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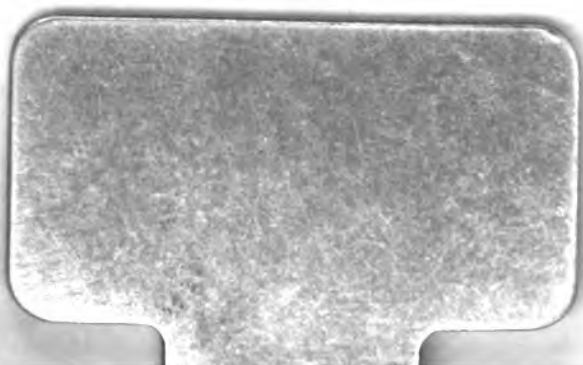


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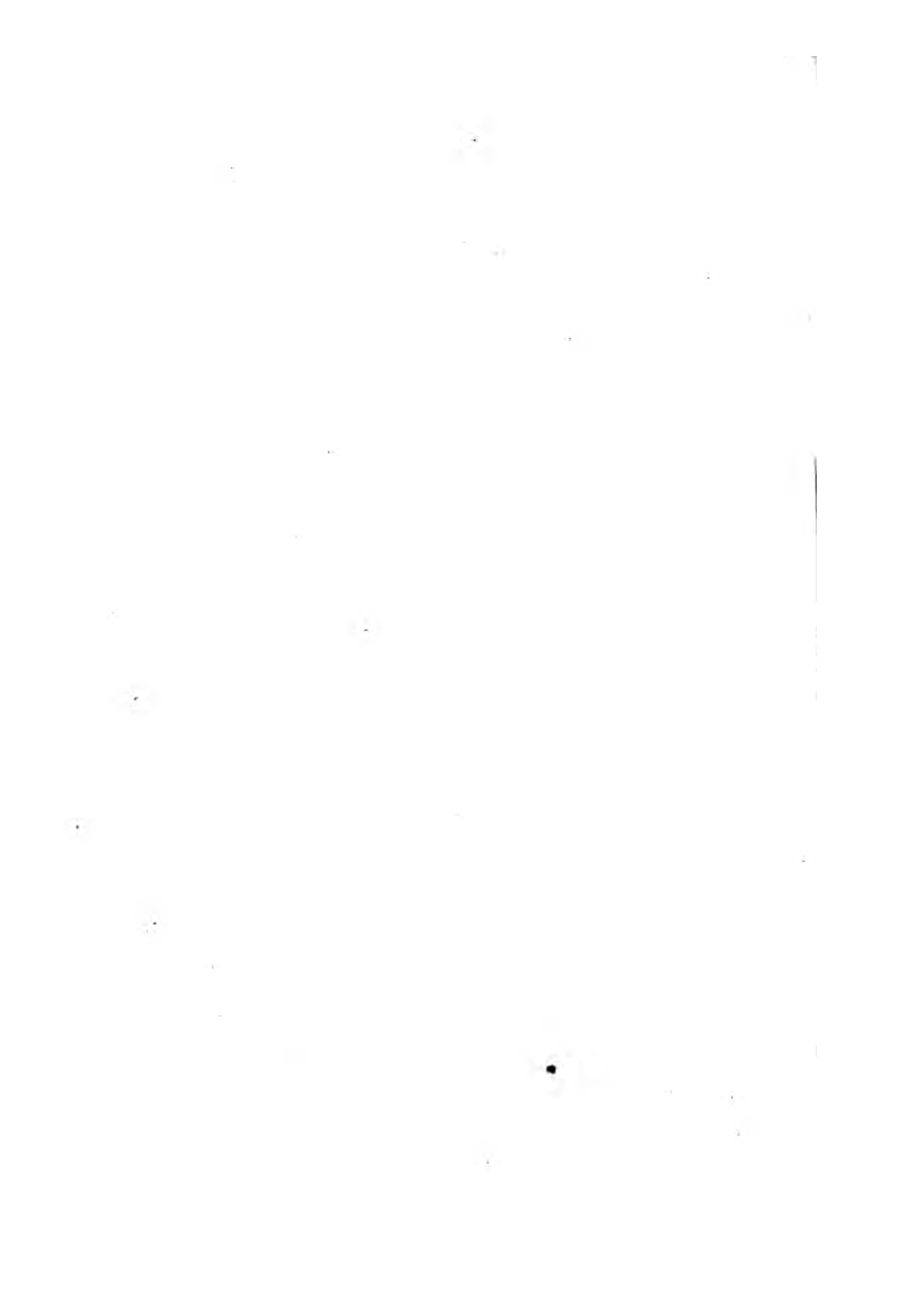


BUY AN ORANGE SIR?

1489 f 1987









BRIGHT VISIONS DISPELLED.

(See p. 25.)

“BUY AN ORANGE, SIR?”

OR,

THE HISTORY OF

JAMIE WOODFORD

“Speak not harshly : much of care
Every human heart must bear ;
Enough of shadows sadly play
Around the very sunniest way ;
Enough of sorrows darkly lie,
Veiled within the merriest eye.
By thy childhood’s gushing tears—
By the griefs of after years—
By the anguish thou dost know,
Add not to another’s woe.”

LONDON :

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KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE POOR,

19, PATERNOSTER ROW ;

AND BAZAAR, SOHO SQUARE.



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“BUY AN ORANGE, SIR?”

CHAPTER I.

STARS IN THE WINTER NIGHT.

“WHEN spring comes, and, in the soft air, the buds are breaking on the trees, and they are covered with blossoms, we think, how beautiful is spring! And when the summer arrives, and covers the trees with its heavy foliage, and singing birds are among the branches, we say, how beautiful is summer! When autumn loads them with golden fruit, and their leaves bear the gorgeous tint of frost, we think, how beautiful is autumn! And when it is sere winter, and there is neither foliage nor fruit, then we look up through the leafless branches, as we could not till now, and see the stars shine.”

Do we?—It is true that we esteem everything beautiful when all goes well with us, but the most difficult lesson of our lifetime is to see the bright lining to the blackened cloud, to lift up the eye to the heavens in the night of weeping, to find something to draw forth our admiration, even in the dreariest solitude. We can rejoice, give thanks, and sing, in the sunshine of prosperity, but in the time of adversity—What do we ?

There are families that pass through scenes as varied as the seasons, but in them all exhibit the spirit peculiar to the Christian philosopher, who sees God's hand in everything. They are grateful in the time of plenty, when everything smiles upon them and theirs, and it is summer with them ; when it may be said of them, they have light in their dwellings ; and when they have fruitful seasons, and their hearts are filled with joy and gladness. So much may be affirmed of all ; but when home is darkened by the black clouds of trouble, when the wintry sky overspreads that scene of comfort and of our warmest affections, how is it with us ?

Of such as we have alluded to it may even then be said that they have happy, though chastened, emotions springing up in their hearts, softening and refreshing as the stream in the barren wilderness, and grateful in their influence as the flower in the desert, shedding its sweet perfume on the waste by which it is surrounded—solacing thoughts, cheering their path like stars in the night of sadness. And to this class of individuals Mrs. Woodford might claim relationship.

Near her now far-off home, in the quiet churchyard of the lovely village of Springdale, were six graves, in which reposed the sweet babes that had begun to bloom around her, and some of whom had already learned to lisp the endearing name of “mother.” She had watched each bud as it drooped, and faded, and fell from the parent-stem, and had tearfully resigned them one by one, until two olive branches only graced the domestic hearth—Jamie, who was now thirteen years old, and Katie, in her twelfth year. But the sharpest arrow from the quiver of the destroyer pierced her heart when her

kind and affectionate husband, who had helped to cheer and sustain her under her various and sore trials, was smitten down at her side.

This event ushered in the chilly winter of a distressed widowhood. She was bereft of one whose good example and honest industry had eminently contributed to bless the home he occupied, and to render it a scene of happiness and contentment. Tears were her portion day and night, but they did not blind her to her position and duty, nor to the recognition of those comforts which may be ours, even in life's winter night. There were two olive branches still to be cared for, and around whom her affections might entwine themselves, the stars of her otherwise desolate heart. Careful comforts they might be, but they *were* comforts, and viewed as such.

The kind attentions of children make their parents happy, and especially soothing are they to the heart of the widowed mother—refreshing as the gentle dew to the mown grass. It matters little whether she has or has not aught besides ;

the little kindnesses and gentle offices of her children cannot fail to edge the blackest cloud with a silver lining.

It was thus with Mrs. Woodford. Although, in her efforts for the support of herself and family, she was called to endure many and great hardships, working at her needle, "from early morn till dewy eve," for what was, after all, only a scanty pittance, she saw and felt that she had much to be grateful for; and hence, with a loving heart and willing hands, confidence in God and the affections of her children, she enjoyed an amount of happiness which, like the fragrant flower, she diffused around her.

"Mother," said Jamie one evening, as Mrs. Woodford sat languid and fatigued, but still compelled to ply the needle, "Mother, father told me when he was ill, that when he died I was to take his place, and help you all I could."

"Ah, child," she replied, with a sigh, "you are too young at present to help me much;" at the same time adding, with a forced smile, to encourage her anxious boy, "Wait a few

years, and then perhaps you may be able to keep your poor mother like a lady."

There was nothing at that moment to indicate that this piece of pleasantry was prophetic, and yet it really was so.

"That I will, mother, and you shall have silk dresses, and warm shawls, and everything to make you happy."

"Do you think, then, that a fine dress would make me more happy than I am?" asked Mrs. Woodford.

"Yes, mother, if *I* earned it."

"That certainly would make me prize it the more, and I should be more thankful than ever to feel that I had so kind and industrious a son."

"Then I will *try* and earn it," said Jamie, in a manly, resolute tone, indicative of a thorough determination to try some course by which his mother should be assisted in her present state of poverty.

For some moments he sat mute and thoughtful, but only to break silence by revealing to his mother his wishes and intentions.

“Mother,” said he, “if I had a shilling, I could make half as much again of it.”

“How could you manage that?”

“When I was out in the street this morning I saw a man selling oranges, and he told another man that he could make half as much again for every shilling he spent; and I don’t see why I couldn’t too.”

“*He* might be able to do so,” said Mrs. W., “for he knows how to go about it, but you do not understand business yet, and I am afraid you would not find it so easy to get on as you think for. Besides, I do not know where you are to get a shilling from—” and the tears started and rolled down her cheeks.

“Don’t cry, mother,” said the affectionate boy, screwing up his courage, which the sight of Mrs. Woodford’s tears threatened to quench; “I will soon get the money, only let me go and try.”

“You may certainly go, Jamie; but, remember, you must get it honestly.”

“That I will, mother; and if I don’t earn a shilling, it shan’t be said I never tried.”

Jamie's kind disposition rendered him the joy of his widowed mother, the companion of his only surviving sister, and if not the sunshine, at least the starlight, of home. He knew no pleasure that all might not share. Moreover, his love for his mother led him to resolve to do more for her than he had the natural courage to perform. He was truly obliging, and touchingly grateful for the most trifling act of kindness or even civility received from any, but his diffidence and great sensibility often increased his natural modesty to a painful degree of bashfulness, rendering it less likely that he would be able to attract the attention of strangers. Hence to obtain a shilling as the groundwork of his success in life, was for him a formidable undertaking. However, he had made up his mind to earn that sum, and as he was not deficient in that most important quality, perseverance, earn it he would.

* * * *

But we must know something of Jamie's home and of his sister Katie.

CHAPTER II.

KATIE.

WITH the following beautiful fable we will introduce Katie Woodford to our readers. "The angel who takes care of the flowers, and sprinkles upon them the dew in the still night, slumbered on a spring day beneath the shade of a rosebush. When he awoke, he said, with a smiling countenance, 'Most beautiful of children, I thank thee for thy refreshing odour and cooling shade. Could you now ask any favour, how willingly would I grant it.' 'Adorn me, then, with a charm,' said the spirit of the rosebush, in a beseeching tone; and the angel adorned the loveliest of flowers with simple *moss*. Sweetly

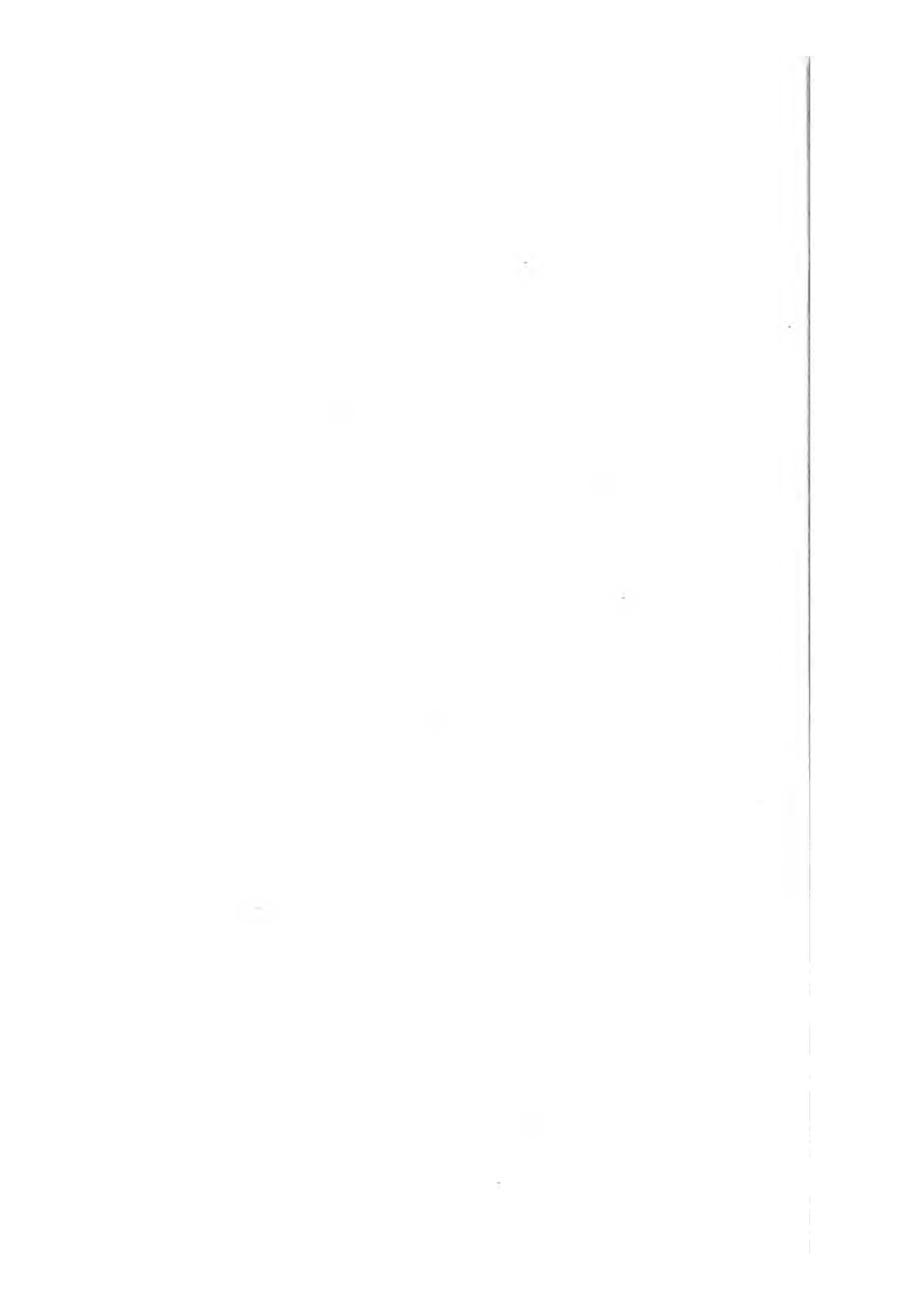
it stood there in modest attire, the most beautiful of its kind.”* And we may well inquire, what adornment more befits any in this world of humanity, than the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? No fine gold is equal to it. In the eyes of man it is more precious than rubies; —in the sight of God it is of great price. With such an ornament had the Angel of mercy adorned the roselike Katie Woodford.

On the morning of which we write, Mrs. Woodford had gone to a distance to carry home some work she had just finished, and Katie was left alone, as she often was for hours together through utter necessity. Her dwelling was in the garret of a lodging-house, where she sat in an old arm-chair, propped up between two pillows, and holding a small pocket Bible in her hand, with a box for her footstool. Her flushed but hollow cheek, and the strange unnatural lustre of her large blue eyes, were sure indications that a canker was at the root, and that the vital flame was fast expiring on the altar of her

* Krummacher.



THE WOODFORDS' HOME.



youthful being. No carpet graced the floor of the apartment, and in more places than one the door and window-frame had yielded to the remorseless hand of decay, while one of the panes of glass had given place to a paper substitute. Nevertheless, as cleanliness and industry will make a home of the meanest abode, and meekness and quietness of spirit, with the grace of humility, will render that home a happy one, so with this humble apartment. The furniture was neatly arranged, the floor was sweetly clean, and there were even some faint attempts at taste, for a piece of coloured chintz covered Katie's homely footstool, while a solitary flower decked the window-sill. Moreover, the Christian virtues, faith and love, shed their fragrance around that homely hearth.

The sun, whose radiant beams gilded the marble pillars of mansions far away, just peeped in at the window of that lonely room, and wrote its golden message on the petals of that lovely rose. That sweet rose! it had long been Katie's companion; but its royal beauty appeared in strange contrast with the low-ceiled apartment,

where, day after day, the poor child sat admiring the crimson folds of its blossom, while she thought of Him who is the rose of Sharon so beautifully spoken of in her pocket Bible.

Jamie always went up stairs very softly, that he might not disturb his sister, if she should perchance be sleeping.

“Is that you, Jamie?” she asked, on the day in question, as he gently opened the door and peeped in.

“Yes, Katie dear; do you feel any better? Are you tired of being alone?” he inquired, smoothing back the auburn hair from her forehead in a loving manner.

“Not very; but my side aches so, and my hands are so hot. How nice and cool yours feel, Jamie.”

“Never mind, Katie,” said he, looking into his sister’s blue eyes, while tears filled his own. “I have been chopping some wood for Mr. Byng; and he has given me a shilling, and I shall buy some oranges with it to sell on the pier. I dare say I shall sell them all, and then I

shall be able to buy something for mother's supper, and a piece of cake and some grapes for you. Won't that be nice?"

Katie smiled; for she thought she should much enjoy such things, although she feared that Jamie would not be able to do as he wished; she felt, moreover, that it was a difficult thing even to obtain what was necessary for daily subsistence. "I shan't mind," said she, "if you can only get enough to give something to dear mother; she is obliged to work so hard to keep us. Never mind me, Jamie."

"Oh yes, I shall, I hope," said Jamie. "We don't often have anything but bread and butter; and you know it's your birthday to-day, Katie. Besides, the doctor says we are to try and tempt you to eat, to keep up your strength. You shall have something better than bread and butter to-night. Do you mind being left alone again for a little while?"

"No, not much. Don't be longer than you can help; for mother will be late before she gets home, and she will be so tired. But you will read me those verses I like so, first, wont you?"

“Oh yes, that I will.” And he read the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation, from the ninth to the seventeenth verse.

That will be nice to have so many to talk to and sing with, Jamie,” said Katie, as her brother closed the book.

“And it will be much better than being here all alone so much.”

“Yes, Jamie. I can't sing now, for want of breath, but I shall be able to sing there; Mrs. Bright says so.”

“And you will not want anything to eat or drink there. It says they'll not be hungry nor thirsty any more. What a nice place it must be!”

“It is indeed. Teacher said, we often talk about it, but what must it be to be there! I wish I was there.”

“You *will* be some day, Katie; and then you will be so much better off. Mrs. Bright says you will have something better to wear than your old patched cotton frock; for it says there are white robes to put on.”

“I don't mind my patched frock, Jamie. I

want to go to heaven. But I should like you to go, too."

Jamie hung his head, for he did not like to think about dying.

At this moment they were disturbed by a gentle tap at the door. It was Jenny Bright, granddaughter of the lodger on the second floor; she had come to sit with Katie for a little while.

"I will go now, sissy," said Jamie. "I shall soon be back."

Away he ran, and having purchased a shilling's worth of oranges, hastened down to the steam-boat pier.

CHAPTER III.

JAMIE'S FIRST ADVENTURE.

ON Jamie's arrival at the pier, all was bustle and confusion; passengers were hurrying to and from the boats, and the noise of many voices and the rush of steam were almost deafening. The poor boy wandered about with his board of fruit, feeling very awkward, and scarcely knowing how to proceed, for it was his first essay at street-selling. Porters were hired and newspapers were freely purchased, but his little pyramid of oranges was passed unheeded by many a bustling traveller—no one stopped to buy. And Jamie had not yet mustered courage sufficient to solicit custom.

Already had he fixed upon the grapes that he would like to carry home to his sister, but at present there seemed little probability of his being able to do as he wished. He felt discouraged, yet he did not despair, but determined, on the arrival of the next boat, that he would let the passengers know that his oranges were really *for sale*. So putting on a bold front, he went up to the first person that landed, and, in a tremulous tone, asked, "Buy an orange, sir?" The individual in question, however, was evidently no friend to street-sellers. "Get out of the way!" said he, and giving him a violent push, scattered the poor boy's fruit far and wide. Some fell into the water, while others were trodden under foot by the passengers who were hurrying on shore.

Poor Jamie! The big tears rolled down his cheeks, for his bright visions of happiness were dispelled in a moment, and his fondest hopes seemed to have vanished for ever. Such want of sympathy was to him a new thing; and he was so taken aback, that he did not, as some boys would have done, at once set to

work to gather up his oranges again, but for some minutes stood as if he did not know what to do. "No tempting piece of cake for Katie," thought he; "no juicy grape to cool her fevered tongue; perhaps not even a supper. Oh, cruel man! Surely, had he known that a poor fatherless boy was trying to earn a little money to comfort and support a dying sister, he never would have found heart to push him aside so roughly."

Jamie knew that nearly all that his mother would receive for her day's work must go towards the rent, and that she would be hoping that he would bring home money enough to buy something for his sister's supper. The very thought of her disappointment made him cry as though his heart would break. "Poor boy!" said some as they passed by, looking on him as did the Levite upon the ill-used Jew who lay in his road, but not having benevolence sufficient to help him in his trouble; while others exhorted him to "Cheer up," or, in other words, "Be warmed, be fed," without extending the much-needed help. At length,

however, as he stood sobbing, a hand was gently laid upon his shoulder. "Never mind, my boy," said a benevolent-looking gentleman; "pick up your oranges, you see they are not all gone; and here, take this, it will help to set you up again," at the same time putting half-a-crown into his hand; for he could see, by Jamie's appearance, that anything given to him would be made a good use of.

Jamie thought the gentleman had made a mistake, and given him a half-crown instead of a penny, and he said so, but his benefactor replied, "It is all right, my boy; make a good use of it."

He did "not much like taking the money," as he said, "without having earned it," hence he begged of the gentleman to take what few oranges were left. The gentleman did so, and no doubt he considered that he had purchased them very cheaply, when he saw that his kind act seemed to put new life and spirit into the boy. He returned to his abode that day the subject of more solid satisfaction than would have been his had he found a string of

pearls or a casket of diamonds ; while Jamie, thanking him in his best manner, ran home with a light heart and full of joy, not forgetting to purchase on his way a few grapes and a piece of cake for his sister.

Such happiness we all can give to others by dropping sweet words and smiles as we pass along—helping the needy, taking the hand of the friendless, cheering the orphan, and encouraging and comforting the sad and dejected. By the way-side, amid the city's din, abroad and at home, let us endeavour to drop words and perform deeds of kindness to cheer and to bless. Let the golden rule be ours in practice—let us do unto others as we would have them do unto us ; and we shall feel much happier as we recline upon our pillows at the close of each day, knowing that the blessing of him who was ready to perish is ours.

“ How softly on the bruised heart
A word of kindness falls ;
And to the dry and parched soul,
The moistening tear-drop calls.

Oh, if they knew who walk the earth
Mid sorrow, grief, and pain,
The power a word of kindness hath,
'Twere paradise again."

Little, perhaps, did that gentleman imagine how much he was contributing to the happiness of Jamie's home when he put the half-crown into his hand, least of all did he suspect the result. It was, as it were, the turning point in Jamie's life-struggle, the encouragement to perseverance in his efforts at obtaining a livelihood. We shall see to what it led.

A happy hour indeed was supper-time in the garret-home that evening; Katie was pleased with the grapes, and Mrs. Woodford listened with grateful emotions to the story of the kind gentleman who helped her boy out of his trouble, while Jamie himself rejoiced with them both.

"I wish I could see him," said Katie; "I do love that gentleman for being so kind; he should have my beautiful rose, if I only knew where he lived," and she leaned her weary head on her mother's bosom.

“Why, Katie,” said Jamie, as he sat gazing on his sister’s flushed cheeks, “what a colour you have got! I am sure you will soon get well now. Don’t you think she will, mother?”

“I am afraid not,” was the reply; and whispering into Jamie’s ear, Mrs. Woodford added, “the doctor says it is only for a few months now that she can live.”

Jamie could not bear the idea of being separated from his only sister, and for a short time was silent. At length, wiping his eyes, and assuming a more cheerful appearance, he said, “I know now what makes Katie so fond of the chapter I read to her before I went down to the pier.”

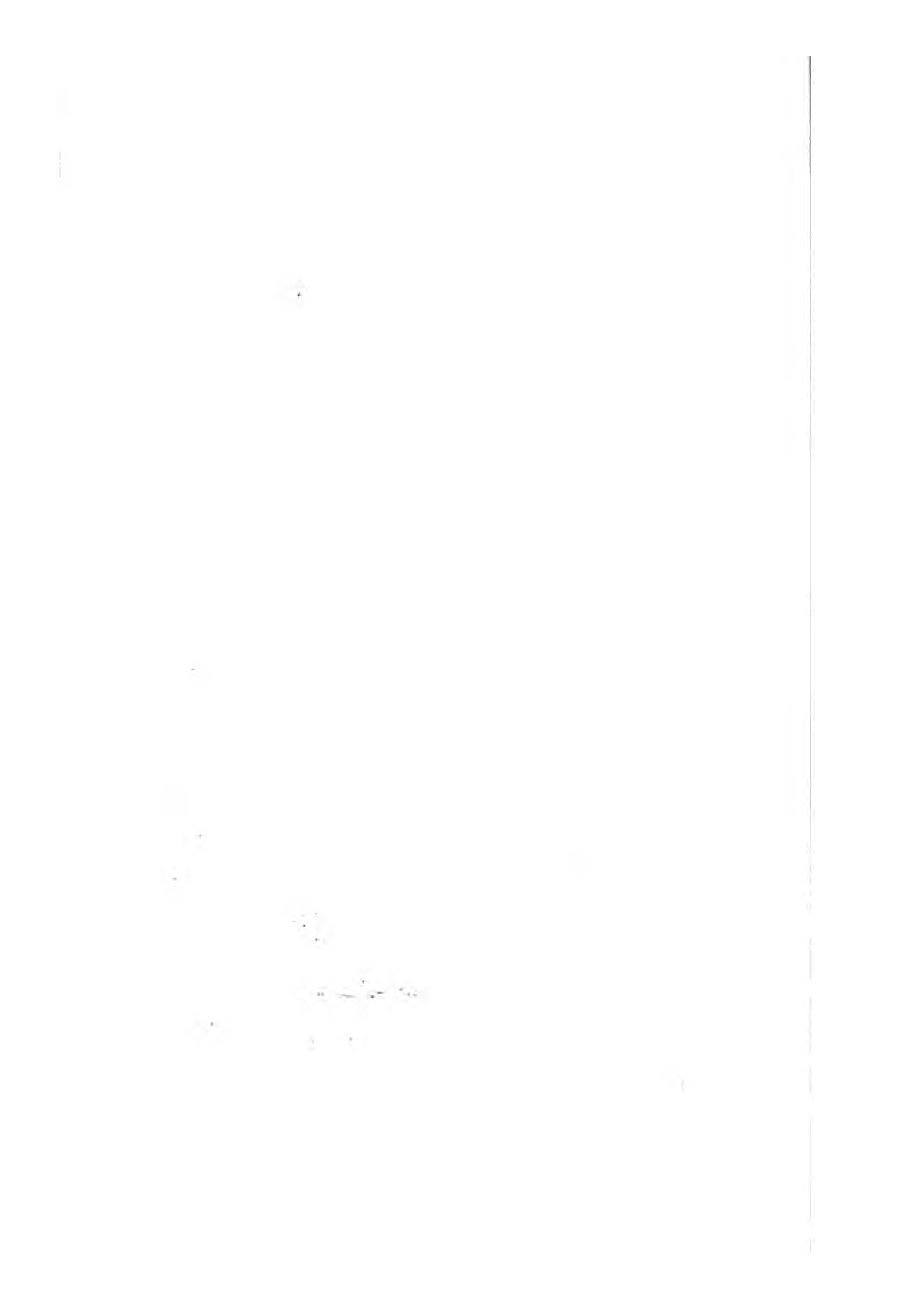
“Why does she like it, do you think, then?” asked his mother.

“Because it tells about heaven,” said Katie, rousing herself, “and about the people clothed in white, and the angels standing round, singing ‘Glory to Jesus.’”

“Yes, mother,” added Jamie, “and it says they won’t be hungry or thirsty there won’t that be a good thing for poor Katie?”



A HAPPY SUPPER-TIME.



“Indeed it will,” said Mrs. Woodford, endeavouring to hide the emotion with which her heart was filled; “for dear Katie’s sake, it will be a happy change.”

“But I want you both to go there too,” said Katie; “it would be so nice for all of us to go together; wouldn’t it, mother?”

“It would, indeed, my dear,” Mrs. Woodford replied; “but that does not seem at all likely. Yet I hope we shall follow you there when it pleases God to call us.”

“Oh yes, mother, I hope you will.” Then turning to her brother, Katie asked him to read to her those beautiful verses about heaven before he lay down to sleep.

Jamie did as she desired. “Those are nice verses,” said Mrs. Woodford. “It will be a blessed thing to be free from sorrow, and crying, and pain. The very thought of going to such a place makes me feel willing to put up with any hardship while I live in this world. I do not know what I should do if I did not hope to go to heaven when I die.”

“Dear mother,” said Katie, “how nice to

hear you talk so ! It makes me feel so happy to think that you will come to heaven by and by."

"Oh, Katie !" exclaimed Jamie, "you talk about dying as if you were only going before us to live in another place, and not as if you were going to die. What makes you not afraid to die ?"

"Because I love Jesus ; and you know Jesus is in heaven, and he says if we love him here we shall live with him in heaven. I love all God's people, and they will all be in heaven. And you know father is there ; and brothers and sisters who died long ago are all there. I am sure I ought not to be afraid to die ; it will be so much like going home—it would be quite like it, if you were both going too."

Mrs. Woodford hid her face in her hands while she wondered at the calmness of Katie's manner when speaking of death ; for she talked more like an experienced Christian than a girl of twelve years. But why should she wonder ? The Scriptures assert that "Death is ours," and the young may exclaim with the more ad-

vanced in years, "O grave, where is thy victory! O death, where is thy sting!" if they be only found trusting in Him who has gained the victory over death and the grave. Katie was doing so, and was looking forward to a home with him who said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions,—I go to prepare a place for you." This was to her the grand attraction—a Saviour there. And so Jamie thought.

"It wouldn't be much to go to heaven if Jesus would not be there," said he.

"It would not be heaven at all without him," said Katie. "Besides, you could not go if Jesus Christ was not there. God will not let any in but those Christ asks him to; will he, mother?"

"You are quite right, my dear; it is only through Christ that we can go to heaven. He died for us, and rose again, and is gone to prepare a place for those who love him and keep his commandments; and the Bible says, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.'"

"Yes," said Jamie, interrupting his mother, "our Sunday-school teacher said that meant

that he was always asking God to let those who love him, and do what he says, come to heaven to live with him."

"Yes, Jamie, he asks God to have mercy upon us for his sake, and to look upon what he has done and suffered for us as if we had done it ourselves, so that when we die we may be with him where he is. But we must not talk any more now; it is time we all went to rest."

His mother then knelt down, and prayed for herself and children, committing the keeping of their bodies and souls to him who watches over us by night and by day, and who is always doing us good; after which Jamie bade his sister good night, and laid himself down to sleep.

The next morning, as Mrs. W. was obliged to go out for an hour to see after some work, and Jamie must also endeavour to earn a few pence, Jenny Bright again was asked to come and stay with Katie for a short time.

Now Jenny "did everything," as young

Woodford expressed it, "to make his sister comfortable." She read her favorite chapters to her, and would bring things for her to look at, and fan her, and step about the room so softly as not to disturb her when she was dozing; and when her throat got dry, she would hand her something to moisten her mouth.

The dear invalid was always very grateful, and though her body was often racked with pain, she never murmured.

"I don't know," said Jenny, on the morning in question, "how you can bear so much pain, without saying anything about it. Even if you bite your lips, you never say a word."

"Oh yes, I do, Jenny; sometimes I cannot help crying out. But, you know, I don't have anything like the pain some people have. I think I could bear more still, if God thought it best for me."

"I wish I could bear pain as well as you can; and then I think I should be more happy than I am."

"You can be happy, if you love Jesus: He loves you, Jenny. You might bear pain, with-

out being happy ; but you cannot love Jesus, without being very happy : that is what the missionary told me, when he called the other day." And then observing the tears in Jenny's eyes, she added—

"You will not cry when I die, will you? for I shall have no more pain then."

"I cannot promise not to cry ; but I will try and remember how happy you are. I won't cry because you are happy ; I shall only cry because you are gone away, and I can't be with you."

"But you can be with me some day, Jenny, if you love Jesus, and do what He says now. Oh, do love Jesus !"

At this moment Mrs. W— returned, and soon afterwards Jenny left her companion, to assist her grandmother with her morning duties, promising to come and see her again in the evening. But the words, "Oh, do love Jesus," still rang in her ears, and many a tear fell that day, as the earnest tones and piercing look of Katie were brought to mind.

"Grandmother," said she, "I wish I was sure of going to heaven, to be with Jesus."

“And why should you not be sure? Jesus asks the young to come to him and be saved. Many have gone to him, and are now safely at home with him in heaven; and why should you not go to him? I am quite sure that he loves you; and if you love him, it will soon be seen, for you will do everything to please him, and to make others speak well of his name. You will be like him—kind, and sympathising, and forbearing, and doing good unto all men. You will fear to offend him. It will always cause you much sorrow to feel that you have thought, said, or done anything which his word says you ought not, and as much to leave undone what it is your duty to do.”

For some weeks Jenny felt very unhappy on account of her sins; and she fell into an error into which very many fall, of looking too much at herself, and not enough to Christ. She was trying to make herself better; but at length she learned the beautiful lesson which Katie had learned, that if we would be pardoned and go to heaven, we must have on the robe of

Christ's righteousness—the white robe which the saints wear in heaven. Nothing that we can do will merit God's favour; and if we would dwell with Jesus in heaven, we must be clothed in Christ's merits. Where did she learn all this? From Jamie Woodford. We will tell you how.

One Sunday evening, when Jamie came home from school, he told his sister that they had had a very nice address from a gentleman, about the white robe, and that he said, "Now, boys, if you wish to go to heaven you must have on this robe; you cannot get there without it."

"Not get there without it!" said Jenny, "what did he mean? I thought you wouldn't be able to have it till you got there."

"No, Jenny; he told us we couldn't go in, without having it on. And he said, if any one managed to get inside the gate without having it on, which he didn't think was very likely, they would soon be turned out again."

"Well, I am sure I don't know how I am to get to heaven then; I know I haven't got the white robe, and I don't know how to make it."

“You can’t make it,” said Jamie, smiling: but Jenny was in earnest, she was very anxious about it. She felt to want to be sure of going to heaven when she died, and she very much wished to know how to get there.

“Then how can I get it?” she asked.

Mrs. Woodford, observing Jenny’s anxiety, said, “Through Jesus Christ: I have no doubt the teacher said so.”

“Yes, mother,” said Jamie; “he told us that Jesus has made the robe, and we are to put it on; but he said, many try to make it themselves.”

“Very true: they do. But what did he say the robe was?” asked Mrs. Woodford.

“He said it was called the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and that we must put it on by faith. And then he told us about the man who went to the wedding-feast, without putting on the garment that the king had provided for every one who came. He said that the king would not allow him to sit down to the feast, but told his servants to bind him hand and foot, and to cast him into outer darkness.”

“That seemed very hard,” observed Jenny.

“Yes, and so teacher said; but it only *seemed* so; it was the man’s pride that made him refuse to put on the garment which the king had provided. Teacher said it was an insult.”

“And so it was,” remarked Katie, who had been paying great attention to what was passing. “I dare say they were not fit to go before a king.”

“That is just what teacher told us,” said Jamie. “He said that perhaps they were beggars with ragged clothes, or travellers covered over with dust, and would not be fit to go in the things they had on to a wedding; and so, as the king wanted them to be there, he had a garment ready for each of them to put on.”

And thus the conversation continued. We should like to have given our readers the whole of it, but cannot now. We may, however, assure them that the teacher’s address was of great use to Jenny, for it taught her that those who desire to go to heaven must go in the dress which the King of kings has provided.

We are all sinners in the sight of God, and deserve to be shut out from his presence for ever. He is so angry with us, that he would long ago have sent us to outer darkness, but Jesus Christ died that we might be saved from going where there is no hope. All that we do is in the sight of God no better than filthy rags, and it is only on account of what Christ has done that we can hope for heaven. But God has provided that in which we may appear before him. Jesus has done what is right, and what God is pleased with; and if we trust in what he has done, God says it shall be just as if we had done it ourselves. It is like putting on a clean robe to hide our own soiled dress; and so we are said to be clothed with Christ's righteousness. If we do what God commands us, and trust in what he says, we put on this robe.

Some people imagine that if they do some good works, and become very attentive to religious duties, they will deserve to go to heaven, but this can never be. Unless we do everything that God's law requires of us, we cannot please God, or go to heaven. This we can never do;

but Christ has done it for us ; and if we believe all that God says about it, and trust in what our Saviour has done, God will take it as if we had done it ourselves.

So Katie happily learned. She saw that she could never please God of herself ; but because Christ had pleased him, she went to her heavenly Father in Jesus' name, and asked him to accept her for his sake. And thus, if we are found in heaven, it will be not on account of what we have done, but for what Christ has done ; or, as God's book declares, "not having on our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ."

May we all be clothed in that beautiful white robe !

* * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

CLOUDS AND DARKNESS.

SORROW and suffering continued to be the portion of the Woodfords ; and it was very sad to see the pale and anxious countenance of the widowed mother, who was compelled to toil on from early dawn till the curtains of night closed around her, or, as was often the case, till morning dawned again. Hard indeed was the struggle to gain a livelihood. Sometimes she found great difficulty in procuring work at all ; at others, when she might have obtained it, her invalid child required all her time and attention. Jamie, too, although he did what he could, had to buffet with a heartless world. Day after day

he went to his post on the pier, but often with very poor success. His feet grew sore, and his courage many a time forsook him. With half the discouragement, there are few boys who would not have given up in despair; but no, he persevered. Frequently, however, was he tempted to give way to dishonesty. Some youths told him he had better do that than starve, and that there could not be any harm in doing so when he wanted bread. But he was enabled to resist temptation; for he knew that God has said, "Thou shalt not steal," and that was enough for him.

Nevertheless Jamie frequently grew dull and out of heart, and would sit down on a block on the pier and rest his aching head on his hand, while he hid the tears that *would* come into his eyes, in spite of all his efforts to keep them back. It was too much for Jamie's kind and loving disposition, to feel that he was able to do so little for the assistance of his mother, and for the comfort of his dying sister. No wonder that, manly as he strove to be, the picture of suffering and hardship which was constantly

before his mind should prove too much for a brother's heart, when he felt himself so powerless to help to relieve it.

One day, as he sat on the pier, in the manner just described, the pier-master passed him on his way to dinner. He inquired the cause of Jamie's distress; for his benevolent heart was deeply moved by the despondent look of sorrow which was depicted on the boy's face. Jamie told him his tale of want and disappointment, and he had the happiness of telling it to one whose heart was a well of sympathy for every child of woe.

"Cheer up, my lad," said he; "brighter days will come yet. You are not the one to give up for a little. Persevere; that is the way to get on."

"Yes, sir," Jamie replied; "I shouldn't care if it wasn't for my mother and poor sister, but I can't bear to see them want. I could manage to put up with it myself, if it wasn't for that."

"I suppose," said Mr. Owen, "your mother does something towards a living?"

"She does what she can, sir; but then my

poor sister is so ill, and the pay is so little that it is hard work to earn enough for the rent."

"Well, well," observed Mr. Owen, who felt more than he could express, "let us hope better times will come yet. I have noticed you often, and I know that you are honest, and do what you can; perhaps I may manage to do something better for you by-and-by. Come along, my lad, I dare say we can find a bit of dinner for you."

Jamie was so overcome with this kindness that he could not speak, but followed the pier-master to his house.

"Here, wife," said Mr. Owen, "I have brought you a visitor;" and then he told her the history of the stranger, as far as he knew it.

Mrs. Owen's sympathies were quickly drawn towards the orphans and their widowed mother, and when Jamie had been supplied with a hearty meal, she put up a few things into a basket, that he might take them to his afflicted sister.

"Only bring back the basket," said she, "for I want it every day."

Jamie promised that he would, and, with many thanks, hastened home.

“Oh, Jamie, what have you there?” exclaimed his mother, as soon as he entered the room.

“Something for you and Katie,” he replied; “but I don’t know what it is, for Mrs. Owen put it into the basket while I was eating my dinner.”

“How kind of her,” said Katie.

“It is indeed,” added Mrs. Woodford; “and look, Katie, here is just what you wanted—a little rice pudding. Have we not reason to be thankful to God? I was very wrong just now, when I began to despair; I ought to have said, ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.’”

“Yes, mother;” said Katie; “you know the missionary read, one Sunday, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’”

“But who is Mrs. Owen, Jamie?” asked Mrs. Woodford.

“The pier-master’s wife; and she says that I am to take the basket back, when you have emptied it.”

Jamie was not long in returning it to its owner, who was pleased with the prompt and grateful manner in which it was done; and promised to call and see his sister.

When Jamie had left the house, Katie said, “Don’t you remember you told me you would always trust in God, for you knew he would not let us starve? and you see he has found us another friend.”

“Yes, my child; but how sorry I am that I ever doubted his kindness for a moment.”

Now, although a true Christian, yet there were times when Mrs. Woodford felt ready to despair. Doubts would arise, but she did not encourage them. Her conduct was like that of the orphan girl, who, in reply to an individual who had been endeavouring to raise doubts in her mind, by suggesting that Jesus Christ was a great way off in heaven, and had

too many things to attend to, to stop and take any notice of her, said—"I know He says he will, and that's enough for me." God has declared himself to be a Father to the fatherless, and a Judge of the widow, and that was enough for Mrs. Woodford. All things, it is true, seemed to be against her, but she knew the word of God was sure, "All things work together for good to them that love him," and that was enough for her. She seemed sometimes to be forsaken, as though God had forgotten her, and shut up his tender mercy from her; but He has said, 'I never will leave thee, nor forsake thee,' and that was enough for her. It should be enough for us all. Oh, how slow we are to take God's word, and trust in him.

However, as we have said, there were times when Mrs. Woodford would exclaim, "What shall we do—how are we to get bread?" and in the very morning of the day on which Jamie brought home the basket from Mrs. Owen, the widowed mother had mingled her tears with those of her children, when contemplating the misery which seemed to

await them. But in that instance she had been reproved; the Lord provided for her. Mrs. Bright had found them a breakfast, and their mid-day meal had come from an unknown friend.

Thus it ever will be with those who trust in God; they may be in the deepest distress, and not know where their next meal is to come from, but God will find them friends, if they do their best to gain a livelihood. It is not the idle to whom the promise is given, but to the industrious, who, however unsuccessful, strive hard to earn an honest living, humbly trusting in God for his blessing.

But we have another scene of sorrow to unfold—the death of Katie. A few weeks longer, and the rose-colour had faded from her cheek; her eyes were beginning to grow dim; her cough had ceased; and her appetite failed her. Her feet, too, were much swollen, and it was evident she was nearing an eternal world.

When first she discovered this sad fact, Mrs. Woodford took her son aside, and whispered

into his ear, "Jamie, your sister cannot live very long. We must prepare to lose her."

"Oh, mother," he exclaimed, "I hope she won't die yet; we shall miss her so."

Katie overheard this remark, and motioned for him to come near her.

He went near, and she whispered, "I am going to heaven, Jamie."

"Yes, sister dear," he replied, while he turned his head away to conceal his emotion.

"And I want you to be there, too." Then laying her hand upon her little pocket Bible, she said, "That will show you the way;" evidently intending that her brother should take it as her dying gift.

Jamie could not utter a word.

Katie, observing Jamie and her mother's distress at the near prospect of separation, with some effort said, "Don't cry, mother; Jamie, you may come, too; Jesus says so."

These were the last words she was heard to utter. For two whole days it was the painful duty of Mrs. Woodford and Jamie to watch

the dying girl, as she lay quietly awaiting the summons which should call her away from earth to heaven. Peacefully, at length, she breathed her last, and Katie was gone to be with that dear Saviour, who loved her, redeemed, sanctified, and saved her. Gone

Where shadows ne'er gather, nor sorrows come,
To darken the sky of the spirit's home,
Far, far away.

Farewell, Christian child, fare thee well.
Where angels dwell
Is now thy home! With sainted ones unite,
And echo through that world which hath no night
Redeeming love!

— gone from her brother's sight,
Whose clinging heart
Can scarce depart
From the one who loved through each changing year,
From the one who in death is still more dear
Than when in life.

Poor Jamie! his lips quivered, and the tears ran thick and fast adown his cheeks.

His mother sought to comfort him, while her own eyes filled, and both sobbed aloud.

Mrs. Bright and her grandchild Jenny, who had been once better off, and were lodgers on the second floor, came up, and did their best to cheer the mourners.

“Never mind, Jamie,” said Jenny; “Katie is gone to the bright land, the happy land, she loved to sing about.”

“But I do mind, Jenny. I have got no one to talk to me as Katie used to, and I shall miss her so every time I come home;” and he wept bitterly.

“You will miss her—that I am quite sure of,” said Mrs. Bright; “but you must remember that Katie, poor dear, suffered very much when she was alive, and now she is free from all that; she has gone to Jesus, and is so happy. I am sure you would not wish her to come back again.”

Jamie knew Katie was happy, and he loved her too well to wish her back again; but still he seemed to wish she had not gone away so soon.

“I seem to miss her so, already,” said Mrs.

Woodford. "I have only one left now," she added, clasping Jamie to her bosom.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Bright, "God never takes away *all* our comforts. Let us be grateful for that which remains. Katie is better off." And she repeated some lines which had been sent her, many years before, on the death of her only daughter :

"Could you see that sweet cherub e'en now,
Rejoicing with joy that no heart can conceive,
And glory encircling her brow,
You would check all complaint, you would smile
through your tears,
And your praises to God would arise,
Who has plucked your sweet flower in her earliest
years,
For ever to bloom in the skies.

"Then dry up your tears for your beautiful one,
So early thus called to her rest ;
Oh, mourn not for her that her journey is done,
And she is eternally blessed.
An angel was bound in a prison of clay,
And dragging a cumbersome load ;
Rejoice, she has burst from her fetters to-day,
And joyfully flown to her God.

Oh, bitter the tears that are shed o'er the clay,
That lies in unconsciousness there ;
While the lovely young spirit is happy to-day,
More happy than tongue can declare."

"Mother," said Jamie, "don't let us cry any more about Katie; she is happy—I know she is."

"And you think we ought to try and be happy, too, don't you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I thought so. Come, Mrs. Woodford, you must feel faint; you had better come downstairs and have some breakfast with us, or you will not be fit for what you have to do to-day."

Mrs. Woodford and her son followed Mrs. Bright, but neither of them had heart to eat. After much entreaty, however, they took a little coffee.

The poor have little time that they can give up to sorrow, and Mrs. Woodford felt this; there was a scanty cupboard and an empty purse. Some work had been promised her, if she could

do it that week, and she must go and fetch it. Mrs. Bright, therefore, offered to go to the parish and ask them to bury poor Katie—an offer which Mrs. Woodford was glad to accept.

“You will not mind being left alone, will you?” asked Mrs. Bright.

“No, ma’am; God is here, and the good angels, and I will try and think how happy Katie is, and ask God to make me fit to go where she is.”

“My Jenny shall stay with you, and keep you company while we are gone.”

When they were left alone, Jamie could not help going to take another peep at his dear sister. Calm and peaceful lay the clayey temple; her lips still smiling, as if her last words yet lingered on them. Jamie clasped her chilly hand in his, and kissed her cold brow. “Oh, sister dear,” he exclaimed, “I wish I was where you are now!”

“Look,” said Jenny, “she seems to smile, as if she was thinking about the angels.”

“She is with the angels now,” said Jamie.

“Yes,” continued Jenny, “the angels have taken her home to heaven, like the Shining Ones led Christian and Hopeful when they passed through the dark river. But I forgot,—you never saw my ‘Pilgrim’s Progress;’ grandmother gave it me; would you like to see it?”

Jamie replied that he should; and they went downstairs into Mrs. Bright’s room. Jenny quickly found the book, and telling Jamie to sit in her grandmother’s arm-chair, she sat down upon a stool at the table. While she was turning over the leaves to find the picture of the Shining Ones, she told him in her own way the story which has interested so many by its union of simplicity with a profound knowledge of the devices and wiles of the human heart. She told him of Christian dwelling in the City of Destruction, and that it is a city in which we all are living, if we do not love Jesus Christ; but Christian found out it was a very dangerous place to live in, for some day all who live there would be destroyed; and so he made up his mind to flee from the wrath

to come. Then she spoke of his setting out on his journey; how he entered the strait and narrow way, and fell into the Slough of Despond, and was helped out again, and at length lost his burden of sins at the foot of the cross. She also gave him some particulars of his journey; how afraid he was when he got near Mount Sinai, lest it should fall on his head; but Evangelist directed him into the right way for the wicket gate, and at last he reached Interpreter's house. Then she told him what danger Christian got into at Vanity Fair, where his fellow-pilgrim, Faithful, lost his life; and how he afterwards found another companion, named Hopeful, until at length they went together through the river of death. And she finished her story by showing to Jamie the passage where it says that they who had escaped to the shore came at once to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, which, in the words of the allegory, "compassed them round on every side."

"Listen, Jamie," said she, "I will read it.

‘There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them, the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, “Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.” I also heard the men themselves that they sang with a loud voice, saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one to another without intermission, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord.” And after that, they shut up the gates, which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.’ Isn’t that nice, Jamie?”

The shadows faded from Jamie’s countenance like clouds chased away by the sunlight, and he

said, "It is enough to make any one wish to be among them. Katie *is*, I am sure; I wish I was."

"We shall be, I hope, some day," said Jenny; and she repeated the lines—

"Oh, that will be joyful, joyful, joyful,
On Canaan's happy shore
To meet to part no more;
And join the everlasting song,
With those who are gone before."

Just at this moment Mrs. Bright returned, with the news that the guardians would bury poor Katie; and was quickly followed by Mrs. Woodford, with work enough for the week.

We need say little of the funeral. Katie's body was borne to its last resting-place, followed by the widow and her son, and Mrs. Bright and her granddaughter.

CHAPTER V.

THE RAINBOW.

FOR a long time Jamie felt alone, and almost deserted. There was a blank, and such a blank as only death can make. Katie's chair—it was empty; the little chintz-covered box stood in the corner, and her bonnet—there it hung! Was not this enough to fill the heart of an affectionate brother with sorrow, and his eyes with tears?

Yet when he saw his mother prostrated from long watching and anxiety, and unable to apply herself so closely to her work as she had been wont to do, he forgot his own trouble, and resolved that he would do his best to enable her

to recruit her exhausted strength, by trying to earn something more than he had hitherto done.

When, therefore, he again went to the pier, he sought to make himself generally useful. In addition to selling oranges, he would hold gentlemen's horses, or show individuals the way to particular houses of business. But, with all his extra exertions, his earnings were very small, and went but a little way towards supplying the every-day wants of himself and mother. Indeed, had it not been for Mrs. Bright's kindness, and that of the pier-master's wife, they must often have fasted. Moreover, Jenny lent a helping hand with the needlework, so that at least some of it might be completed, and returned to the shop.

What noble traits of character are often brought forth in times of trial, that under a bright, unclouded sky might never have appeared. There was Jamie roused to brave and active exertion to make his way in the world. Mrs. Woodford, too, was exemplifying simple faith in God under the most trying circum-

stances; while their friends were induced to carry out the principle of the golden rule: and all this activity of body and mind brought into exercise by trouble and sorrow.

Mrs. Woodford found in her son a most devoted helper and a great comfort, and always when he left his home, to begin his day's efforts, he left it accompanied by her prayers for his safety and preservation from evil. Young Woodford, too, entered into all that he did so heartily, and with such goodwill, that mother and son both felt happy, and could even rejoice in the midst of their sufferings.

One afternoon, as Jamie was leaving the house for his usual round, the rain began to fall heavily, and his mother expressed her anxiety lest he should take cold; "and then," she added, "what shall we do?"

Jamie appeared not to hear this inquiry, but looking out from the window, said—

"Mother, there ought to be a rainbow somewhere; for it rains and the sun is shining at the same time."

Whatever Mrs. Woodford may have thought, or Jamie intended, there was true poetry in this observation, and something prophetic, too.

“You are the rainbow, yourself,” said Mrs. Woodford, at the same time forcing a mother’s smile through her tears. “Yes, my boy, you are the sunshine of my life, clouded as it is. We shall get on very well now, I think; for you seem to brighten every day.”

Young Woodford felt encouraged. “I do what I can, mother; it is not much, but I dare say I shall do better by-and-by; at least, Mr. Owen says so, and he and I are good friends.” And away he ran.

Soon after he reached the pier, Mr. Owen went to him, and, in a kind manner, said—

“Well, my lad; so you are here again.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And how is your mother?”

“She is very poorly, sir, and can do very little work just now. I think it was watching poor Katie so much, and having to work hard besides, that made her ill.”

“I suppose you were both of you very fond of your sister, then?”

“Yes, sir, we loved her very much; and now she is gone, we feel very dull at times.”

“Well, well, I dare say you do; but cheer up, she is better off now. Can you write?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Do you understand figures?”

“A little, sir; but if I had any one to teach me, I think I could soon do better.”

“I see,” said Mr. Owen, “you are the lad to get on. Would you like to learn to keep my account-books? From what I have seen of you, I think I might trust you. At all events, I am willing to try you.”

“Then I should like to learn, sir,” said young Woodford, his eyes sparkling at the very idea.

“Well then, come to me this evening, at six o’clock, and we will see what can be done.”

“Yes, sir, if my mother agrees to it.”

“That is right, my lad; always consult your mother in any important step you take. I like

you all the better for that. A youth who cares for his mother is the lad for me.”

Jamie—we cannot help calling him by that name even now—Jamie was delighted, and for the three hours afterwards that he remained on the pier, or in its neighbourhood, he seemed to grow more brisk than ever. Everything went well with him; he sold all his fruit, directed some passengers to the boats, while he carried the parcels of others to their lodgings; and at five o'clock he ran home, and related to his mother his tale of joy, adding, “I know it will be dull for you; but you will spare me for an hour this evening, won't you?”

Mrs. Woodford felt thankful that she had such a considerate son, and she replied, “To be sure, Jamie; it is for your good. You will get on now. As for myself, I do not mind, so long as you are likely to do well; a very little will satisfy me.”

“But you shall not want, either,” said he. “When I know how to keep accounts, I shall earn enough to keep you and to pay the rent, and then shan't we be happy?”

Jamie kept word with the pier-master, and Mr. Owen kept his word with him—the former proving a very apt scholar.

Thus nearly twelve months passed away, Mr. Owen at the same time helping Jamie and his mother in many little ways, till at length he was installed as book-keeper on the pier—a post which he occupied for some three years or more.

Here, then, was a rainbow in the cloud—something permanent for Jamie to go to. It was a fulfilment of the Divine promise, “Them that honour me, I will honour.” Mrs. Woodford had honoured her heavenly Father, by her simple and unwavering trust in him; and he was now about to honour her in doing great things for her, and causing her heart to sing for joy.

At length, Mr. Owen, feeling that young Woodford ought to be doing better for himself, asked a gentleman who was daily in the habit of coming to the pier, on his way to business, if he knew of an opening in any counting-house for a clever, trustworthy young man.

“Not just now,” was the reply, and he was turning away, when a thought struck him, “Dear me,” said he, “I had almost forgotten it. We are in want of a clerk for our soup-kitchen; perhaps he could manage that. The wages are not great, but it may lead to something better. Would you like that?” he asked, turning to young Woodford, who stood near.

“Very much, sir.”

“And when could you come? Could you come next week?”

“I think so; but I should like to give a week’s notice.”

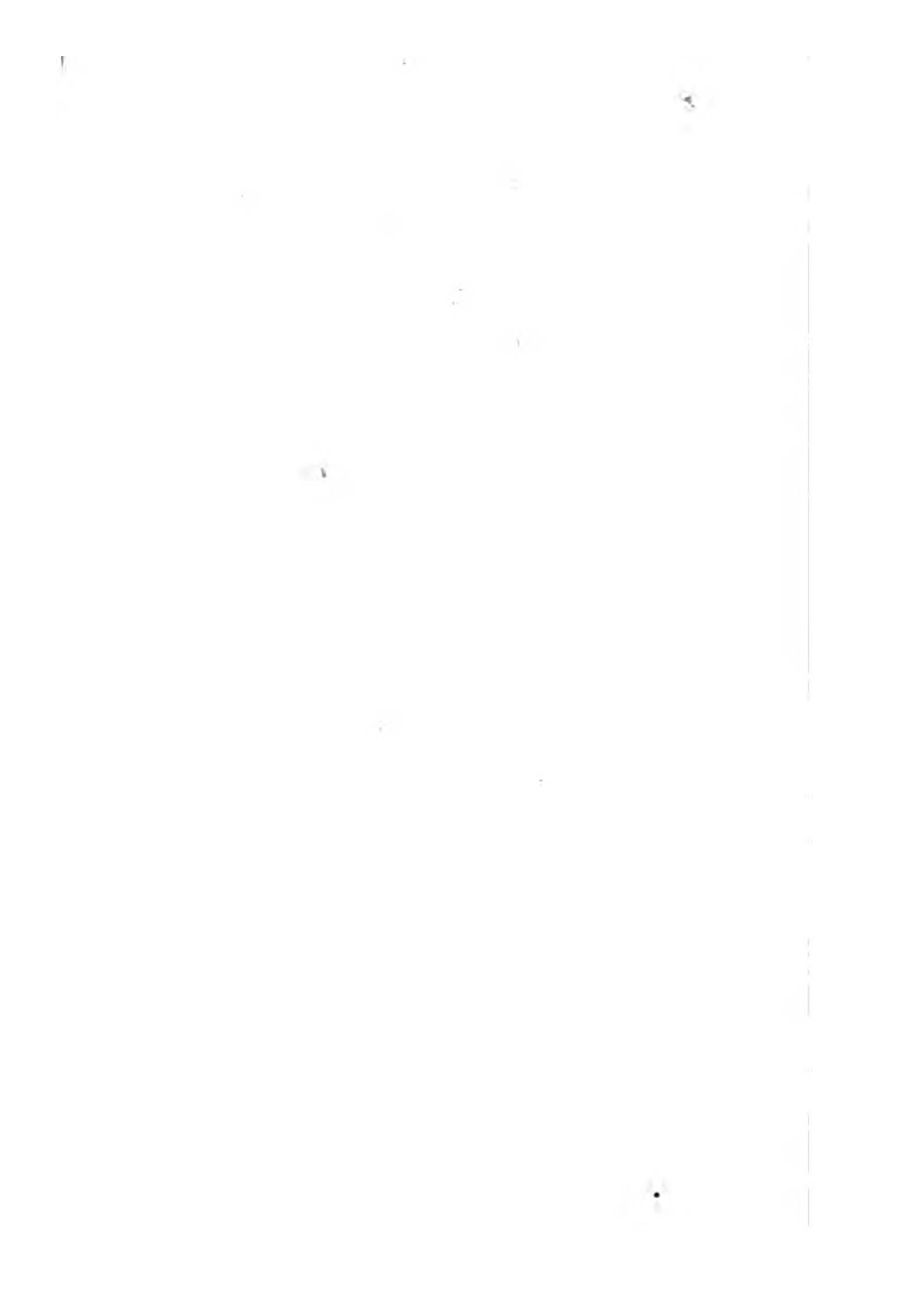
“Never mind that,” said Mr. Owen; “I will manage. You can go when the gentleman wishes.”

Jamie was engaged, that same evening, by the committee, upon the recommendation of the gentleman and Mr. Owen, who was a man much respected by all who knew him.

In his new situation, young Woodford’s duty was to deal out the soup-tickets; he also kept



THE SOUP-KITCHEN.



the books, and, in a word, managed the whole business as well as he was able. At the end of the year, when the committee of the soup-kitchen met to see what good had been done, and how their funds stood, they were very much surprised and pleased with the manner in which the accounts were kept. One of them asked in astonishment, "Why, who have you here? Everything seems so regular and orderly." Another of them, a large warehouseman, said, "I should like that young man in my office;" and when their meeting was over, he went to young Woodford, and asked him if he would be willing to accept a place in his counting-house, at the same time offering him a good salary. This was the same gentleman who had recommended Jamie to the soup-kitchen committee.

"Oh, how good is God to me!" exclaimed Mrs. Woodford; "I wish I could thank him as I ought for raising up such kind friends for my dear boy."

She was deeply sensible of God's great kindness in so soon opening the way for Jamie to

get employment ; and her gratitude was seen in her life “ When God giveth quietness, who can make trouble ? ” The waves may agitate the surface, but they cannot reach the depths of the Christian’s soul, for God will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusteth in him.

“ If distress befall thee,
Painful though it be ;
Let it not appal thee,
But to thy Saviour flee.
When earth’s prospects fail thee,
Let it not distress ;
Better comforts wait thee,
Christ will freely bless.”

Some weeks after this, young Woodford was installed in his new situation, which he filled for several years with great credit to himself and to his employers.

At length a very intimate friend of the warehouseman—who was cashier at a banking-house—noticing the business habits of young Woodford, and the correct manner in which his

books were kept, said to his friend, "That clerk of yours knows what he is about; I think I never saw books kept better."

"He is, indeed, a trustworthy fellow. I only wish it were in my power to improve his situation; but you know I have so many boys of my own, I must train some of them up for the business."

"Don't trouble yourself about that, friend," said the cashier; "I will mention his name to our manager. We will put him down for a vacancy, if you do not object."

"Certainly not, if he is agreeable to your proposition."

Mr. Woodford was called, and upon the matter being brought before him, said that a sense of gratitude would have led him to prefer remaining in his present situation, but, as it appeared to be Mr. Inglis's wish that if anything better offered he should accept it, he would do so, not for his own sake so much as for that of his widowed mother, whom he should like comfortably to provide for while she lived,

that she might be able to spend the remainder of her days in quietness and rest.

“I am happy to hear you speak thus,” observed Mr. Inglis. “Woodford, if I could offer you a better position I would; you deserve it, and shall have it, if my influence will avail anything.”

It was then agreed that the cashier should inform the manager of the bank of the circumstances and position of young Woodford, and that his name should be placed on the list for the next vacancy.

Two years from this interview a vacancy occurred; and young Woodford left Mr. Inglis's employ for the bank. Step by step he rose till he reached the position of manager, and ultimately became a partner in the banking firm.

* * * * *

But we must pause a moment to look at young Woodford's home and business life during the period through which we have just passed so rapidly.

CHAPTER VI.

BRIGHTER DAYS WITH A DARK CLOUD.

SOME people, although they may have outward prosperity, have very sad hearts ; they put the best on the outside. Their abundance will not suffer them to sleep ; their hearts are set upon that which will never satisfy them. As is often said, a sudden change in circumstances turns their brain. But it was not so with young Woodford. The principles which he had learned when things went ill with him continued with him when things grew better. He carried out the spirit of the Divine precept, "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths." And the promise of our heavenly Father was fulfilled in a remarkable manner in his experience.

He kept strict watch over his heart, knowing how deceitful and how desperately wicked it is. It was his practice to rise early, and thus by meditation and reading of the Scriptures, to prepare in the closet for the duties of the day. He felt and acted upon the conviction that religion was not to be confined to particular places and seasons, but to go with him, hand in hand, into all his duties, and shed its sacred influence around all his enjoyments. He considered that godliness ought to regulate all his words and deeds, and be seen in the whole of his behaviour. The book of Proverbs was his frequent study, and he especially set before him such passages as these: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings." "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Nor did he forget that, while diligent in his business, it was equally his duty to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord: and conducting all his business engagements on the principles laid down by the wisest of men, he succeeded therein, according to the Divine promise.

While a clerk with Mr. Inglis, he was able to

add many things to his home comforts, and at length to take a small house in the suburbs of the city, a portion of which he let to Mrs. Bright and her granddaughter at a very low rent. Young Woodford spared no labour to make his home inviting, and he gave it the name of Rose Cottage. He had, too, a little pet flower ; and every evening, when he returned from business, he went to admire its beauty and rejoice in its growth ; while, as he left home in the morning it seemed to smile upon him, cheering him as he went forth to his daily employment. He planted the flower—it was a rosebush—in remembrance of his sister Katie.

No feelings of envy towards those on whom the gifts of Providence had been more plentifully bestowed ever entered the hearts of the inmates of that cottage. There was in their own home all that they desired. From their door the destitute and distressed were never sent unrelieved away ; and some did say that Mr. Woodford was too generous, and would soon bring himself to want again. But he remembered the words of Scripture, “ He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord ; and that

which he hath given will he repay him again." He denied himself in many ways that he might show kindness to such as were in need.

Thus, as his own circumstances improved he was mindful of others, and especially of those who had shown him no little kindness.

One day, on his return from business, he went very briskly into the room where his mother was sitting, and laying a parcel upon the table, said, "Now, mother, I shall be able to redeem my promise. There is a black silk dress and a warm shawl for you ; and I hope soon to be able to keep you like a lady."

"Oh, Jamie! and did you buy those things for me?" inquired Mrs. Woodford.

"I did, mother," was his reply ; "and *earned the money* too," he added, smiling.

This remark brought to Mrs. Woodford's remembrance the time when she had told him, "Wait a few years, and then, perhaps, you will be able to keep your poor mother like a lady ;" and she said, "Oh, Jamie, I seem to be on the Mount of Marvel that Jenny was reading to me about this afternoon."

“Indeed, mother ; and how is that ?”

“You have made such rapid progress, I am quite astonished. You are like the man that the pilgrims beheld at a distance, tumbling about the hills with a word. You have learned how to believe down and tumble out of the way all the difficulties which come in your path ; and you have set me a noble example of perseverance, under the most trying circumstances.”

“Not so, mother ; it is just the reverse. Had it not been for the manner in which you bore up under your many heavy trials and sorrows, I should never have done as I have. But when I saw you so patient, and how you worked early and late to provide things honest, I could not help doing my best to assist you.”

“And God has blessed our efforts, my son. May we never forget him ! It will be a sad thing if at any time we begin to think so much of ourselves as to forget our heavenly Father, who hath given us all things richly to enjoy.”

“It will, indeed,” said Mr. Woodford ; “I trust we shall be preserved from falling into so

great a sin as to forget the Giver of every good and perfect gift."

But people do forget God in the hour of prosperity; and unless they keep him always before them, they are likely to do so. It was the language of one who had grown rich and increased in goods: "My river is mine own, I have made it for myself;" but the Almighty punished him for his pride. And so will he punish us, if, boasting of what we may possess, we forget that what we have we have only the use of it; the property is God's. Why, then, should we boast? What have we that we have not received?

* * * *

"We must not forget those who were our friends when we were in trouble," said Mrs. Woodford, one morning, as she and her son sat at breakfast; how often I think of the kindness of that gentleman who helped you when perhaps you needed it more than you have ever done since."

"Mother, I shall never forget him. It was

just at the right time, when it was a new thing for me to be trying to earn something for our living. That gentleman understood the golden rule, 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' He did not ask who I was, but he saw a fellow-creature in trouble, and that was enough for him. It mattered not to him that I was a stranger to him and a poor street-seller; he felt that it was his duty to help those who were really in need."

"I should think he was a Christian man," said Mrs. Woodford; "at all events he acted in a Christian spirit."

"He did, indeed, mother; and I hope he may be rewarded for it."

"He will be at the resurrection of the just; for he most certainly acted in the spirit of the Saviour's advice to the rich young man, 'Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor;' and I pray that he may realize the promise, 'and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' May God, in his mercy, give us hearts that will be ready to give up all for his sake!"

"It shall be my endeavour always to act in

that spirit," young Woodford replied, thoughtfully.

"I hope so too," said his mother; and added, "there is another thing I wanted to mention to you. You know Mrs. Bright has been very, very kind to us, and Jenny has helped me a great deal; indeed, I don't know how I should have managed without her."

"Yes, mother, I know all, and I have not forgotten Jenny or her grandmother's kindness; and it is my intention," he added, smiling, "to do my best to repay it."

"Why do you smile, Jamie?" asked his mother.

"Well, mother," said he, "to be plain, I have promised to marry Jenny next spring, if you agree, and we are spared and in health. Do you approve of the choice?"

"Oh James!" she exclaimed, "yes, to be sure I do. You know poor Jenny and her grandmother too were once in better circumstances, but were brought to their present position by the cruelty of others; and I often wonder how they could put up for so long with such a house as we lived in at first."

“They would not have done so, mother, if it had not been that they were obliged to get a very cheap lodging; even then it was very hard work to make both ends meet; and they must sometimes have gone without themselves to be able to help us as they did. However, let us be thankful for the prospect we have now of being able, in some small measure, to repay their kindness and self-denial for us.”

“We will, my son; and I rejoice that you have chosen one who loves Jesus Christ, and is anxious to live to his glory.”

“It was Jenny, dear mother, who followed up sister Katie’s kind words to me about my soul. She has been very kind to us, and I trust we shall both be so to you.”

* * * *

The spring arrived, and Mr. Woodford became a married man. It will suffice our present purpose to state, that it was in every respect a happy union. Soon after the wedding, however, Mrs. Bright was taken ill, and after a few weeks’ illness, was summoned to her heavenly home. Jenny—we must still call her

Jenny, it seems so natural—Jenny felt the loss of her grandparent deeply, but she was enabled truly to bless God that she had been spared to her for so many years, and in sincerity to say, “The Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord !”

* * * *

The disciple of Christ is not called to tread the primrose path of pleasure, but to press his way on over a rugged road, where obstacles are met and difficulties are to be encountered. Discouragements will at times throng around him, and sometimes bring darkness and depression on his mind, and spread such an aspect of gloom and difficulty over his path, that he will be tempted to think that God has forgotten him; yet the promises of God will even then come, like the gentle breath of evening, to cheer his sinking spirit and rebuke his flagging faith. “Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense and reward; for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.”

With our friend Woodford the sky overhead was not at all times bright and unclouded; he did not travel over a perfectly smooth and unobstructed path. There were trials to be met with, even in the most prosperous circumstances.

The chief clerk of the banking firm by whom Mr. Woodford was employed proved to be a dishonest man, and as he was superior in position to our young friend, he endeavoured to fasten the crime upon his junior. The circumstances were these.

A gentleman who had emigrated to Australia, and had been very successful, made frequent remittances to the bank, in favour of his aged mother and sister; but the greater portion of the money never came into the hands of those for whom it was designed. These remittances, instead of increasing, as Mr. Mason had promised they should do, diminished, and on each occasion on which the money was paid to the mother, there was a less sum for the poor woman to receive. At length the sister wrote to her brother, not complaining of the small

amount, but fearing that he was in less prosperous circumstances than formerly. Meanwhile another remittance came, but a less sum than at any previous period was given into their hands.

“It is very strange,” said Mrs. Mason, “so particular as John is, that he has never written to tell us that he could not afford to send so much as he used to do.”

“It is indeed,” said her daughter; “but they are very careful at the bank; and you know Mr. Hooper always brings it himself, that there may be no mistake.” And thus they satisfied themselves.

After some months, a letter arrived from Australia, inclosing one addressed to the head of the banking firm, to be delivered to him personally. The letter was immediately taken by the sister, and delivered as desired.

Mr. Hooper was at once called in, but he knew nothing, or rather he affected to know nothing, of the matter. “The money was duly entered by the clerk Woodford,” said he; “the fault is his, it cannot lie with any one else.”

“We will inquire into the matter, Miss

Mason," said one of the bankers, and she left the office.

An investigation took place. Mr. Woodford being called, the cashier addressed him in the presence of the partners, "Woodford, this is a serious affair; Mrs. Mason has not received the full amount of the remittances forwarded to the bank by her son in Australia. There is fraud somewhere. The matter cannot be allowed to rest here, and things look very suspicious against you."

Mr. Woodford was very much hurt at so grave a charge being laid at his door, and asserted his innocence of any dishonest act.

"How is it, then," it was asked, "that the books do not agree with the advices from Australia?"

"I am unable to account for it," Mr. Woodford replied, "but of this I am certain—the amounts are entered as given to me."

"But they do not agree with Mr. Hooper's books," said one of the partners. "The various items, as mentioned in the letter re-

ceived to-day from Mr. Mason, are entered correctly in Mr. Hooper's cash-book. You must be guilty of appropriating a part of the money received. We must therefore give you into custody."

"Will you, first of all, allow the whole matter to be gone into by an accountant?" asked Mr. Woodford.

"The thing is so clearly against you," said Mr. Hooper; "you must answer for it before the magistrate."

"Stay," said the cashier, "I am not quite so clear upon that point. It seems perfectly reasonable that, before a charge of so grave a nature is made in a court of law against an individual, who has hitherto been without reproach among us, we should thoroughly investigate the matter."

The partners fully concurred in the suggestion.

Mr. Woodford's books were found to be correct, so far as the amounts paid were concerned, but they did not agree with the advices, and it was evident that there had been wrong doing somewhere. Other books were examined, and the clerks were closely questioned, but no fur-

ther clue was obtained to the matter, and it began to be considered by some that Mr. Woodford was the guilty party. For some weeks the investigation continued, during which period he was the subject of great anxiety and depression. All things seemed to be against him. One day, however, as the clerks were busily engaged over the books, an accountant suggested that the firm might perhaps discover the offender by inquiring of the mother of Mr. Mason from whom she received the amounts at the various times they had been paid to her. The suggestion was acted upon.

“Your chief clerk,” she replied, “has always been careful to pay me himself. He said he could not trust so important a matter to others.”

“That is quite correct,” added the sister; “indeed, my brother kept up a correspondence with Mr. Hooper, and the advices were addressed to him. We were merely told by my brother that he had forwarded a remittance, which would soon come into our hands.”

These statements corroborated that of Mr. Woodford, who said that all that he knew of the money was that Mr. Hooper usually came

to him, and would say "Enter this (naming the amount) to the credit of the bank against Mr. Mason. I will pay Mrs. M. at once myself."

Gradually one incident after another arose which tended to fix suspicion on Mr. Hooper himself, and the result was that he was at length given into custody.

An examination before the magistrate took place, and he was committed for trial. In the course of the trial it came out, that Mr. Hooper had been guilty of domineering over the junior clerks, compelling them to enter sums which they had never seen or counted, but which he assured them were all correct; and the jury decided that there was everything to show that Mr. Hooper had been guilty of the charge brought against him; and he was sentenced to penal servitude for fraud and embezzlement. Meanwhile, a second letter from Australia, inclosing one received from the clerk, proved that the full amount had in each case been received by Mr. Hooper, and must therefore have been appropriated in part by him.

Thus happily was Mr. Woodford's innocence established; and to show their sense of his integrity, the partners promoted him to the chief clerkship, a proceeding which caused universal rejoicing among his fellow-clerks.

"You see," said one of them, "he wanted to fix it upon you, because he knew you were very mild and gentle."

"Yes," observed another, "but he is caught in his own trap; I am glad he is."

"I do not rejoice," said Mr. Woodford. "I wish he had not been guilty of so wicked an act."

"It was a piece of double cruelty," was the observation of a fellow-clerk, "he robbed a poor widow, and then he tried to destroy your character. He has got no more than he deserved."

"No doubt," Mr. Woodford replied, "he has got what he deserved, but it is not for me to rejoice over him now that he has fallen. I will endeavour to take warning from his fall. We all need to be watchful; our hearts are very deceitful—at least mine is."

"You are right," said a man of fifty, who had hitherto appeared to take no notice of what was passing; "you are right. 'Hold *Thou* me

up, and I shall be safe; guide me, and I shall not err;’ that’s the prayer for every one of us,” and he went on with his work.

“That is all very well,” said a clerk close by him; “I know we are all liable to fall into mistakes; but that is no reason why we should *hide* the faults of others. That man Hooper was always a proud, stuck-up fellow. I have known him push children down, for no other reason than because the path wasn’t broad enough for my gentleman; and, some years ago, I saw him upset a little boy’s oranges on the pier, simply because the child, who was evidently in distress, asked him to buy.”

“Did you see that?” asked the man of fifty. “I remember it well. The boy had a half-respectable sort of appearance; and instead of being rude, seemed to have only just courage enough to ask for custom.”

* * * * *

But we must proceed.

* * * * *

A few years rolled away, and Mr. Woodford ranked as junior partner in the firm.

Having attained to so eminent a position, it

became necessary, "for the credit of the firm," as he said, to take another house; he accordingly, as soon as arrangements could be made, removed into the country, at about ten miles from the bank.

* * * * *

"Now, mother," said he, one morning as he was leaving home, "I *shall* be able to keep you like a lady."

"It does seem so, my son but this much I hope, that if I am to live like a lady for the rest of my days, I may also live like a Christian; and that I may not in my prosperity forget those who have to struggle with poverty and want as I have done."

"I trust not, mother. You know it was a kind word and a helping hand from that gentleman on the pier, who pitied a poor fatherless boy, that that was the first link in the chain of events which have issued so favorably for us all. Perhaps we may have the privilege of helping some one in similar circumstances."

And he left for the city.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

It was four o'clock, and a brougham was drawn up at the door of the bank in ———, to take one of the partners home to his private residence. The spirited horse could hardly be curbed, and the coachman looked anxiously towards the door, wondering why his master, who was longer than usual, did not come.

Mr. Woodford stood in an office at the end of the bank, looking over a small pocket-book, which he always carried about him, for some note or bill which he wanted to take home with him. As he stood, the voice of an individual asking earnestly for assistance met his ear.

“I should be glad if you would buy, gentleman; for my need is very great. I have a sickly daughter at home, who must be fed.”

“Be off,” answered one of the clerks, rather roughly; “you are not wanted here.”

“Surely I have heard that mild voice before,” said Mr. Woodford to himself, and partly opened the door.

“Show that person into my room,” said he to the clerk.

The clerk obeyed, but wondered that the banker should ask into his private room an old orange-seller. The old man wondered too.

“Sir,” said he, “I fear I was intruding on your young men’s time, but I was only asking them to buy some of my fruit. I am very poor, but I was not always so.”

“Indeed!” said Mr. Woodford, scarcely able to hide his feelings. “How came you thus?”

“The failure of a large house was my ruin.”

Mr. Woodford then seated himself at his desk and wrote off a cheque, saying at the same time, “I will pay you for your oranges,” and handed it across the table.

“Five pounds!” faltered the old man as he read it, “Nay, do not mock me.”

“I do not,” said he. “You spoke of your

daughter. I have a cottage to let, with a small garden, and shall be glad for you to inhabit it, rent free. We will see what else can be done to help you to get a living."

The old man stood pale and bewildered, and was at a loss to know what all this meant. And Mr. Woodford was so full of grateful emotion that he did not at first stop to explain.

"My friend, my benefactor," said he, "you do not know me; my memory is stronger than yours. Is it possible that you have forgotten me?"

"My memory does not serve me," he replied.

"Yes—why should I think you had not, when I am so changed? Listen, my dear sir," he said with a bright and affectionate and earnest smile, "have you no recollection of a forlorn boy on a crowded pier, whose little all was scattered by a rude blow? Have you forgotten his distress? Do you not remember that a kind stranger stopped to comfort him, not only by money, but by cheering words?"

"Is it possible?" stammered the old man.

"It is! I was that forlorn boy. Your money,



RECOGNITION OF AN OLD FRIEND.

which that night supplied the wants of an afflicted family, proved the stepping-stone to my good fortune. My heart treasured up your kind words as priceless jewels; and now the time has come when I may in some measure repay them."

The old man moved his pale lips, but could not speak.

"My sister," continued Mr. Woodford, "who often spoke of your kindness, the violets have blossomed over her grave these five and twenty years. I owe everything to you; and now grant me one favour."

"A favour of me!" exclaimed the old man.

"That you will allow me henceforth to provide for you, and consider me as your son. You must come and see me. Can you come to-day?"

"Not to-day; indeed, my poor daughter will be anxiously waiting my return home. I must go home to-day."

"Be it so. But remember you are to make the cottage your home."

"Through your kindness," said the old man; and was leaving the office when the banker called him.

“One moment first,” and he took a small volume from his pocket, bound in faded velvet, with claspings of tarnished gilt. “This book was my sister’s : it lay on her pillow when she died, and since that hour it has been my constant companion. There is a passage here that has been present to my mind ever since your kind deed gave hope and courage to my life. ‘He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.’”

* * * * *

That evening was the most joyful of Mr. Woodford’s life. Nevertheless, although arrangements were made for the future comfort of his former benefactor, the Woodfords felt that their debt of gratitude to God was not paid, and never would be ; and they devoted time, talent, and property to Him who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. Day after day was spent in doing good, in succouring the poor and needy, and the blessing of those that were ready to perish came upon them.

* * * * *

At length, Mr. Jenkins—for that was the old gentleman's name—went to reside with his daughter in the cottage provided for them. There they spent many a happy day together, and were often visited by the Woodfords. Mr. Jenkins performed many little services for Mr. Woodford, superintending those matters that were constantly being attended to on Mr. Woodford's property, for which he received a small sum per annum, which, together with the proceeds of a day school for young ladies, kept by his daughter, was sufficient for their comfortable support.

“How good God is,” said Mr. Jenkins, as he sat in the parlour of his neat little dwelling; “he has provided for me just such a situation as I should above all others have preferred.”

“He has, indeed,” said his daughter. “Who would have thought we should ever have come to this? I expected we should have to end our days in distress and sorrow.”

“God is love, my dear,” said her father, repeating the lines—

“I cannot always trace the way,
Where thou, Almighty One, dost move ;
But I can always, always say,
That God is love.

“When mystery clouds my darkened path,
I’ll check my dread, my doubts reprove ;
In this my soul sweet comfort hath,
That God is love.

“Yes, God is love—a thought like this
Can every gloomy thought remove,
And turn all tears, all woes to bliss,
For God is love.”

“Yes, my dear, God *is* love,” and the tears trickled down his cheeks. “He is indeed,” he added after a slight pause ; “let us endeavour to trust him more unreservedly, love him more heartily, and serve him more actively than we have ever yet done.”

“Oh, there is Mr. and Mrs. Woodford ; I see them coming,” exclaimed Miss Jenkins, and their conversation was disturbed by the entrance of their ever-welcome friends and benefactors.

“We have come to spend an hour with you,” said Mrs. Woodford ; “it is the first

opportunity my husband has had since you have been settled in your new home."

"I am so glad to see you, sir," observed Mr. Jenkins.

"Not more so than I to see you," Mr. Woodford replied. "We meet under very different circumstances to those in which I first saw you."

"We do, indeed; but I think my feelings are the same as ever. I hope my heart is full of Christian love towards you, and that I am as willing as ever to do good to my fellow-men."

"I believe you most sincerely. But I should like to hear something about your history since the day you met me on the pier."

"You shall; my sufferings have been short and sharp, and the tale is soon told. A friend of mine, in a large way of business, requiring a considerable sum of money by way of temporary accommodation, begged of me to endorse a bill for the amount, which, as I have bitterly learned, I most imprudently agreed to do.

"With many others, I imagined myself perfectly secure; and so, had all gone on well, I

doubtless should have been, but a fire occurred in the premises adjoining those of my friend, and the supply of water being exceedingly scarce, the flames rapidly extended, and laid hold of my friend's warehouses. Before the morning dawned his premises were a heap of ruins. Now, he had neglected to increase his insurance in proportion to the value of his goods, perhaps imagining that a fire with him was a very unlikely matter, and hence, upon estimating the damage done, he was found to be insured to less than half the value of his property. But this was not all, a few weeks afterwards, a ship of which he was the owner was wrecked, and together with its cargo lost, and this too only partially insured. Loss succeeded loss, and soon my friend's affairs were in a hopeless condition; and, as a consequence, every farthing for which I was responsible was claimed; this brought me to ruin. I was responsible for more than I had the means to meet. Everything belonging to me was sold, and I was left penniless. Oh, Mr. Woodford, often have I thought of the words of the wise man, 'Be

not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take thy bed from under thee?' If you can assist a friend, do it by all means, but do not be surety for any one."

"You are right, Mr. Jenkins; I hope I may always have a heart to do good to my fellow-creatures, but I never will be a surety."

"Depend upon it, be he who he may, he is a wise man who avoids becoming a surety for another. For myself, I have learned this lesson—to help as far as may be in my power, and no further. Experience is a great teacher, Mr. Woodford."

"I agree with you, friend; and I trust that your experience and my own likewise will yet prove of much value to me, in my domestic and business affairs."

"But," asked Mrs. Woodford, "after you had given 'that poor boy' half a crown, did you ever see him again till you met with my husband in the bank?"

"Oh yes, ma'am, once; I saw him looking

sad and dejected, with a piece of crape upon his cap ; but I had not heart to speak to him. I had lost my means then. I saw that he had a kind friend in the pier-master, and this pleased me.”

“ Then it could not have been long after your first interview with Mr. Woodford that you fell into trouble.”

“ Only a few months ; but I never regretted having given that half-crown to the poor boy in distress, although many times since I should have been glad of even a third of that amount from some kind benefactor.”

“ ‘ He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.’ That is God’s promise,” said Mr. Woodford.

“ And God is true to his word,” observed Mr. Jenkins. “ Little did I think, when I put the money into your hand, that it would be paid to me again in the way it has been.”

“ ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me.’ That is the way in which God deals with us,”

said Mr. Woodford; "and it is my earnest desire ever to remember that I am not my own, that it is my duty to do good unto all men, but *especially to them who are of the household of faith.* But we must be going now."

"Will you read with us before you leave, Mr. Woodford?" inquired Mr. Jenkins. "Let us thank God together for his great goodness to us."

"I will read, if you will offer a prayer," was the reply; and happy were the few moments they spent together in reading the word of God, and in earnest supplications at the throne of grace. The old gentleman was most affectionate in his prayers for his friends, and, full of emotion, implored his heavenly Father to bless them yet more and more.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," said he, as he shook Mr. Woodford by the hand, and bade him a hearty adieu. "Quite right," the banker replied; and he left the cottage, feeling all the happier for his visit to his "dear old friend."

* * * *

"Life," said Mr. Woodford, as he sat at breakfast one morning reading a note he had just received from Dr. May, "life is made up of sunshine and shade, sorrows and joys."

"Is anything the matter, then?" asked his anxious wife.

"Nothing in business affairs," was the reply, for Mr. Woodford imagined, and rightly too, that his wife's thoughts ran towards them ever since Mr. Jenkins told them of the cause of his sad reverses. "Nothing in business. Poor old Mr. Jenkins is very, very ill; and Dr. May thinks we had better see him as soon as we are able."

"He complained of feeling poorly the other day," said Mrs. Woodford; "but I did not think he was so ill, although I intended to call round by and by and see him."

"We had better go at once," her husband replied. "John can take word to the city the cause of my absence."

They went, and it was evident that their old friend was fast hastening to his rest. Mr. and Mrs. Woodford drew near to his bedside, with all the eagerness and affection of children.

"I have come to the river," whispered the good old man.

"I think you are very near crossing it," observed Mrs. Woodford.

"Close up; I see the Shining Ones on the other side," he replied.

"How delightful," said Mrs. Woodford, turning to her husband, to hide the tears that began to stream down her cheeks. "It puts me in mind of Katie."

"I see light everywhere. I hear music, sweet, soft music," continued Mr. Jenkins.

"Father," inquired the daughter, "is the river cold?"

"My heart is warm," he whispered faintly.

"Your heart loves Jesus, you mean," said Mr. Woodford's mother.

"Yes, ma'am."

"You are not afraid of death, I perceive."

"Afraid?" he asked, with a look of surprise, as though he thought that he did not catch the question distinctly.

"I mean, do you feel it a dreadful thing to die?"

“No, Jesus is with me, I cannot sink. He is all my hope and my trust.”

Mr. Woodford bade adieu to the old gentleman, his wife and mother promising to return to keep his daughter company, a promise which was faithfully observed. Two days only elapsed before Mr. Jenkins was taken to his eternal reward. He died full of faith, and, said Mrs. Woodford, in relating the experience of his last moments to her son, “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. May our last end be like his.

“Oh could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unclouded eyes!
Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er;
Not Jordan's streams, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.”

“That is what I very much need,” observed Mr. Woodford. “I want to get rid of my doubts.”

“We may get rid of them,” his mother replied, “by trusting in our Saviour, our best Friend, who has never given us any cause to doubt him. Let us see God in our trials, in sorrow and bereavement, as well as in the days of joy and prosperity. Doubting leads to sinning. You know it was a doubt which Satan suggested to our first parent, ‘Yea, *hath* God said?’ There should be no *hath* about it; we should always feel, as I have often said, ‘God says so, and that is enough for me.’ He hath said all things work together for good to them that love God.”

“Yet, mother, we are prone to listen, as Eve did; we are more ready to doubt than we are to confide in God’s wisdom and goodness. Oh for more grace, to live a life of constant trust in God.”

* * * *

Our story is nearly finished. It will be sufficient to add that Mrs. Woodford, senior, went to the cottage to reside with Miss Jenkins, and that Mr. Woodford and family continued to enjoy prosperity. While we say this, however, we do not mean that because they were prosperous, they had no sorrows to darken their

path. They had many trials, domestic and even commercial. There was often bitter mingled with the sweet, a thorn clung to the most fragrant rose. But we do say this, they did not fail to acknowledge their God and Father in all their ways, and he, according to his promise, most clearly directed their steps.

* * * *

What a life is this! We are at one period rejoicing in the sunshine of prosperity, and anon bending beneath the storms of adversity; then again the clouds pass away, and the sun shines brightly for a season. The word of God declares that the days of darkness shall be many. Yet, to those who have learned that glorious Christian experience, in whatever state they are therewith to be content, this is not a dreary world, but one in which they find more of sunshine than of darkness. In all our trials we should see our Father's hand, and be satisfied; in all our joys our hearts should be constantly filled with gratitude and love.

How lovely is the Christian character! We may be naturally endowed with many amiable

qualities, and our dispositions may have been formed in soft and gentle moulds, yet it is religion only that spreads over the whole that mellowing influence which imparts loveliness to every act, and purifies every motive of life. It gives to the whole conduct that humility and meekness, that love and kindness, which are so characteristic of true piety, and pours into the soul that light and wisdom which alone can make us happy and holy in life.

* * * * *

“Buy an orange, sir?” Oh, those words, whenever I hear them, touch the cords of my heart, and vibrate through my very frame. They remind me of the lesson which we all need so much to learn, and which was so well exemplified in the conduct of Mr. Woodford’s benefactor, “Good will to all.” We little know the heart that beats beneath that poor child’s clothing who petitions our patronage.

If he be a benefactor to mankind who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before, what will be the recompense of those who devote all their talents and energies to the

amelioration of the sufferings of their fellow-creatures? If done in fulfilment of the great law of love—which is supreme love to God, and love to our fellow-men for his sake, “they shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

Do good—hoping for nothing again; for if ye love them that love you, or do good to those only who do good to you, you do no more than the worst of men. Every man, woman, and child is our neighbour, and, if they are really in need, we are bound to help them to the best of our ability.

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