange eyes all around them, blocked by walls
Whose stones seem moaning as the winds arise,
And sunken orbs red-ringed with wretchedness
Are shedding tears for ever? Heaven forbid!
And all the Graces utter, "Heaven forbid!"

Leaning on Mary's arm, the old man moves
With slow steps onward. Nature here is fair:
A clear stream murmurs on among the trees,
And ivy climbs the cross by the wayside
Where honeysuckles gather, ferns and flowers
And shining reeds commingle. By a rock
A-near the shallows where the waters swell
In all their fullest music, a young man
Is standing lost in thought or lost in song.
From dust-lines on his clothes and on his shoes,
He seems a traveller with his staff and scrip:
But so absorbed was he in what he saw
Or felt or thought, that they had both arrived
Within three yards of him before he turned
And met them face to face. O what a look!
O what a sound went up from that still lane
And smote the harvest skies! Was it a ghost,
Star-seeking, which the river waves rolled out
In cerements mystical, to beckon them
To that grand sea of beams which Mary saw
When Morn had left her chamber? Not a ghost,
Or wandering spectre; for they only come
Upon the moonbeams or the naked stars,
When Day retires to slumber with the dews.
One moment, and no more, and then the bard—
For he it was—held Mary in his arms,

And kissed her o'er and o'er again : and she
Clung to her lover with the bliss of youth.

They entered not the workhouse. By the stream
Where they had found him on that harvest morn,
Lost in the liquid babble of the brook,
He built a cottage quaintly beautiful,
And Mary was its mistress. The old man
Had his allotted corner, and full oft
Would tell his little grandson the long tale
Of father's shipwreck, and the boat which came
And bore him to a vessel, when he sailed
To far-off islands, searching them for gold
And glittering gems, until his hoard increased,
And he came home to England. But the boy
Would turn his black eyes on him fixedly,
When he, with richest pathos in his voice,
Told how his mother and his grey grandsire,
When the last crust was eaten, and the cat
Cried with sheer hunger by the pantry door,
Walked towards the workhouse, where they thought to die
And share a pauper's coffin and a shroud,
When in the summer sunshine by a stream,
Gazing upon the water, they beheld
A fair young man, who bade them dry their tears,
And turn their backs upon the iron gates;
That God had willed for them another lot.
And so they went with him, and he was kind :
He gave them bread and meat, and sheltered them
From rain and ruin—loved them when the world
Had cast them off and scorned them down to dust.
And this was true affection. When the year
Was entering on its youth, the bells broke out,
So that the echoes filled the curious creeks
And danced along the dingles : they were wed,
And Mary was the wife of him she loved,
And he was Alfred's father.

Here he lived
A life of psalm, impelled by truth Divine;
His friends the flowers, his books the grassy glades,

His teachers winds and foaming waterfalls,
His garden-paths the channels of the flood,
His closet crag-heaps canopied with clouds,
His temple nature's own, his music rills,
His poems purple heights, his battle-cry
The thunder-bolts that awe the world to peace;
True to the mission which his God had given;
And fragments of his simple melodies,
Like hummings from the hamlet, float along
The busy walks and waysides of the world.

TALES.

FRANK FRADDON AND HIS FATHER.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

"I HAVE not had quite enough bread for breakfast, mother," said little Frank Fraddon; "but I shall thank God, nevertheless, for it is more than I deserve. Harry Hold was grumbling yesterday because he got skimmed milk in his tea, when he had nice rock-sugar, toast, and fish as well, and a plenty to eat and leave. But I remember what you have often told me, mother, that we should be thankful for the smallest favour the Lord gives us, whether it be only what I have had this morning, a crust of bread and a cup of water. Though my breakfast has been so small, yet it is much more than Philip Hixon had yesterday; for he said to me down by the wood, when I was bringing your sewing from the village, that he had only three brown sops in his bason, and he could not tell whether he should get any dinner. But when I saw him in the evening he told me that after reading the chapter his mother opened the door, and

there was a bright halfcrown shining on the threshold, which God had surely sent, and which saved them from actual starvation. I have been thinking about this a good deal, and I know it has made me more 'grateful for my half-breakfast; so I shall thank God, mother, who has always been so good to us."

Then little Frank Fraddon clasped his hands together, closed his eyes, and said in a soft and musical voice, "I thank Thee, my dear Saviour, for giving me food this morning, and all the mornings of my life; and also for preparing for me a home in heaven, where I pray Thee to bring both me and my mother, and all my friends. Amen."

Susan Fraddon was standing at the end of the table, with her eyes fixed upon her little boy. Surely the reader will not think less of her if we say there were tears upon her eyelids, which she sometimes wiped away with her apron? Susan Fraddon was a good woman, and loved her Lord and Master, though He had seen it best to chasten her in various ways. And this is often His course with His own people. Many of His most faithful followers are sometimes greatly straitened, even suffering, it may be, hunger and thirst, besides neglect and scorn; for has He not said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten?" Susan felt this, but she was not discouraged or cast down, for she looked "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

It was Christmas Eve, and the sight of her boy, and the sound of his sorrowful words had awakened memories in her soul that scarcely ever slept, but were fresher and clearer to-day than at any other season. Several years ago Solomon Fraddon, her husband, had left her very mysteriously. Their only horse needed shoeing, which he rode into the village, and whilst the blacksmith was preparing the iron, Solomon was seen in the market, with his best whip in his hand, talking with a strange man—and that was all. Enquiries were made, advertisements inserted in the newspapers, searching-parties wandered hither and thither; but there was no clue to the missing man. The kind blacksmith brought the horse back to Susan Fraddon, and said all it was possible to say to comfort her; but, like Rachel of old, she refused consolation.

She took, however, this great trouble to her Heavenly Father, and in the midst of her severest anguish He sustained her. She had known His love when but a child, which had softened for her all the ills of life, and was never more precious than in the day of trouble. Little Frank was then a baby in the cradle; and often has she kissed him there in the evening twilight, when the beautiful image of sleep was upon him, and smiles played upon his pretty cheeks like day-beams upon the pastures, and gone to the door of her home to listen for the footfall of him who was dearer to her than the light of the stars, or the beauty of the summer bower. And there she would remain lost in meditation and prayer until the moon rose over the river, and built bright palaces of silver in every dell, turning the warm tears upon her face to pearls of liquid light, and hanging the tree-tops, ferns, and grasses in snowy tissues. The breeze rustled in the underwood, bats wheeled by the ivied ruin, the river murmured on the lonely moor, and strange whisperings travelled among the hills; but no husband's footfall gladdened her ear, nor his much-loved voice cheered her heart. And week after week it was the same, until the years partially softened the sudden sorrow. The horse had long gone, the cow had been parted with, the sheep driven to other fields and sheltered in other folds; and poor Susan and her boy were so reduced that it was really difficult to survive. Nearly the last piece of bread had been eaten for breakfast, and poor little Frank's hunger had not been appeased. Yet Susan Fraddon still trusted in her God, and when her boy was asleep would still occasionally stand in her doorway, looking in the direction of the village as if she expected to see her husband's approach. How beautiful is faith, especially the trust of a loving wife! And how much more beautiful is the child-like faith of the Gospel!

"Here Frank," said Susan Fraddon, "take this sewing-work which I have just finished over to the lawyer's, and tell the servant that mother would feel obliged, as it is Christmas Day to-morrow, if Mrs. Bindweed would send the money for it, and also that which was due to me a fortnight ago. If this is sent, we may have something for dinner to-morrow; something, I mean, to remind us of the day; if not, we must cook the three last potatoes we have in the broken pan under the stairs, and eat them with a little salt. But He who was born in a stable

will not despise us because our dinner is poor, but, if our hearts go up to Him, will visit us as freely as those whose tables are heavily laden with the luxuries of life. Whatever it is, Frank, we will try to be thankful, and not forget to render Him our love. Methinks I have never felt Him so near as I have lately, when our cupboard has been empty, and the last stick in the grate. But go now, dear Frank; I will tidy up the house a little, and put a few stitches in your best cap, as we know not when we shall afford to buy another. Of course I shall think of your father, as I always do on Christmas Eve, more than on any other eve throughout the year. I shall put his chair in the corner, with his slippers by it, which have been unworn so long, for, perhaps, after all the Lord may send him back. Now let me kiss you; there, good bye, and I do hope Mrs. Bindweed will pay you."

Little Frank Fraddon kissed his mother, and closed the door behind him. He was not very long in reaching the lawyer's residence, when he told the servant his story, handing her the parcel. She replied that she was sorry her mistress was not at home, that she was gone to a ball at the squire's, and would not return until late at night. Poor Frank, he felt his heart sink within him, and a cold shudder shook his frame. He bade the servant good bye, turned from the door, and soon his eyes were red with weeping. What should they do now to pass the Christmas? how procure sufficient to eat? and, worse than all, how could he break the sorrowful news to his mother? As he passed along the snow began to fall, and the wind was whistling through the leafless trees. His hands were very cold, but he rubbed them together to warm them, and even washed his face in the cold water of the brook, that his mother might not see he had been crying. Brave little Frank! we feel we could kiss him heartily if he were near us now. He lifted up a little prayer to our Father in heaven as he trudged along, which served to comfort him greatly. Will it not be well for those who are discontented amid so much of the good things of life, to remember the hardships and privations of poor little Frank Fraddon, which might tend, perhaps, to remove their ingratitude, and stimulate their hearts with thankfulness to the great Giver?

Susan Fraddon received the intelligence of Mrs. Bindweed's absence with some dismay; but the cloud did not remain on

her countenance long when she saw the brave look of her boy. The neighbouring people passed by their door on their way to the market, some in gigs, traps, and carts, some on horseback, and some on foot; but there was no market for Frank or his mother! Of what use was it to go there with an empty stomach and an empty purse? Money is what the sellers wanted, or there would be no buyers. Legs of mutton, ribs for roasting, fat geese, and ducks, and all the rich abundance prepared for the holy tide, passed another way, and not a single shred crossed their threshold. Frank went down to the sea-beach, and found some wood washed up by the waves, which he gathered together and carried home, so that they might not be entirely without fire on Christmas Day. He also succeeded in securing a handful or two of shell-fish, which he put into his pocket for his mother, who greatly relished them. A few crusts were all they had that evening, when they retired to bed early to save their fuel and the candle. And who knows what earnest, heartfelt prayers went up through the darkness of that poor home, from mother and son, to Him who exclaimed, when walking this sorrowful world, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head?" Could Mrs. Bindweed have heard their solemn petitions, and seen the tears upon the faces of the two praying ones, would she not have shuddered in the midst of the brilliant ball, like him who saw the fingers of a Man's hand writing mystically upon the plaster, and have sent the poor needlewoman's hard-earned pittance to her before the dawning of the following Christmas Day? Surely it is high time that the rich ceased thus to trifle with the industrious poor, who too often suffer hunger and cold through such neglect.

The bells rang on Christmas Day, the sun looked down upon the snow, carol-singers chanted their anthems in rich men's halls, the mistletoe and holly graced many a dwelling, and the yule-log blazed in the chimney-nook; but nought of a festive nature was found in Susan Fraddon's abode. Now and then they caught the stray strain of a Christmas song floating past them on the cold wind, awakened by the choristers at a well-to-do farmer's door, where buns and beef were plentiful; but no fowl was spitted in their dwelling, or festal cake sent forth its odour on their board. Frank kindled the drift-wood

he had picked up on the beach, which soon made a cheerful blaze in the chimney corner. But he was careful not to burn it too fast, and got a few sods from the wood-corner to save it. His mother put the three remaining potatoes in the saucepan, placing it over the fire, which, as the reader is aware, with a shell-fish or two, would constitute their Christmas dinner. Frank attended to the wood, and sometimes smiled to see the great sparks soaring and sputtering up the stack. Susan sat by him with her holiday cap on her head, and a few faded garments she had saved from the wreck of the past enfolding her person. She was pale and thoughtful, and looked with anxious eyes into the flickering fire, as if she saw some far-off vision which had aforetime cheered her spirit. The Christmas bells of other days sounded in her ears, when one, who now is not, filled her life with brightness and her soul with hope—gone from her outward gaze like the mists from the moorland mere. And who can say that she did not see HIM in the midst of the blazing drift-wood, who once walked with the three Hebrew children in the burning fiery furnace; and also stood in glorified robes on the Mount of Transfiguration; and whispered in after-days to His wondering disciples by the sea of Tiberias, "Children, have ye any meat?"—who can say that she did not see Him, and that He did not whisper to her, saying, "Daughter, be of good cheer; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee?"

The three potatoes were ready, and several of the shell-fish were roasting upon the red brands. Frank was watching them, and Susan was laying the cloth on the table, ever and anon wiping off a tear from her face, and bending affectionate looks upon her poor patient boy, who seemed so contented with the thought of having two potatoes—for she would only reserve one for herself—and a few limpets for his Christmas dinner, when so many were having their roast meat and fowl-pie, to say nothing of the pudding which could scarcely bear its own weight for the figs and fat. Frank Fraddon had no thoughts of envy of the better feasters of the day; for he even whistled with contentment as he attended to the cooking of the shell-fish, and often spoke quite cheerfully to his mother, saying it was jolly to hear the hissing of the fish, and the crackling of the brands. Just then some one came into the porch and knocked. Who could it be at that time? for it was rarely

indeed that they had a visitor. Susan opened the door; and, behold, a man was standing there with a bandage around his brow. He was leaning on a stick, and appeared to be very weary. He told them he had been travelling for a considerable way, and asked if they would allow him to rest a little in their cottage. Susan consented, and placed him near the fire where Frank was cooking limpets. He had not much to say at first, but looked eagerly about the room, and often fixed his eyes upon Frank and his mother. In the meantime Susan had told him a little of their history, and invited him to share their meal, though it was so scanty. He consented, and they divided the three potatoes amongst them, having exactly one each, with a proportionate number of the shell-fish. The stranger was grateful; Susan and Frank were grateful; and warmer thanksgivings ascended to Heaven from that scantily spread board than from many a rich man's dwelling whose table overflowed with dainties.

After Susan had removed the cloth, he asked if she had heard aught of her husband since his mysterious departure. She told him, no, and that every Christmas tide it was her one saddening thought. She had stooped to pick up a half-burnt brand, and Frank was looking up into the strange man's face, when he suddenly slipped off the bandage from his brow, and sat quite still in his chair. "Look, mother!" said he; and Susan gazed at their visitor. Another look, another, and a great cry of joy; and they were locked in each other's arms, mingling their kisses and tears together. Frank was nearly frightened out of the house; but he grasped the side of the mantel-piece and wondered. Nor was it long before the whole mystery was explained, much to his satisfaction, so that he danced around the room, clapping his hands and kicking the fender and the cricket for joy. The reader will scarcely need be told that this was Frank's father and the long-lost husband of Susan Fraddon. A brightness had entered that poor home which poverty could not darken.

"And so you have only had three potatoes and a few shell-fish for dinner?" sobbed Solomon Fraddon. "If I were at home, it would not have been so. And why is it, wife, that my slippers are here ready for me by my chair?" "O," replied Susan, with the tears running down her face, "your slippers have always been put by your chair every Christmas Eve; for we believed you would come some day."

Before he would agree to tell them his story, he asked his son Frank to go out with him into the cow-house. There they found a package containing bread, beef, turnips, butter, tea, coffee, and a great fat goose, which he had purchased with the money he had in his pocket when he left them so many years ago, which he had secreted and recovered on his return. Susan was soon in the midst of cooking a very different dinner to that of which they had partaken a short time before, and Frank was leaping around, saying he was surely the happiest boy in the universe—that God had sent him his own dear father, and he did not want anything more. The cooking was hastened as fast as the driftwood would permit; and after a more substantial meal than Susan and Frank had enjoyed for a long period, Solomon Fraddon told them how the press-gang had blindfolded him in the market, when he was borne on board a ship, carried into a strange land, and compelled to be a soldier. Once or twice he had written, but the letters were either destroyed or lost in their transmission. Of the war horrors he had witnessed, he would make no mention then.

Crossing a river at the mouth of a harbour, the wind suddenly arose and drove their boat to sea. Three of his companions were lost, and he was picked up by a Norwegian bark, and carried to their country. Here he remained a long time, and had an opportunity of reading his Bible to some of the inhabitants who had learned to speak our language. This was the Bible Susan had given him when they were betrothed, and which he had with him that morning at the market. By-and-bye a ship bore him to England, where he arrived five days ago, and at once set out on foot towards home. And here he was at last, overcome with excessive joy thus to meet them on Christmas Day. Poor he was, yet his heart was as warm as ever; and the loving Master whom he had tried to serve was still his supporter and friend, and he could not doubt would make a way for their escape. With Frank and Susan he was rich; though he had been the victim of conscription and the press-gang, which had entailed untold horrors upon him and upon his household. But his right arm was still strong, and he would trust to it and the blessing of Jehovah. Frank would soon be able to help him on the farm; and he trusted in a few years, by dint of perseverance, to regain what was lost. Though he had been parted from them,

he had not been sundered from his God; and henceforth it would be his greatest delight to serve Him.

They sat by the embers until the last piece of driftwood was burnt out, Frank holding his father's hand in his own, and whispering just loud enough for his mother to hear, "God has answered our prayer, and sent us a handsome Christmas Day." And years afterwards, when a little sister was born to Frank, and the well-cultivated farm yielded the best crops in the neighbourhood; when they had cows in the meadows and pigs in the stye, milk and cream in the dairy and flitches of bacon hanging from the kitchen-hooks; when friends came to see them, amongst whom was the rector himself, and they rode to church on Sundays in their own pretty conveyance, and sat in the pew close behind the squire—on every Christmas Eve the poor people of the district were called to their pretty home, when a present was made to each; and while they were being regaled with the good things of earth, in the presence of Susan and Solomon Fraddon, Frank told them of the return of his father to their empty home, when his mother and he had only three potatoes and a few shell-fish for their Christmas dinner. This rehearsal would draw tears from the eyes of the grateful audience, and, indeed, from the eyes of Susan and Solomon also, and they would all join in the carol of the angels at the birth of the world's Redeemer, "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

SIMON SWARD AND LITTLE BEN

"Why is there a light burning in that window?" said little Ben Bound to his mother, as they returned from a walk after church one quiet summer evening. "Simon Sward is ill, my son," said Mrs. Bound; "did you not hear the parson pray for him in church this evening, when the names of the great people were mentioned who have carriages and servants and an overflow of the good things of this life? True, our parson did not actually pray, 'Lord, help poor Simon Sward,' but then he was included in the general petition, which, you know, is much the same thing. Poor man!

I wonder how he is! They say that he worked on the Twelve Oaks until he could work no longer, and with the stopping of his work came the stopping of his pay, which is greatly the way of the world. But I am very, very glad he was prayed for in church, and trust he may be sustained in his sorrow. It is very consoling to have the prayers of the good."

By this time they had reached their home in the forest, and after his supper little Ben went to bed; but he lay awake for several hours, which was a new thing to him, thinking of the conversation he had with his mother, and wondering whether a little timely aid in the case of old Simon Sward would not be as acceptable to him and to his God as a poor prayer of words alone, without any sacrifice on the sick man's behalf. At last his restless tossings ceased, his arms dropped gently upon the coverlet, his heavy eyelids closed, sweet gales of delicious sounds were in his ears—music such as the willows yield at the dying twilight—fairy visions in gilded garments, striking harps of richest metal, and bearing phials of loveliest odours which deadened his drooping sense, thronged the path he trod; and, as in a clime of roses, the fair boy was asleep.

The next morning he awoke with the sparrows chattering their choice welcomes on an old hawthorn under his bedroom window. After breakfast he kissed his mother, saying he had a favour to ask. "You know, mother, that I have two doves which were given me as a birthday present, and which I keep in my wooden cage on the wall? They are very pretty and I love them, and delight to hear their cooings when I give them food. May I sell them, mother, and do what I will with the money? Farmer Price wants to buy two doves for his son, and I have no doubt would purchase mine. I know the way to the great house under the trees; down by the mill, on by the pond, up through the fir plantation, and you are by the back-door bell. Do let me sell them, mother, for I want to so very much."

"And why do you wish to sell your doves, my boy? You never told me this before. And you appear to love them greatly, and are so attentive to them. And they love you, I know, in return for your great kindness to them. What strange feeling has now got possession of my son?"

Little Ben Bound looked up into his mother's face; there

was a tear in his eye, and his voice trembled, as he spoke: "I have been thinking of Simon Sward, mother, all alone in his room, with but little to eat or drink, and wondering what I could do for him. It is true that he has had the prayers of the congregation; but you told me one evening in the winter, when we were sitting comfortably by our log-fire, and had just relieved a poor beggar at the door, what St. James says of a brother or a sister being destitute of daily food, and 'one should say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?' So I think, mother, that he who prays should give also. Therefore I would like, if you please, to sell my two doves, and give the money to poor Simon Sward, to procure him some little comfort in his trouble. It is all I have; and may I not do it, mother?"

By this time the tears were shining on the mother's face, as she bent down and kissed the brow of her boy. He had never looked so lovely in her eyes, or appeared so noble before. She brushed back his glossy ringlets, bade him take his cap and go; for he might sell his doves to Farmer Price, who was the richest man in the neighbourhood. Ben really danced for joy, embraced his mother, took the doves and departed with a glad heart, delighted to think he was allowed to make this sacrifice for the good of another. The birds were on the bushes, but he stopped not to seek their nests; the asses were browsing by the wayside, and the geese and ducks swimming in the pools, but he had no time at all to examine them; an organ boy went by with some white mice in a cage, but he stayed not his step for a lingering look; the trout swam up and down the stream, hid under the shallows, and glided to the very edge of the water among the green grass, but they lured not his footsteps from the beaten track. On, on went eager Ben Bound, with a dove in each hand, through the fields, and down the lane, and by the holly dell, nor paused until he reached the great door of Farmer Price's residence, and heard the hall bell ring.

A stout, red-faced servant girl came to the door, to whom Ben explained his errand, and asked if she thought her master would buy the doves. Ben was left standing on the hall steps until the servant returned with a message from her master, saying that Farmer Price would like to see him. Ben

felt a little timid when following the maid through the hall, seeing the grand things around him, and hearing so distinctly the echo of his footsteps; but the thought of his mission of mercy nerved him, and in a minute more he stood before the farmer, with the two doves in his hands. "So you wish to part with your doves, my lad," said Farmer Price in a somewhat patronizing tone; "and why is it you wish to sell them?" Ben coloured a little, and then, looking steadily in the farmer's face, which was rather red as if with new wine, he told him respectfully the story of Simon Sward—how he was ill in bed, with but little to eat or drink—how the parson and people had prayed for him in church, and the heavy-voiced clerk had uttered his loud Amen—how he had seen a light in his window, and what his gentle mother had told him—how he lay awake at night thinking of the poor old man, when a voice seemed speaking to him through the darkness, that men must give as well as pray—and how he resolved to sell his doves, which was all his substance, to relieve the sinking labourer. "You will buy them, please, won't you, Sir?" said little Ben, with an innocency that touched the farmer's soul.

Farmer Price bought the doves, and gave Ben more than he had asked for them. O happy Ben Bound! But a noticeable change had taken place in the farmer; he was more thoughtful and serious than he was wont. A servant passing the door of his room a few days afterwards overheard him say, "Yes, though new to me, the boy is surely right; we must give as well as pray. In this, perhaps, I have hitherto been deficient, but I must see if I can turn over a new leaf—yes, turn over a new leaf."

Meanwhile, Ben had rushed from the farmer's house with a great joy in his heart that illumined his very face, nor stopped he until he reached his mother's home, to tell her the good news; and then he went off to Simon Sward. He found him sitting up in bed, drinking a cup of gruel, and looking very miserable. With the price of the doves good food was soon procured, and old Simon was shortly able to sit in the porch, where little Ben came to read the Bible to him every evening. In his petitions Simon Sward always prayed for Ben, saying he was the instrument of saving both his body and his soul.

One day a carriage, drawn by a grey horse, came up

to Simon Sward's door, and who should step out of it but Farmer Price? He sat down and began to converse with the old man, whom he had formerly turned out of his employ on the plea of his being idle, when it was well known that it was far otherwise. Before he left he pulled out his purse, and gave old Simon five shillings, saying, "We are foes no longer, my man, but true friends from this hour. Ben Bound has taught me more than the parson, a lesson which I shall evermore practise—that we must give as well as pray. As soon as you are able, Simon, come with me, and there is work for you until the end of your life." The carriage then rolled away, leaving old Simon dumb with bewilderment.

Some months afterwards a handsome box, with a few small holes in the lid, was brought to Ben Bound's door, directed to himself. When it was opened he and his mother discovered two of the prettiest white doves that were ever seen; and in a neat wrapper a letter, saying they were from Farmer Price, a present to Ben, in remembrance of his visit to his house. It furthermore stated that there was a situation for Ben in his establishment, if he would accept it; and he and his mother soon removed to the lodge at the entrance of the park. Farmer Price never forgot the lesson imparted to him by Ben Bound, to GIVE as well as pray; and it is said that the parson, also, was more frequent in his visits to the sick and needy, and that he oftener took alms from his pocket.

OLD MOSES MERLE AND HIS MASTER.

It was a cold, windy day, and the small misty rain was driven into almost every chink. The few primroses which had made their appearance in the sheltered lanes and knolls of moss, hung their heads, in misery, and the yellow eye of the buttercup was blinded with the blast. It came sweeping down the hills in great wet sheets, hanging heavily on the trees and roof-tops, and knocking at the door with the fury of a foe. Scarcely a traveller was abroad; for who would go out at such an hour? Old women, with their knitting-needles in their hands, and the worsted-balls in

their laps, sat knitting by the fire; and Bob and Rick, unable to attend school, were playing at marbles in the passage. The blackbird, in his cage by the entry, put his head under his wing, as much as if to say, "It is impossible to make melody in such a mist!" and so he remained there, standing on one leg, looking as if he had been cut in stone. O, it was a dirty day, and the very cattle of the field sought a shelter. Sad to be out trudging against the weather, with the thick small rain driven into your face like sand! And yet one is out, whose garments are thin, whose shoes are hole-full, whose hat is crushed, whose knees tremble, whose eyes are dim, whose hair is gray—an old man, without an overcoat or extra sheltering weeds of any kind, tottering along on his staff, with his head bent to the blast, moaning in great agony. See how his feet slide in the mud, and the rain-water drips from his garments and his hoary hair! His lips open a little sometimes, as he creeps onward, showing his closed gums; for his teeth have long since left their sockets. He is old, and feeble, and worn to a rag, without friends or fire, bread or bacon, credit or a crust, cast off, like a worn-out waistcoat—old Moses Merle going into the Union.

And Moses had been a hard worker. He was bird-boy in the fields when only nine years of age; and the fields had been his labour-theatre ever since. Youth found him there, manhood, and old age. He had chiefly worked for one master, tilling his farm season after season, reaping the crops, and heaping them into his granary, paid with the smallest wages, and fed with the scantiest fare. He had suffered cold in winter, and heat in summer, giving all his energies to his employer, from January to December, without a single complaining accent. Had he a wife? Yes; and she did all she could at home, and sometimes in the fields, to help to bring bread to the board, which was generally brown, and of her own baking. She wore the coarsest weeds, as well as old Moses; and a new garment was almost as rare in their dwelling as a leg of mutton or a beef-pie. She used to mend his coat and trowsers with a large-eyed needle and grandmother's thread, adding patch after patch, as the time passed by, until it was difficult even to practised eyes to know which had been put on first. Moses cobbled his own shoes, as well as the shoes of his wife, often sitting up late in the evenings to do

so, chatting and hammering at the same time upon his low stool, with his wife blowing the fire, or mending his stockings. They generally had porridge for supper, like old Scotia's mountaineers; milk and sops for breakfast, and potatoes for dinner. Complain they never did, though they fared hard, toiled hard, and slept hard. Moses was led to believe that he was the undeniable property of his master, and that he had just as much right to him bodily as he had to his oxen or his sheep; so he must thankfully take whatever was granted him. And that was small enough, Heaven knows! So small that there was no power whatever given him to rise above his crushed condition, making one year as misty and as moody as another. And the conscience of his prosperous employer never accused him; for he strangely believed that he was acting as a Christian master should. He gave the same weekly wages as others, and surely this was Christianity. Thus he cheated the angel of good, sat down to his roasted fowl and fish, his rich soups and ruddy wine, thanking God in his heart that he was not as his drudging servant Moses, who dined contentedly off his dough and turnips, and supped on gruel and a crust. O mighty man of the manor, sitting at ease in thine hypocritical chair, God shall judge thee, thou whited sepulchre, and the Great Ruler of the universe shall laugh at thy selfish folly.

Thus Moses went on in the harness of toil, bending his back to the yoke as patiently as the camel of the desert. Suddenly a sound was heard in the air, like the noise of mighty voices, or the distant rush of rapid rivers. Merchants lifted their heads from their ledgers to listen, and burly landowners reined in their steeds at the swell. The poor delver's wife wiped her eyes with her apron, in thankfulness to Him who had heard the cry of the oppressed, and was surely sending her and her hungry little ones relief. The waves of sound grew louder, swelling over the tops of the mountains, dropping into the valleys, surging through great cities, and smiting lonely hamlets with a heaven-born power. The mower heard it at his scythe, the mill-man in the mead, the hind at the rake handle, and the weary carter with his whip and his team; and it thrilled their souls with the hope of a coming brightness. On it went, increasing in magnitude and might, until Mercy's hand was outstretched to

the poor labourer with a freer, fuller cup. And O, what prayers arose for the defenders of the weak, from glens where daisies gleam in the grasses, and corn-ears wave in the wind!

His wife died soon afterwards—died of exhaustion and scanty fare—died without a doctor, or the prayers of the Church—died in his arms, when nearly everything had been sold for bread—died with a Scripture passage upon her tongue, that the great and good Shepherd would gather her home to His fold; and old Moses Merle was a widower. She was buried by the parish, in a pauper's pall, and the black coffin was borne to the churchyard in a pauper's hearse. Old Moses was the only mourner, hobbling along on his stick. The wind was high, and it was sad to see his white locks so smitten with the storm, and his thin garments, which were so badly able to keep life within him. He returned broken-hearted to his dwelling, alone in the world. But the door was locked—the landlord's deputy had taken possession of the cottage, distrained the remaining trifles for rent, and poor old Merle had no longer a home! How dreary the earth appeared to him then! How very far off was the angel of charity! He sat down upon the cold doorstep, wrung his hands, and cried great tears of torture. He had arrived at the verge of the wilderness, and the tangled thicket had become denser, and the wounding prickles more sharp. Unnumbered fierce eyes of weird, wild creatures glared at him in the thorns; and flinty steeps, arid and verdureless, stretched on and on farther than the eye could reach. No light was in the firmament, no flowers at his feet, no brook by the way, no smile upon the faces of any living thing; and the great round sun and silver moon had left their places. The fretful sea-waves bore battered wreckage to his feet, mingled with white corpses and nameless skeletons; and he was really alone on the strand. He smote his forehead with his shrunken palm, lifted his hand and smote it again, and cried to heaven for some tokens of day. But still it was night in his soul, and dark night all around him. Poor old Moses Merle! There is a Providence which cannot err, and by-and-bye thou shalt know, humble and oppressed as thou art, even as also thou art known.

Moses Merle had only one relative—a well-to-do farmer,

many miles away. He resolved to go to him, ask his compassion, and see what he would do for him. This is a Christian country; and Martin Mound, which was the name of his kinsman, was undoubtedly a Christian, as he drove to church on Sundays, sat in one of the grandest pews, walked arm-in-arm with the minister, and gave away alms at Christmas. His name, too, was always at the head of charity-lists, and he took the chair at Missionary meetings. Yes, yes! he was surely a Christian. So old Moses arose, took another look at the dear old cottage, heaved another sigh, louder and longer than the last, brushed away another tear with the sleeve of his long-worn, threadbare coat, and with trembling steps turned his face towards a distant part of the parish. The wind had now lulled a little, though it still moaned in the forest pines, and the sun was setting in all his golden grandeur; but his heart was too sad to be much in sympathy with nature. His pace was slow, and the road uneven. By-and-bye the moon arose; the welkin was now quiet, and the very rustle of the tree-tops was music. The holy halo of the scene gradually softened his spirit, his step became firmer, and his sighs less frequent. Nothing was heard but the river in the valley, and the night-bird among the growing corn. Suddenly the bells pealed forth from the belfry, and old Moses Merle walked on in the music.

It was nine o'clock when he arrived at the residence of his kinsman, Martin Mound. He was tired by this time, and very lame; for his boots were broken ones, and his toes out upon the earth. There was a light in the kitchen-window, and so he hobbled up to the door. A few timid knocks with his stick soon brought the servant to open it, who fell back a step or two when the gleam of the lamp fell upon the coarse dress, furrowed features, and grey locks of old Moses. In sooth he was ready to fall, and was obliged to take hold of some woodwork for support. It was difficult for him to speak, but at last he faltered forth his errand, and asked to see the master. All this time he was left standing in the outer air. After considerable delay, Martin Mound came. He was a round, fat man, with a comical leer in his eyes; and nearly all the left side of his nose was gone to the ridge. He turned his squinting orbs upon the old man, scanning him from head to foot with a glance that actually stung him.

At last, with his hands thrust into his red waistcoat pockets, his head thrown back, and his corpulency showing to the utmost, he roared out, "Who are you, old fellow? and what do you want?"

Moses Merle told him in plain English that they were related on his father's side—that his old master was dead, and he was dismissed from the farm, and shut out of his dwelling—that his faithful and good wife for forty years was dead also, and that she had just been buried under the elm-tree in the churchyard—that his furniture was taken for rent, and he had no home now but the wide wilderness—that his day of toil was over, health was failing, old age had overtaken him, and it was hard to starve—that a little would do for him now, only a little, just a crust of bread and bacon and a sup of milk; and he had made bold to come to ask if his kinsman could afford him this small measure out of his abundance. Having said this, faintness overcame him, and he fell upon the stones in the courtyard.

When consciousness returned, he was lying on some straw in the barn, whither he was commanded to be conveyed by Martin Mound. He sent word to say that he did not know him, nor had he the faintest recollection of his pedigree. His conclusion was that the old man was a tramp, secretly stealing from place to place—an impostor, and should be dealt with accordingly. It was his idea that the sooner the country was rid of such base vermin the better. They were to give old Moses a little milk-and-water and a piece of bread, let him sleep on the straw that night, and if he did not leave by seven o'clock in the morning, the police would take him to prison. He must make no more appeals to him, or show himself at his door; if he did so, the consequences would be disastrous. He could not afford to keep cows and pigs, and pay rent and rates for milksops like him; so let him call at the relieving officer's for an order to go into the Union, which was a condition good enough for a worn-out labourer, no matter how honest, or thrifty, or useful he might have been. After preaching this long charity-sermon to his obedient servants, he went back to his well-spread board, his liquors, and his ribs of roast, leaving his famishing unowned kinsman, old Moses Merle, with his crust and sky-blue upon the barn straw!

The morning was misty, as we have before intimated, and poor old Moses Merle, worn-out and wronged, was travelling with a sad heart to the Union. Slowly he dragged himself along—very slowly! What his thoughts were it is impossible to divine; the cup of misery was almost quaffed, and he was now drinking the very dregs. Still, the mist hissed in his ears, sputtered in his eyes, and fastened on his threadbare garments. A dizziness creeps over him, like that which seizes the weary traveller when rest is come; and thoughts of the grave, and the quiet sleepers in their shrouds, where silence and the worm perpetually dwell, congregate around him; and the poor, cast-off labourer longs to be there. Still the compassionless mist drives thicker and thicker, and old Moses bends lower and lower, till his chin almost touches his knees, and there is a sound in his ears like the voice of his dead wife. Still the sound increases, and old Moses bends lower and lower. And another voice whispered in his soul, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

Reader, dear old Moses Merle did not die in the Union. He was found by the wayside, lying under a tree, with his Psalm-book open in his hand, and his dead finger resting upon these loving words, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

UNCLE WILL AND THE EXTINGUISHED CANDLE.

Uncle Will and the writer of this sketch were working together underground, digging in a singularly narrow place after copper ore. It was in a very unfrequented part of the mine, where the sound of another miner's hammer was not heard on the rock. Uncle Will was an old man, and so I let him sit upon a board a very little way behind the working, charging him to take care and keep his light burning, whilst I used the pick and iron wedges in cutting through the lode. Nearly half-an-hour, perhaps, had thus passed, and not a word had been spoken between us, when, by some mischance, I happened to strike the candle which gave us light

in the working, and which was stuck to a fragment of the rock with soft clay, called Saint Ann's, with the point of the pick, knocking it among the rubbish, so that it was extinguished immediately. Looking back on Uncle Will, I was perfectly astounded to find that his candle, too, was gone out, with the exception of a spark of fire in the wick, at which the old man was blowing with all his might, endeavouring in vain to enkindle it. A puff or two more, and we were in utter darkness. I questioned my unwatchful comrade about it, and his reply was, "O, dear! I caught a nod, and awoke just in time to see my candle falling."

And now what could we do? To cry for help would be utterly useless; as well might the wrecked mariner, floating on a board, call to the moon. To sound the rock, and give the understood signal with miners, would also be fruitless, as we were too isolated for anything of this sort. Nor had we any means to strike a light, for this occurred before lucifer matches had been invented. If we remained there, it might be many days before any help reached us, and in that time we should suffer much from hunger and thirst, and perhaps die of starvation. Seeing our position thus critically extreme, I addressed Uncle Will, saying there was no alternative for us but to endeavour to grope our way through the great darkness to the top of the mine. It was a serious undertaking, but the only way likely at all to prove effectual. Better run this risk than sit there to die of cold and hunger in the sickly, sulphurous cell. Should we try? And Uncle Will answered, "Yes."

Taking a pick in my hand to feel the way, I went before, and Uncle Will followed after. How slowly we advanced! Sometimes we had to ascend the face of the rock, where little notches were cut for our feet, the omission of one of which would be swift destruction. Sometimes we had a ladder to climb, and land upon the narrowest platform, full of holes, where a slip of the foot would be our ruin. Sometimes we had low workings to crawl through, where we could not stand upright, and flinty rocks to scramble over with teeth as sharp as swords. Then we had long levels to pass through, in which were deep sinks, with only a single narrow plank across them, which warped and bent as we came upon it, crawling over on our hands and knees. I often had to cheer

Uncle Will with words of encouragement, bidding him to keep directly behind me, while we felt our way inch by inch, and foot by foot, with the pick-handle. Now we had a set of ladders to mount, shifting this way and that way as we reached the top of one to gain the foot of the other, the ascent being no wider than an ordinary well. Slowly, silently, and solemnly we went ; and in the pauses of our steps we could hear the beating of our heart against our side. A single slip of the foot, and we should be lost in some grim excavation where we might lie undiscovered until the sea gave up her dead, and the earth put on her flaming funeral shroud. Whenever we could, we felt the rock at our side, or under our feet ; and with our previous acquaintance with the way, having been over it so often before, we knew within a few yards where we were.

But now we had to pass by a shaft, where the footway was not more than three feet wide, which yawned under us some two hundred fathoms deep. There was no chain, or rope, or railing around it, or security of any kind. It was useless to strain our eyes to try to catch a gleam of light ; we might as well have kept them closed, for the great gloom was as perfect as that in the house of the dead. This shaft was the most dangerous part of the way ; and I cannot tell the reader how slowly we passed it. Sometimes a loose stone, disturbed by our movements, would roll into the void, and go sounding down the dreadful depths, until we could hear it no longer. Thus we stole onward, with the thought of home, wife, and children in our minds. Could we cross this cruel gulf, hope would revive, for then the ladders would almost be in a direct perpendicular line to the top. At last we got over, and Uncle Will and his guide were again ascending. We felt now comparatively safe. This was the regularly-used way up and down the mine, and we might, perhaps, soon meet some one with a light ; and if not, we felt almost certain of reaching the top. Up we go, up, up ; ladder after ladder, ladder after ladder, each round bringing us nearer to liberty and home. By and bye, when looking upward, we saw a speck of light like a distant star in the firmament, and as we ascended higher, it became larger and larger, until its cheering rays shot down upon the ladder-steps, gladdening our hearts more than the sweetest music. Grasping the last ladder, we felt the

tears of thankfulness stealing into our eyes; and reaching the topmost round, and stepping into the dazzling light, we had to wipe them away with the sleeve of our flannel dress. We were saved by the guiding hand of our Father out of the darksome dungeon into the blessed air and glorious sunshine! Yes, by untiring, persevering effort, we had climbed into the light.

And so shall it be with him who mourns in secret and trustfully lays his troubles before his Maker. Art thou sitting in darkness, poor weary one? and is thy candle extinguished in the conflict like those of the two miners in the depths of the earth? To remain thus without an effort on thy part is eternal ruin. Arise and climb towards Him who is the Light of the world, and every step shall bring thee nearer to the region of purest joy, where the Sun of Righteousness rains His splendour upon the lovely land. Is thy daily labour much, and thy bread little, and do thy hungry children often look towards the empty cupboard and ask for food in vain? Tell it to Him who is the Guider of His people. Fling away thy garment, and kneel before the Son of David, and in His own time deliverance shall come; the beauty of heaven shall beam upon thy path, and the shadows of sorrow flee away. Step by step, and the desert is passed; the gloomy ravine is left behind; the rugged ridge is surmounted, and the Canaan of repose is reached, which hath no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

ALLY ARDWICK, THE BARM SELLER.

ALLY Ardwick resided in a little house not far from the road-side between Crag Croft and Gull Creek. She was, perhaps, about threescore years of age, rather plain to look at, though her countenance was not unpleasant. Her husband was a hind at Squire Strongman's where he had worked when they were married, and continued to do so as long as he was able. They had only one child, a little boy, who had died with the whooping cough one cold winter when the weather was exceedingly severe. Just about this time Dick Ardwick was driving his master's cart down a narrow lane, when he stumbled and fell, by catching his foot in some impediment; the cart-wheels went over him, and both his legs were broken. Through this misfortune he was confined to the house for a long time, and was lame ever afterwards. His pay was very small; and, though but two of them, they had to dress mean, and fare hard, often for weeks together being without butter or a shred of animal food, content with bread and treacle.

Thus they passed on from one year to another, with but little change in their circumstances or their sad fare, until their grey hairs warned them that age was approaching. Then Dick Ardwick was seized with rheumatism, racking and raging in every joint. He could not work more than half his time, and the other half he spent in bed, or sitting by the chimney-fire. His master, seeing he could get but little more out of him, reduced his weekly pay to such a small

fraction, that it was scarcely possible for him and Ally to keep body and soul together. Reader, this great cruelty cannot go unmarked in heaven, the frightful catalogue shooting bolts of terror into many an alarmed heart at the last day. Old Dick Ardwick's working-time was over, his strength exhausted, and he lay like a battered barque upon the shore, which the next great wave might force into fragments never to be gathered together again. But what cared his employer? He had reaped the full fruition of his youth, and the glory of his manhood; and now, when he was no longer of any use, he might sink or swim, or beg or borrow, for any sympathy which might actuate his heart. A few gentle words floated to him on behalf of the old man, from Bible-loving neighbours; but he shut his ears to their tender entreaty, and pointed to the Union-house on the hill as a fitting place for worn-out worth. Let us feel grateful, however, that all masters are not like Squire Strongman, but that many an English employer provides for his aged long-tried servant, and would not suffer him to go into the workhouse while he had a horse in the stable or a cow in the field.

When things came to this poor pass, as the saying is, Ally sat by Dick's side one evening, knitting a pair of stockings for a neighbour in the next village, who had long been very kind to them. Dick was listening to her needles, as was his wont, resting his head on his hands upon the top of his stick, without which he could not walk now even across the room. Suddenly Ally said, stopping her needles, and looking full in the old man's face,—

"I have been thinking, Dick, of attempting to do something, which I trust will bring me more pay than knitting worsted stockings, which coins less cash for the pockets, I should think, than almost any other branch of industry. Just fancy! eight pence for this pair, which takes me more hours than I can now stay to reckon up. Not that I am weary working for thee, Dick, which I shall never be, though I knit my fingers to the bone. I recall all the years of thy hardship, when thou wert toiling for me from morning until night, summer and winter, in rain and sunshine; and I never heard thee grumble even when thy dinner was a dry crust of bread. The road has been somewhat rough, Dick, to both of us; but it is God's way, thee knows, and therefore must

be best. But I may as well tell thee my plan, and tell thee also that whilst thou wert sleeping a little this afternoon, being disturbed all night with thy rheumatism, Squire Strongman sent his gardener to say thou hast no occasion to go over to the farm any more, as he can do without thee; and thy little wages will also all cease to-day.

"I had been praying before, Dick, but when Squire Strongman's gardener left me, I prayed more earnestly still, with great drops coming out of my old eyes, and I know He answered my petition. Yes, Dick, the thought came into my head when I rose from my knees, as sudden as lightning; and it was as if a voice spoke in my ear, softer and sweeter than any voice but thine, 'Go, Ally, and sell barm.' And when I went out in the porch, with my knitting in my hand, and looked towards Squire Strongman's farm, where thou hast worked for more than fifty years, the voice seemed to follow me, and murmur in the branches of the elder, and through the honeysuckle of the hedge, 'Go, Ally, and sell barm.' So my mind is quite decided, Dick; I shall begin to make it to-morrow, and go out with it on Friday, and thou must pray for me, Dick, whilst I am away. I think thou hast more prayer in thee now than when thine arms were strong, and thy joints free from rheumatic pains. Thou knowest the text we were reading on Sunday, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' This is always the Lord's way, and will be so now if we have only faith in Him. Yes, Dick, I know it is He who is now telling me, 'Go, Ally, and sell barm.' Dost thee hear me, Dick? Dost thee hear, I say?"

The old man lifted his head a little, and replied that the great trouble through which they were then passing would, he felt, be unendurable but for his Ally's unfailing affection. They had taken away his meagre earnings from him when he needed them most, and thereby struck him a heavier blow than when they had doled out to him, week after week, a dinner of crusts and herbs. He could go into the fields no more to pen the flock or guide the plough; but her unchanging love for him was like a draught of clearest water when he had been thirsty, Yes, he could pray for her, kneeling by the settle, when she went out with barm, which he would be sure to do. There was nothing left him now but this, which

was the greatest mercy conferred on man; for it was yet true what the preacher had said many years ago, when he used to worship in the thatched chapel by the Crag, that prayer moves the hand that moves the world. So, coughing a little to clear his voice, he distinctly and heartily said, "Be it so, Ally; be it so."

So in due time Ally went out with her barm, and Dick prayed for her by the settle. Several times a day he did this; and the more he prayed, the pleasanter the duty became. No eye saw him, or ear heard him, save the One above; and his old master cared no more for his faithful servant than he did for a dweller at the antipodes. But Ally sold her barm to ready and willing customers; and every evening she brought the pence home and counted them out to the great satisfaction of her husband. As the months went by her trade increased, so that she was as busy every day as she could well be, and her knitting was entirely suspended. Many comforts came to their home, to which they had long been strangers. Ally's health improved with her change of occupation, and Dick became more cheerful than he had been for a long time. They even commenced laying by a trifle for a rainy day, depositing it in a tin can on the mantelpiece. After giving Dick his breakfast, Ally would go out with her barm-pitcher, in which was a small stick to stir it up, with a tin measure on the top; and Dick continued to pray for her and for himself, kneeling regularly by the settle. And who can estimate the influence of those humble prayers, which snrely brought down a richer blessing upon their home, ay, and on the neighbourhood around, than the fashionable formula of any pompous dignitary, or the heartless offerings of their own parish priest, who seldom called to see them, and rarely, if ever, assisted them from his well-filled purse? But Ally and Dick Ardwick struggled on, notwithstanding, daily provided for by Him who sent the ravens to Elijah.

Things went on thus for a year or two, and then came a change. Returning to her home one evening with her empty pitcher, Ally passed a little boy sitting on a bank by the road-side. He had no cap on, his clothes were soiled, and his little shoes quite covered with mud. Tears were upon his face, which he essayed to wipe away with his small coat-sleeve. He could not tell his name, or the name of his

parents, or where he came from, or whither he was going. All that was intelligible was, "I am Jemmy." He seemed hungry; and his clothes were wet with the recent rains. It was looking cloudy then; the night was near, and what should Ally do? If she left him there, he might die before the morning; and how could she sleep on her bed with the thought of the dear lost child out in the dark? No! she must take him home with her, and he must share in their humbleness, and partake of a measure of their sustenance. God was good, though man was cruel; and though it was difficult to procure enough for their own needs, yet He would surely provide for the little foundling. Every single cup of water given in honesty and heartiness would be mercifully honoured by and bye. And she was certain Dick would not object to it, but would willingly sacrifice a slice of bread in the morning, and a slice in the evening, for the sake of the dear child. Yes! yes, it must be so.

So she stooped, and took him by the hand as gently as an angel stoops to brush a tear from the orphan's face whose father has been shot down in the wicked wars. On they went, the twilight deepening and the winds walking with more melody across the earth than she had heard for many a month. Poor child! he cried no more for his father or his mother, nor sobbed after his lost joys, now that he felt the warm pressure of Ally's palm; though he was no nursling of the cave. Dick was pleased to see him, and took out their little dead boy's cricket from the cupboard, where it had been kept ever since he had been buried among the flowers of spring, with his initials cut upon its side, that he might sit upon it at his feet. He told Ally to take out his little cup and plate also, which were held more sacred than gold, that he might use them at his supper. The old man had never looked so happy before for many a day; and Ally rejoiced greatly to see him so pleased. After being washed quite clean, the boy fell asleep; and Ally laid him on their dead child's crib, which they still carefully kept in the corner. On the lining of his coat they discovered a name, which they concluded must be his—Willie Affmott. This Ally made out with the aid of her glasses, satisfied it must be the name of the little wanderer.

Things went on pretty much in the same way for a consi-

derable period, and then came a greater change—Ally had a rival in her barm-selling. This rival was the widow of Jeremiah Zobbs, who had reclaimed a field or two of land in the neighbourhood of Crag Croft, but had commenced about it too late in life, as he died before his third field was enclosed. His wife. Susan Zobbs, thus left with a large family to bring up, was obliged honestly to turn everything to account; and, thoroughly understanding the making of yeast, and hearing, too, perhaps, a little of Ally's success, she determined to persevere in this branch of industry. Whether it was that her barm was better prepared than Ally's, and the neighbours preferred it, whether she had more energy and perseverance, or whether it was owing to Ally's lameness, having injured her ancle by stepping into a cart-rut, it is not for us to determine; but true it is that she lost much of her custom, though Dick continued to pray for her several times a day by the settle as before. Indeed, so serious had the falling off become, that they had been obliged to part with many of their articles of furniture to buy bread. Ally's ancle grew worse, so that she could not go out with barm any longer; most of the household items were gone, winter had set in, and Dick Ardwick's rheumatism was more racking. Ally looked at Dick, and Dick looked at Ally; and though neither of them spoke, they were thinking of the Union workhouse.

"Well, Ally," said Dick at last, "I have been meditating on our blessed Saviour, and what thou wert reading about Him yesterday, something of the foxes having holes, and the birds of the air nests, and He not having bit of a place to lay His head. If we have to leave here, Ally, we shall be better off than He, for there is the poor-house yonder, with the pauper's mess, and a roof over our heads. I do not mind this myself, Ally, though I grieve much that thou shouldst have to sit there in the solitary wards, whose grim walls must seem like a tomb. But if it is His will, thou knowest we must submit. To-morrow, Ally, to-morrow."

That night they could not sleep. Ally lay still, with the tears upon her face, and she could hear the old man sobbing sometimes, who concluded she was asleep, and he prayed a little prayer that God would guide them. And God was

guiding them, as He ever guides His people, although it was in a way they knew not. In the morning they procured an order from the relieving officer, and the settle being gone, the dear old man knelt by the hearthstone to make his last prayer, and long after his departure the marks of his tears might have been seen there. Then Ally took the child by the hand, and away they went. What their thoughts were we cannot tell, and must leave it with the reader to conjecture. Slowly, sadly they trudged along, the cold wind blowing their white locks about their foreheads, and almost freezing the few tears upon their faces. Little was said by either, until the sin-stained gates of the house frowned upon them, sending sharper arrows into their souls than ever they had felt before. Then they looked at each other, as they look, perhaps, who feel the last lurch of the sinking ship before it takes them down into the great depths of the ocean. Ally rang the huge, unmusical bell, for Dick's hand trembled so that he could not do it; and they were soon standing in the porter's lodge. How grim and ghostly it looked to their poor old eyes! and how rough were the words that were generally addressed to them! The high iron gate had locked them in, shutting out all hope; and they could scarcely think to leave the house any more before they were carried to a pauper's grave.

After a while they were summoned to the master's room, where they did not stay many minutes, questioned by this official, whose heart had grown hard in his employment, witnessing, as he did, almost similar scenes every week. He sent a woman with them to show them their separate apartments—yes, dear reader, their separate apartments! They had lived together as man and wife upwards of forty years; and now, when they really need each other's sympathy most, when poverty has come upon them like an armed man, and they have to lay by their working tools and succumb to the workhouse, they are to be severed from each other. Heaven will surely, sooner or later, avenge this great insult against His high command. How would the squire, or the parson, or the burly magistrate, appreciate such a disaster brought upon themselves? And is not the heart of the poor man as sensitive as the heart of the rich? Shame on Christian England to

sanction such a sin! How long will those who sit in the high places of the earth wilfully shut their eyes and ears to the wrongs of the poor? O! merciful Father, how long, how long?

The boy was taken to the school; and the woman put Ally and Dick through a long passage, until they came to a door in the wall where they must part. Dick whispered to Ally about God being in the workhouse as well as outside, took her two hands in his, and they kissed each other solemnly as if they were about to die. Thus they were cruelly parted! Think, dear reader, of the keen poignant grief these two poor old hearts endured, not only for the moment, but for days and months afterwards, and cry shame! shame on such an unchristian system as this. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Yes, vengeance is His, and it will come with arrows of fire on His foes—yes, yes! with arrows of fire on those who thus separate affection and age.

Blindness, in part, possesses the rulers of the land. It is barbarous enough to separate younger couples; but the aged should surely be left to succour and befriend one another. No face would beam so kindly upon Dick as Ally's, not even the parson's, or the lady visitor's with the Bible and religious tracts in her hand; and no voice would soothe him in his sorrow like the voice which murmured music in his home for more than forty years. And now, though within the same grim building, with the same roof over their head, and the great iron gate shutting them in, they could not see each other, or seldom send a loving message to cheer their hearts. Shall we say that the pressure of this loneliness, though surrounded with many as old as themselves, lying still and stupid with the life crushed out of them, caused them often to wet their pillows with their tears? Could not some distinction be made in the quiet, honest, struggling poor, who, through sickness or disaster, come to the workhouse, and the spendthrift and the idle, the despiser and the drunkard, who carve their own way to the poorhouse wards? Should not this question be seriously considered?

But Ally and Dick did not end their days in the workhouse. A year or two passed, and then came a change. A

gentleman, who had just returned from Australia, visited the Union wards. He had read of reclaiming the waste lands of the United Kingdom, and he felt determined to try. He wanted a strong boy to assist in the work of his house and farm-yard, and the guardians had recommended him to look through the poorhouse. He was much struck by the boy brought there by Ally and Dick. He inquired his name, how long he had been in the house, and what they knew about him. The Union master referred him to the old people, saying he was brought in by them. Ally and Dick were called into the office, where also sat the stranger. They were closely questioned, standing all the while—for perhaps it is not fashionable to offer a pauper a chair! Ally was the principal speaker, and she faithfully told the stranger how she had found the child sitting on a bank by the wayside—how she had brought him home, much to the satisfaction of her old man, placed him on their dead child's cricket, and fed him with their humble fare—how he lived with them until the barm business failed, and she had injured her ancle in the cart-rut—how they pledged and sold their household items one by one, until there was no hope left, and they had to come into the workhouse.

"But," inquired the stranger, seeming a little excited, "had you no clue to the boy's name?"

Then Ally told him of the name they had found inside on the lining of his little coat, which she still preserved in a small box in her pocket, the only memento of what they once possessed. She drew it forth, and presented it to the stranger. He took it from her; and on reading it a great trembling seized him, so that he nearly let it fall from his hand. He glanced at the boy, at Ally and Dick, and sinking into the chair next him, he exclaimed:

"O merciful Father, how wonderful are Thy works and ways! yea, they are past finding out. This boy, my good people, is my own son. When we were on our way to the sea-port for embarkation, we stopped at a little village for refreshment; and on leaving it, our Willie was missing. We searched here and there, and paid others for doing so, but the boy could not be found. As the ship would sail at a certain date, and our passage-money being paid, we had to

hurry on with heavy hearts, hoping some one would find him and send him after us. But the ship weighed anchor, our tears fell for Willie Affmott ; and by and bye we landed on a foreign shore without him. But he was seldom out of our thoughts ; night and day, and day and night, we thought of our lost boy. And when prosperity came, and our corn and wine increased, the remembrance of him was like bitters in our cup. And now he is ours again, thus strangely restored to us ! How will his mother rejoice when I lead him back to her arms, who has shed more tears for her Willie than it is possible to number ! Come, Willie, come, my boy, and leave the workhouse for a home where comfort and love sit hand in hand. And you who so lovingly nurtured our child in his misery shall not be forgotten."

So Willie went away with his father, Eustace Affmott ; and that it was a happy meeting for him and his mother, the reader can well imagine. In a day or two afterwards a carriage drove up to the workhouse gate, and Ally and Dick Ardwick stepped into it, and were driven to a pretty little cottage not far from Gull Creek. Here they were comfortably supported until the end of their days, with no further dread of the "house," often looking through their rose-surrounded window on the newly-reclaimed meadows added ever and anon to Eustace Affmott's farm. Their cheerfully-given cup of cold water had not lost its reward.

SAMUEL SOUND'S SUCCESS.

SAMUEL Sound was a young man, with no helps upon which to lean for a livelihood, and with no prospect of improving his condition in life save his own two hands, and they were strong ones ; so he determined to use them to an honest advantage. We may as well at once inform the reader that Samuel's father was a drunkard. The love of drink was a great fire within him, which burnt all the finer feelings of his soul into cinders. For drink, he bartered his health, his home, his reputation, his friends, his wife, his children, his clothes,

his credit, his land, his love, his tools, his trust, his faith, his friendship, his manhood, his Maker, his body, his soul. Hour after hour at the public-house! hour after hour at the fire-water! His farm was neglected; his cattle strayed, were impounded, and irrecoverably lost; his sheep were diseased, and died; his hedges were broken, his outhouses ruined, his dwelling-room leaky, his window-frames rotten, his door unhinged! Hour after hour at the public-house! hour after hour at the fire-water! His wife wept, and waited, and wept again; grew paler, and thinner, and more ragged still; while her step was feebler than a child's, and her voice like the chirrup of a forsaken bird; but what cared he? Hour after hour at the public-house! hour after hour at the fire-water! Hot tears from the sunken eyes of her he had sworn to cherish stayed him not; sighs by the fireless hearth from babes on whose cheeks the roses of beauty were fading, where Famine had fixed his fleshless fangs, and hunger gleams from glassy eyes were too plainly visible, checked not the raging spirit within him, nor stayed his feet one moment from the way of wrong. And when death came on a night of frost, when darkness was made more dark by the drifting snow as fine as powder, and the tempest travelled with greater fury than it was wont, and took her from her bed of poverty, to dwell for ever in a land of love, with beings whose robes were spotless white, and crystal rivers gladdened green valleys, deliciously full of unfading flowers, he still sang at the public-houses and lifted the burning liquid to his lips. The funeral took place without him, for he was wedded to his cups, and his son Samuel was the only real mourner. When the cold clods fell upon his mother's coffin, he lifted his heart to Heaven and prayed to be kept from the great sin of drunkenness; and that earnest prayer was answered.

Still his wretched father drank, leaving the boy to shift for himself—to beg, or starve, or steal! Many a day has he gone without his dinner, and many a night has he retired to his poor bed hungry, and cried himself to sleep. The sound of his father's heavy footstep on the stair sent a pang through his young heart, like poison; and he trembled in every limb at the voice that should have cheered him like music. O shame! shame! unworthy the name of father, and fully entitled to

that of brute. Would it be any wonder if a child so shamefully neglected should grow up to be a curse to society and a blot upon his race? But there is a gentle spirit abroad in the universe, whose milder impulses the boy obeyed. When the gnawings of hunger almost tempted him to steal, this gentle monitor seemed to draw his hand away; and when his feet were almost turned into the way of wrong, this loving attendant kept them back. His mother's voice was with him, and her teachings filled his soul.

There was a fair at the great village, a roaring, ramping fair. Merry Andrew was on the platform, Punch and Judy in the square, shows upon the green, stalls of sweetmeats and gingerbread in long rows, flags flying at public-house doors, a quack doctor by the market-house steps, blind fiddlers led by dogs, with little begging cans in their mouths, boys and girls rich in halfpence, who should have been home with their mothers, young men and maidens learning how to woo, and old men and women anxious to "see the fun." Samuel's father was there, the merriest of the merry, drinking with greater avidity than aforetime. The sun sank in a sea of glory, and the moon came up from her bower of beauty, full and pale, hallowing the earth with her loveliness. But what cared he for the setting sun or the rising moon? Drink was everything to him, and he drank like a madman. Midnight came, and the din of the fair had a little subsided. Punch and Judy were stretched on their couches; Merry Andrew had retired, fagged and foolish, behind the scenes; the quack doctor had left his stand, and was counting his gains, with an irreverent chuckle, over a glass of brandy-and-water in the little bar parlour, the most consummate sneak in the whole throng. The gay youth on stilts had dropped down to a level with his fellows; and the great fat giantess, whom any booby might see for a penny, was deeply discussing a mutton chop.

And now it is morning. Samuel Sound is stretched upon the straw mattress, half asleep, listening now and then for the entrance of his father; but no father comes. He rises, and eats his only crust, with a drop of cold water, thinks of the Union, and wonders if they are better off there, listens again for his father's footfall—but no father comes. A neighbour employs him to hold his horse, gives him a penny, and says he

shall require his services to-morrow. He buys a loaf, eats it dry, waits, watches, listens for his father; but no father comes. Weeks, months, years pass; the boy has regular employment, is steady and respected, has good food and clothing, has taught himself to read and write, and bids fair to be prosperous—yet he has never heard of his father! Nor was he heard of after that night at the fair. The last that was seen of him, he was in company with a strange-looking fiddler, who was scraping away on his violin, sitting on the end of a beer-barrel, with the drunken man before him, attempting to dance. It was noticed, too, that his fiddle twanged considerably, and sparks of fire seemed often emitted from the bow. In the morning both the fiddler and the dancer were gone, and were never heard of afterwards.

When our story commences, as we have before intimated, Samuel Sound was a young man. His father's farm had been untilled for a long period, so that the fields looked like small gorse crofts. Samuel still resided there, in the back kitchen, which was less exposed to the weather than the front of the apartment. After the mysterious disappearance of his father, his aunt came to live with him; and they managed, what with her spinning and knitting, and his odd jobs, &c., among the neighbours, to get on for some time together. But though the farm might now be called his own, yet very little was made of it, except a few shillings annually for the sour summer grass. Often did the boy wish that it was in his power to do something on the land; but what prospect had he, the son of a drunkard, left on the wide world with no road to fortune but his own two hands, of accomplishing such a task? But was he not getting older, and stronger, and more responsible? One night he consulted his aunt about it, and she encouraged him in his enterprise; and in a few days his plans were arranged, his proceedings marked out, and his mind quite fixed.

And so Samuel Sound began to work, with no other hand to help him, and no capital to force him on. But "little by little" was his motto. He repaired the roof of the house, mended the door, and fixed the window; he plastered the broken places in the wall, patched the floor, and gave the whole building a coating of white-wash. He cleared the garden paths, trimmed the trees and fences, uprooted the brambles and weeds, and burnt them all in the little meadow.

This took him some time, and then he came out upon the farm. What a task lay before him, looking worse, perhaps, than it really was! Brier and bramble, brush and brake everywhere! "Little by little" was his daily text. He struck into the brushwood right and left, hacking and hewing like a hero; and the thorn and the thicket fell before his hook, like grass before the scythe of the mower. Furze and bramble lay in heaps, until the crackling fire consumed them, the smoke rolling away in volumes; and the ashes were strewn over the field for manure. "Little by little" was Samuel's creed, which lays a tribute on sea and land. An iron plough and two red horses were lent him by a neighbour, with the understanding that payment should come with the first crop. How wonderfully the red horses pulled the iron plough through the root-lined ground! How grandly they swept round the curves, and turned the rich mould into regular furrows! Then the rough roots and sods were burnt in large piles, which made great furious fires in the moonlight, scaring the owl from the ivy, so that his tu-whit, tu-whoo, was heard in another locality. The harrow did its work, the sower scattered the seed, which was supplied by the same farmer, on the same terms as the iron plough and the red horses, out of respect for the honesty and perseverance of Samuel Sound. His aunt helped him when and where she could, picking up the roots and grass, and conveying them to the heaps, bringing his lunch to him, with water from the well under the trees, and raking the corners which the harrow would not reach.

At last the field was quite finished, and the increase was left with HIM. The dew fell, the early rain descended, the sun shone, the blade appeared, then the ear, and then the full corn, rich, rustling, and heavy. Yes! it was a good crop. Samuel Sound cut it himself, whistling as he did so to the blackbird that sang on the hedge. It was threshed, winnowed, and in due time the grain was sold, reserving seed for the next season; and the profit surprised him. The horse-hire was paid, and also the seed-account; and Samuel Sound was, as they say, set upon his legs. He then turned his attention to the remaining portion of the farm, clearing, grubbing, and cleansing. chiefly doing it all with his own two hands, living on coarse but wholesome food, drinking nothing stronger than coffee, or cocoa, rising early in the morning, when Sloth was

stretched on his down, and plying his agricultural tools with the song of hope on his lips. And season after season found an additional pasture ploughed and tilled.

One evening, in summer, he was working in the under field. He had nearly finished it, and it was the last he had to clear. The farm was now one of the best in the neighbourhood. He had a horse of his own, and cows and sheep were in the green pastures. Samuel Sound was a prosperous man. But it was all due to his untiring perseverance, and the blessing of Providence. He had nearly finished for the night, and was about to put his tools upon his shoulder and walk home, when a respectable-looking man rode up to the gate. He hastened over to him, when the rider asked if his name was Samuel Sound? He answered yes, and invited him into the house. The rider dismounted; and he was indeed a fine powerful man. His countenance was open and frank, his eyes bright and intelligent, his forehead high, and his thick bushy hair beginning to turn grey. He was slightly sunburnt, as if accustomed to travel. He eagerly glanced at the house, from the basement to the roof,and from the eaves to the chimney-tops. He entered, and his eyes flashed on the walls, the ceiling, the few pictures, and the stove. He fell into a chair, moaned, wiped the tears from his face, gazed at the aunt, looked at Samuel Sound, rose up, walked to the window, pulled out his handkerchief, fell into the chair again, and. fixing his piercing black eyes upon the young man, exclaimed in a voice which almost shook the habitation, "Samuel Sound, I am your drunken father!"

Reader, do not leave your seat, or ring the bell, or close the door. This fine-looking horseman was no Knight of the Round Table, or elfin of the bog, but the veritable whisked-away father of Samuel Sound. And was he really whisked away by the furious fiddler on that night of the fair? Read on, and draw your own conclusion. The violin ceased, the fiddler roared, the dancer swooned, and fell under the table; and when consciousness returned, he was on board a ship, with the blue waters of the Mediterranean all around him. The grim fiddler was there, still playing lustily upon a cask. He was the victim of the press-gang, thus strangely bereft of his liberty. He wisely kept himself still for several days, manifested no excitement; and then stalked forth the storm. The heavens

were red with vengeance, and the troubled sea rose up to meet the watery moon. The ship sank; and he was the only one saved—cast ashore upon a lonely island. Here he sustained himself by singular exertion, month by month and year by year, until he was taken off, at last, by a merchant vessel. In one of the caverns of the island he had discovered much treasure, in gold, and silver, and precious stones, all of which he had secured, and which was enough to make him and his son independent for life. Of course, he drank only water, and had learnt to value it more than any malt liquor. Taking his son Samuel by the hand, he shouted rather than sobbed, "Forgive me, my son, for my great cruelty! And thou, who art in heaven, the angel of my life, on whom I suffered the rains of sorrow to fall, and the chill winds of neglect to beat so unkindly, forgive me, O forgive me also! And Thou, great King, against whom I have sinned so long, blot out my transgressions! I have done with the beer-cup for ever."

Listen! the bells are pealing from the village tower, rising and falling over the cornfields in waves of melody. Mirth is abroad, and Joy has on his holiday vest. A new porch is added to the farm-house, remarkable for its show of roses and woodbine. The roof is newly thatched, and the shaven eaves look lovely. Aunt is giving directions to the servant how to cook a great fat turkey, whilst she arranges some choice flowers for the snug little parlour. A small wing is added to the building, for the special comfort of the happy reclaimed father. Samuel is now the owner and manager of the farm, as his per gift; and when the strange horseman is dead, the treasures of the cave are his also. But he rests not upon this showy perspective, but simply on his own two hands, which have made him what he is.

Still the bells peal, and the echoes roll in swelling volumes up the hill-sides, and then down into the deep dales, ever repeating on their musical march, "Samuel Sound is bringing home his bride!"

PETER PLARE'S COTTAGE.

The cottage was an old one, and had been old for a considerable period. Great patches were nailed to the door and windows, and the walls were sadly rent. The thatch-roof was very ragged, and repaired here and there with banks of coarse reed, giving it a very uneven appearance. The interior had also an antique look, though it was tidy and clean, which was entirely owing to Peggy Plare's thrift and industry. It consisted of two down-stairs rooms, and a similar number up-stairs. The up-stairs apartments seemed as if they were at perpetual variance, and were continually lunging at each other. How very full they looked of blotches and bruises! There was no ceiling overhead, and the unplaned beams were all visible, and even the rotting rafters, which appeared in the dusky twilight and solemn moonlight as if they were full of curious eyes, opening and shutting, and shutting and opening. Some of the roof woodwork was broken; and it required no very vivid imagination from the sleepless occupant of the couch to convert the long splinters and red oozes into the shattered limbs of conquered goblins dangling in the dark. Through sundry holes in the reed the stars could be seen on a clear night, in all their twinkling triumph, even the stately Orion with his belt and sword. But woe to the inmates when the winds were out! Wisps of straw, rolled up and thrust into the crevices, failed to rebuff their fury, which smote them like the woodman smiting the ash. And was this miserable cage the abode of any of England's excellent workmen? Yes; an honest agricultural labourer dwelt here, with his wife and four children. And this is not so unhealthy, even, and fever-feeding, as hundreds of squalid homes in our over-crowded cities, where so many families are huddled together in one house, to the injury of morals, and the increase of crime and disease. A grand little fortune it may be to the landlords, but a foul curse and blot upon the land. Is not the time fully ripe for the legislation of the realm to hasten to redress this hugely-increasing evil?

Peter Plare was Squire Stronghand's woodman; and this

tumble-down house was considered by his master as an addition to his weekly wages. He had been living in it ever since his marriage, and had repaired it himself every autumn; but his master's temper was inclined to be fiery, and he knew not how soon he might be dismissed without a moment's warning; for his servants were held in his estimation on a par with, or a little below, the cattle of the field. The former tenant had much injured the cottage by the explosion of a bag of gunpowder, through which the window was blown out, and the eastern end of the house rent open from the foundation to the chimney-top. It was in this state when Peter Plare entered it, and so it had remained, with small annual patchings, ever since. When it rained out of doors, it rained in. When the wind was on the mountains, and the storm-monarch drove his car upon the clouds, rattling louder and louder through the welkin, it was wind also in Peter Plare's kitchen. When it was snow on the steeps, and by the brooks, and on the naked rocks of the wilderness, it was snow on his bed-coverlet, and on the stones of his hearth. When it was frost in the furrow of the farm, on the window-pane, and the walk to the cow-shed, and on the lonely pool of the moorland, it was frost also on the floor of the woodman's home. And when it was hail on the heath, when the blast was bitter, and the hurricane was high, it was hail in the hollow home of Peter Plare. Surely the law-framers of the land should spare a few moments from earnest debate, to secure for England's honourable labourer a healthy, happy, compact, and proper dwelling-place!

March was nearing its end, losing none of its blustering characteristics. It was a dry, choking wind—blasting, blighting, bending. If a cowslip looked up for an instant, in a warm gush of treacherous sunshine, the next moment found it a corpse at the feet of the roaring foe. Young buds were blown down and tossed into the high road, or on the scatttered grass of the pasture, shining in the sunlight like a shower of pearls. This evening the wind freshened, veering northward, rolling over the land in great noisy billows. Peter Plare had just returned from his wood-cutting, and was sitting down to his supper. Peggy was attending to him, pouring out his coffee, handing the bread and butter, and smiling cheerfully, as a working man's wife should. Presently, a great wave of wind

came tumbling across the common, rattling as it rolled, and smote the four corners of the house with terrible anger, so that its clay walls, rafters and roof, shook as if in anguish; and the patched-up door opened and shut, and shut and opened, with a great clang. They all rushed out to see the reed flying from the roof, like foam from the crests of the waves: nor were they an instant too soon, for another merciless wind-surge took the house in its monstrous arms and overturned it like a nutshell. They cried when they beheld the ruin; for their little furniture was destroyed, and they were thus tossed naked upon the world.

That night they slept in a barn, and the next, and the next. Then the neighbours were kind to them; trifles of furniture came, as well as bedding and bread. Squire Stronghand heard of the disaster and their distress, and appeared to pity them; though he never sent them any immediate relief. He promised Peter Plare, however, that if he wished to rebuild the cottage, he was quite at liberty; and that a few acres of waste land which lay around it should be his at the smallest rental. Peter thought much about it, and talked much about it with his wife, Peggy; but what could they do with no money, and nothing but their own empty hands? They could but try; and to try they were determined. And nothing is too hard for him who has a will to persevere. Step by step, and difficulties give way which before appeared insurmountable. The surface of the great globe is already nearly ringed with iron; and the next century may witness the steam-horse rushing hither and thither under the ocean. How much better would it be to expend capital in this way, or in reclaiming the doleful deserts of the earth, than in the horrid wreck, and waste and wickedness of war!

Peter Plare was a member of a little church in the village, and no sooner was his trouble made known than relief was promptly sent, out of sympathy for the sufferers. And this was a great joy to the society, inasmuch as they felt they were then imitating the example of Him who, when on earth, fed the hungry, comforted the sorrowful, sympathized with the poor, and bound up the bruised and broken in garments richly perfumed with the balm of His love. This cheered the bleeding heart of Peter, and the heart of his wife and their little ones, more than the grandest homily from the

most profusely-gemmed pulpit, or the empty good wishes of a hundred squires. "How much dost thou feel for her?" said the grand old Quaker to his importunate neighbour, when solicited to help a poor widow in distress, "how much dost thou feel for this disconsolate creature? I have already felt *five pounds* for her!" Well done, thou noble-minded follower of thy Master! Thine is the genuine charity of the Gospel, which suffereth long, and is kind. And this is the only principle which will convert the world. Not like so many of the swells of the earth, enmantled in broadcloth, with gold rings and glittering chains, eye-glasses, and ivory-headed canes, who, on hearing of the misery of the worn-out labourer, rattle their metal links with their delicate fingers, and, squinting through their sight-helpers, lisp languidly forth, "I am sorry, really sorry for it!" Let us not be deceived; the poor man's help lies in himself, in honesty and sobriety, and the muscles of his own strong arm.

And so they commenced to work in earnest, with a little help from neighbours and old acquaintances. Another site was chosen for the cottage, not far from a gentle brook which went babbling down the dell. The foundation was soon dug out, the first stone laid, the first daub of mortar took its place, and the walls rose slowly day by day. Peggy cheerfully helped, and the children, and occasionally some of their kindest kindred. The work was rough, but strong; and willing hearts and hands soon produced an edifice to command the warmest commendation. Before August came with the corn-sheaf and the fruit-laden bough, Peter Plare and his family were once more in their own dwelling. How happy they were we shall not attempt to describe, but let Peter, who is sitting at the end of the table, with the open Bible before him, tell his own story. Peggy is sewing busily on a new waistcoat for her husband, and the children are all in their wonted places, with their bright eyes fixed upon their father.

"I thought, Peggy," said Peter, "on that wild night when the March wind upset our house, which fell on our bits of furniture, so that we barely escaped with our lives, that it was all over with us. Your tears, Peggy, went to my heart, and the sighs of the children cut me like swords. All our little items were crushed to dust, the savings and addings of so many years! And it was gone, too, in a moment, as if

eaten up by fire. What a night that was in the barn, when the wind whistled, and the rafters creaked! how our calamity darkened as the cold seized us, and we silently shivered among the hay! All the gates of escape seemed closed; and the Union workhouse rose before us. Thou rememberest how we prayed when the children slept, covered over with old sacks and coarse grass, unconscious, for a time, of our poverty and woe, and wandering in a land where the dells are full of visions, and the landscapes glow with dreams? Did we not liken them to the "Children in the Wood," which the dear little robins so carefully covered with leaves? Thou knowest how we prayed, Peggy, till the whole barn seemed full of light, and a voice sounded in our hearts, "Fear not, for I am with you!" And He was with us, to lift up our hands and to cause our feet not to stumble. Squire Stronghand's heart softened towards us, so that he has spoken to me more kindly, and he is intending to drive over to see us next week. Yes, He helped us, Peggy, so that willing hands came to our aid, strength was given in our weakness, stone was added to stone, and rafter to rafter, until a home was ours once more. And here we are, Peggy, in our little humble dwelling, happier, I ween, than many an emperor. Our garden fence is nearly finished, and we have cabbages and turnips planted already, which are doing exceedingly well. Next month we hope to commence on a piece of the waste; and by perseverance this, too, shall yield us its increase. I begin to see things clearer of late. Providence is not going to rain down wheat from the clouds, or send us leeks and onions in the bubbles of the brook; but we must use the lawful means to procure them, and His blessing will then be given. I fully believe the old adage, 'He who sows his land trusts in God.' We will sow our land one day, Peggy, and the children shall help us, trusting in Him for the increase; and by-and-by the sound of the scythe shall be heard in our meadows, and the echo of the flail from the barn floor. How will we rejoice when the cow chews her cud in the clover, and the young lambs dance among the daisies! 'Tis coming, Peggy, 'tis coming, as sure as I am sitting in this corner. Get the tea-things, wife. Hark how the kettle sings upon the new hob, filling my soul with sweeter music than all the battle-fifes or war-drums that were ever beaten. Rosy,

Dicky, make haste, take your places in the window. Tea, tea, tea!"

And Squire Stronghand came, sure enough, and was exceedingly pleased, and not a little surprised, with all that Peter Plare had accomplished. He said it was a great credit to any man; and he should henceforth look upon the honest labourer in a different light. He was pleased also to hear that Peter was about to begin to cultivate the portion of waste allotted him with his own hands, and he trusted that hundreds of working men throughout the kingdom would do the same. He furthermore promised Peter a prize when the first meadow was enclosed. As he rode away in the twilight, when a solemn silence fell upon the forest, stole into the creeks, and glided over the glow-worm glens, he whispered more than once to the monitor within him, "Yes, yes; God hath made of one blood all nations of men."

MARGARET MACE AND THE LOST CHILD.

MARGARET MACE was a widow, very steady and industrious. She had lived with a husband for twenty years, and then he was suddenly taken from her. He had long been connected with a sick club in the neighbourhood, paying to it month after month, often making the greatest sacrifices to do so, going without a great coat in winter, or boots in summer; and often, to keep clear of arrears, or the black book, taking dry bread and unsugared coffee for breakfast, and the smallest shred of meat for dinner. Yet, notwithstanding, when old age and weakness were coming upon him, and he thought he might possibly draw from its sources what he had the greatest right to obtain, the staff upon which he leant gave way, and he was obliged to limp across the world without hope. "Why?" does the reader ask? Fraud had been practised by some of its officers, the funds became exhausted, it could not survive the crisis, coming down with a sudden gloom; and the sick club was a black bye-word. John Mace was taken ill in the potato-field, and carried to his house in his master's cart. They sent for a doctor, but he lived four miles away, and when he arrived it was too

late. The worn-out labourer lasted only a few hours, and then expired, his last words being, "O, Margaret! the club, the club!" They buried him in great haste, with scarcely a single person at the funeral; and the only mark even now upon his grave is a great clump of weeds.

Our story opens in the winter, when the frost is out, when the sky is cold, and the winds make hollow music through the leafless trees; when great fires crackle in the mansions of the rich, and the pictured halls of the noble, and when those who go abroad wrap themselves in furs, cloaks, and coats to the very chin. Yes, all who have cloaks or coats wear them; but this great luxury is denied to many. It is denied to Margaret Mace, as she makes her way through the driving sleet, wrapped in a thin, tattered shawl, toward the squire's residence in the park. Every gust, laden with ice, seems to be more cruel than the last, and she shivers more and more as she drags her worn frame along. She passes the park-gate, and it is a little less fierce here under the trees, though they moan and roar like living monsters, and sway forwards and backwards as if in agony. And now she is at the door of the great house, and her heart palpitates considerably as her fingers touch the bell-handle. But she pulls it at last, though in so doing her feet almost slide upon the slippery snow. As her hand falls like a stone from the knob, she turns her eyes upwards to the wintry sky, and a prayer rises from the secret cells of her soul, "O Lord, protect the widow!"

But why is Margaret Mace here at this inclement time? Is she a beggar in pursuit of alms, passing from door to door? Do the relatives of her dead husband, as menials, reside in this mansion, and can she reasonably hope for any succour from them? Has she lost her way on the wintry wold, and does she creep up to the rich man's gate to request the servants to set her right? No, no; this is not the widow's errand at this time. This is the abode of the master for whom her honest husband worked for more than twenty years. They had lived in his cottage ever since they were married, and John Mace had died under its roof. But Margaret had been poorly lately, and could not go out to work as heretofore: consequently the rent had not been paid for the last few months, and the squire's steward had sent her a written warn-

ing to leave. This cruel blow had stunned her; and she was now standing before the door of the mansion, to plead her cause with simple eloquence, and, if she failed, to go into the Union.

The squire was in his library when the servant entered, and told him that a poor woman was at the door who wished to speak to him. "Let her come into the side room," said he. Margaret Mace came in, looking disconsolate enough; and presently the squire opened the door, and spoke to her. "Well, my good woman, and what do you want?" O, how stout he was! how rosy! and how well-pleased with himself, in contrast with the poor widow in dripping weeds! Her pale face looked sadder even than it was wont. She made her best bow to the great man, and then with faltering lips repeated her story, how her husband was dead, and had worked with the squire more than twenty years,—how sickness came suddenly upon her like a hungry wolf, and left her with an empty cupboard and a naked room,—how the silver wasted from the old tin teapot, until the last shilling was handed over for rent a short time before,—how her arrears had been swelling ever since, till now the steward had sent her a written message to leave; and she had no place of refuge but the Union. Her tears fell fast, and she entreated the squire to think of her departed husband, to remember his strict integrity, his faithful service, and his useful labours for so long a period; that he ever loved his master, and did for him to the best of his ability from Monday morning until Saturday night, when he brought his wages home, never spending a penny in the public-house. She reminded him of his cheerful disposition, never grumbling at his lot, nor envying the rich in their carpeted abodes, how he sang at the plough and whistled at the wain, plodding on with hopefulness until the sick club became a ruin, and then his countenance fell. She spoke of his love for the Bible, which he statedly read in his closet, of his regular attendance at church, and his veneration for his superiors and the ministers of the Lord. She begged him to remember all this, and, for the sake of the departed, who served him so lovingly and so long, and who was now watching him from his place of rest in the sky, to revoke the decree of his steward, and let her remain

in her cottage a few weeks longer, when something more cheering might transpire.

Whilst Margaret Mace was speaking, the squire was pacing his room; and when she had finished, he answered, still walking as before, "I see no chance, if you are left in the cottage, of any change for the better in your circumstances, and therefore conclude that matters must wax worse. I always leave this business with my steward; so you may go." Having said this, he rang the bell for the servant; and poor Margaret was soon in the snow. The squire went back to his library and fire, his wine and rich cake; the widow to battle with the uncurbed winds of winter, and the more terrible tempest in her own mind. "Woe! woe!" sighed the great trees in the park, "Woe! woe!" sobbed the river in the hollow, and "Woe! woe!" thundered the cloudy heavens overhead. The conflict in her breast was too severe for her feeble frame; she staggered, and fell upon the sleet.

Just then a horseman came up the park-road, and seeing the poor woman he alighted, and spoke to her, but she made no reply. He then put spurs to his steed, and dashed up to the hall. The servants recollected the poor woman, and ran to her assistance. She was soon brought in, restoratives applied, and then consciousness returned. A little warm tea was given her, which she drank with eagerness, and was soon able to converse. The rider came into the kitchen, followed by the squire. Margaret was then able to talk, and the horseman, who was the squire's son, asked her her name. When she told him he started, and drew his father aside. They soon returned, bidding the servants take particular care of Margaret, and put her to bed. "To-morrow," said the squire's son, "I have a communication to make to you."

Margaret Mace slept through the night, and in the morning she took breakfast in the kitchen with the servants. Her clothes had been washed and dried, so that now she looked tolerably cheerful. In a short time she was called into the library, where sat the squire and his son. They bade her be seated, and then the son told the story. He had been travelling on the banks of the river Ohio, and, whilst there, had come upon a settler's cabin. It was occupied by one man only, with whom he remained several weeks. He was very free, kind, and communicative. He had come into the neigh-

bourhood a poor man, had turned his attention to farming, had reclaimed many large plots from the jungle, and was then able to count his hundreds of dollars. Whilst the squire's son remained with the old man they ate and drank the best, and when he was leaving he requested that he would visit him again. After exploring the river and its environs for some months, he again returned to the cabin, and found the old man very low. In conversing with him he said that he was called Matthew Marks, and that he had an only sister in England. Here Margaret Mace opened her eyes very wide, and fixed them upon the speaker. "Had you a brother of that name?" asked he; and she answered "Yes." "Well, then," said the squire's son, "I may as well tell you all. The person I then saw ill in the cabin by the river Ohio was your brother Matthew. I remained with him until he died, and saw him buried under a maple. But before he expired, he gave me his dying charge—to turn all his stock into cash, and convey it to you. I disposed of his property to great advantage; and have now the pleasure of performing his last request in the presence of my father and his servants." And he placed the heavy bag of coin in her hands. This sudden transit from darkness to light, from want to plenty, almost overcame her, and tears ran down her face.

A servant accompanied her home; and in a few days there were more comforts in Margaret Mace's dwelling than she had enjoyed for many months. The news soon spread; and it is singular what the effect of her good fortune was upon her neighbours. Congratulations reached her from various sources; and some who would scarcely nod their heads at her before, now heartily shook hands with her at every opportunity. Invitations were sent her to take tea at residences, the inside of which she had never seen, and even the squire deigned once to stop at her door. The draper, grocer, and butcher lifted their hats to her on the road, and the prim little milliner sent her her dainty card. Margaret received all this mock homage very humbly and respectfully, still keeping herself in her proper sphere, and sitting in thankfulness at her own hearth.

At the close of a leaden winter's day, when the clouds hung out their blackest palls, and a great heavy sombre shadow filled the hemisphere, when Margaret had barred up

for the night, and had just trimmed her lamp and placed it upon the board, she fancied she heard a feeble sound at the door. She dropped her sewing, and listened; and the little sound came again in the mutterings of the blast. And yet again the sounds came, fainter and more plaintive than before. She speaks—"Who is there?"—but no answer; only that very little cry. Then she opens the door; and standing in the cold sleet is a little boy, some three years old. His cap is gone, his dress is torn, and his feet are bare. But the solemn, mysterious meaning of the child's face—who can describe that? "Lost, or left!" was the widow's first thought; and it was a true one. She took the little one into the warmth of her home, washed his face and hands, pulled off his wet garments, wrapped him in a woollen shawl, gave him some bread and milk, and laid him upon her own bed. While the boy slept, she watched his face and prayed to the Lord for guidance. Weeks, months passed. She sent word hither and thither, but no inquiries came after the child. Advices were plentiful: "Turn him out of doors," said the squire; "Put him in the Union," said the parson. "No, no!" exclaimed Margarat Mace; "The Lord has sent him to me, and he is mine. While I have a crust of bread I will share it with the boy." And thus the lost child became her adopted son. She taught him to read, to repeat "Our Father," and to call her mother. And though year after year passed away, and the child grew into boyhood and youth, no inquiries ever came for him, and his birth remained a mystery.

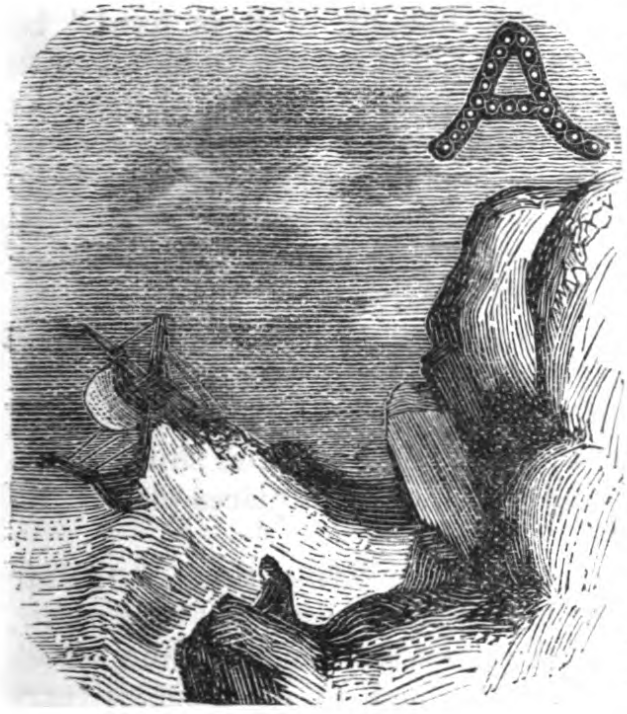
She called him John, after her husband; and when he entered into manhood, he turned his attention to farming. Much of the land in the outskirts of the village was waste; and with the scientific knowledge which he had acquired respecting the cultivation of ground, he believed that, with a small outlay of manure, he could soon render the moorland productive, and, as it is commonly called, a paying affair. This he suggested to Margaret Mace, saying, if she would advance a little capital, he would try; and they would be joint partakers of the gains. The bag was then taken from its hiding-place, and twenty-five pieces counted upon the board; when the precious treasure was secreted as before. John procured a portion of waste land, and worked on it with a will in his own way. The result was astounding; every

year was an advance upon its predecessor, until the farm was a model for agriculturists. The parson praised it, as he passed by on his fat horse, and marvelled at the fruits of industry spread before his eyes; and the squire pronounced it one of the greatest achievements in the neighbourhood.

We have only now to inform the reader that before Margaret Mace died she bequeathed her large bag of coin to her adopted son, who was quite a prosperous man. They kept a carriage and a footman; and John often drove his foster-mother into the green lanes of the country, and sometimes down as far as the sea, when the widow's heart would overflow with thankfulness. All letters addressed to him—and being Chairman of the Local Board, he gets large numbers from various places—are headed, "John Mace, Esq." The last bit of village gossip reports his approaching marriage with the daughter of a county magistrate.

And so let all the wild wastes of England be! where thorns and thistles now riot, may corn and clover flourish; and in the stagnant marshes, where pestilence and fever stalk in their masks of mud, and frogs and tadpoles join in concert to the sickly moon, may wine and milk and honey flow!

ANDREW ADE AND THE DIAL.



N old infirm man was Andrew Ade, and unable to walk without the aid of a stick. He had been the herdsman of Hayside for almost half a century and was well known in the neighbourhood for his uprightness of character. All buyers and sellers of farm stock loved to bargain with Andrew, who never asked but one price, and was never known to overreach a dealer. His

master had the greatest confidence in him, as year after year went by, bearing upon their azure wings the gravest lessons to mankind; and he has been frequently known to say that the honest servitude of his herdsman has been a little fortune to him. But the mill-wheel lasts not for ever; sun, wind, and water do their work, until at last it is cast aside as useless, and a new one revolves in its place. So it was with Andrew Ade. Feebleness overtook him, age confined him in its fetters, the frost of rheumatism was in his joints, his once quick step became tardy, and his eye became dim. His worth in days of old, and his great advantage to his employer, gradually faded away from the mind of his master, leaving a ragged skeleton in its stead, which grew more and more obnoxious as the old man's cough increased until the great landed proprieter could bear it no longer; and the dear old man was dismissed on a wild December day, without any thought of provision for the future. And such, alas! is life in its ever-varied phases.

And now it is December, gloomy and ghostly, with a great horror in the heavens and on the earth. A storm is up; and it is night before the hour. Andrew Ade is in his small cabin by the common, watching the flickering embers on the open hearth. His food is done, his fuel nearly exhausted, and to-morrow the Union is before him. Yes, the Union! and an iciness creeps over him at the thought. "It is hard," he sighed, "after all these years of faithful service, to be taken to the Union, and end my days in a paupers' ward. Liberty is sweet, O how sweet! and I would rather be here on a crust and a cup of tea, though the walls of the workhouse were built of gold. But if I must go, I must; and there is an end of it. His ways are past finding out, yes, past finding out, to whom I have long learnt to submit. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His. Well, well! the end cannot be far off, and I dare not forego my trust in my Master, though the road at present does seem dark. But when He says, 'Let there be light,' it comes shining into every obscure corner, making even the rough places plain. So I place my hand in His."

Meanwhile the storm increased, thundering through the air with a voice that shook the hills. The woods sent up a moan, and the sorrowing sound of the great sea came to him across the moors. The old house shook; and to his listening ears

it seemed as if armies upon armies of clanking warriors went marching by him. How the wind shrieked through the key-hole, roared in the chimney, rattled on the casement, and rolled in great roaring waves over the roof of his shed!

Andrew laid his last log upon the smouldering embers, and sat looking into the fire. What strange shapes seemed to flicker in the flames, and run along upon the red rods of wood, clad in garments of light! Here were blazing steeds, with nostrils emitting smoke; and there were shining ships in full sail over a swelling sea of glistering lava. Behind that fiery brand a group of sun-bright ladies walked in gilded slippers; and here a high-browed boy, with a fire-tuft in his cap, was trundling a burning hoop. He closed his eyes for a moment, and when he opened them, the face of his dead mother appeared in the smoke, smiling upon him as of old; but when he tried to speak, she was gone, and an old faithful defunct hound lifted its smoking head. Under an arch of blinking cinders passed and repassed the playmates of his youth; and in white wreaths of electric light rose and fell the gentle vision of one he loved. And then far back in the depths of the heat, a cold, grim building rose before him, where stiff iron railings stood motionless for ever, and on whose thick, ponderous doors, in huge flame-letters, he read, "No hope! no hope!" and he knew it was the Union. A great sigh from Andrew Ade's bosom broke the enchantment, and at the same instant there was a knock on the door.

Andrew opened it, and there stood a shivering man in the garb of a sailor. He had no hat on his head, or shoes on his feet; and he looked ready to fall with faintness. Andrew took his hand, and led him in by the fire; and when the chill had somewhat left him, he gave an account of himself. He was an Englishman, had been to the Colonies and elsewhere, amassed means, was returning to his native land as a sailor, and had only reached it to be wrecked on the coast. All day and all night the ship was harassed with the hurricane, driven like a chip upon the waters; and in the first streak of morning light she was dashed upon a flinty reef and sank like a rock of mineral. He believed that he was the only one saved, on a cask which floated near him. His hat was washed from his head, and the shoes from his feet; but he managed to scramble up the cliff and crawl across the common, and the first house

he found was the one in which he then sat, and he trusted the old man would have pity upon him.

"The Fates have driven you to a poor house," said Andrew, "a poor house indeed! However, it is better at any rate than the bottom of the ocean, especially on such a stormy night as the present; and I bid you welcome with all my heart. My bit of fire is all I have; my money is spent, my friends are gone, my food is finished, and there is nothing for me to-morrow but the workhouse. I am so sorry for you, poor stranger, that I cannot offer you any refreshment—no, not so much as a crust of bread! I have water in plenty—thank God for that!—as good as any in England. Come, sailor, take a draught."

The dripping mariner drank heartily, after which he inquired the distance to the nearest shop. Andrew told him. "I have money," said he, "in my belt, which I wore round my waist. Lend me your shoes and hat, old man, and I will get some food." Andrew took off his shoes, unhung his hat, and the sailor put them on, shut the door behind him, and went out in the wind. In a short time he returned, bringing with him bread, meat, eggs, sugar, tea, salt, pepper, butter, and a bit of cheese. These he heaped upon the table, telling the old man he was going again. This time he brought coals, tobacco, and two pipes. The kettle was soon singing, then the meat and eggs were fried; and they were quickly sitting down to a plentiful repast. Andrew Ade asked a blessing with tears upon his face; and whilst he partook of the good gifts of Providence, his eyes were often fixed upon the stranger, who thus so unexpectedly brought blessings to his board; and he wondered much whether he was a real man or an angel of the waters.

Their new pipes were now filled with tobacco; and they sat smoking, one on each side of the fireplace. The wrecked sailor asked Andrew his name and his occupation, and he told him. After a few weighty remarks on the unjustness of his master, he asked Andrew whether he had any relations abroad. Andrew told him that he had only one—a younger brother; and he supposed he was dead, as he had not heard of him for a number of years. He still possessed a miniature dial, which he presented to him on his departure; and Andrew drew it forth from his pocket. It was a rare piece of

workmanship, in a bright metal case, with the initials R. A. engraven on the back. The sailor took it, examined it, and seemed satisfied.

Puff, puff! on each side of the fireplace—puff, puff, puff! The smoke coiled upwards in curious wreaths, hanging to the rafters, shrouding the rough walls, draping the worm-worked beams, and even creeping through the wounded thatch. Puff, puff! on each side of the fireplace—puff, puff, puff! A calmness came down upon Andrew, such as he had not felt for many a day, and which it was puzzling to describe. In the cheering whiffs a more pleasant prospect seemed to await him, though he knew not under what sky. Still the calmness increased, and old Andrew was happy, with the angel of trust in his soul. The stranger eyed him affectionately from his chair, and once or twice seemed about to rise, and then as quickly sat him down again. Puff, puff! on each side of the fireplace—puff, puff, puff!

The stranger laid his pipe upon the mantel-piece, and taking a little book of poems from his pocket, handed it to Andrew, asking if he knew it. The old man put on his spectacles, opened it, shut it, turned it round, opened it again, when some writing on the fly-leaf caught his eye. He read it eagerly, spelling out some of the indistinct words, and when he came to his own autograph, exclaimed, "This is the little book which I gave to my younger brother on his departure! Can you tell me anything about him?" The sailor stood up, advanced towards him, grasped both his hands, and cried in a trembling voice, "Look into my face! look into my face! Andrew, I am he! your own lost brother, Robert Ade—lost, but found again. The world has treated you harshly, thrusting you from its embrace when you were most in need of its fostering care. Yes, Andrew, like dear old King Lear, you have felt the biting of the pitiless blast, and the blow of the great storm. Truly the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. I, too, have suffered wrong, and my steps have been tracked by misfortune; but cheer up, brother; the sea has not engulphed all, for I have enough gold in my belt to buy you a dinner for many a day. Cheer up, brother Andrew, cheer up, the darkness is departed!"

Long talked they into the night, until the rains abated and the winds had blown over. A cock crew from a neighbour-

ing barn, which was promptly answered by chanticleer from another farm-yard, and another and another in the long distance. Andrew donned his woollen nightcap, and wrapped himself in the blanket on his bed, falling asleep the very moment his heavy head touched the pillow. Robert Ade walked forth into the morning. The place was familiar to him ; but what a change ! The desert had become fruitful, and the dry land green with vegetation. In his youth it was a wilderness ; now the waste lands had become a garden. He hastened down to the beach, but could see nothing save a few fragments of the wreck ; and a great shout of praise for his deliverance went up to heaven.

Andrew Ade did not go into the workhouse. The traveller in the neighbourhood of Hayside, passing a pretty straw-thatched cottage in an orchard, sees an old man at the door sitting in the sun, whose hoary hairs are beautiful to behold, and, on inquiry, he finds that this is Andrew Ade. His old master sees him there as he passes by the house. Little children see him there, and watch at the gate for the apples which come bowling down the walk ; and how they clap their hands and thank the dear old man ! The robin redbreast sees him there, and the sparrows from the eaves, and regularly visit the shade of the laurel for their dinner of crumbs. The lame mendicant sees him there, and never holds out his palm to him for alms in vain. The rector sees him there, and warns him that the church doors are open for public worship at six o'clock. When the sun shines, and the air is quiet, he goes to his place of prayer ; but the shade of the sycamore is Andrew's temple, where the air is filled with the melody of wings.

Need the reader be told that this is the residence of Robert Ade, the shipwrecked brother, whom Providence sent so opportunely to the rescue of the worn-out labourer ? His productive enclosure was redeemed from the waste, and was sufficient for the wants of both. In the chimney-corner they often sit when the wind blows and the window rattles, the dial and the book of poems on a little deal table beside them, telling tales of the long ago ; but their favourite topic is the great tempest, the wreck, and their meeting on that bleak December night, whilst Andrew often whispers as if to himself, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men ! "

HAMET HART'S RETURN TO FOSSFIELD.

The evening was approaching, still and quiet, and a sweet anthem went up from the earth—the voice of thanksgiving to its Maker. Rivers murmured on towards the ocean with a soothing sound, and the breeze which fanned the closing flowers scattered jets of poetry from its wings, which fell deliciously upon the ear like ripples from the Well of Life. There was a halo on the hill-top like a crown of glory ; and the listening valleys, where the bats wheeled, and the glow-worms began to glitter, were just hung in their airy garments of purple.

Through the stillness and beauty of the evening walked a traveller. He carried a stick in one hand and a very small parcel in the other ; and it was evident from the interest he was taking in the surrounding scenery, and from the leisurable manner of his gait, that he had been in the locality before. At every stile he paused, and at every field-gate he looked around. He was rather respectably dressed, with a thoughtful look upon his face, as if he had experienced much of the vicissitudes of life. And who has not felt these in passing through the wilderness? Flowers sometimes wither in our path, and even the young buds are blasted with an untimely wind. And when our ripening hopes seemed almost mature, and our hands were even stretched forth to gather them, some unkindly circumstance, over which we had no control, dashed them to the ground, and we wiped our eyes over their trodden dust. "Man was made to mourn," sang the sweet poet of the plough ; than which nothing has been truer since the melancholy utterances of the patient patriarch of the land of Uz.

It was noticed that the traveller's face was frequently turned in the direction of Fossfield, and that he often shaded his eyes with his hand to scan it more distinctly. At this juncture he reached a spot where the road diverged off into two branches, spreading more apart as they advanced ; and he was evidently embarrassed, not knowing which to take. Just then a little girl came singing towards him, with a bunch of wild flowers in her hand. She stopped her melody when

she saw him, and curtsied, as country children sometimes do. He asked the way to Fossfield, which she told him, pointing with her finger in that direction, saying, "There it is, Sir." There was something in her voice and manner which excited him, and forced him to look into her face more earnestly than he was wont; and, thanking her, he went on.

It will be better, perhaps, that Hamet Hart should tell his own tale in his evening soliloquy on his way towards Fossfield. Having wiped his brow with his handkerchief, and gazed after the retreating figure of the little girl, he turned his eyes towards the sunset, which was one of the loveliest, and thus communed with his own thoughts:

"And can this well-cultivated and highly-productive district be Fossfield, which was a moor in my boyhood, stagnant and slough-full, and where I sometimes went a snipe-shooting when a young man? Perhaps so, or I am in a dream. The earth is full of change from one pole to the other, and from wondrous zone to zone; but the changes in our own neighbourhood and homestead affect us most of all. The loss of a dear friend, who has stood shoulder to shoulder with us in the battle of life, sharing in the feeling of our losses and gains, rejoicing when we rejoiced, and weeping when we wept, suddenly summoned to the shadow of the sepulchre, leaves a deeper sorrow in our heart, and a bitterer blank in our existence, than the knowledge of some fearful calamity, through which hundreds have been injured many long leagues away. Fossfield a farm? How very puzzling! It was a bog when I was a boy, and a rushy marsh when I was a man. A few wild-worded people talked of farming it, who were laughed at as fanatics. For my part, I never thought much about it, content occasionally to be allowed to follow the squire there with his gun and dogs, which, when well pleased, he suffered me to do. But my only brother, Tom, would sometimes speak about it as a practicable thing, especially when smoking his pipe of an evening. Tom was always a hard worker, and an honest man, fond of his Bible and his home, though his wages were small and his meals often stinted. He was a workman on the squire's estate, earning about nine shillings a week to support himself and family; and I have often seen him eating his supper contentedly, consisting of bread, sops, water, salt, and a little pepper. What a cruelty and crime to

treat an honest, hardy, English labourer thus! Heaven hears their groaning, and will surely speedily come to their relief on His car of deliverance. Tom had but one suit of clothes, which he wore every day alike, Sundays and Mondays, winter and summer, throughout the year; the only difference being that on the Sabbath he left off his smock-frock and walked to church in his bargain.

"My wife died, and my little boy was taken from me; when, consigning my only infant daughter to Tom's care, I set sail for a foreign land. Once there, I wrote a letter to Fossfield, persuading my brother and his family to emigrate, and share the comforts of my adopted home—for I found comforts there to which I had for ever previously been a stranger. I got no answer, and then the sad tidings came that they were all dead—carried off with a fever. I wrote no more, and turned my best attention to my employ. Providence prospered me, and blest my earnest efforts, as He is sure to prosper the diligent, industrious plougher or sower, delver or digger, who seeks His counsel, and puts his trust in Him. The years brought no intelligence from home, though they brought much to me in the way of wealth; and then the irresistible longing possessed me to see my native hills once more, and to breathe the pure air of its valleys; for the love of home is undying.

"And here I am in the hush of evening, with a great delight before me, like a white-sailed barque skimming over seas of liquid light, bearing me into regions of romance. What fair isles I shall reach I know not, what rivers behold, what flowery landscapes discover, what tall trees scan, what poetic dwellings enter, what singular inhabitants meet, or what delicious songs I shall hear. That this is Fossfield, so quietly and so fragrantly reposing on the couch of twilight, amazes me. How green the fields, how sacred the melody arising around! The twitter of every bird is a lyre-string of nature, and the purple tree-tops, in the glow of the setting sun, so gently shaken with the breeze, have tones of loving tenderness which belong to the groves of the upper land. My soul adores in silence the handiwork of the Great Creator, baptized with sylvan beauty. The river, how rich in sound! and yon solitary bird, sweeping through the firmament, the rush of whose wings I hear from this standpoint, is seeking his home for the night where his loving mate awaits him in

the thicket. But see, there is a nice-looking house on the hill-side, on the very spot where I once disturbed a brace of woodcocks from the rushes, which the squire secured with his fowling-piece. I will make my way to it, and, perhaps, may get some intelligence which I am anxious to gather."

Hamet Hart pursued his way in the twilight towards this hill-side home. At the gate of the garden he paused; for there was the little girl he so recently met in the lane. The same indescribable feeling possessed him which had shaken his frame before. How black her eyes! how beautiful her hair! how sweet her countenance! How closely her features resembled one whose love in days gone by had changed the old whirling woe-begone earth to Eden, his winter to summer, and his night of bitter poorly-paid toil to a day of golden sunshine, whose glory hung upon everything below! Alas! that it should fade so quickly, and the darkness roll down so suddenly from the black hills! Hamet asked her if she would give him a drink of water, and allow him to rest a little in the cottage. How her eyes beamed when she answered with the gracefulness of a princess, quietly opening the gate of the garden, "Yes, if you please, Sir. Will you be kind enough to walk in? There is no one there but my uncle Tom, and he is reading the newspaper. Are you a stranger here, Sir, in Fossfield?"

He replied that he was, though he had known it many years ago when it was a bramble-bearing wilderness. "But you have not told me your own name, or the full name of your uncle," suggested the traveller.

"My name is Ellen, Sir; and my uncle's name is Tom Hart. I have been living with him ever since my father went away, and we never heard of him again. Perhaps he was drowned in the sea, or perhaps he was killed by the lions or savage men. Uncle cannot tell, and I do not know; though in my prayers I still pray for him, and ask God to be my Father, and I know He will."

Hamet Hart stood still on the garden path, and felt as if in the purple light of evening he was visited by a cherub, who had long been singing under the fruit-laden branches of the Tree of Life. Yet it was no vision which he then so lovingly beheld, no revelation of beauty through the opening heavens, but a pure child of earth, a being blessed with immortality,

still wearing the weeds of dissolution, and holding a love for his later days—his own dear daughter Ellen! Yes, there she stood before him, with the purple light of the fading day falling upon her form, like a white-winged worshipper on the hills of glory. Embrace her he must not, before he had made himself known, though he longed to kiss her for the hundredth time, and to bind her in tears to his beating heart. He trembled with agitation, and was obliged to take hold of a tree-branch to support himself; and before the sudden joy had passed away he told her who he was, and in what relation she stood to him. The joy of such a discovery, the happiness of such a meeting, the love of such an hour, cannot be described by human pen, and can only be murmured by the gentle winds. Go, weep among the trees, and its spirit shall possess you like the spirit of the Infinite.

Reader, lay down the book for a moment, and listen at the door under the laurels of the garden, and you will hear the voice of Ellen, like the voice of a summer bird:—

"Uncle! dear uncle! come out into the garden quickly, and see who is there. My father, my own father is come, and I have seen him, and he has talked with me! Don't be afraid, uncle, it is no spirit, but the kindest, gentlest, dearest father that ever was! There are tears in his eyes and joy in his heart; and I heard him pray to God and thank Him under the apple tree. I seem dreaming, dear uncle, ever since he rained his kisses upon my cheek, and praised our Father in heaven. Quickly, uncle, quickly! it is my own dear father!"

Ellen was interrupted by a step upon the threshold, and the next moment Hamet Hart was grasping the hands of his brother; and they gazed long and earnestly into each other's eyes. What tales they read there in that brief moment! what sorrows! what joys! what conquests! what failures! what hopes! what fears! The handshaking over, talk ran quickly, explanations were given, mysteries unravelled. It seems that the vessel in which Hamet Hart's letter was forwarded to England foundered at sea, and was never heard of more. Not knowing where his brother was located, Tom could not write to him; and thus the time passsd away without any communication between them.

After a substantial meal, Hamet Hart induced Tom to tell

him the story of Fossfield. Ellen sat by her father's side, looking up into his face, and wondering with a great joy in her soul what had befallen her. God had sent her father to her, and this was enough. Tom put his pipe upon the mantel-piece, leant back in his chair, and this is his version of the reclaiming of the waste land.

"After you left us, and no letter arriving, we were greatly troubled, deeming you had perished in some unknown way. My wife died, and Ellen was all that was left. One evening I was walking across Fossfield, then nothing but brier and bog, when a voice seemed to arise from the thicket with the ascending moon, 'Cultivate it!' I paused to listen, and again the voice came out of the bracken, 'Cultivate it!' I sat at home with Ellen, and after supper and the reading of the chapter, I took my pipe, and in the curling smoke-puffs came the same command, 'Cultivate it!' Sleep fell upon me, and I was wandering in fabulous dells and mystical valleys; yet the same echo was in my soul, 'Cultivate it!' I rose, went forth to my labour, but like a harper it travelled at my side, 'Cultivate it!' I procured its lease of the squire, and set to work with an energy unknown before. Difficulties gave way, obstacles were overcome, bogs were drained, brushwood consumed, hedges built; and as year after year passed away, my achievements almost surprised myself. Good crops well paid me for my outlay, becoming better every season, until Fossfield *bog* was Fossfield *barton*, as you see it at present. I have now a man to help me, who lives in a part of this house, which is also my own. And all this, though I say it myself, is the fruit of honest, persevering industry, blest by the great Husbandman. And what myriads of waste places throughout the United Kingdom, bog-gushing and boulder-laid, are only awaiting the willing hand of the labourer to become as fair and fruitful as Fossfield! Let the poor man try it, and his reward is sure. There, Hamet, that is all: and now three cheers for Fossfield, and thirteen, both loud and long, for a returned brother! Truly, the dead is alive, and the lost is found!"

Ellen crept closer to Hamet Hart, and placing her hand in his, gazed lovingly into his face, saying, "You will never leave us again, will you, father?" The question was so simply earnest, and the voice of the pretty questioner so sweet and

musical, that the tears again came into his eyes ; and, stooping down, he affectionately kissed the shining drops from his daughter's cheeks, and whispered, "No."

And he never did. The visitor to Fossfield church on Sunday mornings may see him there in his pew, with Ellen on one side, and his brother Tom on the other, so orderly and well-dressed, the most respectable attenders of the place. And report says that the son of a wealthy yeoman in the parish frequently comes to Fossfield generally in the hush of the evening, not merely, it is presumed, to chat with Hamet Hart and his brother, but more especially for the sake of Ellen.

NARDIP JONES AND HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER.

THERE was a little bench at the end of Nardip Jones's garden, canopied with ivy and honeysuckle, where he often sat with his little grand-daughter, Bete ; and it is here that we find him on the present occasion. A broad sycamore or two stood at some little distance by the well-trimmed fence, and an old hawthorn, like a sentinel, was ever guarding the gateway. Here the sparrows chattered in comical glee, as they dropped from the eaves of the dwelling, keeping up a perpetual gossip.

Nardip Jones was blind, and had now been so for several years. But he did not complain, or charge God foolishly. In truth, he was ever grateful to a good Providence for the mercies daily vouchsafed to him, ever thanking Him in his heart, and blessing Him with his lips. And may not very many of the unthankful of our race, who are hourly surrounded with love, and yet are ever grumbling because of their lot, learn a lesson from the gratitude of this poor blind man? Let us think of those who are below us in the scale of comfort, instead of those who are above us, and the tear of thankfulness will oftener fall.

Little Bete, who was a round-faced, rosy-cheeked creature, with brown hair and blue eyes, climbed up on Nardip's knee, kissed his face, and asked him to tell her again the story of his blindness. It was a lovely day ; the sun was shining on

the broad leaves of the sycamore, and glittering on the wavelets of the river close by; but Nardip Jones saw it not. It gladdened his heart, however, to hear the hum of the insects among the flowers, the murmur of the distant waterfall, and the skylark's song above his head. O, how sweet these sounds were in his ears, as if an angel floated through the air! Soothed by the inner and outer voices, he bent down and kissed the bright face of his grandchild, whispering as he did so, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." Then resting his back against the bench, and his hands upon the head of his blackthorn stick, he told her over again the story she desired.

"We have not always resided here, Bete," said he. "There was a time when I lived with your mother in a hollow home on the border of Stagstay estate. This was the name of my master's farm, for whom I worked ever since I was a boy. Your mother was nice-looking, and as good as she was fair, obeying her parent in all things, because this is right. I have never seen your face, my darling, and never shall see it now; but your voice is like your mother's, and I love to hear it. Your grandmother died soon after your mother was born, leaving a darkness in our dwelling which I cannot explain; for no language can describe what it is to lose a faithful wife. I nursed your mother with tears, thanking God that this star was left in my sky of gloom. A neighbour kept her by day while I worked in the fields, but she was always with me by night. I cannot tell how delighted I was when she was able to talk and sit on my knees as you do, Bete! It was then I felt the force of Sir Walter Scott's beautiful lines:

"'Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear,
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head.'

"She had one little brother, two years older than herself, and they used to play together in the lane near our house; and happy I was to meet them in the evenings after my long day's work was done. My earnings were very small, so that few of the good things of life ever came to our board; but we were contented, and thanked God for the humblest fare. In those days, Bete, the English labourer was sadly pressed, as with an iron hand, but let us hope that better times will follow. Often, at the end of the week, on my return to my cottage with my meagre pay in my pocket, I have wept hot tears in secret, seen only by our Father in heaven, when I contemplated the few necessaries it would procure for you. And I must believe that those tears, and the tears of unnumbered others, have been bottled on high, and in his own time the great Helper will send deliverance, as He sent through His servants to His own people in days of old. Already the morn is breaking, Bete, which must usher in a brighter day.

"Thus time passed on with but few changes, until your mother grew up to womanhood, when from a distant town a young man came to woo her, and in due course they were married. Your uncle Harry emigrated to a distant country, so I was left in my habitation alone. Harry used to send letters sometimes, for he learnt to write in the evenings from an old copy-book, thrown into the yard; and his epistles comforted me much, you may be sure. A very promising son was your uncle Harry, I can tell you; and I always thought he would turn up again some day, which filled me with hope. The spring came with all its music and bursting buds, when news was conveyed to me in the park meadow that you were brought into the world, and your dear mother was not expected to live. I hastened home, but was too late to see her alive. The blow was heavy for me, O, heavy indeed, but it was too much for your father; and in a little while he was buried by his Ellen's side. Thus we were brought together, Bete.

"The following summer I was cutting hay in the long meadow, when almost suddenly the clouds began to congregate, and the rains to fall. I knew it was dangerous to stand near a tree at such a time, but I seemed to have no alternative, and hastened under a spreading chestnut close at hand.

O, how the rains came down! and then it lightened and thundered so that the earth seemed to shake. It was wrong of me, but I held my scythe in my hand, for we used the scythe then, and not the clanking machine. Presently the whole heavens, from one rim of the hemisphere to another, appeared on fire, and the very trees around me were like pillars of flame. The grass and every green thing was changed; and when the great dazzle had departed I knew I was blind. After the shock had somewhat subsided, I called for help with feeble voice, and a woodman passing by overheard me, and came to my relief. I was led home, and after a time the doctor came, examined me, and said I should never see again. This was a sore grievance, Bete, and you so little. I had no savings by me; and the world will quickly turn its back upon you if you are poor. So my helpers dropped off one after another until I was left sole monarch of the empty house. Then came the overseer with an order for the Union; and one morning we were both taken thither in an official vehicle, and placed in different wards. Some said it was unkind of my master, whom I had served so faithfully for so many years, to let his old blind servant go into the house; but when you are worn out, and of no further use, you are turned out to die like an old horse on the common.

"We remained in the Union for several months, and I met you but seldom, though I longed to kiss your smiling face. But I always prayed for you, Bete, at morning and evening, and sometimes through the day. One of the men in our ward was very communicative, and many a long talk have we had over our tin of weak broth. He had been a sailor, had passed through much hardship, and could only now boast of one arm and half a leg. He was never married, and knew not that he had then a single relative in the world. He had been shipwrecked, captured by savages, and pursued by beasts of prey, but his worst foes, he said, were those of his own species. He smoked when he was allowed a little tobacco, and I noticed that he was always better pleased then. 'Never despair' was his motto, which he had written on a large piece of paper, and wore it round his neck. 'Never despair, Nardip,' said he, 'Paris was not built in a day, and the Tower of London was raised stone by stone. I think I may get out of the

Union yet, have a pension, perhaps, and live in a cottage of my own; and then won't I give you a treat, all of you? You have worked hard, Nardip, ploughing and sowing, trudging and tilling for your master, until, like a disabled pitcher, you are thrown to the heap of refuse, to bleach in the sun, and blacken in the rain, unnoticed by those who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day whether you have a meal or not, till you are picked up and put into the Union, where harshness is higher than mercy, and the crumbs of comfort are few and far between. But never despair, Nardip, it is a long lane without any turning, and the iron gate of the Union may be unbarred to let you out yet. Never despair, Nardip, I say, till the last plank is gone, and then look out for the lifeboat. We feel that the usages of the Union are hard. Though I am not married myself, yet I can see the cruelty of separating man and wife when it is forbidden in God's book. But there is surely a remedy at hand. And the earnings of the tillers of the ground are a disgrace to merry England; but let us hope that their redemption draweth nigh. Never despair, Nardip, never despair!'

"I confess, Bete, that the brightness of this old man often comforted me, and set me a thinking. And he was not against reading the Bible to me, which he often did. One morning in October the nurse came to me and said that I was wanted immediately at the gate, and that I must take off my Union dress, and put on my own apparel. I made haste to do it, wondering what was up. Very soon I was led out of the house, and up to the iron gate; and who should be there waiting for me but my own son Harry! 'Come along, father,' said he, 'turn your back upon the Union, for you will never go into it again while I have an arm to work for you. I have not come back to you empty-handed, for I have a leathern bag full of the finest gold nuggets that were ever seen. And Bete is with us too; and we are all three going to live together. And where will it be, do you think? Why, on that waste piece of common you have often spoken about as a nice place for a house and garden and a few meadows, and which it was a sin to leave uncultivated. I have purchased it of the Squire, and have still many shining pieces left in my leathern bag. I am going to call our place 'Nardip's Notion,' after yourself. Come along, father, come along, Bete, and shout farewell to the Union.'

"Harry worked hard week after week, and month after month, and I assisted him a little, though it was but a little. This house was built, the garden enclosed, the fields hedged in; and soon cows and sheep were grazing on what was once a wilderness. Harry is gone to the market to-day with some of the finest wheat ever produced in the district, so that the labour of his hands will be made a blessing to many. I do hope that others will soon follow the example of my Harry, and cultivate the waste moorlands, which would ultimately yield food for thousands. I love to sit here now in the quiet twilight, and listen to the sounds around me. The rustling corn, the cooing pigeons, the lowing cattle, and the psalm of the milkmaid in the meadows are dear to my ears. Kiss me, Bete, and then run to your book."

Soon after this there were bridesmaids clad in white, the ringing of bells in the village church tower, dainty little parcels of bridecake sent hither and thither, an overflow of gossip in the hamlet, and Harry Jones brought home his wife to his well-stocked farm. And thus a portion of the desert of England was turned into a garden, where fruit trees flourished, and the heart was gladdened with the comforts of life.

The reader will be gratified to learn that the old sailor's hopes were realized at last; his case was laid before the Admiralty, and a small pension was granted him from Government. He left the Union, and came to reside near Nardip Jones; and many a long chat do they now have in the summer evenings on the old bench in Nardip's garden, with little Bete playing beside them. He still wears the written paper round his neck; and his sympathies are with the daily labourers of his native land, whom he bids "NEVER DESPAIR."

BEN THE BASKET-MAKER.

ON came the hounds in hot pursuit, followed by red-coated huntsmen, and horsemen in doublets of grey, green, and blue; on through the moorland, on through the meadow, down through the poor man's garden, trampling his crops into ruin, with no recompense save a savage threat, the sight

of an uplifted whip, and a visage where a scowl hangs like paint upon a Christmas mask ; on sweep the hounds, with a terrible cry that wakes the echoes of the dingle, causing the hill-tops to answer each other, and the rooks in the green pines to chatter with fiercer earnestness, whirling and screaming as if possessed ; on dash the pack, up-hill, down-hill, on through level roads, over gates, hedges, ditches, hollows, and heights, trampling down the poor man's corn, potatoes, rye and clover, and caring no more for the damage than the cruel blast of Boreas, when the ice is out. On they gallop to the sound of the ringing horn, hurling care to the winds, and conscience to the dark ; on, on, shouting, roaring, raging, as if so many Bedlamites had been unchained, and had rushed raving forth to hoot goodness to its tomb ! The very hill-caves mock them, and the flowers blush with shyness as they pass. Some poor little innocent hare is the meek cause of all this racket, straining its every muscle to escape the heathen tyrants. See how the dear little thing leaps, and jerks, and bounds from shallow to shallow, steaming with perspiration. And after it still bellow the horsemen and hounds, with unjust ardour burning in their breasts, thirsting for the blood and bones of a poor defenceless brute ! Shame, shame, ye landed autocrats ; vent your spleen on the giant destroyers of our race—adultery, fornication, uncleannesss, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, and leave the poor, dumb, innocent beast untortured, so that the cry of the hounds be heard no more in our land. Instead of the lavish expenditure on your dogs and steeds, allow us to suggest that you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and treat the daily labourer with due consideration, when we prophesy for you an increase of true happiness.

Squire Stratt rode after the hounds in full gallop, in top-boots and spurs, and a silver-headed riding-whip in his hand. How earnest he was in the pursuit, shouting with great gusto, the words rumbling forth from his tongue like wind among the wintry branches ! And how he panted and perspired, too fat and heavy almost for the great horse to carry ! But he banged along, caring nothing for the extra exertion of his steed, caring nothing for the sorrows of the peasant whose crops he destroyed, caring nothing for the crushed fences and

shattered gates, caring nothing for pigs and poultry trampled beneath the hoofs of his horse, caring nothing for frightened dames or screaming children—on, on he banged, as reckless and as rollicking as famed John Gilpin to Edmonton.

At the foot of a small declivity, where two roads crossed each other at right angles, the squire came upon a poor man prostrate upon the ground. A little way from him was an overturned cart, with the pony lying upon its side. "Help them up," shouted an old woman, standing by the stream, with a basket on her arm, "help them up! O, help them up, good squire!" The cart-driver was moaning much, as well as the poor brute, and surely he was unworthy the name of man who could without pity behold such a sight; but the squire put spurs to his nag and dashed on, leaving Harry Hare and his horse to their fate! Had it been his own dog, or even the dog of a stranger, he would, perchance, have alighted, bound up its wounds with his own soft handkerchief, spoken loving words in its ear, and carried it to his own carpeted room; but a poor ill-clad peasant—let him die in the ditch!

But Harry Hare did not then die; the Watcher of the sparrows sent him relief. Very near the spot where the accident took place, resided Ben, the basket-maker. He was an old man now, and his house stood among a few trees at the corner of the down. He was sitting in his door at the time of the accident, though he never lifted his head to watch the hounds or the huntsmen. Old Ben felt that fox-hunting and hare-hunting was a grievous waste of time, a grievous waste of property. and a grievous waste of wealth, and for gentlemen landowners to practise such cruelties was a disgrace to the English aristocracy, as well as a great sin against the Giver of all good. So he held down his head, continuing his basket-making; though the deep baying of the hounds, and the shrill echo of the horn, blended with the yellings of the frantic pursuers, filled the valley with a storm of reverberations as if the four winds of heaven were doing battle with a vengeance. But when he heard of the disaster to poor Harry Hare, he dropped his work at once, and requested his boy to go and see what the poor man's injuries were.

The boy soon returned, with the intelligence that Harry Hare was lying upon the ground, with his cart and horse beside him; that the squire had galloped on after the hounds,

leaving the poor prostrate man in his misery ; that he and his horse were groaning as if Death were by them, with his scythe in his hand, whetted to mow them down. Old Ben rose from his seat when he heard this, and bade the boy follow him. They were soon on the spot—Harry Hare was lifted up, and put to sit upon the grass, with his back to a tree; and then the belly-band was unloosed, the collar unbuckled, the chains unhitched, and in a few minutes the liberated horse was on his legs again. The glad little pony shook himself, glanced round at his preservers, and thanked them with a neigh. He was not much injured, neither was the cart; so in a little while he was again in the shafts, harnessed, trim and tight, and Harry Hare was lifted up, and conveyed in his own vehicle to the home of old Ben, the basket-maker, whom we may truly call the good Samaritan.

For several weeks Harry was confined to the house. There were no bones broken, but he was shaken considerably. The doctor came at the expense of old Ben; and Harry found food and shelter in his home. His few household effects had been sold many months before, and he lodged wherever he could find a hole, sometimes here, and sometimes there, doing odd jobs with his horse and cart, where he happened to find employment. Sometimes he was days together with little to do; and then he and his nag might be found in the lanes, where patches of coarse grass grew by the rut sides, or on zigzag slips of waste land, where the fences did not reach—the pony feeding, and Harry reading or ruminating on the varied lots of the human race, or the strange distribution of worldly wealth. He was unmarried, unhoused, uncousined, and uncared for. His parents had died in his infancy, and he had to rough it ever since, with more cuffs and kicks from old Time than there are Saturdays in the year. Sometimes he had a good dinner, sometimes he had none; yet he sang and whistled as he jogged along, eating his crust with an appetite unknown to those who grumble and growl over daily dainties, more thankful than a monarch. But now he was laid low, a pensioner on the kindness of old Ben, the basket-maker.

Old Ben had lived in that cottage for more than forty years, pursuing his avocation of basket-making. His wife had only died a few months before the accident to Harry Hare, and then he had taken the little boy into his service. He

performed the errands the old man required, fed the bird, attended to the pig, and when the baskets were finished, carried them into the town to be sold. In fact, he was very useful, and quite willing to turn his hand to any kind of work. So after Harry Hare got better, the old man's thoughts were busy as to what his future employment should be. Now, the land around the basket-maker's dwelling was very dreary, not having been known to have been cultivated from the time of the Norman conquest. High mounds, dangerous flats, stony cairns, savage glens, and wild wildernesses, where strange shapes flitted in the mist, and rode upon the wings of the hurricane, were all that was visible. This great waste was the unappreciated property of Squire Stratt, who laughed at the very idea of its being cultivated. "Cultivate that!" said he, "I would as soon think of cultivating the Gull Rock."

Old Ben, however, talked about it in the evenings, after his basket-work, and thought it would be nice for Harry to attempt to cultivate a plot or two, if the squire would let it on reasonable terms. Ben would provide Harry with food and lodging while he was about it, and then they would share the after-gains. Various were the plans proposed to convey the request to the squire; but at last it was decided that it should be done by writing a letter. And a letter was written by Harry in the name of old Ben, asking for a lease of the land. Off went the epistle by post; and in a few days they received a satisfactory reply. The squire had heard of the kindness of the basket-maker to the injured man, whom he had left by the wayside unaided on the day of the hunt; and he was glad to make some apparent restitution. He said that this unkind affair had troubled him much—in his pew at church, at his wine and venison, in his walks and in his rest, in the sunshine and in the shadow, lying down and rising up, by day, and more especially by night. O, then, in the silence of the darkness, grim visages came creeping to him along the wainscot of the room, down the panels, up the bed furniture, in over the ornamental ceiling, with great leering eyes, and long livid fingers, like shreds of moonlight, pointing to a poor prostrate man, discoloured and helpless, groaning in the mud! Seeing all this, the squire would start and shriek so as to frighten all the sleepers of the house. Yes, the squire was delighted to have the shadow of a semblance to atone for his cruelty and

shame ; and so he let old Ben a great many acres of the common at the lowest possible figure.

So Harry began to work with no other capital than his own strong arms and hands, toiling early and late with a cheerfulness which ever lessens the lug of labour, commencing with the lark that carolled in gushing melody over the moor, and retreating with the sinking sun, carrying his working tools upon his shoulder. And be it understood that he never drank ale or porter; but his constant beverage was clear water from the well hard by. When the wind blew, or the breeze warbled; when the sun shone, or the clouds gathered in black battalions in the zenith, he ever adhered to water.

Old Ben's boy, too, helped Harry at intervals, so that the hedging, ditching, and grubbing of roots and stones went on pretty vigorously, until a plot was ready for planting. Some artificial manure was procured, and the newly-enclosed meadow set with rows of potatoes. The squire heard of it, and made light of the attempt. But this did not prevent Harry and the old man from commencing another enclosure, and by the time the potatoes were ripe it was finished. The season was a favourable one, and the crop of roots was abundant. Though the disease had visited many localities, it quite passed over Harry's field ; and the estimated profits of the first year met a considerable item of the expenditure. Still Harry worked away ; hollow after hollow was drained and redeemed, hill-side after hill-side came under cultivation, until the basket-maker's residence was the centre of a large estate.

Let the reader remember that all this was accomplished by earnest-hearted men who never possessed much capital. They depended not upon the finding of bags of gold, or on the return of some long-absent relative, whose hoardings would stimulate them to exertion, but putting their own hands to the pickaxe and the spade, the rake and the plough, with steady, persevering toil their sinewy arms clove through difficulties and surmounted obstacles, which at first appeared so formidable, achieving thereby a nobler victory than he who thrusts a bayonet or wields a flaming sword, leaving ruin in his track. Stone by stone and turf by turf the fences were finished, inch by inch and foot by foot the land was cleared, until by and bye the rough region became the praise of surrounding parishes.

The squire stopped in his drives to admire it, and confessed

that his judgment was at fault. It is even said that he had an advertisement on a square board nailed to an ash tree at the corner, offering to let the great run of waste land at a very moderate rental. He sent word to Harry Hare that he had long felt sorry for not assisting him on the day of the accident, and that after the death of the basket-maker he would grant him the freehold of the land he had enclosed.

Time passed, the pastures became greener and more productive; corn grew there, and roots of various kinds, and from the long untrodden wold came food and fruit to supply whole villages. The labour of industrious hands had brought honey from the hoary rock, and goodwill to the sons of men. Old Ben had long since passed away; and the last basket he made was purchased by the squire, which is now hanging as an ornament in his hall. The basket-maker's boy emigrated to New Zealand; and a letter from him a short time ago states that he is now the proprietor of several hundred acres. A new house is standing not far from old Ben's, fronting what was so long a wilderness. Children are playing there, whose merry voices ring like the April gushes of the skylark. A pleasant, gentlemanly person is giving orders to the servant to plough Basket Meadow, so named after old Ben. He stoops to kiss the little ones, who come running to him with beaming eyes and upturned faces, and sweetest prattle on their tongues, waves his hand to his wife, who is sitting in a bright parlour window, and, with stick in hand, hastens down the lane on to the next village, where he is to be chairman at a Missionary Meeting. This is Harry Hare. Long may he live to enjoy the fruits of his industry and stimulate the worthy toilers of England.

EZRA ELM AND HIS GUINEA.

OLD Ezra Elm sat on his only chair by a small fire, endeavouring to warm himself on a wild November day. But it was almost in vain to attempt to do so, the house was so hollow, the roof so torn, the walls and woodwork so full of chinks, the one window so shattered, and the blinking fire so very, very little. He puffed away, however, both with his bellows, the leather of which was stuffed with small bits of rag, and also with his mouth, bobbing forwards and backwards to keep time with the puffs, until there was really a little blaze, which danced upon the walls and rafters of his room, ran up and down his cupboard-door, glittered upon his two-panes-and-half of glass, shone on the head of the holly stick, raced over his tobacco-box and pipe, and then rushed back with a flash of warmth on his wrinkled face, just as if it said, "Cheer up, old man! now I am master here."

Ezra hung the bellows on its peg, knocked the ashes from his pipe, re-lighted it, lay back in his chair with his feet upon the low fender, puffing away at will; and then fixing his eyes upon the flickering fire, his thoughts slowly went back over the journey of his life. In the stillness of his apartment he was a little boy again, led by the hand of his mother to the village church. Now he sees the parson in his snowy surplice, and the hollow-voiced clerk under the pulpit; and the cadence of the old psalm seems coming in at the door. Now he roams a-nutting in the wood, tearing through brambled brakes, and swinging from tree-branches, until his pockets are full to overflowing, and he creeps home in the twilight to receive a gentle

castigation because his trowsers are torn. Now he goes a trout-fishing with those of his own age, neglecting his school-lessons, and deceiving his parents, though conscience kept reproving him till he resolved not to do it again; and he never did. Now he is seated by the wood-faggot in the chimney-corner, telling stories in the winter evenings; and he almost sees the faces of his brothers and sisters in the dying coals. Now he follows his father to the fields, where he begins to work for his daily bread; and he seems to hear the neigh of the horses, the lowing of the cattle, and the crow of the farm-yard chanticleer. The cold of winter, the heat of summer, the flowers of spring, and fruits of autumn, are with him once again. He reviews his first fresh years of manhood, when his arm was strong, and his foot was firm—when he could even run through a troop, or leap over a wall. Now he thought of his marriage with his master's servant, his family and fireside, when his children climbed on his knees, kissed his face, and told him quaint stories of Jack and the bean-stalk. He remembers his long toilsome years on the farm, when his earnings were often so small that his good wife was sad, and his little ones hungry; how he worked in the fields with a weight upon his heart, though the blackbird whistled in the hawthorn, and the swallows floated over the grass. And he well remembers, too, his prayers among the willows, when he felt the presence of his loving Lord, and laid hold of the promises of the Bible like a drowning mariner laying hold of a rope. And then came the fever, when the months dragged slowly away, and a great mystery fell upon his mind; and when the mist passed from him, and the clear light of day shone into his eyes, he knew that he was alone.

At this juncture he gave a heavy sigh, the pipe dropped from his mouth and fell into his lap, a little mouse ran from under his chair to its hole in the empty cupboard, a great blast came down upon the house, carrying the rain through the roof, causing the habitation to shake, and sending a chill to the heart of the old man. Then he heard footsteps approaching, the door opened, and a visitor came in. She was a middle-aged woman, with a motherly expression of countenance, and she wore a long cloak with a hood. Her umbrella was unopened, as the wind was too high to carry it. The water was dripping from her garments, but she shook Ezra's hand not-

withstanding. He arose that she might take his chair, but she declined it, saying she could stand, and should not wait. She was the housekeeper at the hall.

"I should not have come to-night," she began, "but I have startling news for you. The squire is dead, and your old master has remembered you in his will. You are to live in the little house by the park, and are to be supported from the barton. This is, principally, because you exerted yourself so earnestly to reclaim some of the squire's waste land, which is now so very productive. It is said that he grieved much in his last hours to think he had treated you so hardly—you who had been so faithful to him, serving him with all your might for your long life, and being recompensed with just enough to keep body and soul together—and he hoped you would forgive him. The waste piece of common, where you worked so diligently, is now the best portion of dairy-ground we have. Why, bless you! the grass is so rank there! and the clover knee-deep. And it is to be called 'Ezra's Enclosure,' after yourself. But your fire is nearly out; stir it up a little. Good night, Ezra; early to-morrow a conveyance will be sent for you, to take you to your new abode. It has been a long night with you, Ezra, a long night indeed; but at evening-time there shall be light." She was gone, and Ezra was left bewildered.

He heard the door shut, and listened to the retreating footsteps; but, poor man! he was dumb, not one word could he utter. Was it a vision, or some waking dream? No; it was real, for his eyes were open. Slowly the encouraging truth came back upon his mind, like one who knows that he has just been saved from the jaws of death; and he wept great tears of gratitude. This will be the last night in his hovel! yes, the last in his hovel! He must gather together his items, for to-morrow he must start early.

Now, it was Ezra's good fortune, many years before, to have had a guinea presented to him by his master; and this guinea he had never spent, resolving that it should aid in defraying his funeral expenses. Some cattle which Ezra attended to won a prize at the exhibition; and his master was so pleased that he gave him a guinea—the only present he ever had from him for fifty years. This guinea was in the house; but Ezra had forgotten where. He searched the old black teapot, but

it was not there; he rummaged the ancient chest, which contained his blue best suit, only worn at funerals and on high occasions, brushing the very dust from the four corners, but it was not there. He turned up the tea-caddy on the mantelpiece, and the cracked jug in the cupboard; he pulled out the drawers of the table, and ransacked a little box of odds and ends which contained his hammer and his nails; he poked his fingers in the crannies of the chimney, the rents in the wall, and the hollows of the roof; he drove his finger-nails into the ashes, and dug up the holes in the floor; he looked here, he looked there, and he looked almost everywhere, but no guinea could be found.

He was much perplexed, and scarcely knew what to do. He even wrung his hands and sighed bitterly when he thought of his great loss. But to-morrow he would be out of it, cared for in a better home; and what mattered it then for his golden guinea? By this time the fire was nearly out, and the candle had burnt down in the socket. The wind roared, the door rattled, and the old house shook with the anger of the elements. Ezra laid his last piece of wood in the grate, scraped together the last shovelful of coals, ignited his last match, and kindled his last fire in the rended home he had occupied so long. "I will warm myself a little," said he, "before I go to bed. Who would ever have thought that the enclosure of waste land would do so much for me? Waste land! it is God's great blessing trampled upon, which I have always averred, and which it is sinful not to improve, while there are so many widows, and orphans, and hungry families to feed. Waste land! it is a treasure in a tangled thicket, wrapped round with brambles and prickly briers, yielding no required usury, and sending a moan across the wilderness like the wretched wail of famine. Yes, I have heard this wretched wail in the first glimmer of morning, and the last of eve, and others have heard it too, staggering over my master's swamp like the dull gibber of a hundred idiots; and I knew it was a warning that the waste should be enclosed. A warning? yes, a warning! I stood there one evening in the moonlight, and up from the rushes rose a mystery. A finer-looking farmer I never saw. He carried a long scythe upon his shoulder, a sheaf of the finest wheat under his arm, a beautiful basket of grapes on his head, and he drove before him a large flock of sheep and oxen. As

I gazed, he vanished in moonlight tissues ; but I knew it was the genius of the lowlands. I slept little that night, and in the morning I asked my master's permission for the hundredth time to begin the fencing of the fields; and when he saw I was so much in earnest, he allowed me. 'But, Ezra,' said he, 'it will never pay! it will never pay!' See! see! what is that shining so brightly on the top of the fire? It is my golden guinea! yes, it is my golden guinea!"

Yes, he had found his guinea ; and he now remembered all. Some burglars had visited the neighbourhood, and fearing he might be robbed of his treasure, and not knowing where to hide it in the old tumble-down dwelling, he secreted it in a corner of his coal-cupboard ; and it came to light in this way. It was smoked a little on one side, but he rubbed it upon the knee of his trousers until it was quite bright; and then he went to his bed with the guinea grasped tightly in his hand.

The wind increased in the night, the ocean roared, and the thunder rattled; no star was visible, and earth and heaven were black. At sunrise the conveyance was come for Ezra Elm. They knocked at the door, but there was no sound from within ; they looked through the window, but could see nothing. Then they knocked again, louder than at first, but it was all useless ; and the silence seemed to grow deeper, as if Death were watching there. They procured a key which suited the lock, and when they entered the house, there lay old Ezra, dead. His Bible lay open upon the pillow with his spectacles resting upon this verse : "In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you." A beam had fallen upon him in his sleep, from which he never awoke; and he still grasped in the palm of his right hand the smoked guinea. Alas! alas! his master's favour had come too late, and Ezra Elm had gone to meet him in the land of spirits.

His guinea helped to bury him.

ABRAHAM AUKWOOD, THE WORN-OUT LABOURER.

It was spring-time, and the early flowers had again made their appearance. Violets were blushing on the banks, under the trees, and by the margin of the brook; whis-

pering in every breeze that passed over them utterances of vernal tenderness to the buttercups and primroses, their sisters in the train of Spring. It was very pleasant to mark the kindling life around, from the green grass springing on the dry moorland, to the shining corn-blade in the meadow; and from the song of the thrush on the budding hawthorn, to the noisy furze-chat in the fen. How beautiful the gorse, rich in its golden blossoms, filling the air with its fragrance! How enthralling in the twilight, when the valleys are silent, when the light fades from the landscape, when the milkmaid is returning with her well-filled pail, and we are conscious that it is now the hour "when night and morning meet!" How we love to walk in the lanes, or on the wide woodland, or along the margin of the brooklet, when the sun is shining in his full strength upon the dazzling flood of yellow glory of the furze brake, which is surely unsurpassed in our English clime! Well might the astonished German kneel down in adoration before it, when he beheld its sun-lighted sheen for the first time, and, with clasped hands and throbbing heart, worship its august Maker. What a convincing proof of the existence of the Deity, and the mighty power of the great Fashioner! And when its bells of burnished gold are touched with the fingers of the gentle zephyr, or the soft hand of the wind shakes them into melody, their music is more elevating to the musing soul, or the thoughtful wanderer in the cells of twilight, than the loudest crash of the organ, or the fullest swell of the solemn choir. While the furze-bloom continues to shine between the prickly spears, and its odour is wafted hither and thither in fragrant urns, the creed of the sceptic has no weight in the balance, blind Chance finds no atom of footing in the universe, and the four winds of heaven reiterate to each other, "There is a God in the wilderness."

Abraham Aukwood was a worn-out labourer; yes, worn out in the field of rough service. His eyes were dim and watery, his joints stiff, his knees trembled, and his hands shook. And small respect have the gay worldlings for a poor, decrepit, worn-out labourer. Their hounds are cared for, and their horses, and their favourite birds; but their earth-bending servants—let them feed on the wind! It is well to care for hounds, and horses, and birds, and all the creatures God has made, and on the merciful man He assuredly looks compla-

cently ; yet this need not retard the cup of kindness being handed to His own image. Beware, ye mighty masters—ye stout men in rich broadcloth—ye wine-drinking, carriage-riding, fox-hunting favourites—ye men of golden chains and dangling eye-glasses—of soft gloves and silver-washed spurs—of large barns, groaning boards, great cheeses, and huge preserves of game—beware how ye treat the poor son of the soil! Do not turn him into the lanes when he is toothless, like a broken horse, to die in the ditch. Has he not spent in your service the best fire of his youth, and the strength of his manhood, bringing kine to your meadows, and coin to your coffers, for the smallest remuneration that would keep his poor body from the worms? And did he not do all this uncomplainingly, humbly, and gratefully? And now, when the frost of age is in his joints, and he should be allowed a little ease and rest after life's long battle, before his shrunken, shrivelled frame is laid to repose, ye cut him off like a weaver's thread, and let him drop into the dark. Beware! beware! the rod of justice is over your heads, and its invisible descent is sure, which shall smite you like a sword of flaming fire.—Beware! lest your great transgressions call down the just vengeance of heaven, and ye are overtaken in your neglect of God's heritage, and your contempt of prostrate worth, which shall overwhelm you as with a surging wave of liquid lava. Listen to the voice of Nature, and the voice of God, in the trees of the forest, and the waters of the wilderness, and treat your down-trodden, barely-sustained, yet honourable workman, as your BROTHER, and thereby avert the wrath of the Highest.

The sun was shining, the air mild, and the earth beautiful. Abraham Aukwood sat in the doorway of his thatched cottage, with his face turned towards the woodland. His hands were resting on his stick, which had been his friend for a long time. His hearing was not so good as it had been, when the crack of a whip was distinctly caught across the valley. No gift of Providence is appreciated rightly, perhaps, until it is taken from us; and then we truly feel its value. How often, for instance, do we quench our thirst with the clear water of the fountain, taking it almost as a matter of course, and forgetting to thank Him to whom our thanks are due!

Abraham's hearing had not so far forsaken him, however, but he could hear the lark rising from the meadow, and singing deliciously in the sunshine ; higher and higher it soared, and sweeter and sweeter it sang, scattering its notes upon the air in ever-varying cadence. And what is the beat of the hollow drum, the shriek of the fife, or the sound of the loudest trumpet, compared to the gushing lay of the skylark? Truly, a schoolboy's whistle to a whirlwind. And yet how the surging crowd is attracted by the racket of the brass band, set to a roar by some wandering troupe ; while the sweet true melody of Nature falls unheeded on their ears! How tender are the sounds of the murmuring brook ! and yet how uninteresting to uninitiated minds ! Abraham Aukwood loved the spirit of gentleness, though his vestments were coarse, and his learning limited. The soul of the poor man, whom Nature touches, is as sensitive to the presence of the beautiful as that of him who reposes on the lap of ease, has his well-stocked library and dazzling drawingrooms, and rolls across the earth in a gilded chariot. Abraham Aukwood was one who had ever been in love with the beauties of the universe, whose charms delighted him even in the decline of life.

Still the lark sang, and Abraham listened. How the tender melody comforted his spirit, and filled his broken heart with visions of delight ! Youth rose before him like a green landscape, studded with favourite flowers, and redolent with ever-refreshing rills. And then he thought of his early love, and the maiden of the moorland, who often listened with him to the voices of the forest, when the thrush was in the thicket, and the cuckoo in the grove. The bells which pealed forth from the belfry on his marriage day seemed ringing again in the dingle, and the well known wedding psalm came floating up the valley. He saw his mother watching him at the door, with her apron to her eyes, and his father at the field-gate, with lines of anxious thought upon his brow. The bride-maids of the hamlet, too, were there, with their bridal dresses fluttering in the breeze, the bride-cake, and the bridal feast. Then his cottage in the woody covert came to view, where roses tapped at the window, and sparrows chattered on the shaven roof ; whilst on the floor the smallest little feet went pattering about, and softest, sweetest kisses were imprinted on his cheek. Again he saw bright eyes gleaming through

the window pane, watching his return, and heard the sweetest prattle at the supper board. Songs came to him from the distant past, laden with heavier richness than any words can reveal ; and for a brief space he had actually forgotten that he was quite alone.

That night on his poor bed Abraham Aukwood was visited with April visions and summer dreams. He was wandering in a land of plenty, where clear waters murmured among the flowers, and fragrant breezes fanned the full-eared corn. Choicest kine fed in the meadows, sheep studded the green hill sides, rich grapes hung from spreading vines, and orchard trees were heavily laden with luscious fruit. The sound of the oppressor's voice was heard not in the glens, and the sharp sigh of hunger had never broken its deep repose. The servant laboured cheerfully for a loving, right-minded master, who was treated in many respects as his equal ; and no murmur of discontent smote the ear. The table of the hind was well spread with solid, substantial food ; his wife was no longer heart-broken and sad, but her face was ever beaming with the sunshine of gratitude, and his happy, rosy children were the pictures of health, as they fed to the full on the homely fruits of the father's industry. The well-dressed landlord chatted with his tenant on the way to church, and even took hold of his child by the hand. He sent him books from his own library ; and his only daughter felt it to be her duty to teach the peasant children to read. The cottages of the poor were models of comfort and cleanliness ; and the rotund magistrates had almost vacated the bench. Peace and order abounded everywhere, and the song of thanksgiving arose alike from hovel and hall. It was a glowing revelation, granted to the poor old worn-out workman, of the happy time to come.

The next day Abraham Aukwood took a quiet turn in the meadows ; for he was still able to walk slowly with the aid of his stick. Though hunger had pinched him, neglect discouraged him, oppression bruised him, friends forsaken him, and old age placed its palsied hand upon him, yet his love for the dear fields and flowers had not grown cold. The daisies looked up in his face and smiled, and he smiled back to them. The violets winked at the old man, nodded their blue heads, and appeared to tell him of another land, to the borders of

which he had come; and he seemed to hear the bells of the city of light. The cowslips told him tales of the long ago; and the whisper of the gentle wind was like the voice of some familiar friend. The softness and sweetness of the scene overcame him; and once more he was a worshipper at His feet. For him the rough battle of life had ceased to rumble; and on the distant mountain tops were snowy angels, whose fingers of light were beckoning him away. The hum of many insects, the fall of distant waters, and the surr of the great trees of the moorland, sounded in the ears of the cast-off peasant like harps and trumps of the higher hills. And out of the odorous air peered faces which he long had loved, whose smiles were dearer to his wounded heart than water to the lost in the desert.

A few days afterwards there was a parish funeral in the village; old Abraham Aukwood was laid to rest. From the walk alluded to he never returned. He was discovered by a ploughman sitting under a gorse bush, rich with golden blossom, with his two hands to his stick, and with his white head fallen forward, looking as if asleep; but it was the sleep of death. At his feet was a bed of blue-bells, and over him a lark sang most sweetly, filling the valley with his holiest strain. The skylark must have sung him to slumber and the gate of heaven. Yes, he was a worn-out labourer, and some aver that his end was accelerated by lack of food.

THE GRANGE AND ITS SECRET CHAMBER.

The principal incidents in the following story were communicated to the writer by a servant of the Grange, who now resides in one of the pleasant alms-houses of England.

On a beautiful portion of reclaimed land, in one of the Western Counties of Great Britain, stood a handsome Grange, surrounded with plantations of choice trees, meadows of green grass, clear streams and lakes, where fishes sported, and water-lilies grew. In the spreading elm-tops the noisy rooks built their nests, and reared their young, season after season, unawed by the rush of the train, or the weird shriek of the

steam-engine; and here the starlings congregated when the great November winds rode forth in their fury, gathering in vast numbers from every quarter of the heavens, on the approach of evening, and settling down upon the bending branches like the sound of many waters. At the back of the residence a high hill rose, whose white crags could be seen from the upper windows of the house, where the lightning flamed in awful grandeur, and the wind-god moaned with an icier chill. Before it, in the distance, was the ocean, where ships were visible through the trees, when the atmosphere was clear; and on each side it was bounded by forest and field. A gentle waterfall played among the ferns at the foot of the lawn, whose very sounds were music, where poetry dwelt in a bower of green. Roses hung from roofs of arbours; roses clustered on propped-up stems; roses perfumed the walks, and gemmed the curious porch; roses whispered by the lakes, and bent their fragrant lips to the crystal brooks; roses trailed among the box and laurel, and even climbed to the pine tree tops. It was, indeed, a region of roses, and a land of flowing streams.

But it was not always so. Once it was a misty marsh, stagnant and stifling. The sportsman came there after the wild fowl, and, occasionally, the cottager for peat; and this was all. The wild winds rolled over it from December until March, with more meaning in their moanings than man can utter. The snow fell upon its arid slopes, and the frost frolicked on its isolated pools, with a startling language in their purity, which the poet alone is able to read. And duly, too, the eastern portals opened, when Morning came forth in her sheeny robes, kissing the drooping flowers, and stringing rainbow-coloured dew-drops upon its course, thin grasses, and

rushy tufts, and whispering in its hollows of an era yet to come. And it was even so with the moonlight, the starlight, and the twilight; each and all were replete with a language which told of other years, which ceased not in its onward progress, reverberating from bog to bog, and boulder to boulder, until the ear of meditative man could bear it no longer, and the tools of the worker were busy in the wilderness, which was ultimately transformed into a pasture of plenty, such as we have depicted in the opening of our tale. And what the surroundings of the Grange became, under the hand of cultivation, so will the waste places of England be with toil and trust.

We have not much to do at present with the former proprietors of the Grange, who are supposed to have come from Germany, and to have purchased the estate when it was but poorly cultivated. The name of its present owner was Jacob Jare, a diligent hardworking yeoman. Under his superior management, the farm soon assumed quite a different aspect, and became a source of great gain to him. His wife's name was Hanet; and Providence blessed them with one son, who was sent in due course to school. He made rapid progress in learning, and at the age of fourteen had advanced as far as his master could teach him, for education was not then so forward as at present. Soon after he left school, his father was taken ill, and month after month he gradually grew worse; and at last he felt that he must die. He called his son to him, and entreated him to be kind to his mother, as the fifth commandment taught him; to be diligent in his business, as after his death the barton would be entirely in his hands. He said that some time ago he was visited with a vision in the twilight—of earnest-hearted workmen levelling hills, draining valleys, and planting the steep hill-slopes with the food of life. Higher wages fell into the hands of the toiler in the field, in the shop, and in the mine; and he was oppressed with tyranny no longer. Bread was in his cupboard, and clothes upon his healthy children. His wife smiled at her washing, and sang sweetly at her needle and shears. He was looked upon as a brother by his equals; and the wealthy landowner undervalued him no more. He held his head erect in the assemblies of the people, and moved among the wonders of creation with an acknowledged dignity

upon his brow. In fact, he was a serf no longer, but a respected and valued citizen of the world. He then died, and was buried; and a stone was erected over his tomb: "Here lies Jacob Jare."

The name of the son was Martin; and after the death of his father he made great changes on the land. He planted pines on the slopes, and fruit-trees in the vale; he enclosed waste corners, demolishing old hedges, putting two or three small fields into one; he removed great heaps of rubbish, which had been accumulating in various places, putting it to fill up hollows and make the rough places plain; he laid out new roads, walks, and shrubberies, until the barton looked almost another place. Nor did he forget the pasture land, which became much more productive under his control. But the old Grange with its gable roof, Gothic windows, and arched doorway, remained the same. The sparrows built there, the doves sheltered under the eaves, the turkeys proudly strutted up and down the yard, and the rooks rocked themselves to rest in the trees. And so it went on moon after moon, and season after season, with but little change within or without.

Hanet, Martin's mother, was now growing old; her step was feeble and her hair was grey. With her, indeed, the grinders had ceased, and the grasshopper had almost become a burden. But her resolute will, which she had so long manifested, both within doors and without, was still unsubdued. In nothing was this more apparent than in her stern determination to retain the management of all money affairs, and to keep the gold and silver within her own grasp. Martin had but little to do with this, and cash was almost a stranger in his purse, except a small sum now and then for pocket-money. But he never complained, willing to labour for his mother, knowing that the few thin silvery hairs which fell upon her brow betokened the advance of time, and the hour when she would pass away from him; and then the Grange, with its surroundings, would be his. But this was not his desire by any means, for his prayer night and morning was that Providence would preserve his mother, and spare her life for many years.

Martin had free access to all the rooms in the old Grange, from the cellar to the attic, except one on the left wing of the

building; and this was called by the servants the *Secret Chamber*. Hanet, the deceased yeoman's wife, was the only person who ever entered it. She carried the key about with her by day, and placed it under her pillow by night. Not a man, or a maid; not a single domestic, from the oldest to the youngest, had even so much as peeped into the Secret Chamber. Various and vain were the surmises as to what it contained, and why Dame Hanet was the only person who ever entered its precincts. Perhaps it held some precious mementos of the Jare family—some ancient shields or swords, bruised and battered in the day of battle? Perhaps there were some quaint writings, on vellum, or rough parchment, in the drawers of the great bureau, penned five hundred years ago, by scribes in tinselled robes, wearing huge caps composed of the skins of now defunct beasts, which she loved to ponder over in still retirement, too mysterious for other eyes to behold? Perhaps the room was haunted with the ghosts of the departed, who came and sat on the cushioned chairs, like moonlight shadows, with whom the Dame was so familiar that she even wooed their entrance, and waved her hand at their exit? Perhaps it contained some mystic volumes, which taught poor folks the way of turning granite into gold, and the earth of the fields into bars of shining silver; and Dame Hanet alone was able to decipher these characters? Or, perhaps, in some mahogany drawer, closely locked and secured, were heaps of diamonds and dollars, enough to purchase a parish, which the Dame delighted to count? Such were the conjectures of the servants in the great kitchen, when the faggot crackled, and the cricket chirruped upon the hearth.

Meanwhile, Dame Hanet grew older; a fog from a neighbouring moorland rolled over the country, saturating the trees and grasses, and even creeping into the porch, and through the door-chinks of the Grange; and when it had passed away, sweeping westward like a great tidal wave, Dame Hanet was laid upon her bed. As the months went by, her illness increased; but her will was as resolute as ever, and no power or persuasion could induce her to yield up the key of the Secret Chamber. She was often whispering to herself when awake, and frequently talking in her sleep. She would not allow the Bible to be brought into her room, or the name of

the Saviour to be mentioned in her hearing. And thus the sands trickled slowly from the glass of time, until there were only a few more grains to fall.

One evening Martin requested the servant who was in attendance on his mother to ask if she would let him have the key of the Secret Chamber. The servant presented the petition ; but she denied the request with much energy and trembling, saying no one should ever get it from her. It was noticed, too, that she looked very strange, and that a great darkness came over her features. During the night a storm arose, the conflict with the elements was immense ; it thundered and lightened greatly ; the trees roared around the Grange, and the river rushed down the valley with a solemn sound. Throughout the lonely house strange tappings were heard, and a mysterious flutter as if of weary wings ; and hollow wailings crept through chinks which were quite unnoticed before. Dame Hanet moaned, turned upon her bed, and beat the coverlet with her bony hands. The servants shuddered to behold her, and shrank from the fearful sight. All night she was dying.

The morning dawned ; Dame Hanet's pulse grew feebler, and her breathing harder. The storm had blown over, and the old trees rocked no more. The sun looked forth in full glory upon the tranquil earth, and Beauty sat in her bower of brightness weaving roses in her shining hair. Birds fluttered from tree to tree, and butterflies glided from flower to flower. She whispered to the servant to call her son, and she would give him the key. Martin came, and was surprised and grieved to see the strange look upon his mother's face—a look which cannot be described in words. He quietly approached the bed, when she hastily turned her eyes upon him. "Martin, my son," she repeated, "you have been asking for the key of the Secret Chamber, and I suppose you must have it." She then drew it forth from under the pillow, and held it out to him. He took hold of one end of it, and she held the other. The sacrifice was too much for Dame Hanet, and she died in this position—grasping an end of the key in one hand, and Martin holding on to the other !

Her head fell back, the dead hand relaxed, and Martin was the possessor of the key. After properly attending to the inanimate form, they prepared to enter the Secret Chamber. All the servants and old retainers were summoned, and they

all came with wondering miens. They marched in single file through the solemn passages, with their young master at their head, until they reached the open doors of the mysterious apartment. O, how their hearts palpitated when Martin placed the key in the lock and gently turned it! The bolt went back without any grating, and soon they had free access to the room. Slowly they entered it; Martin marching first, with cautious, careful footstep. And now they are all inside, and their hands are lifted in amazement. They were speechless for a season, and stared at each other in blank bewilderment.

Reader be not alarmed! They saw no spectre with beckoning hand,; no ancient shields, blood-spotted ; no swords, no battle-blades, with "grey hairs sticking to the heft;" no books, or parchments crammed full of mystic lore. The furniture was very beautiful, and very clean and orderly. The pictures were handsome, in heavy gilt frames, which were chiefly portraits of defunct members of the Jare family. But the great attraction was found under a splendid mirror, by the eastern window, through which the sun was then shining. On a long oaken table covered with green baize, were piles of silver, gold, and copper, in high heaps and regular rows, from one end of the board to the other, glittering and flashing in the sunshine. Here was Dame Hanet's secret—this vast hoard of wealth. Yes, this was the great idol of her adoration. Here she worshipped the golden calf, which attracted her more and more as the years passed by, filling her eager soul with fires more strange than the flickerings of a volcano. In a drawer of the same table was discovered a bank-book; and when all the widow's savings were reckoned up, the aggregate sum was upwards of three thousand pounds!

The reader will be interested to learn that Martin Jare devoted the principal portion of his strangely-discovered fortune to the good of the people. Fathers blessed him at their well-spread board, and mothers taught their children to pray for him, both morning and evening, as the benefactor of his race. His name rose high in the history of his people, and bards perpetuated his worth to the generations to come.

MINOR POEMS.

THE BOATMAN'S LESSON.

THE little boat went gliding on,
And then the winds arose;
The twilight faded on the hills,
The day began to close.
The boatman spoke, as much I feared
Amid the flashing foam,
"O master, give it up to me,
And I will row you home."

So I sat still in helplessness,
Though numbed in every limb,
Now up, now down among the waves,
And gave it up to him:
And skilfully he turned the prow,
And plied the bending oar,
Until, just as the moon arose,
He brought me safe to shore.

And evermore that boatman's words
Amid the wind severe,
As up and down the world I walk,
Are ringing in my ear,

In sun, in rain, in dark, in light,
Where'er my footsteps roam :
"O master, give it up to me,
And I will row you home."

'Tis thus with HIM who came to save
The ruined sons of men :
We are to trust His power as I
Believed the boatman then ;
And though the winds may smite the dark,
And angry surges foam,
The loving Christ of Nazareth
Will guide His people home.

October 14*th*, 1876.

THE VIOLETS AGAIN.

THE violets again ! the violets again !
Their blue faces smile in the lea-hedge and lane,
By the well in the village, and down by the mere
Where the queen-fays are playing when moonlight is clear,
And up mid the bracken where crags catch the rain :
'Tis spring-time, 'tis spring-time—the violets again !

They gladden the schoolboy, and quicken the sage ;
They fling their sweet spells over childhood and age :
The sick one is cheered with their glances so dear,
And the ploughman sings louder to know they are near,
And whistles the driver beside the wide wain :
'Tis spring-time, 'tis spring-time—the violets again !

In forest and fallow they shine in their beds
As blue as the firmament over our heads ;
And sounds from their moss-homes are murmuring all day,
That man should be grateful and evermore pray :
For the God of the flowers has made nothing in vain :
'Tis spring-time, 'tis spring time—the violets again !

Then let us not murmur, but honour His hand
Whose blossoms of beauty are filling the land.

How they gleam in the dingles, and wave 'neath the trees,
For evermore wafting His name on the breeze!
Though changes o'ertake us, we will not complain:
'Tis spring-time, 'tis spring-time—the violets again!

CORNWALLIA.

TWILIGHT with me, twilight with thee:
No morn my strength restores,
As when, companioned with my harp,
I wandered down thy moors,
And heard, where bowers were ivy-roofed,
Cross-streaked with sunset hues,
When boyhood roved among thy meads,
The mysteries of the Muse.

From morn till eve, from youth to age,
Till green leaves turned to brown,
Have I, enamoured of thy charms,
Gone crooning up and down,
Until thy streams and bye-ways still
And solemn commons wide
Were like the faces of my flock
Around my own fireside.

When moonlight-shafts fell on thy meres,
And fairies thronged thy wells,
How oft I've heard the queen of song
Within thy flowery dells!
And where thy mineral stores lie hid
Beneath the pall of night,
Mine ears have caught unuttered strains
From many a tinselled sprite.

In glens where giants lived in caves,
And princes stalked of yore,
I've stayed my feet to hear the rush
Of armies on the shore,

Where now the glancing swallows wheel
Till glows the red sunset
Along thy craggy castled peaks,
Or fisher plies his net.

How many cells from man retired,
Where no one sees or hears,
How many moss-banks, fay-impressed,
I've hallowed with my tears,
When Eve led Silence down the hills
Into the dingles dim,
And God was pleading on the heights
That men should turn to Him!

Twilight with me, twilight with thee:
Yet still thy waters roar,
And great ships come and great ships go
With many a precious store.
Thy mountain-tarns are sacred sites,
Thy peaks are holy ground,
Where angels gather in the dusk
When psalms are floating round.

From schoolboy tasks to fading age,
Thy reeds and rocks among,
Muse-led, my earnest life has been
An era of strange song.
My theme—thy beauties unsurpassed
On sea-side, mead, and moor,
Where fairest damsels sing thy fame
By many a rustic door.

Yet though I hear the sound of strings
Among thy rustling reed,
And voices whispering in thy pines,
Men give but little heed.
And if I tell them song is there,
So many turn their head,
And almost offer me a stone
In lieu of daily bread.

Twilight with me, twilight with thee :
Yet will I sing thy worth
Until thou yieldest me a grave
Within my mother earth.
The flowers are fair in other lands,
And clear the waters fall,
But old Cornwallia is the best
And brightest of them all.

JOE AND HIS BARK.

TRIM the light, Emma dear, let it burn, let it burn :
The cold wind is sweeping by every turn :
It shaketh the window, and rattleth the door,
And rolleth away with a rush and a roar
Down the echoing cliffs, through the terrible dark,
To the sea, to the sea, with our Joe and his bark.

"Trim the light, Emma dear, trim the light, trim the light :
His last letter said he was coming to-night :
From the offing he'll watch for our beacon's bright ray—
Hark ! a gun of distress at the mouth of the bay !
How sadly it sounds through the sorrowful dark !
It may be our Joe in his storm-driven bark.

"Add oil to the lamp, let it flame, let it flame :
There's a sound in my ears like our sailor boy's name,
And a footstep is coming I very well know—
It must be, it must be the tread of our Joe.
The gate has banged to, he is getting *so* near :
How I'll hug him and kiss him ! Thank God, he is here!"

OLD GRANNY BENT.

A WIDOW was Granny much wasted with care,
And bright lines of silver had mixed with her hair :
Her thin cheeks were worn with the sorrows of years ;
Deep channels were there, as if washed out with tears.
She stooped a bit forward, wherever she went,
And the villagers knew her as old Granny Bent.

She lived in a little house by the moor stream,
And her window was gilt with the morning's first beam.
The ivy had climbed all the way to the thatch,
And the woodbine was whispering over the latch,
Where the rose and the myrtle were lovingly blent
On the walls of the dwelling of old Granny Bent.

There neatness and cleanness with order combined,
And her pewter was bright as the spade of a hind:
The cat by the cricket coiled up in its place,
Where the sands of the hour-glass were running their race:
And the musk in the window out-wafted its scent,
To comfort the croonings of old Granny Bent.

The parish allowed her the dole of its poor,
Yet the beggar unaided ne'er passed from her door:
And 'twas sweet, when the elder came out by the gate,
As in the low porch-way she silently sate,
Gazing down the wide moor on the twilight's descent,
To hear the bright needles of old Granny Bent.

She read but one book in the heat and the cold:
Its pages were tear-marked, its covers were old,
And over the leaves above and below
Some joy-lines were visible, made long ago.
Its precepts she pondered wherever she went:
The BIBLE was precious to old Granny Bent.

When the Sabbath bells sounded along the green leas,
She went to her meeting-house under the trees;
And here I have seen her with trust in her eye,
When waiting in silence for HIM to pass by;
Imploring in breathings the Spirit's descent,
Who came in His beauty to old Granny Bent.

One moaning I missed her. The warning had come,
And the Angel of Mercy had summoned her home.
Below we were seeking the aid of His rod:
On high she was hymning the praises of God.
And this was my thought on the solemn event:
What a change up in glory for old Granny Bent!

June, 1876.

A FRAGMENT.

A BOY came down from a cot of reed,
And tuned his pipe by the village mead.
The notes were sweet as the summer breeze
That woke the melodies of the trees ;
And we wiped our eyes to hear his strain,
Now high, now low, with a soft refrain,
As surely Heaven-inspired and true
As the lark's loved lay in the circling blue.
But his country clans, who knew him well,
Paid little heed to his soothing shell,
Because, we ween, he was lowly born,
And his sire had never a title worn.
So they turned away from his simple song
For a blustering trumpeter in the throng,
Who blew a blast like the noise of strife
In the well-thronged mart when tongues are rife ;
And the boy was left by the village trees
To play alone to the birds and bees.

A worker stood with the sons of men :
He could use his hands, he could use his pen :
But he boasted not that his strength was great,
Nor bragged it over his trudging mate,
But bent with quietness to his toil
From moon to moon in the world's turmoil ;
And so still his tongue, and so slow his pace,
That the clamorous cried, " 'Tis a losing race ! "
And the coxcomb scoffed, and the pompous brayed,
And the swaggerer slashed him into shade.
Yet stranger far than all beside
That worth was so misled by pride :
For they turned their backs on the quiet man,
And after the rollicking roarers ran,
Not knowing or heeding the weak from the strong,
But moved by the wind which swayeth the throng :
And so with the tears on his high cheek-bone
The quiet worker was left alone.

The years pass by like a tale at eve,
Where the vine round the lattice its tendrils weave;
And the noisy trumpeter was not found,
Nor our ears assailed with his furious sound;
But the sweet-harped boy at man's estate
Had gathered round him the good and great,
Who hailed his hymns of humble birth
As a heaven-born gift to the weary earth.
And the clamourer, too, and the braggart bare
Had passed away like the clouds which were
But yester-eve on our gladdened view,
Leaving no trace on the wondrous blue:
But the quiet worker with hand and pen
Had won the esteem of his fellow-men,
And brought a blessing upon his race
By deeds of love and acts of grace.
So knew I that sweetness and meekness might be
Overborne for a season, to triumph more free.

DAN AND HIS FATHER.

The wise will learn from simpleness,
The reaping of a sheaf,
A stray note floating through the woods,
The rustling of a leaf.
And lessons of Divinest lore
Beyond the sage's reach,
Blest by the Spirit of His Son,
A child may often teach.

The day declined, and little Dan
Put on his cap to go,
When up the distant southern sky
A great cloud travelled slow.
Then to the door his granny came,
And glanced across the leas,
And told him he had better stay,
For voices filled the breeze.

And suddenly the lightning streamed
Against the window-sills,
And thunder answered thunder-peal
Among the echoing hills.
Great drops of rain came pattering down,
The eaves with water ran,
And granny from the settle spoke,
"How wilt thee get home, Dan?"

Just then a step was heard outside,
And in the solemn roar
Which filled the glens and shadowy creeks
Dan's father oped the door.
He wore a long coat to his heels,
So very snug to see:
He looked at Dan, and opened it:
"Now step in here," said he.

So Dan went in, and all was dark:
He grasped his father's hand,
As they went plashing through the pools
And o'er the sodden sand.
And though he could not see the earth,
Nor yet the heavens above,
His trust was in his father's care,
Was in his father's love.

And soon he heard the wicket-gate
Amid the falling rain;
Then that which gladdened him much more,
The latch click in the lane.
And now, as quickly as could be,
The coat was opened wide:
And Dan was home before the fire,
With mother at his side.

Should we not learn from truths like this
To banish sad despair,
And, whether it be dark or light,
To trust our FATHER'S care?

The sobs of sorrow may arise
And thicken in the blast;
But He who shields us with his wings
Will guide us home at last.

THE ROSE.

No words have power to
utter half the feeling
Which through my being
flows,
While moorland music
is around me stealing,
To hail the summer rose.

How love I silence and
the rush of waters,
The brooklet's gentle
tone,
And Solitude with her
dear twilight daugh-
ters,
Musing o'er byepaths
lone!

And when the sunset
cleaves the waves
asunder,
I read their crests of red,
Or steal enraptured
through the moon's
white wonder
With star-shafts over-
head.

Still hear I psalms where wells their treasures render,
And rush and rock abound,
As sorrow-healing and as sweetly tender
As when my harp I found.

And so 'twill be till life's last lay is written,
And twilight's portals close :
When tottering Time with Death's sharp scythe is smitten,
My heart is with the rose.

OLD FRANKEY.

OLD Frankey sat in his elbow-chair :
His visage was pale and marked with care.
His wife and he had both grown old,
And their son had left them in search of gold.

Old Frankey's wife, with a look of dread,
Told how the cupboard contained no bread ;
And, "What shall we do?" with a sigh began :
"O, trust in God!" said the dear old man.

Then he climbed the stairs with his locks so grey,
And calmly knelt by his bed to pray.
He was ill and weak and decrepit too,
And this was all the old man could do.

And as he pleaded the Saviour's Word,
A double knock on the door was heard,
And his wife cried out by the old crock's rim :
"A letter, Frankey, from our boy Tim!"

Then they broke the seal with the greatest care,
And an English five-pound note was there.
Said Frankey, brushing away the tear,
"God's children never starve, my dear."

THE CABIN BOY.

THE winds blew wilder every hour ;
Then came the dreadful shock,
The wail of woe, the rush on deck—
The ship was on a rock.

True to his post the captain stood
Amid the wild uproar,
And cried, as with a trumpet voice,
"Who takes this line ashore?"

None answered. The loud-roaring winds
Rushed fiercely from their caves,
And fearful monsters, lightning-winged,
Rode on the seething waves.
Well might the stoutest spirit quail
Before the blinding glare,
The strife of struggling elements,
And bronzed tars tremble there.

None answered, though the splintered mast
Fell in the doleful deep,
And some brave seaman lost his hold
At every billow's sweep.
Then spoke the pious cabin-boy,
Who by the stern did stand:
"With God's help, Sir, if you'll allow,
I'll take the line to land.

"My brothers taught me how to swim
When I was very small;
And once I saved a passenger
Who from the deck did fall:
Out of the shrouds I quickly dropped,
And caught him by the hand.
With God's help, Sir, if you'll allow,
I'll take the line to land."

"Go," cried the captain, "quickly go:
My feelings none can tell.
Our lives are hanging on thy worth:
May kind Heaven speed thee well!"
The waters roared, and every board
Seemed by a thread to hang,
When o'er the ship's side gallantly
The youthful hero sprang.

The cord was fastened to his waist :
He struggles in the sea :
They see him now, and now he's lost ;
Now up, now down is he.
And now the line is standing still,
Which does their hopes destroy :
They strain their eyes, but cannot see
The faithful cabin-boy.

O noble lad ! Where is he ? where ?
Within the deep profound,
Asleep beneath the moaning waves,
With bright shells shining round ?
O, no ! O, no ! Lift up your eyes,
And see his waving hand,
And hear his shout of thankfulness,
Now standing on the land.

And soon a rope was drawn ashore,
And many a tar has crossed,
The captain and his grateful crew,
For not a soul was lost.
And as they stood around him there,
They shouted loud for joy,
That God would bless for evermore
The noble cabin-boy !

THE CHRISTMAS FIRE.

The log blazed bright on the chimney-stone,
Where an old man sat in his chair alone :
No, not alone ; for strange phantoms came
And danced awhile in the flickering flame ;
And looks of love from faces bland
Gleamed forth from the cells of the burning brand.

He saw his brothers and sisters blest
Where the daisies smiled by the skylark's nest :
His playmates came, with their cheeks of joy,
With hoop and marbles, as when a boy ;
And the carol-chanters adown the moor
Were singing beside the rectory door.

And one he had loved when his youth was green
Stood out from the embers the flames between,
With a smile like spring when the sunshine glows
On the emerald slopes and the opening rose ;
And the old man drew his chair still nigher,
While a tear fell down on the Christmas fire.

And then his daughters across the sea
And his sons came back to their father's knee ;
And he heard their laughter among the trees.
When summer was fanning the fragrant leas ;
And their prayers returned when the day was spent,
And the traveller's feet were homeward bent.

Then a vision arose in the clear fire-gleams
Of a coming age of meads and streams,
When war should die on a desert shore,
And man shoot down his man no more ;
When love should hold in a silken band
The peaceful dwellers of every land.

And he looked again in the embers red,
Where Merit walked with an unbowed head,
And Worth was honoured among the isles,
And Truth had earned its country's smiles,
And Peace reclined in her pastoral bower
With a crown of green corn half in flower.

Still blazed the log on the chimney-stone,
Where the old man sat in his chair alone :
And he heard an echo from shore to shore
That might should trample on right no more ;
That the true should live, and the false expire :
And he thanked his God by the Christmas fire.

MY FATHER'S HAND.

THE throng was great, the train moved on
With many a serf and squire :
But one fair boy was shedding tears,
For he had lost his sire.

Around him men and women sat
With features strangely dim ;
But not a single face he knew,
They all were strange to him.

On, on ! puff, puff ! the rail-horse rushed,
Yet still the fair boy sighed,
Till he was gently asked to scan
A window at his side.
A smile passed o'er his tear-washed face,
While he in accents bland
Exclaimed with earnest beaming eyes,
" It is my father's hand ! "

So he at once was satisfied,
Nor shed another tear,
Convinced by what he then beheld
His father must be near.
And soon they reached their journey's end,
And trod the station floor ;
And the glad boy had tightly grasped
His father's hand once more.

Thus there are times and seasons too
Along the Christian race,
When faith is dim, and cannot see
Our loving Father's face.
But, O, behind the gathering clouds
That darken half the land,
We hear His voice, and see again
The glory of His hand.

The flowers along the brooklet's banks,
The blossoms on the tree,
The ferns within the forest shade,
The daisy of the lea,
The clouds around the gate of Eve,
When silence fills the strand,
And voices flow among the hills,
Reveal our Father's hand.

And should our tears in secret fall,
And hunger mark our way,
If weariness and pain are ours,
And watchings night and day,
With patience let us bear the cross
At His Divine command,
Assured that we at last shall see
Our loving Father's hand.

The winds may rise, the angry skies
Grow darker every hour,
And o'er our cherished earthly hopes
The wintry clouds may lower:
Yet still I say that come what may
Across life's desert sand,
Look up and wait, and we shall see
Our loving Father's hand.

SPRING STANZAS.

THE first dear buds are in their mossy places,
Nursed with the love of Spring:
By stream and stile outbeam their shining faces,
Where woodland echoes ring.

Adown the steeps and through the solemn sedges
Where trailing tendrils twine,
Among the trees and by the hamlet-hedges,
Awaken lays divine.

Jehovah whispereth in the trembling brier,
And song o'erflows the leas,
Whilst every blossom is a blissful lyre,
Swept by the mystic breeze.

Throughout God's earth this murmur stayeth never,
Whilst green leaves fade and fall,
By day, by night, reminding us for ever
That He is King of all.

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.

I KINGS, XVII.

By the brook's side Elijah
Came when the reeds were still,
And patiently he waited
To know his Master's will.
And morn and eve the ravens
Swept through the silent air,
With bread and flesh from heaven,
To feed the prophet there.

And now the clear sky brightened,
And came a time of dearth,
The rustling herbage withered,
No rains fell on the earth :
The corn-stalk quailed for moisture,
And closed the floweret's cup :
He quaffed the brook no longer,
For Cherith was dried up.

Then through the gates of Zion
Jehovah bade him seek
The widow of Zarephath,
With weary waiting weak.
And so he crossed the dingles,
With no desire to wait,
And found her gathering branches
Beside the city gate.

He knew her in a moment,
For God had sent him there :
Cheer up, poor weeping widow ;
The Lord hath heard thy prayer.
His succour cometh surely,
Although it should delay ;
For oft His will He worketh
In a mysterious way.

"Fetch me a little water,"
Was the seer's mild command :
"And bring the smallest morsel
Of baked bread in thy hand."
But she had none to give him,
And little meal to use,—
A handful in a barrel,
Some oil-drops in a cruse.

Within their home of sadness
She left her boy alone,—
No meat was on the platter,
No fire was on the stone,—
A few stray sticks to gather
Beneath the burning sky,
Wherewith to cook their victuals,
Then fold their hands and die.

He bade her fear no evil,
Not e'en the cloud-shade dim,
But at Jehovah's bidding
To bring a cake to him.
And nothing should diminish
Of her small earthly stay ;
God would renew the barrel
And oil-cruse day by day.

So she obeyed Jehovah
Throughout her trustful lot,
And the meal never lessened,
The oil-drops wasted not.
Though famine smote the vine-lodge,
And made the dresser sad,
No lack was in her dwelling :
The widow's heart was glad.

Thus shall it be for ever,
While stars their courses run,
And youth, and age, earth-bending,
Are gladdened in the sun.

Who heeds the Spirit's teaching,
And cheerfully obeys,
Shall feed upon His blessing
For very many days.

A PLEA FOR ROBIN REDBREAST.

I AM sure it is more than my granny would do,
In her gay crimson cloak and her bedgown of blue,
So famous for using her needle and thread,—
Wear robin for show on the top of her head.

No : sooner than robin to kill on the spray,
She would trudge it without any bonnet all day ;
And I know she would whisper to Martin and Ned,
" Don't marry a maid with a bird on her head ! "

O, sacred was robin with snow on the moor
When she scattered the crumbs by the sill of her door ;
As dear as her babe was his bosom of red :
She dare not wear robin for show on her head.

How the tears filled our eyes as around her we stood,
And she told us the tale of the Babes in the Wood,
Which he covered with leaves when he knew they were dead :—
Not granny wear robin for show on her head !

O robin, red robin ! to torture him so,
Who cometh when angels are making the snow,
And icicles hang from the eaves of the shed !
Shame, lady, to wear the pet bird on your head !

It was Thomson who sung that Lavinia looked best
When the robes were the plainest in which she was drest :
How he would have wondered, with sadness o'erspread,
To see his pet bird on the top of her head !

The wind in the trees, and the waves of the main,
The thrush in the thicket, pour forth the refrain :
" O lady, dear lady, is goodness all fled,
That you wear the dead bird on the top of your head ? "

He cometh when ice-gales are tearing the thatch,
And the cloud-feathers hiss on the knocker and latch,
And the sea-waves roll solemnly, shaking the shore :
O leave little robin to sing at the door !

Last eve from a thorn robin whistled so clear,
As the bells from the belfry burst on mine ear,
And the sun sank to rest in a splendour of red :—
O lady, to wear the dead bird on your head !

The child on the cricket, the boy on the stool,
The youth with his satchel away to the school,
The man at the scythe, and the maid at the rake,
Love robin beyond all the birds of the brake.

O lady, the King from His mansion of light
In anger looks down at the sorrowful sight ;
And a sin-mark remaineth wherever you tread
With the dear little bird on the top of your head.

And surely my granny was right in the main :
I have said it before, and I'll say it again,
Repeating her warning to Martin and Ned :
" Don't marry a maid with a bird on her head ! "

THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE.

HAST thou gone forth when earth and air were still,
And leaves dropped gently down,
Where clearest waters worked the village mill,
And the old woods were brown ?

And didst thou hear among the tinkling streams
Which through the brushwood wind,
Where the sun flings his faint and fitful beams,
An echo undefined ?

Now high, now low, now like a distant lute,
Where pine-trees hide the meads,
Now softly sad, now eloquently mute,
Now trembling through the reeds ?

The solemn mystery which o'ercame thee then
Was the Almighty Voice:
He giveth song to every hill and glen:
O hear it, and rejoice!

THE CESSATION OF WAR.

THE sweetest lyres that ever rang
Have echoed,—Strife shall cease,
And wild War lay his weapons down
Low at the feet of Peace.
Then olive-leaves shall gem the isles,
Dropped by the gentle dove,
And anger yield to charity,
And hate give place to love.

'Tis time, 'tis time, to lay the sword
And deadly rifle by,
To let the awful cannon rust
Where silent ramparts lie;
And turn the mighty battle-ships
Adrift upon the flood,
Converted into merchantmen
For man's especial good.

'Tis time, 'tis time, to sow the vales,
And plough the untilled land;
And let the nations cast away
The hissing ball and brand;
Enkindle charity's clear lamp
As far as man has trod,
And bow in reverential awe
Before the mighty God.

'Tis time, where Christian churches rise,
And hymns of mercy swell,
And Sabbath prayers perfume the air,
To bury shot and shell,

And trust in Him who holds the winds
Within His awful hand,
To whom the foes of righteousness
Are as a grain of sand.

O that my words had power to move
The masses of mankind,—
The statesman in the cabinet,
The poor neglected hind!
Like morning light athwart the isles
This simple sound should fly,
And twice ten thousand utter it:
"'Tis time that War should die!"

'Tis time, 'tis time, that bards denounce
The awful battle-blaze,
And bid men view its ghastliness
Stripped of its fabled rays,
Where cornfields lie like blackened moors,
And glens with gore are red,
And cities flame and widows wail
Above the trampled dead.

'Tis time, 'tis time, to welcome Peace
With all her fair array,—
The lowing herd, the luscious vine,
Green corn, and fragrant hay;
The heaped-up wain, the song of praise
From every peasant's door,
The golden age of brotherhood,
When man shall slay no more.

Already shines the star of morn
Above the trembling trees,
And His unfailing promises
Are travelling on the breeze,
That Earth shall yield her buds of bliss
Like those in vales above,
And beauty blossom everywhere,
A universe of love.

O MAN, WHATE'ER THY LOT MAY BE.

O MAN, whate'er thy lot may be,
Believe that it is best for thee,
And trust for that thou canst not see.

There is a star behind the cloud,
A passage where the waves are loud,
And Hope still holds the flapping shroud.

Stern winter yields to budding spring.
The fiercest storms have fleetest wing,
And faith can e'en in darkness sing.

Then courage take, and fear not thou
The torrent's path, the mountain's brow :
Thy God shall shield thee then as now.

And e'en in peril's sharpest hour,
When cold winds blight thy dearest flower,
Still stay thee on the Arm of Power.

One Rock, one Refuge, have we all ;
One fold, one flock, one Shepherd's call,
One great Deliverer from the fall.

And so I say to thee once more,
However weak, however poor,
However small thy earthly store,

Believe the promise of His Son,
The work that He for thee hath done,
And sin is slain, and heaven is won.

JONAH.

SUNSET among the cedars,
When through the gates of gold
The grandeur of the Highest
In words of wonder rolled :

"To Nineveh go, Jonah:
Spare not, but cry aloud:
'Yet forty gathering twilights,
And she is in her shroud!'"

Whence came this lonely prophet
With features worn and wild?
Had he no settled dwelling?
Had he no wife or child?
No home among the palm-trees,
Or 'neath the cedars rare?
No mother with her blessing
To fill his life with prayer?

But he flew down to Joppa
Against the Lord's command,
And paid his fare to Tarshish
With a rebellious hand.
The great storm soon o'ertook them,
And smote the rumbling deep:
But Jonah in his hammock
Was lying fast asleep.

Still louder roared the whirlwind,
Still higher rose the wave;
The terror-stricken seamen
Called on their gods to save.
One of them must be offered,
The Furies to appease;
And the lot fell on Jonah,—
They cast him in the seas.

And then in great compassion
The Lord prepared a whale,
Which swallowed up the prophet,
As ceased the angry gale;
And in the fish's dark belly
He knocked at Mercy's door,
And after three long midnights
Was cast upon the shore.

Then Jonah sought the city,
  Great Nineveh of old,
And cried, "Yet forty sunsets,
  And all her years are told."
And high and low believed it,
  And bowed in earnest prayer;
And God removed His anger,
  And saved the people there.

Should this not cheer us ever
  To bow before His face?
So boundless is His mercy,
  So plenteous is His grace.
Though He had said the city
  Should share Gomorrah's lot,
The God of truth repented,
  Jehovah did it not.

But Jonah's pride was humbled:
  He sat him down to sigh
Amid the eastern olives,
  And strangely longed to die;
Until Divine protection
  The Almighty did accord,
And he forgot his sorrows
  Beneath the sheltering gourd.

But when the morning sunlight
  Streamed on the shining shoot,
The gourd began to wither,
  A worm was at the root.
'Neath the fierce glare he fainted,
  And on the ground did lie,
With scarcely power to whisper,
  "'Twere better far to die."

Thus when our plans are thwarted,
  And all our prospects dim,
When 'tis *our* way no longer,
  Do we not feel like him?

But over all He reigneth,
  Though winds and waters swell,
And clouds hide His pavilion,
  Who doeth all things well.

KIT BOWDEN.

O THINK of him when skies are clear,
  And heaven and earth are bright,
Who labours in the mine-cave drear
  Through an unchanging night.
No lark aloft is singing loud
  Where frown the flint-shades dim :
No thicket-plume with song is bowed,
  No daisy nods for him.

Morn opes her lofty eastern gates
  With bars of brilliant sheen,
When by the shaft Kit Bowden waits
  With mildness in his mien.
On the man-engine rod he stepped,
  Which seemed the shaft of doom,
Dropping him down where Silence slept,
  And Plutus reigned in gloom.

Down, down, from gulf to gulf he went,
  Through smoke-hot sickly air,
To earn his daily bread intent:
  Full twenty more were there,
On steps, upon the engine-rod,
  In suits of flannel dressed,
With tallow wicks, all strangely shod;
  And I among the rest.

And then, as swift as lightnings stream
  Around the shattered raft,
Was heard the rush, the groan, the scream
  Within that dreadful shaft.

The engine-gear had snapped like tow,
And all our hopes destroyed,
Hurled headlong with the sudden blow
Into the fearful void.

I heard the rush, the roar, the groan,
When wounded on the plank :
And then Kit Bowden's earnest tone
Rang through the cavern dank.
With startling power it filled the shaft
Where many lay like me,
With scarcely strength a sigh to waft,—
"My Saviour, where is He?"

It was as if an angel spoke,
Among the sharp spars nigh ;
And then Kit Bowden silence broke
With shouts and praises high.
The Father's face had beamed on him
In brightness from above ;
And though he had a broken limb,
His soul was filled with love.

And when the cares of life increase,
And sorrow's waves are high ;
When all the brooks of comfort cease,
And every well is dry ;
Then like Kit Bowden, sore dismayed,
Bruised, broken on the tree,
I sigh within the gathering shade,
"My Saviour, where is He?"

Years, years ago, when skies were bright,
And trees in buds were dressed,
The angels on their wings of white
Bore him away to rest.
Yet still I hear Kit Bowden's voice
Above life's surging sea,
Which sometimes makes my heart rejoice :
"My Saviour, where is He?"

THE LAUNCH OF THE SICKLE.

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO MISS TREMAYNE.

'Tis not because her keel is firm, and safely placed her gear,
Her timbers sound, her cable safe, her deck unstained and clear,
Her slim mast shivering in the light, her pennon in the breeze,
That we rejoice to launch to-day the Sickle of the seas.

No, not for this, but more because her peace-flag waves above,
To woo the hardy mariner to seek the God of love:
Her aim the overthrow of wrong when war's last spoils are won,
To bear to every seaman's berth the Gospel of His Son.

Go forth to reap the ocean-waifs at the great Master's call,
For in the harvest-field of Christ there is a work for all;
And He will thy evangel bless who stilled the stormy sea,
And walked in His omnipotence the waves of Galilee.

God speed thee on thy holy work for which now set apart;
And may good news be borne by thee to many a sailor's heart!
We bind the Bible to thy prow, invoke the heavenly breeze,
And pray once more that God would bless the Sickle of the seas.

October 31*st*, 1876.

THE FRIENDS.

Who came to me when skies were dark,
And high waves rolled upon my bark
From iron ridges sheer and stark?
The Friends.

Who cheered me when the form of Gloom
In sable vest passed through my room,
Like one in trappings of the tomb?
The Friends.

Who sat beside my stricken hearth,
When sorrow's bitterest tears had birth,
And wild weeds wrapped the reeling earth?
The Friends.

Who came with quiet, noiseless pace,
With love-words, when no other face
Or foot of man stole near my place?
The Friends.

Who gave me sympathy in woe,
And strove to ease the fearful blow
Which in a moment laid me low?
The Friends.

Who took my hand in Christian cheer,
When hills were steep and dales were drear,
And red-eyed Grief was cowering near?
The Friends.

Who prayed for me with simplest grace,
While yet the tears were on my face,
Approaching Heaven's own dwelling-place?
The Friends.

Who bade me trust in Him the more,
Although the waves of trouble roar
In anger on the shaken shore?
The Friends.

Who raised the reed with broken stem,
And bade me touch His garment's hem,
So that my heart is drawn to them?
The Friends.

November 6th, 1876.

THE BOY AND THE BARLEY BREAD.

OVER the Sea Tiberias
The blessed Saviour went,
And trod with His disciples
The mountain's green ascent.
The flowers smiled on their Maker
With bliss-awakening eyes,
As on his car of glory
The great Sun filled the skies.

Up the green hill-side slowly,
With many a sweet acclaim
And homage to Messiah,
A crowd of followers came;
And on the mountain's summit,
Where breezes murmur sweet,
They gained the loving Saviour,
And gathered at His feet.

O, faint they were and weary,
Which Christ the Saviour knew;
And hence He questioned Philip,
To prove his ardour true:
"From whence can bread sufficient
Be found for such a throng
As here, far from the city,
We sit the flowers among?"

And Andrew answered quickly,
"A lad is standing near
Who brings five loaves of barley
And two small fishes here."
A youth of few bright summers,
With thoughtful face and fair,
And beauty on his forehead,—
How came that stripling there?

Had he a widowed mother
Within the smallest shed,
Who sent him forth that morning
To sell his barley bread?
Or little ailing sister
Who long had been unwell,
For whom he sought His blessing?—
We may not, cannot tell.

And then five thousand people
Sat on that grassy hill,
And of these loaves and fishes
They all partook their fill

And after they had eaten,
So wondrously relieved,
The fragments filled twelve baskets,
And multitudes believed.

Thus in His perfect wisdom
An unknown, nameless boy
Is used to spread His glory,
And swell the tide of joy.
And so it ever shall be
Until the perfect day :
The weakest oft is strongest,
A child shall lead the way.

A WAR INCIDENT.

A SERVIAN widow sat by a wall,
Blackened in war, with her children small.
Her husband fell 'neath the foeman's power,
When the fierce flames roared through their dear home-bower,
And a wail of woe from the earth uprose
'Mid clattering hoofs and echoing blows.

Gone, gone was all she had held most dear,
And only the wall was standing here :
Her goods and chattels and items rare,
Stored year by year with religious care,
All swept away in a flood of fire,
'Mid rifle-charge and shell-burst dire.

Of her dearest home this shred of wall,
Flame-scorched, war-pierced, and wild, was all :
And they gathered there as the shot came down,
And the thunder shook the beleaguered town,
Till the heavens waxed fiery overhead,
And her children cried for lack of bread.

Far off was a field of waving grain,
Which rustled in ripeness on the plain :

And thither she went o'er the blasted land,
To gather the ears with a trembling hand,
Which she bruised with stones, and essayed to give,
That her starving children might eat and live.

Thus day by day, while the rifle spoils,
In bitterest widowhood on she toils,
Where War hangs out his funeral pall,
To feed her little ones by the wall :
While her husband's spirit, aloft in the air,
Over the ruin, is watching her there.

O Lord of Love ! O Prince of Peace !
Let hate and rancour and slaughter cease !
Beyond the gloom and mist of strife
May angels scatter the leaves of life,
And sweet odes ring on every shore,
That battle shall bruise the earth no more !

OUR TOMMY.

WHERE is our Tommy, I wonder !
'Tis seldom he lingers so late :
The candle is burnt to the socket,
His supper is cold on the plate.
I hear a great voice in the passes,
Loud breaking among the dark hills :
'Tis the wind in his chariot of wonder,
A-rushing wherever he wills.

" The band of the faggot is broken,
The last I have brought from the pile :
I'll add to the fire a few branches,
And take up my knitting the while.
How loudly the old clock is ticking
By the end of the dresser of delf !
And I hear a mouse nibbling the leaven
Away on the little back shelf.

"I'll open my Bible where David
Sings of the green pastures and streams,
And how the good Shepherd will guide us
Where Canaan's own glory-vale gleams.
I feel, when I'm reading the Psalmist,
Like one in the midst of a wood,
Where breezes are bending the branches,
And angels are spanning the flood.

"O, where is our Tommy, I wonder!
My fears will rush up in a throng.
Hark, hark! he is coming, is coming!
Where hast thou been loitering so long?
"I put Susan home through the meadows,
Because it was noisy and bleak:
So we lingered awhile in the doorway,
And we shall be married next week."

A HYMN OF WELCOME TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL NORTHBROOK,

ON HIS SAFE RETURN FROM INDIA.

May simple words a pleasure bring
To him whose place was next a king;
Who nobly filled the seat of power
Where eastern sunshine gilds the flower,
And murmurs many a sacred stream
Where spire and minaret grandly gleam;
Where cities vast, and valleys lone,
And hill and hollow, shrub-o'ergrown,
And jungle dim, where crash the storms,
Are full of India's fabled forms.
And yet no glittering pageant here,
No dazzling pomp, was half so dear
As English music in the reeds,
The sky-lark singing o'er the meads,

The hawthorn where the field-gate swung,
The primrose when the year was young,
The prayer within the chancel's gloom,
The daisy on his mother's tomb,
The hymn of praise at Sabbath hour
From cot, or old cathedral tower,
In strains of solemn, sweet accord,
To Him who is the sovereign Lord:
And so, in this our simple strain,
We welcome Northbrook home again.

We call to mind how, hand in hand,
Lank Drought and Dearth marched o'er the land,
Followed by Famine's fearful feet,
Slow-trailing through the city street,
And busy towns, and bye-ways lone,
With eyes of fire, and cheeks of bone;
And prince and peasant hung their head,
To hear the echo of his tread,
To hear his melancholy moan,
Enough to pierce a heart of stone.
For age and youth were smitten there,
The maid with roses in her hair,
The child upon his mother's knee,
The herdsman where the teak-trees be;
And quailed the brave, in noontide sheen,
Before the monster's hungry mien.
'Twas then Earl Northbrook faced the foe,
And struggled hard to lay him low,
And dashed at last the demon down,
Winning thereby the world's renown,
Who honour such a conquest, made
Without the gun, or sharpened blade,
Or thrust of spear, or gory stain:—
So welcome, Northbrook, home again.

And other thoughts, to him allied,
Are with us on this harvest-tide,—
How he was ours, through changeful years,
Amid our country's honoured peers;

Courteous and kind where'er he went,
The greatest gift that Heaven hath lent,
Leaving a memory in our souls,
Like flowers where deepest water rolls.
So Cornish hearts rejoice to-day,
Where white sails glisten on the bay,
And sleepy waves, in careless sport,
Are breaking round the castle-fort,
Or ambling on the shining sands,
With tuneful tales of other lands;
While overhead the sea-bird wings,
As on the deck the sailor sings.
And oft the fisher's little maid
Pours forth unstudied, undismayed,
Her carol by the landing-stone,—
"No port is fairer than mine own."
Thus 'mid green fields, and seas of blue,
Where Nature's lore is ever new,
And breezes float from fields of grain,
We welcome Northbrook home again.

IN MEMORIAM.

R. W. FOX, ESQ., F.R.S.

BORN APRIL 26TH, 1789; DIED JULY 25TH, 1877.

His life was love, his death was beautiful,
His sepulchre dear Nature's quietude,
Where green boughs bent with music. Peace and truth
And gentleness were ever at his side,
Though Science crowned him in the hall of wealth:
And in humility with HIM he walked,
The Bible-light his beacon.

Through the firs
The morning beams were streaming, the bright sun
Stirring in his great chamber, lighting up
The doorway of the East, and scattering jets

Of burning ruby on the towering trees;
The flowers held loving converse, while the birds
Filled the green covert with their hymn of praise.
The good man's room how silent! By his bed
His daughter watched, and in unuttered thought
Commended him to Heaven, nor left until
The solemn angel spake, and the first rays
Of spreading sunlight glorified her face,
When he she nursed so fondly moved his hand,
Whispering the name of Jesus, and was gone,
Swifter than thought, into the holy place
Where meet the blessed on the hills of Heaven.

When summer sunned the streamlet rose-embowered,
And the blue sky spread over the full corn,
Where swallows wheeled, and wandering winds came down
With God upon their wings, they bore him forth
And buried him in flowers; whilst o'er his tomb
The tree-tops kissed each other, and the breeze
Sighed through the ivy of the honoured dead;
Then sighed again in waves of pensiveness:
So that the orphan heard it in his tears,
The dresser of the garden, the gray hind,
The widow, and the child upon the grass,
That he who thus beneath the rose-wreaths slept
Was kind and good and loving, and his years
Were filled with deeds that sanctified his life:
Thus ripened he for richness unrevealed.

And so we turned and left him. But our prayers
Shall rise for her who watched beside his couch,
In filial meekness, till the mists of earth
Were scattered by the splendour of the heavens;
And with Christ's hand in his he vanquished death
And put on life eternal.

ANNIE SALT.

THE following incident occurred in one of the rivet-making districts in the Midland Counties, where girls from five to nine years of age are employed as little nurses.

ARE not the warrior's wasteful deeds,
By sword and spear defiled,
Sometimes for bright intrinsic worth
Out-valoured by a child?
True hero-hearts are not confined
To fields of human gore,
With horrid shrieks and awful thrusts
Amid the battle's roar.

A baby nurse was Annie Salt,
A child of six years old;
And little David was her care
Both in the heat and cold.
And though she often longed to run
Where daisies gemmed the lea,
And cuckoo-buds were in the hedge,
She knew it could not be.

Along the street from day to day,
Amid its foul alarms,
Intent on her entrusted charge,
The baby in her arms,
She wandered up, she wandered down,
Without a sign of cheer,
Except the smile on David's face
To little Annie dear.

One day a cart came rolling by:
No time had she to call:
The horses swerved, and she was jammed
Against the rugged wall.
No shriek of dread escaped her lips,
Or echoed through the town,
Although her life was ebbing fast,
And blood came trickling down.

But little David—where was he,
The baby watched with zeal?
At her arm's length she held him up
Above the grating wheel;
Regardless of the cruel crush,
Regardless of the strife,
Intent, through that which cost her much,
To save the baby's life.

Dear little kind heroic nurse!
Over the circling blue
Bright angel-eyes are watching thee
Where flowers are ever new:
And though within the hospital
Thou now in pain dost lie,
The thought of thy heroic deed
Shall often dim our eye.

These are the acts that fill the world
With blossoms of delight,
Which flourish not along the track
Of wasting fire and fight.
If men gave help instead of hate,
And raised their eyes above,
Where roll the stars in harmony,
The earth would glow with love.

THE WELSH MINERS:

OR, THE RESCUERS AND THE RESCUED.

OLD England needs no trumpet,
Where warriors take their part,
And proudly prance the chargers,
To reach her Christian heart.
The voice of suffering thrills her
More than the sounds of strife,
And hastes she now as ever
To rescue human life.

The mine-men had descended
To break Troedyrhiw's coal-seam,
When suddenly the waters
Through all the workings stream.
Like sea-waves surged the billows:
No time had they for flight,
No hope of present rescue,
No passage to the light.

Still swelled the solemn waters,
Still rose their silent prayers,
While each to each united
His fellow's suffering shares.
The waning candles flickered,
The stalls sent forth a sound,
Till the last gleam evanished,
And darkness closed them round.

Fear not, ye honest toilers,
To face this trying scene:
The cotter thinks upon you,
And England's loving Queen;
And many a warm petition
Is offered for you here,
In homes where tears are falling,
By wife and mother dear.

And noble hearts are risking
Their very lives for you,
'Mid fire-damp, rock, and rubbish,
Whose hands and heads are true.
Each noontide brings them nearer,
Till now within your call;
Nor slacken they their labours,
Although the blood-drops fall.

And when ten days of hunger
Had slowly o'er them passed,
These noble hero-workers
Saved the five men at last;

And wives embraced their husbands,
  And children kissed their sires,
And words of praise were wafted
  Along the electric wires.

Deep pleasure thrilled the peasant,
  The nightly watchman lone,
The merchant at his ledger,
  The Queen upon her throne;
And offerings on the altar
  Of love and truth were laid,
And prayers of true thanksgiving
  In hallowed aisles were made.

O, when at eve we gather
  Around the cheerful fire,
Amid our household treasures,
  As the coal-flames rise higher,
We'll talk of those brave miners
  In that lone Cambrian vale,
Who saved their suffering comrades,
  And marvel at the tale!

Thank God for deeds of valour
  Like this we now record!
Thank God for British heroes
  Who never wore a sword!
Thank God for willing workers
  Where Danger's self is seen,—
The love enduring all things!
  Thank God for ENGLAND'S QUEEN!

May, 1877.

GEORGE LEE, THE HEROIC FIREMAN.

THE following incident of true heroic bravery occurred at Clerkenwell at the close of July last, 1876. George Lee, the brave fireman, did all he could do, and laid down his life for another. He was so injured with the smoke and fire that he was at once removed to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where in a week afterwards he died. Captain Shaw believes this to be the greatest act of bravery ever shown by any fireman in the world.

How much we owe, by night, by day,
To the heroic band
In armour clad, but not to slay,—
The firemen of the land!
Where burning beams are all a-glow
The doors and windows round,
To save the helpless forth they go
Where fiery floods abound.

They bear no warrior's burning brands
With measured martial stride,
No rifles glitter in their hands,
No swords are at their side:
They haste to save, and not to slay,
Where Danger's beacon glares,
And waves of fire in surges sway,
And the red column flares.

The flames rose high at Clerkenwell:
George Lee obeys the call,
And 'mid the tolling of the bell
He climbs the heated wall:
For in that upper smoke-filled room,
With gleaming sparks o'ercast,
The victim of a fiery doom,
A girl is dying fast.

He takes the maiden in his arms
Within this sulphurous cell,
And in the chamber of alarms
Five times the hero fell.

And yet he would not lose his hold,
Or leave the young girl there,
Although the flames his face enfold
And singe his streaming hair.

He could have left her there to die,
And saved himself by flight:
But no, he braved the red fire high,
He faced the furious light,
Unmindful of himself the while,
To shield another's life,
Flame-smitten in the burning pile,
To perish in the strife.

O valour more intrinsic far
Than the destroyer's deeds,
With spear and flashing scimitar,
Where wounded Virtue bleeds!
Now let him sleep with fame o'ersprent;
Lay soft sods o'er his head:
George Lee deserves a monument
Among the noble dead.

IRVING'S NOBLE ACT.

At the Manchester Infirmary a poor factory operative had his leg amputated. He was all but dead, when the surgeon stated that nothing but an infusion of blood could save him. Mr. Irving, a medical student, volunteered to be bled, and twenty-five ounces of his life-blood were taken from him at his own serious risk, and infused into the dying man. This noble act of real heroism saved his life. See "The Times," September, 1876.

While the sun shines in all his wealth of glory,
Flinging his splendour around,
Gilding the hollow and the highland hoary,
True heroes will be found.

Not with the war-torch, where the spears are flashing
And the rude trumpet brays;
Not where the bullet from the gun is crashing,
Not where the swordsman slays.

True valour dwelleth in the lowliest places,
Behind a hazel latch,—
Where sweetly cluster simple peasant faces,
Beneath a roof of thatch.

Though war-tents rise where Peace should reap her acre,
And camp-fires flare above,
Yet Charity, in white robes of the Maker,
Holds forth her urn of love.

Thank God for this! Thank God for Mercy's pinion
Hovering above the cloud,
With dews of kindness for lost man's dominion,
Though scoffers clamour loud!

On honour's page we fain would place another,
Adding the poet's hymn,
Who freely gave his best blood for his brother
When life's last light was dim.

Nothing could save the factory man from dying
But blood, and blood alone,
Who almost pulseless in the ward was lying,
When IRVING gave his own.

True greatness this, with no sword-smiting gory,
Spear-thrust, or hissing ball:
And think we, as we read this hero's story,
Of ONE who died for all.

THE SWAN OF ISCA.

THE earth is full of murmurs,
Strange echoes of the years,
Which float o'er fen and forest
When twilight sheddeth tears,

That he who giveth lendeth
To the great King of Love,
To be returned in treasure
From the high hills above.

*Tenax** has caught the spirit
Of love's eternal song,
As forth he goes to battle
With wretchedness and wrong:
His sword true-hearted friendship,
His helmet Christian grace,
His shield the law of kindness
For all the human race.

Already old IONA
Ranks him among her brave
For many a boat whose fisher
Is prospering on the wave:
And now his spirit yearneth,
As only Christian can,
To launch the SWAN OF ISCA:
O, aid the worthy man!

* F. Clapp, Esq., Exeter.

TALES.

MICHAEL MANDER AND THE WAIN.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

"IT is still snowing, mother, and getting dark," said Jessie Mander, "and the wind is rising higher, so that it is difficult to walk against it. I have been down the road to see if father is coming; but there is no trace of him anywhere, nor can I hear the wain, or the rattle of his whip. But this is nothing strange; as I have often heard him say that he carried his whip more for show than for use, and that many a long journey has been performed, with very heavy loads, from morning until night, when the roads were miserably rough and rutty, without even inflicting a single blow on the patient, struggling animal. We have often heard father assert that kind words were better than kicks, and a pat on the neck more powerful than a knotted lash. I wish, I am sure, that Philip Pooley would think so; for the tears came into my eyes yesterday to see him beating his horses up the sleety hill. I so wanted father to come home a little earlier to-day, because it is Christmas Eve, and we have such a number of things to talk about. Where has he gone to, mother? I have forgotten what you told me."

"Over to the rectory for a load of reed, Jessie. Call your brother Isaac from the barn; perhaps he can tell us something

more about it. I heard your father talking with him whilst he was putting on the collar to the horse and buckling the belly-band. I expected him before now, and have prepared his roast potatoes and pork, which are warming upon the hob, and of which he is fonder than of any other dish. I should be so glad if he were come, for I have never known him to be so late as this, though he was there for reed in the beginning of last winter, and said that the rector was very kind to him. It is later in the season now, for the horses have been busy breaking up that piece of flat beyond the outer field, where the camomile grows so plentifully, and the swallows are sure to sport in the summer, and the starlings find a shelter in the frost. The house needs thatching, for the rains have already found their way through a rent or two in the roof, leaving marks upon the whitewashed wall. I have cleaned it already twenty times, but it seems entirely useless, for the wash is no sooner put on, than the winds wheel to the south, bringing the shower directly, and I have my labour for my pains. But I am truly glad that there is now a prospect of the roof being repaired, especially before the New Year commences, which often brings with it a whole hemisphere of storms. I went over last week and spoke to Will Bates, the thatcher; and he promised to come to us when he had finished Ruth River's cottage. Will is a good workman, and shaves the eaves beautifully. But I am detaining you, Jessie; call your brother, and let us hear what he has to say about it."

Isaac came in from the barn, and his mother questioned him respecting his father. He told her that he had attended him in the morning as far as the outer gate of the farm, and saw him turn up the road, sitting on the shafts of the wain. He had told him that he hoped to be home early, being Christmas Eve—that he should bring a piece of meat with him from the butcher's, which was all they required, as they had a fat goose and two ducks, which he hoped to prepare after he came back. His wife would see about figs for the pudding, sugar, &c., at the village shop; and apples, cream, onions, carrots, parsley, and other vegetables would be forthcoming from their own farm. This is all he knew—their chat as the wain rolled through the frozen fields on its way to the rectory for reed on the morning of that Christmas Eve. Yes! this was all he knew; and he, too, wondered why his father was not come.

They were standing in the doorway, looking in the direction of the rectory, though they could not see far on account of the falling snow and the increasing darkness. At last Mary Mander—for that was the name of the farmer's wife—said she thought she heard the sound of distant wheels, and she was almost sure it was the vehicle with their Dray. Isaac and Jessie ran as fast as they could down the farm-road, and presently saw the horse standing by the outer gate. There was no reed, not a single straw, and, what was worse still, there was no driver! His whip, which he so seldom used, lay upon the bottom of the wain, the reins were hanging loose, and the horse was not at all tired; but their father, Michael Mander, where was he? They would open the gate, and wait; perhaps he might soon come. The snow fell, the wind blew, and the night grew darker; yet no father appeared. Isaac ran down the road, but returned again to his sobbing sister without any sign of Michael Mander. Jessie went to her mother and told her what they had discovered; and Mary Mander was so agitated that she let the soft leather with which she was rubbing the tins fall from her hand. She went out to satisfy herself that it was really so; and there was Dray in the yard, with no sign whatever of the driver except his whip in the wain. Her heart misgave her, and she trembled like a leaf in the wind. She sent Isaac over to Will Bates, and the honest-hearted thatcher very kindly left his supper and his wife with the half-picked goose, to go in search of his neighbour, Michael Mander.

Though entreated to remain at home, Mary Mander was determined to go with them, saying she could not do anything in the house in their absence, and should be most miserable until their return. So they set off together, Will Bates, Isaac, Jessie, and her mother. They directed their steps towards the rectory, looking here and there for any traces of the missing man, but looking in vain. A little beyond a quaint wayside inn, known by the misnomer of "The Moorland Rest," where the road enters upon a wide common, they found, by the light of the lantern which they carried with them, or rather fancied that they discovered some recent marks upon the ground, though the snow was falling so fast that they were undecided about it. At last they reached the rectory porch, and rang the bell. They told the servant their errand, and the rector, hearing them,

beckoned them into the library. The hind was then called; and he declared that neither Michael Mander nor Dray had been there, nor had he sold a single sheaf of reed for the month. Here, then, was a great mystery which affected them all considerably. That Michael was gone, it was evident; but where, and how? that was the question. Had he been murdered for the little money he had about him, to pay, as he thought, for the reed? If he had been taken ill, and had fallen off the wain, they would have found him somewhere upon the road; but there was no sign of that anywhere. And he would not run away to a distant land, leaving his family in uncertainty; for a more lovable nature than his could not be found. To guess any more was useless, as the matter grew darker every moment. Mary Mander would return to her home, and wait, and lift up her cry to Him who numbers the very hairs of our head. The good rector spoke very kindly to her on her departure, bidding her to call upon her Heavenly Father in the time of trouble; and saying that all mysteries will be unravelled in the day of His appearing.

And theirs was a sad and sorrowful Christmas! No fowls were cooked for them, no fig-pudding made, no laurel hung over the mantel-piece, no holly with red berries graced the pewter-jug, or bay-branch the old eight-day clock; no mistletoe whispered of olden times, or musical carol murmured through the house; no well-known, anxiously-waited-for footsteps approached the threshold, no Michael Mander returned! As you sit beside your own table, dear reader, at this jubilant tide, with your loved ones around you, happy in the possession of health and the good gifts of Providence, let your Christian sympathies be extended to those who mourn in secret, or pine in breadless homes, blessing them with an iota of your good cheer, for the sake of Him who left the untold splendour of the palace of glory for you, which shall not in any wise diminish, but truly enhance your delights. The Infant-King, whose advent we celebrate to-day, visiting in thought the stable, and gazing on the manger and the patient oxen, where sits the mother of our Lord—hearing the chant of the angels, and seeing the wise men guided by the glittering star in the east to the lowly birthplace of the world's Redeemer—He has said for the comfort of the kindhearted of our race, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Yes, more blessed to give

than to receive, especially at Christmas-time when the ends of the earth meet in love. Hear it, ye rich, weighed down with sorrow ye dare not unburden, and cheerfully take the heavenly anodyne held out to you, by stooping to bind up the wounds of the widow and the wayworn to-day, and more true peace shall fill your bosom than the knowledge of augmented gold, or the multiplicity of your merchant ships.

On New Year's Day, Isaac bade his mother and sister good bye, and went off in quest of his father. This so pressed upon his mind, that he could not resist it any longer. They gave him all the money they could spare; and even his own little hoard was taken from behind the looking-glass and devoted to this purpose. They received a letter from him from the Isle of Wight, stating that he had taken ship for Britanny, and he hoped to be able to send them something more definite in his next. But month after month passed by in anxious suspense, and no intelligence reached them of either Isaac or Michael Mander. Their savings were nearly all exhausted, the horse had been sold, as well as a great many of the farm implements, and Poverty had put his foot upon the doorstep. Often had Jessie and her mother wept together, and wondered, after all, whether they should have to go into the workhouse, where no member of their family had ever been. So Mary Mander continued to pray and wait.

Twelve months had thus passed, and Christmas Eve had come once more It was the morning of the day, and not so chilly as on many occasions. The sun shone brightly, and it was tolerably warm, though somewhat sharp in the shade, owing to the strong east wind. Mary Mander was cleaning the house, every now and then laying down the brush or broom to wipe the tears from her face; and Jessie was rubbing the cans and pewter which were kept on the mantel-piece, often thinking of her father and brother, wondering whether they would ever return, and whether her mother would be able to provide any Christmas dinner on the morrow. But if it were only a crust of dry bread, she would not complain, knowing that He whose birth she celebrated was often hungry and thirsty, though all the treasures of the universe were His. Suddenly there was a loud knock on the door, and the postman handed them a letter. It was from Isaac, and the contents were as follows :—

"My dear mother and Jessie,—I have been ill in the hospital, but am now better, and hope to be with you about Christmas, which will be nearly as soon as you receive this. An advertisement which I put in the newspaper is answered; and I hope to be able to bring you some intelligence of father, whether alive or dead. Do not sell the plough, or the harrow, as I hope ere long to use them again. Get my room ready, and put father's boots by the fender. Affectionately yours, Isaac Mander."

What a tumult of thought rushed through Mary Mander's mind on reading this! She placed the letter on the table, took it up, read it, laid it down again, wept and wondered, and read it once more. Was her husband alive or dead? and what was the meaning of putting his boots by the fender? It was truly exciting, and she scarcely knew what she was about. She put the egg-stand in the dust-pan, and the broom on the pantry shelf. Her heart beat violently, and once or twice a faintness came over her. Before the household arrangements were finally complete, Jessie, who had occasion to go into the garden, said that two people were coming over the farm, and she asked her mother to go and look at them. She did so, passing beyond the gate, shading her eyes with her hand. Still she went on, followed by Jessie, advancing towards the approaching figures. Not a word was spoken; but she began to lift her hands and to walk more rapidly. Both parties were now in the same meadow, drawing nearer and nearer to each other. With a cry that startled the lapwing from the stubble, and the fieldfare from the sheltered mead, she ran into his arms, exclaiming, "My husband! my husband! my long-lost husband!" And then she embraced her son, and Jessie kissed her father and brother, and they returned together, overcome with smiles and tears, to the farm-house.

Michael Mander was much worn, though he complained not of weariness, but smiled pleasantly on all around him; and Jessie, who sat in the corner watching, noticed him more than once lift his eyes to heaven, as if he were thanking God for his return. Such refreshment as they had was quickly placed before father and son; and then, he said, they would arrange for their Christmas dinner, after which he would tell them his story. Money he had none; but love was better

than gold, and he felt sure that Providence would direct them. "Come, Jessie," said he, "how shall it be accomplished? how shall we get a dinner to-morrow?"

"O," replied Jessie, "I do not think we shall have so very much trouble about that; for the two ducks and goose which you intended killing last Christmas Eve are still alive in the feeding-house awaiting your return. Mother said she would not kill them until you came back; and if you never returned they would never have been killed. Shall Isaac and I go and bring them, father?"

The poultry was soon produced, and fat and full the fowls looked; though, perhaps, they might have been a little tougher than they were a year ago. To kill the three at once was out of the question, as they must husband the little they possessed, and labour courageously, energetically, and unitedly to procure subsistence, and if possible regain what they had lost. So the goose was killed, and the two ducks were kept for laying eggs in the season. Mary went to market with their last half-crown, and a few extras were provided for their table; and though they all wanted to know the history of Michael Mander's whereabouts, he persisted in reserving it until after the dinner on Christmas Day. And when the roast goose was smoking on the platter, and the plain, but substantial, pudding on the board, no happier or more grateful party ever sat down to a Christmas feast. When the plates and dishes were cleared away, and the blackberry wine of Mary's own making brought forth from the cupboard, Michael Mander explained the mystery of his absence as follows:—

"You know how last Christmas Eve I took the horse and wain, and drove in the direction of the rectory, intending to purchase and bring home reed, as the roof of the house required repairing. And I see that it is much worse now than it was then, the holes being stopped up with turf and stones, and even bushes of furze. But never mind, Jessie, we will do it all by and bye, and then the proud people will no longer point at our house as an old tumble-down. I had but just passed 'The Moorland Rest,' reached the corner of the common, and was talking pleasantly to Dray, when five armed men rushed out of the bushes upon me; and before I had time scarcely to utter a word or ask them why they were so rude, they tied my hands behind my back, gagged me, threw

my whip in the wain, turned the horse's head right about, blindfolded me, and dragged me off between them I knew not whither. But this I perfectly understood, Jessie—that I was in the hands of the press-gang. More shame for such a 'gang' in a Christian country! I thought of you all, and what a melancholy Christmas Eve it would be—how you would be wondering and waiting and weeping for my return; and I sighed bitterly with a great sorrow.

"By the sounds which I next heard I knew I was on board a ship, that the anchor was heaved, and the vessel standing out of the harbour. Resistance would have been in vain; and so I calmly submitted to my fate. After several hours the bandage was removed from my eyes, when I could see the water all around me, and the land—my own land—in the distance like a mere speck. I questioned one of the sailors, and he told me that the brig was bound for France. We landed: and I was forced to be a soldier; but I would much rather have been a rag-man. War commenced, and I was among the fighters. What I saw and felt is more than I can tell you. A bullet grazed my shoulder, disabling me for the service, so that shortly after I got my discharge.

"Kindly give me another glass of your blackberry wine, wife. I declare if it is not prime, and better than half the liquor-poison which is sold in the stained-glass spirit palaces. Seeking a ship in the harbour, I engaged to work my passage in her to England; for, having left the hospital before it was thought prudent by the surgeon, and against the specified rules of the squadron, I was entirely debarred of all pay, and was as free from money resources as a duck's back is from water. I landed without a penny; and though I had never asked alms in my life, I was obliged to beg my way to you. I scarcely got anything of the great farmers, or the rich people, but those who dwelt in cottages and small tenements were very generous to me; and I think you will find it generally true that the poor are kind to the poor. On the outskirts of a village, about forty miles from Dover, I saw a young man by the wayside leaning over a gate looking across the pastures. Without much ceremony I went up to him; and lo, it was Isaac! I had a penny in my pocket, which a poor old widow had given me from her scanty store, like the woman in the Gospel, with which I bought a postage-stamp

in the next town, and posted a letter to you. I have the dear old woman's address, and hope to repay her with interest for her penny some day. After this we jogged on together, Isaac and I, and were not very long in reaching our dear old home. Yes! thank God we are all here once more, and have had a delicious Christmas dinner. Our trials do not endure for ever, and HE giveth stillness after the storm. If my short history shall lead the poor man to see that conscription is a cheat, and the glory of the soldier's trade a complete sham, I shall not have suffered in vain. Come, Jessie; come, wife; it is Christmas time, and we are all together again around our own table, after a painful separation, feeling our hearts full of loving gratitude to Him. I cannot describe my own feelings; for my happiness in being with you once more is inexpressible. Now let us make the rafters ring with one of the dear old carols which charmed me when, in my boy-vest, I listened to my mother's Christmas tales."

The reader will be interested to hear that the wordly circumstances of Michael Mander very quickly began to improve. His neighbours, hearing his history, lent him a helping hand; and even the rector, who ought, perhaps, to have done it before, sent him a load of reed from the estate. The house was thatched, the ground was tilled once more; the crops were excellent, and soon he was again the owner of a horse to put into his wain. He called it Dray, after his former one; and it was quite worthy of the name. Mary Mander soon regained her usual cheerfulness, which was manifest in the song she sang at the needle or the butter-tub, or when awaiting her husband from the plough. Jessie, too, was soon in the possession of all her natural brightness; and the rector frequently came over to spend the evening at their house. Could we enter the snug little back parlour, we should see him there at this Christmas tide, and the subject of their conversation over some of Mary's best home-brewed would be, the press-gang and the empty wain.

Nor was the dear old widow by the wayside—who gave Michael Mander a penny out of her little store, which she could so very ill afford—forgotten, as duly as Christmas Eve came round; for her Christmas-box was as regular as the old church chimes.

WILLIAM EUSTACE, AND HIS SON TOM.

MARY Eustace and her only son Tom were sitting down by a small fire waiting for his father. He was not a tippler, and so they knew he would not come from the public-house, which is a comfort at all times. It was cold and dark, and the evenings were getting chilly. Tom was now about ten years of age, a strong, willing-hearted lad, with an appetite as keen as a pedestrian's, and had just commenced his life-struggle as herd-boy with farmer Robins. Nothing but kindness was wanting, on the part especially of his father, to make him, to all appearance, a youth of whom any English parents might well be proud. But William Eustace was selfish, and somewhat sullen to his rather sensitive son, which told upon the boy's spirit, and in no small measure affected his outer life. This is sure to be the case at all times. Nothing was adverse, however, on his mother's part, who made more sacrifices for him than we need now enumerate, often giving him her own little share of meat from the dish, and eating dry bread that his might be buttered. But his father did nothing of this, nor seemed to think anything about it, whether he had bread and treacle or no bread at all. The best Mary could get was always put aside for her husband, whilst she and her son fed upon the homeliest fare.

To-night Tom was literally hungry, of which there was no mistake; for the cattle had strayed from the field, turning here and there, and he had a long chase after them. For more than three hours they kept him in suspense, and almost in a run, and then he contrived to bring them safely back. His good mother had prepared the smallest supper for him; a few sops in a dish of skimmed milk, well watered. The bread which she gave him was the outside of a cottage-loaf, whilst she reserved the best portion for her selfish husband. She herself had fared much in the same way as her boy, nothing better or worse. But Mary Eustace never complained; she knew it was better to bear it all patiently, that life's weariness would soon be over, or that He who turned the water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana of Galilee, would change her husband's heart, and give him to see the selfishness which was now encrusting him with ice. Brave little wife! of whom

there are thousands in England who bear the yoke thus humbly, and whose tears are only known to the God of love.

And then they heard his heavy tread in the garden. Mary replenished the fire, snuffed the candle, and placed his slippers by the hearth. His cup and saucer were on the table, his knife and fork on the plate, with the remnant of the loaf beside it, the salt-cellar, and the milk-jug. The door was opened, and William Eustace entered, and seated himself at the end of the table; for this was his accustomed place. A fine robust-looking man, with a frank expression of countenance, which at once commanded respect. He asked how they were, and spoke very kindly; for he was not wanting in affection, and knew not, perhaps, that the demon of selfishness was so fast filling his life. He took it as a matter of right that he should have a greater share of the meat and eggs, butter and cheese, and all the good things that found their way into his dwelling; for did he not labour to procure them, and were they not all due to his daily exertion? His wife and boy were but his dependents, and he was the lord of his household. They dare not think but that it was perfectly Christian, and nobody must question his authority. Poor self-led man! he had quite outlived the thought of its inconsistency.

In a few minutes Mary placed his plate of fried meat and onions upon the table, which had been long simmering on the hob. A larger plate was over it as a cover; and when this was removed, what a savoury smell filled the room! Mary took her sewing, and sat near the candle, chatting with her husband on the weather, and the state of affairs generally. But Tom, poor Tom! who had only a few sops for his supper, and a little skimmed milk in a basin, how his mouth watered again as the little whiffs of steam from the well-filled plate were wafted to him, and the odour of the onions affected his sense! A great longing savagely seized him, nearly twitching him to the earth. He shifted on his seat, gave the cricket a little kick with his foot, in hopes his father might notice him, turned his face from the fire, and peeped along the table to see how much was still left on his father's plate. But no! William Eustace ate on, dipping his bread in the gravy, and forking the meat and onions into his mouth, as utterly regardless of the boy as if he had been a stone. Tom could not help crying a little bit; and he wiped away his tears as his selfish

father swallowed his last mouthful, and pushed the empty plate back upon the table.

Then William Eustace turned his legs to the fire, stretching himself before it, taking all the heat away from his wife and son, believing he was only acting his proper part. He bade Tom go to bed, and take a glass of water with him for fear he might be thirsty. Boys, he said, grew fastest when they were asleep. Then he took his big pipe from the mantelpiece, stuffed it with the costly weed, lit it, and let his musings overcome him. Mary gave Tom a crust his father had left, rekindled a candle for him, and accompanied him to the chamber door, saying he would be a man himself one day, and then he would be able to have meat and onions, too, for his supper. But when the candle was out, and Tom's head was on the pillow, a great crowd of thoughts, of various hues and shapes, thronged around him. If his father was right in eating and drinking the best, taking the nicest place by the hearth, and the best chair in the kitchen, without even asking his mother or himself to partake of a single shred, the Scripture text which he had read on Sunday must have a different meaning from what he had concluded. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" But, perhaps, fried meat was not a good gift for a poor boy like him; and yet the smell was so very delicious. But he could ask his Father in heaven for good things, which he would at once do. He should be a man himself one day; and then his mother had told him he would know better and fare better. It was cowardly, he knew, to complain; but why did not his father offer him just a little bit, when he was longing so anxiously to taste it, and his stomach was so empty? It was always so; fish or fowl or whatever it might be, his father had all, and he and his mother had none. He wondered if other fathers did it in other homes. And then he recollected what Jem Jefferies had told him by the gate of the wood a day or two ago—that his father always cut off a corner of his pasty for him, gave all the children meat, before he tasted any himself, and shared what was left with Peggy his wife; but to be a boy in his father's house was a different thing, and it would be a long time before he should be a man, half-starved as he really was. No; he could not stand it, and but for his

mother he would rush away then in the darkness. She was good to him, so good; and he knew not what to do. And poor Tom turned his wet face to the pillow, and cried himself to sleep.

That night William Eustace had a dream. He was wandering over rugged paths, and up steep hills, where sharp-toothed briers stretched across his way, and flinty rocks impeded his course. Still he dragged himself along through slippery places, where his feet were held fast in the mud, or where the banks were so difficult to surmount that he fell back for the twentieth time. The perspiration ran over him in streams, and the pangs of hunger fearfully assailed him. Night was settling down upon the earth, and he had tasted no food since the morning. Here fallen trees lay across the road, and there deep ruts threatened to stop him entirely, over which he clambered with the greatest difficulty, often scratching his hands and tearing his clothes. Still his hunger increased as the way became more intricate, and its pangs were greater than ever he had felt before. Suddenly he found himself under a dark archway, leading he knew not whither. He felt his way along, toiled up some steep steps, and found himself standing before a massive door. Lifting his hand in search of the knocker, he happened to touch a spring, and the huge door opened immediately. He entered, and a sumptuous feast was spread upon a large table, choicest viands of several kinds, and around it, in the blaze of richly-coloured lamps, sat a hundred hungry people, partaking heartily of the provision. He approached the well-spread board, and sat with them at their meal. Beckoning to the serving-man, a plate was handed to him, containing nothing but a picked bone and a hard crust of bread, and a voice arose from the hundred eaters, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." He shivered with affright as they all started to their feet, and shouted in his ears so that the huge ceiling of the hall shook, "This is what you do to your son Tom, and your industrious, thrifty wife." He ate the crust, and again handed the plate to the serving-man. This time he had nothing but the shells of nuts and an orange peel, with the same withering utterances in his ears: "This is how you serve your own household." The smell of the rich delicacies was in his nostrils, and hunger seized him like an angry giant. If he stretched forth his

hand to take the smallest fragment, the miserable serving-man would strike his joints with a knotty stick, or thrust the hardened point against his breast. Screaming with pain, and bawling for food at the very top of his voice, he awoke with great trembling, startling both Mary and Tom.

The next day William Eustace was a different man. A thousand thoughts gathered around him at his work, perched upon the rake-handle, fluttered among the trees on the hedges, sailed through the air overhead, skimmed upon the waters, and buzzed forever in his ears. His dream, too, haunted him, and the gruff serving-man with the knotty stick. He would live an altered life; yes, he would live an altered life. He had been more selfish than he had ever conceived, and now he would fling it from him. Mary should fare better, and Tom should sit with him at supper; and he would not appropriate so much of the hearth to himself. The good things of life should be shared together, or his name was not William Eustace. God had spoken to him in a dream, and he would heed the admonition. Yes, he would do this and begin that very night.

After his day's work was finished he returned to his home, and found every thing in its usual order. Mary was again sewing, and Tom was sitting on a stool in the corner, looking anything but bright, with an illustrated magazine in his hand. The candle was lighting, and his warm slippers awaiting him in their place. He hung up his hat on the peg, washed his face and hands, and took his accustomed seat. Mary lifted his warm supper on to the table, and when the cover was removed, he saw that it contained some boiled tripe, whilst another vessel held some potatoes. Tom turned a side-glance upon him from the magazine, and Mary wondered why his knife and fork lay untouched beside the plate. But after a few minutes of deep silence, Mary stopped her sewing, and enquired, "Are you ill, William?"

Placing the cover again upon his supper to keep it warm, and leaning back in his chair, William Eustace replied:—

"No, wife, thank God, I am not ill; indeed, I have never been better in health than I am at this moment. But my eyes have been opened, wife, by a dream I had last night, which I need not repeat to you now. Did you not hear me call out in my sleep, as if the house were falling, and did I not shake as if I had the ague? I have been selfish, wife, selfish, treating

you and Tom as if you were no better than aliens—eating and drinking the best, and keeping you on the coarsest food, although you were pining away before my eyes. But it shall be so no longer, or I am not William Eustace. Come, Mary, put your sewing down, and bring out your plate from the cupboard, and take Tom's out also. Rise up, poor boy, and come here by the side of thy father. We will share our meals together for the future, and thou shalt have a portion of that which thy father possesses. Rise, Tom, and pull thy chair to the table; the winter is past for thee, and the genial spring is returned, which will usher in, I believe, the summer fruits of happiness. Up, boy, up!"

And Tom rose from the stool with a merrier twinkle in his eye than had shot from it before for many a day, wondering what was the matter with his father, and if the great dream had driven him completely out of his mind. But he was quite convinced of his sanity in a few minutes, when a large piece of tripe, smoking hot, and some potatoes were heaped upon his plate. There were three large pieces, and so they had one each, with a cup of nice coffee. And, O, how pleasant it was! how delicious for Tom, who swallowed his tripe with a richer zest than a prince his costly dainties, often looking at his father, and vowing he was the very best in the world! And what a loveable smile played upon Mary's face, scattering some of its rays of sunshine on her husband's countenance, who was obliged every now and then to brush away the tears with the back of his hand! And when the meal was ended, and the supper things removed, William Eustace declared that it was the heartiest, happiest repast which he had ever partaken since he had been able to wield a scythe or uplift a flail.

Nor did this state of things collapse in a week or a month, but continued from year's end to year's end, enkindling a happiness in the bosoms of Mary and Tom to which they had so long been strangers, whilst William Eustace was the happiest of all. He declared that he could eat better, work better, and sleep better than when the power of self was over him, and he had cleared his plate like a glutton. Tom began to grow taller and stouter from that remarkable night, and his old love for his parent returned and increased. Kindness begets kindness all the world over. Try it, dear reader, and it shall

clothe you in more loveliness than the glitter of fine gold, or the pamper of self.

Tom is now a married man, with a frugal wife, and a child of his own. William Eustace has been unable to work for a long period, and he and Mary are now dependent on their son for subsistence. And this Tom provides cheerfully and well, still remembering that first evening when his father divided the hot tripe and potatoes amongst them, often reciting the circumstance to his little girl on his knee.

WALTER WHEAR AND HIS COW.

It was a rainy day—rain, rain, nothing but rain! The trees dripped, the spouts ran, the eaves of the houses poured down water, and the swollen river thundered among the oaks. Walter Whear sat in his farm-house by the smallest fire, for he could not work out of doors, the rain was so incessant. It came against the window in great splashes, hissing on the floor through the cracked panes; and the thatch over his head was insufficient to keep it from spattering the room above. It was the hind's residence, and had been so for many years, in connection with the farm upon which he worked. Walter sighed as a large drop fell upon his face, and the next moment the door of hollow boards opened, creaking on its hinges, and his wife Martha entered. She was rather scantily clothed; her boots were much worn, and her cotton bonnet tied down with a handkerchief. Moreover, she was dripping with wet, which slowly trickled from her flowing hair and cap-strings, and the fringes of her shawl. Doffing a portion of these, she fell into a rickety chair on the opposite side of the fire-place, and sorrowfully addressed her husband.

"The cow is gone, Walter; gone! and I cannot find her anywhere. I have searched the wood, and the common, and the lane leading into the park, calling 'Brindle! Brindle!' but it is all in vain. We can have no milk to-night, and perhaps shall lose to-morrow's meal also; and this, you know, is losing all. I milked her in the morning quietly chewing her cud by the old apple-tree; and she was so contented!

'Brindle,' said I, 'I love you. You are the sleekest of all cows, as quiet as a summer lake, and just as pure. Your crumpled horns are handsome, so are your back and sides, and your nose has no compare. And you know me, don't you, Brindle? coming at my call, like our Dick to his dinner. And you yield the best milk in the parish, and your cream is fit for the Royal table. What we should be without you, Brindle, I cannot tell, with wages so small and provisions so dear, and I often thank God for you. You will never run away, will you, Brindle, from this green pasture? And you have a little house, too, in the corner, where the robin sings upon the thatch. You won't leave us, will you, Brindle?' And she nodded her head as much as to say, 'I never will.' And yet she is gone, Walter, gone! I wonder what it can be?"

Walter took his hat, unhung his rough coat from the peg, went to the corner for his stick, opened the door, and looked out. But it rained—how it rained! It came driving over the hills with a solemn rush, hiding the mountain tops, and filling the vales with comparative darkness. The great trees at the end of the house, as they swayed forward and backward, sent it down in streams upon the land; and the wide river at the foot of the beacon tossed and tumbled like an angry ghost. Every rut was a brook, and every shallow nook a bubbling tank. He strained his eyes to strive to pierce the thickness, if any rent might be visible in the lowering cloud, or atom of blue sky in the air; but it was all useless, for it was rain, rain, nothing but rain! "No, I cannot go," said he; "a dog would hardly venture out of doors in such a whelm of waters as this, unsurpassed since I was a boy. I hope Brindle will not stray far from those who love her, from the green grass meadow which has been hers so long. Should the rain abate a little, I will go and seek her." He hung up his great coat and hat, and sat once more by his humble hearth, listening to the sounds of the solemn rain.

It subsided at last; the wind went down, the blue sky was visible, and the sinking sun flushed the golden landscape. Walter took his stick and sallied forth. A thousand diamond drops glittered in his path, and hung in clusters on every spray. A thrush sang in the thicket, and the valley was filled with the gushing melody of a solitary lark. But he had

small thought for all this; for it was Brindle which was uppermost in his mind. He enquired of all he met if they had seen or heard of his Brindle, the gentlest of all kine, but no one knew anything about her. The sun went down in his search for his favourite, the moon arose, and the first stars came out in the firmament, but hitherto his attempts were fruitless. He now turned his face towards home, with a sad heart and heavy footsteps, wondering what Martha would say when he came back without the cow.

He found Martha sitting in the corner of her cottage, weeping and wiping her eyes. There was an open letter lying upon the table, which appeared to have been written by some clerkly hand, and Martha, pointing to it, said, 'O, Walter! I have news of Brindle. As I sat here an hour ago, drinking my cup of tea and eating my crust, who should come to the door but the under-steward's son? Says he, 'I have a letter for you, Martha, which I was requested to deliver to you at once. Good evening;' and he was gone. It was not sealed, so I opened it, and the first words which met my eyes filled me with the greatest gloom. Why do you look at me so? And what do you think they were, Walter? Why none other than this—'Brindle is in the parish pound!' Yes, Walter, our Brindle is in the pound."

Walter, who had been standing during this recital, now sat upon the bench at the end of the table, and took the letter in his hand. He discovered that Brindle was found in the Squire's lower park, which was a trespass altogether unpardonable, and consequently she was put into the parish pound. It stated, moreover, that the cow would not be delivered up again to Walter Whear until he had paid a fine, altogether beyond their reach. Now, it was well known that the under-steward was a harsh man, so their hearts were much saddened, for they had but little to hope for from him. It was proved afterwards that the park gate being open when Brindle was sauntering by, some wicked boys drove her into the grounds, and again closed the entrance. "Come, Walter," said Martha, "we must go and see her, or I shall not sleep to-night."

Adown the lane they went, and very soon reached the pound. It was on a corner of waste land where three roads met. The enclosure consisted of four stone walls, about eight

feet high, and within it was about ten feet wide and fourteen feet long. There was a high wooden gate at one end, and through it they could see Brindle standing in the pound, quietly chewing her cud as if nothing had happened. Martha cried when she saw her, called her name, put her hand through the wooden bars, and Brindle came and licked it. "Poor Brindle," said she, "you must spend the night in the pound, where there is not a blade of grass or a mouthful of provender, with the moon shining down upon you! I wonder why you came to trespass, Brindle—*you* who were cared for so well, and had such a green pasture of your own! And now you are punished, Brindle, to remain within these four high walls without any supper, and, perhaps, without any breakfast either. And you place us in great peril too, because of the loss of your sweet milk. O Brindle! Brindle! I am sorry for you indeed, and am loth to leave you here in such a place; but whether the wrong be committed by man or beast, the suffering is sure to follow. Good bye, Brindle! I shall have no peace until you are in your own little field again."

The next morning Walter strove to borrow the ten shillings wherewith to pay the fine, but was unsuccessful, feeling Poor Richard's words perfectly true: "Who goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing." Poor man! he had not many friends; and in such a time of need as the present, which affected the money-purse, one half of them were not worth a penny postage stamp. He asked the ploughman, the cowherd, and even the gamekeeper at the lodge; but they were all armed with excuses, as is too frequently the case. The money, therefore, not being forthcoming, and the under-steward very positive, after a short time Brindle was announced to be sold by public auction.

The day came fair and sunny; birds sang on the bushes, butterflies floated among the flowers, leaves winked to the murmuring breeze, and a hum of grateful melody filled the air. The neighbours assembled in the place of auction—the corner of a green meadow shaded by poplars, where the high hedges were thick with hawthorn. And there was Brindle, sleek and glossy, the innocent cause of all this bustle, looking as meek and mild as ever. By and bye the auctioneer came, a stout, rosy-faced, well-dressed, little man, with a wondrous twinkle in his eye. He mounted the stand, which consisted

of an empty beer-barrel on its end, and, waving his wooden hammer in the air, intimated that the auction would then begin. Standing a little way apart was Martha, with her handkerchief to her eyes; and when the words of the auctioneer reached her, she cried aloud. Her tears brought tears also from the eyes of others in the crowd; and even the stoical auctioneer paused with lifted arm, holding his hammer in the air. "Brindle, Brindle," cried Martha, and the cow came running to her across the field.

Then there was a stir in the crowd, an undefinable motion as if some strange mystery had assailed it. Strong men held their breath, and fair youths listened with palpitating hearts. A thunder cloud passed over the landscape, and in the opening of the peal a brawny man stood forth, with large drops glistening in his eyes, and, addressing the barrel-mounted monarch, exclaimed in a voice as sharp as a scythe-twang, "Stop the auction! stop the auction! Robin Raft will pay the fine!"

Martha heard it, and in a moment her arms were around the neck of Brindle; and it is even said by some that she kissed her face. Walter Whear came up, and Martha and her husband drove the cow back to their own pasture, amid the joy-shouts of the multitude. Robin Raft went with them. Now Robin had worked himself up to some position in the neighbourhood. He was the son of a poor hind. After the decease of his father Robin was employed to drive the horses, which occupation he held until he emigrated to California with several others. Here he saved money, and after a time came back to his native country. He recollected that on more than one occasion Walter Whear had assisted him in several ways, which he had never forgotten, and which he was delighted thus to recompense. He sat down at Walter Whear's board, and there was great rejoicing in their home that night. The wicked boys who thus wantonly drove Brindle into the Squire's lower park were ultimately discovered and punished; and Martha never lost her cow from that day.

Whoever passes round the corner of the wood, through the village, and up the valley to the middle of the lowland, may yet see Brindle in her clover meadow, looking even more sleek and graceful than aforetime; and coming through the gateway is Martha Whear, humming a simple psalm, made happy by the kindness and goodwill of her neighbour.

FLAVEL ROBERTS; OR, "I KNOW BETTER."

It was of no use to speak to Flavel Roberts; he *would* have his way. It was just as well to harangue the wind, or whisper poems to the wintry waves, as to offer him a word of exhortation or advice. Sundays and Mondays, wet or dry, dark or light, hot or cold, full or hungry, Flavel Roberts would receive no suggestion. His wife might as well have talked to the moon, or told her story to the stars, as strive to pour the least persuasion into his ear. "I know better," he would say, snap his fingers, and walk off. Should he be ploughing Farmer Patchmoor's nine acre, and his master insist that the coulter was set too deep, and would be far better and the furrow be more effectual if it were raised a little, he would stamp the earth as if he would stamp the boots from his feet, call upon the horses to go forward, and when the farmer had left the field, such a shower of words would shoot from his tongue as never fell on the head of any poor wretch before. "I know better," he would aver, "and no velvet-breeched yeoman, though he had more fields than hairs upon his head, should ever dictate to me." And yet in this instance, as in almost all other instances, Flavel Roberts was wrong. In consequence of the fixture of the coulter and share, the plough went too deep, turning up the cold earth when it should merely skim the surface. The greatest wonder is that Farmer Patchmoor did not dismiss him from his employ, and place some less conceited man in his stead.

But his wife, Eleanor Roberts, had a very wintry existence with him. Often has she cried at her sewing, or knitting, or scrubbing until her eyes were red with weeping, and her cheeks marked with the frequent tears. Gentleness he had none; and a loving, affectionate word never fell from his lips. He commanded her in harshness, and would not grant her one single opinion from New Year's Day to New Year's Day again. He was always right, and she and everybody else in the wrong. He went to work in the mornings, and came home in the evenings, with the same high swagger, flinging his arms, and kicking the stones before him, as if the lanes were not large enough for his powerful person. Eleanor seldom went to market with him, for he contrived to do all this domestic business himself, buying of the butcher and

baker, and even the grocer, but always allowing his wife, when she did go, to carry the basket. His habit was to keep his weekly wages in a canvas bag, always paying the bills himself, never permitting Eleanor to spend a single penny, though it was obvious to every one who knew her that she could do it far more economically. Surely the English wife should be the provider of her own household; and for her husband to deprive her of this prerogative is a sinful infringement of her rights. He who denies his wife this privilege strips her of his confidence, and makes her a sheer stranger in her own house. But Flavel Roberts did not care; he knew best, and Eleanor must go to the wall. There may be exceptions, through inexperience or incapacity; but we contend that the English peasant wife should generally be trusted to provide for her own household. And trust increases truth, the upholder of the homestead.

Does the reader say, "O, the brute! If I were Eleanor Roberts, I would not live with him for a month"? We scarcely know how we should act, unless we were similarly circumstanced. But this we can aver, that Eleanor was a Christian woman, who loved her Bible, her God, and her minister. When the cold words of her husband chilled her soul, though unwittingly uttered, perhaps, by him, she often had recourse to her only book, and drew from thence a delicious consolation which the world could not give, or its fiercest frowns take away. It was here that she found her Saviour, and the words He whispered in the ears of the woman of Samaria, as He sat on the margin of Jacob's well, with the steeps and streams and flowery vales of Galilee around Him, were precious to her heart: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." She had tasted of this water, and it was a perpetual source of refreshment to her, which it is to be feared Flavel Roberts knew nothing of. Better to have persecution and poverty with this water than a life of ease with the goblet of iniquity.

On one occasion Flavel Roberts and his wife were both at the market together, standing before a shoemaker's stall; for Eleanor wanted a new pair of boots. And she was sadly in

need of them, poor wife! The pair she then had on, which was all she possessed, had holes through the bottoms, into which she had put socks that day, cut from an old cast-off billycock of her husband's, to keep her feet as dry as she well could. But the roads were very dirty, they had no horse or trap of their own, and consequently had to walk, so that the water of many a plashy pool oozed in through the worn-out soles, and both her stockings were wet and dirty. Flavel, however, insisted that she should try on a pair, which the shoemaker offered at a low price; and poor Eleanor got behind a cart, where scarcely any one could see her, and pulled and tugged with a vain endeavour to get the boot on her foot over the wet stocking. She protested that it was not large enough, whilst her husband vowed that it was, saying that she had no judgment whatever; whilst the greasy, soft-eyed shoemaker coaxed her into a partial conviction of their utility through the dampness of her feet. So the boots were bought and carried home in the basket, with the ham and eggs and coffee; and patient Eleanor Roberts was made to wear them. But they were much too small, and galled her feet considerably, though Flavel Roberts declared he knew better, and that it could not be so. So she continued to wear them for quiet's sake, and to keep the angel of peace in the house. Corns, however, came on very quickly, some of which she never got rid of again, making her lame until she could walk steadily no longer. A hundred times she told him they were too small and crippling her feet, but he declared he knew better; nor was he convinced when Eleanor was obliged to desist from wearing them, and they were laid on a high shelf, just half worn out.

He left his home in great fling one morning to go to his work, for he had over-slept himself and was late. Eleanor had called him as usual, telling him breakfast was ready, and the lambs frisking in the meadows. He rolled over in the sheets, rubbed his eyes, yawned, and replied that he knew better. Suddenly the old eight-day clock on the stairs struck seven, and up Flavel Roberts jumped, and rushed off without his coffee and bacon. It is true he took a large slice of bread in his hand, which he began to eat as he stepped over the threshold,and turned into a narrow lane leading across a valley near the cliff. Now, though this was a nearer cut to Farmer Patchmoor's, it was considered to be very dangerous, owing, espe-

cially, to a curve near the edge of a precipice, and consequently was but seldom traversed. Eleanor noticed the way he had taken, when she called after him, and entreated him not to attempt it, saying it was much worse for the recent rains; but he howled back at the top of his voice, which rang in the trees, and echoed over the housetop, "I KNOW BETTER!" So she watched him out of sight, and then went back to her household duties with her stiffnecked husband's last words ringing in her ears.

During the day she had many strange misgivings; whilst solemn sounds seemed to fill the house. Eleanor scarcely knew what her hands were doing, or where her thoughts were wandering. She put the trencher in the coal-house, and gave the cat the salt-cellar instead of the milk-plate. Unconsciously she several times stood in the door-way and turned her face towards the dangerous pass which her husband had to cross; and sighs followed one another which she could not repress. The wind came whistling over the thatch, and a hoarse moan she had never noticed before seemed to be haunting the glen. She tried to eat at dinner-time, but her appetite had failed her; and she sat down in her accustomed place, rested her head upon her hands, and wept. But it was no unusual thing for Eleanor Roberts to shed tears and tell her Heavenly Father all. And thus it was at this time, though the birds sang in the sycamore, and the great sun flung his beams upon the smiling earth, as if the sound of sorrow never travelled upon the laden air.

The clock struck six, and she had his supper prepared for him, and the white cloth upon the table. In half-an-hour he would come, as he always did. But the clock struck seven, and there was no Flavel Roberts. Hark! she hears a step outside approaching the door—but it was not Flavel's. Her heart misgave her, for it was her husband's workmate in the fields. "Where is Flavel?" he asked, "he has not been to the meadow to-day." The discharge of a rifle in the room could not have frightened her more; she sank into a chair and fainted. After a while she so far recovered as to tell him how her husband had left home in the morning, and the way he had taken to go to his work. In company with a neighbour his fellow-labourer went off in search of him. They soon found that there had been a land-slip along the cliff,

which was so recent that it had probably gone away when Flavel Roberts was on it. They descended the precipice; and among the loose stones and earth they found him, bruised and broken, but still breathing.

This was told to Eleanor, who had left her home and was on her way to the cliff. Carefully they carried him to his dwelling, and laid him upon the bed. Here he remained for many months, tenderly cared for by his patient wife, who nursed him with all the love of her sex. She read hymns, and poems, and Bible promises to him with such a tender pathos, and such true melody in her voice, that his heart was softened, and the tears would frequently steal into his eyes. His stubborn nature was subdued by the Good Spirit, his self-conceit gave way, his iron will was broken, and he became childlike and affectionate. Eleanor's God had spoken to him, and he had yielded to His voice. Truly, it was good for Flavel Roberts that he had been afflicted, for he had thereby learned the grandest lesson it is possible to be taught.

Health returned to Flavel Roberts, and their home was like a different place. Eleanor's winter was changed to summer, and buds of hope brightened on every bough. Not a cross word was ever uttered in her ear, no cold rebuke smote her soul. He went with her to her usual place of prayer; and they bowed their knees together before Jehovah, when the evening star looked in upon them through the diamond panes of their little window. And whether Flavel Roberts was ploughing or sowing; whether he was driving the cart or watering the team; whether he was with his workmate in the meadow, or sitting with Eleanor in their own changed home, he was never heard to utter again, "I know better;" but was quite willing to listen, and even to be guided by a little child.

SOLOMON SMITH'S SURPRISE.

AND still the bells pealed forth their merry music, sounding over the green fields, up the hill-sides through the forest, and far away over the waters of the lake, where the white tufts of the rushes waved in the breeze. School-

boys heard and clapped their hands, waving their satchels in the air; fair young damsels, standing in the doors of their dwellings, drank in the music, and wondered when *their* marriage day would come; and old men and women spoke more pleasantly and smiled more deliciously because of this merry peal. And still the echoes were repeated, ding, dong, bell! over the roofs of the hamlet, down by the great mill-wheel, through the orchard, and on by the cottage on the cliff —ding, dong, bell! Ding, dong, bell!

Down the lane by the pleasant village of Mossmay, where the old church belfry flung forth such music on this quiet summer day, came a middle-aged man, bearing a small bundle upon his shoulder. He was decently clad, viz., he wore a cloth coat, a good hat, nice boots and trousers; and a watch-seal and key were visible a little below the bottom of his waistcoat. Hearing the sound of the bells, he paused, rested his hands upon a gate, and looked towards the church stile, from whence a path diverged into the green fields. Presently the wedding train became apparent, passing from meadow to meadow, until it was lost among the foliage of the thick trees.

This was Solomon Smith. He had been abroad and prospered, and had now returned to his native home. For the first thirty years of his working life he had laboured in this neighbourhood under one master, serving him faithfully and fully, adding, thereby, much gold to his coffers. His master, however, suddenly dismissed him. A few weeks later found Solomon on board an emigrant ship, with several others, bound for the gold fields. After a somewhat stormy passage, they landed without a single casualty. He set to work in earnest; refrained from the beer cup and the gambling-room, betook himself to reading his Bible and attending camp meetings, and, by-and-bye, was one of the most respected men in the diggings. Gold dust increased, nuggets were multiplied, sundry commissions proved successful, and with a yearning desire to see once more the haunts of his boyhood, he turned his face towards England, and reached Mossmay in due course, to hear the ringing of the marriage bells.

His wife had died in the first year of their marriage, leaving him a little daughter of the name of Hoytt. He placed her with her aunt, an old stocking-knitting dame in the ham-

let, who was proverbial for her cotton bedgown, and her high-crowned cap. She wore spectacles, carried a snuff-box, had an hour-glass, and kept a cat. Little Hoytt grew up under her guardianship, and was subject to her control; and when Solomon Smith left England ten years ago, her aunt had promised him to take care of her. He was now going over to the hamlet with the hope of seeing his daughter.

He passed the mill, and spoke to the miller, who was standing in his dusty garments by the revolving wheel; but a "good day" was all he received, as he was evidently unrecognized. He went by the parsonage, with its Gothic windows and reedy roof, where Dick the old thatcher was at work, singing snatches of some local ditty, and shaving the eaves with his sharp knife. A servant passed up the garden walk, which was beautifully gravelled, with a small basket on her arm, whom Solomon knew very well; but deeming him to be a stranger, she shut the gate and went in. The blacksmith was still there in his shed, working as aforetime, with his shirt-sleeves turned up above his elbows, bringing his hammer down so that the anvil rang, and the sparks flew round in showers; and Bob, the shaggy-browed boy, blew the bellows as before. Under the old oak tree the fountain bubbled up as clear and abundant as when he was a child, deeming it a portion of the river of life. On he went, past the schoolhouse, where the hum of a hundred boys filled the air with a drone-like murmur; and through the half-open door he could still see the spectacled-mounted pedagogue, with his pen behind his ear, and his birchen rod in his hand, frowning on all around him, as he was wont when in this mystic enclosure he grasped the grandeur of his A B C. On he went over the bridge, past the cobbler's porch, the sawyer's yard, and the tollman's shed, until he stood before the lattice of the lodge of Hoytt and her aunt.

But everything was quiet; there was no motion whatever. The thatch in the roof was broken, the window shattered, and the door much shaken. The little garden was a mass of weeds, entirely hiding the path and choking the dainty flowers. An oppressive shadow seemed resting upon it, which it was painful to enter. Solomon Smith, however, opened the gate, and went quietly up to the door. There was a rusty padlock upon it, and a heavy dampness hung about the place. He looked

through the window, but could see nothing: every item of furniture was gone, and there was a little heap of ashes on the hearth. Having crept round to the back of the house, he slowly departed, wondering much what had become of his friends. "The old woman is dead," said a neighbour;" dead and buried five years ago." This was a great shock, greater because no letters had passed between them from the time of his departure.

He thought he would go a little further into the village, to look at some of the old dwellings, and, perhaps, gaze upon a well-remembered face. As he passed on, the little gardens and the fronts of the cottages were the same, and the clear river winding among the banks. A donkey was quietly feeding by the wayside, and children were playing upon the green, whose merry voices rang like lyres among the leaves.

It was with solemn feelings that Solomon Smith turned down an avenue of limes leading to the church. His thoughts were busy with the past, and with the whereabouts of his daughter. With whom had she been living for those five years since the death of her aunt, and where was she now located? He longed to know, and yet he was too agitated to ask. Several people passed him, and he continued to meet many more; yet the question, although almost too painful for endurance, had never passed his lips. The swallows dashed by him, floating over the meadows, hurrying along on the banks of the river, soaring over the tree-tops, and then descending on the fields of waving corn; and still his thoughts were with his daughter, and he silently prayed that they might soon be permitted to meet.

Presently he turned an abrupt angle of the tree-covered road, which brought him suddenly into the midst of the bridal train. How beautiful the bride looked in her white muslin dress, profuse with the richest lace, and with real flowers in her braided hair! Solomon gazed at her as she passed, and she earnestly looked at him. Then she stopped, and suddenly disengaging herself from the bridegroom, rushed towards him, exclaiming, "My father! my father!" Yes, it was his only daughter, being led to a lovely home by an honest, striving young man. The excited, well-dressed party gathered around them, and when the recognition was complete, a great shout swelled through the hamlet, filling the

valley with echoes. The bells from the belfry tower broke out afresh, pouring forth the most thrilling peal they had been known to give since the marriage of Queen Victoria.

Of course Solomon Smith was one at the wedding banquet, where there was much good cheer of various kinds, and also very much to repeat. His happy daughter, Hoytt, told her story—how her aunt died suddenly on a calm October evening, without one word of warning or advice. She had just finished her chapter, and had laid her spectacles upon the Bible, when she requested her niece to bring her a glass of water, and before she had fetched it she was gone—gone where the sunlight never slackens, and no shadow ever falls! After the funeral Hoytt took possession of the furniture, which was ultimately sold. In an old cracked teapot on the dresser shelves, carefully tied round with a piece of red tape, she discovered an amount of treasure which almost alarmed her. In a piece of faded silk, sewn into a bag, and pulled together at the top by two coarse strings, were the savings of her deceased aunt, bequeathed to her by will. This she placed in the bank, allowing the interest to be added to the principal, which year after year increased it considerably. That morning she had given it over to her husband.

Solomon Smith went to live with his daughter in their nice house by the river, on the outskirts of Mossmay. He had accumulated enough for his own wants, with a little to spare for the needy, so that he was not dependent on any one. By-and-bye a younger Hoytt was born, the very image of her mother; and it is no unfrequent thing for Solomon, on sunshiny days, to lead his little grandchild through the fields, on by the parsonage, and up by the ruins of the roadside cottage, and tell her that this is the spot where her father's fortune was found in the old cracked teapot.

THE LAST LULLABY.

The mower had left the field of grain,
And the driver whistled adown the lane;
The hardy fisherman stepped ashore,
And met his boy by his own home door;
Shone over the trees the young moon's rim,
And down from the heights stole the twilight dim,
When a sound passed by me, sweetly mild,
"Lulla-by, baby! sleep, my child!"

The evening star shone o'er the lake,
And a mystic melody filled the brake;
The brooklet murmured along the dell,
Where the glow-worms glittered beside the well;
And still that young wife's last refrain
Flowed forth a-near the lattice-pane,
So softly sad, so meekly mild:
"Lulla-by, baby! sleep, my child!"

Ah! marvel not that my soul is stirred;
My daughter's voice was the sound I heard,
Which haunts me still when the day is dim,
And the fields o'erflow with the milkmaid's hymn:
For she's gone, she is gone to the western land,
Where the lakes are broad and the forests grand,
To sing where the dark pines fringe the wild,
"Lulla-by, baby! sleep, my child!"

But God is there, where the eagle soars,
And the grand Niagara ever roars;
Where the boundless prairie strangely swells,
And the red man roams through the pathless dells.
Yes, God is there; and her heart will rise
To Him, when the white moon fills the skies;
And her nursery chant shall murmur mild:
"Lulla-by, baby! sleep, my child!"

August, 1877.

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From the LITERARY WORLD, *October* 23*rd*, 1874.

A QUARTO volume of 246 pages. The author terms it his life-work, and it is one of which he may well feel proud. He has written much and well. These poems contain the true poetic ring. There is much in them to admire and ponder over, and the marvel is that they were written by one in such a sphere of life. In addition to the poems we have upwards of one hundred hymns full of pure Gospel truth. John Harris has turned many gems of Scripture into verse, and we claim for him no mean place among ordinary hymn-writers.

From the MALVERN ADVERTISER, *February* 12*th*, 1876.

FEW of us but have heard of John Harris the Cornish Miner, the Burns of the south, who in his Wayside Pictures charmed us with his lovely fancies and liquid music. In that large volume we have several long tale-poems and some touching hymns. When we think of his life of toil, it seems wonderful that his poetic impulse was strong enough to conquer his difficulties. Another work of this self-educated genius is now before us, his tenth volume, "Walks with the Wild Flowers," a book which is not lacking in its own native grace. It consists chiefly of little poems written on our favourite flowers, with a short notice of their haunts, just such a volume as lovers of flowers must often have longed for. He retains his old smooth-flowing measures and healthy religious tone, and we would recommend the book to all readers. The floral illustrations are drawn and engraved by the author's invalid son.

From the LONDON FIGARO, *May* 24*th*, 1877.

A MINER POET.

AT the outset we may say that there is no printer's error in the spelling of the word "Miner," and that there is no desire on our part to make any mild joke concerning a "Minor" poet, not even though Mrs. Ga should be tempted to say, "Which his name is Harris."

John Harris, in short, is the name of our Miner Poet, and we know him only through the medium of his published works. They have been collected in a handsome volume, "Wayside Pictures, Hymns and Poems,"

published, with a portrait of the author, by Hamilton, Adams and Co. London ; and Lord Beaconsfield has recently considered him to be deserving of a grant of two hundred pounds. We think that the grant is very well bestowed. John Harris, who, we believe, is within a year or two of sixty years of age, has been a Cornish miner from his boyhood, and has lightened his days of heavy toil by the cultivation of his poetic gifts. His advantages in life were no higher than those of other lads in the same station ; but, from his youth up, he devoted every leisure moment to self-culture, while working hard for his daily bread in the depths of the Dolcoath mine. It redounds to his infinite credit that under such surroundings he should have produced so much poetry, the greater portion of which is of a character that will successfully challenge the critic's verdict.

The volume of his verse contains 240 pages of imperial octavo size, printed in double columns, the first half of the book being devoted to poems of considerable length, chiefly in blank verse, and the remaining portion to shorter pieces, some 350 in number. Mr. Harris narrates many adventures in which the heroism of the miner is shown, and in which also the highest qualities are evinced. In one of his "Wayside Pictures" Book the sixth is a powerful description in blank verse of Christian heroism.

Mr. Harris has a very keen eye for the grand scenery of his native county, and depicts its peculiar characteristics with great fidelity and wealth of expression. Kynance Cove, and the "storm-swept, boulder-bound Land's End," with other Cornish scenes, are limned with much power and beauty, and form the background for the dramatic action of the various pieces, in some of which there is much imagery and invention. A few lines from "A Spring Warble" will show that he has a delicate ear for rhythm. Our space forbids us making long quotations, even if we did not prefer that our readers should procure the volume for themselves and thus be in a better position to form their own opinions of Mr. John Harris's merits as a poet, at the same time that they will be doing a service to a most deserving man by purchasing the volume of poems that he has written during his life-long labours as a miner. We feel assured that such readers after a perusal of the volume will approve Lord Beaconsfield's gift of £200 to the Miner Poet, and will see in it the recognition, by a master of literature, of considerable talent richly cultivated under no ordinary circumstances. Pontypridd has recently shown us the heroism of miners, and this volume of verse by John Harris is a most agreeable evidence that the Muse of Poetry can be wooed and won even in the dismal depths of a Cornish mine.

From the POETS OF METHODISM, 1875.

John Harris was for twenty years of his life a working Cornish miner. His verses are remarkable for original power and simple beauty. But they have what some would deem higher characteristics of true poetry. His imagination is fruitful in happy combinations and rare similes. His epithets here and there are richly suggestive ; transparent treasuries of distinctive beauty, poetic microcosms. The poems show considerable native wealth of diction, and refined taste is not unfrequently manifest

in the choice of words. On his native soil he is true to life. His pictures of nature have a freshness about them almost as inspiriting as that of the scenes themselves which first courted and called forth his native genius. The poet always has a holy purpose. His lessons are often touching and always pure. His home-sympathies are very tender. The joys and sorrows of human life are sacred things to him, and he touches them with a feeling that gently draws responses from every heart which comes within the range of his influence. His lyric vein is sometimes for beauty like the serpentine adornments of his own "Kynance Cove." We foot it up the side of the carn on the wild brow of which the poet began his life. The only house on the hill was a modern one, bare and cold. The old straw-thatched, boulder-built cottage, with bare rafters and clay floor, locally known as the "Six Chimneys," was gone, all excepting the foundations, and here and there a few feet of wall. The view from the old court was wide and wild. The scene was inspiriting with all its weird loneliness. Nature, however, seemed to do honour to the poet, who had so honoured her. The primroses clustered by joyful crowds in the old deserted garden, as if they would adorn and perfume the memory of him who had so lovingly sung to the first for the season that had smiled on him. It was pleasant to sit on the brow of that hill amid the ruins of the old cottage-home and awaken in the soul the music of the verse which was inspired there. And under one of the rude boulders which had guarded that cottage-hearth there was a bright clump of violets in purest bloom, looking as if they were proud of decorating the nook once enjoyed by him who gave tuneful welcome to "The First Violet."

From the LADIES' EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, *April*, 1876.

SOME one has said that there are twenty thousand living poets in our land. Fortunately rarity is not now the only test of worthiness, and we are very willing to pause before a man that is either unique or the representative of a small and uncommon class. Such a man is John Harris. Born in Cornwall, by the mere force of his poetic impulse he has conquered many difficulties and taken a place among the *recognised* poets of our day.

His parents were poor honest labourers that feared God and owed no man anything; but they could not afford their son either money or time for much education. His only school was a straw-thatched cottage, his teacher a one-legged miner, his curriculum ended before he was nine years of age, and yet he has been able to make his mark. He was sent to work in the fields until he was ten years old, when he went down into the mines for twenty years. During all that time his relaxation, his delight was in thinking and writing poetry. It was often jotted down under most extraordinary circumstances—scratched on bits of rock, chalked on pieces of stone, scribbled on fragments of paper, on old bellows, on anything, in fact, that would retain it until he might write it down in his short leisure. When his family grew up around him, he often wrote verses with some of his children on his knee and the others playing round him, presenting a very different picture of life from that of the moody *solitaire* who goes a hunting for ideas to pack into poems. And when he changed his darksome and dangerous toil below ground

for his present occupation of Scripture Reader in Falmouth, one can well imagine from his works that his heart was glad at the change and satisfied with his lot.

He presents a contrast in many points to our own Robert Burns, whom he resembles in others. Like him, a son of the soil, labouring for his daily bread with the most intense appreciation of the beauties and charms of that nature the sight of which he was for so large a portion of his daily life obliged to forego, uncultivated, spontaneous, simple in his love of poetry and necessity of expression, touched now by the grace, anon by the humour of little things, he used a music as perfect to subjects as varied. But with him poetry has not been a Will-o'-the-wisp, a dangerous light leading to mischief and darkness, but a steady home-beam, a guiding star. Harris longed for self-improvement rather than enjoyment; he loved not only nature but its Creator; he could be free under law and order, duty and right. He presents to us many interesting records of life and action, thought and feeling, besides very many beautiful hymns and touching expressions of his religious life. Perhaps the moral lesson which he most frequently inculcates directly is that of sobriety and temperance. But throughout all one feels that he looks at life in a true light without distortion or false colouring. The large volume of his collected poems, "Wayside Pictures, &c.," has many examples of this. In this volume he has several long tales of Druids, of Indians, of simple Cornish miners, rich in interesting descriptions of well-known localities. These are chiefly in a semi-dramatic form. He is essentially a landscape painter. One hardly knows how to select, but we open the leaves at "The Indian Story:"—

Music among the mountains! &c

But we must not leave the impression that he writes only in blank verse. He has a large variety of measures, in all of which his language flows most smoothly. A lighter style appears in some of his shorter poems, and in some of the pieces written to please his children, or where he addresses a mouse that gnawed his lexicon. But he never seemed to have any difficulty in wooing the muse when he turned to write on Shakespere. *He* seems the one object of the honest miner's idolatry. Most people may be aware that Harris wrote the Ode on Shakespere's Tercentenary, which won the prize in a competition open to all. The original MS. framed and glazed is retained in the Shakespere Museum at Stratford-on-Avon. The poem is now published in this volume which may be said to have been the beginning of his fame. Time will not permit us to follow his musings in "Shakespere's House," but we can imagine them and follow him away to the fair church by the Avon where the great bard lies interred. With his intense enthusiasm he explores every nook and corner of Stratford, dreams by the banks of the Avon, and turns back by Shottery.

The strange thing about this man's writings is that with his limited education and more limited society, his *language* as well as his thought should be so refined, so free from provincialisms, so grammatically correct. It seems to point to the care of the writer and persistent endeavour towards self-improvement. I should imagine him to be no Celt, though born in Cornwall, but a pure type of Saxon character with

its strong ethical feeling, its repose, its mass. Furthermore, his strange love of alliteration, now so rare with us, occasionally suggests a preference to that Saxon form over the mere modern rhyme. Besides being the author of many hymns and tracts separately published, Harris has this year also issued another smaller volume entitled "Walks with the Wild Flowers," containing floral illustrations drawn by the author's invalid son.

CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL.

From the LUTON TIMES, 1876.

MEN WHO HAVE RISEN.

JOHN HARRIS.

The land of song within thee lies,
Watered by living springs;
The lids of Fancy's sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that paradise:
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise;
Its clouds are angels' wings.—*Longfellow.*

JOHN Harris, our Cornish poet, was born on the 14th of October, 1820, in a rough cottage with clay floor and boulder walls situate on the top of Bolennowe Hill, Camborne. The county of Cornwall is no inappropriate spot for a poet's birthplace. I can never quite divest myself of the fancy that it is a province in itself, and not a part of England at all. There is something so weird and strange in its wide barren moorlands with here and there the heaped-up refuse of some great mine and the low murmur of its mysterious machines. The wild cliffs of its magnificent sea coast, the clear water with its brilliant purple and blue and green, through which the stones shine like malachites and amethysts, the black cormorants riding on the waves or flying with the storm, the delicate white sand of the fairy bays—all these have a beauty peculiarly their own.

At the age of five John Harris was sent to a Dame school, where he learnt the letters of the alphabet and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his parents. From hence he was removed to another school kept by a hard and brutal master. This miscreant used to beat the little unfortunates committed to his care with a piece of wood studded with sharp nails, and his cruelty soon drove John Harris away. He took refuge with a kinder master and under his teaching learnt spelling and arithmetic. He also attended Sunday school which he remembers with gratitude. When only about eight years of age he began to write verses on scraps of paper and read them to his companions. Sometimes he would sew a number of his songs together and illustrate them with childish drawings. The first poem which awoke the latent fire within him was Burns's immortal "Cottar's Saturday Night;" whilst he revelled in Bloomfield, Pilgrim's Progress, and Watts's Divine and Moral Songs, and would sit at his mother's feet while she told stories of great and beautiful deeds.

At the early age of nine he was taken from school and put to work in the fields. At the age of ten an old tin-streamer on the moor gave

him threepence a day for throwing white sand from the river; and at twelve he began working on the surface of a mine about three miles from his home, and at thirteen he began to labour with his father two hundred fathoms below the surface. He was now sometimes obliged to write his thoughts on his thumb-nails for want of paper at the moment, and scribble verses upon the wedges used in splitting the rock. The love of poetry "grew with his physical growth and was dearer to him than the smile of friendship." At home in the barn or the cow-house or in the chimney corner amid the noise of the family circle he would sit with paper and pencil on his knee musing and writing. Sometimes for the sake of that solitude so precious to all poets he sat in his cold bedroom with his feet wrapped in his mother's cloak or wandered over field and moor. In autumn he made ink from the blackberries growing on the hedges, and thus saved some pennies for the purchase of books. At the age of twenty-five Mr. Harris married, and his happiness in this union was increased by the birth of several children. In 1853 his first volume made its appearance and met with warm appreciation. Nine volumes have followed, and Mr. Harris's genius is now widely recognised.

On April 22nd, 1864, the three hundredth anniversary of Shakspere's birth, the inhabitants of the quaint old city of Coventry assembled to do the greatest of poets honour. The Corn Exchange was decorated with garlands, flags, and scrolls, and in a conspicuous place two handsome watches, one gold and one silver, were displayed. These were the prizes which had been offered four or five months previously for the two best poems upon Shakespere. About one hundred contributions had been sent to the adjudicators; but though the prizes were awarded, no one was yet aware of the names of the winners which were contained in sealed envelopes. The proceedings opened by the recitation of a prologue; the overture to the "Merry Wives of Windsor" followed, and then the Mayor ascended the platform and opened the sealed envelopes. The first prize was announced to be the property of John Harris, the Cornish poet. The Ode on Shakespere's Birthday is one of Mr. Harris's best works. He describes in glowing language how all the sights and sounds of nature ministered to Shakespere's genius, so that he is beloved by all. It was no small achievement for the half-educated miner to carry off the palm, in competition with a hundred poets, not one of whom, probably, had started in life with so few advantages as himself. For twenty years Mr. Harris worked in Dolcoath mine; the heat, and dust, and hard toil, serving only to increase his love of all things beautiful. For the last sixteen years he has been employed as a Scripture Reader in Falmouth. His "Walks with the Wild Flowers" has lately appeared, illustrated by his son who is suffering from spinal complaint, and it is a very pretty gift-book. To those who are rowing against the stream in the cold and dark, let Mr. Harris speak as one having authority.

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WALKS WITH THE WILD FLOWERS.

From the LITERARY WORLD, *December 31st*, 1875.

IN a preface the author tells us that this makes the tenth volume he has published, and it is one of which he need not be ashamed. Two-thirds of its pages are devoted to some unpretending poetry; the remaining space being occupied by a Christmas Story and miscellaneous poems. Mr. Harris has written some charming poetry, which we have reviewed in these columns; and not a little in the volume before us is exceedingly creditable. As a specimen we may quote "The Violet."

From the LEICESTER DAILY POST, *December 21st*, 1875.

THE name of this writer is a name we ever love to mention in every way as concerns true poetry. Not because Mr. Harris has received such encomiastic credentials from the press at large do we here give our meed of admiration; but because the work before our eye deserves it. There are many who write poetry, falsely so called, and do in consequence more injury to this highest branch of literature than it is possible any other power can do. Nothing but fire in the soul and the promptings of eternity can produce vital and telling poetry.

The volume we have now to mention is dedicated to Lord Northbrook, Governor of India, who in past years was an honour to the house of Baring and to the country, also in his parliamentary connection with Falmouth, the residence of our poet. The book is divided into two parts. Mr. Harris's one hundred and forty-five pages are very interesting indeed. It is illustrated with woodcuts of the various herbal and other road-side and field flowers upon which the poems are based. The cuts are done by his invalid son, a boy whose spinal affliction prevented such a work being effected in any other way but that of a recumbent position. We present our readers with a poem on the Vervain.

Mr. Harris is a self-made man. He tells us he received his education in a straw-thatched country day-school, under a one-legged Cornish miner master. He began verse-making when about eight years old, and has altogether composed ten volumes and written about six hundred pieces, essays, tales, and poems. The latest collection was written out of doors under the hawthorn, or on farm-gates and stiles. His botanical descriptions are excellent, meant to incite a love in the minds of the young for the delightful science of botany. We cordially entreat our literary friends to dig into this botanical poetry for themselves, believing they will not regret it.

From the WEST BRITON, *February 3rd*, 1876.

THIS is a very welcome little book, full of sweet odours and bright colours. There is a calm, meditative air about it which we cannot but like, and which the townsmen in our black, murky hives of industry must envy. John Harris has shown us in his "Walks" that he is desirous to make his saunterings in the Cornish lanes and on his native

moors bear fruit to the profiting of his fellows. Hear him as he sings:

A simple lesson have the smallest grasses,
The humblest flower a prayer:
And he who listens hears it as it passes
Along the silent air.

These few lines are in themselves sufficient to stamp the author a poet. Nor is this the only blossom we might cull to show the posy is a gathering of sweet things: but to those who know how to appreciate poetic dainties one such example as we have given will suffice, and they will wisely seek to possess the bulk. There is an additional feature of interest in this book which distinguisheth it from all the author has previously published, and that is the true feeling of art manifested by Mr. Harris's invalid son in the pretty free sketches of wild flowers he has given us. It is as fresh as a nosegay plucked in spring, and we wish the little book every success.

Testimony of the RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF MOUNT EDGECUMBE.

THE Earl of Mount Edgecumbe begs to enclose a P.O .order for books sent to him by Mr. Harris, which he is glad to have in his possession.
Mount Edgecumbe, January 4th, 1876.

From the LUTON TIMES, *January 1st,* 1876.

WE hail with satisfaction Mr. Harris's tasteful little book. The very names of the wild flowers are music to our ears, so full are they of pleasant associations, and their yearly resurrection is one of the few spectacles that never tire. The author of "Walks with the Wild Flowers" has successfully tried to interpret their language, and his poems have the great merit of growing upon the reader's liking. We believe that any one who admires them at the first reading will doubly admire them at the second. "Down from the Woods" is original and striking. The beautiful and conscientiously executed wood engravings which add so much to the attractions of Mr. Harris's book are the work of his invalid son. We believe that this is his first appearance in public as an engraver, and we heartily wish him all success. Mr. Harris has won him many friends in all classes of society, and we feel sure that "Walks with the Wild Flowers" will increase their number. We must content ourselves with concluding our notice by introducing our readers to the author's charming lines on the Wild Rose.

Testimony of the BARONESS BURDETT COUTTS.

THE Baroness was much pleased with Mr. Harris's little books and also with the *woodcuts*, which she thinks are very nicely done.
January 6th, 1876.

From the ROYAL CORNWALL GAZETTE, *April 20th*, 1877.

EVERY Falmouthian knows and respects John Harris the Cornish poet —or better, the Cornish Missionary poet, who may be daily seen going his rounds of love as a Scripture Reader. No pleasanter news therefore could reach here than that the Prime Minister had kindly offered to Mr. Harris a grant of £200 from the Royal Bounty Fund. No worthier man could be found for Lord Beaconsfield's remembrance. Two brother authors—one at the head of the state, the other humbly toiling as a loyal citizen.

From the WESTERN MORNING NEWS, *April 13th*, 1877.

WE are glad to hear that Mr. W. H. Northy has received a letter from Mr. Tremayne, M.P., stating that "Lord Beaconsfield has again had under consideration the case of Mr. John Harris the Cornish poet, on whose behalf you forwarded a memorial some time since, recommending him for a pension from the Civil List; and his lordship desires me to say that if agreeable to Mr. Harris he will be happy to direct a grant of £200 to be made to him from the Royal Bounty Fund." In his efforts to procure a public grant to Mr. Harris Mr. Northy has all along received the heartiest support from the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, Mr. Tremayne, M.P., and other noblemen and gentlemen. The Prime Minister has done a kind and graceful act in thus recognising a poor brother author.

From the CHRISTIAN GLOBE, *July 7th*, 1876.

JOHN HARRIS, the Miner Poet and Scripture-Reader, is one of those men of whom England is justly entitled to feel proud. In the rugged cheerless solitude of Camborne, with scant education, and few books, without funds or friends, doomed from early boyhood to laborious drudgery in the bowels of the earth, with a wife and family dependent upon him for support, he has nevertheless contrived to work his upward way, simply, yet grandly, winning for himself an honourable niche in the fane of letters. The spirit of song visited him when he was quite an urchin, and his first effusions, scrawled on soiled paper-scraps, saw the light at the mine's mouth. He is an inspired minstrel and a devout man. He contemplates the mountain-top, the craggy steep, the clouds, the dew-laden valleys, the gorgeous tints of summer and the chilling aspects of winter, alike with rapt eyes and gushing heart; and from them spiritual voices, ever fresh and angelic, proclaim to his soul the infinity of God, the wisdom of God, and the illimitable love of God for all His creatures. He no longer burrows fathoms deep for his daily bread. His singular fitness for the post of Scripture-Reader has been happily recognised.

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