THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.

No. 244. A FRENCH WORKWOMAN.—"One of the French Fishermen."—*See page 28.*

New Year Steps.

NEW Year's Day. Once more we are forming good resolutions. Once more we make up our minds to leave the ugly past behind and start afresh. On slip the hours and days, and there still are the old faults and failings. The change we expected has not come. The battle with evil is too hard. We are discouraged. Listen to the story of a traveller and take heart:—

It was midwinter as a traveller made his way along a bleak and desolate road. The traveller was a man of middle age, with poor and scanty clothing. His face was pale and somewhat careworn; but withal his face wore a happy expression. I had lost my way in what seemed to me a trackless desert, when I met him.

"Friend," said I, "can you guide me to the town?"

"Yes," answered my new-found friend "for I am bound for it. I have been travelling many days alone, and shall be right glad of a companion."

After a little pleasant conversation, I asked the traveller to tell me a little of his journey, which he did right willingly, and commenced thus:—

"It is just fourteen days since I left my home, or what has been my home for long years, till I was tempted to leave it owing to a paper which fell into my hands, and in which I read of the prosperity and plenty that abounded in a neighbouring town. I have here in my wallet letters, promising me good wages and plenty of work on my arrival; but my new master, in his letter, bade me think well before I ventured on so long and dangerous a journey.

"For the first three days all went well. On the fourth day I found myself in the midst of a vast forest, in which there were many paths, and it was hard to find the right one. By some mistake I took a wrong one, and as night came on I found myself alone in the forest. Calling to mind the many stories I had heard from my boyhood of the wild animals that abounded in the forest, I climbed into a tree for safety. As the night crept on, on all sides was to be heard the roaring of wild animals, and as the dark clouds lifted and the silvery moon shone forth I discovered with horror a lion crouching near at hand. The sight of its eyes fixed on me made my blood run cold.

"Fascinated, I gazed on it, and offered up a prayer that my life might be spared. After what seemed a long and weary time, the lion disappeared into the dark forest. The blessed daylight came at last. Frozen and hungry, with cautious steps I sped on my way, and, after some hours walking, saw the welcome sight of smoke curling into the air, and took courage. Not far off, in a miserable hut, I came on three men, who made me welcome in their rough fashion; but their countenances were ill-pleasing. After eating a hasty meal I prepared to depart, when rough hands grasped me, and robbed me of my small store of money, bidding me quickly depart, or worse ill would happen, and one man at the same time held a pistol towards me. Thinking of what had happened as a bad dream, I went on my way with an aching heart. Starvation and death seemed near at hand. After many miles of weary walking I lay down to sleep under the shelter of a half-fallen hut. The morning broke, and near me, with wide-open, wondering eyes, stood a child, a boy of some six summers, with a face fair and beautiful as one might picture an angel's, with its love and its pity. In his tiny hands he held food—food which I thankfully took, and still the beautiful child watched me wonderingly. Then, in low, lisping tones, he murmured:—

"'Stranger, the good God has sent you this food, and here too is my little money for you.' And in my hands he placed a piece of silver. Later in the day the child's good father guided me some distance. On, on I journeyed. The child's silver gift was spent, and I knew the way yet to be long. Once again sorrow and despair crept into my heart, when, in the distance, the curling smoke told of hope, and ere long I found myself in a small village, the inhabitants of which fed and lodged me for charity. Bless them for their goodness! Here I sold my good clothing, and got in exchange these tattered garments and a little money. Light-hearted, once again I resumed my journey. On I travelled, over roads covered with stones—stones that cut my feet and made them bleed. My courage was growing faint when I met you; but now, please God, together we shall reach the town, difficulties and dangers safely past and the wished-for goal gained."

Reader, like the traveller, take courage, persevere in well-doing, climb away from the lion in your path—lions of temptation and wrong-doing. Be brave if misfortunes should come. Rejoice when love is shown you; steel not your heart against it. Doubtless angel-faced children will visit you this New Year with messages of love; welcome them kindly. Be thankful for all kindness your neighbours may show you. If "tattered garments" should be your lot, lose not courage. Press ever on—on to the goal; and in the desert of the new, untrodden year, like the traveller, take a friend's hand (it is a lonely journey without a companion) and together try and reach on to the goal, the goal of perfect rest and peace in the Home beyond, and to the gaining of which each well spent year is one step nearer.

G. H.

Reproaches.

No! I'll not blame them. God doth know,
And He all hearts doth see.
God has forgiven: He tells me so.
I fall on bended knee
In prayer to Him. He understands
All sin, all tears, all woe,
And I would face His grave commands
Rather than man—stern foe.

Earth sees but dimly: Heaven reads aright;
Thank God! that it is so. For they who blame,
One day will see with angel's sight—
Will breathe in love, not scorn, my name.
So while on earth I toil, O! for my on.
Taunt, sneer, reproach, it is my lot;
I'll trust to duty's claim. And God's dear Son
Will lead me, tenderly, where foes are not.

CICELY POWELL.

Her Mission in Life.

BY

ALICE KING,

Author of "Fettered yet Free," "Queen of Herself," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARTED.

AFTER a long talk that evening with Lucy and her mother, John wrote a letter to his father. He said that he would give up all thoughts of marriage for the present, but that his mind had been too much saddened and unsettled by what he had lately gone through for him to go back to the old life at Beechcombe; he therefore asked his father to give him a little help in the way of money which would enable him to look for some employment which would suit him elsewhere. He would, however, go home for a few days to take leave of his parents and Winnie, and during his short stay his father and he should mutually agree to say nothing about the disputed matter. He added that he could not cease to love Lucy, and that he trusted his patient waiting would in time bring his father to receive as a daughter the woman of his choice.

This letter was quite as favourable to old Hardwick's wishes as he had expected, for he had never anticipated that his son would give way at once entirely. When he had considered a little the idea of John living away from home for a while, he made up his mind that most likely it would work in the end towards the fulfilment of his own will, and so he determined to agree to it.

"Let 'im knock about in the world for a few months," he thought. "'t'will bring 'im to his senses quicker than anything will. He'll pretty soon find the difference between that sort of thing and what he's been accustomed to. A poor job enough he'll make of his life taking it into his own hands. I should like to know what he'll do without me to come to every morning to settle where he be to go and what he be to do. Why the plough may as well try to go to work without the horse."

In order that absence might have more quickly and effectually the desired result with John, the farmer resolved that his son should not return to Beechcombe even for the proposed few days.

"If he don't see sight at all of Winnie it will make 'im long the more for her, and that longing will be another cord to draw 'im back to home and to a sensible life with us."

His decision on all these points was made known by the farmer to his son, and with the same letter he sent him the money for which he had asked.

As for Mrs. Hardwick, she gave as usual a grumbling assent to her husband's opinions in everything, only adding "that there was not much use after all in making such a to-do about John being freed from this precious beauty, since no sooner would he have done with her than he would be sure to pick up with another."

The friendly tone of his father's letter was no small comfort to John Hardwick's peace-loving nature. It gave him a sharp pang not to see Winnie again, and yet it was a relief to him to know that the meeting with his father was put off for the present.

The parting between John and Lucy came very soon. She saw no use in keeping her lover dawdling about at Woodford; it was only putting off the evil day, a practice she never approved of, and so she urged him to go, and he, feeling she was right, complied with her will. John was to go to Bristol to look for employment. They were to exchange letters when they had time to write.

"Hope, and be strong as a man should be," she said, when the time came for him to go, "and cling to the good ways you have begun with God, and stand up for the right and be true to me as I will be to you, come what may."

"Oh, Lucy, if only my father and mother could see you, and learn to know you as you are, without looking at you in the crooked fashion that they think of you now!"

"Perhaps some day I shall make my way into their hearts."

"It's a far off time, I'm afraid, Lucy dear."

"We must keep the bright side of our thoughts uppermost," she said, smiling, though it was very hard to restrain her tears. "And, John, think of me always when you look at this handkerchief; when I hemmed it for you I believe I worked a little bit of my love in with every stitch."

Gently the strong hands took the little womanly gift and laid it on his heart. Then he stooped and kissed her as she sat at work.

All the while they had been talking she had been busy over a print dress she was making. An instant after, he was gone. The tears might fall now, and the lilac print was wet. The days went and came as usual in the cottage, though John Hardwick was no more seen there. Lucy had no time to sit down and dwell upon her troubles. The floor had to be swept, the dinner had to be cooked, the children had to be taught, the needle had to be plied, that hunger might be kept from the door.

Men and women of the working classes do not know what a priceless blessing they possess in days of bereavement and sorrow beyond those of higher rank in the very necessity for constant toil.

Yet still the poor girl suffered many a heart-ache. Sad thoughts were with her of her lover when she woke at night and saw the stars through the little uncurtained cottage window, and wondered whether the sky looked the same in the crowded smoky town where he was. Sad thoughts were with her of her lover when she prayed, and she knelt longer to ask for guidance for him among those new temptations into the midst of which he was gone. Sad thoughts were with her of her lover in the evening hour, at which he used to come, and the question would cross her mind wearily, "When shall I hear his step again?"

What seemed to her the worst part of her position was, that there did not appear to be the slightest chance of any change in it. What was to alter the hard old man who was so sternly set against her? Nothing, as far as she could see, within the range of common probabilities. There was every likelihood that this day five years, if

she lived, she might be exactly as she was now—an unmarried woman, yet with a wife's heart; separated from the man she loved, yet with his image ever at her side.

Of course the death of John's father, whenever it happened, would break down the barrier between the lovers. But Farmer Hardwick was a strong man for his age, and as likely to live for ten years as his son. Besides, Lucy was a girl of too good feeling not to shrink from looking forward for her happiness to a period which would be a sad one for John.

When Lucy thought of the hopelessness which thus seemed to overshadow young Hardwick's future and her own, she would often sigh, and say to herself almost the same words which she had once used to John, yet without the cheery ring in them which there had been then—

"If only I could find my way into his parents' hearts!"

Naturally enough the neighbours talked about Lucy Burnell quite as much now as they had done when John Hardwick began his wooing.

"I'll tell'ee how 'twill be. Some bright morning Lucy Burnell will be found wanting, and she'll have gone and a' slipped off after her lover to Bristol," said the good lady who kept the little shop at the corner, where the children bought sweets, and who always knew this month what her friends were going to do next.

"I be main and sorry for her," cried the good-natured baker's wife. "She was the prettiest, merriest girl in the parish; and now she'll be but a poor, deserted, desolate thing."

"I'm not sorry for her then," answered the miller's daughter, who had been at a boarding school; "she was always a girl I never could endure; she was so common in all her ways and ideas. The man's just played her the sort of trick she deserved, that's all."

"I just glimpsed Jenny Burnell's face as I come'd home from the barley field, yesterday," said a woman who had worked forty years on the same farm, and who was about a year younger than Lucy's mother, "and I could see, poor old soul, she looked dreadful cut. She's been failing this many a day, and at her age this will do for her, I reckon."

One well-known voice was absent from the chorus of maids and matrons this time, however. Mrs. Gooding had written to Woodford to say that all her furniture was to be sold, for she was going to live with her daughter in London.

Talk as they might behind her back, not a single word of the kind given above was ever uttered in Lucy's presence. There was an indescribable something about the girl—it might have been her unoffending gentleness, it might have been a touch of becoming pride, which made such gossip feel that she would sooner pass through the churchyard at midnight on Midsummer Eve than speak a syllable of pity or reproach or scorn to Lucy Burnell about her lover.

So Lucy went about just as usual in the village. Her place at church and Sunday-school was never empty. No act of kindness that it came in her way to do was neglected by her. She chatted daily with commonplace people about commonplace things.

And after a while the neighbours, who were many of them worthy folks in the main, though they had their faults, one of which was a too quick use of the tongue, a failing not confined to the women of Woodford alone, grew to speak more good words of her than bad ones, and the baker's wife ceased even to pity her when she saw that she could smile at any little joke she made when she came to pay for the bread.

Twice Lucy was caused great uneasiness by John not writing for a considerable space of time, though her letters to him went as usual at regular intervals. The first of these silences was almost immediately after he left, the other was somewhat later on. On both occasions, however, just as she was beginning to be most bitterly anxious, a letter from him reassured her. After that his correspondence with her went on steadily as before. He wrote sweet words of his lasting affection for herself, and spoke cheerfully of both his worldly and spiritual state. Lucy, on her side, in her letters asked why he had ceased to write for a time, but as he did not answer the question, she gave up, after a while, putting it. She was too loyal to her lover, and too unsuspicious to imagine any evil of him. Her naturally cheerful temper was always ready to take the best view of everything, and so she came to the conclusion that John had not written simply because he was too busy, no unusual case in Lucy's experience among men who worked with their hands, and she thought little more about the matter.

Lucy's next best friend to her God, in her trial, was her mother. The old woman did not talk a great deal to her of her trouble; on the contrary she seldom spoke to her of it, but there was in her manner a constant thoughtful tenderness which was to the girl's heart, as the soft wing of the parent bird to her young.

Had not the old woman loved and been wooed long ago in the dewy meadows when she went to fetch the cows, and had not her aunt with whom she then lived at first objected to the match because the young man was poor? Her daughter's youth was to her as their children's youth often is to parents, like reading over again the story of her own past, with here and there a few words changed in it.

A religious faith more perfected than that of her child by long struggling with trials and sorrow, made her more calm and restful about Lucy's future than the poor girl was herself. God will find a way for her out of this trouble, she thought, as he did for me out of all mine. Life is never all flowers or all thorns for any of us, and, when He makes the thorns grow up first, He sows the flowers afterwards. Thus time went on with Lucy. Autumn and winter glided past in slow procession, the one scattering yellow leaves, and the other snow and rain; then spring came again, the season in which she first saw her lover, and summer, the season in which he wooed her. The golden joy of harvest once more rang through the land, but the life of the girl in the cottage brought her no fruit of earthly happiness, except the pale buds of unfulfilled hope.

One winter morning, when Mrs. Burnell came back from some errand she had been to do in the village, she found Lucy standing a little apart from her infant-school, evidently very much interested in a letter she was reading. Her cheeks were slightly flushed, and there was an eager light in her eyes.

"Are any particular good news come from John?" asked the old woman, going up to her daughter, and speaking softly, that the little ones might not hear.

"The letter is not from John, it's from Aunt Judith."

"I should never have thought an old woman's letter could make you look as you do now," said the mother, smiling and patting her daughter's shoulder.

"Where do you think Aunt Judith has gone to live?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my dear; in some pleasant place, I hope. Wherever it be, Aunt Judith will be happy, she's one of them that always have fine weather within doors."

"She's changed from the turnpike, where she's been so long, to a gate on a hill, only three miles from Kilton. Just think, mother, of Aunt Judith being so near the place where John's parents live."

"Well, it is a rather strange falling out of things."

"Mother, do you think you could do without me for a little while?" asked the girl, seeming not to have heard the old woman's last words, and speaking abruptly, as though the question sprang from a sudden thought which had risen up within her.

"Yes, of course I could; my old eyes and hands b'ant quite worn out yet. But why do you ask this, Lucy?"

"I should like to go and stay with Aunt Judith a bit," answered the girl, her words coming out very quickly. "Think, mother, I should see the country he knows so well, and the village, and the outside of the farm he has so often described to me, and, perhaps, I might catch a glimpse of his father and his little Winnie."

The old woman looked at her rather doubtfully for some moments.

"Be'es sure there wouldn't be many heartaches for you in going into such a neighbourhood, my child?" she asked.

"There would be more pleasure than pain for me, mother."

"Well, dear, I think after all I can understand that you should have a fancy for going there, and I daresay the change may put new thoughts into your head, that will do you good. Besides, a talk with Aunt Judith is as good as medicine for any one that be not easy in mind."

"I can pay for my journey with the money I've saved for a new winter dress and cloak; I must stick the closer to work when I come back to make it up again."

"That's good money to pay for a journey with, my child. What's gained by honest work always brings a blessing."

"And you really think you can do without me? Oh, mother, it will be like waking from a dream, to find it true for me to see his house that I'm so often trying to fancy."

That afternoon Lucy wrote to Aunt Judith, telling her her wish. An answer quickly came back to say that Aunt Judith would be delighted to receive her niece, who had a very warm place in her heart. She knew, through letters, the girl's little story, and she at once fully understood why she wished to stay with her. Of course, no one at Kilton would think of connecting the new turnpike-keeper at the gate three miles off with that person vaguely described in village talk as John Hardwick's young woman down in Devonshire. So they would have nothing to fear from curious gossip during her visit.

(*To be continued.*)

A New Year.

Why do we greet thee, O blithe New Year?
What are thy pledges of mirth and cheer?
Comest, knight-errant, the wrong to right,
Comest to scatter our gloom with light?
Wherefore the thrill, the sparkle and shine,
In heart and eyes at a word of thine?

The old was buoyant, the old was true,
The old was brave when the old was new.
He crowned us often with grace and gift;
His sternest skies had a deep blue rift.
Straight and swift, when his hand unclasped,
With welcome and joyance thine we grasped.
O tell us, Year—we are fain to know—
What is thy charm that we hail thee so?

Dost promise much that is fair and sweet—
The wind's low stir in the rippling wheat,
The waves' soft plash on the sandy floor,
The bloom of roses from shore to shore,
Glance of wings from the bowery nest,
Music and perfume from east to west,
Frosts to glitter in jewelled rime,
Blush of sunrise at morning's prime,
Stars above us their watch to keep,
And rain and dew, though we wake or sleep?

These, O Year, we shall have from thee,
For the thing that hath been aye shall be,
Sowing and reaping, from seed to sheaf,
The waiting long and the fruitage brief.
What beyond is thy guerdon bright
To us who stand in thy dawning light?

Canst drop a balm into sorrow's heart
Till the aching wound forgets to smart?
Canst comfort the mother when tempests beat
On a mound with stones at head and feet?
Canst fill with courage the weary soul,
And give the penitent bliss for dole?
Thus other years have been rich in grace,
Have dried the tears on the furrowed face.
O, day by day, and from sun to sun,
Wilt thou, good Year, do what they have done?

A whisper, such as an angel drops
When over a cradled babe he stops:—
It says: "Oh, never to grief or pain,
To anguish or yearning, loss or bane,
Hath any such ease to bring as Time.
Listen, how softly my joy-bells chime.
So, out of the winter and through the snow,
The New Year's promises flash and glow."

Once more a voice, and I hear it call
Like a bugle note from a mountain wall;
The pines uplift it with mighty sound,
The billows bear it the green earth round;
A voice that rolls in a jubilant song,
A conqueror's ring in its echo strong;
Through the ether clear, from the solemn sky
The New Year beckons, and makes reply:

I bring you, friends, what the years have brought
Since ever men toiled, aspired, or thought—
Days for labour, and nights for rest;
And I bring you love, a heaven-born guest;
Space to work in and work to do,
And faith in that which is pure and true.
Hold me in honour and greet me dear,
And sooth you'll find me a happy Year.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

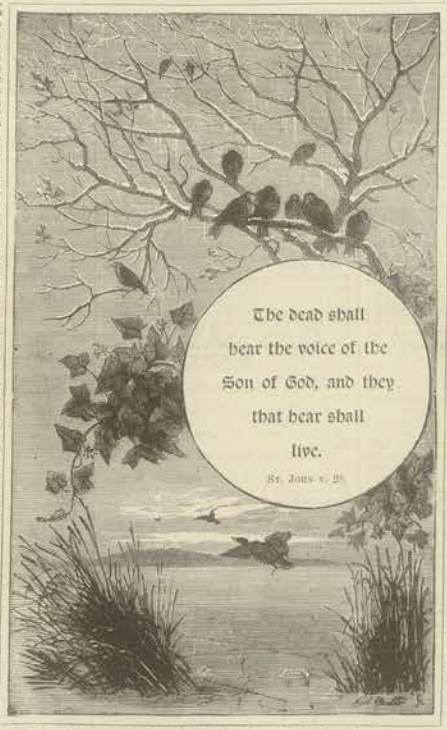
Thoughts on the Life of St. Peter.

XIII.

Peter's Visit to the Empty Tomb, and Christ's Visit to Peter.—St. John xx. 1–10; St. Luke xxiv. 33–34.

WE last considered the sad story of Peter's denial, followed by his repentance. It is remarkable that we lose sight of Peter at the Cross. John was there, and Mary was there, but not Peter. There is little doubt that he could not bear to witness his Lord's agony, with the terrible thought in his heart that he had added to his Master's burden of woe. Peter's heart must have been smitten indeed, and a sore day must that have been to him when he knew that his Lord hung upon the tree. It is true for each one of us that we have been among the number who wounded Christ—for our sins nailed Him to the Cross. The broken bread of our Holy Communion Service teaches us this. A portion of that broken bread is given to each one, for each one has had his part in bruising Christ. But it is blessed to know that it is by His bruising that we are healed.

The first day of the week dawned, and before the rising of the sun there were some who found their way to the Lord's tomb—women who desired to anoint the blessed body of the Master (St. Mark xvi. 1, 8). How little did these women expect to find the stone rolled away, and the tomb empty! They sought a *dead* Christ, and behold He was risen! Our special point here is the message of the risen Saviour, in which Peter is mentioned. "Tell my disciples and *Peter* that I am risen from the dead" (v. 7). It was not tell *John*, tell *Mary*, but "tell *Peter*"—the one who had sinned so sorely, and who might have thought that his Lord would never look at him or speak to him again—"tell *Peter*." Oh! what love this was! In that beautiful little chapter which tells us much of what love can do and *will* do—13th of 1st Corinthians—we read, "Charity suffereth long and is kind;" "Charity beareth all things." Such was the love of Christ. He had borne all that Peter had done against Him, and He did not give Peter up for a moment. If any one offends us how quickly we turn from them, and how long is it, perhaps, before we forgive them! One little word is enough sometimes, and we are offended. How should we learn here of the spirit of Christ! He had put away Peter's sin—Peter had repented, and the Lord had "blotted out" his sin. Peter seems to have received tidings of his Lord's resurrection first of all from Mary Magdalene, who came running to tell him and St. John of the empty tomb. Peter and John then visit the grave; John is there first—he is always supposed to be the *younger man*—and stands looking in. Peter, however, true to his character, *goes into* the tomb. There was no *fear*. Many might have trembled to enter a tomb. But CHRIST had been *there*, and all *fear* was gone. It is just this which has done away with the fear of the grave. Those who love Christ do not fear to lie down where He has lain. "O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57). Peter learnt his first lesson of victory over death when he entered Christ's empty tomb; and it meant that more than he knew. It meant that every other grave should be empty too one day. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (St. John v. 28). If Christ had not risen, no one of us could hope to rise again. Christ broke the power of death when He came forth from the grave a great Conqueror upon that Resurrection morning. St. John "*believed*" and himself tells us so. We are not told that Peter did also; but Peter would soon see for himself the Face of his risen Lord. It is most interesting to note that Peter had a special little visit from Christ to himself alone. It is only mentioned in St. Luke xxiv. 34, and 1 Cor. xv. 5. Just the fact is mentioned, but we are not told anything about that visit to Peter. It seems as if it were too holy, too solemn to be spoken of. Peter had turned his back upon his Lord, but the Lord's first thought after His resurrection seems to have been to seek him out. It was wonderful love. No doubt the Lord knew that Peter longed for one word, one look. The language of his heart might well have been, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant" (Ps. cxix. 176); or again, "Be not silent unto me, lest if Thou be silent unto me, I become like unto them that go down into the pit" (Ps. xxviii. 1.) How graciously was Christ ready to break the silence between Himself and Peter! If anyone has grieved us, it sometimes takes us a long time before we will break the silence. Time goes on, and the one person will not speak to the other. This is not *like* CHRIST. Christ would rule Peter by love, and love conquered. We may be very sure that Peter never felt his sin so deeply as in that moment when he felt himself to be forgiven by his Lord, the Lord he had denied, the Lord who had poured out His blood that sinful men and women might receive forgiveness and acceptance as Peter did that day. What do we know of CHRIST'S FORGIVING love? M. E.



A French Workwoman.

OUR large engraving represents one of the French fisherwomen at her stall in the market of Boulogne, as sketched from the life for us by Mr. Davidson Knowles. The French fisherwomen are an industrious class, frugal, hard-working, and leading, as a rule, exemplary lives. They are busy fishing and dredging with their nets when not offering for sale the results of their industry, and one of the pleasant sights in the great French town is the streets of fisherwomen of all ages passing and repassing constantly in the crowded streets.

OLD COINS.—A few weeks since a sovereign was sold by Messrs. Sotheby, in London, by auction, for £100. It was of the reign of Edward VI., and is presumed to be the second best known. This famous coin bears the likeness of the King seated on his chair of state. Many other coins were sold for high prices. A sovereign of Henry VII., with the King seated under an ornamented canopy, realized £81; another of Henry VIII., once in the Murchison cabinet, £21; a thirty-shilling piece of James I., fine and rare, £11 17s. 6d.; and a noble or "spur rial," bearing a design of His Majesty standing in a ship, £13 10s. Another specimen of the latter coin sold for £9 2s. 6d. only, being cracked. A half-sovereign of "Good Queen Bess" brought £6 2s. 6d.; a milled crown of the same reign, described as "a little gem," £18. A cracked silver Anglo-Saxon penny was disposed of for £1 13s.; another in perfect condition, of the time of Athelstan, was briskly competed for up to £7 5s.; and a London silver penny of Edward IV. realized £3.

Nellie's Lesson.

NELLIE, where are you?"

The question was asked by a tidy-looking woman who was standing at her cottage door one summer's day. Such a pretty cottage it was, with wide latticed windows, and from the front door, now open, Mrs. Gray could throw a stone, if she liked to do so, on the beach on to which the little garden gate opened.

No answer came, and Mrs. Gray walked down the little garden path, and opening the gate looked out all ways, shading her eyes as she did so from the glare of the mid-day sun which was beating full and strong on the south coast village of Rockhaven.

"Where can Nellie be?" said Mrs. Gray, and her question, uttered half aloud, referred to her only child, Nellie, who was born just two months before Mrs. Gray had been left a widow.

Presently up came the child in question. A pretty-looking little girl of some ten years of age, with a bright intelligent face and big blue eyes.

"Where were you, Nellie?"

"Down under the big rock, mother," said Nellie, whose holidays were being spent just then chiefly in running about bare-foot on the soft warm sands and amusing herself in her own fashion. This Mrs. Gray was very glad she should do, but all the same she did not like the amount of time Nellie spent in idling, and she made a remark to that effect.

"Idling, mother—is it any harm?"

"Yes, child, have I not told you so often?" said Mrs. Gray, as she marched Nellie into the cottage and showed her that it was past the time for their usual mid-day meal.

"Yes, mother, I know you have told me so," said Nellie, "but it's different in holiday time."

"Rest is not idling, Nellie, and after all your work at school, said I must say you're a good girl there, play and rest are good for you. Folks couldn't get on without rest, but wasting time and idling about when there's other things to do, and they feel they've rested enough, is wicked-sense to my mind. What were you doing all the morning?"

"Nothing, mother."

"And yesterday afternoon?"

Nellie did not answer. She knew she had spent yesterday afternoon sitting on a rock doing nothing.

"Have your play and run, but don't idle," said Mrs. Gray. "Nellie, you should know better. You know all Miss Eaves teaches you at Sunday School about time and the value of it, and Nellie it is not pleasing to God that you should idle. Think of that, my girl."

Nellie did think of it, and for some days she seemed really to improve. Mrs. Gray saw that she took plenty of exercise and enjoyed her holiday rest, but at the same time employed the interim usefully.

"Nellie," said Mrs. Gray one day, "here's the postman coming up the garden path—run and see what he brings."

Nellie obeyed, and soon brought back a letter which Mrs. Gray found contained a Post Office Order, some money returned by her sister, to whom she had lent it, and who lived in London.

"It has come handy," said Mrs. Gray, "now I can pay Mr. Lock for the calico I got last week and which I didn't like owing. Nellie, you mind the place carefully this afternoon while I go to Rockhaven."

"Can't I go, too, mother?" said Nellie, who dearly liked going into the village, and, above all, to the post office, which was the centre of all the village excitement. Everyone went there, for, besides being a post office, it was a huckster's, draper's, and grocer's shop, all in one.

"No, Nellie, you must stay in," said Mrs. Gray, "and mind you watch that the fire don't go out, and the cat don't do any mischief."

"I will, mother," said Nellie.

"And learn your Sunday-school lesson for to-morrow, and don't waste your time," said Mrs. Gray, as she left Nellie in charge that sunny afternoon.

Nellie learnt her lesson carefully, and then, closing the book, she looked around. There were her stockings for Sunday that needed mending, but Nellie felt too lazy to do them, and, as several things occurred to her mind, she dismissed them all and decided not to do anything. Pussy wanted some milk; she would give her some.

So, after getting the milk, Nellie placed the saucer near the door and stood watching the cat drink it. Pussy was some time over her milk, and Nellie's eyes strayed from her and she looked out towards the sea, and was very soon lost in a day-dream. Standing there with her arms crossed behind her back, the cat at her feet lapping up the milk, and the flowers on the table standing in the window, Nellie made rather a pretty picture.

The minutes passed, and the half-hour was struck by the wheezy old kitchen clock, and still Nellie stood there perfectly idle. Pussy finished her milk and walked off, and in about an hour Mrs. Gray returned and found Nellie.

"Doing nothing, Nellie!" exclaimed Mrs. Gray.

Nellie started. She had been quite unconscious of the way the time had passed, and was astonished to see how low the sun was in the heavens.

"And what is that smell? Oh, Nellie, when I told you to look after the fire."

Nellie followed her mother into the kitchen, and saw that Pussy was asleep on a chair before the fire, which was just out, and some muslin curtains, which Mrs. Gray had been sent to starch, had been thrown down, and a large hole burnt in them by the falling of a cinder.

Mrs. Gray said very little, for Nellie looked so penitent, and she saw that the lesson was one that would not soon be forgotten.

Poor Nellie! when she saw her mother working hard to gain a few extra pence so as to enable her to replace the curtains spoilt by her carelessness, she felt as if she had learned a lesson on wasting time that she never could forget.

Miss Eaves heard the story from Nellie, and was very sympathising about it, and later on assisted Mrs. Gray by giving her a little help towards getting the curtains, which happened to be expensive ones.

And on Nellie's birthday she gave her a beautifully illuminated card to hang up in her room. Have you seen any like it, readers? On it were the words—

"Lost!
Between sunrise and sunset
A Golden Hour!"

It often reminds Nellie of the value of time. Time that, once lost, can never be regained.

L. E. Dennis.

"STOOD WATCHING THE CAT DRINK."—See Page 23.

Concentration.—Go out in the spring when the sun is yet far distant, and you can scarcely feel the influence of his beams, scattered as they are over the wide face of creation; but collect those beams into a focus, and they kindle up a flame in an instant. So the man who squanders his talents and his strength in many things will fail to make an impression in either; but let him draw them to a point, let him strike at a single object, and it will yield before him.

Drink v. Dress.

One dull November afternoon Mrs. Chandler went out to clean her front doorstep. Though not yet four o'clock it was nearly dark, that damp, foggy day; and Mrs. Chandler had chosen the hour because she didn't want the neighbours to see how shabby her clothes were getting. She had her Sunday clothes, it is true; but, of course, they couldn't be worn during working hours, and all the other things Mrs. Chandler possessed had lately become very shabby indeed.

Last spring Mrs. Chandler had said—

"I must get myself a new morning gown now the fine weather is coming on."

"Quite time you had one," remarked her husband, "that old rag——"

"Does well enough for the kitchen, but I do like to look respectable when I run out to the shops."

But the summer came and went, and so did the autumn, and Mrs. Chandler was still wearing the "old rag," or dresses which could be similarly described. Somehow there were always so many things to be got on Saturday evening that Mrs. Chandler never had any money left for dress either for her children or herself. Robert Chandler was a bricklayer, and had been in work all the summer; still money was a very scarce article at 23, Palmira Street. True, there were six children, and rather heavy taxes, but then Robert was a hard-working man who had never had a drop too much in his life, while his wife was the most industrious woman in Palmira Street.

So in an old gown, and still older boots, Mrs. Chandler came out to clean her doorstep in the November twilight. At the same time Mrs. Williams, of number 21, returned from a walk with her children. They were all respectably dressed, and the mother was carrying a large brown paper parcel.

"We've been to the linendrapers," said Mrs. Williams, "getting materials for winter dresses, which I'm going to commence making this very evening."

"Some people are fortunate," remarked the other.

"Well you deserve to be; I never knew a woman work harder than you do."

Which was true; yet when Mrs. Chandler went to market that evening her money was all gone after she had bought her provisions, groceries, &c. Her husband, her children, and herself required many new things; but at all events they couldn't have them that week.

"Robert," said Mrs. Chandler the next day, "I wish I could earn a few shillings somehow. Your wages are not sufficient for our wants, though I am sure I'm as careful as I can be."

"You are, but what do you want more money for?"

"I don't like to see the children so shabby; you want a new Sunday hat——"

"And what do you want?"

"Almost everything, I'm afraid. I might do a little needlework; but then, you see, I'm busy all day, and have a great deal of mending and darning to get through in the evening."

"You strain your sight too much already. I don't know what you can do unless you take a lodger. The Browns do it."

"They have no children, and their house is smaller than mine. I'll think about it. A single man wouldn't give much trouble, and it would be all profit."

Once having the idea of a lodger in her head, Mrs. Chandler couldn't get rid of it. As things were, she hadn't rooms, or even a room, to let. But the boys could have a bed made up for them in the parlour. Mr. and Mrs. Chandler and the baby could have the boys' room; and the best bedroom in the house could be let at four shillings a week. Grand idea! Four shillings a week to spend in dress; not in finery, mind, but in clothing for them all. There was no need to put a card in the window; for Robert knew many single men in want of a respectable lodging.

He soon brought home Amos Page, a young man of about twenty, who was a brickmaker, and could at times earn over two pounds a week. Amos seemed to be a civil sort of young fellow, and gave little trouble. But how about the profit? Amos wanted his breakfast an hour sooner than Robert did, so there was extra coals burned; and, of course, they had to give the lodger soap, candles, clean towels, sheets, &c., so there wasn't much profit after all. Then Amos was not always sober on Saturday nights; his language was not always what Mrs. Chandler liked her children to hear. So the lodger had to leave.

"I'm not much better off for my lodger," said Mrs. Chandler to her neighbour, Mrs. Williams. "It may pay when you have two or three well-furnished rooms to let; but a single man, with partial board, costs about as much as he pays. How do you manage to get on so well?"

"We are all teetotallers in our house," remarked Mrs. Williams.

Mrs. Chandler was rather offended at this remark.

"As much as to say we drink?" she afterwards said to her husband.

"Why, I've never had a drop too much in my life!" exclaimed Robert.

"And I couldn't take less than I do, unless I gave it up altogether."

This set them thinking what they *did* take.

Mrs. Chandler had her half-pint at eleven o'clock, and her half-pint for dinner. She had a pint for supper—fourpence a day, two-and-fourpence a week.

Robert was accustomed to consume beer at various periods during his work, simply because he had always done so, and fancied he was better for it. Then, though he never kept late hours, or drank to excess, Robert *did* go to the public house in the evening. Going to the public house with a working man don't mean merely having a glass and coming out again. It means meeting mates, talking to mates, drinking with mates, going in to spend a penny or twopence and really getting rid of a few shillings. Then there are raffles, tickets for benefit concerts, testimonials to popular landlords; and I believe there are still such things as cards and skittles in the world, though gambling in public is prohibited by law. Then Robert Chandler often took home a quartern of gin to drink while he smoked his pipe after supper.

"No one can call me a drunkard," said Robert, one evening.

Mrs. Chandler was silent for a few moments; then she said—

"No, you are not a drunkard; no more am I. Still, I'm thinking we spend a great deal of money on drink."

"Money must go somewhere; I hate misers."

"But we have many wants. What a lot of money we should have for other and better things if we gave up drink altogether."

"Become teetotallers? You are talking nonsense."

Mrs. Chandler said no more, but from that day she ceased sending for beer for herself, and at the end of a few weeks was as able as Mrs. Williams to buy winter dresses for her children and herself. As the weeks went on Mrs. Chandler was not only able to buy things she really wanted, but was actually saving money.

"How smart you are all getting," exclaimed Robert Chandler one Sunday morning as they were going to church. "My coat's getting shabby, but I can't expect a new one before the spring, if even then."

"You can get a new coat," remarked Mrs. Chandler.

"How?"

"The same way as I have clothed the children and myself."

"Have you come into a fortune?"

"No. I drink nothing stronger than tea, and save accordingly."

For an experiment Robert went a week without drink, and his bodily health was certainly nothing the worse for seven days' abstinence.

"The habit once broken, why should I commence it again?" said Robert, looking at the extra money in his hand. "If I saved all this every week my appearance would always be respectable, and my home would have many comforts it now lacks."

"Here's to more drink and less clothes," says a drunkard's toast, but let us make up a motto for ourselves. What shall it be? I've an idea—"No drink and a respectable appearance." J. C. B.

Mrs. Wood's Mistake.

"HAVE you heard," said Mrs. Smith to her neighbour, Mrs. Wood, "that we are to have a visiting lady?"

"To have a *what*?" asked Mrs. Wood.

"A visiting lady — a district visitor, some calls it; anyhow, it's a lady who comes round to see us regular, and brings us tracts, and such like."

"And do you mean to say," said Mrs. Wood, "that you are going to stand that sort of thing; to have a lot of ladies poking and prying about your place, and expecting you to sit quiet and civil while they wastes your time and their own, preaching at you?"

"Well, I don't know; it can't be no pleasure to the lady to come and see us, and I'm sure some of the houses here about are not that clean as she need care to go poking about."

"Oh, nonsense, they like it;" replied her neighbour, "these ladies ain't got nothing to do, and they like playing at parson. No; if parson himself likes to come and see me he is kindly welcome, and I like a bit of good talk now and again, as well as most, but I am not agoing to have any visiting ladies, and so I shall take good care to let her know."

Some days passed, and Mrs. Wood had almost forgotten the dreaded visitor; when one afternoon there came a gentle tap at the door, and on opening it the district visitor stood before her. Now, Mrs. Wood had made up her mind that when the lady called she would not go to the door herself, but would send one of her children to say she was busy; but it was too late now, and she was obliged to stand for a few minutes and talk to the much abused district visitor, and she was surprised to find that, in spite of all her prejudices, she could not help acknowledging that the lady had a kind, sweet face, and a gentle voice. Then, too, she did not preach to her; but, as she left, she put into her hand a little book, saying—

"Perhaps you would like this little book to look at. I have found it very helpful to me, and I think you may do so too."

And Mrs. Wood took the book, for, as she said to her husband, "You couldn't refuse it when she put it like that, but," she continued, "I did not ask her in, and I don't intend to; though, I must say, I was rather surprised that she didn't walk in without being asked—I thought all them visitors did."

The months went on, and brought the winter with its frost and snow, and all Mrs. Wood's neighbours were full of the praises of Mrs. Owen, the district visitor. Many were the stories of her kindness. How, when Mrs. Lane's husband died she had helped her to get mourning for herself and her little ones; how she had found a place for Fanny Sparks, and went to see the girl every week that she might take news of her to her invalid mother; how, every Saturday, she took a bunch of flowers to poor little crippled Jimmy Ashdown, that his room might look bright on Sunday. But Mrs. Wood hardened her heart, and, though always respectful to Mrs. Owen, she still treated her as a stranger, and never asked her to cross her threshold.

But Mrs. Owen called just the same, and left the little books with the same sweet smile and kindly words; and one day she noticed that Mrs. Wood's eyes were red with weeping.

"Forgive me," she said hesitatingly, "I fear you are in trouble; please do not tell me if you would rather not, but I should be so glad if you would let me help you."

"Oh! it's nothing anyone can help about," said Mrs. Wood, ungraciously; "my husband is ill; he caught a bad cold, and the doctor says it's turned to congestion of the lungs." She did not add that she was also distressed about money matters, for there were no wages coming in, and her little savings were fast melting away to get nourishment for the sick man. Mrs. Wood had a horror of begging, and she feared that, if she mentioned this, Mrs. Owen might think she was asking for charity.

But there are some people who know things without being told, and Mrs. Owen guessed that it was not only anxiety for her husband that had brought that haggard, care-worn look to poor Mrs. Wood's face.

"I am so very, very, sorry for your trouble," she said gently; "it is so sad to see those we love suffer pain, and be unable to help them," and, with a few more kind words of sympathy, she left.

Hardly an hour had passed, however, before she was once more at the door, this time with a basket on her arm.

"I have brought a little jelly," she said, "which I thought your invalid might like."

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you, ma'am," said Mrs. Wood, stiffly, "but," she added, flushing hotly, "I did not mean to beg."

"Oh! no, please do not think I thought so, but I know how often sick people will eat a thing which comes as a surprise, and it will be a real pleasure to me if you will let me bring you some little thing every day."

Mrs. Wood did not answer, she was taking the things from the basket; a jug of strong beef tea, some jelly, and a bunch of hot-house grapes; but as she turned to return the basket her eyes were full of tears, and the sob which broke her voice as she tried to say "thank you," was more eloquent than any words.

The next morning Mrs. Owen came again, to find that the poor sufferer had had a very bad night and that his wife was worn out with watching.

"Now," she said, "You must let me sit with your husband while you lie down for an hour or two."

"Oh, indeed, ma'am, I couldn't. I am too worried to rest," said the poor woman, "and then the children would never be good with a stranger."

"Oh! but let me try, and I am sure I could manage them, and I know your little boy from seeing him at the Sunday School. "Willie," said Mrs. Owen, turning to him, "I want you to teach your little sisters how to thread beads," and she produced a box of bright coloured beads and some thread, "and see whoever makes a ring first shall have a sweetie," and giving a packet of sweets to Willie, she turned to his mother with a smile. "I think they will be good now," she said.

"Oh! yes, ma'am, that will keep them quiet for hours. I kept Willie at home to-day to look after the little 'uns a bit; he is a good little chap and does his best to help me."

"I wonder whether you could spare him for an hour or two in the morning," said Mrs. Owen; "I want a little boy to clean the boots, and do odd jobs for cook, who would come for about half-a-crown a week."

"Willie would be proud to come, wouldn't you, my boy?" said his mother, "if so be you think he would be big enough."

"I think he is just the little boy I want," said Mrs. Owen, "so let him come to-morrow morning as early as he can. And now may I go upstairs?"

Mrs. Wood felt as if it must all be a dream, as she found herself being comfortably covered up on the children's bed by the despised district visitor and heard her say—

"Now you must go to sleep and be quite sure that, if there is any occasion, I will call you at once; but I am going to read a little to your husband, and then, I trust, he may fall asleep."

And, when Mrs. Wood awoke, she found the sick man sleeping quietly, soothed by the gentle voice which had read to him of One who was ever gentle and merciful to the sick and the sorrowing.

The room had been dusted, the children dressed and sent out for a walk under little Willie's care, while on the fire a pot of soup boiled and bubbled merrily, ready for their dinner on their return; it had been saved, Mrs. Owen said, by her own children from their nursery dinner.

And this day was a sample of many following days; every morning till the sick man got well and was able to work again, Mrs. Owen was at her post, cheering and helping Mrs. Wood with her bright presence, and making her feel that she had indeed found a friend; and though no preaching was ever heard, yet Mrs. Wood found herself unconsciously drawn to that other Friend who has said "*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

At last the happy Sunday came, when Mrs. Wood went with her husband and children to the Parish Church, there to offer to God their "*praises and thanksgivings for all His mercies vouchsafed unto them.*"

And then Mrs. Wood went to see her neighbour, Mrs. Smith, and told her the whole story of his illness.

"There," she said, as she ended the account, "You heard all I said against visiting ladies, and it is only right you should know that I made a mistake, and that I am right down ashamed of it, that I am; but," she added, very gravely, "I'll be a better woman for the future, God helping me, and never again will I speak against them I know nothing of."

And she kept her word.

E. M. B.

"Served Them Right."

"Do you know, Jane, I've something to tell you; but stop till Sarah Hughes comes."

These words were whispered in the work-room of one of the principal shops in a northern city, a little before nine o'clock on Monday morning in the busy season, and there were about twenty workers assembled at the time. Presently a comely, modest-looking young woman made her appearance, and took the almost only vacant place there was on either side of the long, plainly-fashioned work-table.

"Here she is, Jane; late as usual," whispered the same speaker, "and now I'll tell you. Last week, though I stayed later than she did several evenings, her wages were nearly half-a-crown more than mine on Saturday. How could that be, Jane?"

"Oh, she's a deceitful, sneaking thing; always was. In with the forewoman, you know. That's how it's done, Mary."

"If I thought so, Jane, I'd pay her off some way, for I'm sure you or I can finish a mantle or a jacket quite as soon as she can."

"And sooner, you stupid," with an ill-natured sneer; "only she get's the best lots, for I've heard the forewoman say more than once that every stitch of her work can be depended on."

"And can't ours, Jane?"

"I should think so, rather," with a lofty smile; "but, hush; she's looking at us."

Plying their needles like just what they were—feminine sewing machines—the conversation, or rather gossip, now became general—that ceaseless exchange of small talk and meaningless chatter which is inevitably more or less common where a score of women and girls are sitting together hour after hour at the same monotonous toil.

But if Mary Crampton had dropped whispering at the request of her fellow-worker, Jane Turner, she had by no means forgotten the unsuspecting object of her remarks. On the contrary, she thought about her all day, and when, late at night, the workers were dismissed to their homes, she caught Jane Turner's arm (they resided in the same direction) and resumed the subject.

"I can't bear that proud, impudent puss, Sarah Hughes, Jane, after what you told me this morning," she began, trying to appear indifferent; "can't we do something to vex her, eh?"

"No use vexing *her*, Mary," answered the other, coolly; "she'd only laugh at you. Too stuck up to care about anything you or I could either say or do, unless we got her out of favour with the forewoman or Mr. Lambert." Mr. Lambert was the head shop manager.

"But how could we do that, Jane?" eagerly asked Miss Crampton, squeezing her friend's arm, and smiling as she spoke.

"Oh I don't know, Mary. Lots of ways. You think of something, and I'll tell you whether it will do or not. And now don't talk any more about Miss Hughes; I'm tired of her."

"Very well, Jane, I won't bother you. We'll speak about our own affairs." And so they did, all the way home, and for nearly half an hour after, though it would have been better for health and rest if they had not stood a needless minute in the cold night air.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday came, and Mary Crampton had not spoken again to her friend, Jane Turner, about Sarah Hughes. But she had been busy in her mind notwithstanding her prolonged silence. How to bring her enemy, as she invariably called the quiet inoffensive worker, who had never done her any harm even in thought, into disgrace with her employers, without herself or Jane Turner coming in for a share of the trouble, was the cruel problem she had set herself to solve, and which cost her hours of close, cunning, and puzzling study. Nor did it seem likely that her own unaided brain would hit upon a suitable contrivance by which to carry out her cruel purpose, when, on their way home again Jane Turner asked her carelessly if she had "invented any plan yet for pulling Miss Hughes down a peg or two?"

"No, I haven't, Jane, but I've been thinking of several."

"What are they like?"

"Oh, I don't know; they wouldn't do, so it's no use telling you."

There was a long pause.

"Do you think Sarah Hughes is *strictly honest?*" at length asked Jane Turner, with a malicious smile.

"Well—Jane, I couldn't—say for certain," was the hesitating response. "You don't fancy she isn't, do you, Jane?"

"Nay, *I* can't form any opinion, I'm sure, Mary. You know I never had anything to do with her, nor do I want to either."

Turning suddenly thoughtful, Mary Crampton, in a half absent tone, changed the conversation, and taking the hint, her friend Jane Turner did not again allude to Sarah Hughes.

It was Friday evening when, the rest of the workers having left, Mary Crampton and Jane Turner lingered behind for the ostensible purpose of mending an accidental rent in one of their garments, but really to execute a very clever little bit of female craftiness. And when, leaving the workroom and bidding the forewoman "good night," they got safely into the street, there might have been heard by any one near them one of those hollow, treacherous laughs, which can only come from wicked, designing hearts.

Strange, pitifully strange, that to be more industrious, active, and painstaking than one's fellow workers should be so often reckoned, if not a crime, at any rate a piece of unpardonable impudence. And so it was with Sarah Hughes. She liked work; it was a pleasure to her, but she detested with all her might, backbiting, slander, and idle, spiteful gossip, at all times; and last, not least, she was a young woman of very few words. Hence she was sneered at and hated by some, and admired and respected by many, while her willingness to oblige others or do any act of kindness that lay in her power caused even her foes to doubt sometimes whether they were not abusing and wronging a real true friend. But such doubts or misgivings never troubled Jane Turner, for she it was who secretly and falsely hated Sarah Hughes more than all the other workers combined. Exceedingly cunning and artful, she could hide her envy and malice while poisoning Mary Crampton's mind with evil insinuations and using her as a willing instrument for the accomplishment of what she of all things desired—Sarah Hughes's disgrace.

"How is this?" asked the forewoman, with a look of surprise that the worker had never seen on her face before, as she finished counting the pile of garments, previous to paying for them. "You're one jacket short, Sarah."

"Oh, then, I must have left it on the table, ma'am—wait a minute;" and Sarah Hughes returned into the workroom, feeling sure that the missing jacket was there. But alas! it was nowhere to be seen. "I don't know how it can be, ma'am," she stammered, reddening very much and trembling visibly. "I've brought all you gave me on Friday morning."

"Don't say that, young woman, or it will be worse for you." She had never called her "young woman," and as she did so then, a cloud of dark sorrow passed over her brow.

"I won't—I can't—say anything, ma'am," and poor Sarah Hughes looked as if she would like to drop through the floor.

"Very well. I'll pay you for these, but be sure you bring me the other one on Monday morning;" and taking her money, the worker went home, wondering greatly what could have become of the missing jacket.

Monday morning came.

"Have you found the jacket, Miss Hughes?" asked the forewoman, in a strange, distant voice, as she walked round the room to note who were present.

"No, ma'am, I cannot—I never——"

"Don't say a word, Miss, but keep your seat." And the speaker was downstairs and into the shop in a twinkling, where, after a few words with the manager, she was despatched to the police station, and speedily returned with a couple of officers.

"You, sir, go to this address, and search for a jacket like this one, and your comrade can wait here till you return."

In a short time the constable came back, and reported that no such article could be found, that the landlady of the house was awfully "cut up," and that the girl didn't seem at all poor.

"That makes the crime all the worse, officer. What will you do now?"

"Don't hurry—not too fast, sir. We must find something out before you talk about crime. Show us your workroom, please."

This was done, and telling the manager to retire, the constables began their inspection, while the workers began to make false or clumsy stitches, or to stare at the intruders without making any stitches at all. The men stroked their chins, looked at the walls and ceiling, exchanged mysterious signs and whispers, walked slowly down each side of the room, and even smiled at each other, when it seemed as if they had nothing else to do. But their eyes were busy all the while, stealing keen sharp glances at the rows of upturned faces, as if they would read their owners' inmost thoughts.

"It's no use, Jones," said one to the other carelessly, "all's right here. Nowhere to put anything, so we'll report according."

"Nothing but this ugly long table, Clark," added the other musingly. Then, as if by mere accident, though they both meant it, the officers fixed their eyes on Jane Turner and Mary Crampton.

"Good morning, ladies. You seemed interested in our visit, so we've been watching you a bit," said one. "Do you know why we're here?"

"No, how should *I*, you impudent fellow?" replied Jane Turner proudly.

"Perhaps some one's taken a jacket," suggested Mary Crampton, spitefully.

"Very likely; thank you, miss," responded the officer, with a peculiar smile. "Will you kindly all get up and stand back from the table till we overhaul it? Nay, don't meddle with it—don't be curious, young ladies." And in an instant the constables were standing beside Jane Turner and Mary Crampton, helping them out of their seats, and watching their movements very closely. "That will do. You take the other end, Jones, and we'll——What's this?"

It was one sleeve of the missing jacket that hung considerably below the board that went round the table.

"Should have been better stowed away, Jones," added the constable, dragging the garment from its hiding place quite coolly. "Go down and fetch the gentleman here."

The workers resumed their places, and the manager came.

"We pulled this, sir, from underneath the table top, just where these two young ladies are sitting. Will you charge anybody?"

"No, officers, not now; wait below till I come or send for you," and the constables retired.

Mr. Lambert was a conscientious, upright man, and seeing through the heartless trap, it affected him deeply. Holding in his hand a soiled slip of paper, he said sternly—

"This was found in the workroom after you had all left on Saturday, the writing is evidently disguised, and it casts suspicion on Sarah Hughes as having taken home a velvet jacket. No theft has been attempted, and I rejoice to know that the trick, the base, the inhuman trick to injure an innocent person, has thus failed. But I must and shall know who's guilty. Instead of hiding the jacket near Miss Hughes's seat it was found as you all saw just where Miss Turner and Miss Crampton work. Now I am unspeakably sorry that the doer or doers of such an act have been employed here a single hour. Mary Crampton and Jane Turner, lay aside your work and look at me."

They did so, pale and trembling.

"All these your fellow-workers," resumed Mr. Lambert, "and you yourselves, if innocent, are being wronged until this painful matter is cleared up. I beg you, therefore, Jane Turner, as a Christian friend, to answer my question truthfully. Do you know anything of how this jacket came to be fastened under the table?"

"I've had nothing to do with the jacket, sir."

"Quite sure?"

"Yes."

"Very well; to you, Mary Crampton, I put the same question."

The worker held down her head and breathed heavily.

"Don't fear the truth," pleaded Mr. Lambert, "but answer me quickly."

Still refusing to speak. "If you don't tell me all you know," he added, "I'll order the constables to take you to the lock-up."

"I—I hid the jacket, sir, to—spite Sarah Hughes, but—but Jane Turner put me up to it," and there followed such a scene of confusion and excitement as had never been witnessed in that workroom before. The two conspirators were instantly discharged and conducted off the premises by the forewoman, though Sarah Hughes pleaded for them most earnestly. She succeeded, however, in getting them work to do at home, and knowing the luxury of doing unto others as ye would have them do unto you, ultimately obtained them other situations. But the fair jury of workers who only know that Sarah Hughes is forewoman now, repeat their verdict as emphatically as ever: "SERVED THEM RIGHT!"

J. C.

Faith's Resting Place.

My Father God, I need that Thou,
Through all life's path should teach me how,
In times of trial, then and now,
To trust in Thee.

My faith is oft so very low,
That hellish doubts upon me grow,
Though I would never have it so,
But trust in Thee.

The way sometimes so dark appears,
That dying hope gives way to fears;
The only thing the prospect clears,
Is trust in Thee.

Power to trust cannot be mine,
It only comes as gift of Thine;
The peace it brings is then Divine,
By trusting Thee.

Life past has shown me what Thou art,
To those who seek the better part,
This shall but fix my wayward heart,
To trust in Thee.

GEORGE NORRIS WILLDMATT.