

BRITISH WORKMAN



The old man commences his confession.

The debauch of the Widow's son.

The old man found dead in his chair.

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THE CONFESSION.

BY MRS. C. L. BALFOUR.

"Vice is a monster of arch bitterness often,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

In one of the loneliest and loveliest spots of that region of the picturesque—the Isle of Wight, stood a humble

yet comfortable cottage—not a dwelling so called from a love of the romantic or from "The joys that spee humbly."

but an actual lowly habitation, situated on what, in the language of the district, is termed a landslip—a sort of terrace or belt of verdure running around the bosom of one of the high white cliffs from which the island receives its name, where the cottage, with its little patch of garden ground, rich in flowers that the soft and

genial climate gave unusual luxuriance to, stood secure and sheltered by the soaring peak that high above had "reared its awful form," and looking out upon the dazzling and ever agitated waves that broke upon its base, like sparkling human hopes, bursting, as empty bubbles, against the flinty realities of the world.

The inhabitants of this cottage were three in number—a widow and her son, who following the dangerous calling which had proved fatal to his father, was a

fisherman; and a lodger—a man apparently in the decline of life. The cottage, though as we have stated a humble dwelling, was the very first of its class in neatness and comfort; and both the widow and her son were people respectable, and respected in their station. It had been for many years the custom of Dame Eberdige, during the summer months, to let her pretty parlour, with its magnificent prospect, and the equally pleasant best bedroom over it, to any of that numerous class of tourists whose means were too limited



"HE COMMANDED THEM, ON THE PERIL OF THEIR LIVES, NOT TO COME NEAR HIM."

tell her of a death by his husband's death was a sad and a cruel one. One of them was a year older than Mary, the other a little younger. They had that far been badly brought up, for their mother had died when they were very young, and they had never known any other friends. They were not what is called people of any nice children at all. She herself had strong feelings both for and against people of that sort, and she had often, when she was alone, thought of her way. Now was it really come to this—that she must make them to live with her as her own? Must she really bring them up in all things like her little Mary, and do as much for them as that which she had done for Jenny Green?

THE WIDOW GREEN AND HER THREE NIECES.
(Continued from page 147.)

CHAPTER II.

THE widow Green, as well as many of her neighbours, had now to prepare for stirring times. It was all true about the new line of railway being likely to pass close to the village; and it was true also that the widow's house had been chosen as the situation most suitable for the railway station.

Jenny Green, as the reader may suppose, was a woman of pretty good sense, and she would probably never have got through her difficulties without help, but for this power of resolving to do what she had to do by herself, and to do it thoroughly. Now then, she thought the time was come to stand by her own, and to keep what she had a right to keep, before all the world.

The first evening after being really convinced that the talk about the railway was no joke, she sat down in bed, to consider what it would be best to do. Had any one peeped in at the window and watched her that night, they would have wondered why her eyes looked so bright, and her cheeks so hot and flushed. The fact was, Mrs Green was working herself up to make a stand against this railway. She was talking to herself in the spirit of one who is determined not to submit; and in this spirit she went to bed, not however without praying, and that very earnestly, to be enabled to submit in all things to the will of God; but at the same time the will of man in the matter concerning her house and garden.

The next morning the widow was more calm, and more open to reason. She began to feel the want of a good adviser. So she went early to her minister, a sensible man, who had often assisted her before with a word of counsel in the season of need. In this interview, the widow's views became entirely changed. She was not an obstinate, stubborn woman, and the gentleman whose advice she had gone to ask, soon convinced her that all resistance on her part against so mighty a power as that of a railway company, would be worse than fruitless. He showed her too, the folly of people placing their own little personal matters in the way of any great public good; and beyond this, he pointed out how she would derive from his peacemaking and land, at such a great profit, and advantage she would not likely to give it. There was no doubt but she might resist, if she liked. She must go to her about as much richer than she was all her little property; but on the other hand, she might accept the terms proposed, and thus come to a much richer woman than it was likely she could be by any other means.

So on the second night when the widow Green sat down to think, there was a still greater change in the state of her mind. This time she was very quiet, but very busy with deep earnest thoughts, and her head was now and then thrown back, as if she felt that in some way or other a grander woman than formerly. Could it be that a worldly spirit was creeping into the widow's mind? We will endeavour to explain what it was.

For a long time the affection of this little niece Mary with a tenderness almost more than that of a mother. It is impossible to say what she would not have been willing to do, or to suffer for this child. One time, and another time, she had tried to keep her affection within bounds. Besides which, her means though comfortable, were not such but as to say very great, so she had never thought of doing more for Mary than fitting her for honest service; and perhaps for being allowed to work some man's wife. Now the case seemed likely

to be greatly changed; and what she had never dreamed of before, might now become not only possible, but right. So it was then, that as the widow sat gazing into the dying light of the fire, she was very busy in her mind with plans for making little Mary independent of all work; for giving her a good education, dressing her—Oh, so beautifully! and in short, for bringing her up quite like a lady. This was the reason why the widow Green tossed her head a little back, and smoothed her apron, and folded her arms with an air of great satisfaction, looking altogether rather like a proud woman, than that before she went to bed.

A searching time however had to be gone through, before the widow's eyes were closed in sleep. Those who pray sincerely and earnestly, seldom do so, without these words either felt or uttered, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." The widow could not sleep, and as she had long sought the Lord in sincerity of heart, that she might be brought as a little child to obey His will. He was pleased to look upon her like a kind father, and so would not let her go in anything wrong, without showing her the path of duty, and helping her to walk therein. Thus, through the long hours of the night, this lonely woman had a strong conflict to maintain with her senses, which cost her many struggles, and some tears. That which she would like to do with her money looked so very pleasant, it was hard to give it up. That which she now began to think it would be right to do, was so very unpleasant, that she turned, and turned, as if to get rid of the idea altogether. Now she was able to rest, and at last, after fully resigning herself into the hands of Him who alone can make the crooked path straight, and the dark prospect clear, she said in the true spirit of obedience, "I will be done," and then fell into a sound and refreshing sleep.

The very next morning a letter was put into the widow's hand, which convinced her that the duty which had appeared so plainly set before her in the night was one from which she could not hold herself excused. The fact was, Jenny Green, like many warm-hearted women, had always clung to her own relations as if they were nieces than her husband's. She thought that if she provided entirely for little Mary, it was a duty which had appeared so plainly set before her whatever might happen to her husband's relations, she was not called upon to do more than to send them a little help in their times of trouble. Now, however, the case was widely altered. She would soon be in a condition to help others besides her own niece, especially if she did not expend her means upon making little Mary into a lady. The letter which came by the post, was to

the child followed her about, she might have seen that her aunt many times the door of her chamber close after her, and stunk down upon her knees to kiss her feet. Jenny Green could never own her cheeks, for it was a very hard conflict, that through which she had to pass. Her eyes were almost blind with weeping, because she had said so entirely, and from her heart—"I will be done." So when the evening came again, and a nice bright fire was burning, the widow sat and gazed into the light without that great loss of her head, but with a smile upon her lips, a smile of that sweet contentment, which is the result of submission to the will of God to give. Mary was beside her this time, sitting on a low stool at her feet, and listening, with all the interest of an inquiring child, to the story of two little girls about her own age who had lost both father and mother, who had no one to take care of them, or even to find them bread, and who would perhaps soon starve and sleep in a little bed beside Mary's, to learn the same lessons, cast at the same time, and be in all respects the same as she was to her aunt.

For some time the child listened with tears of real pity shining in her eyes, and most readily she promised to share both bed and board with her cousins; but when it came to this, they must be as much beloved as she was, her lip dropped, and she said no more, but springing upon her aunt's knee, clasped both arms round her neck, and hiding her little face upon her shoulder, she sobbed aloud.

Such were the trials of Jenny Green, as the prospect of increased riches dawned upon her, and as if we would but look at money in the right way, we should see that just in proportion as our means increase, the duty laid upon us to assist our poor creatures increases also. So that after all it is not quite such an easy and pleasant thing as it is to some people seem to think.

for her house and land, and instead of laying out the money in fine clothes or furniture, she took the advice of a wise and prudent friend, and put it out to interest in the safest manner she could her of, being better pleased to make sure of a reasonable sum, than to risk all her property in the hope of making a great deal of it.

The widow now considered that a comfortable house in the outskirts of a town was far more desirable, and more profitable in the country, far from any place of resort, and from any good school. She was not what is called a miser, but she thought herself, for if she undertook a city, it was her way to do that only heartily and cheerfully, and she thought that she would have been pleased to beget the same of those who were about to become dependent upon her management and care. Thus the house she chose for her future home, had but a small piece of ground belonging to it; it just a little garden in front, and a plain, straight fence behind, sufficient only for the drying of linen and other useful purposes. The widow saw no reason, however, why it should not be made a little ornamental as well as useful. She therefore carefully removed the roots of many of her garden flowers and plants from her old garden, placing them along the edges of her new plot of ground, and particularly about the entrance to her door; for, as she often said, "the front of a house is like a person's face. You may make it look pleasant or otherwise, according to what you set it off with."

It was perhaps well for Mrs. Green that she had not leaving the great house which she had spent so many years of her life, was in the early winter, after all the leaves had fallen from the trees. She often said she did not wish to hear the birds sing in those trees, for she was sure that she would be when their heads and blossoms should again begin to appear. Still it was a painful business, although the winter had set in, and the country all around looked bare and dreary. But the widow had much to do—so much, that she found no time for moping about, and crying over old things and places. When all was packed up too, the cottage looked so very comfortable—so little like itself, that by degrees her heart seemed weaned from it; and when at last, on a cold, dark, foggy morning in December, she took the carriage to her bed, and wrapping her in his own shawls and cloaks, lifted her into the covered van which stood before the garden gate, she had not the pain of seeing how the old place looked for the last time; for the morning light had not begun to dawn, and they were not to be seen but the lantern of the man who closed the garden gate, before taking charge of the horses which stood waiting to convey them all away.

(To be continued.)

As she passed a garden and saw the owner busily at work in it.

"Conscience!" replied the man, "Oh, I'm too poor to keep a conscience." A gentleman who was passing at the time, heard the words, and looked toward at the man, said, "That's a very foolish answer," but the man became abusive, and the two who had remonstrated with him, walked away to the house of God.

A great many trials brought poverty to the Sabbath-breaker, and he had to give up his house and garden, and seek employment elsewhere. A gentleman who wanted a jobbing garden, and he applied for the place.

"I'll send the master," you used to work in your garden on the Lord's day, and you said you were too poor to keep a conscience."

"Why—yes, sir, I left all that about conscience and such like, to my letters."

"If you are too poor to keep a conscience, I am too poor to keep you." The gentleman replied. A servant who breaks God's law, will break man's law.

The man told this grimly to the neighbour who had first admonished him, and added, "I don't know how it is in you better off than me, and you have only worked six days, and I've worked seven."

"Oh, friend, I'm," replied the other, "I have kept a conscience, and my conscience by God's grace has kept me."

"But you are not to be kept from care, pain, and waste, and want, and sin, and ruin, keep a conscience." H.

TOO POOR TO KEEP A CONSCIENCE.

"I wonder, neighbour, your conscience lets you work on the Sabbath day," said a decent man going to his place of worship

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"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favour than silver and gold."

PROVERBS xxii. 1.

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TRY, JOHN.

Try, John; try, John: from temptation fly.

Try, John; Joe and idle Ned—pass such comrades by, John.

Stand by thy own tavern door.

See not foot within;

Each odd chum avow, though dear.

That would ruin to sin, John.

Every thing and every place.

That tends to lead astray, John.

Give them up, renounce them.

From this last day, John.

Try, John; try, John: I will tell you why, John.

He will fight 'gainst what is bad, will conquer by-and-by, John.

If with all your powers you strive

With your habits wrong, John.

While they daily weaker grow.

You will grow more strong, John.

What if thy measures jest and scoff

Because you hate the sin, John.

Surely if they laugh at you,

They may smile that way, John.

Try, John; try, John: wherefore do you sigh, John?

"I'm afraid I shan't succeed"—is this what you mean to say to sin, John?

A nonsense, man—such coward fear

Never won a fight, John.

Let's have faith and courage too.

In what is true and right, John.

Let the little banking crew,

That love to snarl and scold, John.

Evil habits soon will bring,

When we're stern and bold, John.

Try, John; try, John: think, in days gone by,

Habits have been conquered vile as those

Of which you sigh, John.

How this world is wrong, John.

An energetic man, John;

How that holy, hopeless set,

Loathed the pipe and pot, John—

Mark their upward histories well,

And see how they have prospered,

Teaching you what you may be,

How you may dare and do, John.

Try, John; try, John: look with faith on high, John.

Ye've got a Father and a Friend, mighty loving, John.

Go and tell your son repent

Of your will ways, John;

Pray for help and strength to live

By the word of God, John.

Prayer and effort—this, combined

All success ensures, John;

And, with and withal, the best

Victory shall be yours, John.

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