

# THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.







which can arouse less our curiosity and astonishment; yet, in reality, this fly is fuller of wonders than the most marvellous fairy-tale book or volume of strange adventures ever printed by the hand of man, or than the wildest dream ever dreamt by his fever-excited brain.

The fly which we brush away carelessly with our hand is a little miracle in itself. It counts its eyes by the thousand, it can see every way at once, and so have some chance of escape from the many enemies which pursue it and prey upon it. It can look at you comfortably when you are behind it, for these thousands of eyes are situated all over its tiny body; it can take a walk with its head downwards, for its many legs have a sinuous quality, which prevent its having any fear of falling when it is in that position; it has such a wonderful sense of smell that

it can find out the whereabouts of any food it likes long before it is in its immediate neighbourhood. Where the organ of hearing is situated in its small frame has not yet been satisfactorily discovered, but such an organ it doubtless possesses, as has been proved by many experiments. The stouter part of this family of insects is, that they appear to be able to hear some sounds and not others. They hear the buzzing of creatures of their own species, even when it is low and soft, and yet they are not started by the loudest noise of other things.

We cannot account for this, unless the hearing is in a language that they understand.

The fly has legs away, and a bee goes humming past. She is quite as much of a great worker in a very small compass as ever the fly was. This tiny workwoman is provided with three different tools, which she always carries with her: she has a basket in which she stores away part of the wax she gathers; she has a brush with which she frequently performs her toilet, diligently sweeping off each minute particle of dust which she has velvet dress; she can also make out of the brush and the basket, if she uses them at the same moment,

pinners, which are, often, extremely useful to her in pulling off any of the wax or bee-bread that may be sticking to her body.

These tools, however, do not at all impede her flight, for they are made so light and portable, and so exactly suit her size, that she never seems to be aware that she is bearing them about with her.

We will look in conclusion, for a moment, at one of the bee's best friends and partners in the queenly, who so liberally allows her to come and gather up her sweets, and carry them away with her, to help her in the coöperation of her honey. We will hold over the fly and handle lightly her petals, feeling how much softer they are than any material ever woven by man in his most skillful manufactures.

When we remove our hand from the flower and examine our fingers, we find that there is clinging to them a very fine yellow dust, and we rub it off and think no more about it. Each almost imperceptible grain of that dust, however, is, in it, a seed of life and beauty. This is the pollen, by means of which the lovely flower is reproduced. Each atom of what appears to us fine dust, is a tiny ear, containing a life which will become the life of the future plant.

Such are a few of the great wonders which may be found in small things.

ALICE KIRBY.

## The Parable of the Sower.

I.

St. Mat. 13; St. Mar. 4; St. Luke 8.

IN the course of our Lord's teaching and preaching, we find that He often brings in a story to illustrate what He desires to teach. Children learn more easily from a picture than they could do by a description given only by word of mouth. Our blessed Lord dealt with the multitude so often gathered round Him, gently and carefully, as a

of the story. The parable was spoken from a boat on the lake of Galilee. We saw, we believe so, as we read, the striking beauty of the multitude of people in their garments of varied colours, clustered together on the margins of the lake, while our Lord sat in His white-hooped raiment, one of the fishing boats of His disciples—just pushed away from the shore that there might be freedom from the inconvenience of the crowd. How easily would the Lord and Master be able to reach all the gathering with His gracious words! It may have been but a few minutes that He spent with His soil, or if this were not so, such a sight was a most familiar one with all His hearers. Our Lord related what would have been the experience of many of those who listened to Him, who might themselves have known what it was to sow seed and watching the varied results. There are four results of seed sown spoken of in the parable.

The first is that of the "warying sower." "Sown seed fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured it up." (St. Mat. xiii. 4.) If seed were sown on a public pathway, we could never expect to see it sprout or to bear fruit.

The second is that of the "stony soil." It would be where it fell crushed by the feet of passers by, or carried off by the whirl of the air. There is no preparation of the ground.

The third is that of the "thorns." The sower sowed seed at work to make a long furrow in which the seed shall fall and take root, and therefore it is impossible that there can be any harvest.

In our Lord's explanation of this part of the parable we read: "When any one hearth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."

The Word of God is spoken or preached—perhaps how often no impression is made. The careless man, having heard it, remains careless and indolent still. There is no entrance into his heart by the Word of God, the man has not received it, even as the hard-soil seed of the wayside cannot receive scattered seed. The Word, it is truth concerning life and death, sin and pardon, heaven and hell—the same heard, but it lies on the surface and gets no further.

And because it gets no further, it never breaks up the fallow ground, because the heart is unprepared, what happens? This happens, that the great enemy takes the opportunity to carry away every portion of the seed, which would be under other circumstances, so rich in blessing. It is a sower thought that we have a few seeds, as with for destruction as the wayside soil. His sower is swift in sowing and sowing, but it lies on the surface and gets no further.

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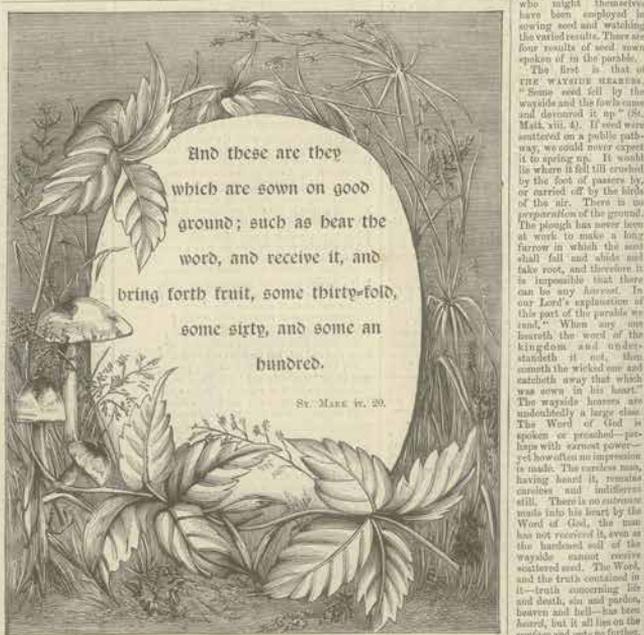
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ST. MARK IV. 20.

tender and wise teacher would do with the children under his training, especially with those children who had much to learn and were slow in learning. There must be milk for the babes, crumbs for the little ones, pictures for the ignorant. The Great Master was never weary of these things. He was never unwilling to repeat precepts upon precept and to add line to line. He was ever ready to break up the broad of life into portions so small that the feeblest of His hearers could gather them up. The parable of our Lord's sowing sows with a heavenly meaning—are full of interest. Perhaps one is more so than the parable of the sower. And for the reason—it is one of the few parables, the meaning of which is explained by Christ to His disciples. Thus we are not left to our own thoughts and fancies concerning it, but we have the hand of the Divine Master pointing out to us the varied points in the picture, while the gracious voice of Him who is the Father of Wisdom of God, "maketh the meaning of each part

clear; because the plough has never broken up the fallow ground, because the heart is unprepared, what happens? This happens, that the great enemy takes the opportunity to carry away every portion of the seed, which would be under other circumstances, so rich in blessing. It is a sower thought that we have a few seeds, as with for destruction as the wayside soil. His sower is swift in sowing and sowing, but it lies on the surface and gets no further.

## Christina's Fiddle.

## CHAPTER I.

"GRANDMOTHER, what do you know that old fiddle hanging up there for?" The question was asked by Fanny Lennon, a pretty young orphan girl, who was seated to a big chair opposite to her grandmother. The room they were in was a large old-fashioned farm kitchen, but the deep-set window looked as if they should have belonged to a castle at least. From them you looked out on a wide sweep of limestone fells—land, as the eye could reach did it stretch in one long wave, unbroken save by the small spire of a ben church or a red-brick farmhouse or the well-spring where the peasant girls lingered.

Shades of evening were falling over it all, and far away to the left were the remains of the sunset in the shape of some rose-coloured clouds. A wild November wind was sweeping over the land, and it looked cold and dreary outside, in marked contrast to the aforementioned stone-paved kitchen with its huge fireplace. The firelight shined on Fanny's pretty face and her grandmother's peaceful countenance, and it cast uncertain, flickering shadows on the pictures that hung on the walls and on a certain black violin which had given rise to Fanny's question.

"Why do I keep my old violin?" asked Mrs. Lennon, smiling. "Ah, Fanny, you have no idea how fond I am of the old thing. It brings back the memory of my early days to me—some pleasant and some very sad. And a shadow came over Mrs. Lennon's face. Fanny looked up wistfully. She was quiet, but still she had not outgrown her love for a story, and Mrs. Lennon read the look in her face.

"Would you like me to tell you the chief thing that the violin reminds me of?" asked Mrs. Lennon. "Yes, grandmother, very much," said Fanny sympathetically. "You know," said Mrs. Lennon, "that all my early life was spent in Austria. It was only when my father and another died, and I had to earn my living, that I went into service as lady's maid to an English lady whose home was in this county. I lived with her for six years, and then I married my grandfather, who rose from being a hawker on my mother's estate to owning this large farm."

"I remembered that you were Austrian, grandmother, but I did not remember how or when you met grandfather," said Fanny. "But please go on, I can see the violin has something to do with your young days in Austria."

"It is like, Well, we were but poor little shopkeepers at Gmunden, a small town—it was then hardly more than a village—while his father was in the very heart of the Austrian Tyrol. It is a

beautiful place—oh, how I should like to see it again, and the little shop in the Framdorf, where we lived, my parents and Franzl, my twin brother, and I. For as we were, we were very happy, and the evenings around our big white stone stove I can never forget. We were musical too. Father played a fute, Franzl had a horn, and I had my beloved violin. We had pleasant hours with our music, and mother's voice was rich and good. I can well remember how she used to sing that grand old hymn, 'O'er the Hills, &c.'

"Franzl and I were great friends, dearest to each other in all this world, and we both loved music. But above each other, and our dear parents, above our music, we were united in loving and trying to serve our Master, Jesus Christ. We tried to help each other in our endeavours to serve Him, and often as I think of dear Franzl, I remember how words of his

were too simple and unassuming to think I was vain of my talents, delighted in hearing me use it.

"My vanity touched me in many ways. I envied others who played better than I did, and I was so delighted with myself I longed that others besides my home ones and my few friends should hear me. I longed to get praise and admiration. But one winter—'twas a terrible winter, the lake was frozen all over—I had something which addressed me much. Franzl might hold one day, and for some weeks lay very ill.

"All through that long winter Franzl lay ill, and I helped my mother to nurse him. I can never forget how sweet he looked, the dear boy, as he lay in his little bed, his eyes so blue and bright, and his fair hair the colour of gold, waving off his high forehead. Hours and hours I spent with him, and he had many long talks with me. He spoke of all he wished to do if he was well. How

he would work hard, and try and gain money so as to make it possible for our old parents to give up the shop. But one day towards the spring, when he was full of lighter and better, he looked at me for a long time, and then spoke to me.

"Christina."  
"Yes," I answered.  
"There is something I want to speak to you of. Dear sister mine, I don't think shall recover."

"Not recover, Franzl?" I cried. "Don't say such things; what could I do without you?"

"Franzl smiled, as I, realising the truth for the first time, burst into tears. Franzl desired to leave me—and I looked up to see that smile. It was indeed wonderfully sweet—the smile of one who is watching glimpses of the land he is very far off. I shall not dwell on the same—my sorrow, and his attempts to comfort me. At length I was calmer, and he drew me of the subject of himself to speak to myself.

"I am, you thankful, darling, that you are really trying to serve God; there is no joy like it."

"I am, but, Franzl, I seem to get wrong sometimes."

"And you do not know what it is?" I hesitated, and then he took my hand in his.

"Christina, you must know."

"I could not deny it any longer."

"Yes, Franzl, I know I am vain."

"Dear heart, do try and struggle against it. You know your good gifts of music is from God, and you can use it for Him. Do be vain to please His gift."

"And then I promised him that I would try. I did try; but I tried in my own strength, and it needed a severe lesson to teach me all I had to learn."

## CHAPTER II.

"SCARCELY two weeks, and the mountains were grey with fallen snow growing on the slopes between the pine forests. The snow passed away, and the mountains rose clear and grand, having put off their winter whiteness."

"Franzl still lingered on, but I did not spend so many hours with him as usual, as all my spare time I spent at a villa which some of the ladies had taken for the summer. They were very kind to me.



"A DOMESTIC LETTER FOR HER."—See Page 83.

used to guide and check me, and yet all spoken in such great humility. They were like himself, loving and humble—and I—I needed them sadly."

"Yes, grandmother," said Fanny, looking to curiosity, for her grandmother's words were said in a strangely sad voice.

"Yes, dear I was then best by a son which it was hard work for me to battle against—was I. I was vain of my music, and I thought much more of it than I need have done. Of course it would have been silly of me to deny that I knew I played very well. I had had every advantage, for an old man, who lived next door to us, taught me himself, and he had been in his day a famous violin-player. He it was who gave me my violin. It always was called 'Christina's fiddle,' and my parents, who





And, added to all this, was another blow. She was deserted. The man who she had loved and honoured—to whom, in sooth, she would have plighted her troth, at the altar, even to death—had, at his first breath of disapprobation, heartily left her—breaking his vows of love and fidelity. Fortunately, perhaps, for her, her faith in him had been weakened within the last few weeks. Promises which he never fulfilled, his lacking courtesy, language which shocked her feelings—all these tended to weaken her confidence in him; and now, when she saw his true character, her love was turned to hatred, for faith to contempt.

"He said," she never mentioned him to Olive more than once, then, in such bitter, exultant terms, that she almost frightened her friend by her vehemence.

"You may laugh at me if you like, Olive, but I tell you it was my own fault, that you wanted me that he was his."

"Hush, Hobbie, you know I would never laugh at any trouble of yours, and I might have been mistaken in his instance of you. You must try to forgive him, and forget him."

"I shall never forget him, Olive, and I am sure he is never, never forgive him."

Bobbie's pent up feelings burst forth now, and she leaned on the table, and sobbed as Olive had never seen her sob before. The flood of tears relieved her, and she looked up presently, calm and composed again, though flushed and tear-stained.

It was very humblely that she kissed Olive that evening, and she began to hope that Bobbie's proud spirit was going to lose admittance now to her Father's will.

It took but a few days to arrange matters at Riverwell House, and, leaving everything in the hands of the older Mr. Goodwyn—who undertook the charge of the final settling affairs—Urtle Lark and Olive returned to Plumfield, taking Bobbie with them, there to find a temporary home, till she could once more launch out into the world.

(To be continued.)

## My Dream of the Past.

AS FOR the world, it is to adore that we quit her sight of old friends; as I was not so very much surprised to find my old schoolfellow, Charlie Hamlyn, appointed tutor of St. Mary's.

We had not met for some fifteen years, and it was hard to recognise the merry, curly-headed boy of olden times in the stud, bald-headed scholar of to-day.

Charlie, a year or so older than myself, took holidays near where I lived, and, during my childhood, he had a great deal to do, for it was a large parish, but Charlie loved his work, and was glad to do it.

"I have some ambition, but it is a very simple and harmless. I should like to be rector in a village, and have a wife who would enter heart and soul into the work of my parish."

"The evening we were talking about old times," said Mr. Moseley, our old schoolmaster, has been dead many years. I remember that I should like to see the old place again."

"As if I should!" said Charlie.

"Then why do you grudge me a ride to Bursley? It will find me all away."

"And I think I deserve a wife's happiness after so many months of hard work. I believe the school is doing well."

"Charlie, we will go to Hamlyn; it will be like a dream of the past."

So we first came meeting Charlie Hamlyn and I took the train to Bursley, and were unaccountably the scene of our childhood. The neighbourhood had changed less than we had. There was the common where we had played cricket, football and rounders; there was the little shop where we had spent our "pips" (namely the schoolboy slugs) on tart, hard cakes, ginger-bread, chocolate, limes, and tinned-tin-and-thousands; there was the forge where we had often watched the "bellows roar," and there was the railway station which had not been there in the time long ago.

We revisited many old haunts, and then made

our way towards Bursley College; and it seemed so strange standing on a stranger's outside gate through which we had passed so often as school-boys.

"Mr. Derwent" was engraved on the brass plate on one of the gates, and Charlie said:

"If we should call, I wonder what reception Mr. Derwent would give us."

"He can't refuse to let two old boys revisit the school of their childhood," I said.

So we went in our suits.

Mr. Derwent, a stout gentleman of about fifty, came into the library, and said—

"I hope you gentlemen are not going to keep me long, for I am very busy just now; in fact, I am in the midst of an examination."

"I am afraid we have called at the wrong time," I said. "We are no doubt strangers to you, but my friend and I were boys at this school in Mr. Moseley's time."

This was enough, and after a little pleasant conversation, Mr. Derwent said—

"As I am obliged to return to the schoolroom, will you accompany me, and be my guests for the day."

We willingly assented, and were once again in the large bare-walled schoolroom. The place itself was not in the least changed. There was the big desk at the top of the room, behind which Dr. Moseley had cracked his jokes in Greek and Latin; there was the stove in the middle of the room, a noble piece of furniture in its day, but which seemed a long way from our seats in the cold days of winter; and there were our old desks, more ill-remembered than ever, only with different boys occupying them.

There was a lull in the business of the day. Mr. Derwent and some of the masters were adding up their marks, and the boys were anxiously waiting to know who had won the prizes for French. Of course these boys were all strangers to me; and my thoughts went back to the boys, my schoolfellows, of the past.

When were they there? Freddy Hedges, who nearly went to the bad in his early manhood, is now a fashionable doctor in Grosvenor Square; Leonard Clark was dead only a short time ago; in Zetland; Percy Reye, poet, dramatist, and would-be epicurean of mankind, is the father of a large family, and lives a large life; while he says many a bitter thing writing epic poetry.

Wilfred King, who would give away the very little he had, for his parents were poor, unexpectedly came into a large fortune, and married money; and Jacky Arnold, my dear, dear mate, was seen starting and in rags on the quays of Melbourne. O Jacky, whom I loved so dearly when we were boys together, and who I would have helped you! But Australia is a long way from England; and at the time I hadn't even money enough for the journey so that would I do it?

Yes, I was in a dream of the past, until Mr. Derwent's voice awoke me by announcing the winner of the French prize. "Old prizes are given away," said Mr. Derwent, making a little speech, hoping the boys will enjoy their holidays, trusting they will not forget what we have learned during the last term (and in vacation, now, indeed, we will), in our day it was half and holidays, and requesting them to come back on the appointed day. Three cheers for Mr. Derwent, for Mr. Derwent, for Miss Derwent, for the masters and scholars, for the visitors, for everybody, and the term is over. The boys rush off to their homes, and their positions are more quickly departed.

I sat at one corner of the desk, where I sat and studied when a child. There is my name, as I recall it, on the lid; and I, astonished fancy that my boyhood, papers, and slates are still intact.

Charlie has and an old cudger frayed in one of the masters, and he is quite at home when I join the party in the large hall at sunset, the boys of the school. The ladies and gentlemen are present and friendly enough, but I do not seem to be a boy again; as I put my arms round the old past.

I play at cricket, get three runs, and knock myself out by hitting the stumps with the bat, but what matters?

The boys cheerfully accept me as a playmate, and we play rounders, croquet, a base, hockey, and so on for largely for gymnasium; but, alas! I am not active enough for that.

Lying under the old trees at the end of the field, the dream of the past comes to me more vividly than ever. Strange boys were playing football in the same large a boy myself, and yet they seem to be my schoolfellows of years ago, and I seem to be one of them.

We have, been in a large hall, and Charlie and Miss

Derwent enter into a long conversation. As I pass these, present to I hear the words, "paralytic," "stroke," "almshouse," "soup kitchen," &c. I and my dream among the boys smile it, and my friend, Miss Olive, then invited to come again whenever we like.

And we do go again. I like the dream of the past, and I like the boys and the society of the masters. And Charlie? Well, Miss Derwent is now Mrs. Hamlyn, and is doing wonders all over our parish.

J. C. B.

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