

# BRITISH WORKMAN

No. 39.

## THE CONFESSION.

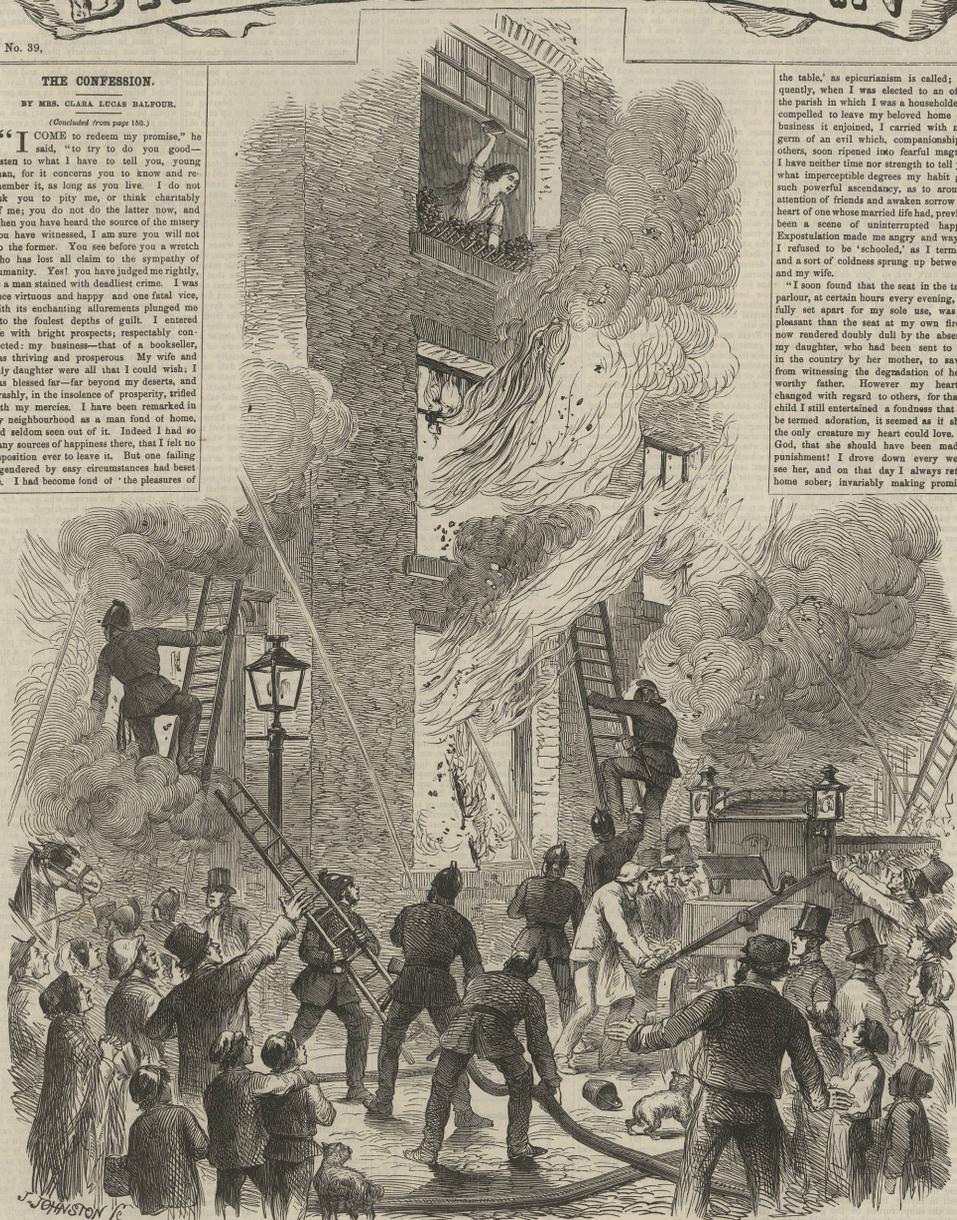
BY MRS. CLARA LUCAS BALFOUR.

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"I COME to redeem my promise," he said, "to try to do you good—listen to what I have to tell you, young man, for it concerns you to know and remember it, as long as you live. I do not ask you to pity me, or think charitably of me; you do not do the latter now, and when you have heard the source of the misery you have witnessed, I am sure you will not do the former. You see before you a wretch who has lost all claim to the sympathy of humanity. Yet you have judged me rightly, as a man stained with deadliest crime. I was once virtuous and happy and one fatal vice, with its enchanting allurements plunged me into the foulest depths of guilt. I entered life with bright prospects, respectfully connected: my business—that of a bookseller, was thriving and prosperous. My wife and only daughter were all that I could wish. I was blessed far—far beyond my deserts, and I rashly, in the insolence of prosperity, trifled with my mercies. I have been remarked in my neighbourhood as a man fond of home, and seldom seen out of it. Indeed I had so many sources of happiness there, that I felt no disposition ever to leave it. But one failing engendered by easy circumstances had beset me. I had become fond of 'the pleasures of

the table,' as epicurism is called; consequently, when I was elected to an office in the parish in which I was a householder, and compelled to leave my beloved home on the business it enjoined, I carried with me the germ of an evil which, companionship with others, soon ripened into fearful magnitude. I have neither time nor strength to tell you by what impregnable degrees my habits gained such powerful ascendancy, as to arouse the attention of friends and awaken sorrow in the heart of one whose married life had, previously, been a scene of uninterrupted happiness. Expostulation made me angry and wayward, I refused to be 'schooled,' as I termed it, and a sort of coldness sprang up between me and my wife.

"I soon found that the seat in the tavern-parlour, at certain hours every evening, carefully set apart for my sole use, was more pleasant than the seat at my own fire-side, now rendered doubly dull by the absence of my daughter, who had been sent to school in the country by her mother, to save her from witnessing the degradation of her unworthy father. However my heart had changed with regard to others, for that dear child I still entertained a fondness that might be termed affection, it seemed as if she was the only creature my heart could love. Just God, that she should have been made my punishment! I drove down every week to see her, and on that day I always returned home sober; invariably making promise of



"Suddenly she made an effort, leaned over the window's edge, and threw the Bible towards me,—impelled by the strength of despair, it fell at my feet."



heaps of plates and dishes piled one upon another in such a way that the least touch almost would have made them all slide down upon the floor. And there were cloths of all descriptions, wet and dry, just smacked up for present use; and half a dozen dirty knives, where one would have done; and bits of bread and meat thrown here and there, and great many kinds of morsels about, that nobody working amongst such things in such a state, could possibly keep themselves either clean or decent.

Harriet blushed very much when she saw her aunt glancing round them; and made excuses about company staying in the house, and having to go out to clean up, and not having had time to do so; or, clear away. But her aunt saw exactly how it was. It was the old habit of not caring to keep things tidy through the day, but leaving all to be cleared away—some day.

This was not all that Jenny Green's quick eyes beheld that day. She had provided Harriet with good strong shoes, and here she was trudging about with a pair of thin slippers down at the heels, and in holes at the sides. Where could she have picked them up? The widow did not ask that day, but as Harriet was soon to come and spend the evening with her, she determined to ask then. It was high time she did so herself, in walking home, that this matter should be inquired into, for if her niece could not keep her shoes in such a state, and such shoes! what would she do next?

To tell the truth, Jenny Green's temper was a little ruffled by what she saw, and this was one reason why she did not trust herself to speak at the time. It was not so mortifying to her as it was then the end of all her talking and teaching? Besides which, what would the lady of the house think of her, if she saw her? The widow walked home very quickly, and would have found her shoes as good as pleasantly, had any one asked her a question. She had time to grow calm, however, before evening came, and she had time to think, and had almost forgotten everything else in the pleasure of having the three girls to go again.

To the surprise of Mrs. Green, Harriet entered the house with her eyes on her bonnet. Now ribbons thought the aunt, and those shoes! Well, tastes differ to be sure; but what had become of the neat and handsome ribbon her bonnet was trimmed with when she went away?

"What a fine bonnet, a fine kind of this kind were put, and respecting the bonnet, Harriet answered, that she was caught in the rain one of the ribbons was spoiled."

"But your umbrella?" asked the aunt, for she had been very careful to provide her with a nice little blue umbrella, as she expected Harriet would have to run on errands in the town sometimes.

"Oh! the umbrella is broken."

"How?" asked the aunt.

"It is broken," replied Harriet, and when she ran up stairs in a hurry, and opened the door, it was crushed, and the ribbons broken. Indeed, it was a very unfortunate," she said, "for her shoes had got buried. A cinder had jumped out of the fire when they were drying within the furnace, and so had burned a hole quite through the upper leathers."

"Had she got the shoes mended then?" asked her aunt.

"Mended!" exclaimed Harriet, "Oh, no, certainly not. The shoe was completely finished, for nobody could wear a shoe with a great ugly patch in front."

"Not uglier I should think, than those slippers," said Mrs. Green, "and pray why do you get the shoes?"

"Oh, they had belonged to one of the young ladies."

"Did she give them to you?" asked the aunt.

"Yes," said Harriet, but she blushed and hesitated so, that her aunt asked again, "Did she give them to you as a present?"

"I did just give them to my self," replied Harriet. "I knew she had quite done with them, so I just asked if she would let me have the wearing of them."

The widow Green rose up from her seat, and looked Harriet full in the face, "You," she exclaimed in a tone of the greatest indignation. "You asked me to give you shoes—my niece, dard to beg, yes, to beg, for it was nothing else. Well, this is the first time that anybody belonging to me has ever begged, and I can tell you it will be the last; for if you dare to do such a thing again, this house shall be no home for you."

Harriet wanted very much to say she did not think it was begging, but she was so frightened at the look and manner of her aunt, that she remained quite still. She could not hear her aunt speak in this way on the subject of begging. Not that she blamed those who really were in want, but to beg without having anything to do, or old shoes, with new ribbons on her head, this she considered the dearest degradation. Her aunt said that could you give anybody's character or family. And after all she had said for her niece about honesty, honourable, independent feeling, and self-reliance, to find one of them, thus in a very unbecoming way, beginning with this low, mean act.



A CRY FROM INDIA.

"Not" he said, "that there was so much in asking for the old shoes, though for her part, when she began to beg, she thought she would ask for something better than that. And if Harriet was a poor parish girl, or had no means of getting shoes any other way, she did not say there would have any harm in it. But with money in her pocket to choose to get her bonnet trimmed, rather than her shoes mended, did she then to beg such things as shoes, and to go about the figure she had seen her?"

She repeated that Harriet must either turn over a new leaf, or provide herself with a new home.

Thus the pleasant evening which all had been looking forward to, was sadly spoiled. But it was partly from these, and similar causes, that the widow Green began from this time to fix upon certain subjects to talk very seriously about, whenever her nieces met together at her house. To these little lectures of her aunt, they listened very attentively, for they disposed sometimes to think her a little particular, and even severe, yet they all knew her goodness of heart and principle too well to be offended with anything she might think it her duty to say.

(To be continued.)

THE BEST RECOMMENDATION.

A VERY seeking employment came to this city, and on inquiring at a certain counting-room if they wanted a clerk, was told that they did not. On mentioning the recommendations he had, one of which was from a highly respected citizen, the merchant desired to see them. In turning over his card-book to find his letters, a book rolled out from the floor.

"What book is that?" said the merchant.

"It is the Bible, sir," was the reply.

"And what are you going to do with that book in this city?"

The lad looked seriously into the merchant's face and replied—

"I promised my mother I would read it every day, and I shall do it, and be then burnt into lead."

The merchant immediately engaged his services, and in due time he became a partner between the city and the most respected of the city.

"WATCH against sin. Its guilt will render you unhappy—its power will render you useless—its influence will ruin others—its friendship will ruin your soul eternally."

WOULDN'T MARRY A MECHANIC.

A YOUNG man commenced visiting a young woman, and appeared to be well pleased. One evening he called when it was quite late, which led the girl to inquire where he had been.

"I had to work to-night," he replied.

"Do you work for a living?" inquired the astonished girl.

"Certainly," replied the young man, "I am a mechanic."

"My brother doesn't work, and I dislike the name of a mechanic," and she turned up her pretty nose.

That was the last time the mechanic visited the young woman. He is now a wealthy man, and has one of the best of women for his wife. The young lady who disliked the name of a mechanic, is now the wife of a miserable vagrant, who haunts the low gin-shops, and sits poor, and miserable woman, is obliged to take in washing in order to support herself and children!

Young women! beware how you treat your younger who work for a honest living. Far better discard the idle dream with all his rings, jewellery, brasses, and pomposity, and take to your affections the hard-headed, intelligent, industrious, and pious mechanic. Thousands have literally regretted their folly who have turned their backs on honest industry. Years of bitter experience have taught them a sad lesson.

WHICH WAY DOES BEST?

A DISTINGUISHED mechanic, in a part of the country where the Sabbath was disregarded, had been accustomed for a time to keep his men at work on that day. He was afterwards at work for a man who regarded the Sabbath, and who, on Saturday, was anxious to know what he intended to do, and therefore asked, "What do you expect to do to-morrow?" He said, "I expect to stop and keep the Sabbath. I used to work on the Sabbath, and often obtained higher wages than on other days, but I soon lost, during the week, more than all I could gain on the Sabbath, so I gave it up, up years ago. I have kept the Sabbath since, and I find it works better. It does work better; and all who make the experiment will, in due time, find this to be the case."

"MY MASTER IS OLD, AND WANTS HIS LUNCH."

BY REV. J. S. OWEN, M.A.

DECLARE the approaches of the army to one of the assaults upon Sebastopol, a civilian was seen walking across the front space between the city and the sea, and was ordered to the rear. He appeared to disregard the order, and continued his course. An aide-de-camp rode up to him, and angrily ordered him back, blaming him for the rash exposure of himself to danger. The man replied, "An Lord Raglan's servant. My master is old, and wants his lunch, let me take it over to him. I heard this related at the Bible Society Meeting in Dublin last April, and the audience were deeply affected at the lowly heroism of this poor being, the sign-man of the country. "How is India to be governed in future? Let us hope that there will be more faith than gibberish in the Gospel, and less in gunpowder, more reliance on the plough and the press, and less on the bayonet and the sword. Had a motley of the millions which have been expended in training up the vast army of Sepoys as soldiers been spent in training the natives in the knowledge of husbandry, and the various useful manufactures, Britain would probably never have had to mourn as she now has, over the mangled remains of her murdered sons and daughters."

"Down went the locksmith's tools, and off he set to his house to give a donation to the poor," "as a thank-offering to God for having permitted him to have a share in restoring the long crumpled up, so to speak, of the life of a poor man."

Some months after he had put it up, he was out at work, when the landlord of the house in which the invalid lodged, passed by. He stood still with a joyful countenance, and told the locksmith that the English lady had stood alone that day after many weeks' gradual trial with the use of a machine Herr Quoy, had put up for her.

Down went the locksmith's tools, and off he set to his house to give a donation to the poor, "as a thank-offering to God for having permitted him to have a share in restoring the long crumpled up, so to speak, of the life of a poor man."

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

"The greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

FAITH, Hope, and Love were questioned Of what they thought.

Of faith, they thought of Religion taught. Now Faith believeth it firm to be true, And Hope expecteth to see it so.

Love answereth smiling, with a conscious glow.

Blessed's Expect! I know it to be so!

PROPER OBJECT OF THANKS.

A LADY once applied to the late benevolent Mr. Reynolds of Bristol, on behalf of an orphan. After he had given liberally, she said—

"When he is old enough, I will teach him to name and thank his benefactor."

"Stoop," said the good man, "you are mistaken. We do not thank the clouds for the rain; they teach the clouds to look higher, and thank Him, who giveth both the clouds and the rain."

THE WILD FLOWER.

SWAG wilding tufts that, 'mid the waste, In lowly bowls are found.

Though by no sheltering walls embraced, They stand the brunt of every wind.

The primal flowers which grace your courts, Bright as the dahlia shine, Are caught from Dew's dejected eyes.

To lonely hearts like mine.

"Is a question that—and yet, perchance, Sweet blossoms, ye are sprung From flowers that over Eden, once, Their pristine fragrance thronged;

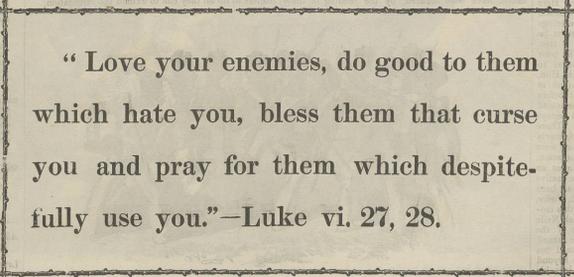
That drank the dew of Paradise, Beneath the stargate clear, Or caught from Dew's dejected eyes Her first repentant tear." J. F. SMITH.

DIVINE AGENCY.

"The winds of heaven blow but as they list, And of their errand paths and seasons, We feel the varying influence as they pass, And mark the change that tells us they have been."

So when the Holy Spirit makes abode in the lowly dweller of a sinner, we see, but we know not where, the stranger-towers.

One, that unbidden, blossom on the waste, New hopes, new wishes, animate the soul, God's health's image, is replaced within, And in whose abject, alienated heart, Once flour'd the punishment of sin. CALDWELL FRY.



"Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you and pray for them which despitefully use you." Luke vi. 27, 28.

