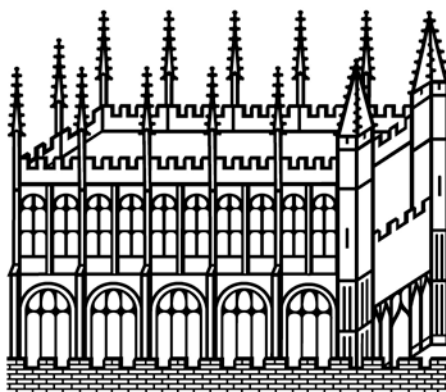




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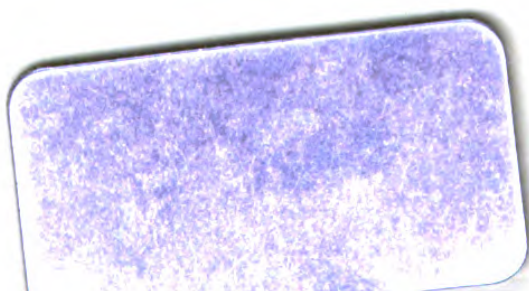
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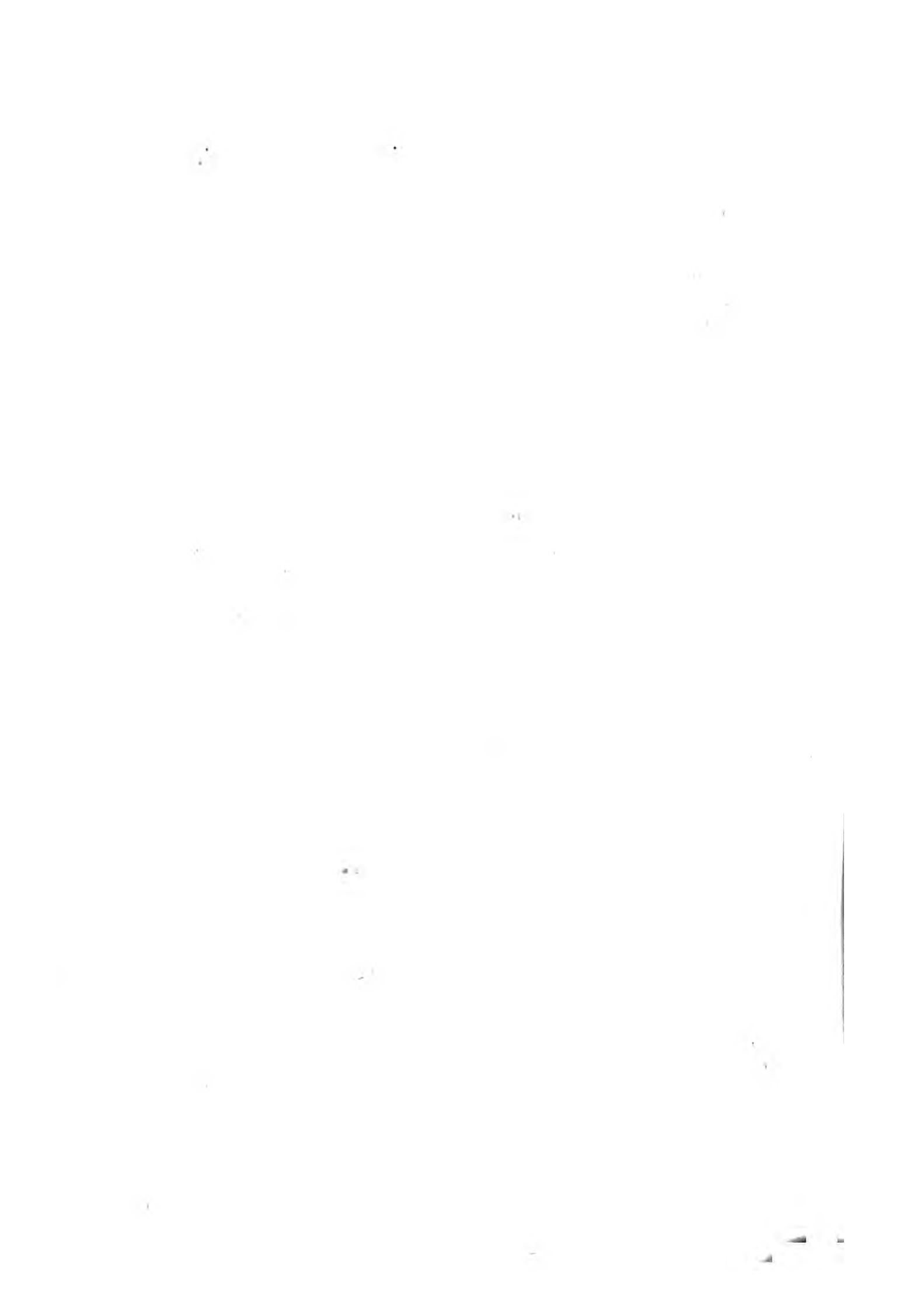
TIM AND
HIS FRIENDS





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HULLO! TIM, SHOUTED THE POLICEMAN.



TIM AND HIS FRIENDS.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY :
56, PATERNOSTER ROW ; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD ; AND
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TIM AND HIS FRIENDS.



CHAPTER I.

A Snowy Morning.

IT was snowing, snowing everywhere, the flakes coming noiselessly down, covering the pavement and roadway with a pure sheet of white, beautiful to look at, and with the cold east wind getting crisp under foot. The warmly-dressed pedestrians seemed to enjoy it much, and hurried along with the vision of a carpeted room and cosy fire looming in the distance. On a doorstep, thinly clad, with shoes through which peeped some very blue-looking toes, and bare elbows appearing through his coat sleeves, crouched a small fair-haired boy of some seven summers, fast asleep.

“Hullo, Tim! I told ye not to do that again; I shall have to put ye in the lock-up some day,”

shouted a good-humoured-looking policeman in the boy's ear, shaking him by the arm not ungently.

The boy half-raised himself, but the cold had made him stiff; he rubbed his blue eyes,—you could see how very blue they were when he gazed up into the policeman's friendly face,—and a smile came, brightening the otherwise haggard countenance.

"Oh! Mister Hallett, I was tired, and went off to sleep."

"Had any breakfast yet, Timmy? You look mighty hungry."

"No, sir, I ain't; I am hungry, and I ain't got no matches to sell. Father didn't give me no money 'fore he went out," said the little fellow, in that plaintive tone that one so often hears from the patient poor.

"How's that, little 'un; I'm afraid he got drunk last night, eh?"

"He came home very bad; and I was frightened, and went up and lay outside grannie's door till daylight; then I crept out here."

"Buy yourself a penn'orth of bread with this, Timmy," and the man put a copper into his hand. "Here's another penny, to get a cup of coffee at the stall round the corner. Now be off."

The boy's eyes glistened. "Thank'ee, sir," and he ran away as quickly as his half-frozen limbs would let him.

The policeman watched him for a minute. "Poor little chap!" he said aloud; "his is a sad lot. No mother, and a father not worth the name; he'd mayhap better be without him. If it weren't for my own five children, I'd like to take him. There's the making of an honest lad in him, there is! owing, I reckon, to his poor mother's care and prayers,—please God he don't get spoiled among 'em: they're a bad lot hereabouts;" and the man moved on with a grave look on his face.

Little Tim could remember, young as he was, much happier times than now. He remembered his gentle delicate mother, a pretty cottage home in a pleasant country village, where he could play in the meadows, and their own garden filled with fragrant, old-fashioned flowers. He was about five years old when she died, but he had not forgotten what she taught him. He always thought of her as looking down upon him from the sky; and used to say so pathetically when tempted by those around him to do anything wrong, "But mammy wouldn't like it. My mammy sees little Tim, she said she'd watch

me ; and I wouldn't like her to cry. She would if I stole, or used bad words." The shadow of his mother's spirit seemed to keep the little fellow amid much evil.

Soon after her death, his father took to drinking, lost his situation, gave up his pretty cottage and his country home, and came to London to seek employment. He went on from bad to worse, until, reduced to the lowest degradation, he cared only for drink. Little Tim was like some fair spirit amid his wretched surroundings ; fenced round by his mother's prayers, nothing evil seemed to touch him. Even his miserable father at times seemed awed by the innocent upturned look. The sweet blue eyes reminded him of his wife, the wife he had once so dearly loved, and who, while she lived, had been his guardian angel, keeping him with her gentle, quiet, helpful ways, and consistent walk (bearing testimony in her life and conversation that she loved her Saviour), from his besetting sin, drink. But when she died, he drank, he said, to drown his grief. And it grew upon him rapidly, until he was lost to every good and generous impulse, and treated his poor little boy so badly, that even the neighbours, who were not very particular either in their conduct or language,

cried out against him. Little Tim spoke to their hearts with his sweet patient ways, his willing feet swift to do anyone a kindness.

John Grant lived in one of those dwellings that are let out in separate rooms; and at the top, in a small back garret, lived an old woman, who subsisted on pay from the parish, and a small sum allowed her by a friend. Very meagre was the fare she could afford; but she was a bright happy woman, never losing her faith in her Lord. Sunny and sweet was her wrinkled face at all times, shining with a light that came not from earthly things, but seeing Him who was invisible: however dark her path might be, His hand guided her, and that was enough. He kept her in perfect peace, because her mind was stayed on Him.

Tim used to call her Grannie,—indeed all the people in the court gave her that name. Any kindly deed wanting to be done, a child minded or nursed, as far as her strength permitted, Grannie came to the fore. She had often protected Tim from his father's anger; he would fly up to her room beyond the reach of the blows that would be showered upon him when John Grant had had too much to drink, and Grannie would then comfort him and talk to him of Jesus

and the beautiful home where his mother had gone, and often share her scanty meals with him ; and he, in return, would run her errands, and do little things to prevent her moving, for Grannie was lame, very lame sometimes. And Tim loved her much : he would sit at her feet and drink in the words of life that flowed from the old woman's lips, in simple childlike language, so simple, that Tim, young as he was, could take it all in and understand it. She used to tell him that his little pattering feet was music in her ears.





CHAPTER II.

Tim finds a Friend in Grannie.

WE left little Tim running off to spend the pence that the kind policeman had given him. He went to the stall and got some coffee, and then to the baker's for some bread—it was a long time since he had had such a good warm breakfast. He was often very hungry, poor little fellow! and his father, after his drunken bouts, generally woke up cross.

Sometimes the wretched man gave him some matches to sell, thinking his pretty innocent face and golden hair would appeal to the pity of passers-by; and the little fellow was so loyal hearted that he would give whatever he made up to his father, seldom buying more than a pennyworth of bread during the day, and not even that if he had any food given him. If Tim made much, he would be kind to the boy, and give him something to eat; but if he had what

he called "a bad day," he would more likely than not beat the child, and send him supperless to bed.

Tim carefully wrapped up a part of his bread in some paper, and carried it up to Grannie's room ; he was always pleased to save her part of anything that he had given him.

"Look, Grannie dear, what I've got ; Mister Hallett gave me two pennies, and I bought some coffee and some bread. I wish I could have saved you some coffee, it was so hot and nice."

"Lor' bless you, honey," said the old woman, her face lighting up with pleasure ; "eat the bread yourself, my pretty ; you want it, sure."

"No, Grannie dear, I kept it for you ;" and his blue eyes filled with tears, as he looked pleadingly up in her face.

"Bless you, my dearie," exclaimed the old woman, putting her hands on the child's head, "bless you, I'll take it ;" and a prayer ascended from that lonely woman's heart that this little one might be blessed indeed, and fed with heavenly food. "Now tell me where you've been, and how's father this morning ?"

"I don't know ; he was bad last night," he whispered, "so bad, I was frightened, and lay outside your door all night."

"Timmy dear, you mustn't do that again; you'll catch cold, dearie. Come to Grannie another time, she'll take care of you."

"It was late, Grannie, I was feared you might be asleep; and I asked God to take care of me, and He did. I said the nice prayer you taught me, Grannie!" and the little fellow raised his sweet eyes to her face. "Will He make father good?"

"I think He will, honey, in time. We must be patient, and bide His time. He sometimes makes us wait a little. We mustn't forget to ask; He has promised, dearie, and He always keeps His word."

"Ask Him to make father good to me, and not beat me, please, Grannie."

The old body breathed a silent prayer over him; and then he ran downstairs, pausing tremblingly outside the miserable room that he called home. He opened the door slowly and passed in. John Grant sat crouching over a small fire, looking haggard from his last night's dissipation. He did not perceive the boy just at first, but hearing a slight noise, he turned suddenly. "Hullo, you there!" he shouted harshly, and a frown gathered on his face (at which Tim trembled), "Where have you been? Why didn't

you come and light my fire, you young rascal?"

"I—I have been up to Grannie," hesitatingly spoke Tim, while he visibly shook, which seemed to increase the wrath of the man. He rose, and struck him a blow with such force as to send the child reeling to the other side of the room.

"There, stop that howling (for Tim was quietly crying), and fetch me some beer." He seized a broken jug and thrust it into the child's hand, with some pence. "And be quick about it, or it will be worse for you."

Tim silently obeyed, and going down the rickety stairs, with eyes dim with tears, he almost fell over a dark-eyed little girl that was sitting on the lowest step.

"Oh, Susie dear, did I hurt you?" anxiously spoke the boy, and stooping down, he kissed her upturned cheek.

"No, Timmy, you didn't hurt Susie; but what you crying for, did he beat you?" she whispered under her breath, her little pale face becoming paler, and tears gathering in her eyes.

"He didn't hurt so much, Susie; but I mustn't stay—he sent me for beer."

"I'll come with you," said the tiny child, jumping up and taking his hand.

"No, dear, you might get hurt down at the corner ; there's lots of men there. Stay here and look for me ;" and the little fellow ran off quickly.

He soon returned, carrying the jug carefully, and passing Susie with, "I won't be long," walked upstairs to his father's room.

"A tidy time you've been, I'll teach you to stay about when I send you for anything," and he aimed a blow at Tim, which, however, he contrived to evade, and the man contented himself with drinking deeply out of the jug. He took a few coins out of his pocket, and threw them to Tim, saying, "There, go and buy some matches ! and mind you bring home some money to-night, or you'll get something."

Tim picked up the money, and slipped out of the room without a word. Running down, he saw Susie still on the stairs.

"Where's mammy, Susie ?"

"In there," said the little creature, pointing to a door on the ground floor. Tim knocked,—a rather loud voice bade him enter. He opened the door, and stood just inside, saying timidly, "Please, ma'am, father's give me some money for matches. Will you help me again ?"

"Oh, so yer father's on the drink again, is he ?"

exclaimed the woman, who, though she spoke rather loudly, and seemed hard to others, was kind to little Tim, and never got drunk. She obtained her living by washing and charing; and though her neighbours were kept in order by her tongue, if they attempted to interfere with Susie, they could not say worse of her than calling her "a vixen." But, if left alone, she minded her own business, and took good care of her little girl.

"Please, ma'am, will you help me again? You said you would," said Tim, waxing bolder.

"Help ye, lad; of course I will," said the woman, kindly. "How many matches will ye have? I've got six penn'orth left from the last lot I bought ye." The woman good-naturedly arranged them on an old box cover. "If ye sell 'em all ye can pay me. Have a drink of tea, Timmy;" and the little fellow drank out of an old cracked cup a curious liquid that you and I, dear reader, might not have recognised as that most refreshing beverage.



CHAPTER III.

Little Susie.

WHEN little Tim started out, Susie ran after him. "Mayn't I go with you a tiny way?" lisped the pretty child, raising her dark eyes pleadingly. She was a perfect little fairy, small limbed and graceful, not resembling in the least the woman she called mammy. She was an imperious little creature, and made Tim her slave.

"Yes, dear, if mammy will let you. Ask her, Susie."

"No," said the little woman, petulantly, "I don't want."

"Well, I will," said Tim, and ran back.

When the little fellow had gained permission, he returned to her side, for Susie had not moved from where he left her. She said, "Why did you ask, Timmy! Mammy don't mind."

"But, Susie, we ought to ask mammy always, and do as she says."

"But I want to do as I likes," the child replied, with a frown on her little brow.

"No, Susie, we mustn't ; Grannie says so."

"Shouldn't like Grannie," she said, with a shake, "nassy ole thing."

"You would like her, dear ; she's so good, and gives me bread when I'm very hungry, and father's got no money," said the loyal little fellow ; "and she tells me all about Jesus, how He was a little boy once like me, and lived on earth, only He was always good, and then God took Him up into heaven. But if we love Him, and ask Him anything, if it is right, He gives it us."

"I'll ask Him to let me go with you all the way when you sell matches. What shall I say, Tim ?"

"No, dear, don't ; mammy wouldn't like it ; and God likes us to do what mammy likes. Grannie says so."

"But I want to," said the little girl, passionately, and she stamped her little feet upon the pavement.

Poor Tim did not know how to combat such a turbulent spirit ; but presently he said, putting his arm round her affectionately, "Don't, Susie dear, please, don't cry. You shall come and see

Grannie some day, and perhaps I'll find a flower ; if I do, I'll save it for you."

After a time, with much coaxing and many kisses, she permitted him to dry her tears and send her back. Then his hard day's work began : his pretty innocent face attracted much notice. He generally took the same route, whatever he had to sell ; and some people recognised his voice, and pitied the poor little boy, so young to begin life's battle, while their own little ones were being sheltered and caressed. We little know what sufferings are patiently endured among the very poor.

As our little Tim was passing through a square filled with large houses, the people living in them being wealthy, a lady standing at the window of one of them was attracted by his sweet voice.

"Herbert, look at this little fellow ; that is the very child I was talking to you about the other day. Is he not pretty ?"

Mr. Musgrave rose from the breakfast-table, where he had been reading the remainder of his correspondence.

"Well, my dear ; and where is this wonderful child that has made such an impression on my wife's fancy ?"

"I do not think it is wholly fancy, Herbert I feel quite drawn to this little boy ; and would like to do him good, if it were in my power."

"Your kind heart is touched by so much beauty and seeming innocence being exposed to the buffets of the world, Mary ; that is it, you may depend. This child will pass from your memory as well as from your sight in due time ; and were you to meet him a few years hence, when he has been in prison perhaps, or got debased, you would not know the pretty boy ; for pretty he undoubtedly is."

"No, no, Herbert ; I cannot bear to think of so much innocence and sweetness ever going to prison. No, surely he will grow up good, purity seems stamped upon his brow ;" and tears filled her eyes, those eyes that always had such a depth of sadness in them, as though she had tasted deeply of sorrow. "Oh," she again exclaimed, "how I wish I could help him, for the sake of——" Here she broke off, and glanced up at her husband with a pitiful look.

"Dear," he said, gently and sadly, "you would only be most bitterly disappointed if you were to try and help him upwards. We do not know how degraded his parents are, if he has any ; and even that innocent look may have been

cultivated for the purpose of drawing pity from those with whom he comes in contact. You do not know the world as well as I do, Mary ; but cheer up, I do not like to see a cloud upon my dear wife's brow."

"How can I ever be cheerful more, dear, when I think—when I think——" and she burst into agonizing sobs. "Oh, that my past life could ever be granted me over again, how differently would I have acted ; and not only I have to suffer, but you, my dear Herbert : the pain is as great for you as for me."

"Well, dear, I own my pain is great ; but you add to your suffering by such bitter upbraiding. Do not do so. I think you are mistaken ; it never was my little wife's fault in any way, I am sure."

She looked up with a faint smile into his face. "Will nothing make you think badly of me, Herbert," she said sadly. "In our early married life I gave you trouble enough with my temper. I know God has taken that away ; but there is a corner in both our hearts that will never be filled again in this world."

"My dear," he said gravely, "if you really would like to adopt a child, we might meet with one of respectable parents, who would be willing

to give it up entirely ; but I do not approve of it, it seems so unnatural to take a child away from its parents."

"No, Herbert ; I have no wish to adopt a child, I do not think I *could* deprive a parent of a child. No, no, the pain I have suffered has been too great for that, I could not ask such a thing. But I feel that I really should like to benefit that boy, not raising him unduly out of his station, but putting him in the way of earning his living, and becoming a good respectable man."

"But, my dear, he cannot be old enough to earn his living yet ; nor will he for many years. School should be the proper place for him for some time to come."

"Yes, dear ; but could we not help him in some small way ? I do not mean take him entirely. Let me, dear ; perhaps it would partly fill up the gap."

"I should indeed be sorry to deny you anything that would bring you comfort, Mary ; and if you can think of anything that would really help the lad, without raising hopes of continued benefits, you have my hearty consent ; but more I cannot say."



CHAPTER IV.

~~Mrs.~~ Musgrave's Trouble.

LONG after her husband had left her, Mrs. Musgrave continued musing over the past, sadly enough; for she always blamed herself greatly with reference to something that had occurred more than five years ago, and which she now feared would never be set right again in this world.

Mrs. Musgrave had been the spoilt and only daughter of rich parents, who had left no wish ungratified. They loved her, not wisely, but too well; and she grew up self-willed and tyrannical, her temper being unchecked. But with all her faults, she was affectionate and true-hearted. When she married Mr. Musgrave (a man known for his integrity and good sense), her friends hoped she would improve; but her husband gave way to her pretty imperious ways, and she remained as great a tyrant as ever.

They lived in a pretty country house, with rather extensive grounds. It was furnished with exquisite taste, he wishing to gratify her in all things pertaining to her home; but when she took for a maid a person whom he had heard was of a violent temper and bad disposition, he tried to get her to see how unwise it was to have a woman of that description near her. But she would not be advised even in this; and in a spirit of contradiction took the girl.

Esther May was a tall fine-looking young woman. Had she cultivated gentleness, she would have been good-looking: for a sweet disposition makes any one look beautiful. She was more vindictive than passionate. No real outbreaks on her part led her mistress to believe that she bitterly resented what were very injudicious remarks. Mrs. Musgrave knew her family; and when irritable, would taunt the girl with things that had occurred that were not to their credit. Esther secretly garnered every taunt in her heart; and long after the things said had passed away from her mistress's mind, *she* brooded over them, and longed to do something in her turn to annoy and vex. The opportunity did not come. "I can afford to wait," she used to mutter; "it will be my turn by-and-by."

How sad a thing it is to indulge in sinful thoughts and desires. Satan likes to help in such ; and he does not let us forget them. So her mistress offended the girl again and again, little thinking what a store of trouble she was laying up for herself, by her unthinking, yet unkind, words and tones to her servant. How careful we should be not to hurt the feelings of others, but ever be mindful to heal, not wound. A kind word or action is never really lost ; but an unkind hasty word or tone rankles long in the heart.

Time sped along until they had been married two years, when a little daughter came,—such a sweet blossom, the joy of the mother's heart. Oh, what care and tenderness was lavished upon the little one ; and for some months Mrs. Musgrave entirely gave up society for her child's sake. So guarded was it by its mother's love, that nothing came near to harm it, until one day the nurse, a good and faithful girl, was taken ill. She was nursed with tenderness, for her mistress had a kind heart, and she was grateful to the girl for the care she had taken of her baby. But while she was laid up, Esther begged that she might have the little one ; and Mrs. Musgrave, really trusting her, consented, while she gave

up much of her own time to the sick nurse girl. At length she recovered, but not sufficiently to retain her situation, and with much regret she parted from her little pet, and went home to her mother.

Esther meanwhile had the charge of the baby. She was called Tiny, on account of being so small. She asked Mrs. Musgrave if she might continue to be its nurse. Her mistress consented, thinking what good care she would take of her wee blossom, her tiny Ethel.

But Esther's head was full of one idea, how she could make her mistress suffer for the pain she had given her. She knew that it had been given thoughtlessly, not maliciously; but she hated her all the same. If Esther had only tried to think of the many kindnesses that she had received, she would have been softened instead of hardened. We should always try to cultivate the sense of goodness, mercy, and love, that charity that thinketh *no evil*, so making our lives beautiful, instead of a misery to ourselves, and a source of pain and trouble to others.

Scheme after scheme passed through the girl's brain, was thought over and rejected; but at last a dreadful idea took possession of her mind, How true it is that if "we have not God in all our thoughts," the wicked one, who is always on

the watch, takes advantage, and then we are lost. I fear Esther had quite forgotten to ask for God's guidance. If she had done so, these sinful thoughts would not have intruded, or she would have had strength given her to put them away. But, instead of doing so, she harboured them, brooded over this thing until it assumed shape and form. The enormity of the crime she contemplated frightened her at first, and she shrank from it as from some deadly thing; but familiarity reconciled her to it, indeed. At last she planned it out with a feverishness born only of the intense hatred she had nursed up for her mistress.

We will not tell in this chapter how she carried out her design; but one day, when Mrs. Musgrave returned from a visit to some friends, she found that her nurse and child had disappeared. Esther had gone out to walk as usual, taking the child with her; and not returning long after the hour she generally came back, it caused great uneasiness, and every effort was made to gain tidings; but no news came,—she had not been met or noticed either in the village or on the road. Telegrams were sent to the nearest station, handbills printed, and rewards offered for any clue to the mystery.

It was thought that some misfortune had be-

fallen the child, and Esther was afraid to return ; but as the days passed on, and nothing was heard of them, Mrs. Musgrave broke down under the strain, and an alarming attack of illness was the result. And though every tenderness was lavished upon her, she trembled for weeks upon the brink of the grave ; but at last youth conquered, and she rose from her bed a "sadder but a wiser woman."

There are some of us who have to learn by bitter experience to conquer ourselves ; and God mercifully leads us in rough and thorny paths, that eventually we may humbly acknowledge His will the best. He sometimes "hedges up our way with thorns," that we may halt in our career, and turn to Him for help ; and this never-ceasing sorrow was working out a godly repentance. The bereaved mother now felt that all she could do was to lay her burden at the foot of the cross, and leave it there. He, who never tries us beyond what we are able to bear, but gives a way of escape, gently drew her to Himself, and comforted her with His sure words of promise ; so that she put her hand out and clasped His for guidance in the dark, and seldom now gave way to unrestrained grief, as she had done this morning. She prayed for strength that she

might be enabled to bear her cross without murmuring; and instead of depressing, try to strengthen her husband under this severe trial. And so time fled, leaving her more pitiful and tender, more mindful of the feelings of others; but asking humbly to be allowed to see her child before she died; and, if fallen into bad hands, to rescue her from harm.





CHAPTER V.

Tim's Father.

LITTLE Tim went on his way trying to sell his matches, until the evening shadows falling found him a good walk from home, and nearly all his goods disposed of. He had not spent anything for food during the day, for a good-natured servant had asked her mistress for permission to give him a piece of her pudding, and the poor little fellow had greatly enjoyed it, "off a real plate," sitting on the doorstep. Then he started for home, feeling light at heart. He always gave his father all the money he made in this way ; and at times he was good to Tim, and expressed his sorrow for having treated him badly. But evil companions and drink had got such a firm hold upon him, that he found himself unable to shake it off ; though at times he bitterly repented of the life he was leading, and made many good resolutions to

reform, and keep his little boy out of the way of temptation. He was a gardener by trade ; but since coming to London had done any odd job that came in his way. When better thoughts prevailed, he had a longing for some more respectable employment, so that little Tim might go to school, and be like other boys. Again and again he had tried (in his own strength) to leave off his bad ways ; but not asking for God's help, he failed ; and another thing was against him, he had no one to speak to his character, and people distrusted him.

Now Tim hurried along as fast as he could, for he did not like to go up the court when the men returned from their work, as they and their wives would oftentimes quarrel, and the bad words would scare the little fellow. So his poor tired feet were urged to greater speed ; but he remembered that he owed Susan Carter some money, and before ascending the stairs, he resolved to pay it. He knocked at the door of her room, and being told to "Come in," he entered.

"Please, ma'am, here's the money I owe you," said Tim, timidly ; for he stood somewhat in awe of this woman, who, although kind to him, he would sometimes hear scolding the neighbours

so fiercely, that he trembled lest at any time her wrath might be turned upon him. But Susan had a very tender spot in her heart for children.

"Eh, little Tim, yer late, ain't ye," said Susan, taking her hands out of the soap-suds, for she was washing, and wiping them on her apron; "how did ye get on, little man?"

"I sold nearly all my matches," returned the little fellow, brightly; "and thank you very much, ma'am, for helping me. How's Susie?"

"Susie's a-bed and asleep, little one, where you ought to be. What a shame 'tis" she exclaimed, wrathfully, "to send such a babe out, all weathers, without any food. Art hungry, Tim?"

"No, ma'am; a kind girl gave me some pudding."

"Ah, well, ye can eat a bit o' bread and butter. There, sit ye down."

Tim sat down, and ate the piece of bread and butter gratefully, and then asked, "Is father at home, ma'am?"

"Yes, Tim, I heerd him go up an hour ago an' more, and for a wonder, sober."

"Oh, I am glad," joyously exclaimed the boy. "I think I'll go now, ma'am, an' thank you."

He went upstairs with a light step, and entered the miserable room. His father sat by

the table with his head on his hands, in one of his fits of remorse.

"Father dear," timidly spoke Tim, "father, look, I nearly sold all my matches ; here's the money," emptying the contents of his pocket upon the table.

John pushed away the coins without speaking, and again buried his face in his hands, the tears slowly oozing through his fingers.

Tim never could bear to see his father cry. He went up to him, and throwing his arms round his neck, sobbed as though his little heart would break, "Father, dear father, don't cry ; please, don't cry," he sobbed.

The man raised himself, and clasping his son in his arms, exclaimed passionately, "I am a brute, Tim ; your father's a brute to you. Oh, if I only *could* do better ; but I am weak and wicked, I am, and that's the truth on't."

"Don't say that, father. Grannie says when we want something very badly, if we ask God for it, He'd give it us, if it's good ; and it's good to love Him, isn't it ?"

"You may ask, lad ; maybe He'd hear you ; He'd have nothing to say to such as I am."

"Grannie says anybody may come, even if he's ever so bad, and ask Him anything. She

told me a tale out of the Bible one day, about a thief that Jesus took up to heaven with Him, because he asked Him ; and Grannie says He hears *everybody*."

"Ah, your dear mother used to talk like that. How much better it would have been for me if I had heeded her counsels. How sorry she would be if she could see me now. I shouldn't have sunk so low if she had been alive."

"But, father dear, I think mammy can see us!"

"I hope not, lad, for I've grieved her a long time now. But I'll have a talk with Grannie: she'll maybe help me to turn over a new leaf. I'm afraid I'm weak and foolish, as well as wicked, but I'll ask God to help me ; and you pray too, Tim, pray that your poor father may be fit to meet mammy in the better world when his time comes. Ask Grannie if she'll let me come and see her."

John after this had several talks with the old woman. She pointed out the only way by which he would be enabled ever to do better, and she encouraged and strengthened him in many ways. He had cause to bless her in future days, for leading him to a sin-forgiving Saviour.

John would try to keep Tim indoors now, and not expose him to the dangers of selling things in the street. But odd jobs were hard to pick up, and sometimes they were very short of food; and God tries His children at times to see whether they are really His: trials work for good to those who love Jesus.

One day, when Tim was in Grannie's room, he expressed a wish to be able to read like her.

"I can't read well, Timmy dear; but I'll teach you all I know," said the kind old woman; "reach me down the big Bible. You can begin to learn your letters at once."

"Thank, you, Grannie dear, I am glad. I will make haste and learn."

"Well, honey, and then you can read a chapter in the Bible to your father, and perhaps a story book at times."

"May Susie come up and learn her letters, it would be so nice?" asked Tim. And the kindly old soul, thinking it would please the children, gave permission; and the little ones used to go up into her room most days afterwards. Tim soon mastered the alphabet, and some small words. He was very persevering, and got on rapidly.

Oh, how dearly Grannie loved to work for

the Master, the Master who had “done great things for her, whereof she was glad.”

Susan Carter was grateful for the notice and help given to her little girl, and would come up and offer to clean Grannie’s room, when the rheumatism was very bad ; and the old woman never lost an opportunity to speak for Jesus. Susan began to think there must be something in religion if it could make an old woman who was very poor, and often suffered much pain, so cheerful and bright and happy. She pondered these things in her heart, and they made her more gentle and kind.

The neighbours wondered what had come over Susan that she was so soft spoken. But the “peace that passeth all understanding” was working within her, the Holy Spirit striving with her spirit ; and she too had cause to bless old Grannie.





CHAPTER VI.

His Friend the Policeman.

THE next morning Tim met Hallett the policeman. "Hullo! where have you been all this time?" he asked; "not seen even yer shadow. Anything the matter, eh? You look like a ghost."

"No, Mister Hallett, nothing's the matter; father's not got much work, but he's so kind to me now."

"Eh! but that means short commons; don't it, little man?"

"We don't get very much to eat, sometimes, sir; but I run errands for old Job West, the boot-maker,—he's hurt his foot, you know, and can't walk."

"You're young to turn out for a living; but it's better than selling matches anyhow."

"Father is so kind now; he don't like me selling matches."

"Oh, turned over a new leaf, eh? Well, that's good news. I hope 'twill last. But, little Tim, I've been looking out for you; there's a nice evening school begun near by. Would ye like to go, lad?"

"I *should*, Mister Hallett. Grannie has teached me some. I know my letters and little words."

"Well, go in and win, little Tim. I shall see you a great scholar some day, you be so earnest about it. Three times a week, and only tuppence to pay!" But seeing Tim's countenance fall, he hastened to add, "But I'll see to that; I'll pay the piper," meaning the schooling.

"Thank you, sir. Did God tell you to do it, 'cause I told Him I wanted to learn?"

"Maybe He did, my boy, maybe He did," said the man, thoughtfully. "I'd like to do more, but I've five children of my own. I'll gladly pay for the schooling, for I know the good of education. My boy can read the Bible quite nice. He's not much older than you, Tim; but then he's had chances that you haven't. You'll soon catch *him* up now, never fear."

"When may I go?" said Tim, eagerly; "but I must ask father first," added the dutiful little fellow.

"You can go on Monday," answered Hallett,

"I'll meet and take ye, it's on my beat this week. Now run away and tell yer father. Stop! here's a penny for you. Good-bye, Tim."

"Good-bye, sir, and thank you."

John Grant was glad for his boy to get some knowledge, therefore gave his consent; and the following Monday saw Tim, as clean and tidy as Grannie could make him, waiting for the policeman at least half an hour before the time appointed.

"Well, Tim, ready? How spruce we are this evening. Is this Grannie's doings?"

"Yes, sir; she washed me, and last night she mended my clothes. She's so good to me; God tells her, I think."

"How's father been lately, Timmy?"

"Better, mister; but he ain't got much work to do yet."

"I think I could help him to a job if he'd keep steady. There's a friend o' mine, who's a gardener in Murray Square; and he's had a bad bout of rheumatics; so he wants a man to help; but if your father goes off on the spree, it won't do. I'd like to speak to him, is he in to-night?"

"Yes, he's in. Oh, father *will* be pleased! and he's keeping straight now. I don't think he'll drink any more, because Grannie keeps

asking God not to let him ;” and Tim looked up with a bright confident look into the policeman’s face.

“ Ah ! my lad, ’tis easier to lose good than to get it again. But if I can get this job, he’ll have a chance ; but here we are. Now I’ll take you in, and speak to the master about you. Be attentive and learn all you can,—it’ll maybe be the making of you.”

They then entered a large room ; and grouped round it were several boys of different ages, and seemingly of the poorer class, busily conning their lessons, though they occasionally peeped over their books or slates to the new-comer.

The policeman introduced Tim ; and after he had been set to work, he told the master what a steady little fellow he was, in spite of his wretched home. “ He’s got the making of something in him, sir, or I’m mistaken,” said Hallett, confidently.

“ Well,” laughed Mr. Hamilton, “ we’ll see. I will tell you more next time I see you, or in a few weeks. It is a great encouragement to teach those that are anxious to learn ; but I so often find that they do not like the difficulties in the way ; they have not, as a rule, the energy to surmount them.”

"You'll make something of little Tim," said Hallett, hopefully. "I know you do this work entirely for the *Master's* sake, and may He bless you, sir."

"He is always doing that, Hallett. Good evening. I hope I shall have good news for you when you come again."

"Good night, sir," returned Hallett.





CHAPTER VII.

Tim's Accident.

JOHN GRANT obtained the situation through the kind word of Hallett; and, though striving his hardest, he found it uphill work, and it was some time before he could move into better apartments. The difficulty of retracing our steps ought to make us afraid of doing wrong.

He had been about a month in his new situation (Mr. Musgrave's) when, as Tim was going home from the night school one evening, and turning a corner quickly, a cab knocked him down. He was taken to the hospital at once. They could hardly say what injuries he had sustained at first; but, on regaining his consciousness, they sent for his father. John Grant was in very great trouble, blaming himself for not taking better care of his poor motherless boy.

The next day John told the old gardener

what had befallen him, how his little Tim had been run over ; and the old man, knowing his mistress's kindness of heart, told her of John's trouble. Ever ready to comfort the distressed Mrs. Musgrave went into the garden and had a talk with him. John, touched by her kind and sympathising manner, told her all his history, how he had fallen, and how God had sent him kind friends to raise him from his state of degradation. But now, his little Tim was run over, and in the hospital ; and what could he expect but that God would punish him for his bad deeds."

"No, Grant, not *punishing* you ; perhaps He is sending this trial to draw you nearer to Himself, and to make you trust Him more fully, in the dark, as well as in the light. But," she added, "I will go and see your little boy ; and when he recovers (which I trust he will, for your sake), Mr. Musgrave and myself will try to do something for him."

John could only thank her in a broken voice for her kindness ; and she left him amazed at the goodness of God in raising up such a kind friend for his boy.

We so often ask God for things, and then feel surprised when He grants us our prayer, instead

of *knowing* that "all *good* things shall be added unto us."

Mrs. Musgrave kept her word, and went to the hospital. You may imagine how pleased she was to find, in little Tim, the boy she had so often watched and longed to help. But the nurse gave very little hope of his recovery : she said that his constitution had been so tried with exposure and insufficient food. Mrs. Musgrave begged that they would spare no trouble, as she was greatly interested in the child. Day by day she came and read and sang to him as he was able to bear it, until Tim used to look for "his dear lady" (as he called her) with pleasure, only second to the delight with which he welcomed his father ; and a bright smile would light up his face when he saw her enter the ward.

The little fellow rewarded the kind care of his nurses by improving steadily ; and when the doctor could tell John Grant that his son would recover, it was indeed a red-letter-day ; the poor man utterly broke down, and sobbed aloud, " I don't deserve it, sir. God has been *so* good to me,—*how* good I can never tell ; and now He's going to spare my little Tim." Clasp- ing his hands, and raising his streaming eyes he said,



TIM IN THE HOSPITAL.

(forgetful for the moment of those that stood by,) "O my Lord, make me more worthy of all Thy mercy."

"Amen," came from the doctor's lips. "My good man, we may all utter that prayer, for we all have need."

"Ah! sir, but not the need I have. You don't know what a sinner I've been."

"Christ died for such, did He not? We may take Him at His word. He came to save lost souls—yours and mine, my friend; and I trust that the life He has spared may in some way be spent in His service, that your restored treasure may do the Master's will."

And now it was time for John to look out for some rooms in a purer atmosphere than the old court. Tim would soon be able to leave the hospital; and Grannie was to live with them to keep them tidy, much to the old woman's delight.

Hallett had promised to fetch Tim, when he was off duty. In the hospital ward the child had become quite a pet among the nurses, and even among the doctors, he was so patient and good.



CHAPTER VIII

Esther May.

THERE were two nurses standing near the bed of a woman who had been severely injured by an accident, one of them spoke.

"So little Tim is going out, poor little fellow! I did not think at one time that he would get over it."

"We shall quite miss him," replied her companion; "he is so sweet-tempered. I am glad he has such a friend in Mrs. Musgrave."

A sharp exclamation from the bed, made the nurse in charge turn quickly round, and look at the sufferer; she was very pale.

"What is it?" the nurse asked; "is the pain so bad?"

"Yes," replied the woman, "the pain's bad enough; but it is not that. Who were you speaking about just now?"

"Why a little fellow that met with an acci-

dent about a month ago, Timothy Grant ; he's a dear little thing : he is better, and going out."

"I do not mean the boy. Who did you say would be a friend to him?"

"Oh, you mean Mrs. Musgrave. Yes, she is a sweet lady, but very sad-looking. I think she has had some heavy trouble ; but she seems almost an angel."

The woman in the bed closed her eyes, as though she wished the conversation ended, and the nurse moved away to attend to another patient.

Towards evening, the woman who had given her name as Hannah Croft, became much worse ; and the hopes that the doctors had entertained of her recovery were very faint.

"Would you like to see a minister, my good woman?" said the doctor ; "you are very ill indeed."

"Does that mean I am going to die," asked Hannah, quite startled.

"The issues of life and death are in higher hands than mine ; but you are in a very dangerous state. I should not be doing my duty if I did not tell you that."

"Oh, so I, who have been rebellious all my life, can now, at the last moment, make my

peace with God. Well! God *may* be merciful, but He is just, I suppose," Hannah replied, with keen sarcasm in her tones.

"No, my good woman, you have *not* to make your peace with God, *that* was done for you long ago. *Now* you must accept the sacrifice that He made in giving his precious Son to die for you. Repent, and be made whole, through the blood that was shed."

"Ah, you little know what I've done, or you would not so easily speak of *my* sins being forgiven."

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," exclaimed the doctor; "think it over, and pray that you may *see* the way. Nurse Jones here can point you to the Lamb." He knelt, and offered a short prayer before he left, that her eyes might be opened to see her state, and that she might be reconciled to the Father, through the blood of Jesus.

The nurse sat by her, reading short portions of Scripture, and speaking words of help and comfort for some time.

"Nurse!" came a sharp voice from the bed; "Nurse, I've something on my mind, and if I'm going to die, I'd like to get it off. I have

injured some one very much, and I can't die without telling."

"What can I do for you? shall I send for a minister? perhaps you can make restitution."

"I don't know," Hannah replied; "I'm afraid not now; but I *must* tell some one, though I doubt God ever forgiving me. I know the one I injured would not; if I were in her case, I couldn't, I'm sure."

"There is no limit to *God's* forgiveness, if asked in the right spirit; I mean, if you thoroughly repent,—repent of the sin, not only of its consequences."

"I don't know," replied Hannah, a hard look coming over her face; "I had a deal of provocation."

"Had not Christ much provocation, when they buffeted and mocked Him; yet He said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And when we sin against God, do we know that we crucify the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame: He who bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

"Oh nurse, I feel awful bad. Send for someone; perhaps I shall be better when I've told all. But if I get well, they could punish me," she said, hesitatingly.

“Do not let the fear of that prevent your making what amends you can. I do not think the law of *earth* will touch you ; but remember that you must be judged at a higher bar.”

Nurse Jones left her to send for Mr. Douglass ; but quickly returned to the sufferer's bedside. Hannah appeared weaker ; but a kind of feverish unrest seized her, and she anxiously watched the door. At length it opened, which when nurse saw, she rose and met the new-comer, and briefly explained why she had sent for him. The poor woman seemed impatient of even this slight delay, for she rightly guessed it to be the minister.

He went up to her bedside, and gently taking her hand, said, “So you wish to see me, dear friend.”

“Yes,” she answered in a low tone, “I do want to tell you of a great sin I once committed ; for I see now that it was a sin of the blackest dye. It has come over me like a shock, since I knew that I was dying.”

Hannah now got so faint that nurse had to administer some refreshment before she could proceed.

When Hannah had somewhat revived, she said, “Now I must hasten ; for my time is short,

I fear. Some years ago, I was living as maid to a lady : she had a very bad temper, and was so sarcastic at times as to rouse every evil passion in my nature. My proud spirit revolted before her cutting speeches, and the feeling grew upon me. I suppose the evil one helped me on ; but I nursed the spiteful feeling until it formed my one aim in life. I so successfully hid my feelings that my mistress never suspected me ; and when she had a little daughter (on the illness of her nurse), she trusted me with her treasure. It was a bad day for her when she did so, as I now had the weapon in my hand with which I could strike her, ah ! strike her to the very heart's core, through her child. I shrank from the temptation at first ; but it came again and again, until I gave it attention. Then I came to hail it gladly, and watched for the moment to put it into execution. Of course I had to arrange my plans carefully, not to be found out. We were living in the country at the time ; the baby was about eight months old, a small fairy-like thing."

Here the poor creature sank back exhausted. She had raised herself, and leaned eagerly forward, while she recited her tale. Nurse said she must rest before going on again ; but after

taking some restorative, she was eager to proceed.

"I am getting weaker," she said, "let me go on while there is time. Well," she continued, "I decided at last to lose the babe in London. I had saved a good sum of money while in service, for my mistress paid generously; and after any of her fits of temper, she would make me a handsome present; but it never healed the wound that her words had made. I see now that it was no excuse for my wickedness; the near approach of death makes things look very different.

"I resolved to look out for a woman who would take the child off my hands for the money I had saved, only keeping just enough to take me abroad. I had some difficulty in this; but I took advantage of my mistress visiting some friends at a distance. I made every inquiry, booked myself under a feigned name on board a ship nearly ready to start for Australia. I also found a tidy woman, who for a certain sum would take the child, and ask no questions: she perhaps thought it was my own. I made no remarks about it, merely saying that I wished it kept for a few years, and then I might claim it again. I had some idea of restoring it to its

mother at some future time, when I thought she had been punished quite enough. And, sir," she continued, "I *know she* suffered ; but I hardly think that her punishment was greater than mine ; I have lived in perfect torment. At times better feelings would prevail ; then the stings of conscience were fearful. At last I felt that I *must* come to England, and see the child once more. I came ; and on going to the place where I had left her, I found the woman gone, and no one knew her address. So the poor little babe that had never harmed me is lost, or so brought up that it would have been better had she died. And this is *my* work. Is it possible that God *can* forgive such a sinner as I have been ?

"It was in returning from that fruitless search that I was knocked down, and brought here, as it were, to face my sin ; and only a short time ago I heard the nurse mention the name of my former mistress. If it should be the lady whom I have so basely injured, oh ! keep her from me : I can never look on her face again, never, never again. Oh, my God ! if it be *possible*, forgive me ! Death is pressing on me, and I have sinned, oh, I fear, past redemption."

Sobs and moans burst from the wretched woman, as she lay back exhausted. Nurs

hastened to try and revive her. It was all important that she should disclose the name of the lady whom she had wronged.

When Hannah again opened her eyes, Mr. Douglass leaned over her, speaking in low and gentle tones. "I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely ; for Mine anger is turned away."

"Those words cannot be for me," answered Hannah, in low exhausted tones. "If my mistress *could* forgive me, I might think that God *would*. But she, I know, never would ; she *never could*. It would be different if I restored her child ; but not now. She was in this place a little while ago. Do not tell her anything until I am past all fear of her ; I couldn't face her, I couldn't, I couldn't," she moaned. "You are a good man, sir ; pray for me."

"I will," replied Mr. Douglass ; "I will wrestle in prayer for your soul, you poor creature. But give me the name of your former mistress, and every particular concerning the child ; she may even yet be restored."

"My mistress's name was Musgrave." Both clergyman and nurse started. But again she spoke : "And *my* name is Esther May ; she would know it at once. But do not bring her

here, I could not bear it: I must never see her again. I have the little one's clothes by me still, with the exception of a shirt, marked in initials with her mother's hair; but I thought that would not be noticed. She was marked with a perfect strawberry on her leg, so that she could be recognised at once on examination. But I have no clue to her whereabouts. Oh, this *is* punishment, indeed. But I deserve it; truly 'the wages of sin is death.' "

Esther again sank back, and closed her eyes. After nurse had attended to her, she and Mr. Douglass stepped aside, and conferred together for a few minutes.

Nurse proposed that he should go at once to the matron's room, as she would know whether Mrs. Musgrave had left the building; she had come that day rather later than usual to see Tim before he left; and might possibly have lingered to see others whom she was in the habit of visiting. Nurse then returned to the poor sufferer's side, and Mr. Douglass left the ward.

When he arrived at the matron's quarters, he found a lady speaking with her; she was on the point of leaving, the farewell words were being spoken, the name mentioned being the name of the lady of whom he was in quest. He quietly

asked for a private interview, whereupon the matron gave up her room to them for the purpose. Before he revealed the important news, he ascertained whether he was addressing the right person, and then disclosed gradually, and with great care, the extent of her former maid's crime.

Mrs. Musgrave became much excited, and feverishly anxious to know whether there was any chance of her little one being restored ; and though Mr. Douglass reluctantly had to speak in the negative, he added, "But cheer up, madam, God is stronger than any evil agency can be, and we may find her yet, if she be alive. But remember, if He *has* taken her, she is now blooming where the flowers never wither nor die, and where there is no pain nor sorrow any more."

Mrs. Musgrave burst into tears, and wept unrestrainedly for some time. Mr. Douglass quietly waited until the violence of her grief passed off, knowing how much tears would relieve the bursting heart.

When she had recovered her voice, she said, "And you tell me she seems repentant. I should like to see her, and assure her of my forgiveness. I will forgive her, as I hope to be forgiven. I was also much to blame. To a

nature like hers it was dangerous to act as I did ; but I had then never learnt to control my temper. It is sad how often we do wrong to others as well as ourselves by not practising self-control ; truly, ‘ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.’ My chastening has been surely grievous ; but it has, I hope, brought forth the fruits of the Spirit.”

“ She said, my dear madam,” answered Mr. Douglass, “ that if *you* forgave her, that she felt God would ; but she did not believe you *could*.”

“ Well, I really could not in my own strength ; but He who has so mercifully led me, for my soul’s benefit, through great trials, will enable me to forgive my fellow-creature. I will see her at once if needful ; you tell me she appears to be sinking.”

“ She is indeed, dear madam. I will ask nurse Jones, and return to you ;” and Mr. Douglass left the room.



CHAPTER IX.

The Restored Child.

AFTER Mrs. Musgrave was left alone, she again wept. The recital had brought back all her grief, all the intense longing and sorrow that she had suffered during the past years ; and she had to pray for strength and grace to sustain her during the coming interview.

At first Esther positively refused to see her former mistress ; but Mr. Douglass pointed out to her that she was adding to the sin she had already committed by refusing to do so ; also that Mrs. Musgrave was prepared to forgive her.

"Forgive me !" exclaimed Esther, "how can she ? she will only heap reproaches on my head. But I ought to bear even that ; it would be a fitting end to my punishment."

"But I tell you, my poor creature, she is prepared to forgive you in Christ's name and for

His sake. Try to realise what real religion can do."

Mrs. Musgrave on reaching the bedside of her former servant, failed to recognise her, such havoc had these past years made in her, and so altered was the countenance upon which she gazed. Esther gave one look and covered her face with her hands, sobbing bitterly.

"My poor girl," said Mrs. Musgrave, "I know all, and have come to say that I forgive you, most freely forgive you, as I trust that God has forgiven me."

"Oh, ma'am, how can you? I never felt how truly wicked I was until now; but I have been punished, ah! bitterly punished. I have never known what rest and peace have been since."

"And now may the Lord of all peace be with your spirit in these your closing hours," breathed Mrs. Musgrave, softly. "I will pray for you;" and long and earnestly she prayed beside that poor soul, and pleaded for her before the throne of grace. Then she rose, and taking her hand, spoke words of comfort and consolation.

"I will come again to-morrow, Esther," she whispered; "good-bye!"

"The Lord reward you, madam, and bring your wee blossom to you again. A little comfort

has come to *me* since you came. I think God *will* restore her : He *will* for your goodness to such a sinner as I am. Oh, if I might be permitted to see her before I go. God has forgiven me, dear lady, I feel it, through your intercession ; and I will pray while breath lasts me for your little child to come back."

Mrs. Musgrave leant over her and kissed her brow, "I also was much to blame, Esther," she murmured, and then left the ward with Mr. Douglass.

Hope again fluttered in their breasts as Mrs. Musgrave and her husband talked that evening over the events of the day. The latter could not help admiring his noble wife for being so Christ-like as to forgive Esther so readily.

The story was told to Hallett the policeman, and he circulated it among others privately. He had advised them not to make it public as yet ; but one day, while relating the whole circumstance to Susan Carter, he observed her to change colour, and look puzzled. He made no remark at the time, but contrived soon to see her again, and was not surprised when she said that she had something to ask him. She inquired very minutely when the child was lost, what sort of woman the servant

was, and many other particulars, all of which Hallett answered to the best of his ability.

"Well," she said, rather excitedly, "I think I can put my hand upon the child. I don't *know*, of course; but Susie here was left by a woman some years ago. I thought 'twas her own, an' she wanted to be rid of it. I've lived in several places since then, so I daresay she couldn't find me; we poor folks don't leave our address behind us—there's no occasion. But it'll be hard lines to give the little un up,—I'm mortal fond of her, she's a sweet little creter. But I can't keep her from her mother;" and the tears gathered in the woman's eyes as she spoke.

"That is good news for Mrs. Musgrave, Susan. Have you got the little shirt she had on when she came?"

"Yes, I have that; it was so fine, I saved it; but I dunno about the marking,—I never see anything on it. But there, I'll show it you." The shirt, on being produced, proved to be the one spoken of by Esther: the initials being woven in hair had not been noticed.

Of course Hallett communicated with Mrs. Musgrave at once, and appointed a time for Susan to bring the child.

The hour drew near, and she, who had been

"tried in the furnace seven times heated," was pacing the room, hoping soon to see the little one from whom she had been separated so many years. She could not rest, her husband was with her; but she was in a state of feverish excitement. "Oh, Herbert!" she exclaimed, "is this another disappointment, or shall I clasp my darling once again in my arms?"

Mr. Musgrave was very pale, but composed. "Do not agitate yourself, my love; He who doeth all things well will be with us, and strengthen us to bear it, should disappointment again be our lot."

"Yes, I know," she said, gently; "He will help us. I will try to be calm and resigned to His will, but it is hard work."

A knock came to the door; and in a short time Susan Carter and the little girl were ushered into the room, Susie clinging to the woman's skirts, and hiding herself. But Mr. Musgrave instantly took her up, gazed long and intently into her face, gave her one fond kiss, then placing her in her mother's arms, said, "There is no mistake here, dear Mary, she is the image of you." Mrs. Musgrave could only silently clasp her in her arms, and kiss her repeatedly, while tears coursed down her cheeks.

Susie did not like such demonstration of affection from strangers, and began to cry, when her mother looked up into Susan Carter's face, and saw that she was feeling the coming parting keenly. On Susie (or Ethel, as we must now call her) being put down, she instantly ran into Susan's arms, and was clasped fondly to her breast, while sobs shook the woman's frame convulsively.

Mrs. Musgrave went to her, and kindly putting her hand upon her, said, "Sit down, Susan. My own joy must not make me selfish : I know how you must feel parting with the child ; but let us talk about it. This little one is my very own ; see, she has the mark !" and she bared her little leg, where the strawberry was plainly visible.

"Yes, ma'am, I am glad you've got her ; but I shall be lone without her. Ah ! I shall miss her pretty ways for many a long day, she was the light o' my eyes," answered Susan, in a choking voice.

"You shall often see her, Susan ; and I will think of something for you. I shall assuredly not let you continue in your present position. I am deeply in your debt for taking such good care of my little girl. Can you now stay a few weeks as her nurse, until she gets used

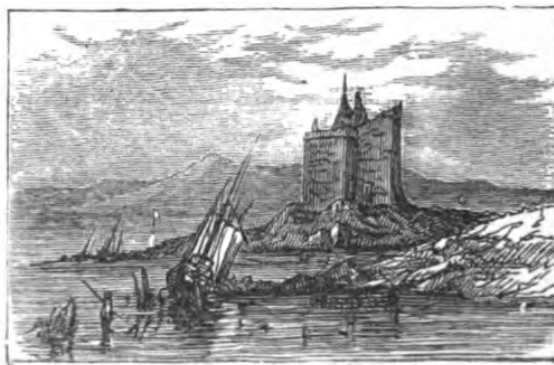
to us, it would fret her for you to leave her suddenly."

"Yes, ma'am, I can. Mr. Hallett said as you'd very like want me for a bit."

"How thoughtful of Hallett. Herbert, my dear," addressing her husband, "you must benefit him in some way: it is indirectly through him that we have recovered our lost treasure."

"I most certainly feel very grateful to him and will do all in my power to benefit him," said Mr. Musgrave.

After Susan had been some weeks in Murray Square, Mrs. Musgrave finally determined to retain her in the capacity of nurse to little Ethel.





CHAPTER X.

The Cloud.

ESTHER MAY did not die until she had seen the lost Ethel in her mother's arms ; and then rejoicing in her risen Saviour, who had washed away her sins in His blood, she sank to rest, and Mrs. Musgrave buried her.

We must now return to Tim, who was getting quite well. He had heard all about Ethel, and rejoiced greatly at his friend's good fortune. Nothing would satisfy Mrs. Musgrave but that Tim should be wholly educated at her expense ; and the old gardener leaving, she persuaded her husband to appoint John Grant to the vacant place.

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We must pass over some years now. It will find our old friend Tim in a merchant's office. His kind friends did not forsake him after he

left school (where he had distinguished himself, obtaining the love of the masters as well as the boys), but placed him in an office, where by industry and perseverance he could rise by merit. He often sees Ethel, as he is allowed to visit Mr. and Mrs. Musgrave. Ethel still likes to queen it over him as in old times ; and Tim is as kind as ever to her. They are like brother and sister. He is so clever, that it is confidently expected that he will be made manager some day.

Ethel, who has grown a tall, but still fragile-looking girl (though she enjoys good health), is looking from a window. "Here he comes, mother dear," she exclaims, joyously ; "here is Tim !"

"What makes you so late ?" she greets him with, putting on a pretty pout ; "you are ten minutes beyond your time," pointing to a clock on the mantelpiece.

"I am sorry that I kept you waiting, Ethel ; but father has had some news. He has some relations who are well-to-do farmers ; indeed, my uncle, who is just dead, was one, I believe. He has just left father a considerable sum of money, or so it appears to us. He grieves for his loss, of course ; but the change from what he

is now to a comfortable position is great. He spoke at once of some day taking a share for me in the business; and to-day Mr. Berkley offered me the manager's place, which has just become vacant; so you see I have had much to occupy my thoughts, and I trust I am now forgiven for not coming before."

"Forgiven, my dear boy, of course you are," exclaimed Mrs. Musgrave; "but Ethel likes to be a little imperious."

"Oh, I am glad, Tim!" said Ethel; "that is good news. Why, you will be quite a gentleman!"

"Hush, Ethel! Tim *is* a gentleman. He is an honourable, educated man, and that constitutes a gentleman."

"Thanks to you, dear Mrs. Musgrave, I have education. I am afraid my father's good fortune would have come too late to have given it me now."

"Well, I am indeed glad; though we shall lose our good gardener. How is Grannie to-day?"

"She is fairly well, thank you; of course, very lame. She goes with us when we remove; father would not know what to do without the old lady now. Her cheerful sunny spirit is just

what he needs ; and I cannot tell you what she is to me. I love her dearly."

Some months passed on ; and though surrounded by every comfort and still head manager, Tim has a cloud on his brow ; and his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Musgrave (who look upon him with affection and tender interest), have tried to invite his confidence, but in vain. Ethel noticed it too.

"I wonder, mother, what is the matter with Tim," she said one evening, as they sat working together ; "he has been looking so sad lately. It is only sometimes that I notice it: then he appears to try and shake it off, and be cheerful again ; but it is done with an effort."

"Yes, my dear, I have observed how absent he is ; and that an indescribable sadness rests upon his once bright sunny face. I do not think it is anything at home ; all seems right there."

"Do you know, mother," said Ethel, thoughtfully, "I believe it is something at the office. Do you remember he told us that his father intended buying him a share in the business some day ? Well, when I was last at Woodbine Cottage, Mr. Grant said he had offered to do so several times ; but Tim had put him off. It seemed to trouble the old man greatly ; he

appears to stand a little in awe of Tim, gentle as he is, in consequence of his being received in good society, and being so clever, I suppose."

"I will ask your father to speak to Mr. Berkley. Perhaps he can throw some light on the mystery. But here he comes," she exclaimed, "I hear his knock. We will talk it over with him."

When dinner was over, and Mr. Musgrave had joined his wife and daughter in the drawing-room, the question was brought up of Tim's altered manner, when, much to their surprise, he said, "I have been talking to Mr. Berkley this morning about this affair, and I find he has grave suspicions that the accounts have been falsified, and the books tampered with; and he strongly suspects Tim. I asked him why he should do so, as I felt sure he was so straightforward and honourable. He replied that it rested between Tim and a clerk who had been with them for twenty years, and he could not suspect the old man."

"I am sure Tim never did it," burst forth Ethel. "I would stake my life on his integrity."

"You need not disturb yourself, my dear, to announce his innocence; neither your mother nor myself believe it of him. But I am sure

he has felt under a cloud lately ; and with his usual sweetness and patience is waiting for it to clear away. Still it is making him unhappy ; and I told Mr. Berkley so, and advised him to thoroughly investigate the case. He has promised to do so, and had no idea that he had shown anything in his manner for Tim to notice. I trust it may soon be cleared up, as I feel sure it will be to the honour and credit of our young friend.





CHAPTER XI.

Sunshine.

A FEW more months passed on, when one evening Tim came to see his friends much earlier than usual. "I have such good news!" he exclaimed; "I felt that I *must* come and tell you; perhaps you have noticed that I have not been quite happy lately."

"Not happy!" exclaimed impulsive Ethel, her dark eyes filling with tears; "very unhappy, I should say, and not exaggerate much."

"Well, dear friends, I have been very unhappy. I must tell you from the beginning, or you will not understand."

"Now do not trouble to do that," replied Ethel; "for we know all about it. I expect it was the *confidential* clerk that did the mischief, was it not?"

"It was," said Tim; "but how did you get to know?"

"Papa asked Mr. Berkley what was the matter. He had no idea that during the uncertainty, he was giving you the cold shoulder, and making you miserable."

"Well," replied Tim; "the cloud is removed, I am cleared; but the poor old man has confessed. I am truly sorry for him. He has been in that house for the last twenty years. I think it was a shock to Mr. Berkley to find one in whom he had trusted so fully to be unworthy of his confidence. I would not let father name about the share in the business, though several times he wished to do so; but I could not have the subject broached while I was under the ban of Mr. Berkley's coldness."

"I am thankful that you are cleared," said Ethel, briskly; "but I always said you were not to blame."

"Thank you, dear Ethel, for your trust in me."

"Of course we trusted you, my dear boy. I was sure that you were uprightness itself," said Mr. Musgrave.

"How much I thank you all for your good opinion of me; and now father may buy me the share as soon as he likes."

Not many days after, Tim entered his friends' drawing-room quite elated.

“What good news now?” said Mr. Musgrave; “for I see there *is* something by your face. If you do not tell us when you are in trouble, you never hide your joy from us: yours is a sweetly unselfish nature, Tim.”

“With whom should I share my pleasure, if not with my life benefactors? What should I have been without you, my dear, dear friends?” and his glowing face beamed with gratitude. But I must tell you my news. Father went to Mr. Berkley to ask him to let me have a small share in the business; and what do you think he said? ‘No, Mr. Grant, not a small share, but he shall be full partner; you can put in the sum you intended, and he can work out the rest. I would not for worlds crush his noble independent spirit; but henceforth it shall be Berkley and Grant!’ You may imagine father’s pride and delight; but much more was said than I can remember.”

“Well done, my boy,” replied Mr. Musgrave, grasping Tim by the hand; “but it is no more than I expected of you. Hallett said years ago, when you were ‘little Tim,’ that there was the making of a good man in you, and he was right; and now, Ethel, what have you to say to your friend and playfellow on this auspicious day?”

But Ethel was quietly crying.

"What, crying!" said her father, "that *is* a nice way of taking good news."

"Leave her alone, Herbert dear ; she is overcome at Tim's good fortune, but she none the less rejoices."

"I am *quite* sure of that," said Tim, with a loving glance in Ethel's direction.

But Ethel now came forward, unwilling for Tim to imagine for one moment that she did not care for his news, and, holding out her hand, exclaimed, her voice unsteady with emotion and her eyes bright with tears—

"Tim dear, you know how greatly I rejoice at your good fortune ; and although I feel how worthy you are of it all, it came upon me with a sudden though glad surprise that rather upset me : but I will be foolish no longer. How strange it is, we look out for and even expect good things, and then when they come we are surprised and overpowered. But you know," she added, "I pictured your father's delight at 'his boy's' success,—he is so proud of you, Tim,—and in imagination I saw Grannie put her spectacles on, and gaze so fondly upon you, her old face glowing with pleasure, and her hands trembling as she placed them on your head in blessing. I have

so often seen her do it, and it never loses its charm with me,—she looks like an aged saint. I have wished that I had the painter's skill that I could transfer her expression to canvas ; it all appeared so vividly before my mind that I fairly gave way."

"No excuse is needed, dear Ethel,—I never doubted you ; but a flood of memory comes over me to-night. I can remember now, when a mere baby you sympathised and loved me, making my dark path brighter for your presence ; our friendship is too sincere and deep for any apology to be needed."

"Ah well, Tim, I shall come up and talk it over with Mr. Grant and Grannie, they will be delighted to have so sympathising a listener. I shall probably hear a great deal more than you have told us, owing to your modesty. How their eyes will glisten and their cheeks glow while they recount your praises. But I do not promise to take it all in though," she added, smiling archly, "we shall be having you quite vain."

"I have little fear of that," said Mrs. Musgrave ; "Tim knows himself better ; he has gone through the furnace, and been tried in the fire."

Tim left his friends with a happy heart ; he felt that God had been very good to him ; had prepared pleasant paths for his feet ; and he prayed earnestly to be made more worthy of his calling, that in his renewed prosperity he might not forget the Hand that had led him hitherto, had tenderly and lovingly shaped his course, had given him "all things richly to enjoy."

It is almost needless to state that having committed his future to a loving Father's care, he went on his way steadily from year to year. And by diligence and perseverance he at length worked out his partnership, and saved sufficient money on the death of Mr. Berkley to take the whole concern, which was another cause of thanksgiving to John Grant and Grannie ; and of course his old friends in Murray Square came in with their share of rejoicing.

Grannie lived to a good old age, cheered and comforted to the last by the love and tenderness of those around her ; but always being such a bright light herself, she was a joy to her friends, doing good in her simple, unobtrusive way unto the last. Bright with many a star would be her crown ; and, "Well done, good and faithful servant," would certainly be hers, when she entered the many mansions prepared by her

Father for those who love and serve Him here below. She left a blank in Woodbine Cottage when she entered into rest.

Tim's father still lives, a happy old man, and his son takes such care of him; but Tim's greatest pleasure is to entertain his friends from Murray Square. And he also takes every opportunity of giving a helping hand to those deserving ones who have sprung from a similar position as himself. The Lord blessed him greatly, and he tries to be a blessing to others.

