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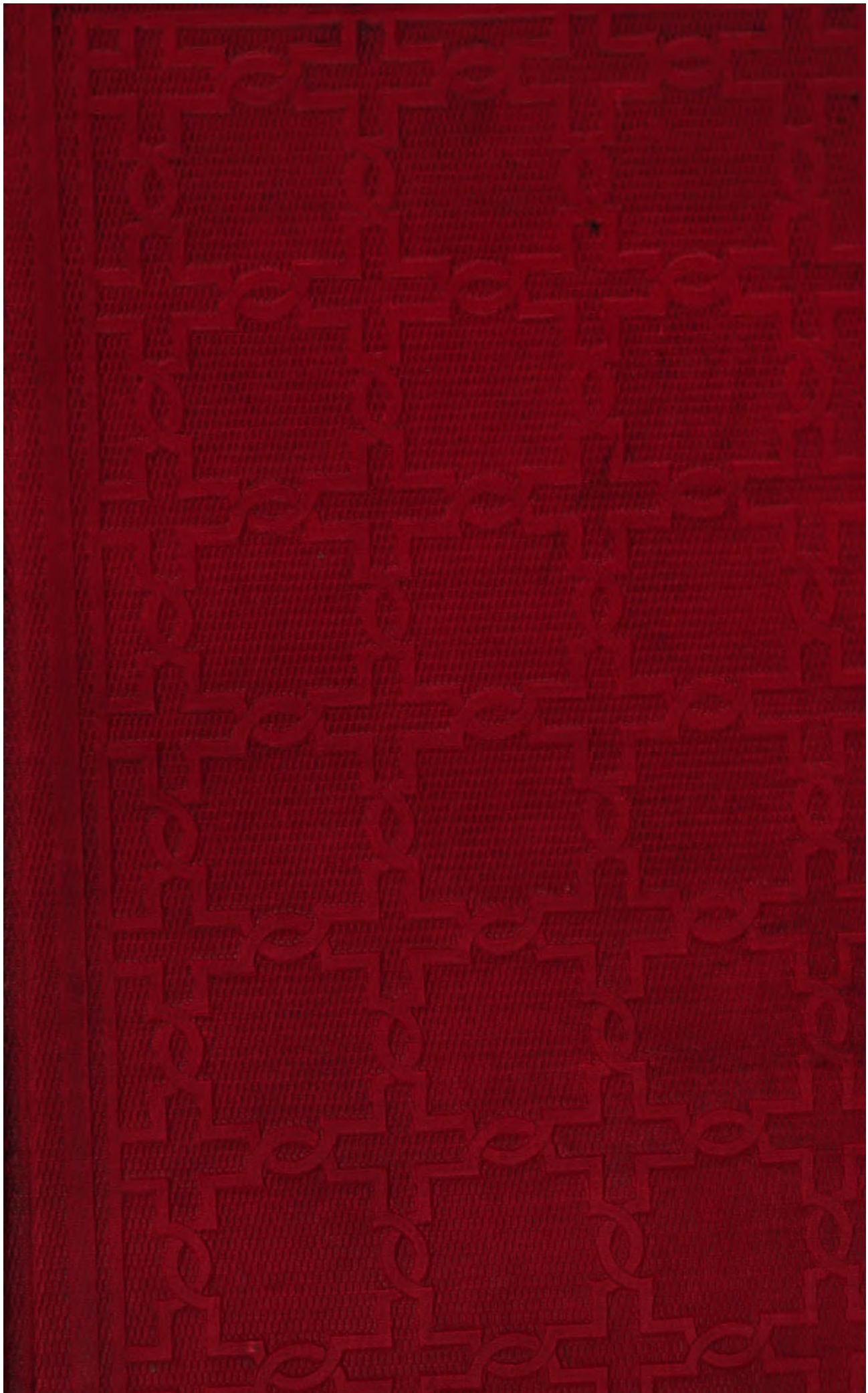
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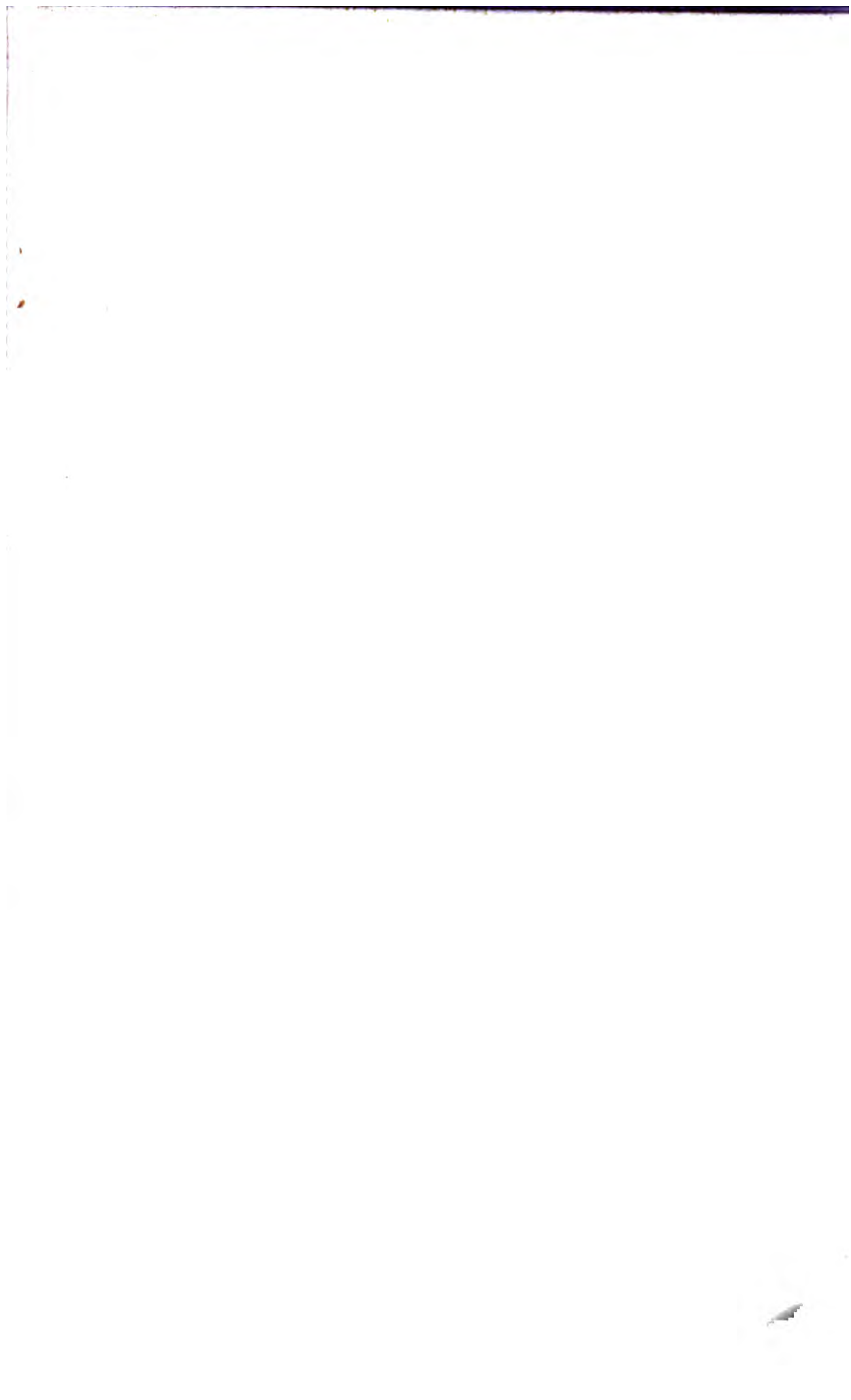
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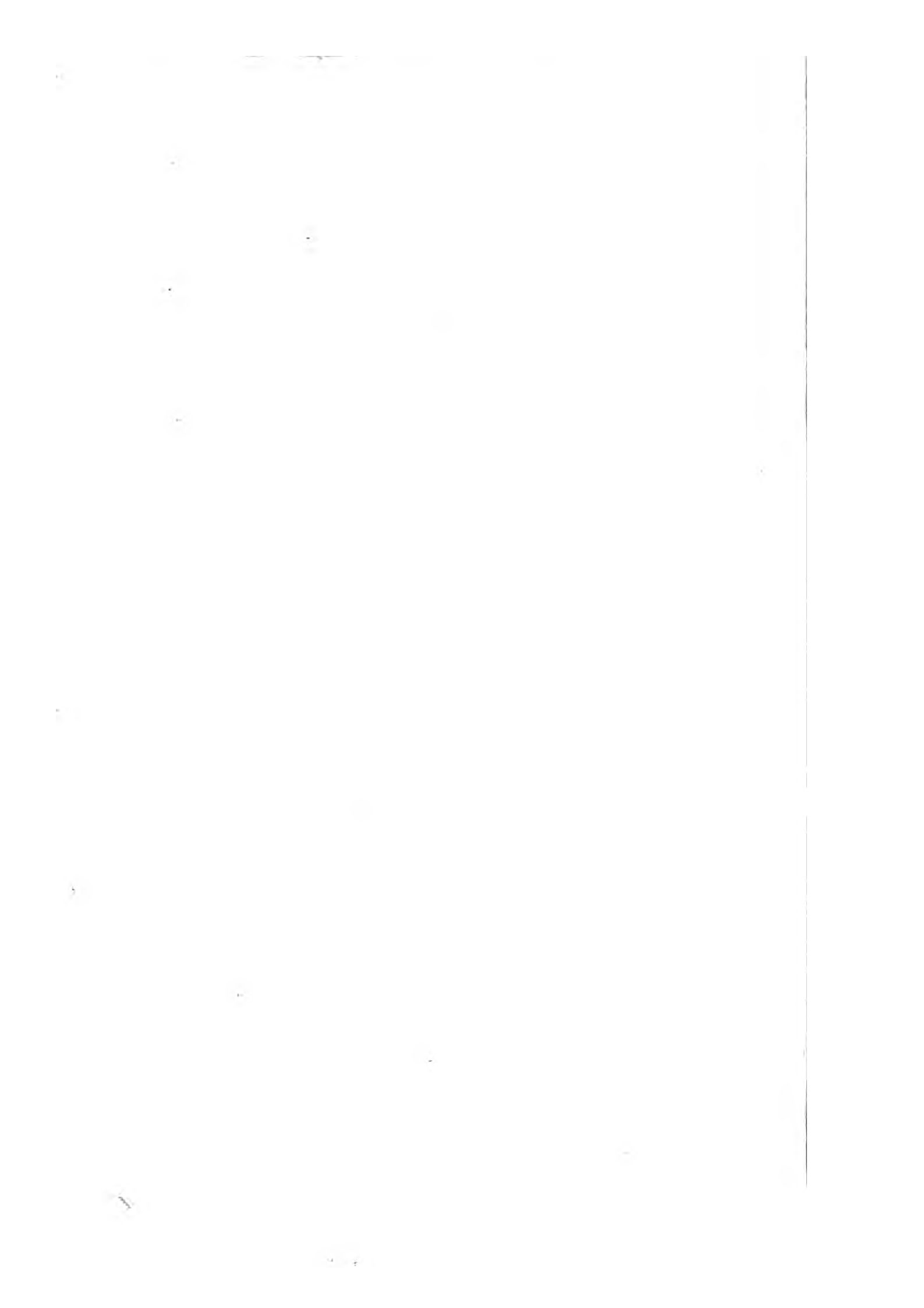


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TALES

AND

ALLEGORIES.

OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER;
AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.

M DCCC L.

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*THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, OR THE
SCHOOL-FEAST.*

WHEN Mr. Stafford, the rector, came into the school-room on Monday morning, he looked very grave; his usual kind cheerful look was gone; and the quick eyes of the boys saw at once there was something wrong. He immediately ordered silence. In a moment all was hushed; you might have heard a pin fall on the floor, and many a heart beat quick. "I grieve to say," he began, "I very much grieve to say, that complaints have been made to me that the apples are not safe in the orchards, and that some boys of this school, forgetting all they have been taught and the plain command of God, have been guilty of the theft. I now warn all, from the least to the greatest, that if any boy is ever caught in an orchard, he shall be forbidden our school-feast next month." Now the school-feast was a great day to the boys of Alverton; many a week was it thought of, talked about, and dreamt about, before it came; many a week afterwards was it remembered and discussed. All the prizes were then given; the parents of the children were in-

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vited to attend ; the gentle-folks of the place were sure to be there ; high and low, rich and poor, went to church, the children making a great procession ; and then came the feast itself in the rector's field, when gigantic cakes appeared and disappeared, and good games followed the cakes. It was a long day and a happy day to all concerned. This Mr. Stafford knew, and thus he determined to stop the apple-stealing by stopping the apple-stealers from the feast.

Now boys, we know, are fond of apples, and in some weak moment, a bright apple dangling on the tree or lying with its ruddy face upon the ground, is no slight temptation. A few boys had begun to find their way into the orchards, though the truth is, as their feet went over the hedge, their heart went pit pat within them, and they heard a voice inwardly saying as plain as it could speak, "Thou shalt not steal." As they both loved and dreaded the rector, besides being fond of the feast, the greater part of them kept their hands to themselves from that day forward, and ate no apples which they could not honestly get.

The feast was to be on St. Michael's day, the 29th of September. Now on the Tuesday before the feast, Charlie Lang and his younger

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brother were trudging home from school. Jack Lang was but a little lad, and Charlie had to tug him home up the long hill towards the common on which his widowed mother lived. As the house was above a mile from the school, his mother had made a good-sized bag, into which she was wont to pack both their dinners to save them coming home so far between morning and evening school. The two dinners had been safely packed into the blue bag that morning as usual, and as usual had been taken out at dinner time, and packed down the young Langs' throats instead. Charlie swung the empty bag on his arm as he started off with Jack after evening school, and proceeded to lug his short-legged brother home. When, however, they had got to the edge of the common, Charlie happened to feel for the bag, and what was his dismay to find that it was gone; it was now getting late, and they had been some time on their way; Jack was tired and could not go back, while Charlie looked for the bag, and yet he did not like to leave him in the dark lest he should take fright. At last the poor boy determined to go half way back, and coaxing Jack to remain quiet by the stile, away he went, tracking his steps and straining his eyes in every direction in the hope of finding his lost

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possession. All in vain; no bag was to be found; he turned homeward again after a fruitless search, and after reaching Jack, who was sitting on the ground with his fat face against the stile, half asleep, he hurried on as fast as he could. When on reaching home his mother asked him with some anxiety what had happened to make him late, as she was afraid one of them had got hurt, he gave her at once the account of his loss.

Now it so happened that James Badley, a big boy, had been one of the first and foremost of the apple-stealers, and was one of the few who were not minded to mend their ways. He thought too, he could contrive cleverly enough to have both the apples and the feast, and he made light at once of God's command and of his pastor's threat. That very evening he had been resolving to wait till it was dusk, and then he thought he could get his pocket-full without being found out. Accordingly, as twilight came on, he clambered over the hedge of farmer Collins's best orchard, filled his pocket with his best fruit, and was on the road again before any body had passed. He had not got many yards when he saw a blue bag lying on the ground; "Aha!" he said to himself, "my pockets are full, to be

sure ; but I can fill the bag now." One sin commonly brings on another, and so one theft in this case paved the way to the second. Back he went to farmer Collins's field ; the hedge was leapt again in a trice, and the bag was nearly filled, when he heard the gate of the orchard creak ; the bag dropped instantly from his hand : looking eagerly through the trees he caught a glimpse of the stout farmer with his two dogs ; away he flew towards the hedge, and scrambling through, did not take breath till he came to his father's door.

Farmer Collins heard the sound of the bushes moving as though some one were pushing their way through the hedge, but being, as I have said, a stout man, he could not get to the spot quick enough to see who the intruder was. Presently the youngest of his dogs was tossing about a blue bag, and pulling it to tatters. "O, ho !" said the farmer, "as a thief has been here again among my apples, I can find the thief by finding the owner of the bag." And so on the following morning he went to the rector's and told him that more apples were missed, that he had heard some one breaking through the hedge and running off, but that the thief had set a trap for himself by leaving some of his goods behind. "Yes,

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yes," said the rector, "I think we shall find the thief; let us come to the school at once that we may discover the owner of the blue bag." On they strode towards the school.

When the rector and farmer Collins entered it, the boys guessed at once that something unusual was in the wind. The whole school, at the rector's order, was ranged round the room; and then, standing in the middle, with a vexed yet sorrowful voice, Mr. Stafford told them "that the apple-stealing had not ceased, but that the boy who had despised God's law had left a clue behind him and could not be hid." Only one heart among all the boys was trembling with great fear, and that was Badley's. "Whoever," continued the rector, "owns this blue bag is the thief, and has lost the feast." Charlie Lang, whose full eyes had been all the while fixed on the rector, started with horror, and coloured up to his ears, when his own blue bag was held up as the property of the thief. The master, knowing the bag, and seeing the colour rise to the boy's cheek, immediately pointed him out. Badley took breath, and felt himself safe.

"What!" said the rector, really surprised and grieved, "has one so young dared to do this evil deed, and you Charles Lang, of whom I have

thought so well!" The poor boy burst into tears, and stammered forth with a broken voice his innocence. However, his guilt seemed proved, and the rector besought him not to add untruth to theft. The master however, who had a good opinion of the boy, thought it would be as well to inquire of his mother what time he reached home that night; for as farmer Collins said it was about seven o'clock when he went into his orchard, he knew that the Langs might have been at home at six, or a little after, had they made the best of their way. The rector took the master's hint, and bade him hurry off to the widow's house. He was soon there, and found from widow Lang that her sons had not reached home till after seven that night; "for," she said, "Charlie lost his bag on the way, and went a long way back to find it." The master was grieved to hear the boys had been so late at home, as it forced him to suspect that they had only invented the account of losing the bag on the road to conceal the real history of its loss, and to excuse themselves for being late. When on his return he told his tale, Mr. Stafford took the same view of the case, and Charlie Lang's fate was sealed. Before all the school he was declared to have forfeited the feast for being a thief.

The boy sobbed as if his heart would break, and still persisted in his innocence.

A bitter journey it was for him that evening home. His mother who knew not why the schoolmaster had been up to ask the questions was somewhat anxious for his return, and was standing at the door, as the usual time arrived for his coming back. When he saw his mother, he rushed forward, threw himself into her arms, and in a violent burst of grief, exclaimed, "O mother, mother, I am said to be a thief, but I am innocent, I am innocent indeed!" The poor widow, startled by what he said, hastily drew him into the house, and when he had become somewhat calm, bade him tell all that had happened. For the first few minutes she almost distrusted his tale; the bag in the orchard puzzled her; but the boy quickly perceiving his mother's hesitation, flung himself round her neck, exclaiming, "Don't doubt me! you are my own mother; don't you be against me! O mother, if you doubt me my heart will break, for I have then no friend!"

"Yes," said the widow, convinced of his innocence by this natural burst of genuine distress, "you have God, from whom no secrets are hid, and you have me; I do believe you!" The boy smothered her with kisses. After a while his

grief broke out afresh, and he said, "I don't care for the feast; I don't care for it a bit; but I am called a thief by the parson, who I know is a good man, and has been a good friend. I have lost him now; he thinks I am a thief."

Just at this time Robert Swale, a shoemaker's apprentice in the village, who had not long left school, and who had always taken a fancy to Charlie, came in. The poor widow in her grief told all the tale to Robert. He listened to every word; he felt that facts were against poor Charlie; but he knew him well, and he knew him to be a boy who feared God, and was spending a holy youth. Robert himself was an earnest member of the Church; he had lately been confirmed, and his whole heart was in heavenly things; he had profited greatly by the rector's instructions, and he liked Charlie because he seemed to be able to understand him when he talked about the things of God, though he was so much younger than himself.

"I am sure," he said as he wished good night, "I am sure Mrs. Lang that Charlie has spoken the truth, and I'll see what can be done to clear him."

"God bless you, Robert!" exclaimed Charlie

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ferently ; “ you’ll stand by me, then ? Well, God has not quite left me this dreadful day ! ”

Robert walked thoughtfully home ; Charlie sat moodily by the fire-side, every now and then quite lost in grief till bed-time came. His mother and he then knelt down for their evening prayer, and the widow put up an especial prayer for her son, that he might be found to have been faithful, that he might be patient in his trial, and his innocence made clear, if not in this world, in the world to come. When Charlie went up to his room, and said his own private prayers by his bed-side, his mother heard his trembling and broken voice calling upon God for help ; her heart rose within her, and she said cheerfully to herself, as the tears stood in her eyes, “ that the boy would not have prayed in that way if he were a thief, but would have shuffled into bed. ”

Early the next morning, the day before the feast, Robert Swale was up with the lark, and wended his way towards the orchard to see what he could make out of the affair. Remembering well that farmer Collins had said the apple-stealer had made his escape at the corner of the field towards the mill, thither he turned his steps. Remembering also that it had rained the night before the theft, he thought he might find

some foot-prints on the ground. With the farmer's leave, he first went inside the field, and there he thought he saw, near the part of the hedge which was freshly broken at the top, as though some one had lately scrambled through, the faint marks of the pressure of a foot. However, he was not sure that he was right, as the mark was so indistinct; but this led him to look over the hedge on the road-side, and there he saw a heap of mud and earth that the road-scrappers had made. He was soon out of the field examining the heap on which the thief must have come down, if he had rightly hit upon the place. There staring him in the face was the plain mark of a big boy's heel, and just in the position in which the foot must have fallen if its owner had come over the hedge. Robert's heart quite beat with joy, and his eye sparkled when he saw that the foot must have been nearly twice as large as Charlie Lang's. "Hurrah, hurrah!" he exclaimed, clapping his hands, "he is not the thief!" Out came his rule; he measured the foot-mark accurately; and noted that the shoe must have had an iron heel of a peculiar make; he was very exact in taking on a piece of paper the pattern of the heel. The question now was who owned the shoe. Directly he got to the

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shop he began looking at all the boy's shoes that were there to be mended, and pulling out his paper to see if they would fit; not one had the peculiar heel. In the course of the day two pair of boy's shoes were brought, and were greedily seized upon by Robert, to his master's surprise, but neither of them were of the right size or shape. Late however in the evening, when the workshop was about to be closed, a woman tapped at the door, and begged that the shoes she brought in her hand might be mended as soon as possible, and she would call for them the next evening. Robert seized them from her as though they were made of gold, and told her they should be looked to directly.

Yes, and they were looked to without a second's delay. A single glance shewed Robert that he had got the prize! there was the very heel! he stood gazing and gazing, staring and staring, as though he could hardly trust his eyes; but so it was, the shoe was found, and the owner too, for Robert knew the woman. Though it was now late he was on the point of starting off to the rectory, when his master told him he had better have his supper and go to bed. What did Robert care for his supper! however, the master would not let him go, and so after swallowing down some mouth-

fuls of something, he knew not what, whether it were bacon or leather it was all one to him that night, he hurried off to bed, wishing the night were at an end. Nothing was seen of him in the morning in the shop ; no one knew where he was gone. The truth was, he was at the rector's gate long before a shutter was opened or a servant up ; then he posted up to the common to see the widow, but on getting there, he paused and went back, thinking he should see Mr. Stafford first ; there he was again at the rectory just as the cook was lighting the kitchen fire.

“ Is the rector in ? ” he asked.

“ In ! ” said the cook, “ yes, fast in bed ; what do you mean, Robert ? ”

“ O, I don't mean is he in ? can I see him, cook ? ”

“ Why, what are you about ? you can't see him this hour yet. ”

“ O how can I hold my tongue for an hour ! ” cried the impatient lad, “ well, I suppose I must ; may I sit down here till he's up ? ”

“ Oh yes, sit there, and I'll tell you when the bell rings. ”

Robert was in no humour for sitting still ; he twisted his hat into all sorts of shapes ; whistled and hummed odd tunes ; beat upon

the stone floor with his feet, in short, could not contain himself. The clocks all seemed to be half asleep, the hands dawdled on, like heavy waggons on a hilly road, from one five minutes to another; never were such clocks. At last the bell rang; Robert jumped from his chair at the joyful sound, and was summoned by the cook into the rector's study. In he rushed, scarce thinking where he was, and spluttering forth in eager tones, "You're wrong, Sir; I'm glad to say you're wrong, Sir; you're mistaken; it's all clear."

"Why, Robert, what's the matter?"

"Beg pardon, Sir, but I mean about the apples, and the thief, and Charlie Lang."

"O!" said Mr Stafford, "that is what you have come about; and what can you tell me? I have been very anxious and grieved about that business."

"I can tell you a great deal, Sir; I can tell you every thing; but I don't want to tell it now; I'd rather wait till the school meets to-day."

Mr. Stafford, who saw he was much excited, and did not quite know what to make of him, told him he had better come to the school-room if he so wished, at the beginning of the feast, which seemed to please Robert much, and he hurriedly took his leave.

It was a bright sunny day, just the day for the feast; you might see the boys and girls in their best clothes, with happy looks threading their way across the fields from the scattered cottages towards the school. Never was such a school-full seen: nobody was late that day; somehow or other the laziest were in time. Then the school looked so beautiful with its festoons of flowers, and in one corner there stood a perfect crowd of cakes, good, stout, savoury cakes, that it was quite a treat to see or to smell; it was a pleasant sight in the corner, I can tell you. And what shall we say of the opposite corner? why there were clothes baskets full of red-cheeked apples, quite sweet and juicy, no bad things after the cakes. Well, all were there; and the clock at last condescended to get to the appointed hour, though it seemed to make a favour of it by going so slow. As the clock struck, the rector entered the room, and the boys set up a loud "Hurrah;" for who was there I should like to know who was not glad to see their pastor's face?

Then Robert Swale who had been fidgetting at the door for an hour at least, stepped up to him, and reminded him that he had something to say about the theft.

"O yes," said Mr. Stafford aloud, "take your

places, boys, round the school." When this was done, he went on to say, "You know, boys, that one of our number is absent to-day because of a very grievous sin; now our old scholar Swale is here, and he says that he has found something out about the theft."

"Yes, Sir," said Swale, without waiting to hear the rector out, "I've found it out by shoe-making."

The boys tittered at Robert's speech, for they did not see what shoe-making had to do with stealing apples.

"I see, boys, you laugh; but here," he said, drawing out the shoe with the peculiar heel, and holding it up high before them all, "here is the shoe of him that stole the apples, and this shoe belongs to Badley; this shoe left its mark on the heap of mud when the thief got over the hedge; this shoe was brought by Badley's mother to master's last night to mend. He must have found Charlie's bag, and stolen that as well as the apples; Badley, Sir, is the thief, that big boy there, and Charlie Lang is as innocent as a lamb, thank God!" With these words he pushed the shoe, and the paper with the copy of the foot-mark, into the rector's hands in a tone of triumph, while all the boys came crowding round to see.

Mr. Stafford thoughtfully took up the shoe, while the boys looked anxiously first at his face, then at Badley's. As for the latter he was fairly taken by surprise ; he turned as pale as a sheet.

“ You are right, Robert, I believe,” said Mr. Stafford after a pause ; “ we judged wrongly ; Badley, are not you the thief ? ” Badley's head dropped ; he said nothing ; all the boys sidled away from him, and left him standing alone, trembling and confused ; by his silence he confessed his guilt ; he could not deny it.

Without waiting to hear the end, away rushed Robert out of the school up the hill towards the common, as fast as young legs and a good heart could carry him. He burst almost breathless into widow Lang's cottage, and seizing Charlie by the arm as he was sitting moping by the empty fire-place with little fat Jack by his side, he gasped forth, “ It's all right ! come along—you're no thief—the parson knows it—never mind your clothes—come along, Mrs. Lang—on with your bonnet—I'll lug little Jack, and I'll tell you all by the way.”

Widow Lang, guessing that some strange turn had taken place at the school, did not wait to hear what had happened, but put on her bonnet, got Jack his hat, and set off with Charlie and Robert Swale.

“ Come along, Mrs. Lang : put your best leg

forward, that's a good woman." In this strain he hurried them on, telling them the story as they went along; the widow's heart beat with joy; she was too much overcome to speak a word; her heart was full; she grasped Charlie's hands, and secretly offered a warm thanksgiving to God for the innocence of her boy, while Charlie in turns laughed and cried, and little Jack trundled along at a brisk trot, not knowing what to make of it. Directly the school was in sight, Robert set up a loud "Hurrah;" some boys near the door looked out as they caught Robert's shout; for to say the truth, they all guessed what Robert had gone for, and the moment he rushed into the room with Charlie in one hand and Jack in the other, such a loud "Hurrah" burst instinctively from all the boys at once, as made the walls of the good old school to ring.

I need not tell the rest. Badley scuffled home with downcast head, unpitied and despised. The feast went on; it was said to have been the best, the merriest feast that Alverton had ever known since Alverton had had a school. Somehow or other the day was brighter, the air was pleasanter, the games were better, the cake was sweeter, the apples more juicy, in short, the boys were happier than they had ever been before. As for Charlie,

if he could but have managed a dozen cakes they would have been his, and little Jack did certainly manage to get some huge hunches down his little throat, that made him heavier than ever to lug up the hill, and yet somehow or other he seemed to Charlie never to walk so well, and never to be so light.

Let me add that of all who were there, none had deeper joy than the rector. Grieved as he was by the gross guilt of Badley, he rejoiced to see the innocent cleared, and he rejoiced also to see friendship like Robert Swale's.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, OR THE SCHOOL FEAST.

THOUGHTS FOR THOSE WHO ARE
TEMPTED TO STEAL.

1. Remember that thou art always in God's presence. Though men do not see thee, God's eye watches thee in all thy ways. Say to thyself, "Thou God seest me."

2. Remember that thou despisest thy Saviour's blood, who died to free thee from the power of all sin.

3. Remember that thou wrongest a neighbour, whom for Christ's sake thou shouldest love.

4. Remember that thou art a servant of the devil whenever thou breakest the commands of God.

5. Remember that thou wilt not go unpunished, and that thy sin will find thee out. Though thou shouldest never be discovered here on earth, on the day of Christ's judgment thy theft will be brought before thee; for there is nothing secret which shall not be revealed on that awful day.

Think of these things when thou art tempted to take that which is not thine; and may God by His Holy Spirit turn thee away from sin for Jesus Christ's sake!

*HARRY FULTON, OR
THE MERCHANT'S SON.*

MR. FULTON was a rising man. He had nothing to begin with but good sharp wits. A clever head was all his stock in trade, and his purse added but little to his weight. However, Mr. Fulton gave himself to business; he had seen men rise before him, and he did not see why his feet should not mount the ladder. Accordingly he began by contriving to get into an under place in a merchant's office, with a small salary; the small salary he laid out to the best advantage; and as he thought it a great matter to "look respectable," he was careful of his appearance, and managed to appear better off than he was. Then he was always in his place, always in the way, always ready. If any extra work was to be done, Fulton was at hand to do it; he never seemed to grudge work. Thus he became useful to his

HARRY FULTON,

employers. The senior clerk was of somewhat a sour temper, and was in poor health. Fulton kept looking at his shoes, and thought to step into them one day. As the senior clerk got older, he got weaker in health, and less able to work; his employers began to turn to Fulton as the useful man; whatever had to be done quickly was given to him; they could get him to move; there was some life in him, while the senior clerk would drone and dawdle through the job.

The merchants soon found they could not do without Fulton; he became more and more active, more and more sharp and ready; he got to know more of their affairs; he saved them much trouble; kept them from many blunders, and elbowed his way cleverly into their confidence. They also began to wish his feet were in the senior clerk's shoes, and they soon managed what they wished. The sour, sickly clerk was one day called into the little parlour, the council-chamber, where the merchants sat. He turned paler, or rather yellower, when the summons came, and knew not what was to happen. When he knocked at the door, and heard the sharp "come" in of the junior partner, his heart trembled within him. Advancing to the

large mahogany table, covered with bills, letters, ledgers, &c., he waited, quivering like an aspen, to hear the reason of his being sent for.

“Well, Mr. Snarley,” began the elder partner, who was a stiff, stout, and pompous person, passing his hand through the thin hair that fringed a bald head, “we have been thinking of your health; you have been a creaking wheel for some time, never strong, and age does’nt mend us, Mr. Snarley, does it?”

The poor clerk trembled at such a commencement of the interview, and a still more jaundiced hue passed over his melancholy face.

“Now we’ve been thinking together, I and Mr. Bidwell, of giving you a retiring pension, as this firm always wishes to reward its aged and faithful servants.”

This was said with a generous and pompous air, and it made the poor clerk lift up his dull eye, which actually glistened with a strange lustre as he found he was not to be turned penniless away.

“I am sure, gentlemen; I am sure, gentlemen,” he began to stammer forth, while he convulsively twitched and twiddled at the dull buttons of his threadbare coat.

“Of course, Mr. Snarley, you’re very grateful,

HARRY FULTON,

that's what you meant to say," said the senior partner; "well, that's right, it's right to be grateful; it's time you should be laid on the shelf, like one of those ledgers," pointing to some gigantic volumes covered with dust, in an old mahogany bookcase.

"But those ledgers," interrupted the junior partner, who was of a livelier turn, "don't eat, you see, Mr. Snarley, and therefore we mustn't quite treat you like them: you would not keep as fat as they upon the shelf, eh?"

A sort of ghastly lugubrious smile played on the old clerk's features at the intended joke.

"Well, be it as it may," continued the senior partner, as if it were time to recal the several parties from any inclination towards familiar pleasantries, "if you are inclined to send your son, who is but a stripling, upon half Mr. Fulton's salary for the next five years, we shall give you an allowance of £60 per annum for those five years, and after that £30 for life."

The offer was on the whole generous; but it was just spoilt by getting the son at a cheap rate for five years. However, the poor clerk was quite overcome; his desponding spirit had hardly ever dared to think of a pension; he had deserved it, it is true, as he had lost his health

in the office ; but though he began to feel himself unequal to his post, he had not thought how he was to support himself in his old age.

A few warm words were all the poor old man could splutter forth, and, as the partners motioned him away, some tears rolled down his sallow cheek. He was soon scribbling at his desk as before, but there was a page in which the letters looked as if they had been wetted, and the long tails of the l's and g's told the tale of a trembling hand. You may easily guess that Fulton was now fairly in his shoes.

But Fulton's elevation only revealed to him other heights ; there was still a stool above him, and one rise in the world led him to desire another. On and on he worked ; he was always in the way as before, always ready for more work, always willing and in good humour ; late and early, there he was.

“ He's a rare man,” said the elder partner, who began himself somewhat to wear at last, and was troubled with the gout.

“ He is indeed,” said the younger ; “ he makes the wheel go ; he's our engine driver, you may be sure, and our firm has turned into an ' express train ' since he came.”

It was quite true. Their business was well

HARRY FULTON,

done, and the firm throve. It soon began to be evident that the senior partner was getting past work. There were many consultations in the little parlour. At last Fulton was called in; the matter was soon settled; Fulton was made a partner, and it was now "Simms, Bidwell, and Fulton;" the latter had jumped to a higher stool, and Mr. Simms ceased to attend the counting-house except when the profits were divided.

Mr. Fulton now emerged from his lodging in a dull dingy street in the heart of the city, and took a good-sized house, some seven miles from town, and kept his gig. He next thought of marriage, and meeting with a retired druggist's daughter of some wealth, he became possessed of her, and some five thousand pounds. So far as regards rising in the world, Mr. Fulton had done well.

In course of time he had one son: no more children were granted him; and now the stream of his love, that had gone sweeping on in one straight channel, was divided into two; love of the world, of rising in the world, and love of his only child. His wife had not much of his heart, though he behaved kindly to her; she was a mild easy woman, but of no strong character, and

was content to manage his house, and make things comfortable on his return from business : but his boy did win his heart ; he had been a self-loving man hitherto, and had slaved for himself alone ; Fulton had been Fulton's idol ; but now a new feeling seemed to gush forth ; he became wrapped up in his child. He would start earlier from business to go into the toy-shop, and he would turn over the toys and try them all, and would be long in deciding which would suit his boy the best. He would always have something in his gig to carry home to Harry. It was refreshing to see him really care for something beside himself ; he was thought to have no heart, but now he found it.

And yet even this love took a worldly turn. He had slaved to become rich and to rise in the world for his own sake ; now he slaved for his child. He had great dreams of his boy's future consequence ; he was resolved to make him a rich and great man. As the firm rose in wealth, he felt that it was but ministering to his boy's riches. He had visions of great estates which he should leave him ; he intended to send him to a school where he could mix with youths of rank ; he constantly passed by Elmore Park, a large place in his neighbourhood, and he often

said to himself "that shall be my son's." The owner was greatly embarrassed, and it was expected to be sold before long. On Elmore Park, therefore, he fixed his heart for his son's sake, and for Elmore Park he slaved. At last as years went on, it began to be known in the neighbourhood, that when the place should be brought to the hammer, Mr. Fulton would be a bidder.

Now it so happened that there were many old paths through this park, and it became a favourite walk of Harry Fulton. He loved to sit under the shade of the old elms, and hear the rooks, and see the clouds floating by through the topmost branches, as he lay upon the grass with his face turned to the sky. Somehow he liked to be alone; and when he was old enough to walk without a nurse, he was always wandering among the trees. At one end of the park stood the old church; it was a solemn-looking church; it awed the boy; he loved it, and he revered it; its walls seemed to speak; he would often steal towards it, and stand looking at its spire, and he would think to how many hundreds of men that old stony finger had pointed to heaven; he always listened eagerly to the service when he was in church, and he quite wondered his father did

not like to talk about the Bible as he did ; to him it was already the best of books ; he was always glad to have a word from the clergyman, and wished to be catechised among the poor children, though in truth he kept answering the questions to himself all the while.

Now one winter's day as Harry was walking in the park, he saw a tradesman's boy riding towards Elmore house with a parcel in his hand. On a sudden the pony, startled by an old branch that the wind tossed upon the road, darted off at a furious pace and tore across the park. The boy pulled and pulled in vain, and then began to scream. Harry made after him as fast as he could, for he knew the pony was scampering in the direction of a large sheet of water, and knew not what might happen. The pony came on the water without knowing it was near, and making a sudden halt in the midst of its wild career in order to save itself, threw the lad with a jerk into the water. Harry, hot and out of breath, was soon at the lake, and found the frightened boy struggling in the mud ; he instantly rushed in and helped to drag him out. The poor lad, wet to the skin, stood shivering with fright and cold, quite confused, till Harry, taking off his own great coat and giving it to him, bade him to get

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quickly home to the fire: the pony was soon caught, and away went the boy wrapped up in Harry's coat. The clergyman had seen the latter part of the scene as he was returning home across the park, and as he had never thought Harry strong, he felt quite fearful of his sudden exposure to the cold after his hot run, and his plunge into the mud. He tried to catch him up, but Harry was out of the park before him. The next day, however, he called on Mr. Fulton, and was grieved, though not surprised, to hear that Harry was in bed with a bad feverish cold. For a long time the cold lasted, and often did the clergyman visit him, as he had taken a lively interest in the youth, and no one did Harry better like to see than "good Mr. Harland."

From that time Harry's health continued delicate, and as the air of the place was always keen, the doctor strongly advised Mr. Fulton to send him to school in some warmer climate. After a long struggle the anxious father consented to let him go. The leave-taking was a bitter scene. The prosperous merchant, the busy, thriving, bustling man, wept upon his son's neck. A great blank it was when Harry was fairly gone. Mrs. Fulton did her best to make the evenings pass, but her husband was not to be amused. The

day after his son's departure, he stopped his gig mechanically at the great toy-shop, and it was not till the man came out that his son's departure again flashed across him; away he dashed from the shop, and had a sad gloomy drive home. Harry, however, was fond of writing to him; and it was strange to see how hurriedly the man of business pushed the letters of business by, till he came to that which had the boy's large hand. At last, the clerk who brought the letters always put Harry's letter at the top to save time.

The school to which Harry had been sent was in a cathedral town, and the boys were allowed to attend the cathedral service. His letters were soon full of the cathedral, full of the sweetness of the chants, of the grandeur of the organ, of the beauty of the nave and choir and aisles. He often would ask his father to be allowed to be one of the choristers; he quite envied the white-robed boys whose office it was to sing God's praise; he became passionately fond of music, and at last began to join in the chants himself, though he wished for the white robe. His father was puzzled at the boy; he kept sending him bats and balls, and boxes of tools; but though Harry thanked him warmly for his presents, he

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found from his letters that other boys had the chief benefit of his gifts. Thus Harry would say, " Hope and Green, with some of the lesser boys, have just gone out to the meadow with the bats and stumps ; they are as happy as they can be, and intend to have a good game till it gets dark. How kind it was of you to send the bats ; for I like to lend them to the boys, it makes them so happy." And again, " I dont know what Halliday would have done but for the saw and gimblet ; he has now made his kite all himself, with the aid of the tools you gave me, and he sawed the lath for it beautifully ; he is quite a carpenter."

At last the holidays arrived ; and Harry, who had kept for some weeks a notched bit of wood to mark the days, had cut off every notch, and joyfully tossed his wooden calendar away, though it grieved him to leave the cathedral with the sweet psalms and the white-robed boys. All the morning on which he was expected, Mr. Fulton could not rest. He went to his office early, that he might leave it in time to meet his boy ; but he might just as well have stopped at home. He was in and out of every room in the place ; he could not understand the letters, and was writing blundering answers which the senior

clerk happily overlooked; he fidgetted and interrupted every body about him, and the clerks wished him well away as their heads began to be confused. The hour at last arrived; the gig came to the door; Mr. Fulton jumped in, and dashing to the toy-shop, bought a cargo of whips, battledores, spades, rakes, enough for half a dozen boys, and crammed them into the gig, which soon carried him home. Just as he reached the door, a post-chaise with a trunk on the box, drove up; the father and son were soon locked in each other's arms.

But one thing struck Mr. Fulton; the mild air had not worked the change he had expected; his boy's cheek was pale, I might almost say, transparent; and his figure was thin. The father was anxious, but Mrs. Fulton tried to smooth down his fears. Harry was soon in the dear old park again, strolling about under the old trees, and wandering to the solemn old church. He soon, too, threw himself in the way of the kind clergyman, who gazed almost with tears on the beautiful, but pale face of the mild, gentle boy. The change seemed at first to do Harry good; he gained a little colour in his cheek, his strolls among his old haunts refreshed and strengthened him. Mr. Fulton began to be

in hope that he was now about to grow out of his delicacy, and his heart was again light within him. A great pleasure was it to come home early, and take a walk with Harry. On Sundays they always walked together. One Sunday, Mr. Fulton began to talk to his boy of future times. "Yes, my boy, I hope I shall see you there," pointing to the old house, "that's the place fit for you; we shall make a rich man of you, and all these walks shall be your own."

"I hope not," answered the boy.

"Why not?" said his father in a tone of surprise.

"Because I should be very rich then, I suppose."

"And would'nt you like to be rich?"

"No, papa, I'd rather be good; for you know that it is said in the Bible, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

The father was silent; he could hardly make out the boy. In passing through the churchyard, Harry stopped and begged his father to look at a tomb near the path; it was the grave of a little girl. "See," he said, "she was only nine years old. I'm nearly that. How young, papa, some people die."

“ Yes, yes,” answered the father hurriedly, “ but don't talk of such things now.”

“ Why not, dear papa? Does not death open the door to the beautiful house in heaven, a better house than that in the park, if we are good and faithful to our Lord? I often think of the beautiful psalm that was chanted in the cathedral which tells us there are ‘ pleasures at God's right hand for evermore.’ I always love this churchyard; it's so calm and quiet and still, and looks so holy, with the old church in the midst of it. I should like to be buried here.”

The father's lip quivered, and he hurried Harry away; he did not like to talk of such things; they made him gloomy; he would rather talk of buying lands, and of rising in the world, and how he had got on, and how Harry should get on.

In the day-time, as Mrs. Fulton was somewhat an indolent and listless person, fond of staying in the house, Harry had to amuse himself; he was fond of going to the parish school as it broke up at the end of the day, for then, as he stood near the porch, he heard them sing the evening hymn. The clergyman on seeing him many afternoons taking his stand near the porch, in-

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vited him in to his great delight. After this Harry was every day at the school. He soon began to teach some of the little boys their letters, and to make friends of the elder boys. When the holidays were over, Mr. Fulton, at the doctor's advice, resolved not to send him to his school again; the air was judged to be relaxing, and he began to look out for something better fitted for his health. In the mean time Harry continued his strolls through the park to the school, and as the doctor recommended the walk, Mr. Fulton, though surprised at the boy's choice, did not like to forbid him the school, as it gave him a place of rest.

Now one afternoon Mr. Fulton had intended to have surprised Harry by coming home early, and having a walk with him in the park. However, as it was a half holiday at the school, Harry had gone out before he came home; whereupon his father set off after him, thinking soon to overtake him. He wandered through the park for some time without being able to see his boy; at last he struck off from the paths, thinking he must have gone to sit under the shade of some of the old elms. As he roamed on, he thought that he heard some voices near a group of large trees; he pressed his way through some brush-

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wood near the trees, and on reaching a green knoll he saw through a break in the brushwood, a strange and touching scene. Close by an ancient well over which some old elms cast their shade, he saw four boys with Prayer-books in their hands; two stood on the smooth turf on one side of the well, and two on the other. Crouching down on the grass, that he might not be seen himself, Mr. Fulton found that it was his own boy with three of the boys of the village school. And what were they about? The four boys were chanting the psalms of the day in that little green shady nook, Harry having taught them, and acting now as their leader; and as the trees threw their green leafy arches over their heads, they seemed to have found a cathedral in the wood. Sweet were the voices of the boys; sweet the psalm that sounded forth from their young lips; and as Harry's cheek glowed with the excitement, and his eye sparkled, Mr. Fulton thought he had never seen him look half so beautiful, or half so delicate. Stealing quietly away from the scene to hide his emotion, he paced slowly home; and strange, new thoughts came across him in his walk, sad thoughts concerning the health of his child, and new thoughts about God. The psalm had smitten him, as the

guileless boys sang on, and they were unconscious that they had been the preachers of a divine sermon which at last had found its way to a worldly heart.

“There be some,” so they had sung, “that put their trust in their goods : and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.

“But no man may deliver his brother : nor make agreement unto God for him ;

“For it cost more to redeem their souls : so that he must let that alone for ever ;

“Yea, though he live long : and see not the grave.

“For he seeth that wise men also die, and perish together : as well as the ignorant and foolish, and leave their riches for other.

“And yet they think that their houses shall continue for ever : and that their dwelling-places shall endure from one generation to another ; and call the lands after their own names.

“Nevertheless, man will not abide in honour : seeing he may be compared unto the beasts that perish ; this is the way of them.

“This is their foolishness : and their posterity praise their saying.

“They lie in the hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them, and the righteous shall have domina-

tion over them in the morning : their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre out of their dwelling.

“ But God hath delivered my soul from the place of hell : for He shall receive me.

“ Be not thou afraid, though one be made rich : or if the glory of his house be increased ;

“ For he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth : neither shall his pomp follow him,” &c.

Not long after this, Harry had ceased to stroll in the park ; his cheek got paler, his frame thinner, and a cough seized hold of him. Weaker and weaker still, worse and worse, did the poor boy become. First, he used to lie on the sofa, but at last he was not able to leave his room. Poor Mr. Fulton seemed now to wake up as from a dream ; he saw what was about to be : stunned and bewildered with the great grief, unprepared for real sorrow, he seemed like one in a new world ; he would stand quite stupified leaning on his chimney-piece with his head buried in his hands ; he seemed as though he were striving to learn something which it was an agony to learn. Yes, he had to learn the things of God ; the unseen world for the first time for years stood as it were before his soul ; the reality of death was present to him ; all his worldly dreams, all his

toils and slaving and hard work, what did they seem to him then but vanity of vanities! The clergyman, who was daily with his child, saw his state, as he ministered to his boy. There was something beautiful to see how he waited on his child; he would give him his medicine, he would sit by him while he snatched a little feverish sleep; he would move as gently about the room as a girl to fetch him his broth or pudding. But his boy was clearly minded to turn his father's love into a still better channel. He would beg him to read to him the psalms and lessons of the day; he would ask him to stay and join in the prayers when the clergyman came. He had always wondered that his father did not like his Bible more, and he would ask him, "Don't you like it more now, papa; don't you?"

"Yes, my darling," the father would answer, "I do indeed."

"O papa," the boy went on, "it tells us of our dear Saviour, it tells of His wonderful love for us; it tells us of the beautiful house in heaven, and of the beautiful angels. O how delicious to have our *home* there, papa, some day, you, and mamma, and I, all there; just think how happy we should all be, all together for ever! for ever! for ever!" and he clasped his father's

trembling hand, and looked up eagerly into his face.

“ Yes, yes,” sobbed the father.

“ O don't cry, papa,” as he felt the warm tears on his hand, “ why shouldn't we be in heaven? shan't we try for it, and pray for it in our Saviour's name; come, do let us pray now, papa; it will do us good.”

The father knelt down, and with an over-charged heart poured forth what was indeed an earnest prayer that his child might be in heaven, and that he might follow his child. The heart of the prosperous, worldly man was going through a furnace of affliction, and he was finding God, like the three saints of old, in the midst of the fire.

One night Mr. Fulton had lain down for a short sleep, after many wakeful nights, when the nurse burst into his room, and bade him come to his boy. The poor father started up, and hurrying to the bedside, found that his boy was indeed dying.

“ O what shall I do, my boy, my boy!” he exclaimed in a frantic tone, hardly conscious of what he said.

Harry stretched out his thin hand, and seizing his father's, bent forward as if to kiss him; his pale lips touched his father's cheek, and whispering in a faint feeble voice, “ Serve God, my father,

and we shall meet in heaven," he fell back upon his pillow—a cold sweat stood upon his forehead—he cast one earnest look upon his father and mother—the struggle was over—his spirit went forth to paradise, and the loving father had lost his loving child. Passionately, wildly, did he kiss the pale, beautiful forehead of the sleeper, till at last the clergyman gently led him out of the room.

In wandering through the park to the churchyard some weeks after, I saw a new grave near the little girl's—it was Harry Fulton's.

Again I was wont to see the quick gig upon the road, but the owner seemed to have grown many years older in a few weeks. He was an altered man; the smart brisk active man, with the quick sharp eye, was now sad and grave. Still the gig passed as regularly as before. At last Elmore Park was advertised for sale; every body was sure Mr. Fulton would be the purchaser, but every body was wrong; Mr. Fulton did not bid or buy; he remained where he was, and the long-coveted park passed into other hands. Then every body began to think that the firm was not as rich as had been supposed; but here again every body was wrong; for the other partner bought a vast estate about the same time; and then every body was puzzled with

Mr. Fulton. The following year, in a poor part of the City, a beautiful church began to rise from the ground for the use of the poor. It sprang up nobody knew how; the clergyman, who was Mr. Harland's brother, knew of course; but he would never mention from whence the money came. The mason shewed me the first stone that was laid, and at the bottom of it were graven these lines, "To the glory of God the Blessed Trinity, this church is built by a father who learnt from his child what he should have taught his child." Those lines were never seen by any one but the mason and myself.

The year after the church was built, the school at which Harry had taught, being in an old and decayed state, was pulled down, and a new one, of a beautiful and comely form, was reared instead. On the bottom of the foundation stone were written these words, "The father was a child at his child's feet." Later still some almshouses for the aged poor were built near the old church. Mr. Harland never told whence the money came for these goodly works. All I know is, that Mr. Fulton often went into the school; if the gig came home a little earlier, I was sure to find him in the school hearing the boys sing the evening hymn; or perhaps he might be found

sitting with the old folks in the alms-houses, reading the Bible, or some other good book.

But not only in this way did Mr. Fulton employ his money and his time. He was changed at home ; he became more gentle and affectionate to his wife, while she, being thus met by affection, warmed in her love for him, and as there was now a spur to exertion, her character seemed to expand. After all, it became a happy home, happy, not in the world's sense, or the world's eye ; happy by being consecrated to the service of God ; happy in its sweet memories of the holy boy whom God had raised up and taken away, in order to be a blessing to the house both in his life, and in his death.

Years rolled away, and I saw a funeral passing through the park ; it was the funeral of one who had risen in the world, who had found the world to be but vanity. The poor followed him to the grave ; many a wrinkled cheek was wetted that day with tears as the body of their friend was laid in the earth ; he was buried by the side of his beloved child, and there they lie together in that quiet calm churchyard, till the resurrection of the just.

THE ROCK AND THE SAND.

THE day came when Mrs. Horton had to leave the rectory. Her husband, a faithful pastor of his flock, had been swept off but a few weeks before by a fever which he had caught in visiting one of the elder girls of his school. The girl recovered, her pastor died. Never had there been seen such a touching sight as his burial; it was a plain funeral, very plain indeed; there was no show, no hired men with scarfs and wands, but some labourers, in their Sunday clothes and with a band of crape round their arms, carried the coffin to the grave. So many longed to undertake the task that it was a hard matter whom to choose. I noticed particularly one old man, who, though he could scarce carry his own weight, would hardly be persuaded to give way to younger and stouter men. On they moved, the whole village following, a long train of true mourners, young and old together, all filled with genuine sorrow. Not a dry eye was there in Coleton churchyard that day; and as the school-children of their own im-

pulse threw some flowers into the grave, many a little one fairly sat down on the grass and sobbed aloud as though it had lost a father. The widow's grief I will not attempt to tell. She was able to go through the funeral, and that is all I can say.

One there was who had longed to be there and was not, I mean the sick girl. She was fast recovering, but she was very weak; she had however set her heart on being there, and had persuaded her mother, a poor widow, that she could walk as far; out they both set from their cottage, the sick girl leaning on her mother's arm, but when she had crept down the lane and saw the funeral winding its way from the rectory towards the church, the sight was too much for her; she instantly fainted away, and was at last carried home with the aid of a good neighbour who was passing by.

A few weeks passed, and then, as I have said, Mrs. Horton resolved to leave the rectory, that it might be got ready for the new clergyman, who was expected soon to take charge of his flock. He kindly pressed her to stay as long as she wished, but as she had to move she determined to get through the trial of such a change at once. She had taken a neat little cottage

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near the school, which was just large enough for herself and her only child, Charlie Horton, a lad about ten years old, and her old nurse Betsy, who was to be cook and house-maid, in short maid of all-work. Betsy, I must tell you, would no more think of leaving "Missis" because she could only keep one servant and had to lower her wages, than of setting off to the moon.

"Leave you, Missis!" she said in a sort of wondering and indignant tone, "God bless you, what you're thinking on M'am? I sha'nt go, not I. Can't I cook and scrub and mend master Charlie's things in that little bit of a nutshell of a house? And can't we all be comfortable together?" And Betsy carried her point.

Now when the morning came, the poor widow strengthened herself by especial prayer that she might not be overcome. It was a hard task to look on the little garden for the last time, where many a summer evening after the labours of the day her husband had sat with her, either reading some good book or watching their boy at play. It was a hard task to leave the rooms where they had offered many a prayer and passed many a happy and holy day. In short, then came before her the truth of the last sermon which her hus-

band had happened to preach, that we dwell "in tents," that here is no continuing city, and when we seem to have a home, the home is broken up and the stakes of the tent uprooted from the ground.

Betsy however, with all her bluntness, seemed quite to understand what her mistress would feel, and had done her best to get every thing ready that she might shorten the task of leaving. At five o'clock that morning, long before her mistress was awake, Job Hale was at the back door with his old grey mare in his cart to take away the heavier things; many a time did the red wheels of his neat blue cart go round before six o'clock. As for money for such a job he would have thought it would have burnt his fingers; it was indeed a labour of love. Betsy and he had arranged it over-night. So of the others; one man had a wheel-barrow which he trundled backwards and forwards from the rectory to the cottage as full as it could hold; another carried great bundles on his head, while the school-children who would carry something were entrusted by Betsy with flower-pots and such-like things, that they might be able to say they had had their share in the matter; even crazy Willie, the daft

boy of the village, was as eager as the rest, and went off in triumph after he had snatched up the brooms and brushes that Betsy was just about to put into Job's cart. After a sad breakfast, Mrs. Horton set out with her boy Charlie, who had kept one thing to carry himself, and that was the large Bible that his father had given him on his last birth-day. The widow's hand trembled as she opened the gate, the task was over, her old home was left, she had moved her tent.

Betsy and her friends soon got things into order at the cottage; somehow or other the garden got all dug; the little lawn all nicely mown; the honey-suckle and roses nailed upon the wall; and every thing was set to rights in the widow's new home. It is said that Hal Greenway, the gardener, has been several times seen coming out of the garden early in the morning, before he went to his own work; but I did not see him, and so I will not speak positively.

Mrs. Horton did not resign herself to immoderate grief. She knew full well that in the way of duty lies the way of comfort and true peace; and accordingly, with the new clergyman's permission, which was most gladly given, she soon

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began again to teach the children in the school, and to visit the poor. Her boy Charlie became of course more than ever an object of care and interest; often did she pray for guidance that she might be able to train him up as a true disciple of Christ; often did she think over various plans for helping him to love God in his youth. Among other points she began to consider how she could turn his Sunday evenings to best account. She bore in mind the particular character of the young, and felt that it was wise to mix indirect with direct instruction. As our Saviour taught in parables, so she thought that her boy's attention might be better caught in the evening, not by reading sermons, but by providing something in the shape of tales or parables. Having used all the books of this kind that she could find, the idea struck her of writing a few stories herself, as she thought he would prize what was hers, even though it might not interest others.

Accordingly one Sunday she bade him come and sit down by her side, and drawing from her desk the following tale, she found that Charlie's eyes glistened with delight on telling him that she had written it herself expressly for him.

Two men journeyed together in search of a place on which to build a house. After travelling

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a long way they at last came to a lovely spot close by the sea shore. Rich green meadows stretched down the sand, and the sea, which was quite calm, murmured gently upon the beach; large trees offered a pleasant shade in the fields, and the winding green lanes were quite sweet with the wild flowers that brightened the banks.

“Here is the place for me,” cried the younger traveller, whose name was Stultus, “here I shall build the house.”

“Do not be caught,” said the other, who was called Sapiens, “by a calm sea and a bright sun.”

“Why, look at the trees, look at the flowers,” said the first; “if the winds were strong, those large branches would have been broken long since on the weather side; and if the winds were bleak, those flowers would have been nipped and withered in the spring; for some of them, I see, can only live in warm and sheltered spots.”

“These fields are flat,” said Sapiens, “some great storm might drive and dash the sea over them, and wash down your house.”

“Look at the bright sunny cottages that line the beach, with roses trailed over them, and their gay gardens in front; they have not been washed away.”

“They are but weak and flimsy things,”

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observed Sapiens, "I do not see an old house in the place."

"I see," said Stultus, "nothing will please you here; you have a gloomy spirit in a sunny place; you are hard to please."

"No, not a gloomy spirit; I want to build a house that shall last; I would rather work hard on a bare rock than bask on a bright shore where one is not safe for an hour."

"Well then, look up there to the right; there is a rock high and bare enough; it must be a strange storm that can dash the waves up there."

"And I think I shall choose that rock; it is high and bleak, to be sure; but I must work hard if I build there; things will not grow as they do down here; but I do not mind hard work, work keeps one from much harm; it is our portion here; so I shall choose the rock."

"What then, are we to part?" said Stultus; "well, a man must have his way; yours is a strange choice, I shall soon see you coming down here to these bright fields and to the shady trees and to the pleasant sands of this bright bay."

"O Stultus," said Sapiens, earnestly laying his hand on his arm, "do not be caught by the gay summer looks of this dangerous place; come

with me and be safe ; come with me and let us work like men ; I will try to cheer you on dull days ; I will take my share of all your troubles, and help you in all your work ; come, let us live as friends, far above the reach of that treacherous sea which smiles upon you to-day with its calm face as though it were never ruffled with great wrath, but which may soon be stirred with some fearful storm and sweep you quite away."

Stultus only wondered at his friend's earnestness, and with a laughing air hurried off, exclaiming, " no rock for me ; I shall choose a place for my house on this merry shore."

Sapiens stood looking at his friend as he strode lightly on with sad eyes ; " O that he would turn," he said, " and come with me ! he will rue the day when he made this foolish choice ; alas, that he should think that the sky will be ever bright, and the waves of the sea always smooth !" At last a turn of the road hid him from his sight.

Stultus soon bought a pretty field in front of the sea, and he was soon at work rearing his new house. The men of the place seemed to be of a gay and cheerful sort, and they told him that he must make a cheerful house, and that they did not wish to build him a gloomy one to dull and sadden the bright view. As Stultus was of their

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mind, you may suppose that a very pretty cottage was soon built; the walls were thin, it is true; but that, it was said, did not matter, and it would take less time to finish; a light verandah was stretched along the front, over which gay flowers were tastefully trailed; the shutters and doors were somewhat gaily painted; the garden was crowded with flowers; a smooth lawn was made to slope down to the sand, and the waves just curled over at the foot of the lawn, making a white fringe of spray along it, and cooling the air. It was indeed a gay sunny spot, and there Stultus determined to live gaily and enjoy life. He soon found many neighbours of his spirit; they were a light-minded joyous set, glad enough to come and feast at his house, to sit under the trees and with pleasant songs to pass away the day, eating his sweet fruits and enjoying the cool air from the quiet sea. Never had Stultus so enjoyed himself before; music and dancing and rich feasts filled up the time, and life rolled on as if its wheels were gliding along smooth turf.

But what had become of Sapiens all the while? He, saddened by his friend's choice, wound his way towards the bare rock; his heart almost misgave him when he reached the foot of

the steep cliff, and saw crag after crag towering over his head, and not a leaf or flower to cheer the view. However, struggling against his faintness of heart, he began to climb the rock ; it was hard work ; he often slipped back ; he wounded himself with the sharp points on which he fell, and it was many hours before he reached the top. When he was there he could not but feel the difference between the bleak and barren place where he was about to fix his house, and the bright valley that lay basking in the sun beneath. However he did not waste his time in looking about, but stoutly set to work, gathering stone for his house, and digging a deep foundation for the walls in the solid rock. It was a slow job, as he was bent on rearing a good strong dwelling that might stand both wind and storm. By the time he had raised it but a few feet from the ground, he looked over the cliff and saw flags flying on his friend's new house, which was quite finished ; the faint echo of the men's hurrahs as Stultus gave them good cheer to drink his health just reached his ear. "A gay flimsy place, not made for weather, a summer toy, varnished for a summer's day," such words, uttered in a sorrowful tone, escaped his lips as he looked on the new house below. Again he turned to

his work, and lifted the huge stones and fitted them well together. At last after some months of labour he roofed it in and all was finished.

Well, time wore on ; the two travellers oftentimes looked at each other from their different homes but never met ; Stultus was too idle to climb the hill ; Sapiens was too busy to come down ; each however saw how the other was going on. Often in the midst of his toils Sapiens would hear the peals of laughter or the sound of some great chorus which was wafted up by the wind ; and when he rested on his spade he could see a large crowd making merry with Stultus in the valley, some putting off in light skiffs adorned with gay streamers, others being rowed about in a gilded barge with a band of music on board, others dancing on the smooth lawn or shouting merrily to their companions in the boats. As for labour, little seemed required there ; the soil was rich, the air balmy, and everything seemed to love to grow in such a spot. Many a time would Sapiens sigh as he beheld the thoughtless crowd of revellers with his friend in the midst ; and many a time did he feel thankful for his more peaceful and toilsome life. “ Alas, alas,” he would say to himself, “ that Stultus and his friends should feel so safe on that unsafe shore,

and that in these giddy ways they should find their only joy !”

Stultus in his turn would sometimes look up to the bare cliff. “There goes on that strange man, toiling, toiling all the day, coaxing a few poor plants to grow on the thin earth, rising with the lark and not knowing what pleasure is ; there he is with his body stooping to the spade, and none near him but those few huts with their toiling drudging owners as grave and dull as he, a plodding cheerless set, dragging on a dull dismal life ; there he is, going into that gloomy prison with its thick dull walls and its narrow windows, as though it were made for owls that could not bear the sun.”

Time wore on ; many years passed over their heads ; each kept to his own way. Sapiens continued to toil hard and to live hard ; many a bleak winter did he spend on the barren rock, and many a cold wind cut him as he toiled. Still he had a few neighbours as patient as himself ; and though they led so hard a life, there seemed a sort of calm joy and peace upon their countenances ; there was no look of mirth, but of grave cheerfulness, if I may so speak ; they were not morose nor harsh, but on the contrary kind and gentle ; I noticed too, that though they

were but a few and had enough to do, they were always glad to help one another. Often would Sapiens rise earlier to give help to a neighbour, and often would a neighbour be seen working till it was quite dark on Sapiens' ground.

Stultus however after all seemed to have made the best choice ; no great storms arose ; the sea was never very rough ; it seemed a sheltered and quiet bay ; the fears of Sapiens appeared to be false. "What," would Stultus say, "what made him talk to me of storms? never was a quieter place ; a little spray has sometimes been dashed against the windows ; once or twice a limb has been blown from the trees and a few flowers torn up by the roots, and the verandah a little shaken ; but what is this? we have been safe for years ; we have passed a merry life without fear, and all this while I should have been drudging like a slave on that cheerless cliff had I taken Sapiens' counsel. I pity your poor timid men, who will not enjoy to-day for fancied storms that may rise to-morrow."

Thus would Stultus run on as he looked up with a pitying air to the patient Sapiens toiling on the rock.

Now one bright summer's day Stultus gave one of his most brilliant feasts : it was a calm

clear day, with not a cloud in the deep blue sky ; years ago on that very day his house had been finished, and he always kept the day. A beautiful arch of flowers was reared at the entrance of the grounds, and festoons of flowers were hung on either side of the broad walk that led to the house, sweetening the air and giving colour and liveliness to the scene as the guests arrived ; coloured lamps were fastened among the flowers, that, as the night came on, the feast might be still prolonged ; troops of lovely children with white robes and golden bands and long waving hair were stationed in different parts of the garden. Sometimes they would break forth into a sweet and merry chorus ; sometimes they would join in a graceful dance, while bands of music played lively airs. Tables loaded with all manner of dainties and rich fruits were placed under the trees, and in the branches of trees were hidden boys who seemed to warble like birds and cheered the feast. Then upon the calm glassy sea the pretty skiffs shot along, racing each other for the prizes which Stultus gave as he sat with his guests under a silken canopy erected at the landing-place. The rowers were all dressed in different colours, some blue, some red, some purple and green, while troops of boys in coloured tunics

had their races on the smooth sand, some on foot, some on ponies gaily decked with ribbons.

Such a sight, such a feast had never been beheld before. As the day drew to a close and the sun began to set, you cannot conceive how beautiful a scene it was. The sky was quite red and ruddy along the horizon, and the sea was flushed with a rich crimson glow ; the coloured lamps began to sparkle among the trees, and as the night stole on, all the skiffs and boats carried coloured lanterns at the stern which were reflected on the sea in long bright quivering lines.

All that day Sapiens had been labouring hard ; a part of one of his neighbour's walls had fallen in, and he had been up long before light to help him to make it sure. Though the sun glared upon him all the day on the exposed and leafless rock, on he laboured with a willing heart, and right joyfully he put a finishing stroke to his work just as the sun had set. Many times in the course of the day he guessed that something unusual was going on below, for the sound of music and laughter seemed more than commonly loud. However he would not leave his work to see, though sometimes he thought very sadly and sorrowfully of the choice of Stultus and of his thoughtless life.

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Now just as he was returning home he thought there was something suspicious in the redness of the sky ; it looked like stormy weather coming on. No sooner had he entered his house and was about to prepare his simple meal, than the wind began to moan and howl so loudly, that he thought a wild night was at hand notwithstanding the calmness of the day. Accordingly he went out and walked all round his house to see that all was fast and sound. He examined the doors and bolts with care, for as the cliff was always a windy place, he had to be upon his guard. Again he entered his house, and had no sooner sat down and spread his evening meal before him, than a clap of thunder seemed to burst close over his head and caused him to start up upon his feet. Then the wind suddenly rose into a frightful hurricane, and it seemed quite to grasp hold of his house that it might shake it to the ground. Again and again the forked lightning flashed before his eyes, and lit up for a moment the dark scene without ; then terrible thunder rolled out as though the powers of darkness were at war in the clouds. Again and again the wind dashed with savage wildness round the walls, and tossed itself in fearful gusts against the house. Even the bold heart of Sa-

piens trembled as the storm continued to rise. He stood anxiously waiting in the middle of his room every fresh burst of the storm; but the stout walls stood firm; they shook, it is true, but they did not fall; though the wild tempest waxed hotter still, the stout walls stood firm; the heart of Sapiens beat fast, his pulse quickened, his whole soul was filled with anxiety; yet as not a stone seemed to be loosened and his strong house held fast together, hope succeeded to fear. At last the wind seemed to slacken; the thunder became more distant; the lightning flashed with a dying power; the chief strength of the tempest was spent; the day began to dawn; the sun again shot its light through the narrow windows of the house; and Sapiens once more drawing his breath felt that the night of his greatest peril was at an end.

But when he began to recover himself, his thoughts turned instantly towards Stultus and the cottages on the beach. "O what can have become of them," he exclaimed in an agony of fear, "on such a night as this!" As the storm was now passing away he yearned to rush to the edge of the cliff to learn their fate, yet his heart misgave him, and his hand trembled when he put it to the bolt of the door. He paused a few

minutes before he could gather courage to face the sight. And what did he see, when, standing on the verge of the rock, he looked over to the valley beneath? The sun was bright again; the sky clear; the waves were settling down into a beautiful calm; but where were the tenants of the valley? Not a house was left; the sea had broken over the green meadows; all was gone; all washed away; not a living thing was to be seen; all was still and calm, no laughter nor merry songs were to be heard; the stillness of ruin and of death was there; of all the crowds of revellers not one was left; gaily painted shutters were floating about the beach; festoons of flowers were mixed with masses of dark seaweed; broken instruments of music, pictures, statues, curtains, strewed the shore; while here and there the lifeless forms of a few children huddled together, with their white robes and golden bands, had been washed to the higher part of the beach. Where was Stultus? Sapiens straining his eye far and wide at last saw something floating out to sea; whether it were a man I know not, but he thought it was the body of his former friend, and wept bitterly.

“Poor Stultus,” cried Charlie, as Mrs. Horton ended her story.

“Yes,” said his mother, “it was a sad end brought on by his own folly; because the place was safe for a time he thought it would be safe for ever, and he was so busy in enjoying himself that he neglected to prepare for wild and wintry days. But, my boy, can you guess on what passage of the New Testament I have founded my story?”

“What! is it taken from anything that is said in the Bible?”

“Yes, my dear; and you shall guess.”

Charlie quickly got his large Bible and began to turn over the leaves. However he could not find the passage his mother meant. His mother then bade him open the seventh chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew and to read it through. Charlie read it aloud to her very nicely, and at last as he came to the concluding verses he exclaimed, “now I have found it; now I have found it.”

“Well,” said his mother, “read it out then.”

Charlie accordingly read these words. “Who-soever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not:

for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

"To be sure, Mamma," he said when he came to the end, "He who knows and does God's will is like Sapiens who built a good strong house upon the strong rock, far above the dangerous sea and the winter storm; and he who knows God's will and yet does not do what God bids, is like Stultus who built his house close to the sea, because it all looked so bright and pretty on a bright summer's day."

"Yes," said Mrs. Horton, "that is quite right; if we do not lead holy lives we do indeed build upon sand; it is no good to call ourselves disciples of Christ, unless we obey Christ; obedience is the test of our faith and our love. Life is not given us that it may be spent in idle pleasure, but that we may serve our Saviour. And I trust, my dearest boy, that from your youth upward you will by God's blessing endeavour to live according to your Saviour's will; for then when the storm of the last day comes to

try what we are and what houses we have built, you will be safe and the storm will not hurt you. O my boy, may we be found like Sapiens, doing Christ's work and preparing ourselves for His glorious coming."

Charlie looked up earnestly into his mother's face, and throwing his arms round her neck he kissed her and said with much eagerness, "Will you pray for me, dear Mamma? for I am but a boy. I should indeed like to be like Sapiens, and I know you are like Sapiens. I am sure God loves you, Mamma. I hope we shall all be in heaven at last."

"We must pray, Charlie, and strive all our lives; we must ask for God's mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He has died for us, and will plead for us with our heavenly Father. And now, my child," she added, tenderly kissing him, "it is time for prayers." Charlie accordingly rang the bell for Betsy, and then they all knelt down together and offered up their prayers at the throne of grace.

After prayers, Charlie went up stairs to bed, and was soon fast asleep, dreaming of building a house upon the rock; though, as is often the case in dreams, he could not get forward in his work; either he could not move the stones, or when he

had got them into his hands, his feet seemed to slip backward as he tried to reach the unfinished wall. While he was thus acting his mother's tale in his sleep, she stole gently into the room; creeping up to his bed she stood for some time watching the slumbering boy. Many thoughts of her husband rushed into her mind as she saw his likeness repeated in the boyish countenance that looked so calm and still. At last a smile crossed Charlie's face, and crying out, "'tis done! 'tis done!" with an indistinct utterance, he waved his hand over his head in token of some dreamy triumph. The truth is, he dreamt just at that moment that his house was finished, and all the stones fixed in their place.

"O Charlie," exclaimed the widow to herself, catching up his words, "may you indeed do God's will; that is my only care; I want nothing else; may you be able to say, when the end comes, 'tis done, 'tis done.'"

Thus thinking earnestly of her boy's salvation, the subject always uppermost in her thoughts, she knelt down by the bedside of the unconscious child, and poured forth her soul in hearty prayer to the Giver of all good gifts, that He might preserve the soul of her boy, and keep him in the paths of innocency from his youth up, as a true member

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of Christ, and a true disciple of the cross. Long she knelt in that quiet room, and long she prayed. At last, greatly refreshed, she rose from her knees, and giving Charlie a kiss she hurried to her own room. Soon all was still in the widow's cottage, and the holy gift of sleep closed every eye.

*EDWIN FORTH, OR, THE EMIGRANT
IN CANADA.*

“WE can do nothing with him ; nothing, I am sure,” said Mr. Forth ; “ for he has been tried by every means, and now he has spent the last penny of his own money ; I am told he has heavy debts, which he knows we are so careful to avoid ; so long as his grandfather’s property lasted, so long he would not listen to my advice, and now he may go.” “ Where ? ” said his wife, gently.

“ Any where,” said Mr. Forth, who was much excited ; “ worthless, reckless spendthrift. He may go any where.”

“ He is our child,” again interposed his wife.

“ Our child, indeed ; I know to my cost he is our child,” said Mr. Forth, “ he has caused me more care than all my family beside.”

“ He may amend,” said Mrs. Forth ; “ perhaps when he finds his money is gone he may be more careful, and it is certain his companions will forsake him.”

“ He will not amend,” said Mr. Forth, angrily, “ he will go on getting into debt ; we may be

thankful he has not the power, as he has the inclination, to ruin every one of us."

"I hope he has not such an inclination," said Mrs. Forth, "his bad companions have led him astray; but I could not think so badly of him, or give up my child, deeply as I regret his folly and wickedness."

Mr. Forth did not reply, he was not in a humour to discuss closely the faults of his son; he felt the disgrace that he was bringing on them all by his bad habits.

Edwin Forth's career had been that of far too many young men. An overfond grandfather had left him a large legacy independent of all control by his father. He had looked forward to coming of age, as a time when he should be quite free from restraint; even during his residence with his family he had shewn an impatience unbecoming a child to his parents, and he no sooner received his fortune than he set all at defiance, and after a few months left home. He was not long in finding companions to assist him in spending his money. London abounds with those who, like himself, had once brilliant prospects, which they misused.

Edwin was every where, and saw every thing; he called it pleasure; it was selfish enjoyment,

not real pleasure, which can only consist in others happiness, as well as our own. God has mercifully decreed, that to be truly happy in this world we must make others happy also, and that no real happiness can exist where others are made unhappy by our conduct. Edwin could not bear to think of home after he had left it, and dreaded his father as he would an enemy. His mother, during a short visit, had in his father's absence tried to persuade him to return home; he consented to remain for a short time; the restraint was insupportable; he came only to return with greater eagerness to his companions; now it was all come to an end, and Edwin was threatened with a gaol for debts contracted in some gambling transactions with his friends, as he falsely called those who had either defrauded him of, or wasted, his property.

When troubles came upon him he found his way to his father's house; he knew it was useless to try his companions; he had heard their jests at those they had ruined, their boasts that it took so long to clear out some victim, and he was too proud to bear their taunts when his fortune was gone.

His interview with his father held out little hopes of assistance; he was met with an offer of

the payment of all his just debts, on condition that he embarked within a week for Canada.

Mr. Forth was an honourable man: he had foreseen an end must come to Edwin's career; he feared even worse than what had now arrived; he saw that if he allowed him to remain in England his bad associates would gather round him, and he preferred sending him to another country, with all its dangers, to the risk of his remaining at home. He resolved to purchase a farm, and to employ one of his agents in America so to secure it, that Edwin should not be able to encumber it, and he offered him such a moderate allowance as should suffice for his wants, yet not enough for him to indulge in luxury without great exertion on his part.

It was a terrible blow to Edwin when he heard his father's proposal. "What I have spent," he said, "was my own."

"Nothing is our own, Sir," said his father, sternly; "I have, by prudence and self-denial, provided for all my children, but if they shewed the same disposition as you have done, nothing would remain to me in a few years. I shall not allow my children to lead me to the doors of a gaol."

"I will not go," said Edwin, "that I will not;"

he rushed out of the house, and accidentally meeting one of his companions less hardened than the rest, began to tell him how cruelly his father had used him, and that he had determined to take his chance, rather to go to gaol than submit to such a banishment:

“Forth,” said he, “take my advice; go back home. I came to tell you that they are trying to arrest you for the debts that you have owed so long; you have not a chance in our set; I have watched you, and been sorry to see how you have thrown yourself away; for myself, I am alone; you have parents, don’t break their hearts; I ruined mine, and should prefer any life to the one I now lead.”

Edwin went home, bidding his companion good by, and saying he supposed it was the last time they should see each other.

Is he a friend? thought Edwin: why does he want me to go away? He tried to prevail on his mother to ask for a longer respite, but she saw it would be useless, and prepared herself for a parting with her erring child. She blamed herself for the little indulgences she had given him, and suffered much more than Edwin, who busied himself with preparations for leaving home. He dared not leave the house, except at night, and

was kept from his former haunts by the knowledge that he would be imprisoned.

At the end of a week a younger brother went with him to Liverpool, and saw him on board the Ajax, a fine vessel, which was to sail the same evening that they arrived. His brother paid his passage money, gave him a sum of money as a present from his father, and added something of his own, saying, "Edwin, this will do when father's is all gone."

Edwin felt ashamed; "No, William, I cannot take it," he said. William made him take the money, and soon after left the vessel, which was towed down the river.

When he recovered himself, and looked at the boxes neatly directed by his mother, he felt their kindness, but was angry with his father, who had not even come to Liverpool to see him to the ship. He recalled his pleasures, and wished to enjoy them once more; mentally he exclaimed against his parent's injustice, thought of many companions who had spent more than himself, and proposed leaving the ship; then there came before him the certainty of a gaol, and the inflexibility of his father's character.

While he remained in sight of home he hoped he might return, but as the shores faded from his

sight, and he saw nothing but the wide sea around him, he yielded to circumstances, and began to talk about Canada to the captain and passengers.

When he told them he was going to farm, asking if he could hunt or shoot, and if the fishing were good, the captain said, "Young man, there is plenty of fishing, and hunting too, but if you want to farm, I would leave all kinds of sport, for all farmers work in Canada, or they don't farm long."

"Then I don't intend to work," said Edwin.

"That is as you please, Sir," said the captain, "no one will force you to work, and if you do not want for any thing I suppose you will not work."

"Very few work for the pleasure of it; captains do not, I am sure."

Edwin did not like the captain, who was very strict, observing religiously the Sunday, and reading the prayers from the Prayer-book, when no clergyman was on board to officiate, and at the same time shewing great interest in the spiritual condition of his sailors, to whom he constantly lent books. Edwin had found idle companions on board the vessel, and a kindly-intended caution from the captain, when he saw him losing money at cards, produced no good feeling in his mind. "Every body seems to interfere with me now,"

said he. Before the end of the voyage he had lost all the money his father had given him, and on his arrival at Quebec, he found, that had it not been for his brother's kindness he could not have completed his voyage ; he began to think the captain was not so bad after all, and discovered that he had lost his money to a set of sharpers.

Edwin remained for a day at Quebec, and was reminded by it of France, which he had visited when a lad ; he then set out for Toronto. He had no money to spend, and therefore amused himself with the scenery on the river, or watching the rafts of timber, which float down the river St. Lawrence, to be shipped at Quebec. Looking at his boxes, he saw one directed " Books, with care ;" and stamping out the words with his shoe, he said, " Books. I shall not want you, I do not like books well enough," yet he was glad in the evening to read the books which belonged to the vessel.

When he drew near Toronto, he enquired of the captain of the steam-boat if Mr. Robertson would be on the pier ; " Yes," said he, " he is agent for our boats, and when he comes on board I will bring you to him." Presently he said, looking through his glass, " There he is, waiting for us on the pier."

On their arrival, and on Mr. Forth being introduced to him, he said, "I received a letter from your father by the last mail, and he was very anxious to know if you had arrived safely." Oh, thought Edwin, he does care for me then, and he may intend me to return home; this is only to frighten me; but his hopes were soon damped, when he heard that Mr. Robertson had purchased a farm, and furnished the house for him; he was gratified when he said, "I shall be happy to see you at my house; you must require rest after so long a voyage; and you will have an opportunity of returning thanks to God for His mercies in preserving you from the dangers of the sea. I hope you had a pleasant voyage." Edwin thanked Mr. Robertson, and accepted his invitation; he made no reply to his suggestion that he should offer his thanks to God for the mercies he had received. He was not thankful; he had long neglected private prayer, and he felt a sort of shame in attending a public service.

He was soon at home in Mr. Robertson's house, and amused his family with stories about England; at times Mr. Robertson thought he observed a levity in his manner, and too great carelessness as to his future prospects. On the evening after his arrival he took Edwin to see

the town, and after introducing him to his neighbours, and shewing him the large warehouses filled with merchandise, he said, "A few years since, Mr. Forth, this town was a forest, and there was not a capitalist within it. I was myself one of seven children, without any property, but we have laboured hard, and you see the results before you;" and pointing to their church, he said, "we have not forgotten, you see, to build a temple for the service of God, the first duty of Christian men." After some conversation about the country, and the manner of living, "Mr. Forth," said he, "I know your past life, for your father has written to me, and asked me to be a friend to you, and that I can only be if you will help yourself; forty miles, which is the distance of Rossneath from Toronto, is far enough to separate us, if you do not find my family pleasant company, but it is not too far for me to serve you, if you will avail yourself of my services."

Edwin thanked him, and said, "You must come and have some sport with me, or have some fishing; I suppose that there are lakes near my house."

"Yes," said Mr. Robertson, "about half a mile from your house is a lake of great extent and beauty, but my visits to you could not be for fishing or shooting. I may see you when I

come on business ; I have little time for pleasure, and that little I give to my family.”

Edwin thought he should not like Mr. Robertson much as a visitor, if he did not hunt or fish ; he however appeared pleased with the country, and listened to its praises, which were poured forth in no sparing manner by one who really loved his country well. On Sunday Edwin went to church, and as Mr. Robertson again suggested it, returned thanks in public for his safe arrival in the colony. He thought it was only a form, and would do neither good nor harm ; there was one however, present, whom Edwin did not see, and who purposely avoided seeing him ; one who did join in returning thanks. Edwin Forth and another person : “ Who could that be ? ” said Edwin to Mr. Robertson.

“ A young man who worked his passage out, and arrived last night ; our rector seemed much interested in him. He is going quite into the backwoods, two hundred miles hence.”

It was Edwin’s companion, a penitent ; he had fled from his companions who had ruined him, and had seen but carefully avoided Edwin, fearing they might injure each other ; he told his tale to the rector, and took his advice ; told him of the disgrace he had been to his family, and of

the misery which sin had brought upon him. He had come to Canada to work as a labourer, and for that purpose chose the backwoods, that none might know him.

“If I die, Sir,” said he to the rector, “I shall leave references to you among my papers, and you can tell my friends; if I live, I will try by my life to express my sense of the goodness of God in not cutting me off in the midst of my days.”

Edwin did not pray, but there were those who prayed for him; nightly when the family assembled they prayed for the absent and erring son; and again, when morning came, was the prayer repeated, for him who lived without prayer.

“He is in the hands of our heavenly Father,” said Mrs. Forth, “the time may yet arrive when he will bless us for separating him from his wicked associates, who would have ruined him utterly. We have seen more than once that the providence of God is a never-failing providence. We thought William had not recovered from his last illness, yet God has given him a longer respite; it may not be very long, yet it is a blessing to live a day with him; he is ever gentle and affectionate.”

“And so was Edwin as a child,” said his father; “the legacy we thought so good a thing, and on

account of which we perhaps favoured him, has turned to a curse.”

“Yes; we call those good providences which bring us riches or honours, and do not fear as we ought their dangerous nature; our poor Edwin had perhaps been very different if trained to poverty.”

There were many enquiries about Edwin from the younger members of the family, who could not understand why he, who was so kind to them, had been sent to America. They were told he had done wrong, and happily did not understand how grievous were the sins he had committed.

After a short stay at Toronto, Mr. Robertson took Edwin in his own waggon to Rossneath, and shewed him over the farm; Edwin was pleased with its appearance, and also with the man who had been hired to look after it until he could take possession of it, and whom he agreed should continue as his servant. Mr. Robertson stayed a few days, and gave all the information he could; and desired him to visit him if at any time he was in doubt how to manage. When he left, Edwin began to look out for amusements, and soon gathered round him the idlers of the township; he formed fishing parties, as it was not the

season for hunting, and when they returned the time was spent in drinking.

His servant would frequently beg him to give up his loose companions, and at length wrote to Mr. Robertson, telling him that the farm could not answer if Edwin went on in his expensive course of living; the inhabitants of the township also told Mr. Robertson the same, so that he resolved on another visit to Rossneath; he was greatly pained to observe the change in Edwin; his character was almost gone in Melville township; some complained that he did not pay his debts, others of his constant excesses, and the evil he did to the young men, who liked his company. The clergyman had seen him, but found he had no influence over him.

In order to separate him for a time from his idle set, Mr. Robertson proposed to take him back to Toronto, to which Edwin consented reluctantly. He felt degraded in his own estimation, the chances of improvement were gone, and he saw no way of peace but in fresh excesses; the man had managed the farm well, and was very honest, so that there seemed a better prospect for the farm without Edwin than with him.

He returned to Toronto, and for a few days behaved himself well; he was ashamed to allow

himself in his bad habits : but, having met some of his old companions, who had also come to the town, he again relapsed, and scarce ever returned to the house in the evening, so as to be able to meet the family ; more than once he had to be carried to his room. At length it became necessary that he should return to Rossneath, for he was worse in town than in the country, and Mr. Robertson was obliged to write to his father, and tell him that he was almost without hope of his son ; the money with which he had supplied him at his father's desire had been spent in excesses ; he had encumbered himself with debts, he disgraced himself daily ; and he added, his life is as completely without religion as if he had never heard the name of God, or a future state of existence.

The winter came on ; deer tracks in larger numbers than usual had been seen about the township. A hunting party was formed by Edwin and his companions, with provisions for two or three days, and, as usual, a large supply of rum. The expedition proved most successful ; on the second night they were returning in two sleighs laden with venison, intending to keep up a feast at Rossneath ; they had all drunk to excess, and Edwin had used no moderation, but lay like

a log on the top of the foremost sleigh. They nearly upset the sleigh several times in coming through the woods, and as they entered the clearing, a sudden jolt threw Edwin into the road; no one missed him; they were uproarious in their mirth, and the second sleigh, which followed soon after, went over him as he lay in the road, snapping his arm and leg. None heard his cries; he was forgotten by those in his own sleigh, until on their arrival at the cottage the driver of the second sleigh recollected driving over something which he thought was the stump of the tree that had jolted Edwin from the sleigh. All were alarmed; the night was becoming intensely cold, so that, even wrapped up as they were in their buffalo-skin coats, they could scarce keep themselves warm.

In a few minutes the sleighs were unloaded, and Edwin's servant went off to look for his master; they called loudly, but there was no answer. Charles looked and saw a track; "Some one," he said, "has found master; we will follow them; they cannot be very far off:" he was much further than they thought, much time had been spent in looking about for the track, and more than once they had lost it; at length they came to Temple's cottage, a mere log building in

the woods, and there they saw Edwin, suffering intense pain.

Temple had been to the store, and was returning home, when he heard Edwin's groans and entreaties for help; he knew the old man Temple.

"Temple, for God's sake, help me; pray save me; they have left me, and I am dying."

"Master Edwin, has it come to this!" said the old man. "God be praised that I have found you, for in another hour it would have mattered little who found you."

He lifted him out of the road, and in a few minutes had cut down some fir boughs, weaving the branches into a frame. He then laid Edwin upon it, and drew him as gently as he could, though suffering great pain, to his house. As he pushed back the door Mary said, "Where have you been, you are so very late?"

"Don't say a word, Mary, get our bed quickly out of the corner; Master Edwin has got a serious hurt, I fear, and I must go for the doctor."

Mary was as ready as her husband to assist any person in affliction, and without another word was preparing the bed; she had finished, and laid Edwin on it with her husband's help, when she said, "The mercy of God is great; it is well he is not frozen."

“He is nearly frozen, I fear,” said Temple.

“No,” said his wife, “the coat had wrapped over him; but his arm is broken.”

“Then I must be off at once,” said Temple; “Squire Jones will lend me his horse I am sure, when he knows what it is for;” and it was true; Squire Jones would have lent his horse for any settler, and his kindness in lending his horse caused him many inconveniences, but he said it did a neighbour good, so he did not mind himself.

A two-hours’ journey brought him to the doctor, who resided in the next township; it was not long before Temple roused him up and informed him that Edwin Forth had broken his arm.

“Very cold to-night, Temple,” he said, “come in.”

“Come in! I can’t, doctor,” said Temple; “I must give the horse a rub down; he has come pretty fast, and must go home fast too, so as soon as you have got all ready we must be off. A beautiful night it is, doctor,” said Temple, rubbing the white frosted breath from the horse’s chest. And a beautiful night it really was; the moon was at the wane, the stars shone with brilliancy, the snow sparkled with the reflected light, the wind slightly moved the fir branches,

and there was a perfect calm. The old man raised his head, and standing still to rest from his exertion, began that beautiful psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work."

"Now I am quite ready, Temple, and we will start."

"Jump in, doctor," said he, "and get the skins round you, for you will be cold enough before you reach Melville, but Mary with all her nursing will not forget us, I know."

"I am not afraid of finding a welcome at your house," said the doctor, "I have found many blessings there." He had frequently been there to service when the travelling missionary came to say the prayers of the Church, and give them Communion.

Temple drove rapidly. "I do not like to drive another man's horse so fast, doctor, but Squire Jones will forgive me on such an errand, I know."

When they came to the cottage the doctor went in, leaving him to take care of the horse, which he had no sooner put in the stable than he came to see how Edwin was going on.

"How is he, doctor?" "He has broken an arm and a leg," said he, "but happily he is

not frozen, and with care he will soon get over it."

A warm mash was soon prepared for Squire Jones's horse, the never-failing Indian corn-meal provided him a supper, and after due care Temple came to prepare supper for the doctor.

"I must take care of the horse first, doctor, or he will not take you back again at the pace we came."

"He will not take me home at such a pace at all, for I do not know the road so well as you."

Edwin suffered greatly; his arm and leg were set, and the doctor remained with him for some time, but when he saw him composed he again set off for his own house.

"Good bye, Temple," he said, "I will send the sleigh to the squire in the morning. I leave Edwin in good hands; you will be chaplain and nurse to him; poor young fellow, he needs both offices."

"If I can do the young man any good I will, doctor; he shall hear nothing but what is good from me, and none of his companions will come near John Temple's dwelling, I know that; perhaps God has ordered this for the poor fellow's good. 'Before I was afflicted I went wrong, but now I have kept Thy commandments,' saith the Psalmist."

“What a truly religious mind!” said the doctor to himself, as he drove from Temple’s door.

Temple, who had only been a few years in Melville township, was an instance of the blessings of an early acquaintance with the principles of the Church. He had from earliest childhood learned his Catechism, and studied his Bible and Prayer-book. On leaving England the parish clergyman had pointed out to him the difficulties he would have in a new country; “especially,” he said, “you will have temptations to forsake the Church of your fathers; her ministrations must of necessity be unfrequent and irregular in a distant settlement.”

“Then,” said Temple, “my house, Sir, shall be a church, and I will read the prayers to my wife, and to any other people belonging to our Communion who will join with us.” And he had religiously kept his promise; his house had been a church; often after a snow-storm Mary and himself were reminded of their first beginnings by being alone, Temple saying the prayers and Mary responding. In fine weather they were never without visitors, and the old country people said John Temple brought back home again, and made them think of the village church and their own

land. The Bishop had given John his license to act as a lay reader, and sent him a volume of sermons to read to his friends.

And daily too the old man said the confession and collects appointed by the Bishop for family devotion; his neighbours said he was a strong churchman, for he would not go any where except to his own Minister, and John Temple said he hoped that he was consistent, for he had too much faith to change his religion every Sunday.

As Edwin grew better, he began to express his gratitude to Temple. "John," he said, "how many times I have laughed at you, and teased others because they came to pray here instead of drinking and swearing, and now here I am indebted to you for life. I should have perished if you had not found me, and nursed me so well."

"You must not talk much yet," said the old man, "you shall pay me for this."

"Yes, I will give you any thing I have freely," said Edwin.

"We will settle it when you get better," said Temple, seeing he did not understand him.

Youth was on Edwin's side, he recovered more quickly than was expected from the nature of his injuries, but the cold had seriously affected his

health. Temple lost no opportunity of bringing good influences to bear upon him. He said the daily family prayers by his bed-side, prayed for him especially, and watched for every indication of relenting in that hardened heart. And John prayed for him in secret too in the deep woods; he remembered the prodigal, and hoped for his return. One day he said, "Temple, there are some books in one of my boxes at the cottage, I should like to read them now; Charles knows where they are, and will give them to you." Temple thought this was a good sign; "if he reads," said he, "he may also reflect." When the books were brought to him, as he looked at the titles, he was humbled by the thought of others' care for him, while he had not cared for them, or for himself. The Bible and Prayer-book were the gift of his mother; as he turned the leaves over, he saw written at the bottom of a page, "Edwin was born on this day;" it was the eighth Sunday after Trinity; he read the collect, then the epistle, "Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." He scarcely understood what he read, and was ashamed to ask, yet when John Temple came in, he shewed

him his mother's writing, and asked him to read the epistle and explain it to him; the old man took his spectacles from the shelf, and read the epistle in a reverent tone; when he had finished he said, "Master Edwin, since you have been at Melville you have lived after the flesh, and I fear long before you came here, for men do not become wicked all at once. You have been a drunkard, you have blasphemed, you have done many bad things, they say in our township you—"

"Hush, John, pray do not say a word more; I know enough; I have led a very bad life; God assisting me, I will try to amend; I will lead a different life, if I ever see Rossneath cottage again."

Tears rolled down Temple's cheeks as he said, "Let us pray for it." He knelt down and said the collect, "O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; we humbly beseech Thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Amen," said Edwin faintly, and burst into tears. The old man prayed secretly for him, and he now found he could pray for himself; he was astonished at his past life.

“Master Edwin,” said Temple, “you promised to pay me for my trouble.”

“Yes, any thing I will give you,” said Edwin, “and so will my poor mother, I am sure.”

“Your mother cannot pay me,” said Temple, “but you can. Will you promise me to do what you can to pay me for my trouble, and all you can?”

“I will, John, trust me I will.”

“Give up every one of your old companions,” said Temple slowly; “yes, every one of them.”

“I will, with the assistance of God; I cannot do it of myself, indeed I cannot; we have been so linked together; but tell me how to do it.”

“Leave that to me,” said Temple, “they have not been to my house, and I hear that they say it will be all right when they get you back to Rossneath again, the old fellow will not be there then.”

“But you will come, John, will you not?” said Edwin.

“Yes, to do you any good, or to drive away the idle ones, I will come; but when they know that you pray daily and read your Bible, they will not trouble you with their company.

Edwin was left very much alone. Temple was about his work, and often went to Rossneath to see how Charles got on: and he wrote

to Mr. Robertson, told him of the accident, and his hopes it might prove a blessing to his soul. Edwin often read the epistle, and never without acknowledging the good providence of God. He often talked with Temple when he saw him at leisure, and asked him what the Apostle meant by "the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." He read it, "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "Am I a child of God, who have sinned so grievously against Him?" asked Edwin.

"I wish our Minister was here to answer you," said Temple, "we lay people ought rather to receive instruction than to give it, but we are so alone here without Priests and without Sacraments, that we must use such light as God has given us. I will explain what I know about it. The Romans, whom St. Paul addressed in this Epistle, had in their Baptism been made the children of God, and adopted into the Christian family; their Baptism was an outward sign of inward grace given to them; the sin of their first parents, and the actual sins of their past life, were on their repentance done away, and they became the children of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. But you were in childhood thus adopted into the family of Christ Jesus our Lord; yours

was the promise of an heavenly kingdom, if you denied the world, subdued the flesh, and resisted the devil ; but alas, you did not do this ; your past life has been unholy, you have committed deadly sins, and the Spirit did not bear witness with your spirit, for your spirit was daily grieving the Holy Spirit ; I trust not grieving it altogether away, for you appear penitent just at this time, but you are now in sickness, and that humbles you ; you have nearly lost your life, and that also warns you ; but none of us can say that penitence will remain ; if it does, and your future life is that of a child of God, if your works are those of the Spirit of God, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; if, Edwin, you exhibit these Christian graces, we shall trust the renewing grace of God has been given to you, and be assured the Holy Spirit will witness with your spirit, that you are again among those who daily live in the hope of a better and more enduring life.”

“ Temple, you are indeed a comforter to me. If I had been alone I should have despaired of mercy, and now I rejoice that I have suffered, and will try to bear my cross as a servant of Jesus Christ.”

“ My dear master Edwin, you must bear many

crosses ; God has much to forgive in you, for you have been a grievous sinner, and I trust you will love Him much. It is a blessed truth for such as are bowed beneath the burden of their sins to hear this saying, so worthy of all to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

Edwin now began to walk out with a crutch ; he went to his cottage, and was pleased to see how careful Charles had been. “ I will try to be a better master to you than I have been,” he said. Some of his companions came to him, expressing their joy at his recovery, and hopes of a merry meeting at the cottage soon. “ Never, never more,” said he, to one. “ I have to thank God for my afflictions, for they have shewn me the folly of my past life ; let us all,” he said, “ try to serve God instead of the devil, to whom we have been so long enslaved. I might,” he added, “ that night have died in my sins, and then what could I have expected but the just judgment of God against a rebellious and disobedient child, and a most miserable sinner.”

As soon as he was able he wrote to his parents, telling them of his accident, which they already knew, and of Temple’s kindness to him ; he told his mother, though poor in this world’s goods, he

was indeed rich in faith, and one who lived in a daily trust in the good providence of God.

Mrs. Forth was most thankful for Edwin's letter, and her husband wrote to Mr. Robertson to have a house built for Temple, and also sent him presents.

When Mr. Robertson proposed it he said, "No, no, I cannot take any thing; we want sadly a church and a clergyman, if Mr. Forth can help us, I shall be most thankful; our township wants both, and I could not live in a better house while we had no church."

Temple's wishes were soon complied with; he had the satisfaction of assisting in building the church of the Holy Trinity, in Melville township.

Edwin removed to Rossneath cottage, which had entirely changed its character. It was known as the most riotous house in the village; now it became the resort of all who lived soberly and godly in the present world; the works of charity were planned there; there the clergy found a ready welcome, and the friends of the Church met together to devise improvements.

After a few years, at the request of his parents, he returned home; he humbly asked their forgiveness for the great wrongs he had done them, thanked them for sending him from home, and

praised the good providence of God, in that he suffered for his sins while in this life. His health was much impaired, though it improved by his journey to England.

On his return, he established a school with the assistance of the clergyman, who induced him to take a few boarders into his cottage; carefully did he train these young people under his charge, earnestly did he warn them of the dangers which beset their path through life.

John Temple came to live at the cottage, and made himself very useful about Edwin's farm. He had enough to support him, and after his wife's death, preferred, he said, ending his days with his dear young friend.

One day in winter Edwin was visited by a stranger, who brought a fine boy with him. He appeared about his own age, and as he came to him, he said, "Edwin Forth, you do not remember me!"

Edwin looked at him, and said, "No, I do not."

"Do you remember one who advised your return home, when you said you would not leave England?"

"Arthur Manley?"

"Yes," he said, "I am Arthur Manley; it was I who with you returned thanks to God for pre-

servation from danger in passing over to this country.”

“I can never too thankfully acknowledge the mercies of God ; my family have forgiven me ; I am living with my children, and God has blessed the labours of my hands ; this is my eldest boy,” said he, introducing a fine boy to Edwin’s notice. “I have had many hard struggles ; when first married we were all ill, and but for the kindness of friends, must have perished. You will perhaps ask, Edwin, how I discovered your abode. I saw you soon after my arrival, and I heard of you from the rector of Toronto. I was afraid to associate with you, for I did not dare trust myself when I heard how sadly you were living. I prayed for you, and now it has pleased God to manifest His mercy in calling you from sin to a life of patient resignation to His will. I was anxious to meet you, and mingle my prayers and thanksgivings with yours.”

“I am truly glad to see you, Manley,” said Edwin. “I may truly say, ‘Thou hast chastened and corrected me, but hast not given me over unto death.’ I suffer much from the injuries I received some years since ; but I can only thank God for afflictions which prevented me from continuing in a life of sin.”

Manley stayed some time with Edwin, and yielded to his wish that he should leave his son with him ; at the death of his father, Edwin received sufficient for his maintenance, though less than others of his family. He did not murmur, but acknowledged the justice of his father, and thankfully received his legacy. He is now living at Melville, which has a church, a resident clergyman, and a schoolmaster, who carries on the school which was begun at Rossneath cottage. Temple lies in the church-yard, under the shade of the church reared in part by his labours, and wholly by his influence. His story is often told by the old people as they pass his grave, or point to Rossneath, now a most beautiful spot ; and Edwin loves to speak of the old man's kindness, to relate the mercy of God in preserving his life, and giving him such a guide as John Temple. Of himself otherwise he does not speak ; but the patient endurance of pain, the gentleness which arises from a subdued temper, the charity which is ever kind, are the marks of a penitent's life, who acknowledges that God has taken him from the deep waters, which had nigh overwhelmed his soul.

COMPLAINTS AND THEIR CURE.

“JANE, what are you doing now?” asked Mary Falton, on meeting her former class-fellow in one of the narrow lanes at the back of the High-street. “I am going to service,” said Jane, “my governess has got me a place at Mrs. Andrews’, and as they keep another servant, I shall learn a great many things.” “I wish I could go to service,” said Mary, “I do not like to stay at home; Mother goes out to work now; I have baby to nurse all the day, Ellen, and John, and Edward, to get ready for school; the master will not let them be late; and then father expects his meals to be all ready for him, and I cannot do it all like a grown woman.”

“Does any one expect you to do it?” said Jane; “or do you think that complaining will make it any better?”

“I don’t know about that,” said Mary; “I am

always uncomfortable, and get so many scoldings; you never had so many in all your life.”

“You certainly are full of complaints,” said Jane, “and they do not help to forward work. I do not expect service is without troubles; governess told me Mrs. Andrews was very quick tempered, although really kind, and I was to remember not to answer again when spoken to, and to look upon my situation as one to which it had pleased God to call me.”

“Did Miss Flood recommend you, Jane?” said Mary, “I wonder if she would get me a place.”

“Yes, Mary, she recommended me to Mrs. Andrews; since Henry’s death we have been badly off, father has been cross, and he told governess he could not afford schooling, I must earn my bread; so she begged him to keep me a little longer at school, and then I should have a place.”

“And who is going to do for your father? I should have thought he would have been glad of you at home.”

“Father is not much at home,” said Jane. She said no more, the truth was too painful to be told, even to such a school friend as Mary Falton; Jane’s father was not steady.

He had been unsteady in his early life, then

on marrying had become more steady, provided for his family, and kept to his work ; at the same time he seldom went to church, but lived, as many do, in conformity with certain principles of their own. He was strictly honest, paid every body from his weekly earnings at the factory, and would always contribute to help his fellow workmen when in trouble. He was kind to Jane's mother, and grieved at her loss. About half a year after his wife's death, he lost his only son, a steady, good lad, of whom he was very fond, and this made him reckless ; he missed the mother from his fire-side, and the boy as his companion to and from work. His place was unfortunately supplied by men addicted to drinking, who, with very kind intentions to James Johnson, had so little command over themselves, that they were poor guides for others, especially in distress of mind.

James, too, had always been afraid of being over religious, as he said, and rather sneered at some of his companions, who, professing to be religious men, were not careful to pay their debts, or to keep their families decently clothed. Jane knew her father's character, and respected his good points ; he had been good to her, in that he gave her education, clothed her well, and

though severe and very particular, was proud to see her respected in the school by the visitors and clergyman, and loved by her governess.

Times, however, had become very bad, work fell off, the long illness of the mother and of the son had reduced James's small stock of money, and being a very self-dependant man, he did not sufficiently look up to God, who giveth all things, but looked down, and despaired of living, when he found troubles come upon him ; perhaps, too, he was a little proud, and that is a disposition which cannot look upwards, because it is enthralled by keeping its place on earth. It is a great blessing to keep our eyes upward in prosperity, that we may have the habit in us when adversity comes upon us ; it is the upward eye that looks thankfully to heaven, and blesses God for prosperity, and the uplifted heart that thankfully acknowledges the hand of God in adversity. Jane had learned this better than her father ; her mother's gentleness, perhaps, prepared her to receive good impressions, and companionship with a suffering parent had prepared her for trouble ; so that Mary Falton's troubles seemed few, very small to hers, for she had brothers and sisters to love and play with, whilst James, her only brother, who had nursed and petted her, and taken her

in the evening to church with him, was gone to the grave; the grave from which there is no return. Jane had tended her father, and tried to keep the house for him, always returning quickly from school to have his dinner ready, and on Saturday cleaning out the two rooms which they hired. Jane and Mary were parting, when Miss Flood came by, and said, "Children, are you saying good bye?"

"Yes, governess," said Jane; and thinking to help Mary, she said, "Mary wants a place, she is quite tired of being at home, and does not like nursing the baby."

"I never try to get places for those who complain of their own homes," said Miss Flood, "they are sure to find fault with their mistress, or quarrel with their fellow-servants, or fancy more work is put upon them than they can do."

"I should not," said Mary, "I would try, governess, if you would get me a place. I am always getting into trouble at home, sometimes the boys are late at school, and then the baby is tiresome, and mother says I do not try, but I do."

"Perhaps you think so," said Miss Flood; "but you are not the best judge of that, you

did not always try at school, and I can therefore believe you do not try at home."

"I do though," said Mary, rather displeased.

"Very well, Mary, I shall soon see if you do; Ellen comes to school now very irregularly; when I see her more regular, and hear you have learned to do your duty at home, I will talk to your mother about a place for you. Good bye, Mary; Jane, you must come with me, I was coming to see if you were at home, and to say we will help to make up your clothes at school."

"I wish, governess, you could help Mary," said Jane, as they walked along to Jane's home.

"I cannot, Jane, until I see her doing her duty at home; God has placed her where she is, and not a mere chance; if I were to help her because she complains, a habit of complaining would follow her through life; she is learning her lessons every day, and if she becomes patient, more tidy, and more attentive to her mother's wishes, I will get her a place as I have got you, but I will not do any thing while the baby is young, and Ellen unfit to nurse it."

Mary Falton had her trials—who in this world has not—her father often found his dinner uncooked, or the fire out when he came home, and wanted food and rest; the mother's earnings

were a large portion of the income, for Falton was only a day labourer. He wanted his wife at home, and he wanted her earnings. Mary could not fill her place, and she did not try to do it; she grumbled at her hard case; when her mother came home, she found she must work, when the work really ought to have been finished, and the house tidy, for her return. It would have been better had she remained at home. Every married woman should avoid going out to labour, especially if she has a family; children are poor substitutes; and Falton would have spent less in drinking if he had found more inducements to stay at home.

Jane's mother would never go out to work. James, she would say, married me, and must maintain me; I will keep his home clean, mend his clothes, and bring up the children; but if my home is dirty and miserable, he will find clean places and bright fires elsewhere, and spend his money away from his family; while she lived James was sober and steady, when she was gone, the good influence was gone which had kept him from evil habits.

Jane found her father at home; there was no work at the factory; he rose up and thanked Miss Flood for her kindness to Jane; "she must

keep her place, Ma'am," said he; "I can't keep her any longer; there never were such times."

"Times, I hope, will mend," said Miss Flood, "and Jane will be a good girl, I think, because she has been regular at school, and obedient to her teachers."

James gave out her mother's clothes box, and said, "you had better take it," and brushing away a tear, he left the room, with a "Good morning, Miss Flood; God bless you for what you have done for the child."

In a few days Jane went to her place. Her father sold all the furniture he did not want, paid his rent, cleared up the shop score, and removed to a furnished lodging, where he was to sleep, and have his meals prepared for him. Fortunately he fell into good hands; his landlady was an elderly person, who had known James from his boyhood, and pitied his misfortunes; by her endeavours Johnson became more regular in his habits; she pointed out to him the error that must follow on his present course. He was less wanted at the factory, and when there was work, was less able to do it than he had been; by kindness, great patience, and often helping him in his difficulties, she at length won him from his bad companions, and led him to regularity in public

and private devotion. Jane kept her place, occasionally coming home to see her father, and always asking him to take her to church; he grew fonder of his daughter, and began to think she was very like his wife: he always took her to see Miss Flood, saying he could never repay her what she had done for Jane, with whom Mrs. Andrews was so pleased that she raised her wages, so as to enable her to help her father, as well as to clothe herself.

Jane did not forget Mary; whenever she came home she ran into Bell Court, to see if Mary was at home, and she thought the house looked cleaner, and Mary had fewer troubles; "Father," she said, "is better contented, he has got more money now, and mother only goes out three days in the week; the boys, too, are better, and Ellen such a good girl to nurse the baby, when she comes from school."

"Then there is a bright side to your house now, Mary, I see," said Jane, smiling.

"Yes, Jane, after what governess had spoken to me, I tried to do better to get away from home, because I thought the better I do, the sooner I shall go."

"And you are not gone yet."

"No; Miss Flood very often comes to see me,

and has told my mother she will get me a place. She says there are crosses every where in life, and I now know all my troubles, but I do not know what may be elsewhere if I leave home."

"You do not think then, you would like to go out now," said Jane.

"Yes," said Mary; "if Ellen could fill my place I would leave home directly, but Miss Flood says, wait for another year, and I shall wait. I never thought that I could have endured home; now I really like it, and am happy in it."

"And how did you change your mind? or what made home more pleasant?"

"I think Miss Flood did me great good; she came in to see if I had the house tidy on Saturdays; then she told me I should certainly have heavier troubles, if I did not bear those which were in the path of duty. She told me she had herself suffered for endeavouring to escape from small troubles; and at last I began to think I had no troubles at all."

"And no complaints to make about the baby, or the house, or the boys?" said Jane.

"No, Jane, I think the boys were better when I ceased to complain of them; they got up earlier, would go to the conduit for water before they

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went to school, and since mother has stayed at home more, father is better contented, and seems to like to come home."

"Then there are cures for our troubles?" said Jane.

"Yes," said Mary; "Miss Flood says, if we do not utter our complaints, we soon cease to think of them; and if we try to be patient, and, as Christians, to remember we must take up our cross daily, the troubles of life are much lightened."

"And did you really, then, try to think every day of taking up your cross?"

"I did try, Jane, but often failed, only Miss Flood would remind me so gently if I were impatient of my promise, and tell me, unless I took up my cross, I laid another cross in my parents' way to happiness; and so by degrees I left off complaining, and now we are very happy."

"I hope you will go to service soon," said Jane, and if you can try and live with me, it would be so very nice to be in the same house together; we would try and have no complaining, and if I were impatient, Mary, I would come to you to learn a cure, though we have very few complaints in our house, for mistress is very kind."

"And you had learned the cure before you

COMPLAINTS AND THEIR CURE.

went to service, Jane, and I hope I shall before I go.”

And Mary learned what we must all learn, that there is no trouble of life that does not bring with it its own cure, if we would try to find it!

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JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

THE FAIR ON WHIT-MONDAY.

THE bells were ringing merrily on a bright May morning in the village of W — as Margaret Gray took her pitcher to the well to fill it with water for breakfast. She heard the bells ringing, but she looked rather sad and thoughtful, and when she had filled the pitcher, she set it down for a moment, and her thoughts seemed to be far away. However she took it up again in a minute, and hurried home, where she was soon busy helping her mother in her various occupations, and preparing the cottage breakfast, against her father and brothers came in from their work. Just as Margaret had told her mother that the kettle *did* boil now, and while she was laying the coarse but white cloth on the little round table, Thomas Gray and his two sons came in from the fields, ruddy with health and exercise, and their appetites sharpened by the fresh morning air.

“Well, Maggy, my lass,” said her father, “you’ve got a fine Whit-Monday for the fair, and I hope you’ll enjoy it.”

Margaret only said that it was a beautiful day,

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and bent her head lower over the plates and basons she was placing on the table. Ere long all the family were seated at their frugal meal, and the Whit-Monday fair was the subject of their conversation. The two youths expressed great sorrow that now they were out at work they could not go for the whole day to C——, the neighbouring village, where the fair was held, but said they hoped to get leave to spend the evening there, when they said they had always the best fun, as the dancing did not begin till six o'clock. They then began telling some stories about the last fair, how tipsy John Stevens had got, and how bold and rude some of the girls at C—— were, and what fun they had had at the Stag's Head after the dancing ended, when their mother begged them to leave off, saying that she was sure it would do Margaret no good to hear of such doings, and that she wished young people could enjoy themselves without behaving in such a wicked way. To this the boys made no answer, and as but a short time was allowed for breakfast, they soon rose and returned to their work in high spirits. When they were gone Margaret and her mother were again busy putting every thing to rights, and after a few minutes' silence

Mrs. Gray said to her little girl, "Why, how silent you are, Maggy! you used to be so delighted always on Whit-Monday with the thought of going to the fair, talking about your fairings and all the pretty things you were going to see, and now you are quite quiet and have nothing to say. Are you ill?"

"O no, mother, thank you," replied the little girl, "I am very well indeed, but I am not going to the fair."

"Not going to the fair, Maggy!" said her mother, "why what has put that into your head?"

"Why, mother," answered Margaret, "I've thought a great deal about it ever since the last fair, where I was very much shocked at many things I saw and heard; Mr. Lennox has spoken to us several times about it lately, and told us that fairs are not places for little Christian children, and that he wished none of his little girls to go."

"Well," said her mother, "I know there's a great deal goes on that's very bad, such as the drinking and the bad language of the men and boys, and that some of the girls behave very ill, and I cannot say I much like fairs myself; but still I had not the heart to prevent

you going, you always seemed to think so much of it. But if you like to give up going, I think you are a very good little girl to do as Mr. Lennox wishes, and I would not discourage you."

"O no, mother! I know you would not, you are so kind," said Margaret, "but Mr. Lennox told us that we had promised to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and he said that 'the world' meant every thing that was contrary to the will of God, that on this earth there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and that every thing that is not of the Father, that is, not according to the will and commands of God, is of the world, or according to the will and commands of Satan."

"Well, dear," said her mother, "I'm sure I like to hear about this very much; but how is it you know it all as well as the minister himself?"

"O," answered Margaret, "we have heard it all over and over again so often, that now I feel I have got it quite into my head."

"But then, Margaret," said her mother, "how did Mr. Lennox tell you we were to know what was of the world and what was of God, for it seems so difficult always to tell."

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“ He said, mother, that God had told us all about it in His holy Word, and that as ignorant and unlearned people cannot always understand the meaning of the Bible, God had given us clergymen to explain it to us, and tell us how to apply it to ourselves, and therefore as he is our clergyman it was his duty to explain to us about the world, and to tell us what things and what places were of the world, and what were of God.”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Gray, “ I know three things that St. John says are not of the Father, but are of the world ; did Mr. Lennox not tell you of them ?”

“ O yes, mother, you mean the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”

“ Yes,” replied Mrs. Gray, “ and I know that the lust of the flesh is the same as the works of the flesh that are mentioned in the Galatians ; but what did Mr. Lennox say the lust of the eyes was, and how did he tell you we were to avoid these three things ?”

“ O, he said that the lust of the eyes meant a too great liking for grand things, such as fine houses, and fine clothes, and grand carriages, and all those things ; and he said that the richest

and greatest people in the world might not have the lust of the eyes, and that the poorest little child might have it quite strongly; but I hardly understood how that could be."

"I think I can tell you, Margaret," said her mother. "God has put us all into different stations, and whatever belongs to our station is given us by God, and if we were in a high station, we should have carriages, and beautiful houses, and furniture, and clothes, but we need not set our hearts upon them, but try to serve and glorify God with all the riches He had given us. I remember Mr. Lennox told us this a Sunday or two ago."

"That's just what he said," answered Margaret; "now I remember what he said about little girls having the lust of the eyes; he told us that if we wanted to be richer and grander than we are, and wanted to have fine clothes that were not suitable for us, and when we saw people better dressed than we are, wished to be like them, instead of remembering that God had given us exactly what was best for us, that then we had the lust of the eyes. Then the pride of life, he said, was thinking too much of being of high rank, and having power, and being looked up to, and he told us that we shewed we had the pride

of life if we wished to be well thought of, and did not like being lowly and in a humble station, and not being much thought of by any one."

"Yes, Margaret," said her mother, "and now I see that if that is what is meant by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the fair must be of that world which you promised to renounce, for it never ends without a great deal of drunkenness and other lusts of the flesh being committed, and it tempts to the lust of the eyes by all the fine things that are sold which are quite unsuitable to little village girls, and tempts you to play at games of chance to get money to spend on those foolish things."

"O," interrupted Margaret, "don't you remember Jane Watts last year? she gained two shillings by the funny-looking table that turned round and round, and then she bought such fine ribbons and all sort of gay things with it."

"Yes," said Mrs. Gray, "and then she and Mary Stevens quarrelled because Jane said Mary Stevens had cheated her; you told me it made you quite miserable to hear them calling each other names, and then their brothers interfered and fought till John Stevens had such a black eye that he could not see with it for a month."

Margaret and her mother were standing at

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the door of the cottage during this conversation, and just at this minute a carriage drove past, in which were seated a very pretty lady and two children. Margaret and her mother both curtsied, and the lady nodded and smiled in the kindest way, when Margaret turned round and said, "O mother, I do love Mrs. Tennant. I could not help thinking when Mr. Lennox said that people might be rich and great, and not have the lust of the eyes, that he must be thinking of Mrs. Tennant, for though she has such a beautiful house, and carriages, and dresses so richly, I feel as if I could tell her every thing, she seems so humble and kind. She speaks to us at the Sunday school just as if we were her children, and never seems to mind what trouble she takes or what disagreeable things she does for poor people. Don't you remember when Tommy Roberts was burnt, and they could not get a doctor, how nicely she dressed his wounds and quite cured him?"

"Yes, dear," said her mother, "and I am sure poor Jane Watts is a proof that a poor child can give way to the lust of the eyes, for though her mother could hardly find them food and clothing, she always decked herself out in every bit of finery she could get, and was so envious of every

one who was better dressed than she was, poor girl ! I fear she will come to no good !”

At this moment the sound of children's voices was heard coming down the lane, and a party of five or six girls from ten to fifteen years old came in sight. “ Well, Margaret,” said one of the elder ones, “ so I hear you are not going to the fair. You are very foolish, for there will be rare fun ; it is to be better than ever. I don't know what there's not to be there, there's to be a conjuror, a rope dancer, and, best of all, a dancing bear.”

Now Margaret had often longed to see a wild beast, and when she heard of the dancing bear she said, “ O I wish I could see that, I should like it so much, but I'm not going, Lucy, so it's no good to keep you.”

Another little girl now ran up, quite out of breath, and Margaret turning round said, “ O Sarah, surely you've not changed your mind, you said you were not going yesterday, and Mrs. Lennox said she was so glad.”

“ Yes, I have,” said Sarah, “ and I don't know how many pretty things my cousin hasn't promised to buy me.”

The tears came into Margaret's eyes, and she took hold of Sarah's hand, saying, “ O Sarah, don't go, please don't. Think of all Mr. Lennox has

said to us ; come and spend the day with me, we shall be so happy in the fields." But the other girls were impatient to go, and Sarah ran off with them.

When they were gone Mrs. Gray said to Margaret, " Why, Maggy, we've been so busy talking that we've quite forgotten your lamb, do run and take it its milk."

" O mother, how could I forget Cowslip," said Margaret, " how hungry he will be ;" and so saying she took a little jug of milk in her hand, and ran off to her pet lamb. She did find Cowslip very hungry, and when he had done his milk, she untied the string he was fastened by, and he gambolled after her down the little garden into a meadow beyond. Here Margaret gathered a large nosegay of May-flowers, buttercups and daisies, and then while Cowslip tried to nibble the grass, she made a long wreath with the flowers and hung it round his neck. She was sitting by the little path that ran through the meadow by the side of a small brook, and while she was weaving the wreath to a still greater length she was singing in a sweet and gentle voice " The pet lamb." She had just got to the words, " What is't that aileth thee?" when she looked up at Cowslip who was making sad havoc of her

wreath, but instead of Cowslip she saw a face she dearly loved. It was that of Mr. Lennox, who had come so quietly along the little path that Margaret had not heard him. He looked at her beaming face, as it kindled with pleasure at seeing him, with the kindest interest, and said, "What, Margaret, have you got a pet lamb? what a rich girl you are."

"O yes, Sir," said Margaret, "I've had Cowslip nearly six weeks now; its mother died when it was only two days old, and Farmer Jones said father might have the lamb if he liked, for that he could not take the trouble of bringing it up; so father brought it home, and it has had part of my milk, every day, and now it begins to eat grass quite nicely. O I'm so fond of it," she added, calling "Cowslip, Cowslip," who came and rubbed his little head against her frock.

"I must send my little girls to see your lamb," said Mr. Lennox. "I am so glad you have not gone to the fair; I thought you would not."

"O no, Sir," Margaret said, "I determined not to go last month, but it made me rather unhappy this morning when I heard the bells ringing and thought of all the amusements, and especially when I heard there was to be a dancing bear."

Mr. Lennox could not help smiling when he heard her express such a desire to see a dancing bear, but he would not appear amused, as he particularly wished the children of his parish to make a friend of him, so he said kindly, "Perhaps the dancing bear may stay after the fair, and then you can see it; but you know, my dear, that if we wish to live like Christians, we must be ready to give up things we like, if we think it right, and you know quite well why you should not go to the fair."

"Yes, Sir," said Margaret, "I told mother all about it. I hope, Sir," she added with some hesitation, "it is not very wrong, but I cannot help half-wishing to go to the fair."

"No, my dear," said her kind friend, "but you must try against that wish, and when you think of the many wicked things that go on at the fair, and remember you do not go because you wish to be like Christ and do as He wishes, that wish will soon go."

"O, Sir," said Margaret, the tears starting to her eyes, "that is just what I do wish;" and then surprised at herself for being so bold as to express her feelings so openly, she hung down her head and stroked Cowslip.

Mr. Lennox was on his way to see a sick per-

son, who was very ill, so he did not stay ; he only said, as he stroked Margaret's shining hair, " May that Saviour whom you wish to follow, bless and keep you, my child !"

Margaret made a low curtsy, and Mr. Lennox passed on. Surely, he thought, as he pursued his way, " of such is the kingdom of heaven," and his heart filled with thankfulness when he saw that his prayers and labours in W—— had been blessed to one soul. He had not been long in W——, and when first he came, Margaret Gray was much like other children, inattentive, and sometimes disobedient and wayward ; but the kind instructions of Mr. and Mrs. Lennox had sunk deep into her heart. They had taught her that God was her Father, that He had of His infinite mercy taken her to be His own child through Christ, and that He had given her His Holy Spirit to strive with the sin that was natural to her, so that now she could struggle against evil ; and they had led her to feel the blessedness of being a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Margaret loved to think of her baptism, and from often dwelling upon the great love of God to her, she began to love Him, and her great desire was to obey and please her Saviour. When Mr. Lennox

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had gone, Margaret stood still for some time thinking, and then recollecting herself, she felt ashamed of being so idle, for she was an industrious little girl, and tried to help her mother in every way that she could, and she ran home to fetch some wristbands she was stitching for one of her brothers. When she had got her work, she sat down by the brook with Cowslip by her side, and stitched away until her mother called her to come in to dinner. While she and her mother were eating their little meal, Margaret told her mother that Bessy Neale and herself had settled to spend the afternoon together, as Bessy was not going to the fair; and her mother, who was a very kind person, told her to keep Bessy for tea, for she said, "you're a good girl, Maggy, and deserve a treat sometimes."

Margaret went off very happy to fetch Bessy, and then they sat together in a little arbour, and read aloud and worked by turns, for Bessy had had a very nice new book given to her which she had brought with her. When they had gone on in this way for some time, they agreed they would talk a little, and after they had chatted about different little matters, the fair included, Margaret said, "I am sorry we have no school to-day and to-morrow, for on holy-days we are always sure

of seeing Mr. Lennox, and he talks so nicely to us, that I quite look forward to them."

"But," said Bessy, "perhaps as this is not a saint's day, he might not have come into our school. I was so sorry yesterday that I was obliged to stop at home, I could hardly help crying; grandmother said I might go, but I knew she felt very ill and would rather I stayed, so I made up my mind to do so."

"O," said Margaret, "Mrs. Tennant spoke so kindly to us about Whitsuntide; she told us that purity of heart was the great lesson we were to learn from this holy season, and she gave us that text, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' for our Whitsuntide motto; and at the end she said, 'How can any little girl who truly desires to be pure in heart, go to a fair, where she knows she will hear and see things that are impure and wicked?' I thought that would have been enough to prevent me going to the fair, even if Mr. Lennox had not said so much to us about its being of the world."

The two little girls spent the afternoon and evening of the beautiful May-day together, having a long ramble after tea in the lovely fields and meadows which lay all around their pretty village; Cowslip went with them, as he would fol-

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low Margaret about just like a little dog, and after Margaret had taken Bessy home, and old Mrs. Neale had kissed and blessed her, and told her and Bessy they were two good lassies, she ran on to her own little cottage-home with a light and happy heart, and when she heard the rude noisy voices of the half tipsy men and boys returning late in the evening from the fair, she did not even regret not seeing the dancing bear. When after her simple evening prayers, which were offered up from a heart full of thankfulness to God, she laid her head upon her pillow, full of peace and love, she felt thankful that she had been spared the sinful sights and pleasures of the fair, and thought that she should always look back upon Whit-Monday 18— as one of the happiest days of her life.

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THE DAY THAT NEVER CAME:

A Tract illustrating the danger of delay in religious matters.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

ALICE GRANT.

Where is it mothers learn their love ?
In every Church a fountain springs,
O'er which th' eternal Dove
Hovers on softest wings.—*Christian Year.*

ALICE sat by the fire watching the slumbers of her little infant, and often would she lay down her work to wipe away the tears that filled her eyes. She had lost her first child just at the time when its innocent prattle and engaging ways rendered it each day more precious to its parent's heart ; and the infant sleeper, though continually reminding her of the loved one she had laid in the grave, seemed yet a token of mercy sent to soothe her heart still aching under her late bereavement. Alice was a truly Christian woman. She knew that her first-born had been taken away from the evil to come, she loved to think that he had joined the company of white-robed saints, his own garment pure and undefiled as theirs, and though the tears would dim her eyes as she gazed upon her babe, there was as much of earnest gratitude in them as of natural grief.

The little glen of M——, where Alice and her

husband dwelt, was now almost deserted. Lord R., to whom all the property belonged, had long been absent. Evil men had gained dominion in the land; men who hated all rule, and spurned at all authority; men who had not scrupled to slay even the Lord's anointed, the king whom His providence had set over them; so what wonder then that the Lord's people and His Church found little mercy at their hands. Those were grievous days for Scotland; the priests of the Lord were forbidden to minister His Sacraments to the people, and were sent forth from their homes and their flocks to beggary and starvation; the people, at least those among them who still were found faithful to their Church and prized the appointed means of grace, were harassed and persecuted. Heavy fines were imposed on any who should be found guilty of having worshipped God after the customs of their fathers, or received into their houses for food and shelter any of the ejected ministers. But in spite of all restrictions and persecutions, there were still many, who in secret places, in the darkness of the night, or in the wild mountain passes, met together to join in prayer and to receive the holy Sacraments from the appointed priests of the Lord.

In M—— the persecutions had been great;

they were a poor but faithful people, ignorant of much of this world's learning, but they had learned this simple lesson, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Their worthy pastor had not ceased to impress upon them even in those troublous times the duty of obedience to their Church and loyalty to their king, and many of them, preferring martyrdom to disobedience and heresy, had been content to forsake home and property, and to go out, not knowing whither they went. Many cottages were now forsaken, and the little gardens overrun with weeds. The church had been defaced and spoiled of all its ornaments; rude and sacrilegious hands had overthrown the font, and mutilated and destroyed its rich carvings; the sacred quiet of the churchyard had been invaded, the simple cross of wood that marked the resting-place of the child of poverty, and the richer and more decorated shrine which had been erected to the memory of the noble and the wealthy, all were alike laid low and trampled under foot.

Robert and Alice Grant lived in a secluded part of the hamlet, and there had fortunately escaped the malevolent observation of those who sought with eager haste the destruction of all who remained faithful to their Church; none, alas!

more eager in the cruel work than they who had turned their backs upon its holy ordinances, and either from fear or from worldly interest had joined the ranks of the rebels.

Alice sat expecting the return of her husband from his work, and no sooner did she hear the sound of his approaching steps, than she roused herself from her reverie, and hastened to throw more wood on the fire, that a cheerful blaze might welcome his return. After bending for a moment with affectionate interest over the infant sleeper, Robert took his seat in the chimney corner, while Alice prepared their evening meal.

“Have you remembered what we spoke of last night?” said Alice, after a short silence.

“Yes, indeed I have,” he answered, and then dropping his voice to a whisper as he drew nearer to her, he continued, “I have seen our good minister, and he promises to do all you wish; he fears no risk for himself, and will be at our usual place of meeting to-morrow night if you are still bent on this undertaking; but indeed, dear wife, you are hardly strong enough yet. Why not defer a little longer the baptism of our little one; he is, thank God, a healthy child, and there need be no anxiety on his account. Wait at least till the nights are warmer.”

“No, indeed, Robert,” said his wife interrupting him, “I dare not put it off any longer, if the nights will be warmer by and by, why they will be lighter too, and the darkness is a help to us. Mr. Cunningham’s hiding-place may be discovered, and he may be obliged to leave us, and then there may be no means of gaining this great blessing for our baby. Do you know,” she continued, while a tear gathered in her eye, “sometimes when I see a shadow pass over his innocent face, it seems to me as if an evil spirit were whispering to him and had power to come near him because he has’nt yet been brought into covenant with God, to be made His child; and do you remember, Robert, what our good minister said the day our blessed child was baptized that’s been taken from us? I mind his words so well when he spoke of the sign of the cross, he called it ‘that royal sign which if the devils behold they may tremble and flee away.’”

“O yes,” said Robert, “I remember those words well, and truly it was a royal sign to our darling child, and has taken him no doubt for Jesus’ sake safe into the presence of his King for ever.”

“Then you see, Robert,” urged his wife, “it

is not so much my baby's death I fear, as a life begun without giving him to be God's child, with all sin growing up in him because of his evil nature, and none of God's mercies in Christ made his by covenant, no holy washing to make him clean from the evil in which he was born, no Holy Spirit to strengthen and help him against the power of the enemy."

"But do you really think, dear Alice, that God, who is so merciful, would visit that poor child so hardly for what would be no fault of his?"

"Indeed, Robert, I can't say. God is very merciful, full of mercy, but then if He has chosen to appoint a way of giving this mercy, surely if we refuse that way we have no right to say He deals hardly with us in withholding the mercy."

"No, Alice, I see that, and of course God has the best right to appoint in what way He will take us and our children into His favour, and to refuse the grace if we refuse the way."

"And oh, Robert, think how dreadful it would be to see that dear little fellow growing up to be wilful and disobedient, and to know that it was our doing."

"Hush, Alice," exclaimed her husband, "I can't bear to hear you talk so, oh! that would be worse than any thing. No, we must indeed do

all that we can for him at any risk, that so we may be able to bless God for him in life or in death.”

“Thank God, we are of one mind in this as in all other things,” said Alice, as she affectionately embraced her husband. “And now tell me, Robert, what did Mr. Cunningham say about the sponsors? did he think this was a case in which we might answer for the child?”

“No, indeed, he didn’t, Alice, though I told him how difficult it would be to find any one now to stand for him, let alone the fear of bringing a friend into trouble; but if I can, I’ll tell you just what he said. He said this was just an occasion that shewed how wisely the Church had acted in ordaining the office of sponsors, who might be ready to supply a parent’s part if needed; for who can tell, he said, in such times as these, whether parents may be permitted themselves to see their children virtuously and piously brought up! They may be torn from them by persecution or death, or, as we have seen some mournful instances even in our own village, they may forsake their God and forget their vows. And then he took my hand so kindly, and said, ‘I do not fear this of you, Robert, nor of your wife either, though it becomes us all to be not high-minded, but watchful and fearful of falling;

yet we must not now disobey our Church in the smallest matter when so many are daily falling away from her communion, but admire her wisdom and consent to her ordinances ;' and then he offered so kindly as we were in such a difficulty, to stand godfather himself for our child, and to persuade old David Lee and his granddaughter to stand too."

"How kind he always is!" said Alice, "and oh what an honour for our dear baby to have such a good man to think of and to pray for him ; and Janet too, though she's so young, will keep to what she promises, for she has learnt through much suffering to love and obey God's will, poor child. And I asked her when she came to see me in my illness, only she said she must ask her grandmother first, and Mr. Cunningham."

The night was dark, and the cold wind howled mournfully among the branches of the still leafless trees, as Alice, with her baby closely wrapped in her cloak, took her way through the wood towards the spot where Mr. Cunningham had promised to meet them, to perform the holy rite by which her child was to be made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, blessings which Alice prized far too highly to risk the loss of them for her

beloved child. But though strong in faith, and earnest to do God's will, this was a moment when her woman's fears would to some extent prevail, as pale and weak from recent illness, and trembling at each blast that shook the trees of the forest, she hastened on her way, repeating to herself as she went, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid?"

It had been agreed between them that to avoid suspicion, Robert should remain in the wood, as if not returned from his daily work, that Alice might seem to have gone in search of him, should she meet any one who might suspect her errand; but the darkness of the night, and the secluded nature of the road, had been in her favour; there was but one dwelling that she had to pass, and that she well knew to be empty; the old shepherd and his wife who had lived there all their days, and had hoped there to await their departure to their Father's home and their looked-for inheritance, had been among those suspected of allegiance to a persecuted Church, and had been driven from their much-loved home, to hide themselves where they could until the fury should have passed away.

Their granddaughter Janet, of whom we have already spoken, alone knew their hiding-place, which was indeed the same which had yielded Mr. Cunningham a temporary refuge, and she had worked and toiled with persevering affection to procure them such things as they needed in their old age and destitute condition.

Alice had now reached the thickest part of the wood, and had still some distance to go before she would reach the secluded spot which had been chosen for the perilous meeting of the little flock and their faithful pastor. Once or twice she had fancied she heard footsteps on the rustling leaves that covered the ground, and now a dark object certainly was to be seen moving rapidly towards her, but the quickened beating of her heart was soon stilled by the encouraging voice of her husband, who had come as far as he could venture to meet her, and now taking her arm within his own, cheered her on with kind words, and assisted her steps through the close and tangled brushwood among which they had to make their way.

“Did you meet any one as you came out, Alice?” he asked.

“Not a creature, except just as I passed the blacksmith’s forge in the dale, the boy Alick

peeped out after me, and I thought he followed me a bit, so I turned at the corner as though I were going up the road, and then I lost sight of him, and took the next opening into the wood."

"Well, I hope he did go back," said her husband, "for they say he is set as a spy on all of us, and that he delights in the work. 'Alick the informer' is a name that's well known and quite dreaded among the poor hunted people of the Lord, and wherever he is there's sure to be some evil done; it's strange he should have such a spite against every thing good, and he is so young too: but, to be sure, he has never been taught better, poor fellow;" and the sigh that followed as he pressed his wife's hand, told her as plain as words, that he was thinking of their little son and of their last evening's conversation.—Alick had never been baptized.

They had now reached the place, where they found Janet Lee with the good old pastor already awaiting them. Old David was too infirm to venture into the chilly night, and so Robert was to answer for him, but, as David said, he should be with them in spirit and in prayer, and should none the less stand to his promises for the child because another's mouth had promised them in

his name. On the spot where they were now assembled, the brushwood had been partly cleared away, and the moon which had now risen gleamed faintly through the branches, casting long and flickering shadows on the ground. In the centre of the clearing stood an aged tree, whose top had been shivered by lightning, and in the hollow stump was placed the vessel containing the holy water. The solemn prayers began as the little band knelt around that rustic font; and earnest were the responses made by each when the minister asked whether they would promise faithfully for that child, that he should renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, believe in God's holy word, and obediently keep God's holy will. The priest then received the babe into his arms, and poured the water on its infant brow, and as he made the sign of the cross, the hearts of those around him thrilled with a warmer love, and a more stedfast courage, while they remembered that that holy sign was theirs also, and that they too had promised to confess the faith of Christ crucified in spite of persecution or martyrdom, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants even unto their lives' end. And when Alice had received her babe again to her arms, quickened with a new life, a life of grace, how more

ALICE GRANT

than tenderly, and with almost a feeling of awe, did she gaze upon his calm and innocent face, and wonder at the great mystery which had wrought so great a change.

“What sparkles in that lucid flood
Is water, by gross mortals eyed :
But seen by faith, 'tis blood
Out of a dear Friend's side.

A few calm words of faith and prayer,
A few bright drops of holy dew,
Shall work a wonder there
Earth's charmers never knew.”

Oh blessed means which God has sanctified to so great an end! What an exercise for our faith! but still more what a call for our thankful praise! that to each infant thus brought to holy Baptism there is given the seed of a new and holy nature to overpower rising corruption, to keep down evil passions in their earliest growth; a Heavenly Spirit there to dwell continually, making a home of its bosom, and a church of its heart.

Twice during the performance of the holy rite Janet's quick ear had caught a sound as of some one moving near them, but the rest, too deeply wrapt in prayer, had not perceived it; now however, the noise increased, and seizing Alice's arm, Janet pointed silently towards a spot in the

darkness where there was evidently a figure moving. In another moment, and before they could recover from their dismay, Alick the informer stood before them. His manner was agitated, and his words thick and hurried; "Don't go," he stammered out, "Oh pray don't go, I know you hate me, and I hate myself," and tears that none had ever seen on his face before, coursed each other down his cheeks. "But," he continued, "I never heard of this, no one ever told me of such things as you said just now, and no one ever took me to be baptized, that my sins might be washed away, and that I might have the Holy Spirit given to me. Oh Sir, that's the reason I'm such a wicked boy, that every one hates me, and sets me to do wicked things, because they say Alick 'll stick at nothing, and that's why I came here as a spy to-night of my own accord. I know not why it is that I'm so bad, and so miserable, but oh, dear people, must I be always so, and have God always to hate me?"

"Hush, Alick," said Mr. Cunningham kindly, as he lifted the boy from the ground where he had thrown himself, "Hush, God does not hate you, for has He not brought you here to-night? and turned your heart from an evil pur-

pose to a good and holy wish? It is the Holy Spirit who has done this.”

“I didn’t know, Sir, it was God that made my thoughts change. I’ve heard father and some others talk about the Holy Ghost, but they don’t talk like you do, for if they want to do any thing, if it’s ever so bad, they say the Holy Ghost wills it; but I always knew that couldn’t be; but now, Sir,” he continued, returning to his former earnestness of manner, “do you think God would let me be baptized now and take away my sins? Oh they are so many, there’s a bad spirit instead of a good one with me, Sir,” and again he burst into an agony of tears.

“All may have that great blessing, Alick, who seek it in repentance and faith. I think you somewhat know what repentance means; but you hardly know what or how you are to believe, and you ought to understand what you engage before you are admitted to holy Baptism.”

“What must I do then, Sir, and when may I come?” asked Alick eagerly.

“I must see you many times and instruct you, that you may be really prepared for Baptism. We must run some risks in meeting, and must meet when we can.”

“O never mind the risk,” exclaimed Alick, “I

do want to give up what is evil, and to have God's love."

"Well then, Alick, meet me here to-morrow night."

"I will indeed, Sir," answered Alick.

Before they parted, Alice and her husband pressed Alick's hand, and said some kind words to him, and then bowing their heads to receive their pastor's blessing, they returned to their cottage.

Many times did the good pastor meet Alick, and at last he was enabled with a good conscience to administer that blessed Sacrament whereby he was made a child of God. Poor Alick had much to endure after his baptism, not only from his own evil nature, which had so long had free sway, but also from the evil men with whom he was compelled to associate. At last the power of the oppressor was no more, and the public profession of our true religion was restored; no where was there more fervent thanksgiving than in the secluded church of M——, where all hastened to catch a word or a smile from their beloved and venerable pastor, as he passed through their ranks to take his old accustomed place in the ministrations of the sanctuary.

*MARY FISHER, OR THE RIGHT USE
OF TROUBLE.*

“O MARY, Mary, don't take on so, try and bear it better, it's God's will; try to say His will be done.”

“I can't, Jane, I can't; he's dead and I shall never see him more; never hear his dear little voice again, never see him toddling about the room any more; and it's all my own fault too; if I had not left him to go in and ask Ann Jones all about the fight in the street, he could not have set himself on fire. O! why did I leave him!” and again she burst into tears.

“Indeed, Mary, you should try to bear it better; do try and think how happy he is now; try and remember that he's better done for where he is than you could ever do for him. Poor lamb,” said Jane, turning away her head to hide her own tears, “he'll never suffer again, there's no trouble where he's gone.”

“You're right there, Mrs. Thomas,” said a third woman who just then came in, “you're right enough; there's a deal of trouble in this wicked world, and I'm sure with her wild hus-

band and large family, and often hardly a bit of bread to give them, she has need to say so, and to be thankful the poor child's provided for."

"I didn't mean that, Mrs. Jones, God gave her the child and would have given her the means to provide for it, I don't doubt, but He has taken it away, and she ought to submit to His will; dear Mary, do pray to Him to comfort you; let me go and ask Mr. Hammond to come and talk to you and pray with you; I'm sure it would do you good."

She was leaving the room, but Mary called her back. "O! Jane, I fear he won't come; he has so often spoken to me about coming to church, and I have not been, and last time he was here Tom was so rude, and said he didn't want a parson to preach to him; I'm sure he'll never come after that." The words were hardly said, when Mr. Hammond, the clergyman, came in.

"I am grieved indeed, Mary Fisher, to hear what has happened, it is indeed a dreadful trial for you, but I hope God will please to bless the affliction to your soul. Jane Thomas," he said, seeing that the poor mother was unable to speak to him, "how did it happen?"

"Why, Sir, she left little Billy alone in the room and shut him in while she went in to Ann

Jones next door, and when she came back she heard him screaming and found he had set himself on fire: he was shockingly burnt, Sir, and though the doctor was gone for directly, he could do nothing, and he died this morning." She did not tell the clergyman that it was she who ran for the doctor and promised to pay him, and that she had sat up all night with the poor child in her lap, though her pale face and trembling hands might have told that part of the tale for her. "I think you had better leave her alone with me," said he, "and I will call on you as I go away."

The woman left the room, and Mr. Hammond sat down by Mary; he did not at first try to check her crying, but after a few minutes he began to speak very gently and kindly to her: "I do not ask you not to cry, Mary; God will not be angry with you for that; He wants you to be sorry, but to be sorry in a right way, and not to murmur against His will. Can you not say, 'His will be done?'"

"O! Sir, how can I when I think that I shall never see my sweet Billy again?"

"Hush, Mary, you may see him again if you choose. He is gone to that blessed home where you too may go; where your Lord and Saviour

wishes you to go ; where He will take you if you will let Him, and He sends you this grief to help you on your way.”

“ Help me on my way ! how can that be, Sir ? Sure it’s a sign that He hates me and is angry with me, else He would not have let my child die.”

“ No, Mary, not so ; chastisements are signs of His love ; if He had not loved you He would not have tried you thus ; try to think of this, and it will be a comfort to you ; try and think whether you did not need some dreadful blow to rouse you up and make you think of your sins.”

Mary was silent, for she knew that at the fearful moment when her child lay moaning in her kind friend’s lap, and she saw by the doctor’s face that there was no hope, her past sins and neglect of God had flashed like lightning upon her mind ; she felt it was a punishment, but she did not then know that there was mercy in it. Now a ray of comfort seemed to steal into her heart, and she said, “ O ! sir, I wish indeed it may be as you say, but I have been so forgetful of God, so very sinful, that I can hardly believe He loves me still.”

“ He who so loved sinners as to send His Son to die for them, does love you still, Mary ; let

nothing persuade you out of this, but try with all your heart to do His will now. He gives His Holy Spirit to all who ask it, and with that help you may turn to Him, but it must be in lowly repentance. I cannot stay long with you now, but I will pray with you before I go.”

The prayers ended, Mr. Hammond left her, and on his way out, went to Jane Thomas' room, which was in the same house. It was a very small, very poor room, but quite neat and clean; what little furniture there was, seemed like the remains of better days, and Jane herself had the same look. She was the widow of a small tradesman: after a few years of what would have been great happiness but for his bad health, he died of consumption, and her two children soon followed him to the grave, and she was alone in the world. Her husband's business, house painting, could not of course be carried on by a woman, and she had to support herself by taking in needle-work and going out when she could as a nurse. Her means were indeed small, yet she often found enough to help others, and those others never knew that the meal which cheered their hearts was her own Sunday dinner, or that the few shillings so cheerfully given to save their goods from being seized, had been carefully saved up

to buy a warm shawl to go to church in. Jane Thomas was a great favourite of Mr. Hammond's, and he often found her useful among his sick parishioners. He knew he could trust her, and that her way of talking would do them good and not harm, unlike many sick nurses who make their trade the means of gossip and mischief-making, and instead of making the sick think of that world to which they are going, fill their minds with tales of their neighbours' mis-doings; for it is remarkable that gossips never choose the good doings of others to talk about. Jane put down her work as the clergyman came in. "Go on, Jane," he said, "you must not stop for me; I know you have no time to spare."

"Indeed, Sir, I have always time to stop and listen to you; I feel more fresh for work after your visits, and I fancy the work for the body never gets on the worse for a little time spent on the soul."

"You are right, Jane, and those who have in their madness and folly tried to do away with God's day of rest, have found to their cost that the body cannot thrive without it, but I have only a minute or two to spare you now, and I must talk of poor Mary; her's is a sad trial."

"It is indeed, Sir; she reproaches herself so

bitterly for leaving the child, that it almost breaks one's heart to hear her."

"It is better she should do so, Jane; her neglect of home duties is a great sin, and I trust this fearful event may arouse her to a sense of it; but she should not be left too long to brood over her trouble; I hope you will go and see her when you can."

"That I will, Sir; I will take my work and sit with her a bit when her husband is out, and I will read the good book you gave me when my dear husband died to her, if you think proper."

"Do so, Jane, and give her good advice about her family, now that her heart is softened by trouble; I will see her myself as often as I can, and I trust ere long she may find the blessings of affliction."

Mary Fisher's history was no uncommon one. She had been a servant in a gentleman's family, and on the whole had conducted herself well, but her love of dress and going out had given her mistress some anxiety, and she often talked seriously to her about it. When she was only twenty, she became engaged to a young labourer about her own age, and instead of waiting a few years till they should both have saved a little to begin upon, they resolved against the advice of their

friends, to marry at once. James Fisher was not unsteady, but of a lively and rather thoughtless disposition. At first all went on well: James found a tidy house and a neat cheerful wife to greet him on his return from his day's work, and he wanted no other company; but soon Mary found the days hang heavily on her hands, and she would step in first to one neighbour, and then another, for a little chat, and once or twice it happened that James came home and found the house empty. One afternoon it rained hard, and he was obliged to leave work early with two or three friends less steady than himself. They went with him as far as his own door.

“ Well, old woman, here I am for a snug early tea,” he said, as he opened the door, expecting to give her a pleasant surprise; but no Mary was there: he stood at the door talking with his friends for some time, and still she did not appear, and it ended in his companions enticing him to a beer shop with them: once in, getting out was a hard matter, and that night for the first time Mary saw her husband tipsy. She never thought of looking to herself as the cause, and as he went on worse and worse, she sought more and more for comfort and company out of doors; and as time went on and they had

a large family, their idle habits were the cause of much misery to them.

The day after the funeral, Jane took her work and went to see Mary, who she found sitting over the fire doing nothing.

“ Well, Mary, how are you to-day ? ”

“ O ! very poorly, and all alone ; the children would go out to play ; they say it’s so dull in the house ; and James is gone to work. Mrs. Jones wanted me to go in and have a cup of tea with her, but I’ve no heart to go out. ”

“ Well, I’m not sorry for that, Mary ; one’s own house is the best place in time of trouble—no, not the best, there is one better. ”

“ Which is that ? ” said Mary.

“ The house of God, ” said Jane solemnly.

Mary did not answer, for she felt that she had never sought it as a place of comfort. After some time she said, “ I wish, Jane, you would tell me how you used to manage : people say you were always cheerful and never idle, even in your greatest trouble. ”

“ I could not afford to be idle, Mary ; and as to being cheerful, I could not murmur at what was God’s will. It was hard to bear at first, but I used to think over what Mr. Hammond told me, that my dear ones were gone home, and that

I must strive to follow them; and the thought of doing that made me cheerful over many a hard day's work, and then each morning, as the church bell tolled for prayers, I felt as if I were getting a stage further on my journey. But let us talk of your affairs, and see if nothing can be done to mend matters with you."

"O! it's no good while James goes on as he does now. He often comes home tipsy and with only half a week's wages; the children are in rags, and no wonder; I'm sure I've no heart to mend their clothes."

"But you ought to mend them, Mary, and if you sent them regularly to school they would not get so ragged."

"I know that well enough, but they don't like going, and it's hard to be always contradicting and teasing them poor things; they'll have trouble enough by and by."

"That they certainly will, thanks to yourself."

"Thanks to me! why?"

"Why, because you will not contradict and tease them, as you call it. Children do not know what is best and happiest for them, and must be taught to know it by those older than themselves: but do you really find they are unhappy at school when they do go?"

“ O no, when once they are there they are happy enough, and come home full of tales of the fun they have had with the other children, and of all Miss Hammond has told them.”

“ And if you made them go regularly they would be much happier ; they would cost you less, for they would not destroy their clothes, nor make them dirty, as they do playing in the street, and you would just give them their dinner to take with them, instead of their running in and out asking for bread and butter all day long as they do now.”

“ That’s true enough,” said Mary, “ and they do learn such shocking talk in the streets, it makes one’s hair stand on end to hear them ; I beat them but it does no good.”

“ It is no good, unless you teach them that it is a sin against God ; if you taught them this, perhaps they would never need beating. Children’s hearts are not hard, and the fear of God is easily taught them ; a child well taught will scarcely ever need a beating.”

“ Well, I will try and make them go to school regularly, and send them to church, though I can’t go myself.”

“ Why not ?” said Jane.

“O! I’ve nothing fit to wear, and James lies in bed so late on Sundays.”

“But what has that to do with you? He does not want you to dress him, does he?”

Mary smiled in spite of her trouble, and said, “No; but he wanted his breakfast when he came down.”

“Then leave it all made and ready for him; and as to having nothing to wear, that is an excuse I can never bear to hear. You are not ashamed to be seen in the street, and you need not be ashamed to be seen in church, if you go clean and decent.”

“But the neighbours talk so! I heard Mrs. Jones remark only the other day, that Sarah Trotman went to church with a dyed ribbon on her bonnet.”

“Do you hear Mr. Hammond, or any really religious people, observing what the people in church are dressed in?”

“Of course not, they are attending to the service.”

“And do you really think it matters what people who are not doing their duty say, Mary? Do you think when you have to give an account at the day of judgment of all the blessed Sundays you have wasted, that it will do to say, ‘I was

afraid Mrs. Jones would remark my shabby clothes?’ Such excuses are worse than none, for they only help us to deceive ourselves, we cannot deceive God! O, dear Mary, you have a great work to do, and you must strive to do it before it is too late!”

“But how can I, a weak woman like me, and my husband hindering instead of helping me?”

“I fear the hindrance is partly your own fault; try and make his home comfortable; let him find a clean house, and a cheerful welcome, teach his children to look for his coming as a pleasure, and above all, set him a good example in being regular at church and in all religious duties, and I believe you will find him mend his ways, by God’s blessing.”

“But, Jane, how can I try now, when I can think of nothing but poor Billy’s death?”

“Think that Billy’s death is a call from God to you, to tell you to mend your ways, and you will not find your sorrow hinder your duties; God sent it for your soul’s good, not for your hurt, and if you pray to Him, and at once strive to do His will, I am sure you’ll find more comfort than you have ever yet known; and now it is getting dark and I have done my work, and must go home to get some more ready.”

So ended Jane’s visit, and a happy one it

proved to poor Mary Fisher, who resolved to try at once to act on her friend's advice. That very evening, James, who was too much out of spirits about his poor child to go with his wild friends, found a comfortable tea waiting for him, and after tea Mary asked him to read a chapter to the children before they went to bed. This good custom she went on with whenever he came home sober, and he soon felt ashamed when he knew he was not fit to read to the children. The children went regularly to school, and Mary to church. She had many trials still, and often felt disheartened, but Mr. Hammond, to whom she freely told her troubles, cheered her, and pointed out the true way to cure them ; and at the end of a year, as she walked home one Sunday from church with her husband, she said, " Now I feel what that text means, ' Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth ;' if He had not chastened me by the death of my dear child, I should not have been to church with you, James, to-day."

" Well, Mary, I'm very glad I've been, and now I've begun I mean to go on with it. I never really liked staying away, for I didn't feel comfortable in my mind. But let us make haste home now, for fear the young ones should get into mischief."

" O never fear, they have all been at school

and at church, except Anne and the baby, and I can always trust Anne. She has been quite a changed girl since she went regularly to school, and is getting quite a steady little woman."

The younger children here joined them, and all seizing upon their father's arm, at once said he must take them for a Sunday walk.

"It will be so nice, father," said Tom, the eldest boy, "and we will say our new hymns to you as we walk along. Even little Jane has learnt one, and can say it quite well, if I tell her the first words of the lines."

Their mother said they must have their tea first, and that she must make haste home to get it ready.

When they went into the house they found the tea all ready, the bread and butter nicely cut, and, to their great joy, Jane Thomas sitting by the fire nursing the baby while Anne was reading aloud.

"O, Jane, how kind of you to get tea for us against we came in," said Mary.

"You must thank your little girl, not me," said Jane, "she has done it all herself; I was not well enough to go to church this afternoon, so I thought I would come in and see how Anne managed the baby; and she said as I liked to nurse him, she would try and put the tea ready

to surprise you all ; and now, as she tells me the children hope for a Sunday walk with their father, I mean to stay and keep you company.”

When James and the children were gone, the two friends read some chapters together, and then talked over the events of the past year.”

“ I cannot tell you how glad I was,” said Jane, “ to see you and James coming home from church together ; I hope now he will keep on in his good ways, and you will be a comfort to each other.”

“ I hope so indeed, Jane, I take all the blame of his bad conduct to myself, for he is a good kind husband, and was only led astray for want of comfort at home.”

“ Well, you seem to have plenty of comforts for him now, and you look a deal happier than you used to do.”

“ I am very happy,” said Mary ; “ though when I think of poor Billy it makes me very sad, and the thought of my own folly, and neglect of my duties, makes me sadder still ; but I know now what Mr. Hammond meant that dreadful day, when he told me that perhaps I needed some severe blow to turn me to God, and I can truly feel that it was in mercy that He afflicted me.”

MR. SHARPLEY,
OR A TALE FOR THE OVER-THRIFTY.

TWENTY years' absence from my native place had worked many changes both in men and things. When I came back to Powerstone I hardly knew either the people or the place. New houses had sprouted up, and old houses had tumbled down; middle-aged and elderly houses had clothed their faces with paint and plaster to conceal their age from curious eyes, and to hide the wrinkles that were beginning to seam the walls. Streets were widened in this direction and lengthened in that; the old gable ends were fast disappearing, and the modern rivalry in shop-fronts had already commenced even in this distant town; omnibuses, those long boxes of human luggage, lumbered noisily through the streets towards a neighbouring railroad. How unlike the quiet sleepy Powerstone of old.

The people had also changed. Little prattling

infants that I had tossed in my arms, now matched me in height; and those to whom I had given coral and ginger-bread now sent their children to get lolly-pops from my pocket, or to have a dance on my knee; the men of middle life were now grey or bald, fast going down the hill of life; while a very little remnant of the old folks might be seen tottering about and basking in the more sunny corners of the little town, some deaf, some half blind, some infants again in understanding, the wrecks and ricketty resemblances of their former selves, shuffling onwards a few paces towards their graves.

But besides these changes in the outward world of Powerstone, in men's looks, or the outward appearance of the town, there were inward alterations too; characters were changed, some for the better, some for the worse.

Boys that had been greedy of cakes and apples were now greedy of greater things, and were elbowing their way in the world with a grasping selfish spirit; children that had been noisy and quarrelsome were now mixed up in all the heats and angers and sharp doings of political party; light laughing girls had turned into widows with care-worn looks and heavy hearts, and yet some of them softened and sobered by

their afflictions, the bitter cross that had been laid on them having led them to Him who calls the weary and heavy-laden to Himself; others on whom trouble had fallen had only become fretful and impatient, murmuring at their lot, and looking at all things with a sour complaining mind.

But there was one of my old townsmen whom I found more altered than all the rest; this was Mr. Benjamin Sharpley. When I left Powerstone he was a man of about forty years old, he was now sixty. He was then a hard-working man, a bustling tradesman. He was thriving in the world, for he was slaving for the world; his whole heart was given up to business; he was looked upon as "a highly respectable" person, was honest in all his dealings, and being a thriving man, had that sort of influence which increasing money and increasing prosperity are sure to give in this world. To my mind he was thoroughly, entirely eaten up with covetousness; he was at work by day-break, and you might see a light in his window late at night; he cared for nothing else but his shop; he talked of nothing else but business, he thought of nothing else. To get rich was his one aim; he lived very plainly; spent next to nothing,

gave nothing away, except when it was "the respectable thing" to do, as on charity sermons; and on such-like occasions, was of a cold, hard, selfish temper. Religion! what had he to do with that? that was for the poor, or the sick, or the dying, according to his view; at any rate he pushed all such things from his mind; his shop was enough for him; he could not attend to two things at once, and that was true. "It was all very well for people to be religious," he used to say, "he did not object to it; of course it was very proper; he respected religious people;" but he himself had no heart for it. It is true he went to church once a Sunday; it was respectable to go to church, and he had a large high pew, for alas, there were large high pews then in Powerstone church. Such was Mr. Benjamin Sharpley, a man thoroughly for this world, prudent and hoarding. He was unmarried, as he had always dreaded the expense of marriage; his nearest relations were two nephews, wild and gay young men who lived at some distance, whom he never saw and never liked. Of course among the gossips of Powerstone it was often a knotty subject of debate: what would become of Mr. Sharpley's money when he died.

Great therefore was my surprise when, on attending daily service which had been begun at Powerstone, I found Mr. Benjamin Sharpley always there. "This is a change," I said to myself, "how can he find time on week-days for this? or rather how has he got the heart for this Christian business?" On coming out of church one day he give me a warm greeting; the whole man had thawed, if I may so speak; his very countenance was more mild and kindly, not so close or shrewd as it was before. When we parted he could not help saying, "Is'nt it a privilege, Sir? is'nt it a blessing to have the church open daily?" Away he hurried to his shop without waiting for a reply, and I was left lost in wonder. The first Sunday after my arrival I most thankfully partook of the blessed feast of the Lord's Supper; it was a joyful yet an affecting hour; twenty years had gone; twenty years of trial had passed over my head, and many troubles had I been called to bear; "Here I am," I thought within myself, "once more in the old church; once more in the holy house of God, where I worshipped in my youth. How many have been stricken down since I last was here! How many knees that knelt at the altar are now mouldering in their graves! How many have

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gone to their account, and can no more pour forth their souls in the house of prayer." Such thoughts passed through my mind during the pause that took place before the Communion Service began. When I knelt at the altar, I found one kneeling next to me whom I had little expected to find among my neighbours there ; it was Mr. Benjamin Sharpley.

I soon found from the clergyman that Mr. Sharpley's was no mere formal change, nor formal religion. He told me that he was the first in all the good that was done, the kindest, the most generous, the most forward. Though he still attended to his shop, he found time to visit the poor, and to find out their real wants ; he was the friend of the widow and the fatherless, always took orphans as his apprentices, felt a lively interest in the schools, and was now busy building an infant school for the benefit of the parish ; in short, he was as eager and anxious in toiling for others, as he had formerly been in toiling for himself. His way of life was simple in the extreme ; he spent little upon himself ; every thing looked the same in his house as it had done years ago ; in the little parlour next the shop were the same red curtains with black velvet fringe, only faded and turning into a

dingy orange from the wear and tear of twenty years ; there were the same horse-hair mahogany chairs, only at the corners the stuffing was trying to peep through ; the same round glass over the chimney piece, only the gilding had become dull and worn.

Gladdened by the sight of such a change, I sought to become more acquainted with my former neighbour. Many a walk and talk we had on a Sunday afternoon after church, and all his heart seemed to centre upon one thing, a deep settled desire to serve his Saviour, and to be a faithful member of His Church. There was a good deal of reserve about him ; he seemed to dread talking on religious subjects, and always spoke very solemnly ; he shrank from religious talkativeness. As we became more and more intimate, I became curious to know the history of his change ; the clergyman could not tell me ; all he knew was that he had often sought his counsel, and often spoken in tones of deepest sorrow of his former worldly ways. One evening, it was at the close of the day on which the infant school was opened, he was unusually cheerful, and evidently grateful for having been allowed to bring so good a work to an end ; he was also unusually unreserved, and as the evening wore

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on, I could not resist telling him the pleasure it gave me to find him spending his time and money in such good works as were likely to bring blessings upon himself and others. At last, as one remark led to another, I hinted at his former life, and expressed my surprise on my return to find him so greatly changed. "Well," he said with an hesitating voice, "as I do not believe you ask me out of idle curiosity, I will tell you the strange and merciful event which led me to repentance for my past great sin of covetousness and worldliness, and which gave me very deep views of the need of preparing for the life to come by the help of God's good Spirit.

"I had been working and slaving harder than usual about Christmas-time ten years ago; I had all my accounts to make up, and I confess with shame, that I stole some hours two Sundays running to spend upon my books of trade.

"On coming to the end of the job, I found to my delight that I had had a most prosperous year, and I absolutely gloated over the figures that told me how rich I was. The labour, however, that I had undergone had fairly worn me out, and when I leaned back on my chair I felt great fatigue, and at last fell into a restless confused slumber, and I then had the following

wonderful dream, which has exercised such importance on my life.

“I dreamt that I was dead, and yet saw every thing that was going on in my house as though I was alive. The day after my death I saw a gig drive up to the door; two young fellows, my nephews, jumped out and exclaimed, ‘What, is the old fellow really dead?’

“‘Dead as a door-nail, Sir,’ said the old woman who was then my servant.

“‘Well now for the pickings,’ said the elder, ‘what shall we be at first?’

“‘Why first,’ said the younger, ‘let us have something to eat and drink; where’s the key of the cellar, Sally?’

“‘Here’s the key, Sir; I’ll go and fetch you something to warm you this cold Christmas weather.’

“Off she went; but when she was half way down the cellar stairs she seemed to recollect something, and scrambled up into my bed-room where my body was lying; then she fumbled over the waistcoats and trowsers I had last worn, and ransacked them of all the loose silver they contained. Having done this she hurried again to the cellar, and took out three bottles of my best wine; one she put away for herself, and the

other two she brought into the parlour. After a jovial feast my nephews began to turn over my goods. 'Well,' said the elder, 'he was an excellent fellow for saving; all the better for us; he grew the crop, and we'll gather it.'

" 'Aye, and spend it too, I hope,' answered the other, 'we'll soon give his money some wheels; it's been like the green pool in a village, all stagnant; we'll make it move now. They say he worked hard, got up early, and was'nt in bed till midnight; it was very kind of him; he was an excellent labourer for his heirs; he was a good faithful slave for those who are to come after him. It must have been a great pleasure to him to have toiled so hard for us, and if he could but see us now, it would be a great pleasure to him to see us getting hold of all he scraped together; his was the trouble, ours is the gain. I'm sure we're much obliged to him.'

" At this they both laughed aloud.

" 'I wonder,' said the younger, 'whether he thought to carry away his money; he loved it so, it must have been hard to part; did he think he could pack up his ledgers and his bank-notes, and his gold and his goods? However, it's no use lining his coffin with bank-notes, or putting a bag of guineas in his hand.'

“ ‘No, indeed, there’s no sending his money after him, and to say the truth I’m not disposed to part with it. He thought himself, I dare say, a very wise and prudent man. To my mind he was a fool, for what has he got?’

“ ‘Why,’ said the younger, ‘I don’t suppose his money does him much good now; he took a deal of labour; however, it’s all the better for us. Just come and look at this ledger, made up to Christmas, I declare; beautifully written; excellently cast up; what hours he must have spent upon it? He didn’t think we were going to pocket the result; well, Mr. Benjamin Sharpley,’ he continued in a mocking tone, ‘let’s see what you made last year; you have been just like a banker’s clerk, lots of money passing through your hands, but precious little for yourself. Let’s see; here’s the last line, £553 2s. 5¼d., very pleasant profits last year, and very pleasant pickings; thank you, Mr. Sharpley; you did pretty well last year; you must have worked hard; much good may it do you; we are greatly indebted for having it all copied out so fair; £553 2s. 5¼d., what say you to that? We’ll toss up about the three farthings, we can’t divide that.’

“ ‘They then proceeded to look over the shop;

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the shutters were closed for sake of decency, but they made Sally fetch a light, and with that they inspected all my stock, searched all the drawers, rummaged every desk, and made themselves masters of the state of my affairs; my banker's book, my account of money in the stocks, all my business letters were in their hands.

“ ‘After all,’ said the elder, as they sat down to a good dinner in the parlour, ‘we must not complain of your slaving, drudging, covetous dogs, as far as we are concerned; it is true they have a dismal life of it themselves, and what becomes of them afterwards it's better not to think; money is'nt much good beyond, I should guess; this shrewd old fellow has outwitted himself; it appears he's got nothing in this world and nothing for the next, he has beggared himself by his savings and hoardings. However, he shall have a decent funeral; and as he never gave any thing away here, or did any good that I ever heard of, I suppose after the mob has stared at his coffin, nobody will think any more of Mr. Benjamin Sharpley.’

“ ‘I think we ought to put up a marble slab in the church.’

“ ‘Well, we can do that, and they may read it who like. Of course we shall say he died

“beloved and respected,” or “deeply lamented,” and all that sort of thing. I dare say the stonemason will have a ready-made epitaph.’

“‘O this great ledger,’ exclaimed the elder, lifting up the huge volume, ‘this is at once his monument and epitaph; this would tell the truth if we could but get it nailed against the church wall instead of your marble slab, for I don’t believe he had a thought beyond the debtor and creditor account.’

“At this point the ledger somehow or other slipped from his hands and fell heavily on the floor. I suddenly awoke, and found that by some unconscious movement of my arm I had really shaken the ledger from the table, and the noise had startled me; my dream was at an end; but the impression which it made will, I trust, never be effaced; every word pierced my conscience as with sharp swords; I saw the wretchedness and wickedness of my whole life; all the imaginary speeches of my nephews seemed so full of truth, that I was for a long time doubtful whether after all it was but a dream; they haunted my memory day and night; my shop, my ledger, my stock, all cried out against me that I was covetous; wherever I went in the course of my business, the words of the dream

wrung in my ears ; ‘ too true, too true,’ I would exclaim to myself, ‘ is the picture which I have thus seen of myself ;’ ‘ not a thought beyond the debtor and creditor account,’ I keenly felt was a saying exactly applicable. I looked upon the event as a solemn warning ; I considered my whole mode of living, my ends, my motives ; and I found I was indeed beggaring myself by getting rich, gaining things I could not keep, and losing all that could be kept. I resolved at once to make a great effort to free myself from my sin ; that very night I bent my stubborn knee, and poured such prayers as had never before risen from my soul ; like the poor publican I was indeed conscience-stricken and self-abased. Besides using my own endeavours, I hastened to the clergyman ; I told him plainly of my sin ; I asked his counsel ; I besought him to treat me as a child ; I placed myself under his guidance. As a true ambassador of Christ, as a true pastor and holy friend, he dealt with me ; I owe him, under God, more than I can express ; he led me to search for the true riches of our Saviour’s kingdom ; he helped me in the search ; and now having taken up the cross, I purpose by the aid of the Spirit of grace to devote my whole life to His service, who in

His great undeserved mercy did not cut me off in the midst of my sin. You see before you a poor penitent, a wanderer, a guilty wretch craving for pardon at the foot of the cross, and desiring to be remembered in your prayers. I have to-night been able to speak to you in this manner; I have never revealed this dream before; I shall never speak of it again; I look upon you as a friend indeed, for we walk in the house of God as friends. May we be friends on earth, and friends for ever in heaven."

My poor friend then burst into tears; for a long time he was too much moved to speak. I laid my hand upon his, and suffered him gradually to recover his composure. When he had regained his self-possession, I took up the Bible and read a chapter aloud, as I had no heart to return to common subjects, and it seemed to calm his spirit. When this was ended, he rang the bell, and his apprentices and servants came in to join in family prayer. We all knelt down, and I trust that our souls were that night truly united before the throne of grace. It was then time for me to return home, and after a warm "good-night" I left the house. The memory of that evening remains with me as fresh as ever.

I have continued to meet Mr. Sharpley since,

A TALE FOR THE OVER-THRIFTY.

and have only found more abundant cause to be thankful for the friendship which has sprung up between us. The more deeply I see into his character, the more clearly I see his complete devotion to the Christian's true business ; and though I have never had the same temptations to covetousness, I trust that I have learnt from him a stronger desire to use my worldly means to the glory of God and the relief of my brethren.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

*THE CURATE'S DAUGHTER,
OR THE SACREDNESS OF CHURCHYARDS.*

“NEXT girl! Funeral! What spells funeral?”
These words were addressed by the curate of a country parish to one of the girls in the little school that looked on the churchyard. The word was duly spelt, and then he went on somewhat in this manner.

“And now tell me what a funeral is?”

“A burying, Sir.”

“Yes, and what is a burying?”

“When they carry any one to the grave.”

“And where is the person who is carried to the grave?”

“In the coffin, Sir.”

“Did you ever see any one in his coffin?”

“Yes.”

“Did you like to see him?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because he was dead.”

“Could you have run about the room and played?”

“No.”

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“ If the coffin-lid had been put on, could you have laughed, and talked, and jumped over the coffin ?”

“ No ;” (with a look of great horror.)

“ What made the people carry the person to the churchyard ?” No one answered.

“ Why did they not bury him in the garden, or take him to the wood, where he would be quite alone ?”

One little girl answered, “ they might dig up the garden, Sir.”

“ Yes, and they might cut down the wood, and make a field of it, might they not ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Well then, why did they take him to the churchyard ?”

“ Because he might not be disturbed, Sir.”

“ Yes, that is one reason, but suppose the churchyard were not large enough ; what should we do ?”

“ Make it larger, Sir.”

“ Yes. But should we not build a wall round it, like the other part ?”

“ Yes.”

“ And then get the bishop to come and consecrate it, as he did the other day at Newport ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Then would it be the same as other ground ? ”

“ No. ”

“ What would be the difference ? What were you told about that ground. ”

“ That it was sacred. ”

“ Should you go to play in the church ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because it is a sacred place. ”

“ Should you play in the churchyard then ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Well then, you see how wicked it is to do as you do every day ; you tell me you would not laugh and play in the room where there was a dead body, and you were quite shocked when I asked you, whether, if the lid were put on the coffin, you would jump over it, and then you tell me that the churchyard is a sacred place ; and yet, because a few feet of mould are laid on the lid of the coffin, you go and jump over it, and laugh, and play ; not only where there is one dead body, but where there are hundreds ; and not in a room which is not sacred, but in the consecrated place, and over the tombstones, many of which have the word ‘ sacred ’ upon them. ” The attention of every child in the little

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school was gained, and looks of childish shame sat upon almost every face. And then he went on to say, "I was in a city the other day, my dear children, and I went to see a church in the worst part of it. I mean where the most wicked people live. My friend and myself went down one street, full of low, bad people, and there were wicked persons at their doors talking wicked language, and dirty, ragged children fighting, and screaming, and, I am sorry to say, swearing in the streets, and drunken men reeling along, and the sound of coarse and filthy songs coming from the public houses, and defiling the peaceful evening air. I said to myself, truly there needs not one church, but many here. Well, suddenly we turned out of all this noise into a quiet churchyard, and I seemed at once to have left the world behind me, and to have come indeed into a consecrated place. There were no children playing and screaming about the graves, as I have seen some of you, but the paths were all kept clean, and the grass nicely cut, and there were flowers upon many of the graves, and round the church, and marks of reverent care all through the churchyard. When I saw all this, I uncovered my head, and thanked God inwardly that among those wretched people there were

some holy children and good people who revered the church, and the churchyard, and kept the memory of their departed friends fresh by God's own monuments, the flowers, which call to our minds the death, or rather the sleep, of the seeds. It will be long, I dare say, before I see this in Hadwell churchyard, but I hope you all, my dear children, will try and be more reverent there: and when you play do not choose so sacred and so awful a place."

The seed fell upon good ground; the substance, and in some cases the order of what he had said, was kept and related at home by most of the children, and much was the curate pleased by seeing a more reverent demeanour preserved in the churchyard. This was one point gained, and from time to time, in the catechisings, the subject was alluded to, and the grown-up people, through the children, were taught the reverence due to holy places.

This is all man can do; sow the seed of good, and leave it to God to raise it up when it pleases Him. Clergymen go on preaching, and warning against persisting in some evil course, or neglect of some plain duty, and it often pleases God that they should fall asleep before the fruits of their preaching manifest themselves. And again, as

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the kingdom of God cometh not by observation, neither do the effects of the king's message. The herald comes, and proclaims his master's will, but he sees not who obeys the proclamation. Doubly blessed then is that clergyman who is not only listened to when he delivers his message, but who is spared to see it acted upon. Yes, even though the first occasion of its being acted upon should be on some great calamity happening to himself, as was the case with the curate of Hadwell.

He had one lovely little girl; the earthly shadow cast by a sainted mother from the skies. At the time referred to at the commencement of my tract, she was about eight years old. She was much the companion of her father, and thus was thoughtful beyond her years, for he was one of those men who feel the holiness as well as the beauty of childhood, and how much is to be learnt of God's revealings from the language of guileless and trusting faith. It was a beautiful sight to see this little maiden stand on the summer afternoons among the rest of the children to be catechised. Her place was generally opposite the window of the south transept, outside of which, or rather almost before the church porch, which was made there, but stretching

its mighty arms to the window, grew a large sycamore tree, the glory of the village, almost of the county. The lights and shadows of this tree played upon her young face, and the villagers, some of them, who fancied that they saw other lights than those of earth there sometimes, used to look with a simple and almost reverential love upon the little child. Then they loved their pastor, and used to look from her face to his, and see the same earnest dark eyes, kindling up at the same time, and at the same subjects, the same pale features, the same strange look. There she stood, Sunday after Sunday, and the village children loved her as much as she loved them, and turned, as naturally as possible, to her, when any question of more than ordinary difficulty was asked, and treasured up her answer, oftentimes more than they did the words of the curate himself.

Her father loved her greatly you may be sure, but not so much as God did, for He took her to heaven, and her father would have kept her upon earth. It was in the autumn that she sickened. Her voice, which was strangely musical, got faint ; and a small bright spot burnt upon her cheek, and her eyes grew large and brilliant, and her little plump hand grew thin, and the fingers

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tapering, and the palm was hot and felt clammy when you took her hand in yours. When her father first saw these signs, he went into his study and locked the door, and wept bitterly. Long, very long, did this storm of grief continue, for he had no other child, and this was very dear to him ; but at last he subdued it, and said to himself, "This is but what is due to the flesh, be satisfied now, my heart, and give up your darling." Then he knelt and prayed, the more earnestly as he felt his weakness returning, for thankfulness in his affliction, that he might bless God for exalting his darling into a better home, and for not leaving her to defile her baptismal robe with the vanities of earth. This was due to the spirit ; and after having made these sacrifices of resignation, and these thanksgivings, he went and talked calmly with his darling child.

Young as she was, the light of the Spirit shewed her where she was going ; for a short time after, she came in one evening from tending her flowers, panting for breath, and with her face, all save where that bright spot burnt, very pale : and placing herself as was her wont upon a little stool near her father, said, "Papa ! in those verses you read to Mr. Coleman the other day, you said,

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‘ Place not thy love upon the flowers,
They dwell beneath the sky;
And longing for the sunny hours,
Pine after them, and die.’

“ And you know, papa, you often call me your little lily, and there has been the rough wind and shaken that poor little lily, the last one you know, papa, the one you said was an imperfect blossom, has shaken it all to pieces, and when I went to see it I found the beautiful white flower-leaves scattered up and down, and the golden threads hanging down looking quite useless, and I thought, if I should be like that lily!” Here, overcome by the thought, she threw her arms round her father’s neck, and father and child wept passionately at the thought of parting from each other. But after awhile, the deep voice of the father, albeit broken at times with grief, began to utter sentences which had a strange power over that little one; “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” (Isaiah xl. 8.) “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” (1 Thess. iv. 14.) “Suffer little children to come unto Me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God.” (St. Luke xviii. 16.) “If

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any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (St. Luke xiv. 26.) "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (St. John xi. 25, 26.) At the first sound of those holy words, her wild grief was hushed, and clasping her little hands tightly, and yet in the attitude of prayer over the bosom of her white frock, she listened, the tears indeed standing in her long eyelashes, but the dark eyes beneath fixed upon her father's with a mingled expression of awe and love, such as we delight to imagine in angels when they worship. Sentence after sentence out of God's holy book did he repeat, till the sobs of both were hushed, and that little one uttered her mother's favourite words, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest." And then father and child began to talk of that dear one who had passed on before them, and it seemed, as the sounds died away in the village, and the grey twilight fell, and the bright stars came out one by one, it seemed that even so they were leaving behind them the things of earth,

and entering into the communion of saints, so soft, so gradual came the change over their spirits.

But I linger over this part of my story, and I cannot help it, for, with such spirits, this, the hour of giving up the dear one, is the time of death. It has no more terrors when this is passed. So was it with the curate of Hadwell and his daughter. But fondly and earnestly did the father strive to furnish this young saint with means of Christian help and comfort: he the more trusted that the Holy Sacrament would be worthily received by so mature though so young a disciple, who had but little known actual sin. Soon, however, very soon, she fell asleep, drooping her pale face upon her father's shoulder, like her favourite lily, whose golden threads still clung to the parent stem; she died like one who lies down to sleep on the eve of a great festival, hoping to be awakened by the sound of rejoicing on the morrow.

And then followed the last solemnities of planting in corruption the seed of incorruption: and the curate came back to his dwelling, with that chastened grief at his heart which the Christian may indulge in: and it was whilst he was striving more earnestly than ever for consolation,

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that God sent it to him in the form most acceptable to a clergyman, namely, a proof that his words had not fallen to the ground. His friend Mr. Coleman, who had said the service at his little one's burial, came in, and after offering him the consolation one Christian usually offers another, told him, that after the burial, and as he was leaving the church, he found at the priest's or chancel door, some of the elder school children who had followed his daughter to the grave. "The tears," said Mr. Coleman, "were still wet upon their cheeks; and the girl who addressed me, could scarcely do so for her sobs. She said, that some time ago, you had reproved them for playing in the churchyard, and told them how reverent they ought to be there: and, among other things she said, you told them of a churchyard you had lately visited, where those who loved their friends had planted flowers upon their graves, and kept them blooming all the summer, and neat all the winter. And then they told me how dearly they loved little Ellen, and how they all longed to plant some flowers on the grave, and around it; and begged me to ask your permission before the turf is put on. I said I would do so, but then I asked, how can you be sure that other children or the rude

boys who go through the churchyard, will not pull up the flowers? They all exclaimed almost at once, that everybody loved little Ellen, that no one in the village could think of doing such a thing. And that no one ever came to play in the churchyard now."

It may easily be supposed that permission was given, and before long a glorious white lily lifted its head above the simple cross which marked little Ellen's resting-place, and a white moss-rose drooped its half-hidden buds over her breast, and a beautiful white amaranth was near it, and the laurustinus, the favourite plant of those who look beyond the summer of this life, and others sweet and simple, were there, the lovely violet, and the snowdrop, of course, not excepted. Duly watered, and jealously guarded, we may be sure these flowers were: and each little school-child considered herself responsible for the welfare of this miniature garden. No rose was plucked, no flowers taken away, and when at last some of them bore seed, and they ascertained that they might venture to take this, almost every little garden in the village boasted of a flower from Ellen's grave in the ensuing spring. Then, when the curate saw that the sanctity of the churchyard was duly acknowledged, he ventured to plant

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some shrubs about it, and to train some roses amidst the ivy on the church, and to sprinkle round the borders of the paths some mignonette seed.

The angel of death came too to the school, and bore away in his bosom one of that little flock. It was a boy, who throughout a long and painful illness, constantly said that he should go and see little Ellen. He was but five years old when he died, and after his burial, the curate, with his own hands, planted the amaranth and the laurustinus upon his grave, and it soon blossomed like a garden. Then the school-mistress, who had been almost a mother to those little ones, and was loved as such by them, she lay down in her last sleep, and the hands of affection decked her grave in the same manner. And now, in that village churchyard, the turf lies soft and green between the graves, and here and there before the tombstones wave bright flowers, and pleasant odours float upon the summer air. The old sycamore still stands, and the golden sunlight struggles among its branches to get to the place where the village children stand to be catechised. And, although it streams through stained glass, and often falls, red, or purple, or richly blue upon their youthful faces, yet it never diverts

their attention from their pastor. Some of those who stood there with little Ellen have gone away to service, and some are living in the village; yet, whenever any of them come near the churchyard, they turn aside to her grave, if not to weep, yet to think on her who lies beneath awaiting her last change. And a fit place is it for the meditations of Christians over their sleeping brethren. Far away towards the rising sun stretches the view over a country richly wooded, and gradually rising. The church, like a huge cross laid reverently down among the tombs, shews here a few grey stones, and there the dark ivy and the brilliant rose. There are now no damp graves, covered with dank grass and weeds, shewing where some relative has been put, perhaps under cold wet dripping eaves or trees, but all are carefully tended and kept free from weeds, neatly bound with osiers, if not covered with flowers. The feet of neighbours and friends are frequent upon the turf, and the language used there partakes generally of the sanctity of the place. Such, reader, are some of our churchyards, really sacred to the memory of those who sleep in them. May all be such!

HINTS FOR KEEPING CHURCHYARDS HOLY.

1. NEVER pass through a churchyard as through common ground. Think within yourself that under those graves lie Christians, awaiting the Day of Judgment. Say a secret prayer that God will raise you up from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness, that when you shall depart this life, you may rest in Him.

2. Teach your children from their earliest years to reverence the churchyard as a holy place, and discourage any childish mirth or playfulness there, much more actual sport. And you will be the better able to do this, if you avoid, as much as you can, all exchange of ordinary civilities, while you are standing on sacred ground.

3. If you have friends or relations lying in the churchyard, make it a religious duty to see that their graves are well cared for. It is a beautiful and appropriate custom to plant flowers on the graves, where it may be done.

4. Be careful always to walk in the proper paths, and not to disfigure the turf by treading where you ought not: but especially recollect, never to put your foot upon a grave, for one who was created in God's image lies beneath.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE.

OH, I'm a miserable woman, that I am! a poor worn-out drudge! quite a slave! scrubbing and rubbing, toiling and moiling in all manner of dirt and sorrow! As soon as one set of lodgers is gone, another coming in! No peace, no respite! And Tom out all day, aye, and often half the night too, with his boat! No help in carrying the water, nor in beating the carpets! And little Tom fretting so with his teeth! Oh it's a miserable world, and this is a miserable place, and I'm a miserable woman! What a fool I was to leave Ashton Hall, and . . . there's the kettle boiling over!

So did Ellen Day bemoan her lot; and while she runs down stairs to look after the kettle, the reader shall be made acquainted with the nature of Ellen's misfortunes. Like many other people, she had so few real troubles that she was disposed to indulge herself in imaginary ones. She had allowed herself to complain so much about trifles, that without being aware of it, she had grown very discontented, and was making her-

self, and every one who had to do with her, uncomfortable.

Now that she was no longer in service, she was continually comparing her present condition with what it had been at Ashton Hall; all the while she was there, she was always full of misfortunes. It was too hot, or too cold, or the place did not agree with her; or the country was so dull; or she had engaged herself for a nursery-maid's place, while her talent was in the kitchen; in short, every thing went the wrong way, and nobody, according to her way of thinking, had ever so many troubles and vexations as herself. Her chief consolation was in pitying herself, and in looking forward to a future when she should be her own mistress, and have her own way, and then nothing would go wrong, and nobody would cross her. "Service is no inheritance," she would say, "that's my only comfort. If I were but settled for life I should be happy."

And before very long she was settled for life. About two years before the events which we are about to record took place, the family from Ashton Hall moved for the summer season to the sea-side, and took up their abode at Winterbourne, which, as all the world knows, is one of the most delightful spots on the Sussex coast, a

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bright sheltered nook, in a little bay or rather cove of its own, with a long row of villa-residences built at the foot of a lofty cliff, and with a wide expanse of firm white sand in front.

Being a good fishing-station, there are plenty of boats, and where there are boats there must be men to manage them. The Ashton children passed a good deal of time on the water, and it was soon observed that a certain Tom Day had acquired the exclusive privilege of carrying the young Ashtons out to sea, and further, that when he came up to Sea View House for orders, Ellen Mason was seldom out of the way. A fine, sturdy, good-looking fellow was Tom, with a merry laughing eye, and an honest, open, sailor-like countenance; I suppose Ellen thought he seemed like one, who, if he had a wife, would know how to take care of her: and, as soon as he dared, Tom let out that he was pretty well to do in the world, and every year was doing better; that Winterbourne was a growing place; that a lodging-house (and there were one or two of them on sale) would be a safe investment for money, and that if he could but find a wife to take charge of it, he should be a happy man. And if, in addition to all this, he told Ellen that he admired her more than any one he had ever

seen, and that he was over head and ears in love with her, he said no more than he felt, and than he had good cause to say, for barring a slight shade of discontent which now and then passed over her face, Ellen was a very pretty girl, and what is more to the purpose, a well-principled and well-disposed one; so that, when upon enquiry and further knowledge, she was satisfied that Tom was a good man, and likely to make a kind husband, she contrived to let him know that she did not care how soon Ellen Mason became Ellen Day.

The autumn of that year had not passed into winter, before the young Ashtons had gone home with a new nursery maid, and Ellen's savings were helping to furnish "Sunny Nook" (so the new purchase was called) with beds and carpets, tables and chairs.

It was well named Sunny Nook; for its full southern aspect, and the lofty elms on either side of it, and the high cliff at the back, made Tom Day's villa the warmest and most sheltered lodging-house at Winterbourne. In its garden the myrtle and scarlet geranium lived through the winter, and the blue passion-flower hung in festoons from pillar to pillar in the little verandah.

It had all that nature could give it to make it a bright and sunny dwelling; but unless we have sunshine in our own breasts, our outward blessings are given us in vain.

Through every season of the year, Tom Day's house had a succession of lodgers, and each family as they quitted it expressed to Ellen the wish that they could always live in such a pleasant place, and congratulated her on having her lot in life cast there. At first she would blush and smile, and her eyes would sparkle at the consciousness of her happiness. "Yes," and she thanked God for it, "she had a good husband, and they were doing well, and it was a beautiful place, and they had every thing to be grateful for." By and by, she used the same words, but they seemed like a mere form, and as if they did not come from her heart; there was no smile, and her eyes did not sparkle. At the year's end, she "was sure she was very glad if the family were satisfied, but all places were very much the same to her."

On the morning of the day on which our tale commences, she had received the farewells of her last lodgers with a curtesy, and their praises of Sunny Nook with a sigh of resignation.

The black spot had spread. A casual infir-

mity of temper was growing into a confirmed habit. No resistance had been made to the tempter, and the poison of the sin of discontent was spreading through Ellen's whole character, and making herself and her husband wretched. Without being aware of it herself, she was growing peevish and complaining, and without a trouble in the world save those of her own making, was fond of talking as though fortune had a spite at her, and as if she had "worse luck than any-body."

A sharp fit of the toothache would have been a positive blessing to her, if it had befallen her in the first month of her marriage. The fact was that she was really too happy; she had a husband who doted on her, and made every thing smooth to her. It is a sad thing to say, but her very mercies had made her ungrateful. So true is it that the safest and least dangerous path for a Christian, is one in which all things do not go well with him. So needful is it for our own personal happiness, no less than for our spiritual advancement and growth in God's favour, that we should obey the injunction of our blessed Lord, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." We all need a daily

cross ; and if we do not find crosses ready provided for us, we had better make them than be without them. Only, if we desire a blessing on them, we must take good heed what the materials are from which we make them. We may make our crosses out of self-indulgence, (as poor Ellen did;) Scripture teaches us to make them out of self-denial. And we must remember this too, that we have no right to make crosses for others.

Ellen's infirmity had been a sore cross to her husband. For a long while he could not understand how it could be that such little matters as she declared to be the sources of her vexation, could be a trouble to any-body. At first he tried to laugh her out of it, but he soon found that this would not do. Then with ready good humour, he endeavoured to lighten her domestic labours, or whatever happened to be the cause of her trouble, by undertaking them, so far as he could, himself. Many a job in house and kitchen did he do, which never fisherman was seen to do before. His neighbours laughed at him, and told him he was spoiling a good wife ; his wife laughed at him, and told him that his fingers were thumbs ; but little cared he what was said, if only he could see her happy, and not hear her incessantly complaining.

However it was all to no purpose ; and when Tom found that in spite of all his efforts to make her comfortable, Ellen still persisted in talking as if she were a miserable woman, he began to grow callous to her imaginary miseries. Certainly it made his home very uncomfortable at times ; but (so he consoled himself) “ it was only her way ; ” and he was determined not to mind it. So when she began to complain, he put his hands in his pockets and began to whistle, or put his hat on his head, and went down to his boat. This did not mend matters : and by degrees the way was preparing for that miserable state of things in which husband and wife are glad to escape from each other’s presence, instead of finding mutual society, help, and comfort. Ellen grew more peevish and complaining ; and Tom became indifferent to his home and to all things connected with it. He was happier when buffeting with the winds and waves, than at his own fireside ; and Ellen was happy no where ; and this, simply because she had given way to a discontented spirit, which grew upon her more and more, and at times persuaded her that her very life was a burden to her.

The kettle, which, by boiling over, had interrupted the course of Ellen’s lamentation, was

speedily removed from the fire, and the work of preparing her house for fresh lodgers proceeded. Even in her grumbling, Ellen had a pride in her house, and unknown to herself, she had a great deal more interest in it, and every thing connected with it, than she believed herself to have.

Grumbling had become a habit to her, and so as soon as she resumed her work, she resumed her grumbling. Yet it was not without a feeling of satisfaction that she looked upon her pretty parlour, when the labours of the broom and duster were concluded.

“It is a neat little place, I will say that for it, when it’s properly cleaned up. There s some comfort in seeing a house look as it should, tho’ I’m worn to death with cleaning it. Dear! dear! if I lived any where but in a lodging house, how happy I should be! But these lodgers, coming in one after another, they’re always making some mess or another, and never think of the trouble they give. And the sea, that’s another thing, as bad or worse than the lodgers: it spoils every thing, and fades every thing, and wets every thing. Who would have thought that it is only a week ago since I cleaned these windows, and now,—ugh! one can hardly see through them for the salt on the glass!” So saying, she threw

open the folding doors which opened out into the garden, and began to clean the windows. "Never saw such a mess in my life! Who would ever have thought I should have to take to window-cleaning? I'm sure I never cleaned windows at Ashton Hall. What a fool I was to leave it! What could have tempted me to come here?"

"Why, you fell in love with me, and couldn't help yourself, you know," said a good-natured voice behind her.

Ellen could hardly resist a smile in spite of herself, and the tone of her husband brought back a vision of days that had long passed away.

"I wish you would not make one jump so, Tom, I thought you were going out fishing."

"So I was, and so I am, but I ran home just to get my glass, and take a look at that schooner there."

"Did you never see a schooner before?"

"She's Dutch built, that's evident," observed Tom to himself, as he gazed through his telescope, without paying much attention to what his wife was saying, "and if the haze would clear away a bit, I should see more of her."

"Why, what's the matter with her?"

“I don’t know that any thing is the matter with her, but I can’t understand why she keeps beating about in that strange way, nor what her people are doing.”

There was something about her which was puzzling to Tom’s nautical experience. At last he said in an unsatisfied tone, “may be they are waiting for a pilot,” and he shut up his glass, but instead of taking it into the house, he put it into his pocket.

“Can I do any thing for you, Nelly, before I go?” he asked, addressing himself to his wife.

“No, thank you, Tom. You have left me to do every thing by myself, and now, when all’s done, you offer to help me. There are only the windows to be cleaned, and you can’t do that, for you would break every square you touched. If there’s a thing on the face of the earth I hate, it’s window cleaning.”

“Why do you clean them so often then?”

“Because, if I don’t, the lodgers will grumble.”

“Let ’em grumble,” said Tom, “don’t worry yourself about the windows; when they’re dirtiest, they are cleaner than at the other lodging-houses, I’m sure.”

“Of course they are. You wouldn’t have

your house like Hogg's lodging, would you? People never stay there more than a day or two, because of the dirt."

"Well, then, don't clean these windows till you're rested."

"Rested!" exclaimed Mrs. Day, in a very injured tone, "I'm sure there's no rest for me, Tom. I've never known rest since I left Ashton Hall, and as for having rest ever again, till I'm in my coffin, the thing's impossible."

And then to shew how impossible it was that she ever could have rest, she began to clean a large pane so vigorously, that in a moment her cloth went through it, and the glass was shivered to pieces.

"Are you hurt? Have you cut yourself?" cried Tom, with great earnestness.

"Cut myself? no; but there will be five shillings to pay the glazier, if there's a farthing."

"It might have been worse," said Tom, greatly relieved, "we might have had to pay the surgeon. Never mind the glass."

"'Never mind the glass,' and 'it might have been worse!' Why, Tom, you'd make one think you were a fool, by the way you go on at times. I do believe I'm the unluckiest creature that ever was born! Don't you know there are new

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lodgers coming in to-night, and don't you know there's not a glazier within four miles of us? And then to go and say, '*It might have been worse.*' You're enough to provoke a saint, Tom."

It was well for both parties that the conversation was here brought to a sudden stop. Had it proceeded further, the quarrel which seemed to have been long impending, would have been the result. Day was wearied out with his wife's fretfulness, and her womanly pride was piqued that she could no longer exert the same influence over her husband now with frowns, as formerly with smiles.

Hurt and angry at Ellen's hasty words, he had turned away from her, and was in the act of taking the path which led out of the garden to the sea-shore, when once more his attention was rivetted to the schooner, which was now rapidly approaching the shore with all her sails set. A fresh wind was blowing, and during the short time in which Tom had been talking to his wife, the vessel had come full into sight.

The careless whistle which had been commenced with the view of hiding deeper feelings, stopped in a moment. The telescope was raised, as suddenly let fall, and then in a voice which was choked with agitation, the fisherman ex-

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claimed, "Oh Ellen, Ellen, look out yonder ! As sure as there is a heaven above us, that vessel is on fire, and the poor fellows are running her ashore to save their lives !"

"On fire !" cried Ellen, darting up, and forgetting in a moment all her silly pique, "where, where ? I see no fire."

"No, no, that's yet to come, but you see the smoke, don't you, driving across the sails ? you see how they're steering the vessel, don't you ? Would they steer her so in broad day-light, knowing as they must that in five minutes' time they will be aground within fifty yards of our cliffs, if they had any hope of saving their own lives by any other means ?"

It was but too evident : even while he spoke the mass of smoke surrounding the ill-fated vessel grew thicker and thicker. The hatches had been fastened down to prevent the approach of air to the flames, and to retard the progress of ignition ; but it was a question of time, that was all, when the fiery element would burst forth. Without saying another word, the husband and wife ran out of their garden, and in a minute more were upon the beach, whither (for the alarm was already given) their neighbours were hastening.

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It was about noon: but the month was November, and heavy clouds were drifting across the sky, and obscuring the sun, which, however, gleamed forth at intervals. The tide was going down, and the firm white sands were thronged with the population of the little village.

Nearer and nearer came the vessel, and every instant the smoke, black as ink, poured forth in denser masses from every cranny of escape, eddying round the white sails, spreading over and obscuring the deck, and then, stretching out in a long, low line above the waters, darkened both sea and land.

Nearer and nearer it came, and gradually, as it approached, was heard a sound which still grew louder and louder, till it rose above the howling of the wind, and the tumult of the waters dashing over a line of rocks in the immediate neighbourhood. It was the angry roaring of the pent-up flames, writhing and struggling to burst forth, raging like wild beasts, greedy of a prey, which some obstacle detains for a moment from their grasp.

The squall increased; down came the rain in torrents; but the anxious crowd upon the shore stood motionless, one sight in their eyes, the fated vessel, one sound in their ears, a sound

which rung in them for weeks after, the indignant bellowing of the baffled fire.

Baffled for a short space only! for at the moment she grounded, the force and shock of her keel cutting its way into the sand and then meeting a sudden and complete resistance to all further progress, seemed to have the effect of causing the timbers to gape, and of removing every obstacle which hitherto had hindered the visible ascent of the flames. Within a minute the whole space about her stern was a mass of fire, lapping up every object within its reach, curling round the masts, running in tongues of flame among the rigging, darting like balls of fire from point to point, till every part and portion of the schooner was wrapped in fearful conflagration. The rain continued to fall heavily, the waves beat over the ship, but not the slightest check appeared to be given to the devouring element. For a brief space the fire was less bright, for the wind was now veering about continually, and sweeping in eddies round the vessel carried the smoke with it, and obscured every object. So things continued for a quarter of an hour or more, and then the wind having shifted and blowing steadily off the land, the progress of the fire became visible once more. By and by

there was a loud explosion, which caused the affrighted crowd to hurry away in all directions ; then another, and another, and then some portion of the stern gave way, and there issued from the opening a cataract of liquid fire, which ran over the sands, (for by this time the retreating tide had left the vessel stranded,) rolled through a low barrier of rocks and sea-weed, till it forced its way into the sea, with which it appeared to mingle without being extinguished. And no wonder ! for the cargo had consisted of hundreds of barrels of turpentine and rosin. In a short time the heat and glare of the flames was so insupportable, that none could approach the fatal spot within many yards. All attempts at extinguishing the fire were hopeless, to save any thing was impossible, and the crowd of villagers could only gaze upon jets of white, and green, and ruddy flames, and a cloud of inky smoke which stretched out to sea for miles, till the returning tide swept over a few charred and hissing timbers, which were all that then remained of the good ship "Rebecca."

And what meanwhile had been the fate of the crew ? By God's great mercy, not one of them perished. Though scorched, and almost suffocated by the dense fumes of the turpentine, they

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were able to remain on board till the vessel ran on shore, and the flames burst forth. Then they leapt over her side into shallow water. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

And no sooner did these poor foreigners reach the shore, than with one impulse and consent they fell upon their knees, while, in some brief and well-known form of prayer in which all joined, their captain offered up in their native tongue, for himself and them, a thanksgiving to God for their deliverance.

It would have been well if the crowd around them had done the same: but we English are miserable victims to false shame. However, there was a solemn silence; men removed their hats from their heads; and down more than one weather-beaten cheek an unwonted tear was seen to glide. But when the poor fellows rose from their knees, they were almost stunned with a hearty cheer, and kind words and offers of assistance (can there be such children of hell as "wreckers" any where?) were pressed upon them.

The captain stood for a minute, among his crew, gazing at his blazing vessel, silent, unable to speak: and then turned calmly to an officer of the coast guard who was already on the spot,

and who with Tom Day and others, were condoling with the sufferers on their misfortune, "We must submit," he said, in such broken English as he could muster, "things might have been worse."

"Well, master," said Tom, "there are not many men, I reckon, who would think of that, if they found themselves in your condition."

"Nay, my friend," rejoined the captain, "things are bad enough, and we have had a bad time altogether, but our good God has not forgotten us. We have had yellow fever on board since we left America, but only one of the crew died. Our ship might have taken fire in the midst of the Atlantic, and then we should have all perished. Nay, if it had happened only yesterday, there was such a fog off your coast, that the chances would have been all against us. Oh, it might have been worse! The ship might not have been insured, but, thank God, she is, so my poor wife and children will not be beggared. We might have run her among rocks, and been dashed to pieces in trying to land. We might have landed among men who would be more disposed to plunder than to help us. Oh indeed, good friends, we have much to be thankful for. Bad as things are, they might have been worse!"

“I can’t get those poor fellows out of my head,” said Tom Day to his wife, as late in the afternoon he stood with her in the garden of their quiet home. The wind had lulled, the rain had just ceased, the heavy clouds were passing away, the sun was breaking forth with a mild evening glow, and a bright rainbow spanning the heavens, interrupted only in one spot by a mass of black rolling smoke. “I can’t get those poor fellows out of my head, I wish I could.”

“Do you?” replied Ellen. “Well, I hope that I shall remember them to the longest day I live. Oh Tom, Tom! how ashamed of myself I feel! what a thankless, ungrateful wretch I have been! I have been making miseries of my very mercies, while they have found blessings in their terrible misfortune. Oh, dear Tom, forgive me. Help me, pray for me; when you see me giving way to my besetting sin, remind me of yonder smoking wreck, and I think by God’s grace, the recollection will not come into my mind in vain!”

And it did not? And in a year’s time Sunny Nook was once more the happiest home, and Tom Day the happiest man in Winterbourne.

THE CLOUD UPON THE MOUNTAIN.

AN ALLEGORY.

I WAS a stranger in a strange land. Indeed I am still a stranger and a sojourner as all my fathers were. In that confession I declare plainly that I seek a country. I am a wayfaring man, a wanderer, a pilgrim far from my home; and on that plea, since I have no abiding city here, I ground my appeal to the charity of those among whom I dwell, that when my time of need comes, they would grant me, for such a season as I may need it, the only possession I shall ever ask at their hands, the possession of a burying-place.

It is toward evening, and the day is far spent. Few and evil have been the hours of my pilgrimage. Thankfully do I see around me unerring tokens that I am approaching my journey's end. I have yet a dark and dreary valley to cross, but my path hath long wound along the base of lofty mountains. I have walked through the vale of misery, and used it for a

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well, yea, and have found its waters, though bitter, healthful. And now, though the deep and perilous abyss which yet remains to be passed, is, I am well aware, the awfulest and most terrible in all the universe of God, still I would fear no evil. I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have entrusted unto Him against that day. To Him I have committed the keeping of my soul in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. And my faith tells me that in that day He will commit His rod and staff to me to comfort me. I am confident that He which hath begun a good work in me, who in His mercy made me His child, and who in His pity hath led me these many years in the wilderness, to humble me, and to prove me, and to know what is in mine heart, whether I would keep His commandments or no—I am confident that He which hath begun a good work in me, will perform it unto the end, if only I be not wanting to myself.

I have been a stranger in strange lands, and it is ever the way with strangers to be struck with, and to mark circumstances and customs, which are not noticed, or are passed over by natives as matters too common to be thought about or commented upon. It may be that the

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scenes and events which I am about to record, are an every-day sight in the land wherein I have been sojourning. I suppose this is the case, for I observed that none but myself stood to contemplate them ; and this, methinks, could hardly have been the case, had the deep meaning of all that passed before me presented itself as strongly to the minds of others, as it did to my own. Use, no doubt, had deadened their perceptions, so that had I spoken to them of what was passing before their eyes, they would probably have said that I had put a visionary interpretation upon it, or that, like other travellers, I had been led astray by hasty impressions, and drawn my conclusions from insufficient grounds.

Perhaps it may have been so. But whether a sight which I saw of late in my wanderings was altogether such as it might have appeared to an indifferent spectator, or whether it had not in it more than met the careless eye ; whether there did not lie beneath the surface, deep spiritual meanings, types of truth, lessons of heavenly wisdom, and awful warnings, let the reader judge.

I sat alone upon the summit of a vast fragment of rock, which, in some convulsion of nature, had been hurled from the mountain above, and had found a resting-place half-way between

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the summit of the steep, and the waves which washed its base. It was a huge isolated crag, standing boldly out amidst a wilderness of confused masses of stone; for the scene around was one of ruin. Passing fair it was, for the growth of underwood, the spread of creepers, the colour and luxuriance of wild flowers, had done much in the lapse of ages to mask, at least to the casual passer-by, the desolation which must have ensued, when the work of creation was marred, and the grassy slopes and verdant thickets had been upturned from their base, by the sudden catastrophe which converted a garden into a wild and desolate wilderness of barren rocks and treacherous quagmires. The marshy spots seemed now, in the lapse of ages, and when viewed from a distance, to be clothed with healthy verdure, and the deep and dangerous chasms and fissures were, for the most part, concealed by tussocks of the hart's-tongue fern, or wreathed over with festoons of the bryony or clematis.

The ascent to the crag which I had chosen for my temporary resting-place, was rendered easy on one side by a flight of natural steps formed by the shelving layers or beds of stone, which had been thus irregularly wrenched from their original site. On its summit was a flat space

covered with a soft carpet of turf and thyme, while in a cleft on one side a stunted maple had found means to insert its roots, and grow to a sufficient size to form a leafy canopy above me.

Here, therefore, being wearied with my journey, I sat upon the crag, and gazed upon the scene around me. Hour after hour, I fear, passed by, and found me still in idleness. It was not a place in which to be overtaken by night-fall; but I was faint and foot-sore, and this indisposed me for exertion, and thoughts of the past, the present, and the future, so crowded themselves upon me, that I took no note of time.

How long I had sat contemplating the scene before me I know not, but suddenly I heard a voice addressing me and saying, "Stranger, what seest thou?" I started, for the sound was close to me, and I gazed around, but there was no one in sight. "Who speaks?" I cried, but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. I listened, but all was still.

Once more I sank back into my former position, and gazed intently on the ocean.

"Stranger, what seest thou?" again inquired the voice; clear and distinct, yet soft, and so close to me that the speaker seemed at my very side. Was it an angel that spake to me, or

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was it that voice from within, which sometimes utters its words with such distinctness that it mocks the outward senses, and makes us, as it seems, to hear with our outward ears, what only exists in our inward imaginations? I know not; I cannot tell; but at the time I believed I was in the presence of an unseen companion, and with a strange absence of fear, which afterwards seemed wholly unaccountable to me, thus I answered;

“Before me lies a smooth and ample terrace, in the midst of which is a broad and well-worn road, an easy path, I ween, for them that travel on it. By its side grow flowers bright and gay, and here and there are quiet resting-places, seats of rock, embowered under canopies of woodbine, and traveller’s joy.”

And methought the voice answered again unto me, and said, “It is even so: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. What more seest thou?”

“The terrace extendeth but to the cliff; down the cliff there is a steep winding path which communicates with the sea: then comes the pebbly shore, and then the swelling waves, and beyond these I see nought, for a mist is resting on the surface of the distant ocean.”

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“ Now turn thee, and look behind thee,” said the voice.

Then I arose, and stood upright on my feet, and when I had gazed awhile I replied, “ That is my course homeward. I know it, for in character it is like the road I have already trodden. It is very steep. It winds amid deep gaping cracks in the soil, into which if a man fall, he can hardly escape unmaimed. It follows a devious, though ever-ascending course amid the crags ; now it seems to go through dark thickets of thorns and briars, and now to lie across a peaty swamp. One while, the track seems lost amid broken fragments of stone ; at another, to diverge into a score of paths which grow fainter and fainter till they are wholly lost. Yet there is one path, which, as I gaze on it from hence, I see to be the right one ; it is but as a thread on the mountain’s side ; it is steeper than all the rest ; so steep that I think none could look back from it without being in danger of falling : it ascends higher and higher till it reaches the gap, which is the entry into that pass, which, as I trust and believe, will bring me to my home.”

“ Can you see what lies beyond the gap ? ” asked the voice of the Unseen.

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“ No,” I answered with a sigh.

“ Why not ?” rejoined the speaker.

“ Because there is a cloud upon the mountain.”

“ See you aught peculiar in that cloud ?”

“ Yes, it is never at rest. It never clears away from the mountain-top ; it shrouds the pass perpetually. Now and then the wind seems to drift it for a moment from before the face of the gap, or to disperse its substance partially, and then its edges are fringed with light as though the sun were close behind it, but anon the mist thickens, and shifts its place with every eddying gust. Occasionally it will descend rapidly and cover the greater part of the mountain side, then it will be seen hovering over one spot, then over another ; but it seems to come down most rapidly, and hang most densely over that portion of the ascent where the tracks are most divided. Alas for those who are overtaken by it, when they have thus wandered from the right way, for they will never be able to find it more.”

Sternly yet sadly replied the voice, “ Never, never ! Yet none need so perish. Those who do perish, perish only because they love to wander, and will not refrain their feet. Have they not read, have they not heard the solemn warning ; ‘ Give glory to the Lord your God, before He

cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death and make it gross darkness.’”

I was too awe-struck to make an immediate answer, and so, for some brief space, there was silence, interrupted only by the whispering of the wind in the leaves of the tree above me, and the echo of the distant waves as they broke upon the shore. I stood motionless; for all things round me had acquired a significance which they had not possessed before, and I meditated with myself how I could learn the art of interpreting them.

The viewless speaker seemed to have divined my thoughts, for once more his voice was heard.

“Understandest thou what thou seest?”

“I desire to do so,” was my reply, “but I fear me I am dull of sight to see, and slow of heart to understand. The thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but

the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out?"

"Humility," answered the voice, "is the mother of all graces. To know the weakness of your sight is, so far, a safeguard against stumbling. It is only the wilfully blind, who seeing sees not; it is only the presumptuous, who, making his boast of seeing, is left to grope in darkness. Be watchful, be circumspect; look within; study thine own heart; prove its secret workings. And then you may in safety look out on the world around you; and the common things of life, which to others are dumb, will speak wisdom to you. And you will read in them, as in a mirror, your own spiritual state. Their types, and shadows, and similitudes, will serve to shew you what you are, and where you are, will help you to see yourself as others see you. Stand here, therefore, for a while, and watch, and it shall be even as I have said."

Then the voice ceased, and I felt within myself that I was in solitude.

And I stood upon the verge of the jutting crag, and looked out towards the sea. And behold, there issued from the soft mist, which, at some little distance from the shore, moved upon the face of the waters, a large boat crowded with

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many boys, and steered by one who seemed to have the charge of them.

As they neared the shore I perceived that they began to strip off their clothes, and one by one, keeping hold of their guardian's hand, they were plunged for a moment beneath the waves. And the sun burst forth from a cloud, and shone on them with all his brightness, as, fresh and glowing from the salutary waters, they regained the vessel. And the echo of their happy voices was as music in my ears, as they put on their holyday attire, clean and bright, and clustered round the venerable old man, who laid his finger on the brow of each, and then with anxious looks and earnest gestures pointed out to them the track on the steep hill-side, the intricacies of the path, the dangers of the cloud that hung upon the mountain-top, and the gap at the summit which led to the hidden district beyond.

Then the boat drew nearer to the beach to land its crew, and the terrace in front of me hid it from my eyes, and I saw it and its steerer no more. But as I gazed upon the shadowy mist and the rippling waves, and thought of those who had so lately emerged from them, and of those who in the days of old were under the cloud, and passed through the sea, I remembered how

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I myself had been under the water of the font, and how thence I had emerged cleansed and purified, a new creature, born again ; how I had gone down into the water a child of death, and had come up a child of the resurrection ; how I had gone down a child of wrath, and had come up a child of mercy ; how I had gone down a child of the devil, and had come up a child of God ; how that I had there, as it were, been buried and had risen again, buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so I also should walk in newness of life. High and holy had been my calling, great and glorious had been my privileges ; how had I listened to the one, and used the other ?

Thus I was beginning to question with myself, when the sound of approaching voices called off my attention to the scene before me. Those who had so lately occupied the boat, were now beginning to appear one by one, winding their way up the cliff, and making for the terrace in front of me. When I had first seen them in the distance they had seemed to me mere children ; as they approached nearer to me I saw that they were youths ; and strange to tell, when afterwards they passed me, and ascended the

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face of the mountain, whether it was from the weariness of their limbs, I know not, or from some effect of distance, the nearest to me looked as if they had shot up into the vigour of manhood, while those who had mounted highest towards the gap, tottered onward as though they were aged men.

Before long the space between the shore and the terrace was mastered; but a moment's glance told me that all were not there who had left the boat. And I heard some of them asking others with respect to their missing companions, what had delayed the loiterers so long; and when the reply was made that they had stopped to pick up sparry pebbles and rainbow-coloured shells upon the beach, my heart ached, for I knew that the little bay in which they had landed was hemmed in with rocks which ran far into the sea, and that the tides on that coast rose very suddenly, and I feared lest, while thus at idle play, the cloud from the mountain-top might descend and shroud them in its folds, or ever they could regain the path which their companions were treading. So eager was I that I called to them repeatedly, but I fear none of them heard me, for none answered; and then a chill struck into my own heart as I thought

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how many earnest calls from anxious friends I had in my own childhood disregarded or made light of, and I shuddered when by and by the sky grew darker and the waves raged horribly, and I heard amid the roaring of the wind, what I trust was only the sea-bird's cry, but which sounded like the death-shriek of a poor perishing child.

Meanwhile, the sun was for the present shining brightly, and it was a pleasant sight to see the terrace in front of me receive the little band of travellers. Most of them had, happily, followed their preceptor's instructions as to the way in which they were to walk. To believe and to obey is the instinct of guileless childhood. They were aware that he knew the track better than they could, and their habit had been to do what they were bidden; so, though the track was very steep and difficult, they kept to it carefully, and so doing they found their footing firm, and the way though rough, a safe one: they did not grow giddy; and here and there, there was a spot where they could pause and take breath. There were even flowers within reach, and some I marked who gathered heart's-ease there, which they bore in their bosoms so long as my eyes could follow them. A few were more

ambitious, and not content with heart's-ease must needs stretch forth their hands to reach some gayer or more conspicuous flowers. One I saw that after a violent struggle grasped what proved to be a thistle; another succeeded in gathering a bunch of the sea-iris, but directly afterwards was compelled to throw the nauseous-smelling weed away; and one there was, who reaching after a garland of wild roses overbalanced himself, and would have fallen from the cliff, but the thorns, which rent his clothes and tore his fingers, stopped his descent, and thereby saved his life.

These all had followed the path pointed out to them; but a few bold self-willed lads there were, who thought they could find a shorter and an easier way for themselves, where there were no rocks, and the cliff shelved less abruptly towards the sea. They tried it, and soon found that from the greasy nature of the clayey soil, through which land-springs were trickling in every direction, they were continually sinking knee-deep in the mire, and even when they seemed to make some little progress, for every step they advanced they slipt back two. So they were obliged to retrace their steps to the beach, whence they ascended breathless the steep

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path which their companions had already surmounted, and when, after a long interval, they came out upon the terrace, their holyday garments were soiled with filth and mud.

Then, as I looked upon them, shame and bitter sorrow filled my own mind, as I thought how early I had broken my baptismal vows, and how spotted and sin-defiled was my baptismal robe; and I made my earnest prayer to the God of my life that He would turn His face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds for His dear Son's sake.

And now the whole band (save those only who had wilfully loitered on the shore, whose subsequent fate I know not, and some who as I gathered from the conversation of their companions no longer walked among them, for the cloud had come down upon them early, and they were seen no more) had reached the terrace. The most part, especially those who came up last, were weary and exhausted, and so they threw themselves upon the soft green turf, or rested among the bowers of woodbine. But a few there were who, pausing only to take breath, at once pushed onwards. Of these some were those who had kept the right path and reached the terrace soonest; the rest were of those who

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in defiance of advice given them, had chosen ways of their own, and who now, profiting by sad experience, resolved to be self-willed no more. These all passed by me, and as I turned and looked after them I beheld them with greater or lesser speed, according to their strength, ascending the mountain side.

Yet the progress onward was not made without an effort. More than one hesitated, as some companion called him back, and urged him to rest for a while. "What need is there to hurry on so fast?" thus cried the loiterers to those who were already on their way. "We are only waiting here till we have recovered breath; if we were to go on at once the ascent would be beyond our strength."

One of the climbers looked wistfully back. Again his friend urged him to sit down, if it were but till his comrades should be rested. And the words of the tempter prevailed. The boy turned back, ran down the steep to join his friend, and so far as I know, never looked upward more.

Not so another. He was one whose dress was wet and soiled with filth, he walked lamely as though he had had a recent fall, and when he passed by me, I heard his short quick breathing,

and marked his exhausted, anxious look. He was one of those who had early wandered from the narrow track, and had only regained it when those with whom he started were already on the terrace. "Poor fellow," they exclaimed one to another, "what a miserable figure he looks! how worn and weary! Come here," they cried, "and let us scrape the mud and filth from off your clothes."

The boy thanked them, but declined the offer. "You will only get foul yourselves," he said in a melancholy tone, "without cleansing me. The filth is so ingrained, that the clothes are spoiled. My only hope is that others will be provided for me when I reach my home, and thither I will go at once."

"Well, but wait a moment, we are coming on by and by."

"No, no, I cannot, the longer I stand talking my lameness increases, and the wet and mud seem to hang upon me more chilly and heavily; and I am so exhausted I want to be in the mountain air, the higher I go, the more freely I breathe."

"Still it will do you no harm to refresh yourself a moment here. See how the water sparkles as it flows from yon cool spring. You

have but to stretch out your hand as you lie on this bank, and the wild strawberries are within your reach, so cooling and refreshing. Come down hither, and when we are rested we will all start together."

"No, no, I cannot come back."

"But why not?"

"I dare not, I have lost too much time already."

"What do you expect to happen to you?"

"I know not," said the boy firmly, "only this I know, that the night cometh." And without further parley, he passed onward on his way. Of his companions, some seemed staggered for a moment at his words, but the sun was still high in the heavens, and their apprehension passed away. Others pitied him as timid, and weak, and over scrupulous; and some mocked and derided him.

But little cared he for what they thought or said. He had grown wise in time, wise by sad experience. And so he resolutely kept to his purpose. Lamé as he was, he soon outstripped others who were proceeding more leisurely. He rested, indeed, frequently. But his posture at such times was always on his knees, and this gave him ease and refreshment which could have

been found in no other position. So long as he and his companions knelt with their faces turned to the mountain-top, there was no risk of faintness coming on, or of their slipping backward; but those who boasted of being able to stand upright, were sure, sooner or later, to fall; and those who looked back upon the things behind them, instead of reaching forth unto those which were before, were sure to grow giddy and lose their heads as they looked down the precipitous steep. But this danger the youth of whom I am speaking wholly escaped; his whole heart was set on pressing forward, and as I watched his progress, I could not but think that his earnestness and perseverance had all needful encouragement, for the higher he mounted the less he halted in his gait, the mountain air revived him, and his exertions supplanted his limbs, yea, and the sunshine and the breeze in which he journeyed seemed to dry his miry garments, and to cause the black stains of mud to disappear and fade away. And so it came to pass that in spite of his early error, he was among the first who came to his journey's end. But then few had sorrowed, and few had striven like him.

And now my attention was called back to the scene in front of me, where the greater part of

the lads had flung themselves down upon the turf; for suddenly I heard sounds of music and gaiety, and along the smooth broad road which ran through the midst of the terrace, I saw a merry noisy crowd advancing, and I gathered from their discourse that they were on their way to a fair in the neighbourhood. They soon came up to the boys, who immediately recognised acquaintances among them. And the jest and laugh went round, and the boys were soon on their legs in the midst of the crowd, and I heard a pressing invitation given to them from twenty tongues at once, that they would join the revelry, and see the sights to which the gay troop was hurrying.

And some of the boys consented at once, without further delay or doubting. Others hesitated for a time, but when their new companions dwelt upon the pleasures of the fair, the smoothness of the roads, and the ease with which in consequence, both the scene of pleasure might be visited, and the mountain ascended likewise before the day closed in, the argument seemed to prevail, for these too turned their steps down the broad road. Others there were who resisted the temptation in this form, but were not proof against the wit and ridicule

of those around them. They yielded, not because they had any strong desire to go; but because they could not bear to be laughed at; they were afraid of being thought afraid. So they went; but they looked ashamed and ill at ease, and I thought I observed that the very persons who had led them astray despised them, and after a short time looked coldly on them, and avoided them.

There were two brothers; hitherto they had kept together; they had climbed the path from the shore side by side, the elder helping the younger, as was meet, guiding his steps and preventing him from falling. But now the time was come when a parting was to occur, when one was to be taken, and the other left.

It had been the wish of the youngest to have crossed the terrace without delay, and to have mounted the hill side at once in company with another boy whom he dearly loved. But in deference to the wishes of the elder, and from the diffidence natural to his years, he did not like to dispute the point, and so sate down beside him on the turf: but he felt unhappy, and the more so when the elder instead of rising, after a brief delay stretched himself out upon the grass as if about to go to sleep.

“ Oh, brother,” cried the youngest, “ are you not rested ? will you not go on ? the master told us we had no time to lose.”

“ We have a long summer’s day before us,” was the drowsy reply.

“ Yes, but the day may change, and the cloud may come down from the mountain, and the right path may be hidden from us.”

“ No fear of that,” rejoined the eldest, “ where we sit we can see its approach, and can move away in time.”

“ I do not know,” said the younger doubtfully, “ but the master particularly warned us that people do not see its approach, especially when they are near the broad road. And now I look at the sky, the clouds do seem lower than they were just now.”

“ Fancy !” was the reply.

“ But surely this is not fancy,” urged the boy, grasping eagerly at some flowers which grew near ; “ See, here is the shepherd’s calendar, its scarlet flowers are closed ; they were opened when first we reached the terrace ; and so is the pink centaury ; and here too, the starry petals of the yellow thorowax, all are shut, not one open. Surer tokens of the approach of foul weather than the closing of these flowers, there

cannot be. Do rise, dear brother, let us go hence."

But the elder was by this time too nearly asleep to heed the speaker; his eyes were closed, and in another minute or two he would have been in a deep slumber; but he was roused by the music and singing of the approaching merry-makers. He raised himself on his elbow to listen to them. Then, as they drew nearer, he started up and went forward to meet them. He was as eager now as he had been listless before.

"Oh do not join them!" cried his younger brother, seizing his arm, and trying to hold him back.

"Why not?" said the elder, shaking him off impatiently.

"Do you not see that they are all going along this broad road? Do you not remember our master's warning us, both against the road and against associating with those who travel on it?"

"Well, I am not on the road, I am only looking at it."

"Eve began with 'only looking,'" urged the younger with a sigh, still retaining his hold of his brother's arm; but the elder did not seem to hear him. And at that moment the crowd

came up to them, and he was greeted by more than one joyous good-morrow, and gaily urged to accompany them.

“Do not go, dear brother, if you love me do not go: you will break a promise, a solemn pledge and promise, if you do; and nothing but harm and misery can come of broken promises. And you know our master told us we should find more pleasures at our journey’s end than ever we can find on our journey. Do not, do not go;” (the elder was struggling to get free;)
“nothing but mischief can come of it.”

“Mischief! what folly! I am not going among strangers am I? Don’t you see neighbours and acquaintances in the crowd, and people we have known all our lives? I do not mean to stay long, I shall soon be back again.”

“Oh, do not leave me,” cried the younger, wringing his hands and sobbing bitterly; “I shall never get on without you, I shall never reach the mountain-top.”

“Of course not; I do not mean to leave you. You will come with me.”

“Oh no, no, no. Any thing but that!” exclaimed the younger, shrinking back. “I cannot, dare not, go with you. Nothing but mischief can come of it!”

“Who are you that you should know so much better than I? Am not I the eldest? Have not I brought you safe all this way?” was the haughty rejoinder. “Don’t waste time in arguing, come along.”

“No, I cannot go down the broad road,” said the younger, sadly, but firmly.

“Well then, do you go your way,” replied the elder, “and I will go mine.” So he turned, and went away in a rage.

As for the little one, he continued steadfast: for having cast one long lingering look of anxious misery on the companion of his life, he turned his face earnestly towards the mountain, and proceeded onward, weeping as he went. His firmness, however, was not lost. It influenced others, though it failed to influence him to whom his heart was most united. Two other boys joined him, and I saw one press his hand, and speak to him thus in kind consoling tones; “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

And so I watched them journeying on side by side; not making rapid progress at first, for the younger brother still paused and halted fre-

quently, as though he was lingering in the hope of being joined once more by him whom he had lost, his companion, his guide, and his own familiar friend.

Sympathizing deeply with his distress, and conscience-stricken with the thought how nearly in many respects the conduct of the elder brother resembled my own, who had so often broken my baptismal pledge, and joined in sin and folly, the world, the devil, and the flesh, I turned my eyes once more to the broad, forbidden road. All there was stillness and solitude; the revellers had passed by; and in their noisy mirth had not observed the descent of the cloud from the mountain, which was now hanging in thick folds but a few yards above the road.

“A few yards lower,” I thought to myself, “and even should any wish to return, the mist will impede them, they will never be able to find their way back.” How great was my comfort to see dimly through the thickening vapour a few forms approaching! Yet how different, alas! was the return from the departure! Gaily and joyously they had bounded forth in the midst of a laughing crowd. Now they were creeping back, one by one, feebly and faintly. I looked at them as they emerged into strong daylight,

and saw the wanness of disease upon one countenance, remorse and shame upon another, disappointment and misery upon a third. The scenes they had visited had dazzled them for a moment, and then had sickened, wearied, and disgusted them. They had been imposed upon and cheated; they had found their so called friends hollow and selfish; their food had poisoned them; they had got entangled in brawls and strifes; they had known neither ease nor peace. All had turned out a delusion, and a mockery, and a snare. They had gained nothing; and it were well if they had not lost all. On some the cloud had actually fallen, and they had only time to cry out, "too late, too late!" before darkness overwhelmed them. Others hurried back as fast as they could; but they were but the tithe of those who had originally joined the revellers.

Earnestly, anxiously did I scrutinize each pale face which passed me, in hopes that I should recognise the elder brother, him who had promised that he would "soon be back." But I saw him not, and was just turning away in despair, for the cloud had all but reached the earth, when through the thickening gloom, I saw one fleeing as for his life, and anon he came

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forth naked and wounded. It was he for whom I had watched. He had plunged into the wildest scenes of revelry, and while maddened with intoxication, had fallen among thieves who had intreated him shamefully, and robbed him.

His misery had sobered him; his brother's warnings had come into his mind; and he had rushed back with the energy of despair. Never shall I forget how he grappled with difficulties, how he struggled to get forward to the narrow path, how soon he was seen scrambling among the rocks, how loudly he called to his brother; and never, never shall I forget the unutterable joy that gleamed upon his countenance, when first his eyes rested on his brother's distant form! Again and again he repeated that well-known name, and ere long he was heard. "Come to me, come to me," he exclaimed, "I am foot-sore and wounded, my strength is failing, my eyes are dim, my head is dizzy. Come back to me and help me." The younger brother stopped, stretched forth his hands with the utmost joy and affection towards him, and beckoned him onwards. Then he sank on his knees.

"Oh cruel! cruel!" ejaculated the elder, with an exceeding sharp and bitter cry: "he sees me ready to perish here, and yet he will

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not help me. I am utterly exhausted, I have nothing for it but lie down in despair and die!" But something within must have reminded him that to despair, would in his case, be the greatest of all sins, seeing that he had already had a great deliverance. Then he reflected and understood why it was that his brother could not come down to him. And he felt that in some mysterious way his brother was helping him, though he only continued on his knees. It was an encouragement, at any rate, to feel that the distance between them was not increasing. So he made a fresh effort to reach his brother; but he was too weak. Then it occurred to him to do what his brother was doing. He lifted his eyes upwards, and fell upon his knees likewise. Long he continued in that position, and still as he kneeled his faintness and weariness grew less. The cold mountain air stanch'd the bleeding of his wound. And when he arose, he found that his feet and ankle bones had received strength. He was yet too far off to hear the sound of his brother's voice, or to hold converse with him; but the beckonings and gestures of affectionate encouragement were still continued, and I saw a small packet bounding towards him, thrown from the young one's hand, which I made no doubt contained

food to strengthen him, and words of kindness. It fell directly in his path, and once more as he laid hold on it, he flung himself on his knees and again received strength. Thus he went on, faint but pursuing; and, every step which he took upwards, the distance between the brothers was lessened, till at length they were locked in each other's arms, and thenceforward they never parted more; yea, they seemed to love one another with a tenfold love on account of the misery which had ensued through their temporary separation, the elder exhibiting the tenderest gratitude, and the younger still helping and supporting him, for I could not but remark that he still walked lamely; I knew he must carry his scars with him to his grave, for his wounds were very deep.

And then I meditated sadly on my own condition, how sins, the commission of which I had long and long ago forgotten, still left their guilt upon me. I saw how thoughtlessly in spite of many warnings, how ungratefully in spite of many mercies, I had wandered into the broad road that leadeth to destruction. And as I marked the cloud which now seemed to cut off wholly the return of those who had thought that they could retrace their steps when they

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pleased, the obvious reflection rose to my lips, "So will it prove with me, if I strive to serve two masters, or fail to keep a presumptuous spirit in subjection, or reckon on a certain future. Death will come upon me in an hour when I think not, and leave me without an opportunity for repentance or returning!"

And now the lengthening shadows reminded me that the day was far spent, and I felt that I must take my last look at the little band who were mounting the narrow path. They had, I hoped, escaped their greatest peril, and I could not doubt that they were in earnest, seeing that they had surmounted many difficulties already. Yet from the crag on which I stood I saw that they were still beset with perils, and so the lesson was urged on my own mind of my urgent need of unceasing watchfulness and continual prayer, that so by grace I might be kept steadfast in faith, and diligent in obedience.

At the foot of the steepest portion of the ascent there was a level spot, covered with green moss, and the gay flowers that grow in marshy places. There were firm tussocks of rushes at intervals, and those who were cautious stepped lightly from one to another of these, and passed on safely; but more than one grew confident,

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and walked heedlessly, or from levity sought amusement in trying to leap from one point of firm footing to the next, and so missed their footing, and got plunged up to the neck in a treacherous bog. Further on, there were clefts, and chasms, and fissures in the soil, not easily discernible, for the glossy foliage of the hart's tongue, or the spleenwort, usually obscured the narrowest, while over the widest and deepest was spread a tangled mass of the creeping plants of the district, bind-weed, and the everlasting pea with its showy clusters of pink and blue, the wild rose, the night-shade with its clinging stems and scarlet fruit, the bryony, the ivy, and the hop. He who walked among these needed to walk with the utmost caution, for a grievous sprain would be produced from the heedless foot slipping even into a shallow fissure; while there were chasms so deep and dangerous that he who fell into them, even if he escaped without broken bones, would be sorely delayed and hindered on his journey.

Further perils yet! Beyond the swamp, and past the tract so rent with cracks and clefts, was a spot bare and barren, covered with flakes and fragments which the heat of summer or the frosts in winter had splintered off the rocks above.

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Here the distinctness of the upward road was not lost, indeed, but it was confused in consequence of the frequency of diverging paths. The further such paths led off from the main road the fainter they grew; they came to nothing, or went suddenly downward to sloughs or precipices. Some lost themselves here; and though a few found their way back I know not that the rest did, nor what became of them, for when I saw them last a mist seemed covering them. Yet I saw enough to satisfy me that they need not have lost themselves. If they were bewildered and benighted at last, it was only through their own wilfulness. The track which had been trodden for ages was not indistinguishable by those who looked for it; there were sure marks by which to know it; and there was a long train in advance, who in their progress upwards still bore witness that it was the right road, the road that had been pointed out from the first.

And now I could not but contrast the numbers of those whom I had first seen assembled on the beach, with the little band which was at length reaching the mountain-top. Many were altogether missing; many were lingering far behind; some seemed utterly careless, and

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to have no wish to advance; while some were lying bruised or lamed by the way-side.

Sad sights these! but there was one so joyous and consolatory that it compensated for all the rest. It was to watch that happy company who now were finishing their course, and reaching their destination, to see how affectionately they helped each other onward, to hear them high above me carolling like the lark, for distant as they were I did hear them, and the sound brought back to my mind the words of the sweet singer of old, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," and taught me that great as their perils had been they must have had all along a source of strength and peace within, which the world can neither give nor take away.

Nor was this all: for of those young travellers who, in an honest and a good heart, had set forth on their journey, resolved to gain the summit of the mountain, who had adhered to their instructions, and availed themselves of the helps which had been given them, not one, no, not the youngest, and weakest, and feeblest of all, missed of success. One after another they reached the highest pass, and though, when they had reached it, the cloud covered them, and I

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saw them no more; yet, in my last view of them, the bright and glorious rays of the setting sun were resting on their heads, and I knew that their toils and labours were ended, and that all henceforward would be the brightness and the joy of home.

Long, long, I stood gazing at them, wishing that my own lot might be like theirs. But at length I perceived that a cold damp haze was floating round me; an icy breath was chilling me. I started, and saw that the sky was overcast, that the heavens were black with a coming storm, and that the cloud was rolling down the sides of the mountain towards me, though the steep and narrow path was still open.

I hastened to leave my resting place, and as I gathered my garments round me, the sound of the thrilling voice entered my ears once more; "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

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TONY DILKE.

MANY years have elapsed since I passed a few weeks in autumn at St. Bride's. It is now a place of fashionable resort. It was then an obscure fishing village, with two or three lodging-houses, let in the summer months to persons, who, like myself, required rest and change of air. It was a wild spot, little known or frequented, and by no means easy of access. Its site was a narrow cove, or bowl-shaped gap which shelved down to the sea. On either side were lofty cliffs, and above and behind there were downs which stretched away for miles and miles without a tree or a human dwelling. And the people were, for the most part, as wild as the place. I have called it a fishing village, but in former days it had been a notorious haunt for smugglers; and even at the time when I visited it, it was believed that the inhabitants made more by their

contraband trade than by their fishing. At a still earlier period, forty or fifty years ago, there was no such effective coast-guard as now almost wholly prevents smuggling. No wonder St. Bride's was a low-lived place! And at that time too, the beautiful lighthouse had not been built, which now serves as a beacon to all vessels entering the channel, and gives them timely warning to keep off the rocky coast, and that most perilous part of it, Duncliffe Bay, where, when south-westerly gales were blowing, more than a score of vessels have been wrecked in one night.

The terrible scenes however which occurred at such times, seem to have had the effect of hardening rather than of softening the hearts of the inhabitants of this part of the coast; a wreck was to them not a sight of pity but of joy. Their thought was not of assistance but of plunder. And so it came to pass that there were dark (and it is to be feared, but too true) tales of men, who had raised false beacon-lights upon Duncliffe Head for the purpose of misleading home-bound ships, and who, when in consequence a shipwreck had occurred, had not scrupled to meet and hurl backwards into the boiling surge, such few mariners as, half-perished with cold and wet,

had escaped from the sinking vessel, and were ascending the cliffs, thus preventing the appearance of any living owner to lay claim to the stranded goods. I should gladly avoid allusion to such horrors, but the mention of them is necessary for the comprehension of the ensuing pages.

My residence at St. Bride's occurred when I was a young man, for I had only been admitted to Holy Orders about a year before. While there, the clergyman of the parish was called away from home, and at his request I undertook to officiate for him in his church, and to attend to any of his parishioners who might require my services and spiritual assistance. But of course I could only go among them as an entire stranger, for I knew no one in the place except the clergyman and my landlady.

It was on the evening of All Saints' Day that returning to my lodging after a long walk, I stood for a while on the summit of the cliff which overhangs the village, to gaze upon the scene before me. The sun had set some time, and the moon was already high in the heavens, but a heavy cloud concealed her orb from my sight, though it by no means intercepted her rays from falling on the sea. Accordingly,

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along the surface of the grey water ran a wide track of pale yellow light, faint towards the shore, and now and then quite interrupted by black rocks, or long spits of sand, which spread out to a great distance, at low water; but brighter and brighter as it receded from the land, till at its brightest point, the glittering pathway was suddenly and completely obscured by a veil of grey mist. In the very line of light three or four fishing-boats were moving, and so beautiful was the scene that I watched them from the time when they were threading their way among the rocks, till they had entered within the line of mist, and then were seen no more. How striking an illustration is this, I thought to myself, both of human life, and of that most comfortable doctrine which the Church sets before us in her services for this day, that, namely, of the communion of saints. Like the occupants of those little boats, the children of God have to take their voyage across a sea often vexed with storms, and always abounding with rocks and shoals: like them, we may find a path of light, which will shine more and more the further we advance along it; like them we must, after a while, enter a region where we shall be hidden from the view of those

whom we leave behind ; yet the separation will be rather apparent than real ; we shall still be brethren, still live, and love one another, still be subjects of one kingdom, still be united by common hopes and desires, still look for re-union and rest together when our voyage is ended.

I was here interrupted in my train of thought by observing the approach of a person whose manner at once shewed me that I was the object of his search. He was a decent-looking young man whom I had observed to be very regular in his attendance at church, but this was all I knew of him.

“ I beg your pardon, Sir,” he said, “ but I believe you are the gentleman that has undertaken our parson’s duty while he is away.”

I intimated that I was, and asked how I could be of service to him.

“ It is not on my own account that I have made bold to trouble you, Sir : but I thought, perhaps, you would not be above visiting a neighbour of mine, who, I think, is not long for this world.”

“ Certainly not ; I will come with you at once. Does he live hard at hand ?”

“ No great way off, but further, I fear, Sir, than you may care to go at the end of a long

walk. Do you know the cottages at Duncliffe Chine?"

"Oh yes," I answered, "and now the tide is down, we can keep to the beach, and shall soon be there. Will you shew me the house?"

"That I will, and gladly," replied Harry Davis, "for the poor creature that's departing is in sore need of all that you can do for him."

"Who and what is he? Has he been long ill? What is his character?" were questions which I asked in a breath, for I saw by my companion's manner that there was something peculiar about the case.

"Did you never hear of old Tony Dilke, Sir? 'Claribel' Dilke as some people called him, but I reckon that no man dared call him so to his face, at least so long as he could hear it."

"No, I am quite a stranger among you."

"I suppose, Sir, you have heard tell of the wreck of the Claribel off Duncliffe Head. That's a tale which has been known far and wide. It happened when I was quite a child, but I can remember, as though it were yesterday, seeing the dead bodies left by the tide, and how the poor creatures were buried where they were found. You'll mind the row of graves

above the beach, half-way betwixt here and the Chine ; we call the place Deadmen's Dell."

" I have understood that a foreign galliot was wrecked there, and that it was supposed that some of the crew had had foul play among the wreckers, but I know no particulars. How came she to be wrecked ?"

" She did'nt know where she was ; she was misled by a light on Duncliffe Head, and got knocked to pieces on the Mill-race."

" Some accidental fire, I suppose ?"

" No, Sir," replied Davis in an under tone, and hesitating as though he would not bring the words out ; " It was not accident : it was kindled by Dilke, and some of his gang, for the very purpose of luring the vessel on to the rocks. It was an old trick of theirs, and the Claribel was neither the first nor the last ship that they brought into peril ; but she was the only one where all hands were lost, and where almost all the cargo disappeared too ?"

" Do you mean to tell me," I exclaimed in dismay, " that the man to whose death-bed you have summoned me, has not only been a robber, but in effect a murderer, as much a murderer as if he had slain the ship-wrecked crew with his own hands ?"

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“ Dilke has had hard measure if he is innocent of the heaviest part of the charge,” was the reply, “ for many people believe that his hands were actually stained with blood. But he has enough to answer for without that. If he kindled the light that caused the wreck, he was at any rate, as you say, Sir, a murderer in intention. But bad as he was, there were worse than him, at least more brutal and cruel ; there was one that went by the name of Black Bob ; and another, I remember, whom we called Pegge the Pig-killer, that was almost directly afterwards killed like a pig himself, in a fight with some of the revenue folk ; that man scrupled at nothing. And I believe it was he, and not Dilke, that did deeds of blood that night. There was a woman’s body found on the shore next day, and a young lad’s, which had wounds on them, which could hardly have been made by the rocks. And it was known that Pegge carried a butcher’s cleaver in his hand that night.”

“ But why was he not arrested, and put upon his trial ? ”

“ I believe he was arrested, but the justices could bring nothing home to him. Indeed there was no one to be found who would give evidence against him, or Dilke, or any of the gang. Ours

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was a low-life place in those days ; it's bad enough now ; and if any one was suspected of being disposed to bear witness against a neighbour, he was like enough to be found at the bottom of our cliffs with his neck broke."

" Then the magistrates dismissed the case ?"

" Yes, Sir : I have understood that there was a great talk about it at the time. But I suppose it was like a nine days' wonder, soon forgotten, except just hereabouts ; or may be it was hushed up ; smugglers and wreckers were apt to have powerful friends in those days. At any rate it was hard to find a jury to convict them."

" And what became of Tony Dilke ?"

" O, he came back to his old quarters, and lived unmolested. He built a house, (not the hovel he now occupies, he only took to that after his troubles,) and he bought a new boat, and he dressed better than before, and had money for every thing he wanted ; but for all that he seemed like one who felt something heavy at his heart. He kept more to himself, saw less of his old companions, was less keen about going to sea, and moped about the house, or along the shore. He never looked one full in the face, and he turned away from those who looked at him. I have known him, Sir, ever since I was a child,

for my mother and he were next door neighbours, but he was so stern and sad, and looked so askance at me, that I was always afraid of him."

"What has been his history of late years?"

"Why, Sir, it has been as if he were constantly under God's curse. Misfortune after misfortune has come upon him as thick as hail. My wife has often said that he puts her in mind of the wicked uncle in 'the babes of the wood.' First, three of his children, as fine lads as ever you saw, were killed all in a moment. Parts of our cliffs are very dangerous to walk under; in wet and frosty weather they are always crumbling away; and sometimes vast masses fall. While these boys were heedlessly playing beneath, an overhanging portion, many tons' weight, flaked off and crushed them to pieces. That broke the mother's heart, (she was pale and drooping before,) and sent her to her grave. Then the man himself grew poorer and poorer; no heavy losses, but nothing seemed to prosper with him. So he sold his house, or at least his creditors did, and then he took up his abode at the foot of the Chine: and a miserable place it is, Sir, as you'll see."

"Do any of his family live with him?"

“ He has no children left. There was one daughter, but she died of decline, and his only surviving son was lost one foggy night, boat and all, upon the Mill-race yonder. The old man has never had any one to live with him since. He is a lone man ; but, lonesome as he is, I do not think he would have put up with a relative in his house, even if he had any, and I know of none.”

“ I suppose by what you have stated,” said I, “ that he must be advanced in years ; has he been able to manage for himself ? ”

“ Yes, Sir, he must be a good way past seventy : but he has been a deal broken of late, and so my wife, who has been used to wash for him and clean his house, has lately prepared his meals. It was when she went into his room to get his dinner to-day, that she found him sitting shivering over the fire, and she saw in a moment that he was struck for death. He gazed at her as if he did’nt know her, and kept muttering some nonsense or other till she was quite frightened. Then she came and called me, and we got him to bed and sent for the doctor : but the poor creature does nothing but rave, and seems in such an awful state, that I thought it but right to fetch you.”

“ Has your own clergyman, Mr. Shaw, never been in the habit of visiting him ? ”

“ He has often endeavoured to do so, but the old man would never listen to him ; indeed I fear has often spoken rudely to him. But you need not fear him ; he’s past that now, Sir ; he’s very weak ; but my wife thinks he’ll come to himself by and by ; and when he feels, as he must, that he is near his end, he surely cannot but be glad to listen to you. The worst is that he is almost stone-deaf.”

“ Stone-deaf ! ” This was the finishing stroke. Every fresh circumstance I had heard during our lengthened conversation, had filled me with deeper and deeper dismay at the prospect of the task before me, but this last piece of intelligence was utterly overwhelming. It is awful enough for a minister to have to attend the dying bed of a parishioner who has been known to him for years past ; but this man was an utter stranger, that stranger was believed to have been guilty of the most fearful crimes, his end was fast approaching, his mind was wandering, and he was almost stone-deaf ! I felt utterly stunned by such a responsibility as that of ministering to such an one in his last hours. But to withdraw from it would be to incur

guilt almost as great as his own. I made my silent prayer for strength, and guidance, and light.

Up to this time our path had lain along the firm white sands of the sea-shore, but now our further progress along the beach was interrupted by a barrier of rocks and large stones which extended to a considerable distance. We therefore mounted a narrow path which wound along the face of the cliff, upwards or downwards, according as the ledges of rock afforded a firm footing; and so we passed on till we came out upon a piece of broken ground on which had been erected four or five miserable hovels, the haunt, as one should expect, of ague and low fever. It was as dreary a spot as can be imagined; the soil, a cold blue clay on which nothing would grow but reed and rag-wort, with here and there a patch of mare's-tail, or the large untidy leaves of the colt's-foot. In front rose in stern and dismal majesty the bold abrupt Duncliffe Head, frowning over the deep, and effectually excluding for many months in the year, the rays of sunshine from ever falling on the cottages, after an early hour in the afternoon. This headland stood out, an enormous mass of dark, dull red-brown colouring, separated from us by a deep

narrow chasm, through which a tiny rivulet wound its way into the sea; this was the Chine, which gave its name to the locality. To our right hand was the restless ocean; on the left at some little distance was a wall of cliff, surmounted with a fringe of stunted trees, and perforated in many places with caves, which had been the haunt of the smugglers before the cottages were built. The plot of ground on which these edifices stood was in keeping with the rest of the scene; it suggested no thoughts to the mind but those of dreariness and slovenliness. The cottages themselves were but mere huts, built of boulders, thatched with reeds, one story high, with low doors, and small windows. The approach lay through dung-heaps and pigsties; a few rows of cabbages, here and there, were the only attempts at garden; and the only marks by which one man's premises were divided from his neighbour's consisted in low broken walls of turf. Half a dozen pollard willows, from the boughs of which hung a tangled mass of nets, ropes, and cork floats, a few crab pots, and some strips of more than half putrid skate, or dog-fish, (used by the fishermen for their baits,) suspended from the forks of a dead apple-tree, completed the foreground of the dreary picture.

Through these we wound our way, mounted a dozen rude steps, and stood before a hovel (the smallest and worst of all) built, as it seemed, almost into the cliff. The light of a dimly-burning fire glimmered through the lattice. The door was open, and we entered. A woman, my companion's wife, met us, and led us at once from the outer to the inner room.

"Thank God, you're come at last, Harry," she whispered to her husband, and then curtseying, addressed me.

"It is very good of you, Sir, to come at this time of night, but poor creature, he never can hold out till morning."

"Is he worse? has the doctor seen him?" asked Harry Davis.

"Yes, Mr. Wilson was in a while since, and says nothing can be done for him, he's fairly worn out."

"Is he sensible?" I inquired.

"You'll judge for yourself, Sir," was the reply, and so we entered the chamber of death.

A rushlight, standing upon a sea-chest, threw its flickering light on the objects in the room.

There were two or three men, and as many women gathered together at the further end. They moved as we came in, and the light fell

upon a low, uncurtained bed. In it lay a tall, gaunt, hard-featured man, dying. I saw at a glance, that in health and vigour the strength of that well-built frame must have been prodigious, and his breadth of chest, as it rose and fell with his laboured breathing, at once arrested my eye; but his strength was evidently gone; the size of his bones seemed only to exhibit his emaciation more strongly; his eyes were sunk, the nose sharply pinched, his cheeks hollow and lead-like in colour, and there was already the earthy smell of death in the room. He was very restless, sometimes snorting, sometimes muttering, sometimes talking loudly, but incoherently; and he moved his head from side to side, and threw his arms out, and drew them back again continually. It was the stage of excitement which goes before the last exhaustion.

“Peace be to this house,” said I, “and to all that dwell in it!”

But alas, he who dwelt therein was no son of peace that he could say “Amen” to my prayer. The patient heeded me not.

I took the candle and went to his bed-side, in hopes that I should thus attract his attention. “How fares it with you, my friend?” I inquired, speaking slowly and distinctly, as remem-

bering his infirmity. I might as well have spoken to a stone.

“Do you try,” said I, turning to one of the women, “he will know your voice, better than that of a stranger.”

She repeated my words to him, but the result was equally unsuccessful.

The men, wild-looking fellows they were, had shewn me all respect by taking off their hats when I entered, and I thought gazed with the utmost anxiety on the unhappy man, eager to benefit him if they could. I nodded to one of them, who now approached the bedside, by way of intimating my wish that he would endeavour to make the patient comprehend that a minister of religion was near him.

“Tony,” said the man, “here’s the parson come to pray with you; try if you can’t listen to him. You’re in a very bad way; perhaps it would do you good.”

One word, and one word only seemed to reach the sick man’s ears. He thrust out his hand as if to push something aside. “Parson!” he exclaimed, “who’s talking about parsons? We don’t want any parsons here. What’s the use of them? I don’t like such black cattle!”

“Hush, hush, Tony,” cried Harry Davis, “don’t you know you are very ill?”

“Very ill, am I, and what then? The parson can't make me better; don't you know the rhyme,

‘The devil was sick, and the devil a monk would be:
The devil got well, and the devil a monk was he!’

But I'm not sick. I'm quite well. Come along, Pegge, and get the boat out; there'll be work for you, and Black Bob, and all of us, before morning! Look out! Look out! It's all right, she'll be upon the race in five minutes. We've done them nicely. Hark. Crash! there she goes! what a yell they make, and be hanged to them! never mind the fire now. It has burned long enough. The darker now the better; get down upon the beach. She'll be breaking up directly. Ha, ha! d'ye hear what Pegge says? Look at his cleaver: it's bright enough now, it will be dull by and by. ‘As fast as ever they get on shore,’ says he, ‘I'll knock 'em back again. Fight will they? Ha! ha! ha! well; we'll fight too! and kill, kill, kill. Dead men tell no tales. Why, what a chicken-hearted fool you are! ‘Give me the cleaver,’ says Pegge. Eh! how the blood runs! Yes, yes, the sea will soon wash out all that. Ugly gashes? Yes, the rocks make ugly gashes. Roll that woman on one side, and the boy. How they stare at me! take 'em away, I tell you; how can I mind all these things that are drifting in, while they keep looking at me?

Murder them? I dare you to prove it. I didn't murder them. Who saw me near them? Hark! what's that? See, see, the cliff is falling. Never mind, it will hide them; the woman and the boy with his long yellow hair. No, no, it isn't yellow hair! it's black! it's my own Willie, and Dick, and little Tony! They're crushed all to pieces. Dig 'em out, dig 'em out. O what a mash! Come away? No, I won't, I tell you I won't, won't!"

And the wretched man buried his face in his hands; remained silent for a minute or two, and then recommenced the low unintelligible muttering which had attracted my notice on my entering the room, as being a very unfavourable symptom.

I waited for a while, and again attempted to recal his attention. But he was either too deaf to hear me, or my words failed to enter into his wandering mind. He once or twice turned his face towards me, and I almost hoped that I should be able to attract his notice; but it was a delusive hope; almost before I could address myself to him, he was again rambling incoherently. So after remaining an hour or more by the bed-side, and finding my efforts useless, I addressed myself to the bystanders.

“ What an awful lesson is this, my friends, to us all! What a warning to prepare, while life and health remain to us, and our senses are undisturbed by disease, for that hour which may come at any time, and must come at last! If our Blessed Saviour, in whom was no sin, felt himself constrained to say, ‘I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work,’ how needful is it that we should finish what we have to do,—to make our peace with God, before our allotted day of grace is over! Not one of us has any superfluous time, no years nor days to spare. And so sure as God sees us wasting our time, or putting off attending to the work of our salvation to what we suppose will be a more convenient season, may we expect that He will deny us that convenient season on which we reckon. We tempt Him to cut us off in a moment, or leave us, like our poor brother here, delirious or senseless on our dying beds. I believe, too, that the experience of all those whose office it has been to attend the dying, goes to shew, that men for the most part die as they have lived. It is very, very rare to find a man who has forgotten God all his life, remember Him on his death-bed. And he who deliberately puts God out of his thoughts, or,

which is the same thing, puts the thought of Him away as much as he can, is almost sure to be taken unawares at last. According to His own warning, it is precisely in such an hour as he thinks not that his Lord cometh to call him to account. I fear, from all I have heard of your unhappy neighbour, that he has been a very hardened and determined sinner. But it is not our business to judge him. What concerns us is that we look to ourselves, and take heed that we do not delay our own repentance till our day of grace be past. There is only one thing which we can now do for him, and I am sure you will all do that willingly. Let us pray God to have mercy on him, to restore his senses, and awaken him to a true sense of his condition, so that if it be possible, even now, at the eleventh hour, he may turn with his whole heart to his offended Maker. Let us beseech God not to take him out of this world till he is fitted for his awful change, so that when he goes forth to meet the Bridegroom, he may not find the door for ever shut against him !”

Then we all knelt down, and when we had joined in earnest prayer, I left the house with a heavy heart, promising to return early the following morning.

I did so ; but if the scene had been sad the night before, it was sadder still then. There was no more of wild incoherent talking, or restless tossing of the limbs. All was still enough ; but it was the stillness of exhaustion. Life was ebbing fast away, and the dying man was apparently in a state of stupor ; every avenue of sense seemed closed, and he was as much dead to the world around him, as if the heavy soil were already heaped up six feet above him, and the grass were growing on his grave. It was only by a fluttering pulse, and a slight rattling in his breathing, that the presence of life was discernible, for his eyes were closed, the jaw was drooping, and the extremities were cold and clammy. He had raved and tossed himself about, the poor women who were watching over him told me, till his strength was spent, and had been lying like a log ever since. He had never shewn the slightest symptom of returning intelligence.

“ We have prayed for him as well as we could, Sir,” said one of them, “ and Harry Davis, who is a better scholar than we are, read prayers out of the book you left behind ; but he took no notice.”

“ You have done all you could, all that any one can do. He must be left to God’s disposal.

He must bear his own burden. Only, while there is life, there is hope, for there is nothing impossible with God. And therefore, while we see life in him, we must continue to intercede for him, remembering what St. James tells us of the efficacy of effectual fervent prayer."

So we knelt down and prayed again, and repeated our intercessions at intervals during the day; but he in whose behalf we prayed remained as senseless as the bed upon which he was lying. Then, towards noon, I turned my steps once more homewards; desiring that I might be sent for immediately, if any change should take place, but well satisfied from what I saw of the patient's state, that only one change yet remained for him, though the event might be delayed for a few hours longer.

Having received no fresh intelligence at a late hour in the afternoon, I again proceeded along the beach towards Duncliffe Chine. It was a wild November evening, and threatened to be a stormy night. Towards the horizon the sea was almost black; above that sharp and well-defined line, the sky was of a dull lurid crimson for some brief space, and then came banks of heavy clouds, piled one above another, dark (yet not so dark as the sea) at their base, and gradually passing

into lighter shades above my head. There was a cold silvery flicker on the surface of the water, which was already a good deal agitated with the rising wind, and I observed that the sea was no longer clear and transparent, but thick and turbid, as though the depths were already stirred. And so observing, my thoughts naturally passed from the troubled element to the unhappy man whose career had been so rough and dark, and whose end threatened to be so awful; and the words of the prophet came like a warning voice into my ears; "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

And now the increasing power of the wind, with frequent scuds of heavy rain, and the noise and spray of the rising tide, dashing among the rocks, made me hurry forward, and I was soon at the cottage; but no light gleamed through the window, and the door was shut. I lifted the latch, and entered the dwelling, but no one came forward to meet me, so I passed on to the inner room, the door to which was also closed, but the rays of a candle shone through the joints of the ill-closed wood-work.

I knocked, but no one answered. Then I

opened the door. No living soul was there. A rushlight was burning on the sea-chest. And upon the bed lay a clean white sheet. And there was the outline of a corpse beneath it.

My approach to the cottage had not been observed in the twilight by any of the occupants of the neighbouring dwellings, who, wearied with watching, had returned home for a while, after having completed the needful arrangements for the departed; and, owing to the accidental circumstance of his making a call on the way, I had missed meeting Harry Davis, who had gone to St. Bride's to inform me that an hour or so before, Tony Dilke had passed to his account. He had never rallied, never spoken, never stirred after I left him. By degrees the breathing became slower, till there was a longer and a longer interval between each faint gasp. The bystanders held their own breath, and listened nervously, for the end was now close at hand. Then came another gasp, longer, fuller, deeper. Was all over? No: it was heard once more. Again they listened, waited for its repetition. But this time in vain. Henceforth, and for ever, all was still. He was dead! Dead: gone to meet his God!

And of the result of that meeting none shall

know till we all stand before the judgment-seat. Yet he, ere the echo of that last gasp had died away, had doubtless felt a foretaste of his future doom, and understood what was comprehended in the threat which he had so often despised, that that doom should be eternal.

Thus died Dilke the Wrecker. But what have any of us to do, the reader will ask, with such a case as his? Hardly any of us would ever have the opportunity of committing such a crime as his, and of those who had the opportunity, scarcely one would ever feel the temptation to commit it. In these days, it is surely unnecessary to warn Christians against such a horrible offence. I trust it is so. But there is an offence of even deeper dye than his, of which people make very little account, and which, it is to be feared, is very common.

His murderous act consisted in kindling a light on the cliffs, with the deliberate intention of thereby misleading unfortunate mariners, and luring them to a course which would bring their vessel, and most probably themselves, to destruction. It was a deed of atrocious wickedness. But it was only the bodies of men which his evil designs could reach. Are there none who use a like process for the destruction of their brethren's souls?

If any man deliberately calls evil good, and good evil, let him know assuredly that his sin is near akin to that of Dilke the Wrecker. If any man tries to corrupt the innocence of the young and inexperienced, by making a mock at sin, thereby luring them on to become the devil's prey, is not he the worse murderer of the two?

If any man attempts by the force of mockery or ridicule to undermine the Christian principles of others, thereby imperilling their souls, wherein is he more excusable than the ignorant and brutal wrecker?

If any man, in order that he may not be alone in his wickedness, endeavours to weaken the conscientious scruples of others who are afraid to offend God, what is this but trying to destroy their souls? what is he but a wrecker and a murderer?

If any man for the gratification of his own fleshly lusts and passions, tries to lead the pure and modest, aye, or even the impure and immodest, into the commission of sins of uncleanness, is not he doing all that is in his power to ruin a soul for which Christ died? And if he succeeds, will not his victim's blood be on his head?

If any man in the boldness of professed, or in the recklessness of practical unbelief, makes it his object, directly or indirectly, to unsettle the religious faith of others, is not he doing a devil's work? Is not he, like the wrecker, seeking to accomplish a work of cruel destruction?

And to sum up all in a few words, if any man knowingly misleads, or perverts the judgment of others, in order that he may thereby make them as bad as himself, is he not to all intents and purposes the murderer of their souls? Has he not cause to feel that the voice of his brother's blood will cry out against him?

Perhaps some of us have never seen the matter in this light before. If we have not, it behoves us to think seriously about it now. By and by it may be too late. It may please God that the disease, which is destined to remove us hereafter from this world, may leave us on our dying beds delirious, or senseless. But God forbid that we should be haunted with such visions as those which thronged around the dying wrecker! God forbid that we should pass from this world to the next with the guilt of having effected the eternal ruin of a brother's soul upon our own!

THE DAY THAT NEVER CAME.

Elmhurst Vicarage, February 25th, 1832.—I had an early visit this morning from the good old housekeeper at the Hall. “I am anxious to speak to you, Sir,” she said, “about Alick, the under butler.” “I am very glad of it,” I replied, “I was anxious to hear of him from some of his fellow-servants. He is probably more open with them than he will be with me. He is so unwilling to enter into conversation with me, that although he cannot avoid me now, as he did before he was confined to his arm-chair, I find I can make no progress with him whatever. It seems as though he had resolutely hardened his heart against receiving God’s message through God’s minister. And therefore, perhaps, the only chance of reaching his conscience, is through the means of those who, like yourself, have the awful warning of his example constantly before you, who have almost hourly intercourse with him, and who have opportunities of saying things to him, which even now, at this, which seems to us

like "the eleventh hour" of his unhappy life, may, by God's great mercy, awaken him to a sense of his danger. It would be a grievous sin, either from fear or false shame, to neglect such an opportunity; but, as respects yourself, I am quite sure that instead of shrinking from so unpleasant, and, it may be, so thankless a task, you would rather make than miss an occasion of being of use to him."

"That would I indeed," replied my visitor with hearty earnestness, "and I think there is more of an opening than there has been hitherto. He is much worse, and feels himself to be so. The water has risen very much in his body; his head and breast are greatly swollen, and Mr. Graves who saw him yesterday, told me that he did not think he could last many days."

"May God have mercy on him, then," I exclaimed. "Is he aware of his situation?"

"Not of the extent of his danger, Sir; but he has long known that his symptoms are dropsical, and he certainly thinks ill of himself now."

"That is the reason, is it," I asked, "why you have more hope than you had of his beginning to think of the things which belong unto his peace, before they are for ever hidden from his eyes?"

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“ Yes, Sir, and he said more to me yesterday, when I was talking with him, than he ever did before. To be sure it was little enough, but it was better than nothing, for it shewed that, at any rate, he was thinking serious thoughts. He had been in a good deal of pain, and was saying that he thought he grew worse instead of better. I answered that I feared he did, and that there seemed so little likelihood of amendment from the usual course of such diseases as his, that there would be but little to make him wish to linger on in this world, beyond the desire, which I hoped he had, to prepare himself for the next. Well, Sir, he turned his head away impatiently, and took no notice at first, but by and by, when I was beginning to think of something else, he gave a kind of a groan that quite made me start, and fixing his eyes upon me, with, O, such a dismal look! he said, almost in a whisper, ‘ I’ll tell you what it is, Mrs. Miles. This is a very ugly world. I don’t care to live in it, and yet I’m afraid to die out of it.’ ”

“ Well, Mrs. Miles,” I replied, “ this was, as you truly say, not much to give us encouragement with respect to him; but it is clear that your remark touched him closely: the sting was left in the wound. Did he say no more?”

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“Nothing, Sir. And I thought it best to leave him for awhile with his own thoughts. Later in the day I took him that book you gave me, *The pious Christian’s Daily Preparations for Death and Eternity*; but when he had just looked at the title, he laid it down again. Would he not use it? I asked: and he answered, ‘By and by.’ But, Sir, we all know too well what ‘by and by’ means from his lips.”

“Yes, indeed,” I answered, “for years past his miserable downward course has been the result of his irresolution to face his known duties, and of his cowardly shrinking and putting off till to-morrow what he was fully conscious that he ought to do at once. You wish me to come down to the hall and see him? I fear he has expressed no such wish on his own part.”

“No, he has not,” said Mrs. Miles sadly, “but it is such a dreadful thing to see a fellow creature passing out of the world, and so unfitted for a change, as Alick is, that I thought it best to let you know what has occurred.”

“I am much obliged to you, and will return with you to the hall at once. You have acted like a good Christian in all you have done for him for many weeks past, and I trust you will continue your good offices. You may be of in-

calculable service, for if he continues to be as unwilling to benefit by my ministrations as he has been hitherto, you may have opportunities and power to say things with effect, which would make no impression if they came from me. At any rate, being as you are, at the head of a large establishment, you can influence his fellow-servants to be diligent in their prayers for him, that God would yet give him grace and space for repentance."

February 26th.—On arriving at the Hall yesterday afternoon, the first news that I heard was that Alick Martin had, about an hour before, fallen out of his chair in a fit, (he has not been able to sleep in a bed for the last two months,) that he was black in the face when taken up, and that for some time he was supposed to be dying. Under the remedies applied by the medical attendant he somewhat rallied. I saw Mr. Graves subsequently, who informed me that he had left him in so nervous and excited a state, that a direct intimation on my part of the greatness of his danger, would in all probability cause his immediate death. It appears that so lately as within the last week, the unhappy man had contrived to get ale and spirits smuggled into his bed-room by the help of an ignorant stable

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boy, nay, that having been debarred from a greater supply from the Hall cellar than the doctor permitted, he had actually run into debt for spirits at the next market-town, to the amount of two pounds. So devoted is he to liquor!

O that those who are hesitating between self-indulgence and self-denial, that those who allow themselves to commit sin under the impression that they can leave it off, and forsake it, when they please, and who think that a death-bed is the place for repenting of their sins, and settling their accounts with God, could see the sights which a clergyman is compelled to see continually! Surely, one such case as that of Alick Martin would be enough to make them know that they have fallen into a deadly error, would compel them to realize that truth which men are so very slow to believe, but which all experience goes to confirm, that, for the most part, men die as they have lived, and that at any rate the cases are few and far between where any marked change of character takes place on a dying bed!

When first I knew Alick Martin, he was as promising a lad, and one who had as fair opportunities of becoming a good man, and doing his

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duty in that state of life to which it pleased God to call him, as any young person who has been under my pastoral care. He came, when a mere boy, from a neighbouring parish, to work in the Hall gardens. There he was found to be so handy and obliging, that he soon attracted the notice of our present Squire's mother, who was then alive; and he was ultimately taken into the house as her page. The old gardener strongly objected to the change. "You will turn a good labourer," he said, "into a bad footman. The boy is well enough as boys go, but I have seen that in him which satisfies me that he will never be able to stand the temptations of the servants' hall. He is a boy that wants a sharp eye over him, and few indulgences. While I can look after him, and he lives on what he can get at home, he is likely to be steady; but if he gets to beef and beer, and goes up to London with the family, it's a great chance if you don't ruin him, body or soul, or may be both."

"Why so, Yates?" asked the old lady.

"Because, ma'am, he's a boy that can't say No: and because he's inclined to put off till to-morrow what he might do to-day."

Blunt Mr. Yates's objections had no weight

with Mrs. Fielding; the boy was taken into the household, and for a time the gardener seemed a false prophet, Alick was as handy within as he had been without doors.

It was at that time that he was first brought into communication with myself. He was old enough to be one of the candidates for Confirmation, and he used to come down to the vicarage for instruction. He was sharper, and more fluent, and readier with an answer than most of his companions, but I remember, even then, being oppressed with the feeling that his was rather head-knowledge than heart-knowledge, and that there was none, or at any rate but little of the earnestness and reverence which I witnessed with satisfaction in many a duller boy.

Confirmation is one of those mysterious turning-points in our lives, on which it would often seem as though our eternal destiny depended. No doubt God vouchsafes us many such, in His mercy, throughout the course of our mortal career, but some seem to ourselves more marked than others, as if by the line of conduct there chosen the issue of a life was determined. The notion may be true or false, but it has at least this advantage connected with it, that to

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those who hold it, it affords a most urgent warning never to let slip an opportunity, never to put off a known duty, never to delay it.

Of those who were confirmed at the same time with Alick Martin all, I believe, received the Holy Communion for the first time on the following Sunday except himself. When, after the Confirmation, I spoke to him of his attendance at that blessed Sacrament, he seemed fully to enter into all I said, to have neither doubts nor scruples, even to wish to avail himself of so great a privilege; but he hoped he might be allowed to defer it till the next time, till the first Sunday in the next month. "No time like the present time, my boy," said I, "why do you wish to absent yourself?" "I am very anxious to go home next Sunday, Sir, to see my sister." "Next Sunday is the Wake Sunday at Weston, I suppose, is it?" The lad blushed, and answered that it was.

I was grieved, but hardly surprised, at finding how little serious thought he could have as to the nature of those vows which he had so lately repeated with his own lips. So I spoke to him very kindly, but very earnestly, especially pointing out how much of temptation and sin were the accompaniments of a village wake, so that

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no person at all in earnest about his soul, would have any thing to do with one, and urging him to deny himself, and cross his inclinations of going home, and thus shew his heavenly Father that he was determined to devote himself to His service at once and for ever.

He left me, promising to follow my advice, but Sunday came, and he was not among those who presented themselves at the Lord's table. During the month ensuing, I had occasion to observe that if he happened to see me at a distance, he contrived to avoid me, and that whenever I was at the Hall, he was sure to be out of the way. However I was determined not to let him slip out of my hands, if I could help it, and accordingly, having enquired for him on one occasion, and been told that he was out, I said quietly, that I could wait till he came in. There was no escape, for it was late in the afternoon, and the family dinner-hour was at hand, so he presently made his appearance. After some confusion and awkward excuses, he seemed to pluck up courage, and said, the Holy Communion was "a very serious thing," and that he wished for more time for consideration before he received it. I answered, as on a former occasion, that there was no time like

the present, and that if he had any real doubts or scruples, I was quite ready to help and instruct him to the best of my power, but that this was one of those cases in which delay was not likely to be of service to him, on the contrary, the longer he delayed, the less likely he was to be fit or willing to approach the Lord's table. I repeated the instructions he had already received as to what is required in the way of preparation, and reminded him that none of us go there because we are worthy, but because we desire to become more worthy.

He was much obliged to me, he answered, for what I had said, and would think it over, and hoped to come, if not on Sunday next, yet very shortly; he only wished to put it off for a little while.

“ Well, Alick, I cannot force you to come; but I repeat my warning, if you do not come *at once*, the probability is that you will never come. God is not mocked. If He sees you trifling with Him, He may leave you to yourself, and let you go your own way without giving you any further warnings. Remember the case of Felix. He trembled once at the warnings addressed to him by St. Paul; but he fancied he should attend better at a more convenient

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season. So far as we know that season never came, and the trembling-fit which might have saved him, passed away for ever."

Once more the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in Elmhurst church, but Alick Martin withdrew as soon as the sermon was ended. Another month passed, and by that time the family at the Hall were gone up to London for the season; thence they removed to the sea-side; and so it was late in autumn before they got home again.

To Alick Martin the change from the country to the town had proved one of unqualified evil. All the bad points about him had become worse, and there was that bold look and off-hand manner which shewed that he was aping the ways of the most offensive (and, it is to be feared, most vicious and profligate) class of servants,—the footmen of "great houses" in London. All his simplicity and modesty were departed from him, and when I met him one day, and enquired whether he had become a communicant, he answered in a tone which might have come from Gallio himself, that he "hoped there would be time enough to think of those things by and by." There was nothing of which I could complain in his manner to myself,—nothing saucy or impertinent; but

he evidently wished me to infer that he did not consider himself in any respect amenable to me for his religious conduct, and that the less I interfered with him the better he should be pleased.

I soon saw that my apprehensions were realized. At first there was nothing very marked in Alick Martin's misconduct. He was very rarely to be seen at Church, and his visits to the House of God grew rarer and rarer, till at length they almost wholly ceased. Occasionally his master would remark upon his absence, when for a Sunday or two he might be seen in his place, and then would absent himself for months. Thus he was living without God, and in gradual process of hardening his heart. By and by rumours reached me that he was growing "very gay," as my informant expressed it, in other words, that he was in the habit of indulging in those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, which, more than any other sin, corrupt and taint the whole man, defiling the mind and conscience, grieving and driving away the Holy Spirit, who made, in our baptism, our mortal bodies His living temples.

After awhile, further tidings reached me that he had become partial to liquors, that he was often seen in a state of at least partial intoxica-

tion, and indeed, was not rarely drunk. Had any proof of this reached his master, Alick would have been dismissed from his situation: but many things go on in large establishments of which it is impossible that the master should be cognizant, so long as servants feel bound together by a system of false honour to conceal each other's offences. A tale-bearer is a very odious person, whatever be his rank in life; and a servant who tries to exalt himself in the good opinion of his master by contrasting his own faithfulness with the faults or failures of his fellow-servants, is deservedly avoided and disliked. But this is a very different thing from warning a master of evils going on in his household with the motive of checking them, and thus preventing a master's reputation from suffering, and a fellow-servant from getting into confirmed habits of sin. O that servants could be brought to see, as God sees, the wickedness and cruelty of shielding and concealing the delinquencies of their companions! It is wickedness, because, in so far as they see their master injured either in character or pocket, by one of their fellow-servants, and do not apprize him of it, they are abettors and accomplices of the crime: it is cruelty, because such an act is, in reality, the helping a fellow-creature in his

downward course to hell. And yet this is one of the commonest sins committed in every household. There are, for the most part, but two occasions on which servants will speak out honestly as to the evil courses of a companion : the one is when they themselves are injured by his proceedings ; the other is when he has left his situation, and the knowledge of his former transgressions can only give pain to his master. Then, indeed, they are open-mouthed, as though they thought that their unsparing condemnation, when speaking has become useless, would be a sufficient atonement for their silence when speaking might have done some good.

There was nobody at Elmhurst Hall who was right-minded enough, or straightforward enough, or who thought it "their business" to apprise Mr. Fielding of Alick Martin's propensities, and so he went on for a long time in his wickedness without any check whatever.

However, as I was returning through the park in my way home from a person who lay dying in the village, quite late one Sunday night, I was startled by hearing a sound like a groan very near me, and turning my lantern in the direction whence it proceeded, I saw a man lying under a tree, whom, on closer inspection, I found to be

Martin in a state of extreme and helpless intoxication. I soon saw that I could do nothing with him by myself, so I proceeded at once to the Hall stables, and gave notice where he was to be found.

The next morning, while I was reflecting with myself what was the best course to be pursued with respect to him, it was announced that he was at the vicarage, and wished to see me. Accordingly he was soon in my study, in a state of extreme distress and agitation, pouring forth all manner of excuses, beseeching me to "forgive him," and not to tell Mr. Fielding; for that if I did, he knew he should be turned off without a character, and that would be his ruin.

"I have nothing to forgive, Alick," I said; "your offence is not against me, but against God, whose day you profaned, and whose Holy Spirit you have grieved by your great offence."

"But indeed, Sir, I am deeply grieved at having committed it, and very much ashamed of myself. And it was not altogether my own fault; I was led into it. Yesterday was the Wake-Sunday at Weston, when I always go home for the day, and"

"The Wake-Sunday, was it? Alick, how many

years have passed away since the Wake-Sunday was your excuse for not presenting yourself at the Lord's table?"

"I am not sure, Sir," he answered, in some confusion. "Five, or six. Six, I believe."

"And I warned you then, did I not, that if you put off your attendance at the Communion for such a reason as that, the probability was, that in spite of your intentions and promises, you would never be seen there?"

He could not deny it.

"Have you ever been at the Lord's table?"

He dropped his head, and answered that he had not: "but," added he, "I do mean to go there."

"God forbid!" I answered hastily. "What! a confirmed drunkard to go there, with his sin unforsaken? That would, indeed, be to eat and drink condemnation to yourself!"

"No, no, Sir. I did not mean just now: but before I die. I know I am not in a right state now."

"Alick," I replied, "one who is not in a right state to receive the Holy Communion, is not in a fit state either to live or die!"

"God help me, Sir, I fear that is my state."

"I fear it is," I replied, "I cannot doubt that

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it is. But He to whom you pray to help you, will help you (if He sees you in earnest) to become what now you are not. He can give you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. Are you in the habit of praying to Him?"

"Sometimes, Sir, that is to say, when I remember."

I shook my head. "If you had prayed, prayer would have made you leave off sinning. As it is, sinning, I fear, has made you leave of praying."

"But, indeed, Sir, I used to say my prayers very regularly for a long while, but I did not find I was any the better for it."

"How could you expect to be, while all the time you were plunging deeper and deeper into the mire of sin, and forgetting God and His laws more and more? What has been your life ever since you were confirmed? You then vowed to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. But what has been your course? Do not think, that because I have said but little that I have not had my eye upon you. Are you not a stranger in God's House? Are you not notoriously an unchaste and unclean person? Are you not fast becoming an habitual drunkard?"

“You are hard upon a fallen man, Sir,” replied Martin bitterly.

“No, I am not,” I answered. “But my office is to warn you of the truth, and to tell you those things which others may be too false, or cowardly, or careless to tell you. And if you want a more unprejudiced witness than you think me, you have two at hand who will not deceive, a witness from without and a witness from within. Turn to the first looking-glass you meet with, and there you will see one who is an old man at five and twenty, one who will be a dead man before he is thirty, if he continues his present courses. Turn to the voice of conscience, and you will hear what is the path you have been pursuing, and whither it will lead you.”

“I am afraid, Sir, that somebody has maligned me to you. I am not so bad as you think. I know I have been too gay, but I assure you I am sincere in my intention to reform.”

“When do you mean to begin?” I asked.

“As soon as I can,” was the reply.

“Do you mean to begin to-day? now, at this present moment? If you do, I will pray with you for God’s pardon on the past, and give you such advice and rules, plain and few, as may

help you, by God's grace, to keep to your resolutions."

He hesitated. He knew, he said, he should be wanted at the Hall: there was company expected. Perhaps I would excuse him now, and he would come another day.

"If you go away now," I said sadly and solemnly, "you will never come again. If you put off the work of repentance, knowingly, and wilfully put it off to another day, mark my words, that day will never come."

"Oh Sir, do not say so. I hope, I feel sure it will. But, Sir, I trust you will not get me turned out of my place. I trust you will not mention to Mr. Fielding what has occurred."

"I shall not be so bad a friend either to yourself or Mr. Fielding as not to tell him; but I shall take time to consider as to the recommendation with which I shall accompany my statement. That will, in great measure, depend upon yourself." So he left me.

The end was that Alick Martin's continuance in his situation was made conditional upon his breaking through his habit of drunkenness, for it was feared that if he were dismissed at once he might be driven to despair, and so all hope of amendment done away.

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It has almost become a proverb that no drunkard is ever really reformed, so difficult is it for such persons to do without the excitement of drink when once they have accustomed themselves to it. And there were few encouraging symptoms in Alick's case, for he seemed to have no steadiness of purpose, and his habitual shrinking from beginning the work of reformation at once, were much against him.

However, his kind-hearted master acted for the best, and for a time a marked change took place in the unhappy man's habits. He was never seen in liquor; and he was for several months regular at Church: but alas! there was no evidence of true repentance, and real conversion. He was one of those who in time of temptation are sure to fall away because they have no firmness or depth of principle.

About a year ago Mr. Fielding's health was in so unsatisfactory a state that he was obliged to go abroad, and the consequence was that Martin, who, from having been a page, had gradually worked his way up to the office of under-butler, was now left with almost all his time upon his own hands, for he had little more to do than to take charge of and clean the family plate.

This made him idle, and the result of idleness

was that he rapidly relapsed into all his former habits, and his taste for drink assumed an aggravated form. Ale was discarded for spirits.

So he went on, day after day, and week after week, till his health was quite broken; dropsical and other symptoms of a failing constitution made their appearance, and about a fortnight ago he had a frightful epileptic seizure. Hoping that at length I might find my way to his conscience, I lost no time in visiting him. On the day succeeding that of his attack I called at the Hall, and to my surprise found him in his pantry. He looked miserably haggard and ill, with swelled legs and an uncertain step, and trembling hands; and the expression of nervous distress which spread over his countenance as soon as he saw me, shewed me at once that I was an unwelcome visitor. But I felt that I had now to grapple with what probably would be a last opportunity.

I enquired as to his condition kindly and sympathizingly: but I soon saw that it was his wish to make as light of his illness as possible. He had been rather unwell for some weeks past, he said, and had had, he believed, an attack of giddiness, which caused him to fall, yesterday: but to-day he was much better, nearly well. And

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then he took up a piece of leather which was lying on the table, and began to rub some of his spoons, by way of a hint to me that he had no time for conversation.

I took no notice of this, and went straight to the point at once ; “ No, Alick, you are not nearly well, and I should fear are never likely to be. It is clear that you have undermined your constitution, and that your state is becoming a very precarious one.”

No answer ; but a nervous twitching at the corners of the mouth, and the leather applied to the plate more vigorously.

“ I think you know me well enough, Alick, to be sure that I do not say this to pain you unnecessarily : but I stand in the position of one who has a message to you from God, and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I must deliver it, that so at least the guilt of your blood may not rest upon my head. I am come this day to warn you once more that your course of life for a long time past has been one of utter forgetfulness of God, and defiance of Him ; to intreat you to consider what the consequences will be to yourself, and so to induce you, if so it may be, to devote to Him in repentance the remnants of that life which you have so miserably wasted ; and lastly, to assure

you of my earnest desire to be of all the service I can to you, as your minister.”

“Oh, Sir, I don’t doubt your good intentions towards me; and I am much obliged to you; but I am more nervous than I used to be, and I don’t find myself able to hold a religious conversation. I hope I am not so bad as you think me. I hope I can lift up my heart to God, though I may not be able to talk like a clergyman.”

“I hope that you both can and do lift up your heart in prayer to Him whom you have so long neglected, and if your heart be right with Him, it matters little whether you can talk on religious subjects or no. My object is not to lead you to talk, but to induce you to think; and to urge upon you that time is swiftly passing,—that the night cometh, when no man can work.”

Conscience apparently here aided me, for the unhappy man fell into a state of extreme agitation, and threw himself into a chair which stood near.

“I know what you would say, Sir; and I trust I am not forgetful that life is uncertain; but really these discussions agitate me so much! I hope you will excuse me, Sir, but I am not equal to them.”

“ Every day that you put off the work of looking into the true state of your soul, the task will become more and more agitating. You are more equal to hearing and knowing the truth now, than you will be when disease has taken a greater hold upon you.”

“ Surely, Sir, the delay of a few days till I am stronger” (he forgot he had just boasted that he was “ nearly well !”) “ will be no great matter.”

“ Nay,” said I, “ how know you, if you neglect God to-day, that He will give you even a few days more? We cannot tell what a day may bring forth. Only of this we are sure, that He allots to none of us more days than are needful for the business of working out our salvation ; and that they who have wasted time in running the race that is set before them, cannot but be far behind, cannot but be in extreme danger of not being able to make up the time they have lost.”

“ Sir, you have such a stern, I may say austere way of putting things, that you quite make religion repulsive to me.”

“ I am here, Alick, to tell you the simple truth ; not, God forbid ! disposed to keep back one single word from you of all God’s gracious promises in Christ Jesus, our only Saviour, to the returning prodigal ; but, on the other hand, not daring to

preach peace where there is no peace, or where, at any rate, there ought not to be peace. Far, far better that you should know the truth, and profit by your knowledge, at any cost, or present pain and misery, rather than that you should slumber on in false security, to wake at last in hell. Think, Alick, how many warnings you have had, how many warnings you have neglected, and how after each neglected warning you have fallen into a worse condition than you were before! The warning you now hear, may be your last. Are you determined to neglect it, as you have neglected all the others?"

So direct an appeal seemed intolerable. The sick man started up, gasped for breath, and then in an irritated tone exclaimed, as he busied himself once more among the plate, "Indeed, Sir, you are too hard upon me. I am not well to-day. And I have so much work to do, that I must beg you to put off what you had more to say. I assure you, Sir," he added, scarcely knowing, I believe, what he said, "I assure you I have no time."

"Well, I cannot compel you to listen to me, Alick, if you are determined not to do so. But there is one thing which you must find time for, and that, if I mistake not, speedily."

“*Must!*” cried he hastily, with an expression of something between a smile and a sneer on his face—“for what must I find time?”

“To die, and meet your God, Alick!”

And with those words I left him.

The same night he had a succession of fits, and thenceforward was confined to his bed-chamber. I have seen him daily, but sometimes he has been dozing, and sometimes in so much pain that it was impossible to fix his attention; latterly he has, at times, been wandering or light-headed. I have talked to him, read to him, prayed with him, sometimes, I fear, against his inclination. At other times he has assented in a dull apathetic manner to all I have said: but nothing seems to have reached his heart. Such was the state of things when Mrs. Miles came to me yesterday morning. I tremble for the tidings I may hear to-morrow.

February 27th.—The medicines prescribed by Mr. Graves yesterday have produced so much temporary relief, that when I visited Alick Martin this morning, he seemed quite revived. But alas, alas! the day has passed without my being able to make any impression on his heart. All his perceptions seem dulled and blunted. It is as if he could not take in, or understand

his true condition. He shed a few tears, when I told him that he must look on himself as a dying man, but the nervous flutter was soon followed by a stolid vacant stare. He did not object to my praying beside him: he even said, "Thank you, Sir," as I rose from my knees, but there was nothing to shew that he was attending, or feeling, or joining in what was said. And all that I could elicit when I tried to probe his spiritual disease more deeply was that he was very tired, and hoped I would be pleased to put off my remarks till the next day. "To-morrow I shall be happy to listen."

"To-morrow, Alick, you may be in another world. You are tolerably free from suffering to-day: your mind is clear to-day: do not lose these precious hours. God gives you one more call. 'To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart!'"

"To-morrow, Sir, to-morrow!" was the rejoinder; and with that he turned his face to the wall, as if resolute that he would hear no more.

May God have mercy upon him, and give life and power to my unsuccessful and imperfect ministrations!

February 28th.—Alick Martin reported to be

much worse. He has been rambling and light-headed ever since midnight,—so Mrs. Miles sends me word. On arriving at the Hall, and proceeding to his room, I was met at the foot of the stairs by one of his fellow-servants, who described him as having been raving all the morning, and that he had now become so violent that it required the strength of two men to hold him in his bed. “It is no use your going to him, Sir: you might as well talk to a tree; he is so changed in appearance: it will only shock you.”

“It will not be that which will shock me,” I replied, “and I would not on any account stay away. If he be, as you say, quite unable to pray for himself, so much the greater is the need that we should pray for him.”

On entering the sick man’s room, the sight which presented itself to me was indeed an appalling one. A strong man on either side of the bed was forcibly retaining the patient where he lay. Poor fellow! his face and head were much swollen with dropsy; he appeared to be in a profuse perspiration, the effect of his violent struggles; his eyes were fixed and glaring; his looks wild; his voice hoarse and altered. He spoke or shouted continually. Now and then he

seemed to allude to former occupations, but generally his purpose seemed to be to drive some invisible objects which terrified him from crowding round his bed;—a circumstance of very common occurrence, where there is fever or head-affection;—nevertheless there was something inexpressibly awful in seeing one who had been the slave of sin for so many years, and who was, as it seemed, so near the threshold of the unseen world, struggling to escape from unseen tormentors,—now throwing his arms wildly around him,—now striving to hide his face in the bed-clothes, and more than once shrieking out in terror, “Keep them off! keep them off.”

Of course he did not know me. It was vain speaking to him, so I addressed myself to his fellow-servants, of whom there were several in the room. “How awful a lesson is this, how terrible a warning to every one of us, not to delay, no, not for a single hour, the work of repentance! This is the man who for years past has been putting off that work to a future day, to a day that in all likelihood may never come. Surely it is a sore tempting of God to trust to a death-bed repentance, as it is called! Surely the probability is that to those who reckon on it, it will never be vouchsafed! I would not speak un-

kindly or uncharitably, but I must speak plainly. You all know what Alick's life has been, and here is the end of it. It is not for us to pass judgment on him. He, perhaps, had never such a warning as we have before our eyes this day. But at any rate we shall be without excuse in the day of judgment, if we fail to profit by what we now see." I was continually interrupted in this short address by the struggles and cries and exclamations of the sick man ; so I only added, " I had hoped that it might have pleased God in His mercy to have afforded him the sense and the will to join in our prayers, and perhaps He may yet do so, in answer to our petitions ; all however that we can do now is to be earnest in prayer for him, that God would yet give him grace to repent, and time for repentance. Let us form no hasty conclusions as to his state, but while we intercede for him, let us pray for strength to amend ourselves !"

Then we all kneeled down, and I offered such prayers as were suitable in behalf of an impenitent sinner in a state of delirium.

March 1st.—Mr. Graves, the surgeon, announces that mortification has commenced in Martin's legs, and consequently in a few hours more he must pass to his account. The scene

in the chamber of the dying man was a mere repetition of that of yesterday, only the sufferer's appearance is more shocking than it was, owing to the progress of the disease. I remained with him some hours, and prayed with his fellow-servants, for him and for ourselves, from time to time: but Alick himself never returned to a state of consciousness for so much as a single minute.

March 2nd.—Alick Martin is dead. He continued in the same state of delirium all the early part of the night. Mr. Graves, with some difficulty, induced him to swallow a composing draught, after which he burst out into singing, and continually sang himself to sleep, the first rest he had had for eight and forty hours.

About an hour afterwards, he opened his eyes, looked slowly round, gave a deep sigh, and then closed them upon this world for ever.

I am told that since his death, decay has gone on so rapidly, that his body must be laid in the grave to-morrow.

But the soul,—the *soul*?

NOTHING LOST IN THE TELLING.

“ Now wasn't that shocking, mother ?”

“ Wasn't what shocking, Frank ?”

“ Why about the Walkers.”

“ I'm sure I don't know, Frank,” replied Mrs. Wood, in the tone of one who was not attending very carefully to what was said to her. Mrs. Wood was busy ironing her caps, and she wanted to finish her work while daylight lasted, and the sun had already set.

“ Well, mother, but wasn't it wonderful ?”

“ Bless the child ; wasn't what wonderful ?”

“ Why what Mrs. Faddy told me about the pedlar, and the pie, and the poison.”

“ I dare say it was, Frank ; Mrs. Faddy's tales are apt to be wonderful.”

“ But don't you think it wonderful ?”

“ What ?” inquired Mrs. Wood, as she laid down one iron, and took up another, with a look

of ignorance which betrayed a complete unconsciousness that Frank had been telling her a long story, the whole of which had been lost upon her.

“Why I do believe that you haven’t listened to a word I said.”

“I beg your pardon, Frank, but I am afraid I have lost the best part of it. I heard you beginning with Sally Faddy as your authority for your story, and so I thought more of what I was doing than of what you had to tell. When you have known Sally as long as I have, you will do the same.”

Frank looked vexed. “I can’t think why you dislike Mrs. Faddy, mother. She is very kind to us all.”

“I don’t dislike her, Frank. I dislike her gossiping ways, and her carelessness about truth very much, but I have a regard for her, and wish with all my heart that she would break herself of her fault. I was at school with her, forty years ago, I was in service with her afterwards, and we have been neighbours ever since she came to take care of her aunt, so if anybody knows Sally, I do; and I say again, Frank, that I have very kindly feelings towards her, but I have seen a black spot spread and spread,

till it has quite spoiled her whole character. She cannot tell a plain truth; she must always exaggerate; and always add something of her own inventing by way of increasing the effect of what she has to tell. The consequence of this is, that it is quite impossible to trust her about the simplest matter of fact; and without being at all an ill-natured or mischievously inclined person, she is the greatest maker of mischief in all Elmhurst."

"But, mother, every body says how kind-hearted she is, and how good to her neighbours, and how attentive to her tiresome, deaf, old aunt Fitchel."

"So she is, Frank, and she has many other good qualities besides, but nothing can make up for the want of truth."

"Do you think she means to deceive, mother?"

"Not by any means, Frank. I am confident that nothing would tempt her to tell a lie to benefit or to shield herself. She believes as surely as you and I do that the devil is the father of lies, and that lying is one of the most offensive of all sins in the sight of God; and yet through love of talking, or desire of being the first to tell the news, from some infirmity

NOTHING LOST IN THE TELLING.

of vanity, or self-importance, she has allowed herself to embellish what she has to say with circumstances which are likely to attract the wonder of her hearers; she is so anxious to make the best, as it is called, of a good story, that her conscience has become dead to the sin of exaggeration: the habit has crept on insensibly by little and little, and she has probably no notion of the extent to which she habitually perverts the truth. Unhappily for her too, she has a great deal of spare time. You remember the words of the hymn, that

“Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

And somewhere else I have read, that

“Never was there idle brain,
But bred an idle thought.”

Between idle thoughts, and idle hands, it would be strange if poor Sally did not give vent to idle words. Now then, tell me shortly what was the shocking and wonderful thing to which I ought to have listened, and which I see you will not be satisfied till you have told me.”

“Well, mother,” replied Frank, “you know what a rough, ill-tempered man pedlar Penson is.”

“I know he is rough-mannered, and has a gruff voice, and has very big black whiskers, and

an angry-looking scarlet neckcloth, which looks something like a turkey's wattle : will that do."

"No, mother ; he must be very ill-tempered and wicked too. Do you know he called at the park farm the day before yesterday, and though he had all the trouble of opening his pack, and spreading out his wares on the kitchen dresser, not a thing could he sell, for just as the maids were going to buy, in came Mrs. Walker and said she wouldn't have his trumpery among her puff paste, and so he had better pack off himself, and his pack too."

"Well, but Frank, that rather looks as if Mrs. Walker and not pedlar Penson was the ill-tempered person."

"You haven't heard the end of my story, that is, of Mrs. Faddy's. Mrs. Walker gave a dinner party that day, and so, being very busy, she might have been rather hasty, but she didn't bear malice and hatred in her heart, like this wicked pedlar, mother."

"But what did he do?"

"I'm coming to that directly, mother. Penson did as he was bid, and packed up his things, and went out of the kitchen ; but at some moment when all their backs were turned, what do you think he did?"

NOTHING LOST IN THE TELLING.

“ Drew the leg of mutton from the spit, I warrant ye,” said Mrs. Wood with a smile, “ and slipped it in the pocket of his rough coat.”

“ O worse than that, much worse,” continued Frank, not remarking his mother’s countenance ; and then adding very gravely, in a low voice, “ He actually tried to poison the whole family.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed Mrs. Wood. “ And how was that proved ?”

“ Why mother, when the apple-pie was carved at dinner, the very first time the spoon was put into the dish it brought up a paper full of needles, (put in, no doubt, to choke them,) and three brass thimbles, and afterwards, no less than nine more thimbles were found among the apples ?”

“ Was that all ?” enquired Mrs. Wood, but in a tone which made Frank feel that she was not nearly as much horrified as she ought to have been.

“ No, mother ; there was ever so much verdigris besides.”

“ Are you sure about the verdigris, Frank ? Verdigris, I believe, is the rust of brass. I don’t see why a pedlar should carry such an article in his pack ; and though it is said to be very poisonous, he was not likely to carry poison

about with him, for the purpose of putting it into the food of those who made no purchases of him. Are you sure about the verdigris?"

Frank coloured up, and hesitated, for his conscience told him that he had not repeated what Mrs. Faddy had said quite correctly. He had caught her trick of exaggeration.

"Mrs. Faddy told me that she dared say there was ever so much verdigris."

"I am afraid, Frank, she dares to say many things for which she has no authority; what she meant to infer in this case was that the acid of the apples had probably had such an effect on the brass as to produce verdigris: that might, or might not happen: but at any rate she did not positively assert that which you did. O Frank, beware of exaggeration. Remember what I said just now. Remember that any thing which is more than the truth is a lie."

"I was wrong, mother, very wrong, but indeed I did not mean to deceive."

"I know that; no more does Sally Faddy; but now look at her story: there is falsehood on the very face of it. If the pedlar wanted to choke folks would he have left the needles in their paper? If he wanted to poison them, would he have managed so clumsily, as to put

brass thimbles where they were sure to be seen?"

"Well, mother, I must say that one thing did strike me as very odd, which was this; Mrs. Faddy said, that that very same afternoon he called at the farm again, and actually made a claim to be paid for a paper full of needles, and a dozen thimbles, which he declared he missed from his pack. Mrs. Faddy spoke of this as a proof of his audaciousness, to me it rather looks as a proof that however so strange a thing had happened, he could not have really meant to poison the Walkers."

"Shall I unravel the whole mystery to you, Frank?"

Frank opened his eyes very wide, and exclaimed, "why I do believe you know all about it!"

"I do believe I do," replied his mother laughing, "for Mrs. Walker called here this afternoon, and told me how when her back was turned, that little mischievous, spoiled boy of her sister, had slipped the pedlar's thimbles into the pie-dish, and covered them with fruit, so that she laid the crust on without noticing them; how she had been so thoughtless as to tell the story in Sally Faddy's presence, and to add that 'it was enough

to poison them ;' how Sally had repeated the story, as she had first heard it, and before it had been found out that it was the boy's mischief ; and how Sally had embellished the tale with additions of her own, till, without having any malicious intention, and out of sheer thoughtlessness and love of gossip, she had actually imputed the crime of murder to pedlar Penson."

"And was that really and truly all, mother?" asked Frank, in a very disappointed tone.

"Yes, really and truly all," replied Mrs. Wood, imitating her son's manner. "But why should that make you seem so downcast? Would it have been better, do you think, that all the Walkers should have been poisoned, and the pedlar hanged for poisoning them?"

"No, mother, not better; only" (with a little hesitation) "it would have made a better story."

Frank's mother looked very grave when she heard this, and said, "my dear boy, you may depend upon it that if you allow yourself to think or speak in this way, you will soon fall into the same habit of sin as that which has done such infinite mischief to poor Sally's character. Surely you remember where it is written, 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-

bearer among thy people ;' and who is it that has declared, that 'for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.' Once get in the way of repeating matters concerning your neighbours, and you will soon have no scruple in 'making the best of a good story,' as it is called ; in other words you will get into the habit of breaking the ninth Commandment in more ways than I can tell : you will be a liar, and a false witness, and an evil-speaker, and a slanderer. How should you like to have your character taken away as you, Frank, and Sally Faddy took away the pedlar's ?"

Frank drooped his head and made no reply, for his conscience told him he was wrong. And Mrs. Wood said no more, for she wished her son to reflect on her words. And so he did, but somehow or other, through that kind of self-deceit by which the devil tempts us to continue in sins to which we are inclined, Frank contrived to persuade himself that his mother had made too much of a little matter, and that it was only because she did not like her neighbour Faddy, that she had spoken so strongly about making the best of a good story. Still his own mind was not quite at ease, when he

thought how he had himself helped to impute evil motives to the pedlar.

A week passed away, and the circumstance had almost gone out of his recollection, when one evening as he was returning from school, he found himself brought by a sudden turn in the narrow lane, within a few yards of one, whose pack, red shawl, and black whiskers proclaimed him to be none other than pedlar Penson.

The thought rushed into Frank's mind that the pedlar would have heard of the false reports which had been spread with respect to him, and conscience suggested to Frank that he himself had not been quite innocent in the matter. What if that great, strong, cross-looking, red-faced-looking man should lay hold of him, and call him to account for what he had said? The very thought made Frank turn, first hot, and then cold, and then, as he afterwards expressed it, "all no how." As to facing the pedlar, it was out of the question. He dared not. What a relief when he spied a gap in the hedge a few yards in advance! To be sure, he must come almost within arm's reach of the pedlar; but there was no help for it. On he dashed as quick as he could, and bounded through the gap when his imaginary enemy was about two

yards off. "Look before you leap," says the proverb; but Frank had no time to think of proverbs; and the consequence was that in the very act of jumping the ditch on the other side of the hedge, his foot caught in a bramble, and down he went, head foremost, into a bed of nettles. Sharply enough they stung him, but at first he did not feel the pain, so terrified was he at hearing a gruff voice, which he recognised but too well, "Hillo! young one! what are you running away for? Come back!"

Come back! no, not if his life depended on it. Up he got, set off at his topmost speed, dashed across the fields, never stopping, and never looking behind him, (but nothing doubting that the pedlar was close at his heels,) till he found himself quite breathless and exhausted in the village street.

Even here he did not stop running, for he felt as if he should not be safe till he got home. However, he could not keep up his former pace, and so as he passed one of the cottages he heard one of his neighbours say to some one standing near, "See, see! there's Frank Wood! how he runs! Poor boy! well to be sure, it's a true saying, 'bad news flies fast!'"

"Bad news!" thought Frank to himself,

“ what can that mean.” But he did not stop to enquire.

“ Frank ! Frank !” cried a voice, from the next cottage doorway that he passed, “ How is she now ? has the doctor been ? Joe says he saw him galloping down your way like mad, half an hour ago. What does he say ? I hope things are not so bad as was thought ?”

Frank stopped, for he was bewildered. A woman’s quick eye saw that the enquiry had not been understood, and good-natured Mary Holland ran down to him and said in a sympathizing tone, “ ah, I see you have not heard. I’m afraid your mother has met with an accident.”

“ My mother !” exclaimed Frank in an agony of dismay. “ Oh ! do tell me what has happened.”

“ Indeed I don’t know any particulars. I made sure you could tell me. It was Lovel’s wife told me. She said how shocking it was that Mrs. Wood had been found lying in the gravel-pit in the cow-pasture with both her legs broke !”

Frank stayed to hear no more. He felt as if he could hardly breathe, he was so spent, but on he ran. He could not cry. He could not

speak. His throat was so dry, that when in a few minutes he spied Sarah Lovel coming down the road, it was with the greatest difficulty he put the question to her whether it was true that his mother's legs were broke.

"True enough, I'm afraid, Frank! more's the pity! leastwise they say one of her legs is broke in two or three places, and it's very well if the other isn't."

"But how do you know this, Mrs. Lovel? Have you been up at our house?"

"I? no, bless you, I haven't been from home all day; it was Martha that waits upon Mrs. Fitchel that told me. She was going down to the shop for butter, and says she. . . ."

"But Mrs. Lovel, how did it happen?"

"Aye, that's where it is. Nobody knows: and it seems so queer that she should have fallen into the gravel pit. However, Martha was in a great hurry, and couldn't tell me more: but you'll pass Mrs. Faddy's in your way home, and she'll be able to tell you all about it. Will you stop and take a drink of water. You'll faint may be if you don't. Poor boy! Poor boy! You must keep up heart though. We must all take what is sent us."

Frank drank the water eagerly, and hurried on.

Before long he overtook Martha herself: but Martha was in what her mistress was wont to call one of her stupid ways. She had forgotten one of her errands. Mrs. Faddy had given her two: there was the butter, a pound, fourteen pence; and four-pence over made the eighteen-pence; but what was to have been done with the four-pence she could not remember: she could only remember one thing at a time; and she was so put about with respect to the errand (for she knew Mrs. Faddy would send her back again as soon as she got home) that she couldn't call to mind all she had heard about Mrs. Wood's accident; only it was all true. John Lees the cowman had met Mrs. Fitchel as he was going to the doctor, and told her as how Mrs. Wood's leg was broke; and Martha added it must no doubt be very bad, for Mrs. Faddy said there were sure to be "compound fractions."

Poor Frank knew no more about compound fractures than did Martha herself: but he heard enough to redouble his pace.

Once more, however, he was fated to be stopped. Mrs. Faddy was standing at her little wicket on the look-out for Martha or any passing event, and Frank could not pass her without enquiring if it was all true.

“ Oh yes, yes,” said Mrs. Faddy, “ not a doubt about it. Aunt Fitchel had it all from John Lees. He said he missed her as soon as he came down to the farm this morning,” (this sounded very odd to Frank, who had seen his mother speaking to the cow-man, just before he set off for school,) “ and so he went to look for her, and they were the dreadful moans that led him to the gravel pit.”

The thought of his mother whom he so dearly loved, lying in such a condition, gave poor Frank the much needed relief of tears, and in the midst of his sobs, he found himself better able to think and listen than before.

“ But how did they know she was so much injured?” he asked.

“ My aunt Fitchel said that John’s very words were ‘ as how Mrs. Wood had broke her leg, and they found her crumpled up all in a heap in the gravel pit.’ And I’m sorry to say,” added Mrs. Faddy, “ that there is every reason to think that things must be very bad, for when soon after hearing it, I saw Dick Mudge going to the blacksmith’s, and asked him what he had heard ; he said he had not heard any thing about it, but as he passed your back yard, his horse started, which made him look down, and he certainly did

observe that the road thereabouts was all in a gore of blood!"

"All in a gore of blood!" This was the finishing stroke to the dreadful picture, the outlines of which had been already filled in. No wonder, that on hearing this last circumstance, the poor boy's strength and resolution gave way, and that he sank down in a fainting-fit at Mrs. Faddy's feet.

It was some minutes before he came to himself, and when he did, it was evident that he was about as able to walk home as to fly there. He reeled and tottered when he made the attempt, and was nearly fainting a second time.

Whatever were Sally Faddy's faults she did not want for good-nature, and she was wise enough to see that the kindest act on her part would be to get Frank home as quick as possible.

Luckily at this moment she discerned the butcher's cart approaching, and for some small remuneration induced the blue-frocked boy who drove it to carry her and her companion, whom she resolved to accompany, (partly out of compassion, and partly, perhaps, in the expectation of learning all details and particulars of the accident,) to the turnpike, where the road branched off in two directions, one towards the

market town, and the other to Mrs. Wood's farm.

They were soon in the cart, and the turnpike soon reached. As the gate-keeper helped Mrs. Faddy to get down, the following conversation took place.

"Thank you, thank you, John Hobson, I shall do well enough now; so; there, I'm not as active as I was forty years ago."

"Few of us are, Mrs. Faddy: none of us, I may say, unless it is Doctor Splint. To my mind he isn't a day older than he was when I was a boy. How he does tear about the country to be sure!"

"Aye, aye, John, but then he rides on matters of life and death. I dare say when he went up yonder," (shaking her head sadly, and pointing towards Mrs. Wood's house,) "he lost no time."

"I don't know for that, Ma'am," answered John, looking as Mrs. Faddy thought, more than ordinarily stupid and puzzled, "for I never saw him go that way: but about an hour ago he came galloping down the road like a madman, on that blood-mare of his, that'll be the death of him or somebody some of these days. Well, the gate was shut, and that's what my impatient

master never can abide. My stars! but he very near rode over me; 'get out of the way, you stupid, old, blundering, dawdling blockhead: what do you shut your gate for. There's a sixpence, and be hanged to you! I shall be late for dinner, you old fool, and there's roast goose!' And he dashed by, never waited for change, and was out of sight before I could call him back."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Faddy and Frank at the same moment, "do you mean that he didn't wait to go up to the farm?"

"Oh, my poor mother!" ejaculated Frank.

"Oh what brutes men are," ejaculated Mrs. Faddy, "a roast goose one way, and she dying, it may be, the other, and he to go after the goose!"

John Hobson looked so very stupid at hearing these exclamations, so bewildered, so dumb-founded, that Mrs. Faddy saw it was hopeless to make further enquiries, and so they hurried on.

A few minutes brought them within sight of the farm, a few steps further brought them to the back door.

And there, sure enough, were dark red stains, in spite of the large quantity of water which had evidently been used to obliterate them. No doubt, the road had been all in a gore of blood.

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Mrs. Faddy gave a groan. Frank rushed forward towards the door opening into the back yard, and through which the blood had flowed. Who shall describe the revulsion of feeling which he experienced when the first object on which his eyes rested, was a fat pig suspended by its hind legs, in the manner in which pigs, just killed and cleaned, are usually suspended, while on one side stood John Lees the cowman, and at a little distance was Mrs. Wood herself, very firm upon her legs, very well, very busy, and perfectly unconscious of the distress and sympathy she had occasioned.

Who shall adequately describe the joy of that meeting, or the mingled emotions which followed it? Deep was the thankfulness: and after a while, long and loud was the laughter when the origin of the dismal report was perceived. John Lees certainly had met deaf old Mrs. Fitchel as he was going to the doctor, the cow-doctor, and had told her that a cow of Mrs. Wood's had had her leg broke. This Mrs. Fitchel had turned into an announcement "as how Mrs. Wood had had her leg broke." The poor animal had gone too near the edge of a deep gravel pit; the side was undermined, and gave way with her, and sure enough the leg was broke, and the butcher

was obliged to make beef of her, but Mrs. Wood herself was as well as ever she was in her life.

A mistake had given rise to the report in the first instance: each person who had heard it had added some little exaggeration of his own, till it had grown up into the portentous tale which had filled Frank's mind with such dismal apprehensions.

All's well that ends well. And to Frank that day did end well, for it enabled him to realize to himself by his own bitter experience, the sinfulness of exaggeration, and the misery it may cause; and as he thought over the events of the day, he saw how his own sin had been the means of his punishment. If he had not been guilty of exaggeration with respect to Penson the pedlar, he would not have been afraid to meet him; he would not have run away instead of going straight home; he would have escaped the tidings which met him in the village, and the miserable hour that ensued.

However, it was a lesson which lasted Frank for his life, and whenever he felt disposed to retail, or "make the best of a good story," he remembered the broken-legged cow, and was silent.

Whether Mrs. Faddy was equally benefited by

the lesson, this history sayeth not. She was heard to sigh when she quitted the farm, and when she got home she was more than commonly cross with Martha about the odd four-pence.

RULES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
TONGUE.

PHYSICIANS make a great judgment of the health or sickness of a man by looking upon his tongue: so our words are certain signs for the quality of our souls. "By thy words," saith our Saviour, "shalt thou be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

As bees manage nothing with their little mouths but honey, so shall thy tongue be always sweetened with God, and shall find no greater pleasure than to send through thy lips the praises and blessings of His name.

Always speak of God as of God, that is, reverently and devoutly.

Beware thou utter not an unseemly word; for although it proceed not from thee with an ill intention, yet they that hear it may interpret it otherwise.

An evil word falling into a weak heart, spread-

eth itself like a drop of oil falling upon a piece of linen, and sometimes it so siezes upon the heart that it filleth it with a thousand unclean thoughts and immodest temptations.

Whosoever taketh unjustly from his neighbour his good name, is bound to make reparation.

Never discover thy neighbour's secret sins, nor aggravate those that are manifest: never make evil interpretation of his good works: never deny the goodness thou knowest to be in him, nor diminish it by word, for in all this thou shalt highly offend God.

Say not such an one is a drunkard, although thou hast seen him drunk, nor that he is an adulterer, though he has been taken in that sin, for one only act giveth not the name to a thing. Noah was once drunk, yet was he not a drunkard, nor St. Peter a blood-shedder, although he once shed blood, nor a blasphemer, although he once blasphemed.

Now although we must be extremely wary not to speak ill of our neighbour, yet must we take heed of a habit into which some do fall who to avoid slander commend and speak well of vice.

When thou hearest any detraction, make the accusation doubtful if thou canst do it justly; if not, excuse the intention of the party censured;

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if that cannot be done, shew compassion towards his frailty, divert the discourse, remembering, and putting thy hearers in mind, that they who offend not, owe all the thanks of it to God; recall the detractor to himself by some mild way, and speak some good of the party slandered if thou knowest any.

Never accustom thyself to lie wittingly, neither by way of excuse nor otherwise, remembering always that God is the God of truth.

If thou speak a falsehood unawares, correct it at the instant, either by some explication or reparation; a sorry excuse hath much more force and grace than a lie.

FROM SALE'S 'DEVOUT LIFE.'

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

THE PRODIGAL.

THERE is a common saying in the country round, that it “always rains on Carsington fair day,” and I certainly have often seen it so, but such sayings are not very conclusive after all, and there never was a finer day than the one on which our little story opens.

The town had been thronged from early morning; at mid-day you could scarcely make your way along the crowded streets, broad as they are; there were bright-faced country girls, and stout fine grown men, and here and there amongst the homelier dresses of the peasantry, you might see the bright uniforms of soldiers glancing for a moment in the sunshine and then lost in the moving mass around; from the numbers collected there, you might judge that the market-place was the centre of attraction. One large

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show, on whose front were hung the paintings of lions, tigers, elephants, and all sorts of wild beasts, took up a great part of it ; another large portion was occupied by a booth, in front of which music was playing, and some very faded looking individuals in very bright dresses walked up and down, perpetually suggesting to the beholders the delights which awaited them within.

In spite of all the vice and folly which sadden the heart as it looks upon such scenes, there was much to please as well as depress. It was one day of pleasure to some whose daily lives were full of unbroken toil. You might see, as you looked on, friend meet friend, some apparently surprised at such unexpected joy, and it must have been a cold heart that could look on quite unsympathizingly on that gathering of happy faces over which the clear blue summer sky looked down without a cloud.

Thus the day wore on, and as the shadows lengthened, the crowd seemed to grow denser about the smoky flaming oil lamps of the booths which illumined the scene, their flames swaying hither and thither in the cool evening air.

And now let us leave this crowd a while, and go forth out of the town ; how still does the world of nature seem as we pass out of the

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noise and glare of that crowded place ; what deep and solemn thoughts come over us of One whom we had forgotten there, and cannot but remember here ! We pass along a quiet lane, its hedge-rows standing full of summer flowers ; the hawthorn scent is heavy in the air, and the whole world seems silent and at rest.

Here is the house to which I have been leading you ; there can be no doubt what the person's business is who occupies it, the bright flowers, the rows of young shrubs, the glass frames and houses, tell us at once that he is a gardener. Let us enter through the wicket ; there he is, the tenant himself of this peaceful spot, old Ambrose Bertram ; he is closing a glass frame for the night, and now he stoops to set upright a large geranium in a pot which he had overturned in bending over the frame ; he moves languidly as though his heart were not in his work, scarcely caring to put back the earth which he had displaced, and to set the plant in its former situation ; and now he walks into his own dwelling, and closing the door behind him, sits down in his old arm chair and looks out into the evening.

It is a fair scene, that on which he gazes ; faint orange hues still linger, where the sun went

down, and surround the minster with its rich tall towers as with a glory; he has often and often marked this with a pleased and thankful heart; but there are times with all of us when old sights that have pleased us lose their charm over us; he does not even see that on which his eye is bent, but he hears the far sounds of the festivities of Carsington, and as the foot-passengers or crowded carts pass his house on their homeward way, he looks for one to come for whose return he is waiting; but the shadows deepen, and first one and then another star comes forth, and the minster towers grow dim, and at last Ambrose Bertram rises and closes the shutters of the window, lights his candle, and takes from his shelf what has been his comfort in many sorrows, his Bible and his Book of Common Prayer. He has read the evening Psalms and Lessons, but still the step for which he has been listening is not heard; he takes down another book, lately given to him by his clergyman, which he has already learned to love, he opens it, and begins to read from the spot where he last left off. The words ran thus :

“ Of the profit of adversity.

“ It is good that we sometimes have troubles

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and crosses ; for they often make a man enter into himself, and consider that he is here in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing.

* * * * *

“ When a good man is afflicted, then he is weary of living longer, and wisheth that death would come that he might be dissolved and be with Christ. Then also he well perceiveth that perfect security and full peace cannot be had in this world.”—*Imitation of Christ*.

A sound outside on the pathway—the latch is lifted—the old man looks up eagerly—it is his son whom he awaited.

It was a tall handsome youth that entered, his features were not unlike those of the old man, their expression as different as you can conceive. One all calm and peace, the other wild and restless. The old man's eye was clear blue, and his complexion, though deepened in some places from exposure to the air, was fair.

Edward's eye on the other hand was dark, as his mother's had been, and his now disordered hair, (which was always somewhat long,) hung about his face, which although very like his father's, was bronzed all over, and flushed now

with unusual colour. He flung himself in silence on a chair.

The old man looked on him surprised, for Edward, though he had caused his father much anxiety, had never failed to brighten their home with his gay voice and cheerful smile, and had been always full of respect and consideration for others.

“Have you had a pleasant day?” the old man said at length.

“Yes, father,” he said in a hoarse and broken voice, “oh yes, very pleasant indeed.”

And he got up and walked about the room hurriedly. “What is the matter, Edward?” said the old man, “I would, my son, that you would give up such places if you return from them thus!”

There was a momentary flashing of the eye as if reproof would be resented, but the feeling seemed checked, and the young man sat down by the table, and took the “Prayer-book” in his hand; he opened it, but did not attempt to read it; after a moment or two he laid it down again. His father looked on him silently and sorrowfully.

It is a terrible thing to have somewhat to tell to another which we know will be the death-

blow to that other's earthly happiness ; the throat grows parched and dry, the voice fails, the heart beats so that we seem to hear it ; we cannot tell it, and yet it must be told.

In spite of all the wild and wayward ways in which Edward Bertram had grieved his good father, there was a deep affection for the old man which made it very terrible to say what he felt must now be said.

“ Father,” he began at length, “ I have often talked of leaving you, the time is come at last ; I” —the old man laid his hand upon the table for support, (though he was sitting,) it rested upon the Bible. There was a pause ; Edward could not proceed ; his father did not speak. “ Father,” at last went on the latter, “ I have enlisted.”

The old man did not speak, his eyes were fixed, and he remained for some moments rigid and unmoving on his chair.

Edward rose and touched his arm. “ Father, speak,” he said ; “ do speak, speak if it be but to curse me ; I have enlisted, and I go from you to-morrow ; we have often talked of my going forth into the world, now the time for it is come. I cannot stay here, indeed I cannot, I am wearied of this life ; you know that I am ; you shall have no more care and sorrow about me ; Sarah

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will come and keep your house ; all be quiet and regular, as you like it ; speak, father ; you will not curse me ; you will bless me before I go."

Old Ambrose listened intently ; he heard every word ; as soon as he sufficiently recovered his consciousness, to think of remedies for this deep affliction, he proposed sacrificing all the little that he possessed to buy off his son ; the garden was not his own, and it was very little that he had, but he had friends, he would apply to them all, they would all exert themselves to help him that Edward might remain at home.

"No, father," said his son at length, "I thought when I first told you what I had done that I would have given the whole world to undo it again, but now it is not so ; I must go, you will be supported to endure it, I know that well, and I shall get on better away, I would not be bought off if I might now.

It was a sad night, Edward was to set off the next morning for B—, where part of the regiment in which he had enlisted was quartered ; it was a sad night, all the weary hours as they went by, and were told by the solemn tones of the minster clock, were full of fresh sorrow to the old man's heart, for he knew that each brought nearer than before the parting with his son.

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Perhaps if it was to be, it was a mercy that it should be thus sudden ; the anticipation of sorrow is so very bitter ; the interval before the event was now so short, that it was impossible to realise at all, in its completeness, all its attendant misery ; nor was that night all darkness to old Ambrose ; late, very late the moon rose, and long before the dawning, the room was flooded with soft white light. Even so was it with the old man's heart ; not only the confusion of hasty preparation which kept him up till very late, and the bewilderment of mind from the suddenness of the calamity, helped him to endure the trial, but when he knelt down beside his son, and they said their accustomed prayer for the last time together, and again when he knelt down beside his own bed, even then when no words of his own came to his relief, even then he felt that he was not forsaken ; he knew that One was near whose ear was so delicate that it could hear even the incoherent words he uttered, and draw their true meaning from his very attitude of humiliation and strong efforts to bow his own will before the great will of the Holy One.

Edward, too, slept little ; an unquiet conscience is a disturbing thing, and his had much cause

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to be disturbed ; month after month had he been withdrawing himself more and more from the holy influences of his childhood ; day by day had he been becoming a little more wild and wayward, more careless in his work, more eager about pleasure ; sins which had once startled him he had grown familiar with ; the good that remained in him was becoming less, the evil of his character deepening day by day. Remorse about himself, and sorrow about his father, prevented him sleeping for some time ; at last came the thought of the showy uniform and pleasant companionship that soon, he fancied, awaited him ; with these came dreams of advancement in the world ; he had strength, activity, good looks and good address ; who could say that he might not win his way ; at last towards morning in a bright dream of success he fell asleep, and would have slept on till very late in the day perhaps, had not his father wakened him.

Old Ambrose had passed an entirely sleepless night ; as soon as the morning broke he rose and dressed himself, and went to look once more upon his son ; there he lay, his dark hair flung back from his forehead, his eyes closed, and a smile still lingering about his lip ; it was the

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form and face of early manhood on which the old man's eye rested, but the smile was the smile of infancy ; it was like the first which years ago his dead wife and he had seen break over his baby features in the deep sleep of childhood ; tears fell from his eyes, and he knelt down beside the bed, and the words came now at his desire, as he prayed for pardon and for guidance for this his erring son, and then he rose calm and strengthened ; the world might be a rough and bad world, and Edward a wanderer there, but there was One above all who might even now preserve him from the evil.

The hours wore on, and the young man still slept, and it was with difficulty that his father could at last prevail on himself to wake him ; he did so, and Edward sprang up, and was soon dressed ; the last prayer which perhaps they might ever say together was prayed, the last meal which perhaps they might ever eat together eaten.

The arrangements for his departure were completed, few words were spoken, the old man commenced something like an exhortation, but his voice grew broken and inaudible ; yet when the last moment came he recovered himself with a great effort, and pronounced distinctly the

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blessing with which he sent his son forth, perhaps for ever, from the home of his childhood and his youth.

The sorrow of such partings is for those who remain behind ; old Ambrose only began to realize what had happened when he went back into his cottage and saw the scarcely tasted breakfast yet upon the table, the chair on which his son had sat, the cup which he had used, and the knife which he had handled. It is strange how in a great grief the eye will mark all the little things around connected with it ; two small bright mugs on the mantel piece, relics of Sarah's and Edward's childhood, kept old Ambrose's eye long and sadly fascinated. The woman who came during the day to perform the household work of his little cottage was full of amazement, and asked an infinity of questions ; at first he did not seem to hear them, but soon he rose and without answering her went into his garden and worked mechanically for a short time ; but it was in vain ; he could not continue at this long, so he went into the house and prepared himself for an expedition to Lady Courtenay's house where his daughter Sarah was in service. He scarcely noted the brightness of the day as he went along, and as he drew near Leigh court,

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would have passed, without noting it, a low pony chaise in which were Lady Courtenay and her daughter, but the latter recognized him at once, and pointed him out to her mother, who stopped her carriage to speak to him.

Ambrose looked up and took off his hat respectfully. Lady Courtenay, who was a very kind person, and had known the old man for many years, soon drew from him the story of his grief, and telling him to proceed to her house, turned her pony's head and drove back towards Leigh court.

"Send Sarah Bertram to me," she said, when she alighted at her own door, to one of her servants.

Sarah was the head-housemaid, and had become much valued for her extreme steadiness and good conduct ever since she had been in Lady Courtenay's service, which she had entered very young.

Lady Courtenay informed her slightly of what she had just heard, and told her to let no consideration prevent her going home at once, for a while at all events, to comfort her father in the affliction which had come upon him.

And so it came about that on that day Sarah Bertram accompanied old Ambrose home, and

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eventually took up her abode with him. And all was as Edward had predicted it would be, quiet and regular. Often have I looked upon the old man as he went up the gentle ascent to the minster, leaning on his daughter's arm; or surprising them by a visit in the evening, found him leaning back in his vast arm chair listening while she read to him aloud from the Bible or some other holy book.

All was quiet and regular, and nothing could exceed his daughter's gentle care of him, and yet the old man failed visibly; there was a hand withdrawn whose touch he had loved dearly, a voice which he dreamt of often, but never heard now. And Sarah felt this; painfully at times she felt that she was not enough for him, and sometimes she thought that her father was scarcely so sensible of all she had done and forgone for him as he might have been.

For she had forgone very much for him since she had come home. There was one by whom she had been long beloved, who had been unable for long to propose that they should be united, lest he should only bring her to share poverty and sorrow; he had worked hard that he might be able to maintain her and have something beforehand to start upon; and now his labour had

prospered, and he had told her that the time was come for them to marry, the time for which they had both been looking long.

But Sarah had refused to hear of this at present ; she had many misgivings about her father's health, and she feared lest new ties might separate her from him, or at all events prevent her devoting so much time and care to him as she felt that he now required. The sacrifice was a great one, but it had been made ; before the altar in the sanctuary it had been made, and none but One knew what it had been to her. Old Ambrose knew not a word of all this ; most carefully had his daughter locked the secret of her trial within her own breast, and yet she sometimes felt vexed and disappointed that the old man did not display a sense of the sacrifice of which she had herself stipulated that he should be kept in ignorance.

But we must return to Edward ; he could not leave his home with dry eyes and a light heart ; it was the home of his childhood after all, and his old father, as I have said before, was very dear to him ; nor was he quite without recollection of a face bending with pale cheeks and earnest eyes over his own in the years gone by ; one night he well recollected, (the memory ever

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clung to him,) two or three hot tears that fell upon his face and woke him from his sleep; the time was connected with a day that childhood never forgets, the first that it sees and hears of death.

These and many sad memories came over him as he walked, but his feelings if they were acute were not lasting, and he was deeply sensible, as I suppose we all are, of the influence of what we call nature. Nor do I marvel at his forgetting much with the free air and blithe sunshine round him, and a path before him which seemed at all events to promise pleasure, perhaps even glory. He walked on for some time and at last drew near his destination.

He had passed the last mile-stone, and the city to which he was journeying lay stretched beneath his feet; the barracks were yet nearer to him, being on the outskirts of the town. And now he felt his heart sink within him—who has not felt doubting and depressed ere he entered for the first time on the chosen employment of his life? He sat down by the road side, he scarcely wished to proceed and plunge at once into this new untried life—how would his companions receive him? would they laugh at him for his country ways? those better principles which yet clung to him, would not they

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expose him to the ridicule of the men amongst whom he was going? he felt that they must, and alas as he felt so he grew ashamed of the good which yet lingered about his character; he sat for some time brooding upon the change which a few minutes must make about him, shrinking from presenting himself amongst those whom he felt himself as yet to be very unlike in bearing, language, or any one particular. But there was no choice now; he might delay, but he could not alter what awaited him; so he soon rose, his bright visions overclouded, and a dark misgiving about his new life stealing over him which he had not entertained before. It was very hot, and he drew out his handkerchief to wipe away the moisture from his forehead; as he put it back, he felt for the first time that there was some heavy substance in the pocket of the jacket which he wore, and on taking it out discovered it to be a canvas bag, and he opened it and found that it was full of money. The sum was not very large, but to him it seemed so, and when he thought of his slender means who had placed it there, the value of the parting gift was not diminished. His first impulse was to return it and insist on his father's expending it in relieving the needs of his own advanced age, but then the thought came over

him that this might only pain the old man, and he could not but feel how useful it might prove to himself. Yes, he certainly ought to keep it—but one day he would restore it fourfold, and gladden his father more by bringing his own earnings and praying him to receive them, than he could possibly do by restoring this parting gift which he must have wished and intended him to keep.

His journey was soon over. The discomforts which he had anticipated he certainly had to meet with, but they lasted not long; Edward soon became very popular amongst his new associates, and as he was very quickly laughed out of whatever was contrary to their notions of right and wrong, the ordeal, which was a bitter one at first, was a very brief one. About the same time with himself, young Lord A. joined the regiment in which Edward Bertram enlisted, and from the latter's striking appearance he was at once selected for a servant by the young nobleman. This made a great difference in Edward's means, and yet it was certainly not to his advantage. Lord A. was a dissipated man, and therefore naturally enough a careless master, and Edward at a humble distance followed him in his extravagance and excesses; instead of saving money to transmit home, he was continually in difficulties, and at last was

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compelled after much struggling to write to his father for assistance. What he asked for, was supplied to him, through Sarah's generous self-denial. But again and again he applied—he had grown reckless and hardened, he had ceased to care for others, he never once thought, as he ought to have done, in that sinful, thoughtless life, of the misery which he was entailing upon others by his own career of vicious self-indulgence. At last he made what he solemnly promised should be a last application of the kind. The regiment to which he belonged had been sometime since removed into the north of England, now it was ordered abroad, and Edward spoke wildly in his last appeal to his father and sister of the extreme unlikelihood of his ever thus troubling them again, or being to them, what he had still some shame in being, a burden and a reproach. The money was sent, and long months and years passed away, and Edward was heard of no more.

* * * * *

A change had come over the household to which I had lately such pleasure in introducing you; the garden had other occupiers, and old Ambrose and his daughter had removed to two miserable rooms in a crowded and wretched part of Carsington. The old man received a small pit-

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tance of out-door relief, his daughter was still with him, working assiduously at her needle, by which, and the kindness of Lady Courtenay, she contrived to make a livelihood.

No longer was Ambrose Bertram able to frequent the public services of the Church ; he was generally now confined to his chair, sometimes to his bed ; and yet he murmured not ; he had more leisure than formerly, and so was able continually to be joining in spirit with the worship of the universal Church ; the clergyman made him very constant visits ; he was often enabled to receive the blessed sacrament, and was daily growing more submissive to a will which at first he found it difficult to resign himself to. Long did he cling to the hope that once more before he died he might see his son ; long had he prayed for this, and above all, if it might be, that he might see him a penitent. But more and more in this as in his other choices had that which at first had been faintly heard in a low undertone, " Not my will, but Thine," risen to increasing clearness, and now the earthly wish was the subdued note, and the spiritual submission the ruling one of his soul.

It was a summer evening once more, and years had passed away and many things had changed ;

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old age and death had been busy in the neighbourhood that year, but old Ambrose was still spared. Now this evening deep orange hues were gathered round the sunset, and the air was hushed; the old man looked forth from his window, but oh how different the scene from what we first saw him gazing upon; even the dirty court however looked bright in that rich light that was flooding the wide earth, and a small space of sky might be seen above of pale clear blue, shewing how over all places, the most unsightly, ever bends continually the same Almighty love. His daughter had gone out to purchase some materials for her work, and the old man sat alone, his hands clasped, his eyes lifted upward to the sky. The door below opened, and he heard a voice enquiring for himself which made him tremble exceedingly—a step was on the stair—the latch of the room door was lifted, and on the threshold stood his son! None but a father's love would have recognised him, the face was haggard and pale, the mouth hidden by a deep moustache, the figure bent as by illness, the brilliant uniform which he wore only making his appearance look more wretched than it was. He did not speak. Was it but a vision made up of many a day dream, or was it the ghost of his lost son? No, it was Edward the

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long-lost found, he was kneeling at his feet, he was resting his brow upon his knees, and in a broken tone he began, "Father!" he could not proceed, the old man's tear of joy mingled with the young one's tear of penitence. "My son," murmured the old man, "my dearest, my best beloved! Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." There were two persons in the room who were now witnesses of the scene; their entrance had been unheard, but there they stood, Sarah and Mr. Bernard the clergyman, whom she had met with at the door about to pay them a visit.

"Oh Sir," said the old man looking up, "rejoice with me, he is come back, he is come home. Sarah, thy brother is returned!"

But Sarah uttered no word of welcome, she tried to do so, but in vain, her throat was dry, her heart was full, she burst into tears and sat down. The old man was surprised and shocked. "Sarah," he said, "hast thou no word of welcome for thy brother?" still she could not speak, all the wrong feelings which she had not learned to restrain were breaking forth, she could not speak. Edward looked at her in silence. Mr. Bernard approached her, "Sarah," he said in a low voice, "is it possible that you do not rejoice at your

brother's return?" "I have never been loved as he is loved now," she said passionately at last, and she rose and left the room, and in her own chamber she brooded long with bitter tears on her own love which had been flung back upon herself, upon her self-denials and services which had never been appreciated. Long did she sit thus alone with these thoughts upon her; they were broken at last by her father's voice calling her from the other room; when she entered he looked sorrowfully at her; Edward was beside him; "Sarah," said old Ambrose, as she drew nigh, "it is not that I love Edward more than thee, but that he needs my love most now," and then Edward rose and prayed her forgiveness for all the wrong that he had done her by his thoughtless, wicked ways, and the spell was broken, and they all rejoiced together in the penitent's return.

That night Edward told to them his history. He had suffered much, he had known hardships and sickness in a foreign land, and more than once death had seemed close beside him. But his sufferings had been blessed to him; in the midst of their darkness there had sprung up to him a light, and he had grace to follow it; in a far land there had come to him a thought of his home, his true home, and now his feet had borne him hither.

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His son's return seemed to give the old man new strength : so far did he recover that he was able to be taken to the minster, and there with his son and daughter beside him to partake of the holy communion ; but the strength was brief which he received ; a stroke hung over him which might not be averted ; most gently however did it fall ; Edward and Sarah watching by his bed, he was taken to his rest.

Beneath the shadow of the minster towers there lies a simple cross of stone that marks the old man's grave. Sarah is settled happily at Carsington, and lives there much respected. Edward still pursues the life which he chose, but is a very different man from what he was when he first entered it ; he is still cheerful, still looked up to, and is advancing steadily, much esteemed by his superior officers, and popular amongst his associates. But words he once uttered he now shrinks from, works he once did, he does not now so much as speak of, his absences from duty are spent at Carsington, where I have more than once seen him, in company with his sister, standing with wet eyes beside his father's grave.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

HANNAH DEAN, OR A DAUGHTER'S TRIAL.

POOR Hannah Dean! much did she need all kindly pity, for her lot was hard, and few were the earthly helps which she had received to assist her in bearing up against it.

She lived with her father in a little cottage in a lonely part of the village of Stourton, and although she was but a child, her father, James Dean, expected her to wait upon him at all times, and also to do the whole work of the house, and the washing of their clothes, and to go upon errands.

Hannah's father had been a soldier, but having been disabled, was obliged to leave the service, and live on his pension. Her mother had died when she was about twelve years of age.

The Deans were very ignorant as far as school learning goes. They could neither read nor write, and did not care to have their child in-

structed in these things. But Hannah had been taught by her mother the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and these being carefully committed to memory, were a good foundation ; yet it would have rendered her childhood happier, had she been able to read the Holy Scripture, and draw instruction from thence.

James Dean would neither go to Church, nor suffer his child to go, and Hannah was unable to go contrary to her father's command, though she longed to enter God's House. As I have before said, she was much to be pitied ; for, added to her father's disregard of religion, he was stern and passionate, and in very many instances quite regardless of her comfort. In his own person he was very untidy ; and poor Hannah, from lack of means, was often but barely clad. When she went into the village upon errands, such as to buy their bread, and butter, and other necessary things, it sometimes made her unhappy when she saw children about her own age neatly dressed, and on their way to school. And one day as she was returning to her home she cried bitterly, but before she quite reached the cottage she set the burden which she was carrying upon the ground, and taking up the

corner of her pinafore wiped her eyes, hoping by so doing to remove all trace of weeping from her face. But her tears which had fallen had been too scalding to leave no mark behind ; and so when she reached the garden gate, her father, who was standing by it, observed her, and asked in a stern and angry tone what she had been blubbering about.

Hannah possessed many estimable virtues,—a love of truth not the least. This principle had been instilled into her by her father, who often said he hated hypocrisy and would have nothing to do with liars.

The poor girl stood silent for a minute, dreading to answer her father's question. "Are you making up a story in your mind to tell me?" said he, "If ever I was to catch you putting me off with a lie I would beat you soundly for it, and that you know ; so tell me at once," continued he, raising his voice until Hannah shuddered, "and let me hear the whole truth." The child answered, "I saw so many little girls, father, about as big as I, and all of them had got such tidy clothes on, and such stout shoes, and I thought I looked so ragged, and some of them stared so hard at me ; and they were all just going to school, and I wished that I could be

like them, and when I thought about it it made me cry, but it is all over now, father, and I won't cry again if I can help it."

"No, you had better not," said he, "or it will be the worse for you. What! you would envy, would you! not if you live with me, I'll tell you that. I'll have no envy here, so set about your work and look good-tempered, or you shall not stay here, for I will turn you out to beg your bread, and will live here by myself."

This threat of turning her out of doors had been often made to Hannah by her father, and she greatly feared that some day he would put it into execution, although she strove by every means in her power to please him in all things.

The last parting piece of advice which had been given to her by her mother, was to mind when she was in affliction and go as soon as she could up to her own little bed-room, and having shut the door, there kneel down and say the Lord's Prayer, and doubtless the Lord would give her relief. This Hannah did not fail to do whenever she felt her trials to be more than commonly oppressive.

James Dean seemed determined to have no personal friend, neither would he allow his child to have one. "I will not have you go gossiping about,"

he repeatedly said to Hannah, to check her from forming an intimate acquaintance with any one. Before her mother's death, she had been a happy, merry child, and although not allowed to go to school, yet she had never lacked companions, for her father did not then think of what became of her, and so she had often gone into the village and played with other children, and had been the foremost among them for fun and frolic. But death often makes sad changes in a household, and this Hannah felt when from a light-hearted, careless child, she was suddenly called upon by her father to change herself into the thoughtful mistress of his house, and there to toil and labour, far beyond her strength, without a single word of encouragement for all her good endeavours. This was to her "adversity," and by the grace of God, which in His mercy He gave her in answer to her prayer, it worked that good within her for which doubtless it was sent,—it taught her to "consider." Although the Bible was to Hannah a "sealed book," yet as night after night, and morning after morning, according to her mother's instructions, she first knelt and said the Lord's Prayer, and then stood up and said the Apostles' Creed, which she had been taught to call her "Belief," the great mercy

of our Redeemer began to dawn upon her soul, and she was led to meditate upon that article of the Christian faith, the Life Everlasting, in which she professed to believe. Very earnestly did she try to call to mind all that her mother had said to her about Heaven, and the mansions there that the Saviour of the world is preparing for His faithful servants: and then these words of her mother's seemed to echo loudly within her heart, "Love the Lord, Hannah, with all your might, and He will take you to Himself in His good time:" and the child felt herself to be but a pilgrim upon the earth, and looked forwards to a better inheritance.

When children in dutiful obedience to their parents kneel down before the throne of grace and call the Almighty God their "Father," and pray that His kingdom may come, and His "will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we may be sure that a blessing is sent in answer to their petitions, although they cannot comprehend the full meaning of the words they say.

Even to the advanced Christian, (when he has attained the age at which his powers are at their highest,) these words, "Thy Kingdom," "Thy will," when said by him to his heavenly Father, contain a depth of meaning which his

mind is unable to fathom. No other who has ever dwelt upon this earth, but He who framed the prayer for us, could compass the vast extent of the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "will of God;" therefore in all humility let mortal man bow his reason before infinite wisdom, and let him not deride the child who prays for greater blessings than as yet have been revealed to him.

"Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me," is the command of Jesus Christ Himself, and how can children approach Him better than with His own words upon their lips?

Where but in holy Baptism had Hannah Dean received that heavenly grace which made her lift her heart in faith, and bow her knees in token of humility, while she prayed to God each night and morning? "We receive," says the learned Hooker, "Christ Jesus in Baptism once, as the first beginner; in the Eucharist often, as being by continual degrees the finisher of our life."

When Hannah Dean, in her infancy, was taken to the parish Church to be baptized, that Holy Sacrament was administered, as it was then customary at Stourton, after the last lesson at evening prayer; and many good Christians among the congregation present on that day considered

it a privilege to be allowed to join with the minister in praying that the Lord would multiply His blessings upon the child who was presented at the font. Certainly God lent a willing ear to the petitions then offered up in Hannah Dean's behalf. Can we suppose that He would be deaf when Christians besought Him in such words as these? "We beseech Thee for Thine infinite mercies, that Thou wilt mercifully look upon this child; wash her and sanctify her with the Holy Ghost, that she being delivered from Thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church; and being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally she may come to the land of everlasting life; there to reign with Thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Surely her name was then entered in the "Book of life," (the hand-writing which was against her for the original sin of her nature having been blotted out,) and a ministering angel appointed to watch the little Christian for her good.

To live alone with a parent and meet with harshness from him instead of kindness, and not to be allowed the blessing of a friend to whom to tell one's grief, and beside all this, to be obliged

to work hard with barely enough food to satisfy the cravings of hunger, nor enough clothes to give a decent appearance to the person, this truly is adversity, and Hannah thought that it was the very worst that could happen to her. But we never know when our cup of sorrow is quite full. Another drop may still be added bringing a fresh grief to the troubled soul. And so it was with Hannah Dean. She was seized with an attack of sickness, which brought down her strength and made her feel so wholly unfit to toil, that she dreaded the early hour of morning to come when she was obliged to get up from her bed, and with an aching head set about her daily work.

Her father did not watch with a loving eye her sudden decline of health, and when she sat shivering near the fire from the effect of the aguish disease, he thought it was only a fit of idleness, and scolded her, and desired her to be more brisk, and lively.

Those who have not made God their hope, and who do not see and acknowledge His mercy in all things, perhaps may wonder at His permitting this further affliction to fall upon one already under so severe a trial. But we know that "all things work together for good to them that love

God." And so they did for Hannah Dean, for she loved God, and endeavoured to run the way of His commandments, fulfilling the duties of her humble station, to the best of her ability, and truly honouring and loving her father even while he ill treated her.

"Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," says the Psalmist. These words were fully realized by Hannah, upon whom the day of prosperity began to dawn, when the clouds above her seemed even darker than before.

One day she felt very ill indeed, and cold chills came over her, making her shake like an aspen leaf. So she collected a few sticks, and having made a tiny blaze with them upon the hearth, she drew her chair quite close to the fire, and spreading her thin hands before it, tried to get a little warmth into her body. It was about their usual time of going to bed, and when her father came in from the garden, he looked sternly at her for making such a waste as he thought of their firing. "Is it not enough," said he, "to have a fire twice in these summer days, without wanting one a third time, just to make you warm before you go to bed? A pretty pass 'tis come to now, but I won't have it," and so saying, he

kicked the fire out with his foot and bade Hannah go to bed that minute.

“Father,” said she, “I am so very, very cold, and when I am in bed my body shakes, and my teeth chatter, and oftentimes I cannot sleep; and then when morning comes I feel so tired. Oh father! please to have pity on me, for I feel quite ill, indeed I do.”

“Don't answer me,” said the unkind father, who had hardened his heart against all gentle feelings. Poor Hannah shrunk from his side, and hastened to her little chamber, and there, having undressed herself, knelt down and began to say her evening prayer, which, as I have before said, consisted of the Lord's Prayer. When this was said, she continued kneeling, for her knees seemed rooted to the floor, and then she opened all her heart to God, she told Him all her sorrows, she prayed that He would make her father love her, and enable her to please him better. And then she begged that God would have pity upon her, and make her well in health, so that she might do her work without getting so very tired. Upon rising from her knees, she said aloud the Belief, and then laid down on her bed with a peaceful bosom, and that night her sleep was sweet, for the Lord gave her the blessing of rest.

Here we see another of the sweet "uses of adversity," Hannah Dean had been taught through it to pray more heartily, and to look to her Friend in Heaven, and seek earnestly for His help in the hour of need.

When morning came she awoke with a different feeling to any that she had ever enjoyed before. While she was still in bed she could not help thanking God for His goodness in giving her so sweet a sleep. Thus adversity had done more than cause her to "consider," and to pray; it had taught her also to be thankful, and when she was saying her prayers that morning she felt that the Lord was very near, so again she told at His throne of grace, all her desires, and reverently entrusted herself to His Almighty care.

Upon going down stairs she found her father busily engaged in doing her work. He had lighted the fire, and put on the kettle, and was in the act of placing the breakfast cloth upon the table. Hannah started at witnessing this unusual sight, but was soon re-assured by her father giving her a kiss and saying to her with kindness, "Good morning, child."

And what had been the cause of this change of conduct in James Dean? Penitence and prayer, brought about by his listening attentively

to the repetition of the Articles of the Christian Faith.

James Dean had, on the over-night, seated himself moodily in his chair after repulsing his child and sending her to her room with such unnatural harshness ; and all was silence in the cottage until Hannah's voice was heard saying aloud, as was her custom, the Belief. Every word was heard distinctly by the father, who repeated after his child the concluding articles, "the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting."

An awful consciousness of his own depraved course of life struck James Dean while he said those words, and he felt that if he should die in his present state his eternal portion would be condemnation and woe, not forgiveness and everlasting joy.

And then thoughts crossed his mind of the days of his childhood, when his parents had taken great pains in teaching him to believe and pray, and he contrasted those happy days with his present gloomy ones, and bitterly deplored the loss which he had undergone. And he thought too of the kind attention which his father and mother had always shewn to his personal wants, and here again made a contrast in his

mind between his own youthful days, and those of his hard-working child, and he could not but blame himself for having conducted himself towards Hannah with such selfishness and severity.

James Dean sat for some time in this relenting mood, and then he quietly walked up stairs, and kneeling down by his bedside prayed to God.

Before undressing himself, he softly opened the door of Hannah's bed-room, intending to speak a kind word to her if he found her awake. But she was sleeping calmly, and her emaciated face told to the father that the sickness of which she had complained was not exaggerated. Several times during that night, when lying sleepless, he thought of poor Hannah's faded looks, and of her unrepining submission, and he determined for the future to be to her a loving parent.

"It has a bad look with it," said he, as he finished placing the breakfast things upon the table after giving Hannah the kiss which had so astonished her, "it does not look well for a father to feel himself obliged to ask his child to forgive him; but I am brought to that, for I have been a cruel father to you, Hannah. Do you think you can forgive me from the bottom of your heart, and let the past be forgotten?"

“Yes, father,” said Hannah timidly, “I am sure I can.”

“Well then,” said the father, “we will say no more about it.”

During breakfast little was said; but James Dean observed that his child had no appetite for her food, and that she looked indeed in a very sickly state.

“Hannah,” said he, when he had finished his meal and left the table, “I am going out for an hour or two, and you may make up a bonny fire and keep yourself warm till I come back.” He then put on his hat and left the house, but little did Hannah suspect that he was going to the neighbouring town to fetch a doctor for her; yet such was the fact; for in the course of a few hours a doctor arrived who said he could soon restore her to health if she had proper care and attention. The harsh father now became transformed into the gentle nurse, and watched over his child with tenderness; and Hannah's eyes often over-flowed with tears of joy and gratitude at the many tokens of affection which she received from him. Her health was not restored so quickly as the doctor thought for, but even this worked a good effect upon the father, for while he had to wait upon his child his mind

HANNAH DEAN, OR A DAUGHTER'S TRIAL.

was freed from selfish thoughts, and his heart was softened by the fear of altogether losing his little meek companion, who at times suffered so severely from the return of the ague fits that her recovery seemed doubtful.

But she did at length recover, and I am happy to say her father remained kind ; and he allowed her to go to school to learn to read and write.

Thus the day of prosperity dawned upon the child who in obedience to the wise counsel of her mother prayed heartily to the Lord in the day of adversity, and treasured up in her memory each article of the Christian Faith.

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