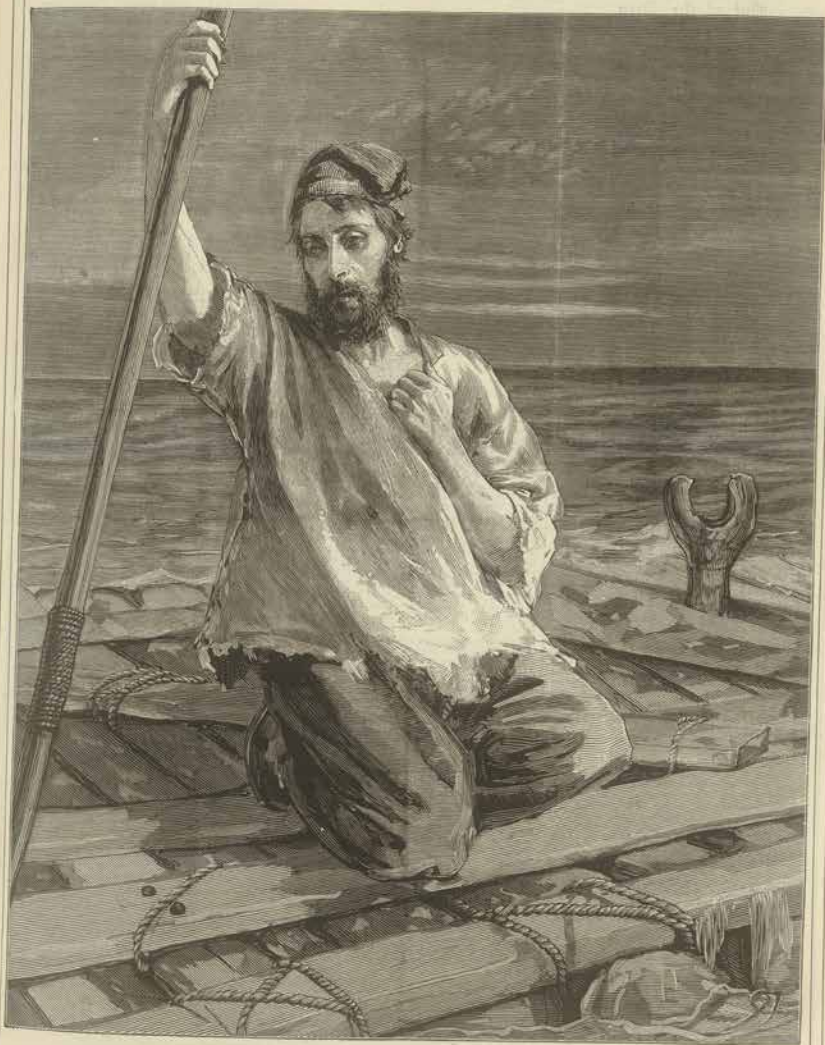


THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.



has "the snare" been for us "broken," and are we not free? If so, may it be sure to walk humbly, to walk watchfully, to walk not "after" us, but near CHRIST. M. E.

A READER'S BOOK.—We desire to draw special attention to the fact, as announced in our last column, that a great number of our "Bible Thoughts," contributed by M. E. to the pages of THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN, and containing, as our readers are aware, much eloquent, heart-cheering counsel, gently teaching and earnest exhortation, have been gathered into one volume with the rhetorical texts which have accompanied them. Many of our readers, we are assured, will be glad to have in a cheap, neat, literary form, for their homes, or for dissemination amongst Sunday Schools and Board Schools, the writings of an esteemed contributor.

THE GRAYT OVR.—London is the biggest city that the world has ever seen. It is three times as big as New York, four times the size of St. Petersburg, twice as large as Constantinople, and two-thirds larger than Paris. It contains in winter 100,000 troops, who in the summer relieve it of their presence. It contains more countrymen than there are in the counties of Devon and Gloucester together, more Roman Catholics than there are in Rome, more Jews than in Palestine, more Irish than there are in Belfast, more Scotch than there are in Aberdeen, and more Welshmen than there are in Cardiff. There is a birth every four minutes, and a death every six minutes. It contains, also, 90,000 paupers, many of whom would nobly contribute to support themselves had it not been for alcohol drinking.—Rev. C. H. GARDNER.

THE JAVA EARTHQUAKE.—M. Blanchard, of the Paris Academy of Sciences, says of this terrible event that it had been predicted in 1881, by M. Delannay who, in a paper read by him in that year, gave the probable date of the earthquake as August 2, 1883, just five days after it actually took place. In the same paper M. Delannay predicted a still more terrible catastrophe in 1889.

"Too Late! Too Late!"

IT IS CLEAR frosty morning, the bare branches of the trees draped in glittering robes of rime, the great sombre yew in the churchyard looking rarely beautiful in its winter bravery. Here and there a hoary oak crowned with festive mistletoe, the hedge-roses beguemed with earliest berries, the holly copious, merrily, the joy-bells ringing out cheerily, the snow, and the sun shining overhead.

So thought the man sitting crossly on the stile in Jessop's field, watching, apparently, the

people going to church. He had been absent twenty years, but was still in the prime of life. Handsome, too, was Stephen Glover—for that was his name—with brown curling hair and deep blue eyes, in which the laughter of his boyhood yet lurked. Presently an expression of disappointment stole over his face. Young and old trooped by, giving him only a momentary glance as they passed. None had recognized him: A keen pang shot through his heart. Had he come home for this? An aged man, leaning on the arm of a sturdy boy, and followed by a woman respectfully dressed in mourning, leading two little girls, also in black, came towards him. Surely John Doncaster would remember him? No, he passed on too. The bells, how they rang as they

till night. But he had returned from Australia a rich man, with money enough to buy any two farms in the parish, and the thought of his doing everything that was bad of him would alter their time now.

Roger was getting old when he went away, and if he had married Janet Doncaster they must have found it difficult to make the two unite meet after the exchange and hand were sold. What was that to him? he asked himself fiercely. They could go to the workhouse for all he cared. That, however, had undergone a strange change; the laughter died out from the eyes, the lips closed firmly; the frankness disappeared; the evil passions rampant within showed themselves plainly.

The bells gave a final ring, and then ceased ringing.

"Why should not he go to church? He had not been for years, and a foolish atheist held him back; only a moment, however, and he entered the sacred edifice."

"What was this met him at the door?" "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

His conscience gave a great start; it was so long since it had made itself heard. He looked around as if in a dream. There were graceful wreaths of ivy and winter berries turned round the altar pillars—vervay fair hands had been very busy in making these wreaths—the chancel was a very tower of greenery; the pulpit was garlanded with flowers and evergreens; the font was hidden in mosses and snowdrops; the sun streamed in through the many-coloured windows enriched with pictures of saint and martyr, flooding the aisle with a subdued light. He drew a deep breath. He had forgotten; it was Christmas Day!

The service had commenced. He took a book some one offered to him, and opened it:—

"I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

How the old days came back to him, when he had listened there to the ancient words, standing side by side with Roger

—he hardly reaching to his brother's elbow—when he, approving smile was drawn to him then and sought for.

"Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild: God and sinners reconciled."

The rector ascended the pulpit. How old he had become! His locks were scarce and silver, his back bent, his voice, once so mellow, low and indistinct; but as he went on he gathered strength.

Reconciliation, peace, and joy! How could he but be eloquent? Stephen listened to every word.

The rector's home had been dwelt many years before, but the sorrow of that time still found utterance whenever trouble visited the humble cottage of his neighbour; and as he



"FAIR HAIRD HAD HER EYES THAT IN MAKING THREE WEIGHIN'."—See page 21.

had rung years and years ago, when he had parted in anger from his only brother. Well, it Roger was a good fellow, upright and conscientious, he was terribly stern, as he had often experienced to his cost. Was he to be blamed because he grew tired of the dull home where duty required expense? Was it to be wondered at that he had sought other companionship, and that his youthful spirit had led him into scenes where pleasure ruled the hour? A thousand times no! Where was the harm? His brother was many years older than he. He should have had patience with him instead of being so hard. How like a freed prisoner he had felt when at last the little property their father had left them divided, he had gone out into the world—the world of which he knew nothing. What a struggle it had been at first in that far-off land! Work, work, from morning

to night.

