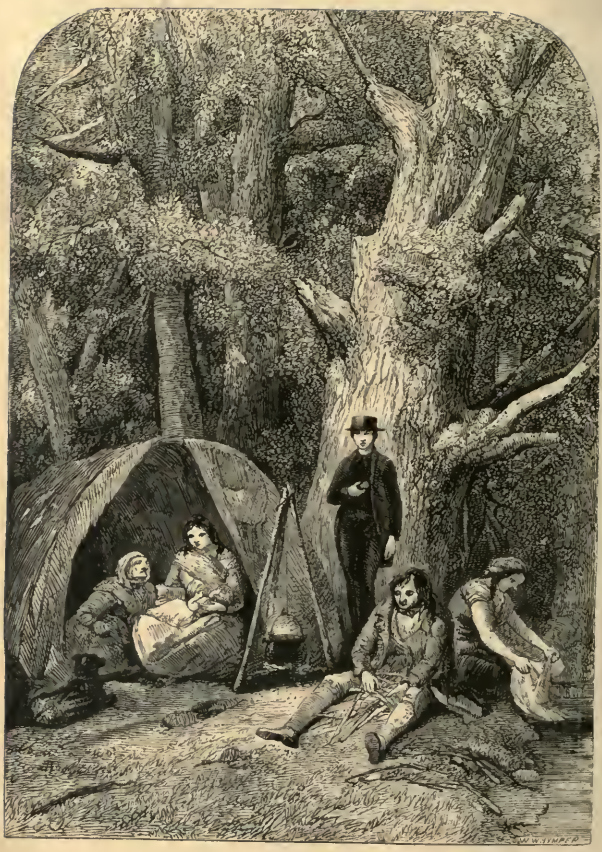

"Zobel was washing a few clothes, while her husband, seated on the ground, was dexterously making the slight baskets used by fishmongers and poulterers. The aged woman lay just within the tent, intently listening to Miriam."

# TOWN AND FOREST.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

Good words are silver, but good deeds are gold.
A martyr's death is more than equal to
The best account of it.

J. E. JACKSON.—*Cecil and Mary.*


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# *Town and Forest.*

## CHAPTER I.

### MICHAELMAS DAISIES.

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.
LONGFELLOW, *St. Augustine's Ladder.*

IT was late, but not very late, on an autumn afternoon. A few straggling sunbeams made their way through the cracked, discoloured panes of an attic window, close to which sat a meagre, sallow young woman, busily pursuing some coarse, heavy needle-work.

On an old deal table beside her were a large

cracked teapot, an ounce paper of coarse tea, a cup without a handle, a half-quartern loaf, two tallow candles, a hank of thread, a ball of worsted, and a black quart bottle.

The girl was making a sack. Presently she rose, wearily threw it on a heap of others, and then pulled off one of her ragged stockings, which she began to mend. First, however, she drained the contents of the bottle into the cup, and drank it with avidity. It looked like water—it *was* water.

That 's a relief! It relieved *her*. It was better than gin.

Just as she was filling her needle, there was a gentle tap at the door, followed by a gentle voice saying, "Is any body here? May I come in?"

The sack-maker started; for she was not accustomed to have her solitude interrupted. No one save the owner of the house had ever come to her in that attic, since she rented it.

Instead of answering, she pulled her wretched shawl about her, and went to open the door

herself. A healthy-looking young person stood outside, carrying a small basket, and with some flowers in her hand.

"I beg your pardon," said she, advancing a step and no more, "but would you like these Michaelmas daisies?"

"I? What use would they be to me?" said the sack-maker, surprised.

"Well, flowers are for pleasure rather than for use, certainly; but I thought you might like a few to make your room cheerful, as to-morrow is Sunday. But perhaps you are not going to spend it at home?"

"Where else can I spend it?" returned the sack-maker, bitterly. "I haven't a friend in the world, and I'm too shabby to go to church."

There was a pause. They looked wistfully at one another.

"Then, you won't have the Michaelmas daisies?" said the stranger. "Perhaps you don't like them——"

"Oh yes I do," said the other, looking strangely

at the giver and then at the gift. And, suddenly, she burst into tears.

"I 'm weak," said she, "and they put me in mind——"

"Of autumn, and of the country," said the other, after waiting for her to finish the sentence. "Where shall I put them?" entering the room a little way, and looking round.

"I 've nothing to put them in—I can't spare the mug or tea-pot."

"No, certainly; nor yet the bottle. Ah, I 'm *sorry* to see *that!*"

"Why need you be?" cried the sack-maker sharply. "Smell it! There are no spirits! It 's my *candlestick*, and there 's nothing in it now; not even water."

"Never mind, I 'll fetch you something to put the flowers in; and some water too."

"Water 's too scarce in this court to be willingly parted with, except for drinking," said the sack-maker. "They grudge it, even for washing."

"Poor thing!" ejaculated the stranger. The exclamation was murmured, rather than spoken; yet it seemed to draw them closer together.

"But where's your tea-kettle?" she resumed.

"I haven't one. They fill my tea-pot down stairs."

"And yours is so much too large for one person, that the tea cannot draw nearly so well."

"That depends on how much you make! Whether you've any thing else for dinner or supper!"

Again they looked wistfully at one another.

"What are you going to have for dinner, to-morrow?" said the stranger.

"Tea; tea and dry bread."

"Oh! That won't do!"

"Then what's to be *done?*" returned the other bitterly. "But I want to mend my stockings before the sun goes down, if you'll let me. When I light my candle, I must go to my sacks."

"Don't they pay very poorly?"

"Very; fivepence a day. And I pay eighteenpence a week for this attic."

"But that can't keep you!"

"That's why I've sold my clothes."

"But the sack-makers ought to give you more."

"I don't work for the sack-makers, I wish I did! They have their regular hands, and one of them is ill, and gets me to do her work for her till she is well. So it's only job-work, and of course she must keep back a trifle for herself."

"What have you been?" asked the stranger.

"What's that to you?" cried the other sharply, "or to any one but myself?" she added in a softer voice.

"Certainly. Well, good-bye."

"Then, you're not going to leave the flowers?" said the sack-maker, looking mortified.

"Oh yes, I am going to bring something that will hold them. I will leave them on your table meantime."

"But, perhaps, I shall be gone before you

come back. I am going to take back my sacks."

"Leave your door unlocked, then, unless you 're afraid."

"No, there's nothing to rob," said the sack-maker sorrowfully. When her visitor had left her, she did not immediately resume her stocking-mending, but sat, vacantly looking at the opposite wall, pondering who her visitor could be, and why she came, till her eyes fell upon the flowers.

Then she might have said, with poor King Edward the Second, "Behold, here is clean warm water wherewith I may wash," for the tears plentifully bedewed her face. Drying them hastily, she resumed her work with great energy, and was able to finish it just as it was growing too dark for her to thread her needle.

To postpone lighting her candle, she then rolled up her sacks into a bundle, beneath which she staggered, and carried them off to the sick woman who employed her. She was accustomed to consider this woman a *screw;* and, perhaps, not

altogether without reason; but something softer in her heart than usual, this evening, made her pity her when she found her tossing, alone and feverish, on her bed in the absence of the girl who attended to her; and while the old woman was crustily counting out her fivepences, the sack-maker swept her hearth, made up her fire, smoothed her rumpled bedclothes, and shook up her hot pillow. The old woman peered up at her with a look that expressed some suspicion of her motives; but, just as the sack-maker was leaving her, called sharply out—

"Come back! come back, I say!" and pulling the stocking-foot purse again from under her pillow, took therefrom the smallest silver coin it contained, and held it out to her, saying—

"There's a threepenny-bit for making me comfortable; but don't expect it again!"

The sack-maker smiled, thanked her, and went on her way. Going back, she bought three red herrings—a rich repast for the three next days. She passed through the evening market, where,

by gas-light, the butchers were selling morsels of meat, that would not keep till Monday, cheap, to thrifty housewives with large baskets on their arms; but the sack-maker, rich with her three herrings, did not envy them their pennyworths. On reaching the squalid lodging-house where she lived, she went straight to the woman to whom it belonged, and paid her week's rent. The woman gave her a shilling in change for her half-crown, and told her that, in consideration of her punctual payment, she might cook her dinner at the kitchen-fire the next day, if she would not be particular as to the time. The baker lived at the corner of the street, bread was sevenpence a quartern, and she owed him for three quarterns; how could she pay for it out of a shilling? But he had his bills to pay, as she had hers; it was hard to keep him out of all, because she could not pay all. She took him her shilling, and said, "That is all I have, now I have paid my rent."

He took it rather reluctantly, and said, "Why don't you get cheaper lodgings?"

"How can I?" she said. "I can't find any."

"Why not share your attic with another poor girl?".

"I've no bed!"

He gave a low whistle, and said, "Here, take back half, I'll trust you a little longer."

She gratefully took it, and other customers coming in, she contented herself with a single word, and look of thanks. Going back, she thought, "I was wrong, I'm afraid, in buying the herrings, while I owed for bread; but the threepence came by chance, and I'm so hungry!"

On the stairs she met her unknown visitor coming down, who said cheerfully, "I did not know you would be so long, and waited for you as long as I could, but you will find the flowers; and the gas-light from the butcher's over the way enabled me to set them out nicely. Good night! I shall perhaps look in on you some day." And she slipped away.

The sack-maker hastened up-stairs, and the friendly gas-light, which had enabled her bene-

factress to place the flowers in water, enabled her with surprise and delight, to see what else she had done for her.

Firstly, the floor seemed to have been swept; secondly, oh surprise! there was what looked at first sight like a bed in the corner; but it was only the bundle of unmade sacks neatly disposed and covered with a neat, clean patchwork counterpane. Close to it was a brown earthen pan, that made no bad washing-basin, with a clean, though not new, coarse towel beside it.

The table was set in the middle of the room, and covered with what looked like a table-cloth, though it was only a piece of old, clean calico. On this the great tea-pot was duly set, flanked by the loaf; but the loaf was in a chipped plate, and the mug without a handle was superseded by a damaged, but very usable cup and saucer. In a gallipot, what luxury! was a halfpennyworth of milk. The Michaelmas daisies were set out in a glass pickle-bottle; and, on a cracked cheese-plate, were a small slice of Dorset butter, and

another of boiled bacon, flanked by a nearly worn-out, but brightly cleaned knife. Beside them, lay a small, much-used hymn-book, with a flower-leaf stuck in it for a mark. And, neatly folded on the only chair, an old, clean, warm petticoat and pair of shoes. One of the candles was duly installed in the bottle, with a box of matches beside it.

Tears, tears of pleasure and gratitude filled the sack-maker's eyes. She was so weak, that a little thing would make her cry, and here were many little things. But it was the attention, the kindness, that she felt most, and that made her wipe her eyes again and again, as she looked around her; and these are *great* things.

"So kind!" she often said; and then she lighted her candle, that she might see everything better, and then she put a little tea into her tea-pot, and took it down to the kitchen to fill it. When she had replaced it on her table, and waited for the tea to draw, she again looked about her with great satisfaction.

"Butter to my bread, and milk to my tea!" thought she. "Bacon, too! Quite a meat tea! And to think of my having a nosegay, and a book! Let me see what it is about, where the mark is placed—ah, this will supply the want of a Bible to me to-morrow. I *was* hard up when I sold that!"

And she read—

"Commit thou all thy ways
To His unerring hands,
To His sure truth and tender care
Who earth and sea commands.

"No profit canst thou gain
By self-consuming care;
To Him commend thy cause; His ear
Attends thy softest prayer.

"Give to the winds thy fears!
Hope, and be undismayed,
He hears thy sighs, He counts thy tears,
He shall lift up thy head.

"Through waves, and cloud, and storms,
He'll safely guide thy way—
Trust but to Him!—so shall thy night
Soon end in cloudless day."

Meantime, her benefactress had walked rapidly from the house, till she entered a quiet little home in a quiet little street.

In front was a small shop, the shutters of which were closed for the night. As she passed through it, there came the ruddy light of a brisk little fire from the small back-parlour. She looked through the glass door, saw the little table nicely set for tea, the bright brass kettle on the hob, a hot buttered tea-cake before the fire, and a man reading a newspaper by the fire-light.

She could not resist the temptation of bouncing in upon him and saying, "Bo!"

"To a goose? hey?" said he, looking up from his paper; "or from a goose? which?"

Then he began softly to hum—

"'Where have you been?' said Milder to Molder;
And 'Where have you been?" said the younger to the older."

"Then I must ask *you*," said she briskly, as she untied her bonnet, "for you are the oldest. Who was Milder, and who was Molder?"

"That's a question that might puzzle the Sphinx."

"Who was the Sphinx?"

"Well, Ellen, the fact is, I don't know; only, I have heard Mr. Bolter say, when he was puzzled, 'That's a question might puzzle the Sphinx.'"

"Perhaps Mr. Bolter does not know," said Ellen.

"Perhaps not. But where have you been?"

"Why," said Ellen, placing herself at the tea table, and beginning to make tea, "Mrs. Meeke let me off earlier than usual this afternoon; and, as I was tying on my bonnet, and looking out into the little back-garden, I said, 'What nice Michaelmas daisies!' She said, 'You may take a few if you like;' so I thanked her and gathered some. I had a little marketing to do, and, as I was coming home, and making my way among so many poor, hungry-looking people, I thought how much pleasure these flowers might give to somebody who has to work hard in a close room all

day! Then I thought of poor Joe Neale, and went to his lodgings; but the woman said he had gone away. I asked who had his room, and she said a poor girl who made sacks, so I thought she might do as well, and be doing as badly."

Ellen then related what had passed during their interview, and thus proceeded.

"I came home, and began to look up what old things I had in my rubbish-closet, that might be useful to her; for, you know, I could not give money. There was some old cracked earthenware, a serviceable petticoat and pair of shoes, my old patch counterpane, and a piece of old calico sheeting."

"Not a very handsome stock in trade, Ellen, certainly."

"Oh, and there was an old torn hymn-book of Master Tommy's that Mrs. Meeke had given me for my rubbish-closet. I thought the girl might not have a Bible, you know, but I had not one I

could spare to give her. So I went and set the things out, and they looked so nice!—quite smart! But unfortunately she did not come back, and I waited, and waited, and at length was coming away, when I met an old milkman serving the lodgers. I said, 'You have not left any for the attic.' He said, 'She don't take any.' So I bought her a halfpennyworth, and that was all I spent. The woman of the house gave me a gallipot. And now what have *you* been about, Mr. John?"

While Mr. John was giving an account of his proceedings, she listened earnestly and sympathisingly, attending sedulously to his creature comforts the mean time; for she made it a rule to render his meals, which were his only seasons of rest and refreshment, as pleasant as she could. Afterwards, he had some writing to do, and while his pen was busily scouring across the paper, she made the following little memorandum.

Cost of a comfortable evening to a poor sack-maker :

| | £ | *s.* | *d.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Old earthenware . . . . | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Old clothes and hymn-book . | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My own butter and bacon . | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Milk . . . . . | 0 | 0 | 0½ |

## CHAPTER II.

### TEA AND TOAST.

"The hearth was clean, the fire was clear,
The kettle on for tea;
Palemon, in his elbow-chair,
Was blest as man can be."

"THAT'S all very well to say," observed John, when Ellen showed him her statement, "only you know it is not correct."

"It's never very well to say what is *not* correct," retorted Ellen. "I know as well as you do, that the halfpennyworth of milk was not enough of itself to make her comfortable; but it was all the money I laid out, the other things

cost me nothing, and were absolutely of no use to me. And I do think, if people would but use their wits, and not mind trouble, they might do immense good to others, even with what cost themselves nothing, and to themselves was absolutely useless. Well, how did Betsy Brick get on to-day?"

"Betsy Brick is a regular brick. She tied on her little straw bonnet directly I came in, and was off like smoke; but she left a list of what she had sold to-day, set down on the slate."

"Why, you abominable John! you have been sitting on the slate, I do believe! The writing is all rubbed out!"

John looked rather blank, and took the slate from her. "All right," said he, "you looked at the wrong side. See—two work-pockets, one housewife, one kite, two pennyworth of marbles, a squirt, two pennyworths of fun, one top, and one Jack-in-the box."

"Come, that is famous, the till must be quite full. Five and sixpence, I declare! delightful!

Why, with my two shillings and your half-crown, we have made ten shillings to-day!"

"For what we have received, may the Lord make us truly thankful," said John.

"Amen," said Ellen. "Of course, we cannot expect such good trade every day, or we should make—how much? three pounds a week, twelve pounds a month! a hundred and forty-four pounds a year! Oh, that would be enormous, it's not to be thought of. Some people do, though, make money at that rate."

"I believe you!" said John.

"Of course, I meant in our station. Is Mr. Bolter come in?"

"No, he's late to-night."

"Poor man! what work his is!"

"And he feels it so! I couldn't contend with it, for my part—it's ten times harder than my clerkship at the brewery. He'll break down, I fear, if he doesn't get case-hardened. There he is now, I think." And John rose to open the front door.

"Good evening, Mr. Bolter."

"Don't come near me," cried Mr. Bolter, shrinking from him, "I'm dangerous!"

John involuntarily drew back.

"Anything infectious?" said he.

"Nothing but dirt—you never knew such a den as I come from. And, alas, where souls are as foul as bodies. I'm going up to change everything."

"Take this light," said John, holding him a candle at arm's length.

"Thank you, though I *have* matches." And he ran up the narrow stairs.

"Poor man," said John, returning to his snug fire-side, and looking grave.

"Suppose I make him a cup of tea, and we ask him to drink it down here," said Ellen. "You can do so, and take him up some warm water to wash in, at the same time."

"You won't mind it?"

"No."

John returned, looking still more solemnised.

"There he was," said he, "on his knees by the bed, praying and crying at the same time. It cuts one to the heart."

"He'll be better presently," said Ellen. "Will he come down?"

"Oh, yes; at first he refused, but I pressed him till he consented; and I think it will cheer him up."

"I am certain of it. I will make him a nice round of hot buttered toast."

When Mr. Bolter came down, he looked quite a different man. His face was pale and harassed indeed; but he had made himself scrupulously clean, and had the air of a man who was willing to be made comfortable if he could.

"Dear me," said he, "what privileges, what blessings! My cup with mercies runneth o'er!"

"You make too much of it," said Ellen, handing him the hot toast. "Do you like your tea very sweet?"

"Thank you, I don't drink sugar."

"Economy, Mr. Bolter?" inquired John.

"Economy first, but now I prefer my tea without it. I cannot say the same of milk, and this is particularly good."

"The same you have night and morning," said Ellen.

"Then your tea is better than mine, I fancy. What do you give?"

"Three and eightpence."

"So do I. You must put in more."

"Only one spoonful each, and one for the teapot."

"Then, if not in the making, it must be in the maker," said Mr. Bolter laughing, and drinking his tea with relish.

"Ay, that's it," said John. "I wouldn't give a pin for a cup of tea made by myself, if I could have one made by a nice young woman. However, appetite is the best sauce, and I fancy you have earned one to-day, sir."

"If I earned it, I did not get it," said Mr. Bolter. "There was everything to take it away. When I came in, I didn't believe I could touch a

morsel; nor do I think I could, if it hadn't been for you and your sister."

"Where have you been to-day, Mr. Bolter?"

"Don't ask him yet," interposed Ellen.

However, Mr. Bolter was reviving rapidly; and without leaving off eating, he replied—"Where have I been? Why, to Hopkinsville, the very worst suburb on the borders of London."

"What a name!" exclaimed Ellen, with disgust. "Such a mixture of low and fine."

"Somewhere out beyond the East India docks, I conclude?" said John.

"Yes, one of the results of railway enterprise; and run up, chiefly, for the accommodation of railway people. But what accommodation! Only one entrance-door and passage to every four houses—neither drained, paved, nor lighted. These houses form numerous small streets, and contain the families of about a thousand men employed in the factory, at the stations, and on the lines."

"And is this to be your new field of labour?"

"I grieve to say it is, for what is one among so many?"

"Remember the answer to that!" cried Ellen hastily. "The disciples used those very words to our Lord, respecting the loaves and fishes—they saw the want, but not the remedy. He answered them, not by increasing the number of loaves that were on the field, but by making them go as far as if he had—the consequence was, *all* had bread enough and to spare."

"Excellent!" said Mr. Bolter earnestly.

"Not my own, though," said Ellen. "Our minister said so last Sunday in his sermon."

"Let us hear some more of Hopkinstown, if you please, Mr. Bolter," said John.

"Hopkinsville, if *you* please, Mr. Miller. Do not rob me of any of my little grandeur. The city missionary of Hopkinsville! Surely that sounds rather distinguished? Well, the backs of these houses look out on a stagnant ditch

overflowing with corruption. I won't enlarge on this, especially at tea-time. To be appreciated, it must be seen and smelt. In winter-time, heavy rains dilute the contents of these ditches, which overflow all the surrounding flats."

"Horrid!" ejaculated Ellen.

"The doctor told me," pursued Mr. Bolter, "that, at such times, a fetid mist rises from the ground; so that, if you meet a man towards dusk, you only see the upper part of his body, and lose sight of his lower limbs."

"How can people live in such an atmosphere?" cried John.

"Well, they do live; but of course considerably more than the average deaths occur; and agues and fevers abound."

"I put it to you!" said John, striking the table: "have speculators a *right*, in the sight of God, to build dwellings so destitute of sanitary provisions, that sickness and death are sure to ensue to the inhabitants?"

"In the eye of God, no!" said Mr. Bolter.

"The deaths of these people lie at their doors as much as if they cut their throats!" said John.

"Not in the eye of man, unluckily," said Mr. Bolter, "and that makes all the difference. The doctor told me that a case or two of smallpox speedily became an epidemic of the confluent description, in spite of wholesale vaccination, and that he had had as many as twenty cases of it in one day."

"How does *he* live, I wonder?" said Ellen.

"Ah, there's a Providence over medical men, and missionaries too," said John cheerily; "else, how should we get along?"

"Many fall victims, though," said Mr. Bolter.

"Very few in proportion to the others."

"True; one reason is moral force; another, habits of personal cleanliness; another, temperance and wholesome diet; another, sleeping in a purer air than that in which these poor wretches live night and day."

"Add to all these advantages, the immediate

and special blessing of God," said Ellen, "and you may hope to be spared."

"I trust," cried Mr. Bolter, rather eagerly, "that, if you have noted something of depression in my manner while speaking of this district, you have not attributed it to any fear of personal consequences. O no! I am as ready to risk my life for my fellow men among the black ditches of Hopkinsville, as if it were Alma or Inkermann!"

"I did not do you the injustice you suppose," replied Ellen; "but you cannot wonder that your friends should wish your valuable life to be spared; and you yourself would gladly, I should think, live to do as much good as you could, where there is so much need of it."

"Certainly I should," said Mr. Bolter, putting aside his empty tea-cup and sighing; "but when I consider the size of the district, the number of families it contains, and their extreme lack of moral and spiritual culture, I feel somewhat discouraged. I cannot but know that it will be

quite impossible for me to attend to them all. While I am at my duty in one part, I shall be equally needed in many others; hopeful cases will come to nothing for want of the time absolutely necessary to follow them up."

Ellen, finding that he had finished his tea, speedily cleared the table, snuffed the candle, and produced her neat work-basket. After stitching a collar for some minutes in thoughtful silence, she said—

"You make me more contented with my very humble sphere of action, Mr. Bolter. I cheered a poor woman this evening by giving her a handful of Michaelmas daisies, and a few other things, which literally did not cost me a penny, and I feel quite pleased and comfortable; while you, who can do good on so much larger and grander a scale, who can save souls and fit them for an eternity of happiness, are out of heart because you can't do more than you *can* do!"

"No! not out of heart!" he replied. "On the contrary, I am grateful for having this field of

usefulness afforded me, and am resolved to do as much in it as I can."

"How shall you begin?"

"First, I think, by schools. A day-school and a Sunday-school, if I can but raise the funds."

"*They* ought not to be wanting," observed Ellen.

"Easy to say, Miss Miller."

"Well, I *do* think, if devoted men like you are forthcoming to undertake such dangerous and difficult work, the rich ought not to grudge their money. As Robert Moffat said, 'If *we* go down into the mine, surely *you* will hold the rope?'"

"That's the very least they ought to do," said John.

"Well, we'll suppose that settled," said Mr. Bolter. "Then, in the next place, I should like to get up a Sunday-evening service, conducted in the school-room, for the benefit of those who are too dirty and ragged for any regular place of worship. I shall hope, also, to hold a meeting

for prayer and Scripture exposition in the same room on Thursday evenings. At present, you must understand, Hopkinsville has neither church nor chapel."

"Though plenty of gin-palaces, I'll answer for it," said John. "Oh! oh!"

Ellen worked a little while; and then said, "Well, there seems everything to do. I can only wish you success."

"Pardon me, you can do more—you can *pray* for my success; and I hope you will," said Mr. Bolter.

"I will," replied she in a low voice.

"You know the promise," he continued. "'If *two* of you shall agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.'"

"What a wonderful promise that is!" said Ellen.

"Many must have been disappointed in it, though, I should think," said John doubtfully.

"Well, if any such case occurred to me, which

none does at this moment," said Mr. Bolter, "my question would be, was it fairly tried? But my own belief is that it is tried very little; and that, when it is tried, it is found to answer in innumerably more cases than you would think. How often, in reading religious biographies, you find instances in which the united prayer of two or more believers, on some special occasion, has been remarkably answered! We feel a kind of surprise when we read of such things, which we should not do if we practically and firmly believed the promise; and if we do not believe the promise, of course our prayer for its fulfilment is hardly the right thing."

"Clearly not," said John.

"Ah," said Mr. Bolter, with much feeling, "my mother was a very devout woman. I remember a striking instance of the efficacy of a prayer of hers."

And he related it, and then fell into talking of early times, and his native place, and his childhood, till all the lines of care disappeared from

his face; and as he sat smiling and looking from one to the other, with the full light of the solitary candle falling on his open, benevolent countenance, Ellen could not help thinking what a pleasant-looking man he was.

John professed himself very little read in religious biographies, and asked Mr. Bolter to recommend him a few. Mr. Bolter, as he named them, mentioned their prices, and where they were printed, or likely to be had second-hand, and spoke of their merits, and described the nature of their contents. Then, standing up in front of their little shelf, he looked over the names of their books, took some of them down and looked into them, read passages here and there, and offered to lend one or two of his own books to John.

Meanwhile, Ellen was very quietly cooking something that smelt uncommonly nice in a little saucepan, shaking it now and then to prevent its burning, and mashing a few cold potatoes, scoring them, and setting them to brown; after which she

spread the little table with a clean cloth; and by the time Mr. Bolter had finished reading aloud the description of the country inn and the country parson in 'The Deserted Village,' she had served a neat little hot supper. There was not much of it, but it was sociably dispensed, and cheerfully partaken of; seasoned with much chat of that quality that relieves fatigue of mind as much as a good bed refreshes the body. Afterwards, Ellen cleared the table, placed on it the Bible, snuffed the candle, and the evening fitly concluded with a short, fervent service.

## CHAPTER III.

### VEAL PIE FOR TWO.

"'Will you walk into my parlour?' said a spider to a fly;
'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy!'"

ELLEN had just finished dressing on Sunday morning, when her brother tapped at her door.

"Are you almost ready?" said he. "I shall be glad to breakfast early, for I am not going to church with you this morning."

Ellen looked dismayed. "Not going to church with me?" repeated she. "Then where in the world *are* you going?"

"Out among the tea-gardens and pleasure-vans," said he, with a roguish smile—"just for a bit of a lark. Why should not I take my pleasure now and then, along with the rest?"

Ellen saw directly that there was no real ground for alarm.

"I cannot make it out," said she cheerfully; "but I shall be down directly."

He had already cleaned the grate, lighted the fire, and set on the kettle for her—he always *would* do that. And when men and women of the same family, dwelling under the same roof, unite, as this brother and sister did, in acting up to the text, "Bear ye one another's burdens," it is surprising how soon and how cheerfully the day's work is done. Ellen had soon dusted the room and set the breakfast; and while she was doing so, John told her that he was so interested in Mr. Bolter's labours, and so curious to see how he carried them on, that they had agreed overnight to set out this morning in company to distribute tracts and do missionary work in

a wild district a few miles to the east of London.

Ellen was disappointed to lose her companion; but she was well assured John could learn nothing but good of Mr. Bolter; and he was so steady a church-goer in general, and so accustomed to consult her wishes, that she would not, on the present occasion, express any objection.

On the contrary, she said how glad she was it was so fine a morning for their long walk, and that she hoped they would do a great deal of good.

John said he did not expect to do any good, but he hoped to see some good done. He was not going to return to dinner. Mr. Bolter and he had agreed to take some bread and cheese with them, and eat it under a hedge.

Ellen thought how nice it would be to eat bread and cheese under a hedge, and felt she should like to be with them; but she remembered how often the pleasant air, blue sky, and green fields, so lovely and innocent in themselves, be-

come temptations to people to enjoy them on Sundays to the exclusion of the proper duties of the day, and she knew she was best at home. She had made a nice little veal-pie for John and herself, and she now wanted him to take it with him to share with Mr. Bolter; but he said bread and cheese would be less cumbersome; besides which, he well knew that if he carried off the veal-pie, Ellen must dine on bread and cheese, and this he did not choose.

So they set off very briskly, Mr. Bolter carrying a blue bag full of tracts, and John with their dinners in a brown paper parcel. The early bells were ringing, school children hastening through the streets, and many a man and many a woman carrying a small piece of beef or mutton and a good many potatoes in a brown earthen dish to the baker's.

Ellen put out the fire, sat down to her Bible, pondered over sundry texts on which she meant to question her class at the Sunday-school, consulted her "Sunday-school Teacher's Treasury,"

and then dressed herself for church, locked up the house, and set off with the key in her pocket.

As she passed Flag-court, where the sack-maker lived, she felt suddenly impelled to call on her. There was little sign of Sabbath-keeping in Flag-court: dirty children were rolling on the ground, boys playing chuckfarthing, women buying cabbages, and men lounging about the public-house and bird-fancier's. It was not a nice place for a neat, modest young woman to enter; however, Ellen made her way up to the sack-maker's attic, and tapped at the door.

"Come in," said a stifled voice, that sounded as if the speaker were crying.

Such was the fact: the sack-maker was sitting on her sacks, looking the picture of woe, and weeping bitterly.

"O dear, what is the matter?" said Ellen hastily. "Has anything happened?"

The sack-maker looked rather ashamed, and got up, brushing away her tears with her hands, saying, "I didn't know you were coming to-day."

"Nor did I," said Ellen cheerfully; "but I am on my way to the Sunday-school, and just as I came by here, I thought I would look in."

"Ah! I was a Sunday-scholar once," said the sack-maker, looking very full of woe.

"But now, being a woman, you have put away childish things. You are fitter for a teacher than a scholar now."

"*I?* O no!"

And she sat down again in utter despondency. Ellen did not exactly know how to proceed.

"Are you going to church?" said she.

"How *can* I?" returned the sack-maker, almost pettishly, and pointing to her old bonnet and shawl.

"Oh! never mind not being very smart. You know the Lord looketh not to the outward appearance, but to the heart."

"That's as bad as the other!"

"Well, it is something to know that the way to cleanse it is to ask Him to wash it in the blood of His dear Son."

"I can't. I've lost the power and the will to pray."

"In church, with the voice and breath of prayer all around you, perhaps the power and the will may return. Try."

The sack-maker looked irresolute and miserable.

"Come—try."

"How *can* I, in such clothes? Who will let me sit next them?"

"*I* will."

She looked up startled. "*You?*" said she, with fast-filling eyes.

"Yes, willingly. Come, put on your things, and we will start off together."

"I haven't washed yet, and——"

"Well, it is not church-time, and I have my class to attend to. I will come back for you in half an hour."

It is impossible to describe the change that came over the sack-maker's face. "Thank you," she murmured.

Ellen gave her a cheerful nod, and hastened

away. Directly she was gone, the sack-maker sank on her knees and burst into tears. Then she buried her face in her hands and prayed.

Ellen found a friend able to supply her place at the school while she left the ninety and nine to look after the poor sheep that had gone astray in the wilderness. When she returned to the attic, she was greatly surprised and pleased at the improved appearance of her *protégée*. With face and hands scrupulously clean, hair and dress neatly arranged, she looked, though poorly and insufficiently clad, respectable. Her countenance, too, had cleared, and there was a faint colour in her cheek.

"What a nice morning it is—is it not?" said Ellen as they quitted Flag-court. "I am always so glad of a fine Sunday, because it enables so many people to get comfortably to and from their places of worship. Besides, the fine weather has an effect upon our spirits, and makes us more disposed to be grateful to God for all his mercies. I often think what a blessing it is to be born in a

Christian land, and in days when people are not persecuted for their religion, as they were in the days of bloody Queen Mary. Did you ever happen to read Fox's 'Book of Martyrs?'"

"Part of it—father has it." And as she spoke, a deep blush coloured the sack-maker's pale face.

"What is your name?" said Ellen, presently.

"Margaret is my Christian name." Then, after a pause, during which she was probably thinking she ought not to be so reserved to one who was so kind to her, she added, "Margaret Scott."

"Yours seems a poor employment," said Ellen, after another silence. "I wish you had something that would pay better. I suppose you *can* do better work than sack-work?"

"O yes! I'm pretty good at plain-work. I have bound shoes and sewn carpets. But I have not been able to get any work of that kind of late."

"Well, I must try if I can hear of something for you."

"They all want a recommendation," faltered Margaret.

"And can't you get one?"

"No—that is——"

She did not finish the sentence.

"Well, I must think it over," said Ellen.

They walked on quietly for some little time. Suddenly Margaret exclaimed, with animation, "How pleasant it is!"

"What?" said Ellen, surprised.

"Why, going to church, and walking along this way with you, and—it seems so cheering like."

Her voice dropped, and she turned her face away.

"It *is* cheering," responded Ellen heartily. "It reminds me of the little hymn we all learn when we are children—

> 'I have been there and still will go,
> 'Tis like a little heaven below!'

You know it—don't you?"

"O yes! Only I have not thought of it for

a long time." And she seemed repeating the remainder of the verse to herself.

"Well, here we are," said Ellen, as they reached the church. "Don't shrink away from me that way—I'm no more ashamed of you than you of me."

She led the way to the little pew in which she and John had two sittings. It was one of the old-fashioned, high-backed, narrow pews, under a gallery, and had a large pillar in it besides, so that, as no one else came into it, they were very much to themselves, and no one had the opportunity of sneering at Margaret's shabby bonnet. Ellen observed that Margaret followed the service attentively, but now and then seemed bewildered and oppressed, as if by painful recollections; and when the organ began to play she was completely overcome, and wept piteously though silently. Ellen thought it best to take no notice; and though these little gushes occurred once or twice again, yet her general demeanour was subdued, reverent, and just what could be wished. The

sermon was an interesting and awakening one. It tore the veil from sin, and then showed the way of escape, and consoled and encouraged the penitent sinner.

As they left the church, "Suppose," thought Ellen suddenly, "suppose I take her home to dine with me." It was a sudden impulse; and sometimes it is dangerous to yield to sudden impulses, but sometimes it is quite the reverse, *for through them the Spirit speaks*, and we are influenced by our pity before our charity, properly speaking, has had time to operate.* "Yes, I will," was Ellen's answer to herself. John was taking his pleasure, and why should not she take hers? Luckily the pleasure of both was doing good.

"Yes, I will," thought she to herself. Ah, how often we answer, "No, I will not," to our benevolent impulses!

So when Margaret wistfully glanced at her to

* "His pity gave ere charity began."—*Goldsmith.*

guess by her countenance whether they were to part at once, or walk together to the entrance of Flag-court, Ellen cheerfully said, "My brother does not dine at home to-day; I shall be quite by myself, so I shall be glad if you will come home to dine with me, and remain till I go in the afternoon to the Sunday-school."

Who can express the joy of Margaret? Her face really glowed with happiness. "How very kind!" said she, tremulously; and as they walked on, Ellen told her that she and her brother John lived in Robert-street; that they were orphans; that John was a clerk in Mr. Truebury's brewery; and that she worked at her needle at home and abroad, and kept a little shop, which, when she went out by the day, was looked after by a kind girl who lived next door. She added that her father and mother had been well brought up, but had been unfortunate in business and very sickly. They had found a very kind friend in a lady named Mrs. Meeke, who lived in Adelaide-square; she had a large family, and kept Ellen

almost constantly employed in needlework either at home or in "the Square;" and when she went there, she had her meals with Mrs. Meeke and the children, as Mr. Meeke dined at his house of business.

Ellen added that she and her brother had a lodger, a most excellent man, a city missionary; it was untold the good he did! the number of thieves he had reclaimed, of drunkards he had persuaded to take the pledge, of persons he had persuaded to attend divine worship and have their children sent to school, &c., &c.

Margaret listened very attentively to Mr. Bolter's praises, but seemed rather relieved to hear that so formidably good a person had gone out for the day. They were now in Robert-street; Ellen unlocked the door of No. 5, and introduced her guest through the shop to the little back parlour, which Margaret thought the picture of comfort. The table was soon spread; the dainty little veal pie being flanked unexpectedly with three or four baked potatoes, smoking hot, which

the good-natured Betsy Brick ran in with from the next door. Betsy was very pretty, with merry blue eyes, rather a wide mouth, cherry-red lips, and a dimple in her cheek. She gave Margaret a surprised but not rude look, and ran out again as quickly as she had run in.

Margaret thought she had never had so nice a dinner. Ellen talked so pleasantly, too, that the time only passed too swiftly, and she was quite sorry to see Ellen putting on her bonnet. She promised to go to church in the evening; and Ellen gave her a pretty little tract to read when she got home, which would interest her in the mean while. When they parted, Margaret said, shyly, "I hope we shall meet again."

"O yes, I dare say we shall," said Ellen; and with that Margaret was forced to be contented.

The fact was, that Ellen was afraid of committing herself before she saw her way a little more clearly; but she had made out a good deal about Margaret which made her hope and even

expect that John would consider her case one worth her taking up. Ellen had spoken so frankly of herself to Margaret that Margaret had been rather confidential in return. It appeared that Margaret's father was a small yeoman, who had a cottage somewhere in Essex, and that she had never been in service, but had worked for some large furnishing house in the City; and on one occasion, owing to her own negligence, had come to be unjustly suspected of a very grievous fault she had not committed, which had occasioned her immediate dismissal without a character. Moreover, her father had been set against her for some reason, and would not receive her at home; so that, hopeless and despairing, she took a poor lodging, and earned a trifle by job-work. When this failed, she sold her clothes, and at last her Bible; and as the sack-making would cease as soon as the woman who employed her got well, which she was likely to do in a day or two, starvation stared her in the face.

"So what am I to do?" she added, dejectedly.

"Keep a good heart, and pray to God," said Ellen, "and something will be sure to turn up. See if it doesn't."

This was a vague sort of encouragement; but still Margaret *did* feel encouraged, and went back to her lonely lodging with a lighter heart.

When Mr. Bolter and John returned, which was not till after evening service, they were tired and hungry enough. Luckily Ellen and Margaret had only eaten half the pie, so there was plenty left for them, and the fire was soon lighted and the kettle soon boiling for tea.

Ellen let them appease their hunger before she troubled them with questions, for which they were duly grateful. At length, when they were completely satisfied, they drew their chairs to the fire, and as soon as she had cleared away the tea-things, she sat down too, and begged them to give her some account of the events of the day.

"Your brother will tell you," said Mr. Bolter, coughing a little.

"Yes, I will be spokesman," said John; "for Mr. Bolter's lungs have been so fully engaged all day in exhorting, expounding, preaching, praying, singing hymns, and reading the Scriptures, that he requires rest. So I will relate our adventures in Hainault Forest."

## CHAPTER IV.

### HAINAULT FOREST.

HAINAULT FOREST! What a delightfully romantic name! What ideas it conjures up of grassy glades amid old, old trees, frequented by owls and squirrels, with violets and primroses growing at their roots, and hares and rabbits slipping here and there through the fern, and groups of startled deer rushing across and out of sight, and woodpigeons cooing afar off, no one can exactly say where. But where is Hainault Forest? There was a Sir John de Hainault in olden times, of whom Froissart tells pleasant

stories — how that he was a handsome, brave young knight, wondrously taken in by cunning Queen Isabella, wife of our Edward the Second, to whom he swore fealty, and in whose cause he came over from Flanders with ever so many gallant soldiers to fight in her defence.

Well, but that brave young Sir John de Hainault had nothing to do, maybe, with our Hainault Forest. The province of Hainault is in the Netherlands; but Hainault Forest is close on the skirts of smoky London.

"It is difficult to believe," said John, "that in former times the whole county of Essex was one immense forest; yet such, Mr. Bolter tells me, was really the case. In the reign of Charles the First, when its boundaries were greatly diminished, its extent was estimated at sixty thousand acres, forty-eight thousand of which have been since inclosed, leaving twelve thousand acres of waste and woodland.

"You know, Ellen, we were lately reading an account of the famous Fairlop oak, and how its

branches formerly overspread a circuit of three hundred feet. A fair used to be held in its honour, and under its shade, on the 22nd of July, when the days are long and the weather is generally pleasant enough. Many a loving couple has doubtless strayed among the green glades and alleys thereabouts at such times, and many a sociable party has been grouped round a cold pigeon-pie in the shade, and many a girl has munched gingerbread, and many a boy blown his penny whistle under that old oak. Had this been all, it would have been harmless enough; but unhappily drinking and gaming became the two prominent features of this fair, as they do of most. On Fairlop Sunday, 1839, seventy-two gambling-tables and a hundred and seven drinking-booths were counted round about the spot where the old oak once flourished—for it has long since been cut down, and the pulpit of St. Pancras church was constructed of the timber. Earlier in the year, when the trees are clothed in green, a better place for a gipsying party than

Epping Forest can hardly be imagined; and one does not wonder that numbers of vans with their looped-up curtains and gay streamers, filled with joyous men, women, and children, not forgetting well-packed baskets of provisions, should briskly trot along the road to the sound of flute, horn, and fiddle, amid shouts and shrill huzzas. On arriving at the forest they drive up to some well-known public-house, alight, form into small parties, and straggle off, some one way, some another, as the fancy takes them; some leaping over bushes, some slinging at boles of trees, some chasing squirrels, some sitting in the shade, or straying along in harmonious chat, till summoned to dine on the grass."

"Pleasant enough, too," said Ellen.

"Pleasant enough, only not so innocent on a Sunday as on a week-day," interposed Mr. Bolter.

"Still, when you consider," said John, "how many poor fellows at that side of London are shut up at their looms from morning to night in close

lodgings, you cannot much wonder at their wishing to inflate their lungs with a little fresh air one day in seven—as I could not help thinking this morning while the lark sang over our heads and the thrush and blackbird from the bushes. Every minute my step grew more elastic, I drew up my head, threw forward my chest, and felt twice the man I was at starting! After walking a considerable way, the road was becoming rather lonely, when suddenly a wild-looking gipsy-man sprang out upon us from behind a bush."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Ellen.

"He had a small tattered piece of printed paper in his hand; and, holding it close to Mr. Bolter's face, pointed with his finger to a row of large letters, and said eagerly, 'What are those?'

"'Selling off,' said Mr. Bolter.

"'Thank you, thank you,' said he gratefully; 'perhaps you will read me the whole line.'

"'Selling off under prime cost.'

"'Thank you, thank you!' and away he was

darting, when Mr. Bolter said, 'May I ask, my good friend, for what purpose you inquired?'

"'Certainly,' said he, looking rather surprised at the kind tone and expression. 'I am trying to learn to read; and, having neither book nor teacher, I sometimes stand beside a finger-post till some one goes by, and then ask them the name of the letters composing one or two short words.* You cannot think how pleased I was to find I could read *To London*.'

"'You must be a spirited, persevering fellow,' cried Mr. Bolter, 'to encounter so many difficulties with so few encouragements. How is it you can get neither book nor teacher?'

"'Ah,' said he, with a half-melancholy smile, 'I am one of a despised race. Who would teach the poor gipsy?'

"'*I* would!' said Mr. Bolter.

"'Would you?' cried he joyfully. 'Then give me a lesson at once.'

* Authentic.

"'I am pressed for time now,' said Mr. Bolter, 'for I want to reach a given place by a certain time; but come, walk along with us a little way, and we can talk as we go.'

"The gipsy cheerfully complied.

"'Is there any particular book you want to read,' continued Mr. Bolter, 'that makes you so desirous to learn?'

"'Certainly there is,' replied the gipsy.

"'What is it?'

"'Why—it escapes me at this moment, but yet I am told it contains a good deal about my ancestors. It is called—hum!—I shall forget my own name next!'

"'What *is* your name?'

"'Pharaoh.'

"I confess I started.

"'Pharaoh Smith,' continued the gipsy. (What a come-down!) 'I'm descended from King Pharaoh.'

"'There were many kings called Pharaoh, my good friend.'

"'Well, I'm descended from one of them—perhaps from all. That makes me so anxious to read the book, because I think I may find in it something to my advantage.'

"'That you are pretty sure to do if the book be what I think—the Bible!'

"'That's the very name!' cried Pharaoh, with delight. 'Oh, *do* teach me to read it! I'll shoe your horse, if you have one, for nothing.'

"'Without shoeing my horse (which I have not), you shall learn of me to read if we can but fix on time and place suitable for us both; but, if I give you a reading-lesson at all to-day, it must be a very short one. Come with us, however, where we are going—to a certain spot in the forest, where I shall hold a meeting for all who like to come, and read some of the very book you want to read so much yourself. Will you?'

"'Thankfully!' replied the gipsy; and, as we walked onward, Mr. Bolter began to teach him the names of the letters of the alphabet by rote, in

their regular order. Presently we came up to a small river or brook, beside which a man and a boy were fishing. 'I must speak to this couple,' said Mr. Bolter quietly. 'Go you forward together, and continue the alphabet, and I will join you in a few minutes.' We did so, and therefore of course I cannot tell you what passed."

"But *I* can," interposed Mr. Bolter, who for some time had felt inclined to chime in. "I offered the man a tract, and observed, I was sorry to see him fishing on a Sunday. He replied, he was confined to a close workshop all the week, and thought there could be no harm in getting a little fresh air on that day. I observed, there was no harm in fresh air, but a great deal of good, and the same might be said of fishing, with limitations. Some of Jesus Christ's disciples were fishermen, but they did not pursue their calling on the Sabbath. He replied, he did not believe in Jesus Christ.

'Ah,' said I, 'we none of us can believe that of which we know nothing; and perhaps

you know little enough of *Him.*' 'I have read the New Testament,' replied he carelessly. 'And remember that passage, doubtless,' said I, 'where He called His disciples away from their fishing, saying, He would make them fishers of *men.* And yet, in the lawful pursuit of their calling, He twice vouchsafed them a miraculous draught, insomuch that their net brake.'

"'O yes, I know all about that,' said he, with some impatience.

"'Know, and yet do not believe,' said I. 'How comes that?'

"He was silent.

"'Come,' said I, putting my Testament into his hand, open at the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, 'tell me how do you understand that?'

"He looked annoyed, but took it in his hand, and soon returned it to me. 'I confess,' said he, 'I cannot understand it at all.'

"'Ah, my friend,' said I, 'I expected to find it so; and why? It is written, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for*

*they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* It is plain, therefore, that the reason this book is foolishness to you, is because you are as yet only what the Scriptures call a natural man, however clever, as a natural man, you may be.'

"'And pray what are *you?*' said he, with an air of pique.

"'A fisher for *souls,*' replied I quickly, 'and therefore in the lawful pursuit of my calling, even on the Sabbath, when fishing for *you!*'

"'Ah! I shan't bite, though,' said he, playing with his rod.

"'Many a fish thinks that before he's caught,' replied I cheerfully 'Come, put up your tackle and come along with me—I'll show you better sport than that.'

"'Where?' said he, irresolutely.

"'Where I fish for souls.'

"'Well—if I do, it will only be for a bit of a lark——'

"'For a lark or no lark, come along.'

"'Let's go, father,' says the boy.

"'Come along, then,' said he, briskly collecting his things together, 'the fish won't bite *here*, at any rate, to-day, and we may as well have sport of one kind or other.'

"'And I've a pleasant companion to introduce you to, a little in advance,' said I.

"'Oh, well, all the better,' said he, his good-humour rapidly rising; 'I like a good companion any day of the week.'"

"Much obliged for the compliment," said John, laughing. "I'm afraid it was only a bait for a silly fish. However, I won't take the word out of your mouth."

"Now you go on."

"No, you."

"No, I'm tired—I like to hear you."

"Well, Ellen, when I saw our friend coming along with two more disciples at his heels, I began to wonder whether he would have *twelve* before our walk was ended—he was evidently at our Lord's own work. As soon as we joined forces,

we all fell into easy talk about the weather, the country, the late harvest, the forest, the comparative amount of inclosed and uninclosed land, which brought us all familiarly together, and which Bolter knew how to make interesting and entertaining to all. The gipsy and little boy were the only silent ones, but they listened attentively, and gave us a bright glance now and then, the one with his black, the other with his blue eyes. Presently, something being said about the birds singing all about us, the gipsy found a subject on which he really had a great deal to say that was curious. Just in the midst of it all, as we were passing, almost without noticing, a straggling row of shabby houses with a public-house in the midst, and a crowd of idle fellows hanging about it till the door should open, Bolter said, 'Go forward, all of you, till I join you—or, stay, you can help me, if you will—let us give each of these people a tract;' and, before another word could be uttered, we all to our surprise found a handful of tracts stuffed into our hands, and ourselves

distributing them in silence, while our chief addressed a few words to each — words so appropriate, Ellen, that I thought if I could speak like that, I'd become a missionary this minute!"

"It would come to you quite naturally," said Mr. Bolter. "Our Lord's standing orders are the same 'yesterday, to-day, and for ever'—'Take no thought what ye shall say, neither premeditate, for it shall be given you.'"

"Well, then, it was a promise fulfilled," said John, "for it certainly was given *you*. The little boy, as we walked away, said artlessly—

"'That was a jolly lark, wasn't it, father?'

"'Jolly!' replied he, hardly knowing whether to look pleased or not; but the next instant I saw the boy's hand locked in his.

"'To think of *my* being a tract-distributor!' said he.

"'Ay, 'tis you educated fellows that are hardest to win,' said Bolter cheerily; 'just as it was with St. Paul—how he *did* hale about the poor

Christians, to be sure, before he came to a better mind!'

"I could see at a glance that the assumption of his being an educated man pleased our companion.

"'Anybody can disbelieve,' pursued Mr. Bolter. 'It is only the well-informed that can give a *reason* for the hope that is in them.'

"'That never struck me,' observed the other.

"'Here now,' pursued Mr. Bolter, 'is an ignorant poor fellow, who would willingly believe if he could, but does not know how—he does not know how to read, and therefore of course cannot read the Bible, though it is the book he wishes to master above all others, because he expects to find in it something about his own particular friends and relations.'

"Our companion looked askance, first at Bolter and then at the gipsy, as much as to say, 'What *can* you mean?' and I confess I thought he was on dangerous ground, especially with the gipsy, but a glance at him reassured me.

"'This good man,' pursued Bolter, 'is of Egyptian descent, nay, he has been led to suppose, even of royal extraction. Now, I need not tell a man of your reading that there is a great deal about Egypt and the Egyptians in the Bible. It gives us the very earliest notices of them that we have,—it tells us of the nature of the country—flat, scorchingly hot, destitute of rain, and liable to be parched and absolutely uninhabitable, were it not watered by a most wonderful river, the Nile, or *Nahal*, which signifies *black*——'

"'Just so!' ejaculated Pharaoh, drawing closer to him.

"'*You see*,' said Mr. Bolter to the other, with a significant look, 'he corroborates the truth of the Bible, though he can't read a word of it.'

"'Go on, sir, please!' cried Pharaoh, 'go on about my country!'

"'This wonderful river,' continued Mr. Bolter, 'overflows its banks at stated seasons, and waters the ground so thoroughly that the Egyptians, who in early times seem to have had more wisdom, as

regards this world, than any other people upon earth, knew how to turn this superfluity of water to the best account, by digging innumerable little channels through their fields, which received the overflow and supplied the want of other moisture. Hence a country naturally sandy became clad in herbage of the most vivid green, and abundantly brought forth juicy, luscious fruits, and vegetables, cucumbers, gourds, melons that melted in the mouth, and were called *abdelerin*, or *slave of sweetness*. But mark what befell: the Egyptians, not content with being grateful *for* their noble river, began to be grateful *to* it, and at length to worship it as a god—just as if we were to worship the river Thames!'

"In this way he went on, and you may imagine, Ellen, our interest in hearing him. We were interrupted by coming up with a man with a gun, going out to shoot small birds. Of course Mr. Bolter had a parley with him, and *he*, too, was persuaded to join him. I cannot tell you how time passed, nor what distance we went—

we 'took no note of time'—but presently we saw people coming out of a neat church: we stopped and counted how many—only nineteen! And there had been twenty waiting at the public-house. 'I wonder, sir,' said our friend with the fishing-rod, 'that *you* were not in church this morning.'

"'My dear man,' cried Mr. Bolter affectionately, 'I should have liked it of all things, but I would gladly be away from it one Sunday, ay, twenty Sundays, to save *you!*'

"Ellen! the man was overcome; he was on the very brink of bursting into tears, but did not, which I was glad of, especially before his little boy, because it would have humbled him too much. He wrung Mr. Bolter's hand. 'Oh, sir,' says he, 'oh, sir! you've subdued me! You've nearly unmanned me! What a man you must be! Sure nobody can withstand you.' Mr. Bolter responded warmly, and then resumed a more equable tone, though all of us were more or less affected. At length we reached the spot,

an open space near a country public-house, where crowds of pleasure-seekers were assembled. Mr. Bolter then briefly told us his plans, and arranged with us to keep near him and form a nucleus, as it were, for a congregation, while he commenced an open-air service. He intended to hold three or four in the course of the day, but settled to meet Pharaoh beneath a certain old oak at a certain time before dark, to give him a reading-lesson. He did not keep his appointment, however, for the service was prolonged rather more than he was aware of, and at its conclusion, a portly man-servant, in rich but plain livery, came to him with a message, and detained him so long, that when we reached the oak, it was nearly dark, and Pharaoh was not there."

"What a pity!" said Ellen.

There was yet much to tell and talk over; and the evening concluded, like the previous one, with fervent family prayer.

## CHAPTER V.

### COUNTRY QUARTERS.

> —— But lift the eye
> And hail the abode of rural ease, that looks
> The mistress of the scene.
>
> BOWLES.

AS Ellen proceeded to Mrs. Meeke's the next morning, she thought of Margaret; and, remembering that Mrs. Meeke contemplated the purchase of a new carpet, she considered whether she might with propriety induce her to let Margaret make it, after stating what she knew of her story. All this was driven completely out of her head, however, by the news that awaited her at "the

Square." Mrs. Meeke came to her with a face of woe, to tell her that the two youngest of her children, who had seemed so poorly on Saturday, now proved to have the scarlet fever—a disease she particularly dreaded, having lost a fine little girl by it already. It was, therefore, her great object to remove the three others immediately from the danger of infection; and as Mr. Meeke's elder brother, a much richer man than himself, was at present on the Continent, and had left his country house at their disposal for the next month, she wished to send them thither immediately. Unfortunately she had no one to whom to intrust them—her own sisters were in Scotland. Would Miss Miller undertake the charge?

Ellen said she would most gladly do so, but for her brother and the shop; however, she would hasten back and consult him. Betsy Brick would perhaps attend to the shop in his absence, and Mrs. Fuller, her aunt, would see that he wanted for nothing.

Mrs. Meeke begged her to make all the haste

she could, as the fly was already sent for: the distance to Tranquil Vale was but thirty miles, and though they could go quicker by rail, a fly would be safer, and time was no object. The old woman who was left in charge of Tranquil Vale had been desired to expect them at any time, therefore they would not take her by surprise.

Tranquil Vale! there was a charm in the very sound. Ellen had always heard much of the beauty of Kent in general, and of Tranquil Vale in particular; therefore, as she hurried off to John, she thought less of being about to do a very kind thing than a very pleasant one.

John, who was always grateful to Mrs. Meeke for her kindness to his sister, was sincerely glad Ellen could show her any kindness in return. He hoped she would enjoy herself very much; there was a full fortnight of October yet, and he expected she would live on the fat of the land, and ramble about the country with the children from morning till dusk, and write him the nicest of letters, and come home as fresh as a rose. As

for Mr. Bolter and himself—oh, they should have jolly bachelor doings in her absence, he promised her!

Ellen, well satisfied with his concurrence, next sought out her neighbour, Mrs. Fuller. Quiet Mr. Fuller was, as usual, peering over his watch-mending in the little shop; he looked up, nodded, smiled, and told her she would find his "good lady" within. Now Mrs. Fuller, though a stirring woman, was likewise a kind one, very partial to Ellen, and capable, as she often said, of doing twice the work of her own little house. Therefore, when this opportunity offered of doing the work of two little houses, she did not feign reluctance, but closed with the offer at once; and when Ellen expressed regret at giving so much trouble, she said heartily, "My dear Miss Miller, don't name it; nothing is a trouble that we can do for you! I will attend to your brother and your lodger as carefully as you could do yourself; and, in their absence, Betsy shall look after the shop."

So, what could Ellen do but express her grate-

ful thanks, and leave her love for Betsy, who was out, and then hasten to pack up her things for the country? To one who so seldom left home, it was a pity that so much pleasure must be packed and squeezed, like her clothes, into so small a space. Had she known of it a month beforehand, the very anticipation would have delighted her all the month. However, it is no good, when we have one apple-pie given us, to regret that it is not two: the thing was very delightful as it was; there was no drawback but the illness of the two children, and she hoped and had very little doubt they would do well.

Having finished her packing, therefore, and found a man to carry her box, she hastened back to Adelaide Square, where the fly was already being loaded at Mrs. Meeke's door, and the children in the hall ready to get in. Mrs. Meeke was very glad to see her, put some money in her hand, hasty farewells took place, and away they went. With three very lively little girls for her companions, and an entirely new road to

travel, it was no wonder that Ellen did not think of Margaret.

The tall poles still stood in the hop-fields, though the hop-picking was over. Every fresh turn of the road brought something beautiful, picturesque, or interesting in sight: country inns, country villages, country churches, country seats, country lanes, country commons and heaths, sprinkled with geese and goslings, donkeys, rough ponies, cattle, and now and then a gipsy-tent, called forth continual emotions of pleasure in Ellen, who endeavoured to convey the same impressions to her young companions. Ellen's mother had been the daughter of an artist, who had imparted some taste for the beautiful in nature and art to his children; hence her eye was not wholly unaccustomed to look out for happy effects and good groupings; and if this often gave a passing interest in the ordinary, unpoetical things around her, how rapturous was it to look around where nothing met the eye but sights of bliss and beauty! The children were

in high spirits, and willing enough to be amused at anything or nothing; but by far the greatest treats of the day to them were the cold dinner eaten in the fly, and their passing through a country fair with plenty of gay booths and gingerbread-stalls.

The sun was gloriously setting when they turned off into a by-road with steep banks and high hedges, which brought them, first to a turnpike, then to a straggling little village and village church; then to a sudden break in the hedge and bank, which disclosed, at about two hundred paces from the road, overlooking a smooth-shaven lawn, an antique little Elizabethan mansion with

> "Three ancient peaks, that nodded o'er
> An ancient porch, which nodded more."

"Tranquil Vale!" shouted the children: and truly it deserved its name. The lawn was only edged by a stone coping, and divided from the road by a sunk fence, which any one with a run and leap might easily have cleared. Two or three white and red cows were chewing the cud in the shade, a peacock stood on the parapet, and

a wreath of thin blue smoke was rising from one of the old spiral chimney-stacks against the dark background of a rookery.

Ellen thought the place looked a perfect paradise. The driver got down to open a swing-gate, and then drove up to the house. A large dog began to bark, and an old woman, the neatest of the neat, came to the door, shading her eyes from the setting sunlight, which glittered on every diamond-shaped window-pane. She came out smiling and courtesying.

"All's ready, miss," said she; "bless the little dears! Master told me to expect them at any time. The beds are aired, and I've plenty of bread and butter in the house, for I've always been looking out for a charrot-full o' children!"

It was very pleasant to be so heartily welcomed. Ellen paid the man, after seeing the luggage taken out; and then entered the house all smiles. The children were already scampering round the quaint flower-beds, gay as a patchwork counterpane, with the great Newfoundland dog, Neptune.

The coloured glass in the hall windows made the hall rather dark. It was of stone, with a Turkey carpet in the middle. There were old oak chairs, an old oaken table, a barometer, a curious clock, and a large dark mahogany chest or coffer, bright as glass, and lined with faded green baize, that would have held all Mrs. Meeke's children, and left room to spare. It reminded Ellen of the old story of the bride who played at hide and seek on her wedding day, and shut herself up in an old oak chest, which she was unable to open again, because she did not know the secret of the spring-lock.

"I were lonesome, biding here all day by myself," said Mrs. Quain, "though I had Kitty to sleep with me; so I'm glad you 're come."

Kitty was a girl of fourteen, with cheeks as round, hard, and glazy as apples, and eyes as black as sloes.

Mrs. Quain showed Ellen into the drawing-room, which had a tall, wide lattice-window at each end, and looked very snug, though there

were no lady's nick-nacks to be seen, nor yet a piano—old Mr. Meeke being a bachelor. The dining-room was oak-panelled, low, dark, and snug also. The staircase had two or three landings and very shallow oaken stairs, carpeted with red drugget. The bedrooms were small, but pretty, with chintz furniture lined with green, blue, and yellow. Mrs. Quain shook out her master's warm dressing-gown, folded it up, and put it away.

"That gave me a precious fright one night," said she to Ellen. "I'd hung it out to air (for we're bothered with moths), and, coming up at dusk to turn down the bed, took it for a man! It gave me quite a turn: for we've had some very bad robberies in these parts."

"I think the less you say of them in the children's hearing the better," said Ellen.

Mrs. Quain gave a knowing look, as much as to say, "Trust me for that," and hurried off to bring up more packages. When that was done, she left Ellen to unpack, and went off to get

tea and boil a liberal supply of eggs. As neither hunger nor the means of appeasing it were wanting, the meal was a very hearty one, seasoned with abundance of harmless mirth; and the children being very tired were glad to go early to bed.

Ellen lingered on the same floor till they were fast asleep, and then went downstairs to look about her, examine the books, enjoy a good lounge in an easy chair, and feel a luxurious sense of novelty, tinctured by the slightest touch of awe. This apprehensiveness was not diminished when Mrs. Quain brought in her supper, and lingered to tell her all the horrible stories she had conscientiously bottled up before the children.

"You will frighten me so," said Ellen at last, "that I shall not be able to sleep a wink."

So then Mrs. Quain begged pardon, and said she had not thought of that, and she hoped nothing of the kind might happen now, for that she looked very carefully after all the fastenings.

Ellen hoped she did, and began to feel that

even a paradise may be spoilt to us if we live in apprehension of thieves.

She went to bed, timid as a hare, and thought she should not sleep; however, fatigue brought its own remedy, and she did not even dream. When the bright morning sun streamed into her room she laughed at her midnight terrors, and rose, fresh and cheerful, while the children in the adjoining room were waging a mock fight with their pillows.

These active young spirits kept Ellen pretty much on the *qui vive* from six in the morning to eight in the evening; so that it was quite a refreshment to her to leave them asleep and quietly return to the parlour, to dip into some old book, or indulge in reverie. Though her days were fatiguing, however, they were highly enjoyable. She was of a sociable turn, and fond of the companionship of children; and she took them long scrambling walks, and helped them to hunt for blackberries, nuts, and wild flowers. They soon found out she was a capital story-teller;

and they would cluster round her, begging her to tell of Whittington, or Prince Arthur, or Goody Two-shoes, or the aforenamed spring-lock, till they scampered off to chase a rabbit or squirrel.

Two books were especially amusing to Ellen during her solitary evenings—Defoe's "History of the Plague," and the "Life of Thomas Ellwood the Quaker." They were thin folio volumes, printed in large type, with a plentiful sprinkling of capital letters, which pleased her eye, and often, she thought, gave force to the meaning. She was deeply impressed by the account of the way in which the plague first broke out in London, and at length desolated the city; and she delighted in the adventures of the three poor men—the soldier, the sailor, and the joiner, who made themselves a little tent, got a small horse to carry their luggage, and resolved to live in Epping Forest till the pestilence ceased: how they "went away east, through Ratcliffe Highway, as far as Ratcliffe Cross, leaving Stepney Church still on their left hand:" how the watchman

placed on Bow Bridge would have questioned them, and how they got out of his way: how they journeyed on till they got into the great north road on the top of Stamford Hill: how they then felt weary, and resolved to encamp and set up their tent for the first night, which they did, against the back of a barn, having first ascertained that the barn had no one in it: how, while two went to sleep, the third, being a military man, resolved to keep sentry and guard his companions: how he gravely paced to and fro, shouldering his gun, till he heard a sound of many people approaching, whom, when they got quite close, he startled by crying, "Who goes there?"—on which one of them said to the others in a melancholy voice, "Alas, alas! we are disappointed; here are some people before us, and the barn is taken up!" Then it went on to relate how that, after much parleying, it proved that the new comers were a large party of harmless people, well-provisioned, who had reckoned on this barn for shelter; in consequence

of which the three comrades gave it up to them on the morrow and started for Epping Forest. They then began to find their horse rather more plague than profit, because it was needful to keep on some kind of an open track, and they could not hastily slip him out of sight when they saw any one coming. Being warned off Walthamstow by constables and watchmen, they began to fear they should be starved, and finding an exaggerated report of their numbers had got about, John the soldier resolved to take advantage of it, and obtain by stratagem what he could not have done by force.

Towards dark, therefore, having artfully disposed his companions among the trees, and lighted several fires, he himself patrolled the edge of the wood, shouldering his musket, in full sight, and presently was accosted, as he hoped to be, by a terrified constable who kept at a safe distance. John the soldier had no scruple in leading him to suppose that a considerable body of desperate men were lurking in the wood, who were nearly

perishing with hunger, and if not supplied with food would certainly burst into the town during the night and help themselves. Consequence was, the Walthamstow folk sent the wily old rogue twenty loaves and three or four large pieces of beef, and thanked them for being contented.

There was a good deal more about these men, and the various adventures they had in the forest. The book enthralled Ellen for several nights, and when she went to bed it was to dream of a merry camp life in

> "The good green wood,
> Where mavis and merle are singing."

Then she attacked the "Life of Thomas Ellwood," whose father, a country justice, kept his coach, his hunters, his greyhounds, and lived in an old house hung with armour, pictures, and coats of arms, though he appears to have been not much richer than Don Quixote, and only kept a man and a maid.

Sweet Guli Springett seemed to give a hawthorn

perfume to the book. First, there was Little Tom, riding with her in her child's coach, drawn by a man-servant, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Afterwards, Tom, when a young man of twenty, took a fifteen-mile ride with his father to call on Guli's mother, Lady Springett, who, meanwhile, had married a rigid Quaker, Isaac Pennington. While the old lady and gentleman are conversing, Tom finds his way into the garden, where he meets Guli, attended by her maid. Young as she was, he found her so stiff-starched that there was no getting on with her; and, as he and his father rode home, they agreed that their old friends were changed for the worse.

Tom, however, was smitten, and soon found his way back to Lady Springett's, where he soon received Quaker impressions, and began to make a conscience of withholding titles of respect from his friends, and keeping his head covered in his father's presence. This greatly displeasing the old gentleman, he made it *his* point of conscience to pluck Tom's hat off his head and throw it out of

window, and then drive him to his own room, buffeting him by the way, and now and then "giving his ear a good whirret."

Having lost all his hats, and also his cap, one of the hats was restored by the relenting, though hot-tempered father, at the entreaty of Lady Springett, in order that he might pay her a visit of some little duration; that is, "from the time called Easter to the time called Whitsuntide." Tom returned home more of a Quaker than ever, of course; and on his sitting down to table in his hat, his father coolly observed, "Tom, if you can't dine without your hive upon your head, you had better dine somewhere else."

His ensuing course is both highly diverting and interesting. His father kept him almost in captivity. At length one day he took to his heels, his father after him; but the old justice, being scant of breath, was soon distanced, and pausing to recover himself, muttered, "Nay, an' he *will* take so much pains to go, let him go if he will."

Thenceforth Ellwood followed his own devices, which often led him into difficulties. At one time he was secretary to Milton.

All this to read did Ellen seriously incline.

## CHAPTER VI.

### GREY NUNS.

The city's domes and far-off spires appear,
Breaking the long horizon, where the morn
Sits blue and soft: what glowing imagery
Is spread beneath! Towns, villages, light smoke,
And scarce-seen windmill sails, and devious woods.

BOWLES.

ON the Monday which saw Ellen conveyed to Tranquil Vale, Mr. Bolter started early for the scene of the preceding day's adventures. As time was an object, he took an omnibus, which carried him some miles out of London. He then turned into a well-kept by-road, skirted, to the right, by an old grey park-paling, enamelled with varieties of minute green and gold-coloured mosses,

and overhung by noble trees that occasionally shed an acorn or horse-chestnut at his feet.

A little way up he reached a pretty rose-covered lodge, and, passing through the swing-gate, he proceeded up a carriage-drive to a fine stone-built mansion, with all due adjuncts of coach-houses, stables, conservatory, forcing-houses, aviary, and fish-ponds. Several varieties of rare water-fowl disported themselves on the latter; partridges, gold and silver pheasants, plovers, and peewits fed on the grass; tame hares darted across the lawn; and even a fox, sly fellow, seemed dozing in his kennel, though whether he were shamming was past the wit of man to determine.

This place as completely captivated Mr. Bolter's fancy as the humbler beauties of Tranquil Vale delighted Ellen. He murmured to himself,

> "Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
> Progressive virtue, and approving heaven—"

and lightly ran up the portico-steps, and rang the deep-toned house-bell. The rosy-cheeked footman who had accosted him the previous day, answered

the summons, and, with a silent smile, ushered him at once into a lofty, spacious, cheerful morning room.

All the furniture of this room, except the fine net under-curtains, was drab of various shades, "each under each," matching each other like Duke Theseus' hunting-dogs. There were no pictures on the walls, but plenty of brilliant flowers arranged about the room, together with gay foreign birds and beetles, brilliant shells and sparkling minerals, under glass cases. The principal table was covered with beautifully-bound books, circling round a thick quarto Bible. There were gold and silver fish darting within a glass globe; there was a cockatoo on a perch, and a Persian cat on a cushion. The view of lawn and garden from the window, closed in by the forest, was charming.

Here Mr. Bolter was joined by a fair and fresh-looking lady, between thirty and forty, dressed in silver-grey silk, and

> "With sable stole of Cyprus lawn,
> Over her decent shoulders drawn."

Very little of her white throat was to be seen; but an artist might have been proud to model the arm and hand of this lady. Her fair, smooth-parted hair, little concealed by a transparent cap, shaded a brow that betokened intellect as much as her mouth indicated sweetness; her complexion was what Sir Joshua Reynolds would have described, when he advised his pupils to "think of a pearl and a peach;" and her calm, placid, holy aspect reminded one of the lovely lady in Comus.

"I fear," said she, in a peculiarly sweet voice, "that thou hast studied my convenience at the expense of thine own."

"By no means, madam," said Mr. Bolter; "my wish is to pass all the remainder of the day in the forest."

"This is not thy district, however," said the lady. "Let us be seated."

"No, I am only on temporary duty here during the illness of a brother missionary," said Mr. Bolter. "He is better, however, and, in a few days, I shall commence work in Hopkinsville—

the far less inviting district to which I am appointed."

"I want to hear all about Hopkinsville," said she, drawing her writing-case towards her. "Give me minute details."

So then he told her all he had already told the Millers, and a great deal more. She set it all down, and now and then looked up at him with intense interest, and gave one or two sighs.

"This is sad," said she at last. "Something must be done. What is the first and greatest want?"

"Men," said Mr. Bolter readily. "The right men for the right places."

"Ah, thou art right!" said she, again sighing. "Instead of saying with Jeremiah, 'O that mine eyes were rivers of water,' I am ready to exclaim, 'O that I were twenty home-missionaries!'"

"You would not supply the demand, madam," said Mr. Bolter.

"And therefore," said she, "I will abstain

from wishing. It is better to pray than to wish. Let us unite in prayer."

And, instead of waiting for Mr. Bolter to take the initiative, she herself, after a short pause, poured forth a stream of prayer so fervent, so moving, so imploring, that Mr. Bolter thought he had never heard anything to equal it, and was deeply affected when she proceeded to pray for himself. After another short pause—

"Now," said she softly, "do thou go on."

He did so; and concluded with feelings strengthened and elevated.

"Ah," said she, "if we oftener agreed as touching a thing we should ask, *and asked it*, it would oftener be accorded."

"That's what *I* say," rejoined Mr. Bolter, "or rather, it is what our blessed Lord has said, which is more to the purpose."

Mrs. Truebury having rung the bell, a man-servant entered with chocolate and rusks, served on silver. The refreshment was very acceptable to

Mr. Bolter, who was set at his ease by her partaking of it with him.

"Yes," resumed she, "men are the chief want, and the wonder is they don't come forward. They will go on a forlorn hope to the North Pole, or penetrate Central Africa, for purposes of science and commerce, nay, they will try to force Christianity into regions that as yet are really impenetrable, while they leave a fearful amount of undone work at home. A few converted at Jerusalem is made much of: are there no Jews in Mary Axe? An enthusiastic young lady gets our government into trouble by distributing the Scriptures in Italy, against the law of the country: are there no Roman Catholics in Seven Dials? A brave, romantic man attempts to convert the gipsies in Spain: are there none in Epping Forest? Truly, they may say to us, as my little boy did to his nurse, when she attempted to cut his meat, 'Interfere with thine own plate!'"

Mr. Bolter could not help laughing.

"Ah," continued she, "for the man who aims

*to be, rather than appear to be* a hero, there is plenty of work at home. As one of your own writers has said, 'It is true that, for the Golden Valley, he may have the Commercial Road; he may have streets for villages, courts for hamlets, the pool for his nearest lake, the sewer for his rivulet, and the scum of all the earth for his disciples; but such were the very scenes in which the Apostle of the Gentiles fought with beasts and bearded the lion in his den. In the eyes of heaven, smoke-stained walls are as bright as leafy groves, the dusty street as the flowery mead, and the artisan's wan child as the blooming village maiden.'" *

"True, quite true," said Mr. Bolter, "and therefore I would not, if I could, exchange the fetid lanes of Hopkinsville for the glades of Hainault and Epping, though I shall be glad when my seasoning is over."

"I shall make special prayer for thee," said

* "Times," Nov. 20, 1858.

she simply. And then, after ruminating a little over her notes, she said—

"Though rather deeply engaged already, I and a few Christian sisters, like-minded with myself, will aid thee to the best of our ability and judgment. We will engage at once a large empty room for schooling, whether morning or evening, first day or any other day, and for exposition and prayer-service."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, madam!"

"I will also obtain a grant of school-books, Testaments, and slates——"

"Oh, thank you!"

"And forms, and a long writing-table. Those I will *myself* supply, and also a washing apparatus, a few pounds of soap, and a few yards of coarse towelling."

"Delightful! Oh, thank——"

"Dost thee not think a lending library might be started?"

"If we had any books, and if any of the people can read."

"They will soon learn when there is a temptation. This is all I can undertake for the present."

"All! you have set me afloat."

"May God prosper thy undertaking! Don't *sleep* in that horrible place."

"No; it will be my interest as well as comfort to remain where I am. Pure air at night must repair the effect of foul air by day."

"Dost thou feel it affect thee much?"

"At present. On Saturday I returned to my lodgings so excessively depressed by it that I was quite ashamed afterwards that the kind persons I lodge with should have seen me so low. Yesterday, in the forest, I was as strong as a lion."

"Well, I will now speak of the matter for which I sent to thee. There are many gipsies hereabouts, and my husband is not very fond of my visiting them—he thinks them more in thy way than mine. The day before yesterday a gipsy-woman applied to me for relief for another woman who was ill in the forest. I gave her

temporal relief, and talked to her a little, but made very little impression. There was something very repelling to me in her 'dear lady,' 'beautiful lady,' and so forth, by which she meant to propitiate me, but which had quite the contrary effect. She did not seem to have the faintest idea of religion. Wilt thou seek out the encampment of these people, and try to find out what is their state, what aid they require, and whether there be any opening for good?"

Mr. Bolter readily accepted the commission, and Mrs. Truebury, saying she would show him the nearest way to the forest through her own grounds, took a parasol, and led the way through a window opening on the lawn.

The weather, the walk, and the companion were charming. As they went, Mr. Bolter related to her his singular meeting with Pharaoh, to which she listened with much interest, and they had a good deal of desultory talk on the outcast race to which he belonged.

At length they parted at a little wicket-gate,

which she locked after him; and she remained watching him till he disappeared among the trees. Then she turned homewards, and was presently greeted by a lovely little boy who came running from the house. Grey Nuns was its name; it probably stood on the site of some old conventual dwelling, though not a vestige of it remained.

Mr. Bolter walked on in a most cheerful, happy frame, and thought how delightful it was to see wealth, intellect, and goodness so combined as in the instance before him. He had had an education superior to that which his present position seemed to demand, and could keenly relish refinement and intelligence, though he voluntarily laboured among those who possessed neither.

A few scattered leaves of a book lying among the fern and brambles induced him to pick them up and examine the nature of their contents. They were dirty and tattered, but as soon as he caught a glimpse of the words "Forest of Arden" he smiled and read on as he walked, the birds

singing over his head, and the rabbits running right and left.

And he read how an elder brother turned a younger brother out of doors, and called his venerable old steward "old dog." And how the younger brother of a reigning duke plotted against his elder brother, and chased him from his dominions and reigned in his stead; and how many good men and true followed the banished duke into the Forest of Arden, where they lived as merrily and a good deal more honestly than Robin Hood and his foresters bold. And how young Orlando found his way to them, and also the good duke's daughter Rosalind, and the wicked duke's daughter Celia, who dearly loved her cousin; and how they dwelt in a little sheep-cote buried in olive trees on the skirts of the forest. How that . . .

Here ensued a gap of sundry pages, much to Mr. Bolter's regret. Next he came to a song, which, amid his immediate surroundings, seemed charming—

"Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to live with me,
And tune his merry throat
Unto the sweet bird's note,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

"Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather."

Oh, world, thy slippery turns! Orlando's cruel elder brother Oliver, thinking that to be sure he shall find countenance and acceptance with the banished duke's younger brother Frederick, finds himself, to his dismay, called to account for Orlando's disappearance, and threatened with confiscation and exile unless he brings him to light, alive or dead, within a twelvemonth. All this, and how Oliver found his way into the forest,

and there wandered about in most wretched guise till almost starved and brought very low in body and mind, Mr. Bolter had not the means of reading. He found him coming up to Rosalind and Celia in a forest-glade, and showing them a blood-stained handkerchief, telling them he had been charged to account to them for Orlando's being unable to keep an engagement he had made with them, by a relation of facts. Orlando, he said, was straying along in melancholy thought, when he perceived a wretched, ragged man sleeping under an oak, just on the point of being stung by a large snake that had wound itself round his neck. Just as he thought it was all over with the poor man, the snake suddenly glided away, and Orlando then saw it had been scared by a lioness crouched under the bushes awaiting to spring on the unhappy sleeper when he awoke—

———" for 'tis
The royal disposition of that beast
To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead."

The brave youth therefore approached the sleeper, and found him to be his elder brother, whom he had no reason to suppose in pursuit of him except to take his life! What should he do? He had nothing to do but to walk away and let things take their course! *Should* he? Could he? O no! The voice of his brother's blood would cry to him from the ground! He would sooner die, if need be, for his brother—

> "*Kindness, nobler ever than revenge,*
> And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
> Made him give battle to the lioness,
> Who quickly fell before him; in which hurtling"

(says Oliver, bursting into tears of penitence and affection)—

> "From miserable slumber I awoke."

Imagine the surprise of Rosalind and Celia, who knew his previous character and conduct, but not his person. "What!" say they in amaze, "are *you* his brother? Was it *you* he rescued?" He sobs out an affirmative; and, when a little more composed, tells them that a

most tender reconciliation then ensued, and that poor Orlando, being sadly torn in the arm by the lioness, was unable to come to them, and sent them his handkerchief as a token that the bearer was a credible witness.

"Matchless Shakspeare!" thought Mr. Bolter. "This play is too long for modern taste; and I have little doubt that if a playwright wanted to reduce it to suitable dimensions, this charming passage would be curtailed, or altogether left out; and yet, to me, it is one of the noblest things in the drama. What a practical sense Shakspeare had of the beauty, the magnanimity, the imperative duty, of forgiveness! He must have had some notable injuries to forgive in his own life; for this is the writing of a man of experience. A common hand would have made the two brothers draw upon each other in the forest, Oliver die after a few passes, or at any rate limp away with the additional burden of an odiously affable 'Thou art forgiven—get thee gone for ever;' but Shakspeare could not have slept in his bed if

he had made things end so! His spirit of forgiveness so overleaps even its boundaries that it extends to the wicked brother of the duke, and, in spite of the risking the charge of repeating himself, which no one could better have known was not good art, he must make even that hateful man in a way to be good and happy, *in this world and the next.* He represents him coming to the forest with the relentless purpose of hunting down and slaying his brother, when—

> '——meeting with an old religious man,
> After some talk with him he was *converted*
> *Both from his enterprise and from the world,*
> His crown resigning to his banished brother,
> And all their lands restoring them again,
> That were with him exiled.'

"To the mass of playgoers this sudden and real conversion would appear about one of the most improbable things in the whole play, which would just show that they knew nothing at all about it. Shakspeare knew better; and that man has had little experience of himself, and

made very superficial observation on the characters and history of others, who does not feel that, in this incident, he suggests nothing that might not naturally have occurred.

'*Shakspeare*, with all thy faults, I love thee still.'"

## CHAPTER VII.

### GIPSY TENTS.

"Underneath the greenwood tree
Here we dwell right merrily.
You may see where we have been,
By the burnt spot on the green,
By the oak's branch drooping low,
Withered in our fagots' glow;
By the grass and hedgerow cropped,
Where our donkeys have been grazing.
By some old torn rag we dropped,
When our crazy tents were raising.
You may see where we have been;
Where we *are*, that is not seen;
Where we are, it is no place
For a lazy foot to trace."

MR. BOLTER cast the fragment at the root of a tuft of violets beneath a gnarled oak, and went forward more briskly. As he looked

about him, he was reminded of some of the landscapes he had seen at the Dulwich Gallery: it was, indeed, a scene that Ruysdael or Hobbima would have loved to paint. The sky was dappled with fleecy clouds no bigger than a man's hand; the bright sunshine brought out each object into clear relief; the ground was undulating and broken; a heavily-laden wagon, with a dog tied underneath, was just wending out of sight; a windmill was briskly revolving its sails in the distance; nearer at hand a couple of men were loading a cart in a gravel-pit; while a little apart from them, and out of sight, a Dutch girl was washing her feet in a pool. Perhaps she caught a glimpse of Mr. Bolter when she arose, for he heard her clear voice borne on the air, crying, "Buy a broom? buy a broom?" and then she gaily struck up—

"From Deutschland I come, with my tempting wares laden,"

till the distance between them rendered the far-off notes inaudible.

Meanwhile he was directing his course along a narrow track, towards a wreath of thin blue smoke that rose from an umbrageous thicket. A pony and couple of donkeys were cropping the herbage, watched by a lazy-looking boy stretched on the grass, who followed Mr. Bolter with his eye (as did the pony) without moving his head. Just within the wood Mr. Bolter came on the first tent in the encampment. A bright fire was burning beneath a black caldron, which a woman of about fifty was watching, while a much older woman, of true gipsy countenance, and bent nearly double with age, crouched close to the flames, now and then croaking rather than speaking articulately. A middle-aged man was cutting skewers, attentively watched by a little boy. A very beautiful gipsy-woman, of about five-and-twenty, with a yellow handkerchief tied over her glossy raven hair, and a faded red cloak carelessly drawn about her, was nursing an infant. These two were what an artist would have called "the light of the picture."

Every one of the party saw the intruder as soon as he saw them, and immediately jabbered something among themselves. (I believe that is the word we polite English apply to a language we don't understand, though it may have been spoken by an intellectual people in the days of Moses and Aaron.) The youngest woman drew her cloak round her, and, approaching Mr. Bolter, asked him, in a fawning way, if he would have his fortune told.

"O dear, no," said he, very composedly, "my business is of quite another kind. . . . . Is there any one here of the name of Lovell?"

"She don't live here," said the woman; "she lives in another tent—a *great* way off!"

"Can you direct me the way?"

"I don't know it," replied she doggedly, and reseating herself on the ground.

"Don't go near her, she's an old witch," cried the decrepit old woman. "She's ever so wicked! And she's dying of a fever, and you'll catch it and die!"

"Perhaps I shall cure her instead."

"What! are you a doctor?" said they all, regarding him with manifest respect.

"Something like it—at any rate a doctor of souls, and in that capacity I might do her some good."

"What's that?" said the middle-aged woman distrustfully; while the man left off working, and looked at him fixedly.

"Do you know, my friend, that you have a soul?"

"No."

"Well, then, I hardly know how to begin. That tree grows, and lives, but cannot move. Your pony and donkey can move, but cannot think. You can think—you can think what you shall have for dinner, and how soon. You can be happy and sorry, you can be angry and make it up again. And why? Because you have a soul."

"I see," said the middle-aged woman.

"Oh, all that's as plain as this stick," said

the man contemptuously, and resuming his work.

"If you've come to talk about such moonshine as that," said the woman who was cooking, "you'd better be off, for we want none of it."

"Did not I tell you I came here not in search of you, but of Lovell?"

"I'll tell you what," cried the old beldame, almost inarticulate with vehemence, "if you've anything good for her—wine, or money, or such-like—you'd better give it to us, and not to her, for we're a deal more in want of it, and a pretty deal better people too!"

"O no, my friend, I have nothing for her but what is spoken by the tongue."

"Keep it for her, and welcome, then," said the old woman, with a ghastly smile; "and be off."

"Keep a civiller tongue, mother," muttered the man. "It does no good."

"It *does* good; for it sends fools packing."

Mr. Bolter was going to pass onward, when, changing his mind, he said, "Do you know any one named Pharaoh?"

"Why, I'm Pharaoh's daughter," cried the old woman.

Mr. Bolter thought her a very miserable representative of that excellent princess; and concluded it must either be a falsehood on the spur of the moment, or that the tribe must be a much larger one than he had supposed. At any rate, this old woman's advanced age made it impossible she could be the daughter of *his* Pharaoh.

"Pharaoh's daughter, and Pharaoh's grandmother," persisted the old woman. "What do *you* know of the Pharaohs?"

"Well, I think mine cannot anyhow belong to your branch," said Mr. Bolter, "for I don't see the least resemblance between you. The one I mean is a well-grown, handsome young man, extremely civil and obliging."

"Ah, that must be my grandson, sure enough,"

cried the old woman, quite changing her tone. "He's the very cream of my heart—O the precious, precious jewel!" And she rocked herself to and fro, muttering to herself in a kind of ecstasy.

"Sit down, sir, sit down," said the youngest woman, civilly offering him a block of hewn wood which did very well for a seat. "We are all very good friends with the friends of my brother." Mr. Bolter having accepted her kindness, "Now then," said she, with evident interest, "tell us what you know of him."

At this moment Pharaoh himself appeared, carrying a bundle of rushes. His appearance was singular; he wore a dirty yellow-brown carter's frock, with great pockets at the sides, and his long jet-black hair hung in heavy waves from under a conical felt hat, such as is worn by Italian brigands. His feet were bare and muddy; one hand and arm held the rushes; with the other hand he grasped a live snake that writhed and twisted in every direction.

"Ah, my teacher!" exclaimed he, radiant with gladness; and, unceremoniously disengaging himself of the snake by hitting its head against a stone, he dropped the rushes and hastily advanced with outstretched hand to Mr. Bolter. It was evident to the attentive lookers-on that their good understanding was no fable; and Mr. Bolter rose proportionably in their opinion.

"So you've found me out," cried Pharaoh. "How strange, and how good! I thought, when I did not find you beneath the oak, that I'd seen the last of you. Had I known this morning that you were here, I wouldn't have wasted my time in catching that nasty snake, that's worth nothing but its fat, nor wading after those rushes, for which I shall only get a penny a dozen from the bird-stuffers. Now, let's go to it at once—will you, sir?"

"With all my heart," said Mr. Bolter with alacrity; and pulling a spelling-book from his pocket as he spoke, they withdrew a little from the rest, and sat down on a felled tree, and the

lesson began. Mr. Bolter found that his pupil had already mastered so many letters by sight, that there was nothing to do but to connect them by name with the alphabet he had learnt the previous day; and when this was done, he gave him a short spelling lesson on the first verse in Genesis. He told him he thought he would soon make a good scholar.

"Ah," said Pharaoh mournfully, "not unless you continue to teach me. I shall only lose what I already know."

"Well, it will be impossible for me to come to you, but could not you come to me?"

"O yes, sir! Where?"

"Why, I am going to have a room lent me in Hopkinsville for an evening school and other purposes; and if you would come to me there, you might learn along with the rest."

"Certainly I would, if they would not be ashamed of me?"

"O no, my poor fellow, they will have no more reason to be ashamed of you than you of them.

I do not yet know where the room is to be, nor how soon it will open; but, as soon as I do, I will let you know—that is, if I know where to find you."

"You may easily do that of the turnpike-man," said Pharaoh. "I will ask him every day whether any one has inquired for me; and if you will leave the name of the place, and name your hour, I will come. Hark, they are calling us to dinner. Come and have some with us."

"With all my heart, and afterwards we will walk a little way together."

The gipsies welcomed him with cordiality. The stew smelt uncommonly like rich hare soup, and was very savoury, though flavoured with herbs that Mr. Bolter thought did not improve it. The woman who cooked it, whom her husband called Zobel, which was probably a corruption of Isobel, ladled a sufficient quantity into an earthen basin for her guest, and then pulled out of her pocket a tablespoon of undoubted silver, though, from neglect and ill-usage,

it looked no better than lead. It had a very suspicious-looking crest, a good deal more modern than that of the race of Pharaoh was likely to be, if it had one; but Mr. Bolter remembered the direction to eat such things as were set before him, asking no questions, and scrupled not to do so in the present instance, without troubling himself with the history either of the spoon or the hare.

"What have you been about?" said Zobel, curiously, to her son.

"Learning to read a printed book. See what the gentleman has given me!" said he, exhibiting it.

"That's a beautiful book!" said his mother, admiringly; "you had better let me keep it for you."

"O no! I shall keep it here," putting it into his bosom.

"Can you read any of it yet?" says the father, with some interest.

"Yes — listen." And, tracing each word

earnestly with his finger, he slowly and distinctly read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

"That's wonderful! Will you teach *me?*" said Pharaoh's sister, fixing her large black eyes on Mr. Bolter.

"If I teach Pharaoh he will be able to teach you all," said he.

"Yes, Mariam, that is as much as you can expect of the gentleman," interrupted Pharaoh; "he has a great many people to attend to besides us, I can tell you."

"How do you know?"

"Because I do."

"I don't know that I shall care to learn," said Mariam.

"O yes, you will," said Mr. Bolter, "when you find how much there is you would like to know in this book."

"What is there?" said she.

"Look up!" said he, pointing to the sky. "Look at that beautiful blue sky overhead, which

at night is sometimes brilliant with stars, sometimes lit up by pale moonlight, and sometimes black with clouds. Then look round on these green trees and that cheerful common. Who made these things? This little book tells you. 'In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.' And it goes on to tell you *how* He made them . . . things that we could learn nowhere else, for no men or women were then created to look on and see. It goes on to tell how men and women were created; and how the woman committed a great sin, and led her husband to sin also, and how, in consequence, people have gone on sinning ever since. It tells you how angry God justly was at their sin; but how, in His mercy, He promised to show them a way by which to escape from its consequences. He said He would send His only Son down from heaven to teach them to be good, and to make peace with Him, and that then He would forgive them, and after they died receive them up into heaven."

"That was very strange!" ejaculated the elder gipsy.

"Very strange, but very good," said Pharaoh. "Is it all true?"

"Every word of it."

"When will His Son come?"

"He *did* come, more than eighteen hundred years ago; but people would no more believe Him than some people will now believe me (not *you*, I hope): they felt something in their hearts resisting him all the while He spoke, that made them say within themselves, 'Whatever you may do I won't believe you.' And at last they became so weary of Him, so angry at Him for His very goodness, that they began to take counsel among themselves how they might put Him to death."

"*Did* they, though?" said Pharaoh quickly.

"Indeed, my friend, they did. They nailed Him to a wooden cross, and let Him hang there for hours, dying by inches. His heavenly Father, to mark His indignation at their wicked-

ness, darkened the sun, made the earth shake, and raised many dead persons from their graves. Afterwards He raised His dear Son from the dead, and took Him up in broad daylight into heaven in the sight of many people, who watched Him out of sight. And there has been His home ever since; yet He is continually among us, watching all we do and say, helping those who are in distress, and providing for all who believe in Him, one way or other; and all who believe in Him He will save."

"Ah, He will never save *me!*" burst from the lips of the father. "My sins are so many."

"My friend, He *will!* You have only to ask Him."

A tear rolled from the man's eye as he said, "Teach me how."

Mr. Bolter immediately offered a short, heartfelt prayer. Just as he had concluded it the old woman, who had dragged herself along the ground to his feet, suddenly dropped on her knees before him, holding up her shrivelled hands

clasped as if in prayer, and exclaiming in a cracked, canting voice, "O you blessed son of God! you're the resurrection! you're the——"*

"Oh, hush, hush!" cried Mr. Bolter, greatly shocked. "You must not use such language to me; you altogether mistake its meaning."

She would have persisted, however, had not her son roughly cried, "Give over, mother, you see the gentleman does not like it;" while her grandson, going behind her, quietly picked her up and carried her off into the tent, where she lay upon the ground making an unearthly sort of noise, and uttering fearful curses.

Mr. Bolter now felt that he must bring the interview to a close. After a few more words of exhortation, therefore, which were cordially received by all, the father voluntarily promising to learn whatever his son should teach him, Mr. Bolter departed, accompanied by Pharaoh, who undertook to guide him to the other gipsies in various parts of the wood.

* Fact.

There were twelve tents in all. To the family in each tent Mr. Bolter addressed some word in season, which, in a few cases, was encouragingly received; so that the whole afternoon was consumed in his labours among them. He made inquiry for the sick woman who had sent to Mrs. Truebury, and found her so grateful for the kind assistance supplied as to be ready to hear a word of exhortation; and, as he found she could read a little, he gave her a small book of Scripture lessons.

Pharaoh listened attentively to all that was said, and really seemed to drink in every word that fell from Mr. Bolter's lips. As they walked from one spot to another he readily answered any questions that were asked him about his mode of life, which seemed, for one of his race, tolerably harmless, though poor and desultory. In the spring he seemed chiefly to live by climbing tall trees for birds' nests, which he sold in the streets according to the number of eggs they contained, at the rate of a halfpenny an egg.

Sometimes he was lucky enough to secure the long narrow nest of a bottle-tit, containing as many as eighteen eggs. He went out bird-nesting three times a week from May to August; then, from August to Christmas, he pulled rushes for stuffing—a poor and uncertain trade. Then, at Christmas, he got "backing" for winter nosegays, the green yew, fern, and holly for windows and plum puddings, and wild-flower roots to hawk in the streets.

Pharaoh had so much to say on all this that he kept on walking with Mr. Bolter along the London road till they got quite into the suburbs. Then they took leave, with mutually expressed hopes of soon meeting again.

What pursuit is equal, in dignity, importance, and interest, to that of even one perishing soul?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DR. GRACE.

"A sweet attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks,
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel books.
I trow that countenance cannot lie
Whose thoughts are visible to the eye."

ABOUT a fortnight after this Mr. Bolter might have been seen, looking very tired and fagged, walking at dusk along a row of tolerably respectable suburban houses, not built with much regard to uniformity, some of them being semi-

detached, with strips of garden before them, others being flush with the pavement.

At the door of one of the former, which had a paved court before it, and seemingly a small burial-ground behind, Mr. Bolter knocked, just as the lamplighter was lighting the street lamps; and, on the door being opened, he inquired if he could see Dr. Grace.

"By all means," said some one within a sitting-room on the left, when the maid delivered the message; and Mr. Bolter was ushered into the doctor's study. It was a pleasant transition, on a cold, wet night, to be admitted from the miry streets, with the gas reflected in the puddles, into a warm, well-carpeted room, with walls covered with books, red curtains drawn across the windows, and a bright fire in the grate.

"Good evening, Mr. Bolter," said Dr. Grace, who was writing very fast—"I am very glad to see you, my good sir." Then, laying aside his pen for a moment, he shook him cordially by the hand, and said, "Will you excuse me? I want

to send this note by the next post; and when it is off my mind I shall enter all the more completely into what you have to say."

"Pray do so, sir," said Mr. Bolter, sitting down; and Dr. Grace immediately resumed his pen. The lamp-light fell full on his head, which was finely formed, though rather scant of hair. He had a pleasant grey eye, frank though somewhat careworn countenance, and was well and compactly formed, apparently working too hard, thinking too much, and living too plainly ever to grow fat.

Having quickly concluded his note and thrown it on a heap of others, he briskly seated himself by the fire and rang the bell, saying,

"That affair is over. And, do you know, Mr. Bolter, I think nothing muddles a man's head more than having to write twenty letters on twenty different subjects within considerably less than a reasonable time."

Mr. Bolter smiled and said he could readily suppose it, but that he contributed very little himself towards swelling the post-office revenues.

"Your work is of a different kind," said Dr. Grace; "you look tired enough, too. Hannah," (to the servant,) "request Miss Lucy to send in tea and toast for two. You may take out all those letters. Lucy," pursued he, as the maid left the room, "has some of the Sunday-school teachers to drink tea with her this evening; and, knowing me to be busy, promised to send my tea in to me, so you and I will take tea together."

"I am quite sorry I should have called at so inconvenient a time," said Mr. Bolter.

"Not at all," said the doctor; "if you had not come, somebody else would. We shall be sure to hear the knocker presently, and then Hannah will say 'the doctor is engaged.'"

This was spoken so cheerfully that Mr. Bolter instantly felt at ease; and Hannah at the same time entered with two large breakfast-cups of hot and strong tea, and a bountiful allowance of buttered toast and plum cake, none of which restoratives were thrown away on these tired men.

"Well," said Dr. Grace, "and how have you been getting on?"

"Like some one not quite so strong as Hercules, setting to work in the Augean stable," said Mr. Bolter. "There is so much to be done that I feel discouraged. However, I have made a beginning."

"What did you do at Barking fair?"

"Sir, you kindly gave me two thousand tracts to distribute. I took a friend with me; and had you given me double the number we could have distributed them all."

"Come, that is famous! May the great Husbandman bless some, at least, of the good seed His servants thus have scattered!"

"He has blessed some of it already."

"Nay! So soon?"

"I will enter into it a little. We began by visiting the courts and by-streets immediately about the fair-ground, leaving a tract at each house, and endeavouring to get a few words with the inhabitants, hoping by this means to prevent

some, at least, from attending the fair. Several interesting incidents occurred. At one house a sailor came to the door. He told me he had been kept to the house by a paralytic affection for some years, but now earned a poor living by making fishing-nets. Though nominally a Roman Catholic, I was much surprised at the knowledge he showed of his own heart, and the way in which he spoke of Jesus Christ as the only way of acceptance."

"Excellent."

"After going the round of these courts and alleys, we proceeded into the fair, which was held in the public street. The shows were of a very low description, with the usual accompaniments of swings, toy and cake stalls, gambling and drinking booths. Immediately on entering the fair I saw two men fighting. One of them espied me, and immediately desisted, and came up to me for a tract. I said, 'Remember, the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' He burst into tears, and replied, 'I know it; my father was a good man, and taught

me better. I know I was doing wrong. This man stuck to me all the rest of the day, and we had much interesting conversation together."*

"Dear me!" cried Dr. Grace, hastily drawing his hand across his eyes. "Why, that one case would have been sufficient reward for your day's work!"

"Over and over again. A great many other incidents, sir, you will find in my report, which I wish was more spiritedly written."

"You talk with sufficient spirit, at any rate. Do go on: I delight to hear you."

"At night, sir, my friend John and I found we had distributed half your tracts. On the second day of the fair John could not be spared by his employer; but I returned to the charge. I began with a few houses we had overlooked. At the first of these the door was opened by a neat-looking poor woman, who, on my saying, 'Will you accept this tract?' immediately replied, 'O yes, with gladness! Yesterday afternoon my husband came in and asked me for

* All these details are authentic.

twopence, saying that he was going to take just a walk round the fair. My heart misgave me that he would not come back so soon as he wished me to think. However, I did him wrong, for he soon returned, sat down, and asked me for his pipe. He then took a tract out of his pocket, and began to read it, saying a person had given it him in the fair. Presently he burst out laughing, and said, 'Sally, this is too good to keep to one's self. It is called *The Fool's Pence*—do listen to it!' So I sat down by him, only too thankful that anything should keep him from the public-house; and he read it aloud, quite with glee, and a great deal of fun there was in it, and yet a great deal of good in it too. We laughed, and then had a long talk over a comfortable dish of tea; but before we had that he said, 'They shan't have the fool's twopence at the beer-house to-night, so there it is back for you.' 'Oh, very well,' said I, and, slipping out to the baker's, I laid it out in a sally lunn, and toasted it for our tea.'—'Ah,' said I, '*I* gave him *The Fool's Pence*.'"

"Capital!" cried Dr. Grace. "Come, Mr. Bolter, let you and me have another cup of tea. *I* will if you will, and glad of the excuse, for I was called away from my dinner."

"And I had no dinner at all," said Mr. Bolter, laughing.

"Do have a slice of cold beef now! You won't? Hannah, beg Miss Lucy to let us have some more tea and toast."

"Miss Lucy will think I am a very voracious guest, sir!"

"O no, she'll only think I'm making you a blind. She pretends sometimes that so much tea is bad for my nerves; but I know the difference. It cheers but not inebriates us busy men, who seldom take a glass of wine. Well, but now about my poor, miserable Hopkinsville."

"One word more first. I told you of Pharaoh the gipsy. On going round the fair, there was he, with a lot of sticks and cocoa-nuts for people to throw at. I knew very well the people who got the cocoa-nuts often went off with the owner

to the drinking booths. I just went up to him from behind, laid my hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Hallo!' Looking round in surprise, he no sooner saw who I was than he turned as red as scarlet. Sir, that man literally '*arose, left all, and followed me!*' He kept with me all the rest of the day."

"Beautiful! beautiful!" ejaculated Dr. Grace.

Mr. Bolter's features worked, and suddenly he burst into tears.

"I feel these things too much," said he.

"My dear friend," said his kind superintendent, rising and grasping his hand warmly in both his own, and pressing it for several seconds, "it is precisely because you *do* feel them so keenly that you are the very man for the work. *In a highly rarefied atmosphere, the faintest vibration is heard!* * It is because you are of so impulsive and sensitive a nature that every word you speak thrills the heart. Was it not so with David, with Jeremiah, with St. Paul? Nay, with our

* Griffith.

blessed Saviour himself? When did Solomon ever draw a tear from human eye? His profound wisdom enabled him, as with a microscope, to detect the tendency of the minutest word, look, or temper, and hold it up to the light, showing that in the most inconsiderable thing we either adorn or deface our Lord's image; but it is David, by whom God's own spirit spake, who touches and melts our hearts; it is Jeremiah who says, 'O that mine eyes were rivers of water!' It is God Himself, speaking through Isaiah, who says, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.' It is God's own Son who says (*impulsively*, as it were), 'I tell you, if these should hold their peace, *the very stones should cry out!*'

"Or, take that the other way, Mr. Bolter. Suppose He was not then, under the impulse of strong feeling, using a powerful hyperbole—suppose the *plain fact* to have been that, ages before Christ's advent, when the wonderful scheme of

redemption was first laid down, our Almighty Father had made this the alternative—that, supposing, when His dearly beloved Son entered Jerusalem as its King, and the insensibility and hardness of His subjects should be such as that not a single voice should cry, 'Hosanna'—*the very stones,* to mark His divine indignation at their contempt for His Son, *should literally* cry out,—our Saviour only then told His hearers the plain matter of fact; and yet, what an astounding fact that was! So startling, so enormous a miracle as the very stones beneath their feet being made voluble with hosannas, was forborne, through the homage of a few artless, affectionate little children! See how easily our powerful God is appeased!"

"Sir, that is very extraordinary." And Mr. Bolter, who was so much more used to pouring out than pouring in, and felt the good doctor's words descending on his weary soul like dew upon parched ground, sat lost in thought for a few minutes. Meanwhile the fresh supply of tea was brought in, and Dr. Grace, sedately stirring the

contents of his cup, went on talking, to the no small refreshment and enjoyment of Mr. Bolter. He was one of the most delightful talkers in the world; a man of logical accuracy, with a highly poetical taste, practical knowledge of the world, keen sense of humour, and profound spirituality. He had taken high honours at Cambridge; and it is an immense advantage to city missionaries, who seldom have had the opportunity of acquiring much secular learning, when they are thrown into connection with a gifted and scholar-like superintendent, who possesses the very attainments they have not, and, by his genial and cultivated conversation, raises them up towards the platform from which he himself looks around on the world of experience and thought.

After talking for full half an hour, Dr. Grace paused, and then said, "Well, and how about Hopkinsville?"

"The evening school answers admirably. Pharaoh comes to it every time, and once or twice has been my only scholar, which I have

not regretted, because we have made so much progress. I have rewarded him with an old shirt and pair of stockings—you never saw a fellow so delighted in your life! By and by, perhaps, I may be able to spare him an old suit of clothes. The attendance of the scholars is increasing. They are squalid, dull, and ignorant almost beyond belief, and at first were riotous, but I am now getting them into order. Mrs. Truebury has kindly supplied us with everything we want, and her aunt has undertaken to pay a female teacher for superintending the girls' day-school. With regard to our school-room services on Sunday evening, your own curate, sir, has doubtless told you that they are crowded. I hope we shall get *you* there some evening. It is, you know, the only place of worship in Hopkinsville for three thousand souls."

"Sad! sad! We must get it licensed, and a clergyman appointed to the district."

"The Baptists and Independents will get the start of you unless you make haste. I must say

I am glad to see their red-brick walls rising so fast. There is room for all. It is very handsome of the Society of Friends to co-operate with us in the way they are doing, because, as you know, it involves the support of what they call 'a paid ministry.' This scruple, however, does not extend to schoolmasters, though it does to missionaries. It is delightful to pull all together, as we are doing now, without distinctions of parties. I only hope it may last. As John Foster said, when the springtide of universal love shall rise sufficiently high, it will merge all rocks of offence and minor lines of separation. I have great hope the reading-room will answer—a few poor squalid fellows, hollow-eyed and with sunken cheeks, are beginning to creep into it; but as they can hardly read a common sentence without stumbling, I have begun by reading aloud and telling them amusing stories, which, I find, answers very well. The first time a man looked wistfully in, and seeing only me turning over the leaves of a book, was going to steal away, when I looked up and

said cheerfully, 'Here seems to be something amusing—sit down, and I 'll read it to you if you like, while we have this nice quiet room all to ourselves.' He immediately drew near, and I read him Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. Two or three others dropped in; and, before the end, I think we mustered half-a-dozen. They liked it extremely. The Illustrated News and Pictorial Times lay on the table, and they looked at the pictures, and I talked to them on the different subjects they suggested. Next time we had Sinbad the Sailor. I always omit whatever they cannot understand or will do them more harm than good. Then we got on to Robinson Crusoe: we are at it still—it will last us half the winter. I mean to follow it with the Pilgrim's Progress. I think, sir, Mr. Truebury will aid me in opening a penny bank at the conclusion of these meetings. He is ready to allow the subscribers ten per cent."

"That ought to answer."

"But ah! they are so poor! And the popula-

tion is so fluctuating! One can hardly wish it otherwise, for the regular occupants of these wretched houses (the best of which only let for four and sixpence a week) are those on whom the malign influences of impure air and water tell so severely that their physical strength is permanently lowered by it. These people are not actively wicked, they are not strong enough! they creep about, get through half a day's poor work, enduring gnawing hunger and pinching cold, and the first attack of illness carries them off. On the other hand, the navvies, &c., who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, are tremendous wife-beaters, and spend the greater part of their wages at the public-house. These are men of great physical force, and wide-awake to what you say to them if it be sufficiently entertaining; but you have no sooner begun to hope you have made some impression on them than they are removed farther down the line."

A loud ring at the house-bell, followed by a summons into the hall, here called Dr. Grace from

listening to Mr. Bolter's communications. After a few minutes he returned, saying, "I am summoned to administer the Lord's supper to a dying person and baptize a new-born child. We can walk a little way together, but first let us unite in prayer."

Dr. Grace was very gifted in extempore prayer and preaching, an inestimable power in those who possess it. Mr. Bolter followed him in every word. Then the doctor concluded with the Lord's prayer, and a fervent, subdued benediction; and they arose and went forth into the night. The church clocks were striking nine—old women under umbrellas were still crouched at the edge of the pavement, selling oysters, herrings, and greens to those who would have them; and groups of little children, who ought to have been in bed, were amusing themselves as children often do, who in imagination

"Turn little dry, unhealthy courts
To hamlets fit for noonday sports;
And in the long wet streets behold
Grand avenues and pleasant streams unfold."*

* J. Stebbing.

## CHAPTER IX.

### TRANQUIL VALE.

"Far in the windings of a vale,
Fast by a sheltering wood,
The safe retreat of health and peace,"
A rural mansion stood.

ELLEN, meanwhile, was viewing with delight the gay tokens of advancing autumn in Kent, where the trees, though shedding stray leaves, were yet well clothed, and the weather was delightful. She and the children took so much exercise, morning and afternoon, that they returned in a glow, and did not dream of being cold. Late in the evening, however, when the

glow had passed off, and the house was shut up, Ellen was not sorry to have a bright little wood fire.

Sometimes in her walks, while the young ones were busy gathering nuts and blackberries, she strayed slowly along, thinking of the picturesque lives of the three men in Epping Forest; or of charming Guli Springett and Thomas Ellwood, who might never, she suspected, have joined the Quakers but for her fascination. Then she thought, supposing the cause to be a righteous one, how far may a woman's influence be innocently exerted?—and again, how was Ellwood's disrespectful conduct to his father to be regarded? Was it resolution, or was it obstinacy? Resolution in a good cause is obstinacy in a bad one.

She was now deep in the earlier part of Southey's Life of John Wesley; and was reading, with profound interest, the account of that comical ghost called by them Geoffrey, who disturbed the Wesley family so much by his unaccountable noises. Unaccounted for rather than unaccount-

able. She believed the whole affair to have been got up by some mischievous person or persons, probably in league with one of the servants, who played upon the credulity of the simple-hearted family.—She closed the book and went to bed. It had kept her up rather later than usual; and Mrs. Quain and Kitty were not sorry to hear her go upstairs. She went to bed and to sleep, without dreaming of ghosts; and, after some hours, apparently of rest, was awoke by what seemed the low grumble of voices in the next room. She listened, and then heard something dragged heavily along the floor.

Now, the next room was Mr. Meeke's; and under Mr. Meeke's bed was his plate-chest, which, it would seem, was being slowly dragged out. Ellen hastily arose, slipped on her dress, seized an umbrella, and cautiously opened the door between the two rooms.

She had covered her night-light, so that she stood unnoticed in the dark. On a table near Mr. Meeke's bedroom window, which was wide

open, stood a dark lantern; by the rays of which a man inside the window was raising the plate-chest to the window-ledge, where another man, standing outside on a ladder, was waiting to receive it. The lantern-light fell full on the man outside, so that Ellen, looking fixedly at him, was certain she should know him anywhere again. The other had his back to her, and his face was in shade.

"Now then, Pharaoh, king of Egypt," muttered he, "heave it up, and be off, and I'll step back for the lantern."

"Hold hard—I haven't got it," said the other, and, at the same instant, his eye fell on Ellen. She instantly saw she was discovered, and, without giving him time to profit by it, she darted forward, and gave the man who was just preparing to pass his leg over the window-sill such a well-directed *poke* in the back with her umbrella that he instantly pitched out head over heels, giving her a frightful look of rage and terror, which she thought would stick by her for life. An awful

crash on the gravel beneath was next heard, and, terrified as she was at the results of her own work, she thought there was no use in doing things by halves, and therefore, taking hold of the ladder, sent it after them. Then she looked out, and dimly made out a dark mass below; but a stone flung at her by a vengeful hand so nearly hit her in the eye that she hastily retreated, and, running out to the landing-place, seized the strong crimson cord of the dinner-bell, and began ringing a continuous peal. This bell, which swung beneath a little pent-house on the roof, was excellent for alarming a neighbourhood at midnight, though hitherto best known by the somewhat contemptuous title of the "Squire's mutton-chop bell." However, it was clear that the squire could not be ringing for mutton chops at that time of night, even had he been at home; therefore many a clownish head was unwillingly raised from its pillow to consider what that there bell might mean; and a few clownish bodies proceeded furthermore to dress and turn out into

the darkness to ascertain the nature of the alarm.

Meanwhile, the children had sprung in terror from their beds, and were clustering round Ellen, crying and sobbing, while Mrs. Quain and Kitty, one as white as ashes, the other as red as a peony, were flying to the rescue.

Mrs. Quain, on learning the nature of the alarm, cried, "O the wretches!" and flew to the open window. Down below lay the ladder and the chest; but the rogues were off. Scared, no doubt, by the bell, they had limped away together.

A great confusion of tongues ensued: Ellen was excited, the children were excited, Mrs. Quain and Kitty were excited. Ellen rapidly told her story, and then went on ringing, while Mrs. Quain and Kitty peered into one room after another, declaring they were afraid to go downstairs. All this while, it should be mentioned, Neptune was barking tremendously, and had done so all along; but he so continually barked at a

rat, or what people called a rat because they did not know what else he *could* be barking at, that, like Cassandra, his warnings were in vain. All at once a great knocking was heard at the front door. Mrs. Quain immediately began to tremble like a leaf; Kitty flew at the bell, and was going to ring it frantically, when Ellen stopped her and said, "It may be somebody come to help us—we must hear what they have to say."

To the window proceeded the whole *posse comitatis;* and Ellen boldly cried out—

"Who's there?"

"Who's there?—Why, farmer Brett and his son Dick," cried a rough voice. "We wants to know what in the world you mean by ringing us up out of our warm beds. Why, I should think they must ha' heard ye at Tunbridge Wells."

"The house has been broken into," responded Ellen; "and Mr. Meeke's plate-chest has been carried off by the robbers."

"Oh, that's a different thing," said the farmer, very seriously. "Hallo! I've a' near broke my

shins over a big box down here under the window."

"Yes, that's it—I frightened them away before they could carry it off. Please bring it in: we'll come down and open the door."

"Hum! you're a girl with your wits about you," muttered the farmer. "Give us a hand, Dick."

"Here's a ladder, father," says Dick, tripping over it, and taking a flying leap to escape falling.

As soon as Mrs. Quain, closely followed by all the others, had opened the house door, the two men brought in the heavy chest, and set it down with no small triumph. Next they brought in the ladder, which they examined curiously, thinking it might be a clue to the thieves.

"Hey, why it's ourn!" exclaimed Dick, with surprise and disgust. "Here's the third rung I broke yesterday and spliced with a piece of cord.—You mind it, father?"

"Sure*ly*," replied farmer Brett. "Well, to be sure, one *does* come from home to learn news!

We shall carry back more than we brought out. I should like to give the lad as meddled with this a good leathering. I suppose, miss, you didn't see enough of either of 'em to know 'em again?"

"O yes, I did," said Ellen quickly. "The man that fell out of the window had great, glaring eyes, and had lost a front tooth—the other, who was standing on the ladder, had a long, narrow, yellow, gipsy-looking face; very bright, black eyes, and coal-black hair. The other called him King Pharaoh."

"Well, it seems to me a detective may spell something out of that," said farmer Brett. "Here come some more to see what the noise was about."

Half-a-dozen labouring men came up to the house, and having been told what had happened, undertook to look the ground about the house well over in search of the thieves. Farmer Brett shook his head when they were gone, and said the men had had plenty of time to clear off, unless,

indeed, they should be too much hurt. Ellen had a queer feeling now and then, when she thought she might have disabled a couple of strong men: however, it was in self-defence and defence of the property; they were committing a grievous crime, and must abide by the consequences; she had not cooled upon it yet. Farmer Brett consented that Dick should sit up in the kitchen to guard the house; and the children and servants, being somewhat reassured by this arrangement, returned to bed and were soon asleep. Ellen lay down, but could not sleep. As soon as it was light, she rose and dressed, and wrote a telegraphic message to Mr. Meeke at his counting-house, which she gave Dick to take to the railway station. It ran thus: "House attacked—nothing lost—all well." As she expected, this brought down Mr. Meeke by the next train. He had not forwarded the unpleasant news to his wife, who could not leave the invalid children, but brought down a detective officer instead, who went over the ground, traced footsteps to a certain distance, heard Ellen's

statement, and seemed to think it a very promising case. They all three proceeded to Mr. Curlew, the nearest magistrate, who heard the matter attentively, and desired the officer to take what steps he thought expedient, and report progress to him the next day at the town-hall. Mr. Meeke, being a busy man, then returned to town, leaving Ellen to walk home by herself. She felt it a very uncomfortable business, and heartily wished they were all safe home again. The pleasure of country life was gone.

The children, too, were unsettled; and though their father had allayed their fears for the time, yet, when darkness and bedtime returned, so did their alarms, which Ellen could only quiet by promising to sit upstairs. As the evening was chilly, she let Mrs. Quain light a fire in her bedroom; and she sat beside it and wrote a long account of what had happened to John.

The next morning, just as she was preparing to take the children a walk, a man came to summon her to the town-hall, saying a prisoner had been

taken, and they wanted her to identify him. So she was obliged to leave her charges to the care of Mrs. Quain, and repair to the town-hall unwillingly enough.

On the previous evening, in a large unfinished room in Hopkinsville, Mr. Bolter might have been seen, amid bare walls, boarded floor, and raftered ceiling, surrounded by a very ragged regiment of scholars, who seemed to make up in earnestness for deficiencies in cleanliness and politeness. A couple of tallow candles, in tin sconces fixed to the wall, afforded them all the light they had; but, though their aids to the pursuit of knowledge were of the humblest and scantiest description, they seemed quite to satisfy the requirements of the learners.

Suddenly Mr. Bolter observed a person quietly enter the room and approach the class, himself unseen by any of those who formed it. There was something professional in his air which made Mr. Bolter at once detect him for what he was; but, as his object seemed simply to observe what

was going forward, and see that all was right, he did not think it necessary to interrupt his proceedings.

"Now, then, Pharaoh," said he.

"Ay, just so; Pharaoh's the very man I want," said the stranger in a quiet voice, which, however, made everybody start; Pharaoh, perhaps, the least of any, though his face expressed simple surprise.

"What do you want of me?" said he calmly. "You're a police."

"That's just it," said the man. "Come out of this, will you? You and I must take a little walk together."

"What for?" cried Mr. Bolter.

"Because this young gentleman, sir, broke into a house last night, and carried off the plate-box."

"I didn't!" exclaimed Pharaoh, kindling like a coal.

"How could he?" cried Mr. Bolter. "He was here, taking a reading lesson of me."

"Not at two o'clock in the morning, sir, I suppose."

"No, certainly; but yet—I feel confident there's some mistake."

"O no, sir, none at all. The young lady had a full view of him, and described him exactly, and she heard his companion call him Pharaoh."

"Why, there are dozens of Pharaohs!" exclaimed the gipsy indignantly. "My grandmother has a hundred grandchildren!"

"Ay, just so, or a hundred and twenty, I think she said," answered the policeman composedly. "She told me all about it just now in Epping Forest, and told me you were here: else how should I have found you?"

Pharaoh and Mr. Bolter looked equally at their wits' end.

"Where did the robbery take place?" said Mr. Bolter.

"Down at Panghurst, in Kent."

"Why, he never could have got there after being with me till ten o'clock!"

"What! not by a third class? Oh, oh!"

"Boys! do you believe I did it?" suddenly cried Pharaoh to the rest.

"Not you! No, no! Come, let's have a shy at the policeman!" A proposal which would certainly have been seconded, but for a diversion occasioned by a great wailing and clamouring at the door. The next instant it admitted Pharaoh's father, mother, sister, sister's husband, and younger brother, all in a high state of excitement.

"Ay, here's the whole tribe of 'em," said the policeman coolly; "they have not been long in following me up. It don't signify, sir. This young man must go: I am authorised to take him in charge."

"Where shall you take him?" said Mr. Bolter.

"To the lock-up house to-night, and down to Kent by an early train to-morrow."

Hereupon ensued a volley of execrations, vituperations, yells, screeches, and other objurgatory attacks, that nothing but the immovable com-

posure of an English policeman would have faced. He, unsupported and alone, found himself quite equal to the occasion; and the women, snatching at the chance of assistance from another quarter, then beset Mr. Bolter, asking him, really in pathetic terms, was he going to let that precious boy, that good, simple, trusty fellow, that would not hurt a fly, that loved the very dust beneath his feet, and minded him just as much behind his back as before his face, was *he* going to give up this poor young fellow to that limb of the law? Then Pharaoh burst forth, "O my teacher! my teacher! Don't believe anything agin me! I never done wrong! You knows what I mean—I never done anything in this line all my born days, and mother knows it! Don't give me up! Don't lose sight of me!"

They hung about him, and clung to his knees.

"Rely on it, I will not, my poor fellow," said Mr. Bolter. "I won't give you up, nor lose sight of you."

"O you blessed, blessed man! O the dear

angel of a gentleman! I knowed it was in him!" &c. &c. &c., with looks that might have pierced the imperturbable policeman to the back-bone.

"Yes, my friends, I promise you I will look after this case. Be content, therefore, with my engaging to do the best I can for you. Go quietly to your home; and you, Pharaoh, go quietly along with the policeman."

"I will, sir,"—with a deep sigh.

"And I will go down with you to-morrow in the very same train."

Zobel burst into tears. "Oh, bless you, bless you!" cried the others. Pharaoh's heart was full, he could not speak.

"Now, then," said the policeman quietly.

"Yes, now then," said Mr. Bolter, taking up his hat, and extinguishing the candles. "We'll all go with you to the station. Come, friends; come, boys. We will go along quite quietly."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE TOWN-HALL.

MAGISTRATE. Fond wretch! and what canst thou relate
But deeds of sorrow, shame, and sin?
Thy crime is proved, thou know'st thy fate;
But come, thy tale!—begin—begin!"

CRABBE: *The Justice Hall.*

THOUGH Mr. Bolter, the policeman, and the prisoner went down by the first train, the gipsies were there before them, hanging about the door of the town-hall. Mr. Bolter stopped for a moment, and in a low voice advised them, whatever might happen, to behave quite quietly, and on no account to disturb the proceedings. "You

know," said he, "that I am speaking as his friend."

"Yes, yes, you *are* his friend—a blessed friend —we will do as you say," said they. And they did.

The magistrate, Mr. Curlew, was already talking over the affair with Mr. Meeke, who had come to represent his brother. On seeing A 1 enter with a prisoner, "Come, this looks like progress," said he in a low voice, and taking the chair. "Gipsy written in the fellow's face. Is the young lady here to identify him? She must be sent for immediately."

A messenger was dispatched.

"Who are you, sir?" inquired Mr. Curlew, looking towards Mr. Bolter.

"A city missionary, sir; my name is William Bolter" (and he presented his card). "The prisoner is one of a reading class I was engaged in teaching yesterday evening when the policeman came to apprehend him."

"Hem, I cannot compliment you much, Mr.

Bolter, on the respectability of your reading class, if this is an average specimen."

"He is *not* an average specimen, sir; I heartily wish he were! for he is intelligent, docile, and, as far as I have had the power of testing him, truthful and reliable. It was this which made me take so strong an interest in the case that I came down here with him, of my own accord, to offer my testimony."

"Williams, are you taking down what Mr. Bolter says?"

"Yes, sir."

"I was giving the prisoner a lesson the previous night, sir, so late, that I am persuaded he was not at the robbery."

"Indeed! Mr. Bolter, your testimony begins to be important. You had better take the oath before proceeding any further."

"With all my heart, sir."

"When did you become acquainted with this man?"

"One Sunday morning, not long ago, as I was

on my way to a field-meeting in Epping Forest, he accosted me and asked me to read him a few words on a scrap of printed paper. I did so, and then asked him his object in making the request. I found he was very anxious to teach himself to read, in order that he might read one particular book. That book, though he could not remember the name of it, I made out to be the Bible. Interested in his purpose, I promised to teach him, but not then: I appointed to meet him at a certain place in the evening. Meanwhile we walked along together, and had a good deal of talk. I found that, though ignorant, he was a simple, well-meaning lad. I was prevented from keeping my evening appointment, which disappointed me, as I was sure it would disappoint *him*. The next day a lady, belonging to the Society of Friends, sent me into the forest to see a gipsy woman who was ill of a fever. In seeking for her, I stumbled on another encampment of gipsies. While I was talking to them, this young man unexpectedly came up, and I can

never forget the expression of joy which lighted up his face on seeing me. He instantly claimed the reading-lesson, which I gave. Some of the others then wanted to learn too, but I told them that I could not spare time. If Pharaoh (this young man) would come to my reading class in Hopkinsville, I would teach him, and then he could teach his own family. They agreed that this would be a good plan, and promised to learn of him."

"This is a curious story of yours, Mr. Bolter. Did the lad come?"

"Sir, he has never failed; and his progress has been remarkable. He has been an example to the whole class. The night before last, I dismissed my scholars, as usual, at nine o'clock; but something had occurred which I was desirous of explaining more fully to Pharaoh than I had been able to do during the course of his lesson, and we remained talking over our book, and he attentively listening to me while I read him various parts of it, for a good hour. It was ten

o'clock when we parted. When we went out of the house I turned to the right, and he to the left. That was the night of the robbery."

"This is singular," said Mr. Curlew, looking at Mr. Meeke. Then addressing Pharaoh—

"My lad," said he, "do you understand the nature of an oath?"

Pharaoh looked mystified. Mr. Bolter was in pain for him.

"Do you," persisted the magistrate, "know there is a God?"

Pharaoh's answer was a good deal fuller than any of his hearers expected—

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord."

"Hum!" said Mr. Curlew, evidently struck. "That is a good deal to say. Who taught it you?"

"He," said Pharaoh, laconically, glancing at Mr. Bolter.

"It may be mere parrot-knowledge, though," observed Mr. Curlew.

"Ah, sir, how often is it so with all of us!" exclaimed Mr. Bolter.

"And you get your living by——"

"Bird-nesting."

"Hallo! that doesn't sound over respectable!"

"O no, sir, he makes no pretensions to belong to the respectable classes," interposed Mr. Bolter. "But I believe him to be honest and true."

At this instant Ellen came in, very much flushed with her quick walk; and when she saw Mr. Bolter, she was so surprised that she flushed still more, and looked quite embarrassed. Mr. Meeke kindly led her to a chair. Mr. Curlew spoke to her good-humouredly, and, as there could be nothing but reassurance in the presence of Mr. Bolter, however unlooked for, she soon recovered herself a little, though her face was in a glow.

The oath was administered to her, which she took reverently, but without hesitation; and Mr. Curlew then inquired of her whether the prisoner were one of the persons who had broken into Mr. Meeke's house.

Pharaoh's large black eyes fixed full on hers. To the surprise and grief of Mr. Bolter, she unhesitatingly said—

"Yes, he is the man who stood outside on the ladder."

"That I didn't!" exclaimed Pharaoh. "Do look at me again, miss!"

"Why, I remember you quite well," said Ellen, indignantly. "Don't you remember catching my eye just as you took the box?"

"Certainly, I don't. How *should* I, when I never see you till this day?" cried he, with equal heat. "Oh, *don't* go to swear away a poor fellow's life!"

She looked shocked, but her opinion remained unshaken.

"Miss Miller, do you not think you may be deceived?" said Mr. Bolter, anxiously.

"Indeed I do not, Mr. Bolter," replied she, much distressed. "I am very sorry to have anything to do with the matter, but you know I must speak the truth." And she burst into tears.

"Of course you must," replied he, sorrowfully, "only you might be mistaken. And I think," he added, "that you *are* mistaken."

She wiped her streaming eyes, and looked hard at Pharaoh, but could not persuade herself she did not know him.

"Well," said Mr. Curlew, with something like a sigh, "I believe we must commit this young fellow. Indeed, the case seems very clearly made out. He left you, Mr. Bolter, at ten o'clock. There was nothing to hinder his getting down here by one or two in the morning."

"Except the inclination," said Mr. Bolter.

"Just so. Well, it can't be helped. I really was in hopes Miss Miller's testimony might have gone the other way. But, as it is, I'm afraid the charge is but too well founded. It must stand over to the quarter-sessions. They will soon be here."

"Don't cry so, miss," said Pharaoh, kindly; which made Ellen cry all the more.

"You needn't handcuff me," said he, rather

quickly, to the policeman; "I'm not going to resist."

Mr. Bolter laid his hand on his shoulder. He looked affectionately up in his face, and a tear shone in his eye, but did not fall. Neither of them said a word.

Directly Pharaoh got outside the town-hall, his family, seeing him in charge, crowded round him, and were beginning to utter loud cries of sorrow and indignation; but he suddenly addressed them rapidly in some language only known to themselves, and with great eagerness evidently told them to do something which they as eagerly promised; and then, while he was carried off to prison, they, with smothered maledictions, quitted the town, and went off, themselves only knew whither—certainly not back to Epping. Every gipsy in the forest had cleared out of it hours ago, and scattered east, west, north, and south.

Mr. Bolter, in some agitation, requested Mr. Curlew's permission to let him see Pharaoh in his captivity. He said he thought he could obtain

from him, in private conference, more light on the subject of the robbery than would probably be extracted from him in any other way; if, indeed, he knew anything at all about it. Mr. Curlew willingly acceded, and shook hands with him cordially, assuring him that he had been much struck by the incidental information he had gleaned respecting the nature of Mr. Bolter's teaching, and the class among whom he laboured. "I am afraid," pursued he, "that your good nature has been imposed upon by this poor lad, and that he is not so honest as you think him. However, that is at present only matter of opinion. You will be prepared to come forward as a witness, if called upon?"

"Certainly, sir."

"The nature of your intended conference with him does not, I conclude, bear any analogy to that of a Romish priest with his penitent?"

"O no, sir; I shall only speak to him as friend to friend. I am not going to worm anything out of him that may criminate himself. I

am only in hopes he may clear up his innocence a little. Supposing him to be innocent, you know, we might prove an *alibi*. The worst of it is, that his own family, who were probably the only persons aware of his being elsewhere than on the spot of the robbery, are not likely, I fear, to be admitted as witnesses, not feeling the obligation of an oath. I am afraid they could *not* witness the good confession Pharaoh did just now."

Mr. Bolter then spoke a few cheering words to Ellen, who evidently was very much in need of them, and proceeded to Pharaoh's place of durance. On being admitted into his cell, Pharaoh, who was sitting in a corner in an attitude of the utmost despondency, started up with joy, and seizing his hand in both his own, wrung it with vehemence.

"Oh, this is so good of you!" said he. "To think of the poor gipsy!"

"How could I help thinking of you?" said Mr. Bolter. "Why, just now I can think of nothing else! Let us sit down and talk it all over; only don't say anything that you may be sorry for me

to tell again, in case of my being obliged to do so."

"Why, *you* don't believe I did it?" cried Pharaoh, looking him full in the face.

"My good lad, I do not. How can we prove to people, however, that it was somebody else? Can you guess who it may have been that Miss Miller took for you?"

"Certainly I can," said Pharaoh.

"Who?" cried Mr. Bolter, with eagerness.

"Why, now," said Pharaoh, reproachfully, "didn't you tell me, that very night as it happened, that them that followed Christ must love their brothers as themselves? How should I do that, if I got my brother into gaol that I might get out?"

Mr. Bolter was silenced.

"I don't mean," resumed Pharaoh, presently, "that he *is* my brother—he's not the son of my father and mother, but he's very near of kin. And you told me that was what the Bible meant."

"It is."

"Then what can I do?"

"Can you prove you were somewhere else; and, therefore, could not have been at the robbery?"

"Surely; my father, mother, and grandmother know that."

"Ah, Pharaoh! but not one of them, I fear, knows the value of an oath; and therefore their testimony would be held worthless. Not one of them, I'm afraid, can say as you did, that they believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord."

"No, they cannot," said Pharaoh, sighing.—"But, now I mind it, I saw Curly Bill, the rat-catcher, that night. He came up to us quite late, and stayed talking to us a good bit. *He* could say I was in the forest at midnight."

"Is *he* a Christian?"

"Well, I don't know—he ought to be. He an't one of us."

"Where is he to be found?"

"That's the puzzle. Father might find him.

But, then, father's off now, so you couldn't find *him*. All of them are off—every gipsy in the forest."

"Perhaps A 1 might find him?"

"Likely he might; for I think *he'd* find anybody," said Pharaoh. "Only it would be too bad—for, you see, it might get Bill into trouble."

"Well, you must choose between yourself and your friend."

"Oh, he's no friend of mine; only, you see, we're civil like. Anyway he isn't an enemy. However, I don't know of any trouble it would get him into. I only said it *might*. My mind doesn't turn agin that, like the other—he isn't my kin; and he's done no harm, as I knows on."

"Well, then, I think we might look up Curly Bill."

"Yes, I think you might."

"Where shall we seek him?"

"Well, there's a little hut off the forest, about three stones'-throw from the pike. Therein lives an old man with one eye. That old man goes by

the name of Will Effet. It don't magnify whether that's his real name or not, he's called by it, and the reason is, he deals in effets, newts, slow-worms, adders, snails, and such-like."

"*Deals* in them! Why, who can want such nasty things?"

"Oh, nothing's nasty that God made. There's a person in Covent Garden buys live snakes at five shillings the pound. They're no value to him dead. Some buys 'em for stuffing, and for curosities—hedgehogs too: they sell for a shilling. I've been out, times oft, with Will Effet, hunting for 'em in Essex, and he's given me something for my trouble. Or else I've got them on my own account, to sell in the streets. I took a hedgehog once with the young ones, and sold the lot for half-a-crown.* People buy 'em to kill black beetles; and when they doesn't eat black beetles, they feed them on bread and milk. Effets is only bought for curosity. Will gets

* Mayhew's "London Labour and London Poor."

twopence a-piece; and snails he sells to Frenchmen; they boils 'em twice in water, and then in vinegar—they say they're as good as whelks."

"I shouldn't like to try them!" said Mr. Bolter.

"No, sir, they're not for such as you. But them foreigners delight in snails, and frogs too—they'll buy them by the pailful. Old Will makes a good bit of money, and is very shy of telling where he keeps it; but for all that, it'll be found out some day, or some night, if the old man don't mind. Well, sir, I thinks if you or A 1 (better you—he'll be scared at a police), if you goes in a friendly way to Will Effet, and tells him young Pharaoh Smith's got into trouble, and wants Curly Bill to get him out of it—I think he'll help you to where he is."

"Very well; your instructions shall be attended to. Meanwhile, Pharaoh, what a capital place this will be for your getting on with your reading! Nay, I don't see why you should not even learn to write. See! I have got a sheet of small paper

and a pencil in my pocket—I will set you a copy, and you can go over it again and again, till the paper is quite covered. Here you have a nice, dry, quiet room, while the rain is pouring down outside. You are as snug and comfortable as can be, and sure of plenty to eat. Here is your little book—I brought it with me—you can study your lessons, and get them quite perfect against my next visit. Meanwhile, I will read you a story in the Bible, about a poor innocent young man (in *Egypt*), who was cast into prison, and kept there a good deal longer than you, I hope, are likely to be; and how the Lord befriended him. Then we will pray a little prayer, and then I will leave you."

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage."

## CHAPTER XI.

MARGARET.

My crime? this wasted frame to feed,
I seized the food! your witness saw.
I knew your laws forbade the deed,
But yielded to a harsher law.

CRABBE.

Poscia più che dolor, potè il digiuno.

DANTE.

WHAT has become of Margaret?

In the course of the week following her parting with Ellen, she finished her sack-work, and found there was no more to be had. Then she went about inquiring for work, but without success.

Margaret's heart sank; she had husbanded her

little earnings with the utmost closeness, yet had spent them all, though she was faint for want of food, and she had nothing left to sell.

She had often thought of Ellen, and hoped she would look in on her, and fancied she heard her light foot on the stairs; but all in vain.

Extremity of want at length drove her to seek Ellen and implore aid. She drew her wretched shawl around her, and, towards dusk, timidly entered the little shop. But no Ellen was behind the counter; in her place stood a neat, active-looking woman of fifty, whose countenance, though good-tempered, was sharp, and did not diminish Margaret's timidity.

"What is your business, my good woman?" said she shortly.

"Can I speak with Miss Miller?" faltered Margaret.

"Miss Miller is in the country, and has been there several days. She is not expected home for some time."

Margaret had not another word to say. She

withdrew with a feeling of keen disappointment, and a tear coursed her thin cheek. She retraced her steps in utter despondency.

As she passed a cook's shop, with slices of cold meat and pudding invitingly displayed in the window, she quickly turned her head away, for she could not endure the too tempting sight. She was almost wild with hunger; and as she passed a man selling hot potatoes and roasted apples at the corner of a street, she felt ready to make a snatch at one, and run off with it. What *should* she do?

The next morning she felt less hungry, but weaker. She crept out again in search of work, and strayed on and on, through squalid streets, where, in dingy shop windows, inferior bread was sold retail, in conjunction with "cuttings" of rusty bacon, and fragments from butchers' shops, technically called "pieces." Looking into a small, dirty shop, not far from the Minories, she saw a man turning over some unmade articles of clothing. She went in and asked him if he could give her some work.

The man looked sharply at her, and asked her one or two questions. Then he held up a very smart-looking waistcoat, partly made, and said, "What will you take for finishing this?"

"What you please," said Margaret, hesitatingly, and afraid of losing the job.

"There, then," said he, throwing it towards her, "I'll give you threepence-halfpenny for finishing it, and supply you with twist, thread, and buttons."

"That is very little," said Margaret wistfully.

"Why, it will be a better bargain to you than to me," said he. "A Jew tailor is to pay me sixpence for it, and I am to find the thread and the twist. I shall only clear three-halfpence by the job.* You may take it or leave it."

He looked almost as wretched as herself; and there appeared little chance of his raising his price. With a deep sigh she took it, leaving him her name and address.

* Authentic.

A mizzling rain had set in; by the time she reached home she was wet through. Chilled and comfortless, she was crawling upstairs, when her landlady met her, and sharply reminded her that her week's rent was due. Margaret said despairingly, "I have some work here I expect to finish before dark. I hope to get paid by-and-by."

It was but a subterfuge, for she knew that the threepence-halfpenny would not pay her rent, nor even supply her with bread till Monday morning. The woman, however, went away satisfied, and Margaret set to work, tremulous with weakness and excitement. She worked fast, but, just before she had completed her task, she suddenly became giddy, and fell on the floor. There she lay till she recovered herself again; and, scarcely able to sit up, resumed and finished her work. It was getting dusk: she had a long wet walk before her, for her miserable pittance. As she went along, a savage desire for food seized her; she felt she must eat or die; nay, eat, if to eat *were* to die. It was a stronger temptation than Eve's. Instead

of going to her employer's, she turned into the first pawnbroker's, forced her way through a group of people looking as woe-begone as herself, and pledged the waistcoat for five shillings!

Then she rushed into the nearest eating-house, and hoarsely said, "Soup—a basin of hot, good soup, with meat in it; and a good piece of bread."

In a minute or two she was swallowing it, almost scalding hot. It was well that the heat made her take it less greedily, or it might have killed her. It was strong, nourishing, relishing soup, well spiced, with savoury slices of onion and carrot, and morsels of stewed meat bobbing about in it. She devoured it as Esau devoured the pottage, and was warmed and satiated.

Then, after sitting still a little while, she gave a deep sigh, laid down a shilling for the soup, and went forth. She bought bread, cheese, and tea by the way, and paid her rent. Then she lay down in the dark, to feel she had committed a crime, and to wish herself dead.

"Ahi, dura terra! perchè non t'apristi?"

The next morning she woke strengthened and refreshed. She made a tolerable breakfast, but without much relish. She had lost her self-respect; and she had a vague dread of the morrow.

She could not make up her mind to go out. She sat idly watching the people in the court, haggling, gossiping, and squabbling. What a different Sabbath from that spent with Ellen!

Towards dusk, her solitude became intolerable. The streets were dry; she resolved to go forth, though without any settled purpose. She walked on and on, in a slow, slouching kind of way, looking dully at the groups of tidy, cheerful people flocking to church and chapel; but she sought neither. Thus she strayed along, and was beginning to feel inexpressibly mournful, and a strange longing for running water, or a still, deep pool, began to overtake her; and somebody seemed telling her how quiet and still it would be underneath; and she said, oh! no, no, she could not bear it; she was afraid; and the other seemed to say there was nothing to be afraid of, and nothing else to do; to-morrow

would be too late—this way! this way! . . . and——

"I doesn't mind going *there,*" one poor woman was saying, in passing, to another, "for he makes us all welcome, and we 're all so shabby that none can sneer at the others. He says the Lord Jesus sent him expressly to such as we."

O blessed hearing! *To such as we?* Margaret followed the two poor women as they entered a very humble doorway, and there she found herself in a very poor room, containing about twenty poor people, as meanly clad as herself, taking part in a service of some sort, already begun. She heard a deep, clear, earnest, persuasive voice, in accents that sank into the heart, saying—

"'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'"

She listened and wept. Afterwards he went on

to say—"We are told of a man possessed by an evil spirit, which, by the great mercy of God, was cast out of him. This unhappy person, instead of testifying his gratitude for what the Lord had done by an altered walk, is represented as hurrying into an utterly reckless course of self-abandonment; so that the evil one, returning to see how it fared with his late captive, finds his soul literally laid open to his entrance, like a house swept and garnished for the welcome of the first guest that had a mind to turn in; on which he, quick as thought, summons seven other spirits, even more wicked than himself, to enter in and take possession; and the last state of that man was worse than the first! Now, can anything be conceived more appalling? If ever there was a human creature beyond the pale of God's forgiveness, and without the faintest hope of redemption, must it not have been such a man as this?

"My friends, we have the sequel to the history of a person in precisely this case. There was a woman who, sorely tempted, no doubt, appears to

have sorely sinned. Perhaps the sense of unforgiven, unrepented sin drove her *mad*, or left her exposed, in an extraordinary way, to the influence of the powers of darkness. This unhappy creature, who, in earlier days, may have been as innocent, as cheerful, as light-hearted, as beloved as any one living, was now an object for the finger of scorn to point at—given up by her friends as lost! Out of that woman our Lord cast seven devils! Yes! though her last state had been worse than her first, he took her part! Though a strong man armed had taken possession of the citadel, another came to the rescue, who proved himself stronger than he, bound him neck and heels, and cast him out, never to return! Let none ever despair who can remember Mary Magdalene!

"Now, what was her subsequent course? It was completely changed. She followed Jesus. Whatever she did, wherever she went, it was all at the will of Jesus. The voice of pleasure had no longer any allurement for her; neither was she susceptible to desperation or despair: she saw

there was plenty of Christian work to be done, even by such a poor creature as herself; she hung on his words; she listened to his sermons; she learned from him how blessed are the meek, the merciful, the peaceful, the pure in heart; she learnt that even a cup of cold water, bestowed in his name, should not fail of its reward; she heard him say, 'Her sins are forgiven; for she *loved* much!' and, again, 'She hath done what she *could*.' Is it wonderful that this woman, when all his disciples forsook him and fled, stood with his mother at the foot of his cross? and that she sought him in the sepulchre very early in the morning, while it was yet dark? And how exquisite was her reward!"

Margaret listened with enchained attention. She knelt with the others, she tried to pray with the others, but her soul was heaving and tossing, like the troubled sea, that cannot rest. The others rose and departed, leaving her there, kneeling alone, her head upon her arms.

Mr. Bolter, taking his hat, and about to depart,

suddenly became aware of her presence. He made as great a mistake as Eli did when he thought Hannah was drunken. Mr. Bolter thought Margaret was asleep. Lightly touching her on the shoulder, he said, "My good woman, the service is over. I dare say you were tired."

She raised her haggard face for a moment, and then, instead of rising, fell at his feet.

"Oh," said she, "I'm worse than Mary Magdalene."

Mr. Bolter, startled, awaited what she had to say.

"I have been dishonest," said she, "and I have been on the point of ending my wretched life."

He made her rise and sit down. He spoke peace to her soul, in words calm, strong, and persuasive. She listened, wept, and was comforted. He showed her there was forgiveness even for such as she was. Then he bade her go quietly home, and he would see her in the morning. She gave him her name and address, and went on her way consoled.

The next morning, though Mr. Bolter repaired early to Flag Court, he arrived too late—Margaret was already in the hands of justice. He followed her to the office, where her case was being brought before the sitting magistrate, who was listening to it with great attention and patience.

It appeared that Messrs. Aarons, wholesale tailors and outfitters, had given the waistcoat to a man named Jones, or Jonas, who undertook to get it made for a shilling. Jones had a stitching-machine, which stitched the seams, for which he reserved to himself sixpence, and then turned over the waistcoat to the man who had employed Margaret, whose name was Samuels, who was to receive the other sixpence for finishing the waistcoat. He, as has been seen, gave Margaret the work to do for threepence-halfpenny.

A tailor in court said the materials were worth seven shillings, and the waistcoat, finished as it was, would probably sell for twelve shillings. Mr. D'Arlincourt, touched with the emaciated appearance of Margaret and of Samuels, sent for Mr.

Aarons, who refused to attend, saying he was too busy.

Mr. D'Arlincourt said it was clear this was a system which gradually ground the work-people to the dust. Most sincerely did he wish that dealers, by contenting themselves with smaller profits, would enable their work-people to receive more suitable remuneration.

Margaret was then ordered to pay the redeeming value, or, in default, to be imprisoned three days, and was fined five shillings for the illegal pawning; failing to pay which, she was to be subjected to additional imprisonment.

Mr. Bolter desperately rummaged his pockets;—alas! they only contained about half the amount. Meanwhile, Margaret was carried off to prison; but he hastened to Mr. Truebury's house of business, and, briefly acquainting him with the case, immediately obtained the needful sum for Margaret's release.

When the poor creature found herself once more in the open air, she staggered, and would

have fallen to the ground had not Mr. Bolter caught her. With white lips that almost refused utterance, she said to him:—

"I think I am going to be very ill. Can you take me to some hospital?"

"I can and will," replied he, with the utmost kindness.

The next instant she fainted away. Leaving her in charge of a neat, venerable old woman, who had been watching them from her shop-door with great commiseration, he again hurried off to Mr. Truebury, got an order for her admission into the nearest hospital, returned to her in a cab, placed her, just recovering, in it, and drove off with her. He waited about the hospital till she had been placed in bed and seen by the house-surgeon, who pronounced her to be sickening of a low fever. He saw her, spoke a few cheering words, bade her place her faith in God, and took his leave with a heavy heart.

In that hospital Margaret remained six weeks. For some time she hovered on the brink of the

grave; but it pleased God that she should at length recover.

When Mr. Bolter next visited his kind superintendent, with what intense interest Dr. Grace listened to his detailed report of the cases of Pharaoh and Margaret!

## CHAPTER XII.

### IS SEEING BELIEVING?

Look upon this picture and on that.
HAMLET.

ELLEN was walking in the garden in rather a dejected frame of mind, while the children were racing with Neptune along the broad, straight gravel walks, when Mrs. Quain came out to tell her that she was again wanted at the town-hall.

Ellen was sick of the town-hall: however, there was no help for it; so she started on her walk of about three quarters of a mile, to the little borough in which stood that ancient and very ugly red-

brick edifice, with a roof like that of the royal palace of Madagascar. The walk itself was a pleasant one enough in fine weather, and under ordinarily agreeable circumstances; but Ellen was beginning to have disagreeable associations with every step of the way, and to look forward with longing to the time when she should once more be seated in her own snug little parlour with John.

On entering the town-hall, there she saw Mr. Curlew, policeman A, the prisoner, the clerk, Mr. Meeke, and one or two others as before. But what very much pleased her was to see Mrs. Meeke also, who shook hands with her, and spoke a few kind words.

"Now then, Miss Miller," said Mr. Curlew, somewhat impatiently, "we must again put you upon oath. Now then, look at the prisoner, and say, is he the man who stood on the ladder outside Mr. Meeke's window? Look once, look twice, look three times."

"I told you before, sir," said Ellen, rather nettled, "that I am quite sure he *is* the man."

"What! he who stands there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why, Miss Miller, that is not the man you saw here before."

Ellen started from head to foot.

"Not the same?" said she, faltering.

"Produce the other gipsy," said Mr. Curlew to A 1, who immediately brought forward Pharaoh, and placed him beside the other. They were strikingly alike. But the expression of Pharaoh's counterpart was dogged and sullen.

Ellen turned red, and then pale.

"I am very sorry," said she, speaking with painful effort, "that I made such a mistake."

"You *did* make a mistake, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Explain yourself fully. Which is the man you saw at the window?"

"*Not* Pharaoh Smith. The man who stands beside him."

"You are quite certain?"

"Quite certain."

"How came you to make such a mistake?"

"Why, sir, you yourself must allow they are very much alike; and when I first saw Pharaoh, he struck me as so much like the housebreaker that I felt assured it must be he; but now I see the very man, there's all the difference in the world!"

The prisoner scowled. Pharaoh looked immensely relieved.

"Well, I think we may consider the point clear now," said Mr. Curlew. "Especially, Miss Miller, as an old blue handkerchief, soaked in blood, which was found behind your garden hedge, has been identified as this man's handkerchief. Prisoner, have you anything to say? Do you hear me?—I see that you do. You are 'mute of malice.' Well, it makes no difference. You will be committed, and Pharaoh Smith is released."

Pharaoh's eye flashed with joy, and yet he could not help giving a look of pity at his cousin, as he was removed.

"How sorry I am I caused you to be falsely imprisoned!" said Ellen.

"Oh, miss, it don't magnify. But I'm very glad to be out. I must go and tell them all!" And, with a hasty, rough sort of bow to the company, Pharaoh disappeared.*

A good deal of talking ensued. Poor Ellen met with her due share of pity for her uncomfortable mistake: though, as she truly said, Pharoah was

* This tale was finished towards the close of 1858. In the *Times* for March 10, 1859, appeared a trial which it might be supposed, but for the above fact, that I had copied. A gipsy aged 23, named Guilliers Heron, was tried at the York assizes for robbing a lad named Richard Gillbank of two shillings. Gillbank was returning from work at half-past four in the afternoon, when two gipsies, one of them *wearing very long hair*, came up to him, threatened, assaulted, and robbed him. He immediately got a policeman to accompany him to the gipsy camp, where he identified the prisoner to his own satisfaction, as the one who had taken his money. The prisoner, however, called witnesses to prove an *alibi*. There were six brothers of them, who were all in their tent, supping on hedgehog (hodjun) when the robbery was alleged to have taken place. Some of these brothers came forward, and were so like the prisoner that a mistake might easily have been made. The gipsy was *acquitted*. Many gipsies were in court watching the case with inteuse anxiety.

the real object of compassion. She was very glad to hear from Mrs. Meeke that her children were well, and sent down to their aunt's at the sea-side, and that she had come to fetch home the others.

They walked back to Tranquil Vale very cheerfully. The children came bounding out of the house to meet their parents, and were almost as delighted to return to town by rail as they had been to come to Tranquil Vale.

Though many of the trees were now leafless, the country looked lovely; but Ellen had no regrets. She was heartily glad to find herself, at dusk, in her own little parlour, enjoying a voluble gossip with Mrs. Fuller and Betsy, who were eager to hear her full and particular account of the burglary. Just as she had exhausted the subject, John came in, and then she had to go all over it again. Mrs. Fuller and Betsy left them to themselves, and they had a long uninterrupted talk till it grew quite late. Then Mr. Bolter came in, very tired and pale, but looking pleased. Pharaoh had found him out, and told him, with great glee, of his release; but

he had also told him that, for a time, he must see his face no more, as his family considered his life in jeopardy from the kindred of the prisoner, and they were all going to some considerable distance till the matter had blown over. Thus this promising pupil was lost.

"It is always so," added Mr. Bolter, sighing. "People of the class among whom I labour are always on the move. Either they get out of the way of the missionary directly he pricks their consciences, or, as soon as he has stirred them up to a better way of living, they go to some less disreputable locality, or they fall into misfortunes, or into the hands of justice, or they get work in another neighbourhood. Anyhow, he loses them just as he is becoming interested in them."

Then he told Ellen of poor Margaret's sad story. She heard it with a degree of remorse, for not having bestirred herself for her, and saved her in the first instance from falling to such a depth of wretchedness; but, as she said, circumstances had been against her; and too often, in cases

of this sort, to be out of sight is to be out of mind.

She resolved to go the next day to see her at the hospital. However, Betsy Brick was busy, so Ellen could not leave the shop; and the first day she could and did leave it, to go to the hospital, Margaret was gone. Ellen then sought her at Flag Court, but she had been seen nothing of there since she was taken to the police-court. The attic was let to another lodger.

A day or two afterwards, as Ellen sat sewing behind her little counter, a square-built, brisk-looking old gentleman stepped in and said—"Are you Miss Miller? Yes; I see you are. Well, I'm Mr. Meeke. I've come back from the Continent—not too soon, I think—to look after my property; and I am now come to thank you very heartily for so vigorously defending it."

They had a good deal of chat together, and Mr. Meeke told her that the other man had been taken, his face sadly disfigured by his fall from the window, which had likewise dislocated his ankle; and that

there was every chance of their both being transported for that robbery and others which had occurred a little before. He believed Ellen would have to appear as witness, but she would not be the only one; there was a worse case against them, and he would see her through it, if they were not convicted upon the first count, so that she might make herself quite comfortable.

A few days afterwards, this brisk old gentleman sent Ellen a very handsome workbox—the completest thing of the kind she had ever seen—with a very friendly note, begging her acceptance of it.

Ellen became aware, very soon after her return home, that an incipient attachment had sprung up, during her absence, between John and Betsy Brick, who now, by the way, preferred being called "Bessy." Ellen could not have a word to say against it; she thought Bessy a very nice girl indeed; and thought John was hardly well-to-do enough to marry. Marriage did not yet seem to be in question: she did not even think there was anything like an engagement—only, they evidently

had a warmer, tenderer feeling towards each other than there had been any symptoms of before Ellen went to Tranquil Vale.

One evening, Mr. Bolter received a letter, which interested him a good deal. It was to this effect :—

"Sir—

"You may remember a poor woman who first fell under your notice at a Sunday evening prayer-meeting, whom you afterwards saw at a police-office, and whom you subsequently conveyed to a fever hospital.

"That person now addresses you. Though recovered from my illness, I left the hospital utterly destitute of worldly means of support, and with a mind oppressed with anguish.

"Chance, or rather a good Providence, directed me to the means of an honest, though poor livelihood. I am now constantly employed many hours of the day, and my earnings are sufficient to feed and clothe me, and supply me with a humble lodging.

"That I should be the recipient of such mercy almost exceeds my belief, and it awakens the liveliest gratitude. I feel that to testify my thanks for the precious pardon of an offended God, there are other ways than words; and I have thought over many plans of devoting the few hours I have daily at my own disposal to His service. Only one of these appears to me practicable; and it is to ask your co-operation in it that I now address you.

"During the time I was in the hospital, I had frequent opportunities of witnessing the utterly friendless condition of many poor outcasts who sought admission to its charity, the filthy condition of their persons and clothing proving their need of a female hand to promote their decency and comfort. I am well aware, sir, that in your missionary visits to the poor and needy, you meet with many such who have none to help them. Now, I would wish to dedicate my spare time (two or three hours a day), not so much to the decent poor, who have a claim on the sympathy of their

neighbours, as to those of my own sex whom, from their utterly squalid and abject condition, no tenderly-reared female could suitably approach. To me, who, by God's mercy, have been rescued from a like miserable state, such cases will have nothing repelling; and I shall esteem it another benefit from you if you will direct me to such as will derive advantage from my aid. No matter how low they may be sunk, I will cleanse their persons, their rooms, mend their clothing, and see that their food is properly cooked. In *any* way that you can make me useful, you may command the services of

"Sir, your obedient humble servant,

"MARGARET SCOTT.

"11, Primrose Court, Hopkinsville.

"You will see me at your Sabbath-evening lecture, and can speak to me, if it pleases you, after the service."*

* The greater part of this letter is authentic. See "The Book and its Missions."

Need it be said that Margaret was soon in full employ, under Mr. Bolter's direction? He found her sharing her one small room with a poor widow woman, an aged, decrepit creature, deprived of the use of her lower limbs, but able to support herself by sewing and knitting, cheerful as a bird, and full of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The room, though poorly furnished, was not destitute of comforts, and was a spectacle of cleanliness and neatness. There were books on a shelf; flowers and a blackbird in the window. Margaret herself scarcely looked the same creature; though still pale and thin, her features had lost their look of care; and a mild light shone in her soft dark eye, while her mouth frequently wore a smile of pensive sweetness. Her dress was exquisitely neat and clean, though of the humblest materials; and her appearance in every respect was creditable and encouraging.

She soon proved a most efficient ally to Mr. Bolter; and, now that her altered course had enabled her to recover her self-respect, she would

sometimes drop in at dusk on Ellen, who rejoiced to see her, and would enter into the details of her work.

"It appears," said she, "that God is graciously marking out a path for me in which alone I am fit to labour. I know nothing of the customs and manners of the rich; I could not undertake the most menial service in a gentleman's house; but I can talk to the poor outcasts among whom my work is, in a way they can understand, and that commands their attention. I can help the neglected poor and aged; I can coax young children to go to school; and now, through Mr. Bolter's intervention, I am beginning, as a paid agent, to circulate the word of life, and read portions of it to those who are willing to hear me."*

"How is it," said Ellen, suddenly, "that you express yourself so well, both in speaking and writing?"

"If I do so," said Margaret, simply, "it must

* Ibid.

come by nature or grace, for I have had little enough teaching; yet, now I think of it, my grandmother, who brought me up, must have been a very superior woman, for she expressed herself remarkably well, and she was familiar with the Scriptures. But she died when I was ten years old, and my grandfather was a very bad old man. He used to boast that he had killed as many deer in Hainault and Epping Forests as he had hairs on his head."

"Was *he* your grandfather?" cried Ellen. "I have heard Mr. Bolter speak of that old man."

"You cannot be surprised," said Margaret, "that the son of such a father turned out wild; in fact, I often saw little of my father for days and months together; and, as for my mother, she died when I was an infant; so all the good I learnt was of my grandmother; and I think it may be that now my mind is more under the influence of divine grace, her ways of thinking and speaking may come back to me in some degree. But her husband and son used her very badly; and when

she died, I neither heard nor saw anything that was good, or could lead me upwards. When my grandfather and I were left to ourselves my life was dull enough, and I had no means of self-improvement; but things got worse when my father brought home a second wife of the lowest description, who made me wretched. I so constantly heard low thoughts and low language, that, though I hated both, it could hardly fail but that my mind should be injured by them. My step-mother, however, paid me the compliment of thinking me too good for my company. She was always trying to reduce me to her own level; and when she found it in vain, her hatred of me became so active that, in self-defence, I left home to seek to maintain myself. I obtained employment at a furnishing warehouse, as you know, but got into trouble, and gradually sank lower and lower till I became what you found me." She sighed deeply.

"The wonder is," said Ellen, "that you have since become what you are now."

"Ay, the wonder and the mercy! And therefore it is that I feel myself called upon, in an especial manner, to be the helper of a class of persons *below* the decent poor—persons beyond the range of spiritual or moral elevation (of whom there is an immense mass underlying the surface of decent society), beings whose sole object is to *live*, no matter by what vice, nor in what filth and wretchedness."

"They must be a very uncomfortable class to labour among."

"Ah!" said Margaret, smiling—and such a heavenly expression irradiated her countenance as to make it almost beautiful,—"the end reconciles one to the means! I find my way into courts where no one even professes to gain an honest livelihood—courts swarming with children forsaken by parents who never were married, who have no desire for, no knowledge of, a better existence—who live by 'tossing,' by thieving, by passing bad money: you may get a bad shilling in Whitechapel for twopence-halfpenny. Then when

I penetrate into the dwellings, I find them little better than cow-houses, and not nearly as sweet—the window-frame stuffed with rags, the bed a heap of old shavings, the floor littered with hare-skins and rabbit-skins, the smell of which is enough to breed a fever. In such dens as these you cannot be surprised that they often say to me, 'Of what use is it for you to come here? What use are your Bibles to us?' yet I am content if, after visiting every room in every house in the court, I find but one subscriber. To collect that one subscriber's penny a week, gives me a recognised object for going again and again. And then my course is clear."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BROTHER AND SISTER.

How blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet according minds!
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one!

"ELLEN," said John Miller to his sister, as they sat together over the fire, "I think you must have observed, since your return from the country, a difference in my manner towards Bessy."

"Well," said Ellen, "I have."

"What do you think about it?" said John.

"I think her a very nice girl indeed, John.

Not only pretty and pleasant, but with really good principles and a sweet temper."

"Yes, she 's all that," said John. "The thing is, I don't exactly know what to say on the subject of marriage."

"If you don't, who is to?" said Ellen, smiling.

"What I mean is, I don't know whether it is well for me to think of marrying *at all.* If I *were* to think of it, there can be no doubt that Bessy would be my choice—if she would have me."

"Certainly, your clerkship is not much to marry on," said Ellen. "Still, it keeps you and me, and therefore would keep you and her."

"What, and for us to turn you adrift? Oh, oh!"

"Don't think of me for a minute, John. I shall do very well, some way or other. Who knows but I may marry too, if you set me the example?"

She laughed merrily; but in reality she had not such a thought in her head.

"Just so; you and Mr. Bolter," said John, in the same tone. Then, more gravely, "Well, but putting you out of the question, even then I should

have little enough to set up on with Bessy; but suppose I had still less?"

"Why should we suppose any such thing?"

"Because I have now and then thought of giving up my clerkship."

"Oh, John! What for?"

"To try to be another Mr. Bolter."

"John, you take away my breath."

"Yes; I knew you would be surprised; but I really have had serious thoughts of it. Sometimes the wish comes over me very strongly. I almost think it is as strong a feeling at times as my feeling for Bessy."

"Well, they need not clash. Missionaries do not take vows to live single like monks."

"No, but at first starting, at any rate, they would work better as single men. Moreover, the necessary preparation would place an interval between my first decision and my first start."

"John, you have surprised me so, I cannot immediately think clearly. I had no idea Mr. Bolter had so much influence over you."

"*His earnestness constrains me!* When I see such *reality* of zeal in that man, such complete devotion of himself to his work, and when I think of the indescribable importance of that work—it seems to me quite contemptible in comparison to go on casting up brewers' bills! especially when I know that labourers in the vineyard are so wanted!"

"Well, it is a very momentous step to take. I hope you will do nothing rashly."

"I promise you I will not. And, mark you, Ellen! though I feel impelled to be a co-labourer of Mr. Bolter's, I do not feel equal to doing the same work. I am ready for Hainault Forest, but not for Hopkinsville! It would be too depressing —I could not stand it."

The conversation was interrupted by the return of Mr. Bolter. Somehow, it had become quite a settled thing for him to board with John and Ellen; a very pleasant arrangement for them, as they were so fond of his company; and a wonderful advantage and comfort to him, who required the cheerfulness of a home circle on returning from his exhausting

duties, and who infinitely preferred eating and drinking such things as were set before him to catering for himself. So he had made a little pecuniary arrangement with his kind friends which proved satisfactory to both.

He had now established weekly and Sunday meetings for prayer and study of the Scriptures, adult reading-classes, a savings' bank, a reading-room, and loan library; and the daily schools under the patronage of the Society of Friends, Independents, and Baptists, were progressing most encouragingly, side by side with those of the Established Church. There was so much to do that there was room for all. Unfortunately, typhus and scarlet fever, small-pox and cholera, were all at work in this pestilential district, and considerably thinning its population, besides rendering many who did not die unfit for work. Mr. Bolter visited many of these cases, and more than once sat up with the sick all night. Had he been a Xavier or a Borromeo he would have been canonised; as he was only a poor city missionary he was not. "But he shall be mine,

saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels."

As he does not lead a charmed life, behold! our friend Bolter is laid low by fever himself. There he is, quite delirious, in a little, clean, but very humble bedroom, with John beside him, and a calm, thoughtful woman dressed in dark brown, with the whitest of caps and aprons, ministering to him. It is Margaret, who is utterly fearless of infection; while Ellen, downstairs, is preparing refreshing beverages for him, and now and then wiping the blinding tears from her eyes.

Well, it pleased God to restore our good friend to something like health, though he was never again to be the man he had been before. His medical man and Dr. Grace (the latter of whom had considerably inconvenienced himself by keeping up Mr. Bolter's prayer-services as much as he could) were both strongly of opinion that his constitution had received such a shock as to render it expedient, nay, a duty he owed himself, to exchange his district for one in a healthier locality; but directly

the subject was broached, Mr. Bolter burst into tears and said, "Oh, I cannot, cannot leave my poor people! Do not urge it, I beseech you! I would rather die in Hopkinsville than live anywhere else!"*

And this feeling was found to be so rooted, that there was no good in trying to shake it out of him; so that his doctor gave up the effort with a shrug, and good Dr. Grace fervently commended him in prayer to God. And that prayer seemed wonderfully answered. Mr. Bolter became better from that day. Mr. Truebury had him down to Grey Nuns, and found a lodging for him, free of cost, at his own bailiff's, where the good people made much of him, and feasted him with new milk, new-laid eggs, cream, home-made bread, home-brewed ale, and other good things, till they made him quite stout and hearty.

One day, when he was strolling among the woodlands, he came to a long, narrow, rushen basket, with a net over it, containing a live leveret, at the

* Authentic.

foot of a tall tree; and, just as he was stooping to examine it, a voice from aloft exclaimed, "Oh, my master! my teacher!" and down slid Pharaoh with prodigious swiftness, holding a squirrel by the tail, that was doing his utmost to bite him, in his left hand, while his right hand was eagerly extended to Mr. Bolter.

"To think of our meeting so near our old ground!" cried Pharaoh, joyfully. "We haven't been here long, but all's safe now. We're close at hand. Do come, do come!"

"With all my heart," said Mr. Bolter, cheerfully. "What have you got here?"

"That's a leveret," said Pharaoh, catching up the basket. "They sell well in the streets to children, mostly to little girls; they like them to run about their gardens. Only they soon die, they do; 'cause they don't get their natural food, and are hindered of their natural habits. Besides, dogs and cats worries them terrible. However, they fetch sometimes one shilling, sometimes two. And this squirrel's worth eighteenpence. Not a bad day's

work, sir. See, he's not a bit afraid of me. Oh, he *can* bite, I believe you."

"Well, I suppose you've forgot all your reading."

"Forgot it!" cried Pharaoh, stopping short, and looking highly injured. "You don't mean to say that? Why, haven't I made every one of 'em Christians? Even my old grandmother, that's a hundred-and-one?"

Mr. Bolter looked at him in surprise. It seemed too good news to be true. At any rate, he feared the change could be only skin-deep.

Just then they came to a tidy-looking tent, pitched, as gipsies' tents are pretty sure to be, in a picturesque spot, on a patch of greensward, with an old oak and a birch or two overhead, and a brooklet of running water gleaming close at hand.

In this brook Zobel was washing a few clothes; while her husband, seated on the ground, was dexterously making the slight baskets used by fishmongers and poulterers. The aged woman, whom some called "Pharaoh's daughter," and

others the "Queen of the Gipsies," lay just within the tent, on a pallet of straw, intently listening to Mariam, who, with her sleeping child on one arm, and her finger tracing each word she read in Pharaoh's lesson-book, was slowly repeating—

"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

"Oh, blessed, blessed Jesus!" exclaimed the old woman, who did not see Mr. Bolter; "I love his very name!" *

"Ah! here comes our good gentleman!" cried Pharaoh's father, with pleasure and surprise; and all the family gathered round him to welcome him except the old woman, who impatiently held out her hand to him till he went up to her and took it. After a few words of affectionate greeting

* "An old mother of the tribe was heard, not long ago, to speak with delight, and to say of that Saviour whom he (the missionary) so tenderly talked about, 'I love His name!' She is on the verge of her hundredth year, has more than a hundred descendants, and is a most interesting character."—*City Mission Magazine*, Jan. 1, 1858.

had been exchanged, the women took notice of Mr. Bolter's altered looks, and he mentioned his illness, which called forth expressions of interest and sympathy.

"Ah, you nearly lost your life, then, for the sake of poor perishing sinners!" cried Zobel. "What could man do more?"

"You will have your reward," said the old woman; "a crown of glory. But you didn't do it for that. No, no!"

"Sir," said the elder Smith, "I can never thank you enough for teaching my poor boy. All that *he* knows he has taught *us*. If you will give me leave, I will repeat to you the Lord's Prayer;" which he did, very reverently, the others clasping their hands. "And now, sir, if you will have patience with me, I will read the first part in my son's lesson-book."

Mr. Bolter was astonished at his progress. He had produced his pocket Bible, and was holding it in his hand.

"Ah," said Smith, who knew the look of it,

"I'm afraid I cannot yet read *that* book; but yet I should like to try."

Mr. Bolter gave it him. He unfortunately opened on the second chapter of Numbers, and, of course, could make nothing of it. Mr. Bolter opened the book for him at the first chapter of St. John. He read several verses quite fluently; and exclaimed with delight—

"Thank God! I am beginning to be able to read the Bible! Oh, if I could read that blessed book, I think there would be hope for me! I should then learn what I must do to be saved."*

He paused, and seemed full of thought.

"I am hindering you at your work," said Mr. Bolter, softly.

"Oh, sir," said he, starting, "I never mind my work, if I can only learn the right way."

"It is so simple," said Mr. Bolter, "that even the wayfaring man need not err therein."

"Oh, sir, read, read to us! read us the words of eternal life!"

* Verbatim.

Mr. Bolter read the 12th and 22nd chapters of Genesis, commenting as he went along; and from the type, Isaac, directed their attention to the antitype, the Son of God, dwelling feelingly on his love to sinners, manifested in the great sacrifice he offered in himself for sin. Their attention was riveted.* Zobel turned her head away and was bathed in tears. Her husband brushed his eyes with his coat-sleeve. Mr. Bolter concluded with prayer, and all knelt around him except the grandmother, who devoutly raised her hands and eyes.

"See!" said Smith, after they had risen, and pointing as he spoke to a pile of wood, "to-day is Saturday. I remember what you said about gathering sticks on the Sabbath, and you see I have collected enough for two days."

Mr. Bolter was touched. Many months had intervened since he spoke of it.

When he bade them farewell, they all expressed

* Verbatim.

such regret at his going, that he promised he would visit them and pray with them on the following day. He left them, followed by their blessings. Pharaoh, who was on his way to town, to sell his squirrel and leveret, begged to accompany him part of the way. It had already been arranged that he was to resume his place in the class at Hopkinsville, whither Mr. Bolter was about to return to his duties on the following Monday.

"Now then," said Pharaoh, wistfully, as soon as they were alone together, "haven't I made them Christians?"

"Pharaoh, what you have done is wonderful! It has evidently had the blessing of God. My good fellow, you must leave snaring leverets and catching squirrels, and hunt men's souls!—the men of your own race. Our Lord came upon two of his disciples when they were fishing, and told them that if they would follow him, he would make them fishers of men. In like manner, my dear lad, he may, if he wills, make you an apostle

to the gipsies, who may probably find far more acceptance among them than any one not of their own race. What say you? Will you leave all and follow him?"

"Master, what have I to leave but such as these?" said Pharaoh, holding out his leveret and squirrel. "Certainly I will." And taking Mr. Bolter's meaning literally, he instantly let his little prisoners go free. Off they darted to their native greenwood.

"You 're a capital fellow!" cried Mr. Bolter, laying his hand on his shoulder.

"O no," said he, sighing, "I'm only a poor gipsy. And I'm afraid I didn't understand above half of what you said just now. But, as to laying down whatever I may have, to do as you bid me, *that* I'll do at any time; and all you 'll teach me I'll learn as well as I can, and teach again to others; and pray to God to make them learn with all their heart—with all their might. Will that do?"

"Excellently."

Then Mr. Bolter explained to Pharaoh that, as

he did not want to rob him of his only means of subsistence, poor as he was, at any rate while he had nothing better to offer him in its stead, he by no means wished to hinder him of gaining his livelihood after his usual fashion, as long as it led him to no dishonesty or injuring the property of others. But, on the whole, he thought digging up and selling primrose roots and violet roots better than snaring leverets or squirrels; and that the more time he found he could give to his schooling the better; and who could say but that eventually, if he sufficiently profited by his teaching, he might become a paid teacher to his own people, under the direction of the very Society that paid Mr. Bolter?

This was such a splendid prospect to Pharaoh, that the sceptre of Egypt could scarcely have more dazzled him. To be on anything approaching to a level with Mr. Bolter, endued with the same knowledge, inspiring the same affectionate respect, exercising the same powers of usefulness, to say nothing of wearing the same gentlemanlike coat and hat,

appeared, even in remote distance, so tempting an incentive to well-doing, that his heart swelled as he thought of it.

After walking some way in silence, "Blessed be the hour," exclaimed he, "when I started out upon you, and asked you to read me 'Selling off under Prime Cost!' That was a famous Sunday for me!"

"It was," said Mr. Bolter. "We little know what great consequences will result from seemingly small causes. A poor woman, coming to draw water, found the Lord Jesus sitting by the well, and entered into conversation with him, till not only he had convinced her that he was the Son of God, but, at her persuasion, the men of her city came out to hear him for themselves, and were savingly converted, as well as herself. In like manner may you be the instrument of eternal salvation to many of your own people. And now, God be with you! My way is through this gate."

"God be with *you*, sir."

And he went on his way rejoicing.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FORESHADOWS.

"Lord, and what shall this man do?"
Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?
If his love for Christ be true,
Christ hath told thee of his end;
This is he whom God approves;
This is he whom Jesus loves.

MR. BOLTER returned to his work, invigorated and refreshed. A heavy loss, however, awaited him—his excellent and sympathising superintendent, Dr. Grace, had been removed to a new sphere of usefulness in one of the western counties. Mr. Bolter's new superintendent was a

layman—Mr. Meyrick, a wealthy, influential, gifted, and very excellent man, but one who could by no means be the efficient support to him that he had lost in Dr. Grace. Mr. Meyrick, when he came to read Mr. Bolter's report, was very much astonished to find that within some thousand yards of his own warehouses might be found a row of crazy cottages called Rabbit-hutch Row, which were constantly under water, and over water too; the water rising through the planks from beneath, and dripping through the miserable roofs above; that a few yards from this healthful and salubrious spot a schoolhouse might be seen in nearly the same plight, with the schoolmistress under an umbrella, teaching a hundred children,* a few of whom were fortunate enough to wear pattens. Furthermore, he read that a stagnant ditch of the most odious description skirted one side of this eligible seminary, which, in order to reap the full benefit of its effluvium, had an unglazed window opening on

* Authentic.

it, only partially closed by a rickety shutter. Over this ditch, a wooden bridge with a house upon it was erected; it seemed intended for a pleasure-house in connection with an adjacent bowling-green; but the bowling-green had long ago come to nothing, and this agreeable summer-house was now actually the dwelling of some poor miserable family that could find no better.

Furthermore, he read that, in rainy weather, the state of the streets was such that Mr. Bolter frequently stuck in the mud, and once lost his shoe—not mislaid it; he never found it again.

Mr. Meyrick said all this was very horrid; it ought to be remedied. He thought an undertaker must have bought the place as an eligible investment. Mr. Bolter observed that the inhabitants had not much to lay out in coffins. Mr. Meyrick asked him what the place most wanted. He replied drainage, lighting, and paving, and a good supply of drinkable water; also public baths and wash-houses.

Mr. Meyrick, after some cogitation, determined

on a very useful act of liberality. He would erect a public fountain or pump!

Mr. Bolter was delighted. It had been quite a mockery, he observed, to persuade people to give up spirituous drinks, when a cup of wholesome water was not within their reach.

So the fountain was made, and the poor blessed Mr. Meyrick.

Mr. Bolter had another thorn in his side, which it was out of Mr. Meyrick's power to remove. A new clergyman had been appointed to the parish in which Hopkinsville was included, who was not disposed to work comfortably in unison with the city missionary. The Rev. Cyril De Vere was a remarkably gentlemanlike young man, strikingly handsome, an elegant scholar, very desirous of doing good, but inexperienced and rather opiniated. Once or twice, when he and Mr. Bolter happened to meet, he treated him with marked coolness and haughtiness; so that it was evident to the poor people about them that the missionary had not the minister's support. This was, to a certain extent,

injurious to Mr. Bolter, as well as very uncomfortable; because Mr. De Vere really had so much good in him, and was so zealous in doing his best according to his own views, that he secured the good word of a large body of parishioners, and his disapproval of Mr. Bolter carried considerable weight. However, as Mr. De Vere was conscious he did not like Mr. Bolter, he became gradually impressed with the conviction that Mr. Bolter could not, and therefore did not, like him. This made him very ready to listen to any tattle on the subject that might reach him through evil-disposed persons; and as such persons are always to be found, it at length came to pass that Mr. De Vere made an open complaint to the Society that employed Mr. Bolter, that the missionary had, in the course of visitation, made remarks reflecting on him. This Mr. Bolter wholly and positively denied. The Society, however, expressed its readiness to listen to any proof that could be adduced in support of the charge, and a sub-committee was held for that purpose, which Mr. De Vere and his witnesses at-

tended. The charge could not be substantiated by them, and it would have been gross injustice had the Society withdrawn its support from Mr. Bolter on such evidence. His conduct during the entire course of his connection with them had so secured their confidence, and his whole spirit and behaviour during this trying examination was, to their minds, so entirely that of an innocent man, and spoke so favourably for his candour, integrity, and temper, that they refused to dismiss him, and even expressed a strong encomium on his missionary career. This was excessively annoying to Mr. De Vere, who expressed himself very hotly about it among his own friends, and ever after looked very much vexed whenever Mr. Bolter's labours were alluded to; applying to his principles the disagreeable word "unsound."

Now, nothing in the world is easier than to set about an opinion that a man's doctrine is "unsound;" and nothing more difficult than to refute it, except by living it down, which is a slow process. In this instance, it was altogether a

wanton, idle accusation; for Mr. De Vere knew very little indeed of Mr. Bolter's principles or practice, and would have thought himself very hardly used, if any one had called him High Church on as insufficient grounds as he called Mr. Bolter Low Church, or no church. In that lawless kind of way which we see and hear examples of every day and every hour, he set a mark on this poor good man's shoulders which he could not immediately get rid of, by calling him "unsound."

One evening, Mr. Bolter was picking his way towards the scene of his labours, when a thin, anxious-looking little boy, about eleven years of age, plucked him by the sleeve, and said, with agitation, "Sir, I've lived three weeks on begging, and I'm hungering now; give me something to save me from starving, or I'll go and steal!"*

"Come in here," said Mr. Bolter; and, turning into a small eating-house, he gave the boy a small

* Authentic.

basin of soup and a piece of bread. The boy ate with avidity; and when he had finished his meal, he looked up at Mr. Bolter with a tear in his eye, and timidly laid his hand upon his. They left the shop together, and Mr. Bolter then said—

"You say you have begged three weeks: what did you do before?"

"Well, sir," replied the boy, shuffling to keep up with him, and looking him full in the face, "I'm an orphant, I am, and father died afore I can remember; mother died, maybe, two year ago. She did job-work, flannels for the tailors, and such-like—anything she could get. Sometimes she worked all night, for we was very bad off—we was so. At last she died, and the good 'oman as we lodged with, who had a mangle, says to me: 'Now, my poor lad, you must shift for yourself; here's an old basket and a few pence, and you'd better start in the muffin line.' Well, I did so; but it's only a winter trade, is muffins. Then I sold creeses, and then cherries, 'cording

to the season, sir, you know. Well, I drawed up with a little chap called Tom; Tom had a father an' mother, and I'd none; so they lets me have half Tom's bed. Tom's father knew my mother; he's a coalheaver, but sometimes he's out o' work. He says sometimes, when he's very much down with the rheumatics, that they must all go into 'the house.' He's very ill now, and they're all pretty near starving, which makes me not tell 'em I'm starving too. If you'll believe me, sir, three weeks ago, a big boy knocked me down, and ran away with my basket. Oh! wasn't it bad of him? Since then I've had nothing I could do but beg. But I don't like it, sir—it sticks in my throat. *Read,* sir? Ay, to be sure I should like to learn to read; but who'd teach me? Tom would like to learn too. *You'll* teach me—teach *both* on us? Lor' bless you, sir! Bless you for ever! Sure we'll come. Yes, I'll come with you now, sir, and see where it is, and what it's like; that soup 's made a man o' me. And if you'll trust me with a couple

of shillings, sir, it 'll start me in trade again, and I 'll repay you before the month is out."

Surely it was the artless tale of some such little outcast as this that made poor half-crazy Blake, the artist, write his pathetic little poem of "The Chimney Sweep:"—

"When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely call out, 'Weep, 'weep, 'weep;'
So your chimneys I clean, and on soot I sleep.

"There 's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head 's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your light hair.'

"And so he was quiet; and that very night,
As Tom he was sleeping, he had such a sight!
There, thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

"When down came an angel, who had a bright key,
And opened the coffins, and let them all free;
Then, down the green vale, laughing, leaping, they run,
And wash in the river, and shine like the sun.

"Then, naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise up on pure clouds, and sport in the wind;
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

"And so Tommy awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work;
Though the morning was cold, he was happy and warm,
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm."

Reader, will you hear another case? These stories are *true*. One afternoon, towards dusk, a girl offered Mr. Bolter some flowers. There was nothing importunate in her manner; she was very poor, but neat and modest. On his questioning her as he walked away, she told him her little history. She said:—

"Mother has been dead just a year this month; she took cold at the washing, and it went to her chest. She was only ill a fortnight. She took on dreadful bad, for she knew she was going, and she couldn't think what would become of me. Minister, sir? No; no minister came a-near us, nor gentleman, nor lady of any sort. Nobody

cared for us but our two selves. When she was gone I hadn't a friend. A young woman as sold flowers took pity on me, and said I might do the same, and lodge where she did. And so I do: the woman is poor, but quite respectable. And she's very kind to me, sir: she gives me a dinner on Sundays. During the summer months I clear sixpence a day. But I can only sell flowers five days in the week—Mondays there's no flowers in the market; and, of the sixpence a day, I pay threepence for lodging. I get a halfpennyworth of tea; a halfpennyworth of sugar; a pound of bread, three-halfpence; butter, a halfpenny. I never tastes meat but on Sunday. What I shall do in the winter, when there are no flowers, I don't know. I can't bear to think of it."

Mr. Bolter thought this was a case in which Mrs. Truebury would be sure to interest herself. Meanwhile he set Margaret to keep her eye upon the girl.

A great contest between the powers of light and darkness was now at hand; one of those

contests which, could we foresee them and comprehend their amazing consequences, would send us to our knees to wrestle with God in prayer, night and day, till we obtained the promise of victory. Things had hitherto gone passably well in Hopkinsville; nay, considering the immense disproportion between the work there was to be done, and the labourer who had to do it, the progress was highly encouraging. Many were under instruction; many were reclaimed from sinful courses, and leading more devout lives; many were drawn to Divine worship; many heard the word of God in their own dwellings; many sick and dying persons were visited. This was much; but it was chiefly among those poor resident families who, as Mr. Bolter told Dr. Grace, were really too physically weak to be actively wicked. A large and most dangerous class remained unapproached and seemingly unapproachable; a class of sturdy, stalwart labourers in the docks and railways—Irish, Welsh, north-country—men of immense physical force, with

absolutely no characters to lose — brawlers, drunkards, blasphemers, wife-beaters, who, as they more than once had told Mr. Bolter, would as soon knock out his brains as look at him.

Of this class there had lately set in quite a stream, that choked the small lodgings and public-houses, and filled the district with clamour and disorder. Their head-quarters were at a very disreputable place called the Rat's Hole, which Mr. Bolter longed, yet feared, to approach. Here might be heard seditious *orators* loudly applauded; here drunken songs were sung in uproarious chorus, and here many a robbery was concerted.

At first these men knew nothing of Mr. Bolter, and as he had not interfered with them, they had no motive for interfering with him; but, little by little, they began to know something of him and to hate him. Strong members of the corps were accosted and remonstrated with; one or two of them were visited by him when sick; others saw and heard him talking

with their fellow-lodgers. He was dubbed a blue light; he was told his life was not worth a farthing's purchase; he was shown a bludgeon bought expressly to knock out his brains; and other agreeable things of the kind.

Mr. Bolter had so much courage that these threats affected him very little; but a great burden was laid on his soul. The awful spiritual condition of these desperadoes, their utter impenetrability to the voice of reason or persuasion, their damaging influence on the morals of the neighbourhood, weighed on him like lead. His healthy red and brown complexion had already, under the influence of Hopkinsville atmosphere, become sallow and sickly; his features were growing pinched, and a look of deep anxiety in his hollow eyes made it painful sometimes to meet their pathetic glance. Good-natured Mr. Meyrick was much struck by it. "Bolter," said he, "you ought to have additional aid." But Mr. Meyrick was not prepared to undertake the entire support of an-

other missionary himself; and, just then, the Society was particularly oppressed by more appeals from various quarters than they could possibly answer. Were there no well-to-do shopkeepers, thriving men of business, men of easy fortune, that might have raised the funds, singly or together, with the utmost possible ease? Of course there were. There always are. But as they did not come forward, and chose to think their strength was to sit still, Mr. Bolter expended his own little remaining strength in continuing to go about single handed.

John Miller had at length found out what to say on the subject of marriage. He and Bessy were engaged, and as happy as two fondly attached people could be. But alas for their prospects! One fine summer day, Bessy had joined a gay water party to Hampton Court. The afternoon proved inveterately rainy; the wearers of thin muslins, baréges, and tarletans were drenched to the skin, and had to sit so long in their wet

clothes, that the wonder was, Bessy should be the only victim. She caught a cold which settled on her lungs, and went into a rapid and fatal decline.

John now found, that instead of going to exhort the dwellers in Hainault and Epping Forests, there was home-missionary work for him to do. Bessy had always been a pleasing, well-conducted girl, but she had never been a serious thinker; and now that eternity stared her in the face, she was wretched and desponding at the thought of death. John was quite appalled at the vehemence with which she clung to the things of this life; he was greatly exercised in spirit; he besought God, with groanings that could not be uttered, to change her heart by the influence of his Holy Spirit, and give her a living interest in the things belonging to her eternal peace. His prayer was heard; he was permitted to be the privileged instrument of this young girl's salvation; and perhaps no minister or missionary of the profoundest experience could have led her faltering steps along the

heavenward path with more success than he was enabled to do under the powerful impulses of human and divine affection.

At length she died. Such peace, such sweetness attended her closing scene, that though John and Ellen wept, it could hardly be said they lamented.

Dear as thou wert, and justly dear,
We should not weep for thee;
One thought shall check the starting tear—
It is, that thou art free.
And thus shall faith's consoling power
The tears of love restrain.
Oh, who that saw thy parting hour,
Could wish thee here again?
Gently the passing spirit fled,
Sustained by love divine:
O may such grace on me be shed,
And may such end be mine!*

Some of us have seen a large silken bag, inflated with highly rarefied air, only prevented by a cord from soaring upward to the skies.

* The Rev. T. Dale.

That cord, in John's case, was now severed, and his soul sprang up to its own element. He did not immediately abandon his clerkship, but he devoted every spare minute to the studies befitting the course he meant to pursue, with such earnestness that his progress was thrice as rapid as it would have been under ordinary circumstances. His mind was wholly given to serve the Lord.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SHADOWS.

Whether in his lonely course,
  Lonely, not forlorn, he stray,
Or, with Love's supporting force,
  Cheat the toil and cheer the way,
Leave it all to His high hand,
Who doth hearts as streams command.

Gales from heaven, if so He will,
  Sweeter melodies can wake,
On the lofty mountain rill,
  Than the meeting waters make:
Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone.

KEBLE.

THE woman who lost her piece of silver, swept her house out diligently, regardless of the dust she raised, until she found it. "It is not un-

usual," says Mackenzie,* "to find a good deal of confusion and tumult when there is any great work going on in religion. Satan likes nothing so well as to let things settle down in darkness and quiet. But when Christ is seeking out his people in good earnest, we must not expect it all to be smooth work. How many afflictions are sent, like storm blasts, sweeping through the soul, to waken us up to see our danger and seek our safety!"

Such storm blasts were, even now, beginning to blow up the moral dust in Hopkinsville. One evening, Mr. Bolter, stumbling on his old acquaintance, A 1, mentioned to that excellent official the state of affairs in the Rat's Hole, and observed what a good thing it would be if the publican could be deprived of his license. A 1 thought that, considering the offences committed, the prospect of doing so was highly promising, and engaged to see to it. Meanwhile, Mr. Bolter was going to try what he could do in an amicable way,

* "Redeeming Love."

by entering the Rat's Hole with several numbers of the "British Workman," and offering them to the customers there.

Accordingly, he made his way thither, guided along the otherwise dark street by a flaming oil lamp in the entrance. He went upstairs, where he heard a great stamping of feet, and other tokens of applause, and entered a room, stifling hot, where many men were drinking. A popular song having just been concluded, there was a lull, which he took advantage of, by going round the table and laying a "British Workman" before each man, saying, "Would you like to have this?"

"I hope you're going to give us a piece of money with it," * said the first.

"I don't approve of this paper," said another.

"And I don't approve of methodistical spies," said a third. "This fellow, whatever he may call himself, is nothing more nor less than a spy."

"Then out of window shall he go," said another, rising up.

* Verbatim.

"Softly, softly, my good sir," said Mr. Bolter, composedly. "This house is common to us all. The owner may turn me out of it if he chooses; but you and I are here on the same terms."

"No, we 're not," said the other, getting nearer to him, "and I'll tell you why. We call for liquor and pay for it; you do neither one nor the other. Therefore it 's plain you 're nothing better than a spy."

"You may think so, but you 've not proved it," said Mr. Bolter; "you might just as well say, 'We call for liquor and pay for it; you do neither, and therefore you 're a hippopotamus."

This unexpected sally made some of them laugh, and the assailant for a moment had not a word to say for himself.

"Ah, my dear man," said Mr. Bolter coolly, "it 's plain you 've not studied logic, or you *never* would have used such an argument as that! Why, you might drive a Lord Mayor's coach through it."

This made them laugh again, and one of them offered Mr. Bolter something to drink. Though

he did not accept it, he immediately availed himself of the opening that was made for him by his ally on the bench, and sat down beside him. His antagonist, however, was very surly, and, resuming his seat, he said—

"Logic here or logic there, I'll bet you sixpence that you are what I say."

"And I'll present you with sixpence," said Mr. Bolter, "if you can tell me what logic is. But come, don't let us be uncomfortable together. As I came over Westminster Bridge the other night, in a pouring rain, there was a stoppage. You never saw such a complete wedge. There were flies, vans, carts, wagons, omnibuses, ladies going out to parties in close carriages, all jammed up together. The policemen were popping in and out among the horses' heads, but for a while could make nothing of it. You may fancy the confusion. After a time some of the drivers, who did not possess the sweetest of tempers, began loudly to grumble. Much good that did, of course. However, they were getting more and more out of

patience, when all at once a cheerful voice cried out, 'What's the odds, when we're all so comfortable together?' Of course there was a general laugh; and the next minute, as if by magic, the foremost vehicles began to move onwards, the others followed in due course, and, in a few moments, all obstacles had dispersed, and every one was jogging along his own way."

This little anecdote was told so pleasantly and naturally, that friendly looks greeted the speaker from sundry quarters; and he then proceeded to say, "I have not come in to stay; I merely wished to offer you these papers for the chance of their being acceptable to you, and in the event of their proving otherwise, I shall speedily withdraw them and myself. Give me leave, however, if it is not disagreeable to you, to point out to your attention one or two anecdotes in this number, which happens to be a remarkably good one, or, if you prefer it, I will read them to you myself, though it is getting rather late."

"Read away by all means," said two or three, though the warlike gentleman exclaimed, "I objects to this here style of thing," and began to thump the table with his pewter can. His next neighbour, however, gave him a shove, and roughly muttered, "Be quiet, then, will ye?" on which the other looked daggers. Mr. Bolter, whose object now became a successful and early retreat, proceeded without delay to read one or two rather lively anecdotes with all the spirit he possessed; and then, starting up, he said, "Well, I must be off. If I should ever come this way again, I may perhaps look in on you earlier; but, at present, I will merely leave these papers with you; and if any of you should be pleased with them, and wish to see any more, you can tell me so next time. Good night."

And off he went with flying colours, though his argumentative opponent hinted to him as he passed, that he should let fly at his head some night when he was least expecting it.

Mr. Bolter, having proceeded beyond the beams of the friendly lamp, was cautiously wading through the mire, when he heard some one in the pitchy darkness before him distressfully call out, "Hoy! hoy! Help! help!"

Mr. Bolter ran forward towards the voice; and, in so doing, suddenly found himself almost up to the knees in soft mud.

"Where are you, and what's the matter?" cried he.

"Here I am, almost imbedded in mud," replied the other, "and afraid to move a step, lest I should plunge farther into it."

The voice was gentlemanlike, but helpless. "Give me your hand," said Mr. Bolter; "I know the bearings hereabouts, perhaps rather better than you do, though I am somewhat out of my soundings."

"Thank you, thank you," cried the other, eagerly grasping the proffered hand. "Surely never was man in such a pickle!"

The thought of robbery and murder had oc-

curred to Mr. Bolter, but only to be instantly rejected; there was a genuine ring in the cheerful laugh which proclaimed the stranger no counterfeit.

"Where do you want to go?" said Mr. Bolter.

"Anywhere, out of this mess," said his companion. "Home, I think. I've had enough of this part of Hopkinsville for a while, though I was intending to get to the Rat's Hole!"

"The Rat's Hole, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Bolter. "Ah, I would not advise you to go there! You 'll get no good there, I can assure you."

"That depends upon my object," replied the other. "How do you know so much about it?"

"Because I have just been there."

"Well, if it suited you, might it not suit me?"

"Ah, sir, all places must suit the poor city missionary."

"Ha!" said the other, and paused. "So

that 's what you are," resumed he presently. "I was wondering to what class you could belong. I set you down for the doctor."

"A doctor of souls, sir."

"A quack-doctor, I 'm afraid, Mr. Missionary, eh? You haven't taken out your diploma!"

"Well, sir, that 's a handsome return of yours for my picking you out of the mud."

His companion laughed, perhaps with a little shame, and then said,—

"Well, what were they doing at the Rat's Hole? I have heard so much of that place, that I have been curious to see it."

"That was precisely my own case, sir; so I took a handful of the 'British Workman' with me, and walked in."

"But was it not dangerous? Were you not afraid?"

"It *was* dangerous; but I was not afraid."

"You were bold——"

"Oh, sir, my Master stood by me."

"Your *master?*"

"Your Master and mine, sir—our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Do you know who I am?" said the other quickly.

"Not in the least; but He *is* your Master, whatever kind of servant to Him you may be."

"Certainly, certainly! I had not thought—— Well, Mr. Bolter, tell me how you got on."

"You know *me* then, sir, it seems," said Mr. Bolter, smiling. 'Well, when I got in, a man offered to throw me out of window."

"Rather an awkward beginning! What did you do?"

"What should *you* have done?"

"Well, I confess I am not quite prepared to say."

"You must not take much time, sir, to prepare what you have to say, or to do either, if you venture into the Rat's Hole. I told the man I had as much right to be in the house as he had; we were on equal terms. He denied it, and said he and his companions called for liquor

and paid for it, which I did not, and therefore I was a spy."

"That was a *non sequitur*. He should have said, and therefore you were not on equal terms."

"Just so; but he was no logician, and I told him so. He betted me sixpence I was a spy, and I offered him sixpence if he could tell me what logic was. By degrees I made my way sufficiently to be offered a seat at their table, I told them a story, read them one or two anecdotes from the 'British Workman,' and then made good my retreat while I could do so with safety, making a half-promise to look in on them on some future occasion."

"You did more than I could have done, I am afraid," said the other, after a short silence.

"Why do you say you are afraid, sir?"

"I am afraid I could not have done as much as you did," said his companion.

"Ay, that's an amendment," said Mr. Bolter, laughing. "No, I do not suppose you could. These places and people, sir, are only fit for the

missionary. He acts as pioneer for more civilised labourers. There is a young gentleman, eminent, I understand, for scholarship and zeal, at the head of this parish, which is twice too large for any man, but how could he make his way in such a den as the Rat's Hole? The very first sight of his fine linen and fine person, carriage, and address, would set them against him. They would tell him as I was told to-night——"

"What?"

"That they would let fly at his head the first opportunity, when he was least expecting it."

At this instant Mr. Bolter received a blow on the head from a bludgeon, which felled him to the ground. The next moment a couple of well-directed blows from the doubled fists of his companion levelled his foe to the mud, though he was immediately on his feet and running off as fast as he could.

"What cheer, Mr. Bolter?" cried his champion excitedly. "You're not seriously injured, I hope? Lean on me, my good sir."

And raising him vigorously from the ground, he dragged the bewildered Mr. Bolter into a small shop hard by, in the miserable window of which gleamed a light.

"Mr. De Vere!" exclaimed Mr. Bolter amazedly, as the rays of the tallow candle fell upon his face.

"The same," replied Mr. De Vere, shaking him vehemently by the hand. "How are you? How do you feel yourself? My dear Mr. Bolter, that blow might have felled an ox. It was a providence that your valuable life was spared!"

"A providence! my valuable life!" repeated Mr. Bolter, looking very much gratified. "I can assure you, sir, this kindness of expression and of action repays me a dozen times for the rap on my head."

"You are a capital fellow, and that's the fact," said Mr. De Vere very cordially. "So now, since you don't seem materially hurt, let us get out of this detestable locality as soon as

we can. Give me your arm—you are not quite steady yet."

And off they went as lovingly as Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, Castor and Pollux, or any other gentlemen whose names always run in couples on account of their affection and fidelity. The generous Mr. De Vere had entirely forgotten that his companion was not quite sound, and, with the ardour of youth, was anxious to atone by his cordiality for all his past misapprehension and coldness. On reaching the precincts of gas-lighted, civilised society, they parted with a warm hand-shaking, the best of friends.

Ah! well wrote wise John Foster:—"The little, nominal, specific distinctions of sects cannot be got rid of while there is so little of vital religion in the world: because *that* is so shallow, these inconsiderable points stand prominent above the surface, and occasion obstruction and mischief. When the powerful spring-tide of piety and mind shall rise, these points will be swallowed up and disappear."

John and Ellen were amazingly delighted with Mr. Bolter's relation of his rencontre with Mr. De Vere. In the first instance, however, they were greatly alarmed at their friend's appearance. Not only was he plastered with mud from head to foot, but his hair was matted with congealed blood from the blow he had received, and was excessively tender to the touch, so that when Ellen skilfully cut off the hair round the contusion, and with light hand bathed the wound, he could not help wincing and crying out. Moreover, as he had fallen on his face, it was scored and scratched in a distressing manner, and many minute particles of gravel and sand were embedded in the skin. He had to undergo a very tedious and severe discipline from the hands of Ellen, before she could at all satisfy herself that she had done her duty by him as a sister of charity; and when he at length was court-plastered and bandaged to her entire satisfaction, he was sensible of a violent headache, great lassitude, and pains in his limbs, which his fall and bad usage seemed

fully to account for. The remedies proposed by his kind nurses were a hot foot-bath, a basin of gruel, and a warm bed, to none of which he made any objection; but as John proposed preparing the bath for him by the fire after Ellen had gone to bed, and Ellen had to make the gruel in the first instance, Mr. Bolter had no resource but to sit by the fire while the said gruel was making. And then it was that, in spite of his throbbing head, he took occasion to give his companions full particulars of his visit to the Rat's Hole, and his encounter with Mr. De Vere.

"It really was quite providential!" exclaimed Ellen, as she placed the gruel before him, and then proceeded to fill the warming-pan. "First you make an enemy of a desperate ruffian; then you convert a gentleman who was your enemy into a friend by an opportune kindness; then, when the ruffian assails you, your new friend protects you and saves your life. Depend on it, there will be great results from all this!"

And off she went with the warming-pan.

"John," said Mr. Bolter, after a pause, "I should so like to have you for my co-labourer in Hopkinsville! We could carry everything before us."

"Ah! no," said John, shaking his head; "I'm not equal to that. You can undertake the Town, but I can only undertake the Forest."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

Our life
Is what we do, and not the space we live.
J. E. JACKSON.—*Cecil and Mary.*

THE forest, unknown to John, was already undertaken. A missionary was appointed to the gipsies, and this missionary, who was a Baptist, found Pharaoh's family apparently so savingly converted, that he was ready to exclaim: "Behold, here is water—what doth hinder these to be baptized?"

Deeming it expedient to make some preparatory

inquiries of Mr. Bolter as to his experience of their sincerity, this missionary, Mr. Rivers, called at the Millers' the day after the attack in Hopkinsville. He found Ellen sewing behind the counter; she said Mr. Bolter was in bed, being in severe pain in consequence of a blow he had received the previous night. Mr. Rivers was concerned: did she think he was equal to seeing a brother missionary? If the indisposition were not serious, perhaps it would be no great inconvenience to him to answer a question or two of some importance; if he were seriously ill, a word in season from a fellow-Christian might not be unacceptable.

Ellen went up and tapped at Mr. Bolter's door, and delivered Mr. Rivers' message. Mr. Bolter answered very feverishly, that he might come up if he liked; so Mr. Rivers availed himself of the summons.

Ellen had scarcely resumed her needle when a very handsome, gentlemanlike man, decidedly clerical in appearance, entered, and inquired

whether Mr. Bolter lodged there. Ellen said he did. Was he at home? Yes; confined to his bed by injuries he had received—a brother missionary was now with him. The clergyman looked much concerned; he said he had feared Mr. Bolter might be suffering from the savage attack made on him, which was the reason of his calling to ask how he was.

"Oh, then," said Ellen with mantling colour, "I dare say, sir, you are Mr. De Vere."

"I am," said he; "but what made you guess it?"

"Mr. Bolter told us, sir, how bravely you defended him. He was warm in your praise, and feels your kindness very gratefully."

Mr. De Vere looked pleased, desired his very friendly remembrances to be conveyed to him, and hoped he would soon be restored to his course of usefulness, and went away. How pleasing an impression he created by those few kind words!

Next, Margaret came in. She wanted to see Mr. Bolter; but, when she heard of his being ill

in bed, she remained talking with Ellen, who related to her what had passed the night before. Margaret's eye glistened with a tear: she said he ought to be more careful of himself—he did not know how valuable his life was.

Ellen began to wonder Mr. Rivers did not come downstairs: a pause ensuing, they could hear Mr. Rivers praying. Then Mr. Bolter's door opened and shut; Mr. Rivers came downstairs and re-entered the shop, looking very serious.

"My good brother is very ill," said he; "you may think it only from the effects of the blow, but I am of a different opinion. I have had some experience, and I am pretty sure that he is about to be laid aside by typhus fever,—and of a malignant character."

Ellen uttered a faint cry.

"If you are afraid of yourself," said Mr. Rivers, looking at her with some severity, "you had better secure your own safety by going elsewhere, and find some other person to nurse him."

"I will be that person," said Margaret, with quiet decision.

"Or, if you are afraid of his remaining in your house, no time must be lost in removing him to a fever hospital."

"O no, sir," said Ellen, recovering herself, though the tears rolled down her cheeks; "you quite mistake in supposing me to be a mere selfish letter of lodgings. Mr. Bolter is the dearest friend we have; and my alarm was for him, not for myself. We cannot think of having him removed, and we will nurse him as if he were our own brother. We have done so before."

"In that case," said Mr. Rivers, very kindly, "I greatly regret having said what I did, and my caution for you must be quite the other way. Pray do not, in your humane zeal, run any unnecessary risks. Take all salutary precautions. You should have advice at once."

"I will go for the doctor directly," said Ellen, tying on her bonnet with trembling hands. She

sped on her errand; and when she returned, she found Margaret already established in Mr. Bolter's room, where she would only speak to Ellen at the door, begging her in earnest whispers to keep out of infection as much as possible.

Ellen shed tears, but went downstairs. With the utmost desire to be a good nurse, she was conscious of having had very little experience; and Margaret seemed to have such quiet self-reliance, and to know so perfectly what ought to be done and how to do it, that Ellen thought it best to take the second place at once, and act as her adjutant. Margaret suggested chloride of lime as a disinfectant, and tamarind-water as a cooling drink. Ellen obtained and prepared the latter at once; and just as she had made it, Mr. Case, the doctor, came in.

She followed him upstairs, and stood outside the half-open door, while he went in: she heard him ask Mr. Bolter whether his throat were sore, his eyes heavy and unable to bear the light,

his head aching, his mouth parched, his limbs full of pain—to all which Mr. Bolter, in a thick hurried voice, answered in the affirmative. Ellen judged, from the tone and look of the doctor, that he did not think favourably of his patient: he came out on the landing, and told Margaret, who followed him, that if purple spots should appear on the skin, accompanied by much prostration of strength, he must have wine, in such and such quantities. Margaret listened to him as an oracle. Then Ellen led Mr. Case out, and timidly asked him, as she opened the door, whether he thought Mr. Bolter in much danger. "I cannot say I think very well of him," was his depressing reply.

Wine! where was it to be had? Mrs. Meeke would surely give her some. Ellen was now truly thankful that Margaret was in the house, to take charge of the sick man while she ran off to Mrs. Meeke's. Much concern was expressed by Mrs. Meeke for Mr. Bolter's illness: she gave Ellen a bottle of wine, and told her she might

have as much more as was wanted—or anything else—bed-linen—*any* thing.

It was getting dusk—Ellen remembered John would soon come in, expecting his tea, and the fire was quite low! She was blowing it with the bellows when he came in, looking surprised to see nothing ready. When she told him the sad news it quite stunned him. But he soon rallied, and reminded Ellen that Mr. Bolter had had a fever once before, yet he had got over it, and so he doubtless would this time, though of course it was very hard to bear, and must create great anxiety. Ellen tried to take this cheerful view of the case; and she told him of Mr. De Vere's kind visit, and of Mr. Rivers praying with Mr. Bolter and sitting with him so long. All this pleased John; and he went up to see his friend, disposed to view his illness in a very hopeful light.

Ellen poured out Margaret's tea, and took it up to her, telling John at the same time that his was ready. He was so long coming down,

that she set the little teapot on the hob, fearful that it would be quite chilled. When, at length, he joined her, he looked much sadder than when he went up—he could not eat a morsel, and with difficulty restrained his tears.

Margaret went home about ten o'clock, because she knew the old woman who lived with her would be uneasy at her absence; but she promised to return the next day, and sit up the following night. Meantime John sat up, and a heavy night he found it. He had never sat up with a sick person a whole night through before, and had had no idea how long and dreary the hours were after midnight, nor what a chilly feeling preceded the dawn. From that night he read, with a new sense of its deep meaning, that verse in the Psalm which says, "My soul watcheth for Thee more than they that watch for the morning!"

Mr. Bolter, towards nightfall, talked, or rather babbled, incessantly. His utterance was so short and quick that it was difficult to understand a

word he said, and there was no connection in it. Once he exclaimed, "Oh, poor Hopkinsville!" and, opening his burning eyes, fixed them piteously on John, adding, "Won't you? *won't* you?" and then closed them again.

John knew very well what he meant; and the appeal was almost more than he could stand. He sat sorrowfully by his friend's bedside, looking at his altered face, and thinking to himself that what Mr. Bolter had done *he* ought not to mind doing, and that he must be a very great sinner to hold back from doing any one thing that God required of him.

At daybreak there was poor Ellen, with her pale, anxious face, beckoning John to the door, and begging him to let her take his place while he went downstairs, where he would find hot coffee, and then took a couple of hours' rest before he went to business. John was so tired and sleepy that he complied, without a thought of the danger she was incurring; and Ellen stole in and sat where she could dimly see Mr. Bolter's

unconscious face, herself unseen. She prayed for him, she prayed for herself, she prayed for John, and then she prayed for Mr. Bolter again.

About eight o'clock Margaret quietly entered, with a soup plate in her hand, containing chloride of lime and water, in the proportion of forty parts of water to one of chloride of lime. She placed this on a table to the *leeward* side of Mr. Bolter, where it was not likely to upset, and where it was exposed to the action of the air. Margaret had learnt, during her stay in the fever hospital, that free ventilation is one of the securest safeguards in infectious complaints; and that infection, communicated through the air, rarely extends above a few feet from the body of the patient. Still, she was continually within the fatal circle herself; but she had no personal fears, and was chiefly anxious that no harm should befall Ellen.

John, affectionate brother though he was, had been too weary and pre-occupied to think of Ellen's danger; yet, on his way to the brewery, it struck him that he might not be altogether a safe com-

panion to his fellow-clerks, and that he had better refer the question to his employer. This gentleman did not wish to incur the risk of having typhus fever in his brewery, and consequently John got his *congé d'élire*, which he did not at all mind, as it gave him the opportunity of returning to nurse Mr. Bolter.

The disease was progressing now; Mr. Bolter no longer babbled, his throat was too much swollen for him to speak, he could scarcely swallow. A deep gloom hung over the house; neighbours looked on it with awe, and fearfully communicated to one another the answers to their inquiries in the shop, or dilated on their own experiences and forebodings. "There is a crying for wine in the streets," says Isaiah. "They shall not drink wine with a song; strong wine shall be bitter to them that drink it." Surely this referred to some pending visitation, like that of cholera or typhus fever, when wine is sought for absolutely medicinal purposes, wholly opposite to those of conviviality. Thus

with Mr. Bolter, when Margaret put a teaspoonful of port wine into his mouth every five minutes by the watch, without its raising his pulse.

Had Mrs. Truebury known of the state in which he lay, the choicest wines, the costliest hothouse fruits, the finest linen, would have been at the disposal of the poor missionary. As it was, his case was only known to a handful of humble people in the obscure walks of life, who risked their lives for him, and besieged heaven with their intercessory prayers.

He did not burn with fever now; his tongue was no longer crimson-red and parched; his cheek no longer carmine. He opened his languid eyes, and in a hushed voice, that no ear less attent than Margaret's could have heard, said—

"Where are my friends?"

Awe-stricken, she summoned Ellen and John. "There is a great change in him," whispered she, with tearful eyes.

They stole softly in, and stood beside his bed.

"Dear Ellen," said he, tenderly (he had never

called her so before), "is that your gayest face on my best day? I am in my Master's chariot, and oh! how easy it is!"

She could only answer him with her tears.

"John! John!" His voice was almost inaudible. John bent his head close to his mouth.

"Tell Dr. Grace . . . ."

John listened in vain. Mr. Bolter closed his eyes. After a time he opened them, looked at John wistfully, and heaved a deep sigh. It went straight to John's heart.

"I will, I will!" said he, falling beside him on his knees. "I will supply your place, as far as I can, to Hopkinsville!"

It was difficult to say whether a smile flickered on Mr. Bolter's lips or not. John sobbed, and buried his face in the bedclothes.

"Hush," whispered Margaret anxiously, and drawing him away by the arm, "if you agitate him all is lost."

Mr. Bolter was past being agitated; his thoughts were in the spirit-land; but John, putting a strong

constraint on himself, mastered his grief, and, rising from the bedside, joined his sister as she stood comfortlessly over the handful of fire. A pause ensued; Mr. Bolter lying quite quiet with closed eyes.

All at once he electrified them by sitting up in bed, and crying, "Help! help! help!" in an agonising voice, his arms thrown upwards, though the next instant he sank back on his pillow.

"What is it? What is the matter, dear sir?" cried they, gathering round him.

"Help! help!" cried he again, looking wildly round. "Come over and help us! Men! men of England, where are you? Where *are* you, I say? Here is work to be done, at the very highest wages, and you sit idling at home and leave it undone! Deluded men! you might win unspeakable happiness in this world, and immortal crowns in the next! *How?* Why, by making the wretched happy, the impure pure; by teaching the deaf to hear, and the blind to see, the things that belong to their eternal peace! It's work worthy

of a God! A God came down from heaven, in the likeness of men, to do it! And you won't help him, though there's so much to be done! The land is perishing for labourers! O my God, they won't hear me!—the fault must be in myself. My lips move, but make no sound. And there they are, on the very brink of the precipice—in another moment they will fall over it. O Jesus, *make* them hear!" . . . .

——"And he fell asleep."—Acts vii. 60.

"Servant of God, farewell!
I know that solemn sound!
Thy race is run,
Thy work is done,
I hear thy passing bell—
Amidst these earthly scenes no more
Shalt thou be found!"*

* Lines on the death of the Rev. James Manning, of Exeter, 1831.

THE END.

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