

# THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.









another sunny day. Let me know if you leave here before I see you again, because I won't call till I've kept my promise and proved my words," and with a sudden wave of his hand, and another earnest "Good-by, Bessie," the workman turned his steps homeward.

Nearly six months had elapsed since George Dawson had seen Bessie Leigh, but still he written to him, or sent any message of any sort, so that he actually began to wonder if she was still in the same place, or to fear that she might be ailing or in some trouble. "I think I'm safe now from public-house temptation and busy apoplexy," he said to himself with a contented smile, "as I'll just get my cheque ready and go round there to-morrow night and hear what she has to say."

Accordingly the following evening found the young workman at the parlour-side door again signalling his sweetheart to come and have a chat with him.

"Well, Bessie," he began, "how have you got along since I saw you?"

"Oh, all right, George. About the same you know. Are you better?"

"Don't I look so?"

"Yes," she answered, with a slight blush, "but why didn't you come round sooner?"

"Because I wanted to feel sure that I had mastered the public-house, and here's the proof, Bessie."

"Oh, ah!" exclaimed the maiden, disappointedly, "a piece of paper with some figures in it. Signing the pledge isn't any proof for me, George."

Bessie's savings were in the Postoffice, and she knew nothing about cheques.

"I haven't signed the pledge, lass. That's your cheque—holding it up—the one I promised to give you if you would accept of it. There, will you take it?"

"It's no use to me, man. What can I do with it?"

"Turn it into coils, rent, better boots, tea, beef—anything that's wanted to keep him on, Bessie."

"Nonsense, George, how can you say so?" and Bessie Leigh laughed heartily in spite of herself.

"No laughing matter, my pretty sweetheart; but let me tell you all about it. When I left my mind up to put every penny I used to take to the public-house into the bank instead, and having done so this bit of paper is the result. This cheque, Bessie, is worth just five pounds seventeen shillings and eight pence, so that I used to spend out of my poor earnings nearly five shillings a week on useless soap. Now will you have me?—Are you ready?"

"No, never."

"Well, I can do no more, lass," continued the workman dejectedly, "to show that I love you and mean to keep you comfortable life. Will you have me? You've no more a new man of me, and next week we'll have the knot tied that shall last us together for ever, Bessie."

"And you won't fall in love with the public house again, George?"

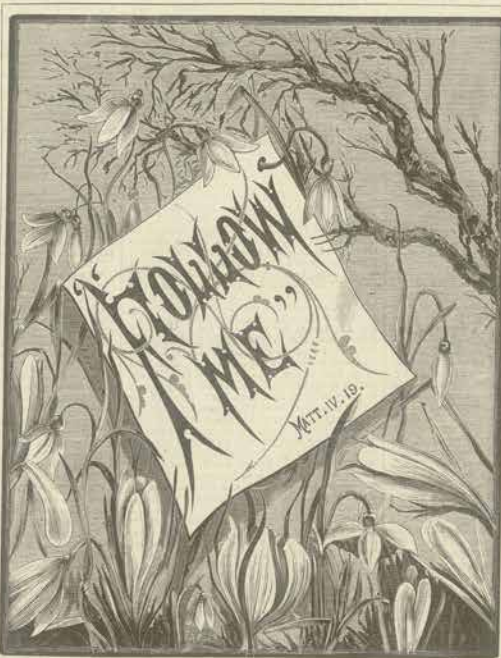
"No, my dear lass, but I will pray that other

workmen and workmen's wives may follow you and my example."

"And so will I, George, for mother said just before she died, 'Bessie dear, never marry a man who drinks!'"

Thus solemnly and with a clear conscience the young couple began the battle of life, owing nobody anything, save the Giver of all mercies and goodness.

VARIETY OF CHARACTER.—All is not attractive that is good. Iron does not sparkle like the diamond, yet it is useful. God has not the fragrance of a flower, yet it is valuable. So different persons have different grades of excellence, and to be just, we must have an eye for all.—WILLIAM FOX.



## Thoughts on the Life of St. Peter.

Its Coll.—St. Matt. iv. 19; St. Mark i. 16-18.



### II.

IN a former paper we considered Andrew's call to Peter to come to Christ, and we saw that Peter came to our Lord and saw Him and heard Him speak to him by name. It does not, however, seem that Peter followed Christ then. It is in St. John's gospel only that

we read of the first interview that Peter had with our Lord. St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us of the direct call given by Christ to Simon and Andrew, when, as they were busy with their fishing-net in their boats, he called to them and said, "Follow Me," and they "forsook their nets and followed Him." Now, these men must have thought very much of Christ, since that first day when they saw Him, but they hesitated to follow Him. They had seen Him, and heard Him, and they went back to their daily life and daily work of fishing on the lake. There had been some steps taken towards Christ, but *then there was a halt*. It is just so with some persons now. Some persons have touched them; some have had spoken to them. They are interested; they think they must begin to seek Christ; but they don't get on.

They say as a child, who, going to school, should learn his A B C and stop short there! There is just a beginning, there is a first step, but there is no second step. Now, why is this? You will remember the excuses given by the guests invited to the wedding feast in our Lord's parable (Luke xiv. 20), one said he had "bought a piece of ground," another said he had "bought five yokes of oxen," and another said he had "married a wife." These were the reasons given for refusing the king's invitation. There was nothing wrong in any one of these things in themselves, but they were hindrances to the men invited to the feast. There is nothing wrong in a man's being occupied in his daily work and business; on the contrary, we must work, and do it with their might, too! But when the business of this life so fills the heart and mind that there is no room left for God and Heaven, then it becomes a hindrance, then there is danger. It may be that Simon and Andrew's fishing-net had hindered them from following Christ. Their nets were all right, in their right place, but they were all wrong, if they kept back these men from Christ. But there are other things that hinder a decided step being taken. Fear of man is one of them. Simon and Andrew might have said to one another, "What will every one say of us, if we follow Christ?" They feared, perhaps, persecution or ridicule.

A laugh has turned back many a soul that had begun to think seriously. Many do not dare to be unhappy people. They are brought up to a man (Prov. xix. 25); but he that will go to the kingdom must expect a cross. Has not our Lord said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23).

Let us note the simplicity of a personal call from Christ. Andrew led his brother near to Christ, but he could not make him Christ's follower. Friends may point with us and urge us to come to Christ, but they cannot make us more than one must hear for himself the voice of Christ. The women of Samaria gathered many out of their city to the well-side to listen to Christ, and to hear him say to them, "I am he who told you to follow Me, but when the Lord had tarried

with them two days, "many more believed because of His own word, and said unto the woman, now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard His ourselves" (John ix. 25-30, 39-41). They must have Christ for ourselves. John the Baptist had great influence over Herod, and Herod "did many things" for John, but he only did them for John, and so it all came to nothing. To have a friend who loves God is a great matter for any one of us. It was good to see Christ, but it was not. It has been truly said, "a man-made Christian is no Christian."

What was Peter called to? To be a "fisher of men." He had been busy with his nets catching fish, now he was to use another "net," and so catch other "fish." He was to use the Gospel net, and he was to catch souls. A net is a very good figure. In the using of it there is faith and hope, patience and perseverance; and there is re-joicing, reward, and disappointment. The fisherman, each time he goes out to his work, hopes to catch fish; he is patient and persevering. He is often disappointed, but he lets down his net again, and again. The "fisher" of men's souls needs to have much faith and much patience. What a picture of this we have in St. Paul (Acts ix. 18-25). He tells the elders of Ephesus how he had "taught them publicly and from house to house," and how he had "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." The fisherman goes out at all times and seasons. Any one who seeks to win souls must seize opportunities.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand" (Eccl. ii. 26). "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. iv. 2). It is the joy of Moody, the great mission preacher, that he made a resolve to let no days pass without his having spoken to some one about his soul. The fisherman rejoices when fish are caught in his net. It is thus with the sower of seeds. It is the deepest and most wonderful joy in the world to win a soul to Christ. It was the joy of Christ to have souls: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2). The parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of money tell us of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke xv.). And if angels rejoice to say, "We do as how this subject can apply to each one of us." All are not called to the special work of a missionary or "fisher" of souls; yet each follower of Christ can seek to lead at least one other with him in the way to Heaven.

Peter and his brethren foresaw it to follow Christ. A great choice was placed before them. The choice lay between this world and Christ; and by the power of God's grace they were enabled to rise up and follow Christ. Could not He make up to them for all that they had forsaken? Oh! yes, a hundredfold more in this present life, and in the world to come eternal life (Mark x. 29).

M. E.

## Peg Neil of Rorby.

"O you think you would like to go to Rorby, Laura?"

"Yes, I think I should; it would be an entire change, and seven un-interrupted quiet to you." The lady's eyes rested fondly on her husband; then turned aside to a somewhat delicate-looking boy of four or five years of age, who was standing at the window of a tastefully furnished apartment overlooking the Thames.

"Minna, will there be any stammers at Rorby?" asked the boy, without turning his head.

"I do not know, dear," Mrs. Godwin looked inquiringly at her husband who answered, "If there are not stammers there will be fishing snacks

upon any railway station. The post only came in once a day; it was a locality little frequented by visitors, and Mrs. Godwin saw a prospect of undisturbed rest to her beloved husband. Not even the inconvenience of travelling without her maid, who acted in the twofold capacity of waiting woman to herself and nurse to her boy, was able to deter her spirits. Little did she imagine, faithful, black-hearted girl down there whom we can trust to fill nurse's place for a while." But as reaching Rorby now seemed a distant prospect, the description was forthcoming. Indeed, if the truth must be stated, a thrill of disappointment, not unshared with feelings of apprehension, was experienced by gentle Mrs. Godwin as she surveyed the industrial tanks whose dialect was unintelligible to her.

The woman who owned the new dwelling-place was described as being obliging and civil; but from the moment Mrs. Godwin saw her, her sensitive nerves somehow took fright. It might have been owing to the rough manner in which Peg

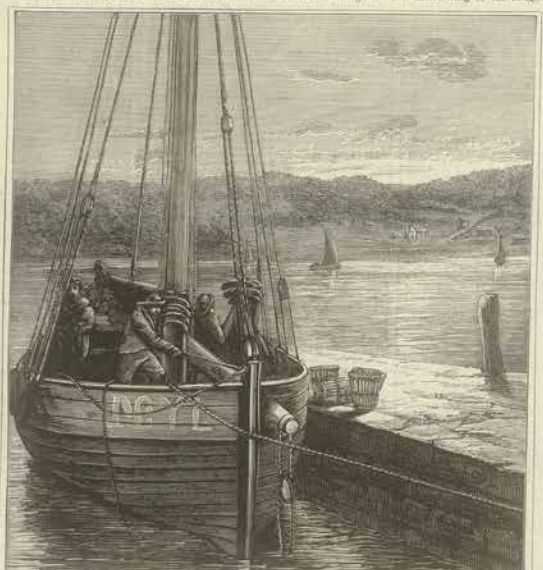
Neil, as she was called, lifted the child from the vehicle, placing him on the ground with force enough to dislocate his hips, or snap the bones of his ankles. She then held out her large red arms strong with bone and muscle, and made a grasp at Laura Godwin, but the little woman instinctively drew back from her advances. An ugly scowl came to Peg's brow; she detected the striking gesture, and the manner in which the lady at last must cling to her husband as he assisted her to descend. She uttered something under her breath, the colour in her face increasing to a dusky red, as she lifted the large leather travelling trunk into her arms and strode towards the house.

The expectations of reward of one Allan Margrah, who had driven them to their lodgings, were not disappointed; with a smile of gratification on his bronzed, good-natured face, he wished the new arrivals every happiness, and departed; but however without a suddenly whispered warning, as he nodded, seemingly in the direction of the cottages. Whatever

her—she's all very well when she takes a fancy; but since that affair of

The stalwart form of Peg in the doorway of the cottage cut short the remainder of the speech; for as Allan mounted his seat, he added mysteriously, "Only his clothes were torn away from him; this comforting addition, he gathered up the ruins and drove off."

With rather a heavy boot, and a strange feeling of coming ill, Mrs. Godwin entered the little dwelling. All pleasure of her holiday seemed gone; and the novelty of her surroundings, which she had been so anxious to have, now seemed a little delight, failed in giving her satisfaction. Everything was scrupulously clean, and there was nothing with which to find any fault. And Mrs. Godwin was not at ease; her husband discovered her disquietude by the restless glance of her dark eyes and her dissimulation, to let Margrah be a



"A SCENE OF UNPROMISING APPEARANCE WAS, NEARING THE KINGS-COTTAGE."—See page 32.

and boats, and green hills for Margrah to climb, and every thing to make a little 'joy happy.' He added finally, he was careful his son's curly head. "And an entire cessation from work and worry for you, Arthur," murmured his wife as she noted the careworn look on her husband's face. "Decide on Rorby, and let us all be off at once."

In less than a week following, the Godwins started on their journey, and their pleasant rooms in the Temple were vacated for a time. The delight of leaving the misery of her husband entirely to herself, was a pleasure Mrs. Godwin had not experienced since their last brief holiday a year ago. The busy life of a barriester, and the conventionalities of the world, prevented their enjoying much of each other's company. They had decided on Rorby as being one of the most out-of-the-way places that had come to their notice. In the first instance it was five miles







Sunday with Ernest Brewer. He was living with his old grandmother, who was quite deaf, and whom he treated as if she was a post.

I found him smoking a pipe in his bedroom, which was full of books and papers, and showed his taste in that direction. We had a good dinner in the kitchen, and the old lady cooked. She had a little independent means, and she allowed her daughter's son to live with her. He had a good education, and had paid Mr. Calver for Ernest's apprenticeship. He was not spiritual, and as I say, showed his grandmother no sort of kindness or respect. No such good qualities were generally shown themselves in young men, who take up notions like Ernest Brewer.

He had a great influence over me, he was very handsome, his eyes were remarkable, they seemed to be always looking out for knowledge.

He had an extraordinary memory, and he could recite Shakespeare's plays, and many other plays, in a wonderful way.

It is a good many years ago now, but I can recall how I drank in every word of the lecture to which Ernest took me that Sunday evening. It was brilliant and gave nothing of the world, or I should have detected, to doubt, that a great deal of the man's eloquence was that of a wild boy. But I liked to hear the grand talk of all we were born to do and achieve, and that poor men were just as much, and more raised by intellect than rich; that we were not to trouble ourselves about innocent actions being wrong, that we were to act up to our manhood and be free men and not slaves.

He preached the deed before him for an hour, and talked a good deal of nonsense, which passed for wisdom, because his aim was to set up poor erring human creatures as Gods knowing good and evil.

"Well," Ernest Brewer said, when he came out of the crowded lecture room, "that's rather better than Mr. Parnell's dry discourse."

"Splendid," I said, "magnificent."

"Ah, yes. Now come along and have a pipe and a glass of beer with me."

"I must go home, now," I said, "thank you," but I made a weak sort of resistance, and I was overruled. I made him smoke and drink, about eleven o'clock. Adam opened the door.

"Hallo! there, where have you been?"

"Spending the day with a friend," I said.

"Have you been to Church?"

"No, I have not," I said, "I don't know that I shall trouble Church much more."

"Till, my boy, I'm afraid you have got into bad company," Adam said kindly. "I've noticed a change in you of late. Now be a man, and break off from them who choose they may be."

"I am quite old enough to choose my friends."

"I muttered, 'I shall be out of any time at Mr. Calver's in two months now, and I shall be able to earn my own living, and to be independent. I ain't a slave, I hope."

"I have not," I said, "it looks rather more like slavery than freedom, when you can't turn away from evil, and as if some one hold you in bondage, but however that may be, I say this: No one lives in my house, under my roof, who does not give God due honour and reverence. And if any books or papers like those that have been sent, of late, lie about, I burn them, that's all. Good night."

(To be continued.)

## "Whatsoever thy Hand

Findeth to do"

ON THE LESSON GEORGE STEPHENSON TAUGHT.

There is no need to do any who choose to be up. That may not be an elegant way of expressing my statement, but it is a truth in which I firmly believe, and one which I am never tired of trying to press home to myself and in my neighbour's ears.

Whilst reading an article in the *Times, on the centenary of George Stephenson, I have been especially reminded of this simple maxim.*

Having spoken much of the railway here, the writer goes on—"What will be the next chapter

of British enterprise and invention, and who and where the men to perform the chief part in it? As to the first question, the answer is, I think, satisfactory, for not a day passes without loud complaints, malignant reconstructions, social and miscellaneous, terrible shortcomings, and material evils, in the conduct of the possible. Whole masses of people, indeed whole classes, to be successful and lifted out of the slough, and enormous difficulties to be overcome in our way, even that, we may exercise our wit and our vigour in the attempt to overcome them. Here, from all these little things, the people of the world cry from agriculture. . . . Here are countless problems, and at the same time colossal scientific discoveries, which, if they lead to nothing else, prove the incessant nature of our dominion over the elements. Then, for the sea, with its terrible average of wreck, and total loss running in without intermission, and with but rare salutes, who shall say that there is here no work for the inventor and improver, who will give his mind and heart and soul to it? Where then are the men to be found for all this? We must not look to the high-born or to the wealthy, to those who start with fortune and position made for them. We fear we must not look to colleges and universities. We must look, if we are to be guided by the instincts before us, to that hundreds of others I could name—to cottages, to the dark depths of the pit, to the smutty cloth, to the noisy and sultry workshop, to the rough hand doing these very humble drudgery of machinery or ruin, and repeated himself to complex dangers and disfigurements. We must look to some one with a thousand things to complain of, and a hundred of them, for he finds in those very things the best work he can do, and his providential opportunity.

The italics under the words, "but not complaining," are mine, although the very spirit which breathes through them carries its own strong emphasis for the thoughtful and understanding reader.

"It is true," says the writer of this *Times* leader, of last June, "that all history, as well as our faith, tells us to look low for them that are to do great things. It was a shepherd's boy playing with the stones and the great stones who conquered Europe with the stupendous fortifications. . . . The man who gave us wings, who taught us to skim the noxae, to surpass the flight of the swiftest bird, and to make huge armies, with multitudes of passengers, skim over the earth far more easily, swiftly, and absolutely than over the sea, was such a modern philanthropist loves to look down on as the object of compassionate aid. He was the son of an engine-fitter at a colliery."

Furthermore, it may be added, that he was very often a very hungry little boy, and that he was thankful enough when he was provided to a hard day's work at a wage of twopenny. His whole education until he was eighteen was learning the duty of his daily work.

And yet it can be said of him, and with the most perfect truth, that the one time colliery boy, the unlettered youth who signed no plans, left no memoranda, to improve not a steam-engine, but anything and everything that came under his hands, in reality, could no marble or bronze monuments improve his memory upon our nation, would no centenary festival to do him honour, for England is itself, with its thousands upon thousands of iron rails, bearing along the hurrying steam-engines that thunder, light and breadth, one large monument to him, and every new railway station that is built throughout the world is a fresh testimony to the strength, kindly, unassuming hard-countryman, the earnest, hard-working genius who carried his grand point for the vast benefit of his country, not only against the opposition of learning and ignorance, high place and wealth, but against the infinitely more powerful antagonism of robbery, prejudice, fear, and self-interest.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," says the Prover.

"Whatsoever ye do, do it lawfully," says St. Paul. He was a tent maker himself, and I am absolutely positive that there was not one single stick of sewing work in the tents he made, that those who bought of him got the best possible article for their money.

If George Stephenson had done no work worth seeing to comfort and commerce by his achievements, he would still deserve our gratitude for his grand

life-achievement on those two texts, for his splendid thoroughness, his unflinching honesty of work and of principle. In these respects we can all learn of the unlearned pit-boy and brakeman. He was a genius—we cannot all be geniuses; but, as St. Chrysostom writes, "the great and the powerful working electrician, our mind to be with a voice and look I shall never forget." We can all work; and so we will not genius, that accumulate the great and valuable works of the world."

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily." I once heard our people say, "In these respects we can all learn of the great pit-boy and brakeman." On the first of the present day, say, that it put him out of all patience to hear people give an excuse for working "jumped," that it was his duty to do it. All work was thus done, it was easily done, and if he had been a crossing sweeper or a millary mule, he was contented that he would have tried to make his crossing the cleanest in London, or his mules the brightest in the neighbourhood, and moreover, have found his pleasant satisfaction in so doing. "There is no such thing as a 'vain' work," he said, and assented, in so far as work is "done heartily as to the Lord," it is mixed into that bright and glorious sphere, where nothing is "common or unclean."

From a child's spelling lesson well learnt to a judge's decision well-considered, from a petate sentence well-considered, from a prayerful revision of the Holy Scriptures, all is noble work in our Heavenly Father's eyes, so long as it is done "with our might as to the Lord," it is heartily, as to the Lord."

From cleaning the rusty bolts of a worn-out old machine, to the great work of a pit-boy's clothes, to making his great triumph, "the Rocket" steam-engine, George Stephenson did everything with his might, heartily, and he was, as a part of his reward, high place in man's esteem, good position in his country, happily winding up the latter days of his life in a quiet, peaceful, and so well-earned, and loved so well, in honourously teaching one more lesson, teaching his countrymen that great truth!

GEORGE STEPHENSON.

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