

WASTE NOT
WANT NOT.



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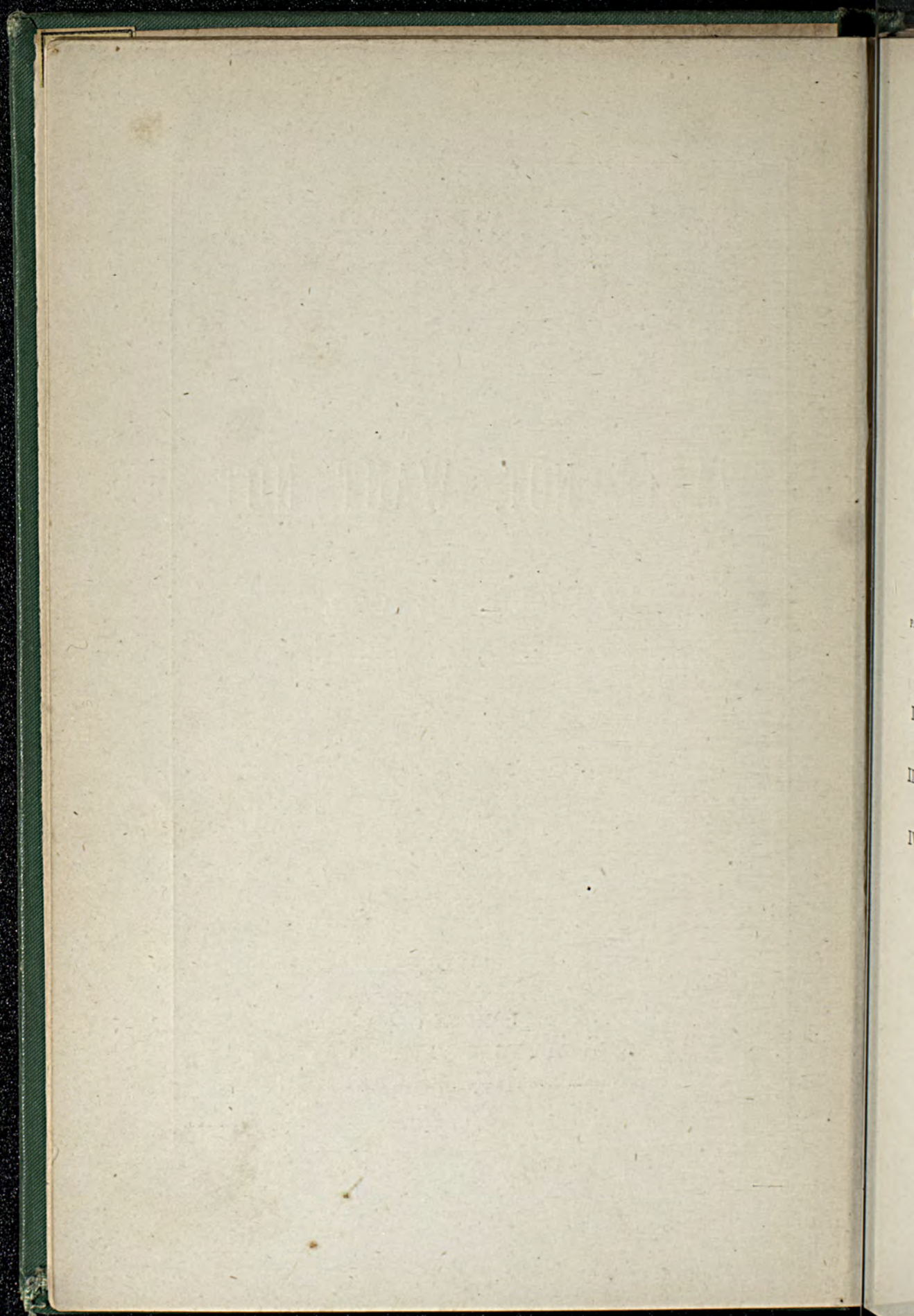
WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER," ETC.

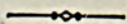


LONDON :
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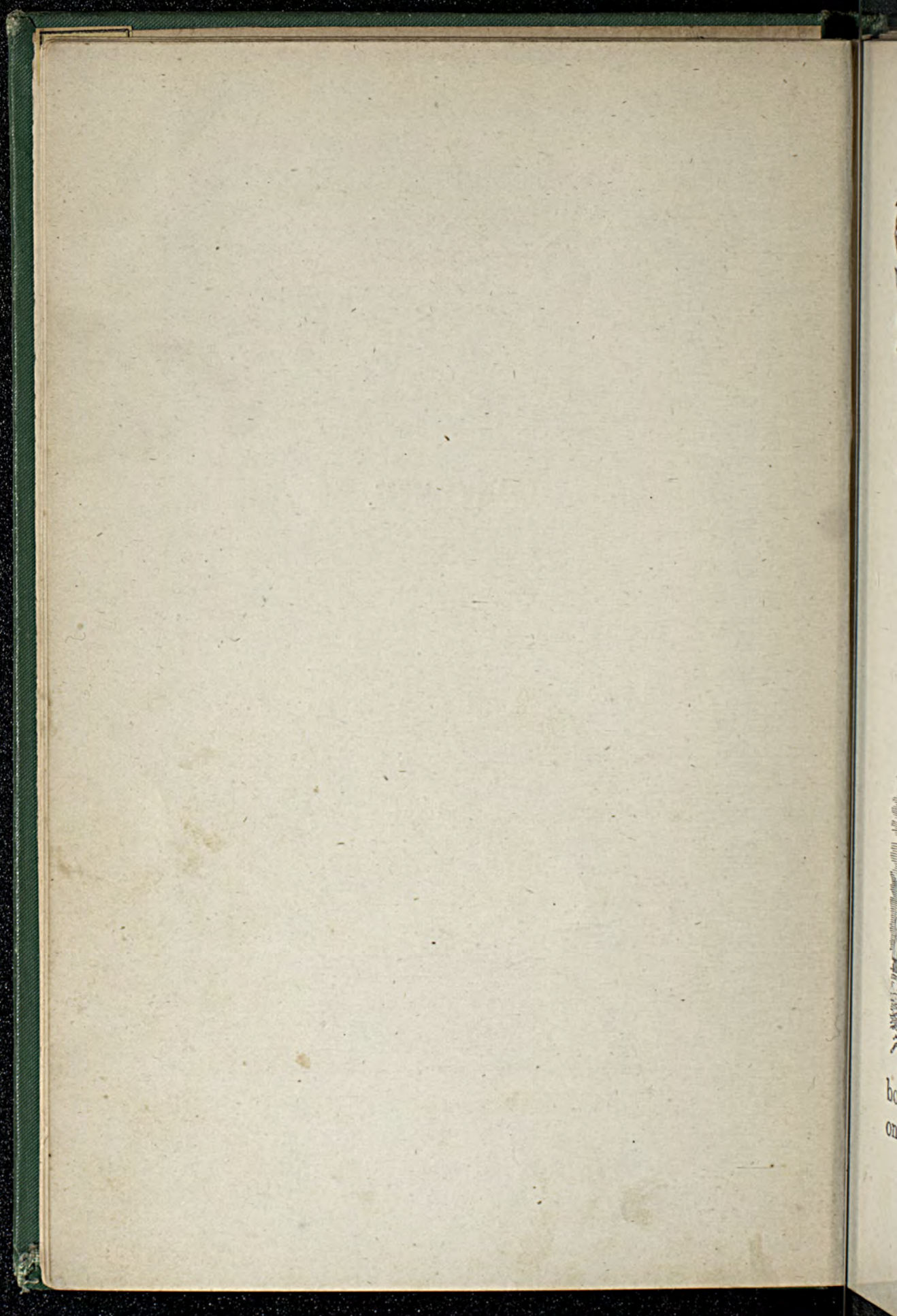


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WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.

PART I.

A GOOD MOTHER.



IN the neighbourhood of the city of Worcester, and on the opposite side of the river Severn, are a number of houses, which form a kind of suburb, and formerly composed a long, single street, for the most part made up of mean dwellings, occupied by boatmen, and such persons as have concerns on the water. About forty years ago there

resided, in a narrow court in this street, a poor widow, of the name of Fairfield, who supported herself by sewing gloves, by which she obtained a tolerably comfortable maintenance. This poor woman had one daughter, for whom she had not only a mother's fondness, but an earnest desire for her spiritual welfare. Those who have visited many foreign countries, and observed the manners of the natives of other lands, will not dispute but that there are more good mothers in our happy island than in any country of the same size in the whole world. The poorest mother in England loves her baby, and provides for its wants to the best of her power: notwithstanding which there are many Elises in our land; many whose "sons make themselves vile, and they restrain them not" (2 Sam. iii. 13); many who indulge their children in habits of idleness and every species of vice, and thus do all that in them lies for the ruin of those very children, who, in their infant days, were the joy of their hearts and the delight of their eyes.

The widow Fairfield, as it will be hereafter seen, was not a character of this kind: she

loved her daughter indeed, and never spared correction when it was necessary that it should be used ; she accustomed her early to treat her mother with respect, and to give her all the assistance in her household matters which could be expected from a child of her age. It was not possible that she should afford to send her to school, neither did she wish it, for she considered that, as her own employments kept her at home, and occupied her hands and not her head, there was no manner of reason why she should not teach her child, and thus enjoy the pleasure of her company, and ensure her lasting gratitude. The widow was not, indeed, herself a capital scholar, but then she considered that it would be no hard matter for her to improve herself, and as she had a good deal of time every Sabbath day, she continued on those days to read and look over what she must teach her daughter during the next week ; and, as she often said, she thought herself very well off if she could keep only one step before the little girl, which was by no means difficult, considering how very slow young children are when they first begin to learn to read.

There were not so many little books in

those days as there are now, but the good woman possessed an old "Reading made Easy," and a Bible; and I will venture to say that with these books, if there were no others in the world, a careful mother, with the Divine blessing, might give her child as much knowledge as she would ever need, either for this life or the next. In these days there is a mighty stir about new books and new plans of teaching, but that which is required to render all these plans serviceable is good fathers and mothers; mothers who, whilst they are going about their household work, will have an eye to their children, and will see that they learn and practise the holy lessons which may be found in the books which are given to them; and pious fathers, who, when they return from their work at night, will take their little ones upon their knees, and speak to them of heaven and hell, and of their God and Saviour, and holy things.

Such a good mother, however, as I should like to see in every cottage through all this pleasant country was the poor widow Fairfield, and, as it might be expected, she had great reason to think herself happy in her

little daughter Mary, who was as decent and as good a girl as any at that time in the whole town.

In the same narrow court, or entry, as that in which the widow Fairfield's house was situated lived a waterman, and his wife and children. The man himself, who was commonly known by the name of Ben Brown, or Brown Ben, alluding to his swarthy and weather-beaten skin, was seldom at home, and his neighbours would not have been sorry if his wife Grace had found occasion to absent herself as often as her husband, for it was no easy matter to rest in peace within the sound of her voice.

This woman was always so busy in settling her neighbours' affairs, and putting things to rights in other folks' houses, that she had little time, and less head, for managing her own business; and though she had money in abundance, and had no other employment herself than that which occupies most of the females of the lower classes in and about Worcester, namely, sewing gloves, yet she never used any control over her children, but accustomed them to idle the whole day in the yard and in the street, till the boys

were old enough to work with their father, at the daily hazard of being drowned.

Another neighbour in the same court was a Dame Crawford, an old woman, and a mighty notable body, who picked up a good maintenance by sewing and ironing in different houses of the town, filling up the odds and ends of her time in settling her neighbours' concerns, and retailing the news of one house in the ears of the inhabitants of another.

Dame Crawford and Grace Brown were for the most part very intimate friends, though now and then they would fall out, and then the whole neighbourhood was sure to be roused up to hear them abuse each other, on which occasion they used all manner of foul language; but to do them justice, they did not bear each other much malice, but were as good friends as ever when they had spent their anger—that is, if we can call such a gossiping intimacy as subsisted between these women by the name of friendship; which, after all, I believe never really subsists between persons who do not fear God.

We may be sure that the widow Fairfield did not find much comfort among such neighbours as these; but if she had no comfort in

her neighbours, she had much in her child, and more in her God ; and though she was afraid of turning out her little one to play in the yard (for her neighbours' children, she was sensible, were no fit companions for her), yet she contrived to give her exercise by sending her into the country to gather sticks and flowers in the season, and even by walking out with herself, when she could spare a quarter of an hour from her work. And Mary used often, when she was grown up, and parted from this dear parent, to talk with delight of some of those quiet evening walks, when her poor mother used to accompany her, and sit down with her under the shade of a tree, whilst she conversed with her about many pleasant and holy things, in which poor people have the same interest as the finest lord of the land. For although the poor are deprived of many earthly goods which the rich enjoy, have they not the same heavenly Father to care for them, the same blessed Saviour to provide for their salvation, and the same Holy Spirit to regenerate and sanctify them, to guide and counsel them, and finally to lead them into glory, as the greatest personage on earth?

And what is it, I ask, which makes our food pleasant and our sleep sweet to us, but the possession of that peace which the world cannot give?

By working every day with her little girl, by the time the child was twelve years of age the good mother had not only taught her to read her Bible with ease, but also had improved herself so much that there was not a single chapter which she could not read off as well, if not better than the parish clerk himself; and what was more than all this, by dint of hearing the Holy Scriptures conned over from day to day, her head became so well stored with Scripture knowledge, that there was scarcely a text which she could not turn to without being told either chapter or verse. But as religion was not in those days in every man's mouth as now it is, she got but little credit either for her knowledge or her practice, but was counted by her neighbours as a tidy body, to be sure, but as one who had many queer ways.

From the time that Mary had reached her ninth year her mother had employed her during part of the day in working at the

gloves with herself; but as she did not think the trade was a good one for a very young girl, inasmuch as the gains were small, and the confinement very great, the widow considered that if she could get her an easy service, it would be much more for her advantage, though it went to her heart to part with one who had been the solace of her life through many a long year of widowhood. Nevertheless this excellent mother thought of nothing so much as the good of her child; and, setting self on one side, when Mary was fifteen, she resolved to inquire for such a service as she trusted would suit her. But the widow Fairfield had no acquaintance amongst the great folks, and on this occasion she knew not what better to do than to speak to Dame Crawford, who was said to be mighty great with some of the best families in Worcester. Accordingly, Dame Crawford's door being open one afternoon, and seeing her ironing before the window, she ventured to step in, with her work in her hand, not having observed that Grace Brown was sitting behind the door.

The widow had scarcely set her foot within the door, when Mrs. Crawford exclaimed,

"Neighbour Fairfield, as I am alive!—what wind has blown you here?"

"Something above the ordinary, you may be sure," said Grace from behind the door; "Dame Fairfield is not so fond of our company as to come here for nothing."

"I was purposing," said the widow, "to get some little light service for Mary, neighbour Crawford; and I am thinking that as you know so many of the great folks, you would be the very person to speak a good word for her with them."

Mrs. Crawford, though a mighty busybody, was not in the main an ill-natured one, and nothing pleased her better than to have it supposed that she had the ear of many of the better sort. She therefore immediately asked her neighbour to sit down, and began to tell whose servants were at the next season for changing, and whose were to "stop on," as she worded it; and who actually wanted servants, and who were provided; with sundry other particulars which I shall forbear to enumerate, contenting myself with saying that the result of all this was, that it was thought there were three places at that time likely to be vacant, all of which might

suit such a girl as Mary. The first of these, and the very best in point of gain, was that of maid to draw the liquor at the widow Smith's at the Sow, in Dolby ; "a capital place," as Mrs. Crawford said, "for gain ; for," added she, "the girl who is there now got, to my certain knowledge, twenty shillings at the last races, just for showing the guests into the parlour : and I doubt not that, first and last, the place is worth six pounds a year."

"Ay !" said Mrs. Brown, sitting upright in her chair, "surely you don't say so !"

"I do," said Mrs. Crawford, "because I can vouch for it."

"What is the next place you know of as being vacant?" asked the widow.

"Squire Strangeways of Holla," said Mrs. Crawford ; "where I have ironed first and last these ten years, though it's a great way to go ; but Madam Strangeways does not fancy any of her things unless I iron them. There is a kitchen maid wanted, just to wash dishes and right up the kitchen after the cook ; but it's a desperate hard place, though the last girl said there were some pretty pickings to be had in the way of perquisites."

"Ay," said Grace Brown, "I thought the cook had all those things."

"So she thinks too," replied Mrs. Crawford, winking at her neighbours, "but I know better, and so does Jane Harris."

"I think," said Mrs. Fairfield, somewhat timidly, "that you mentioned a third place."

"Yes," returned the other, "but it's a poor thing; Mary will scarce have enough for shoe-leather, and so shut up and dull. Betty Hacket, the girl who is to leave next week, says it's the dullest place ever any poor body was in. Not that the mistress is bad tempered, but she is so faddy, so timorsome like; she would sooner go of an errand herself than send the girl out at dusk; then the lass has no time to herself, for the mistress sits in the kitchen when she has no company; for she is mighty near, and there is but one fire and candle between them. Then the wages are not so much as three pounds a year."

"And who is this lady?" said the widow.

"Why, Mrs. Shirley," replied the other, "who lives in the little bit of the house on Henwick Hill; you must have seen her a thousand times, for she never misses church,

and you may know her by her old bonnet and by her leaning on the lass's arm as she goes along."

"I have heard of her," returned the widow, "and she bears the best of characters; you would oblige me very greatly, neighbour Crawford, if you would but speak a kind word for Mary."

"Is the woman mad?" said Grace Brown. "Why, here there are three places, one worth six pounds a year, another worth I know not what, and a third, which is not of the value of fifty shillings; you shut your ears against the first two, and gape at the third like a boy bobbing for cherries. Why, woman, you have no more sense than a green goose, and that's the plain, downright truth."

"True," said Mrs. Crawford, "but if our neighbour has a mind for the old lady's place, why should not she have it, Grace? and if you wish to put out Hannah, I will speak a word for her at the 'Sow.'" These last words were spoken in a whisper, in order that the widow might not hear.

"I have been thinking," said Mrs. Fairfield, when her neighbours had ceased to whisper, "of what you said just now to me,

Grace, respecting my not being over-wise in wishing for the fifty-shilling place in preference to the others which our good neighbour proposed ; and as I love plain speaking, I will give you my reasons. I cannot say that I ever spoke to Madam Shirley in all my life, but for all that I have known her by character ever since I was the height of the table, and I know also her breeding, and have heard of the many troubles she has gone through, with the faith and patience of a Christian. I also know that although her means are small, she is the best of friends to the poor, and more like a mother than a mistress to her servants ; and that the care and the instruction of such a lady as that ought to be counted of more value to a poor young creature, going out into the world, than pounds and pounds of gold and silver ; of more value, I say, neighbour Crawford," added the good widow, "than gold and jewels. And indeed so precious are they in my sight, that I should think myself well off if she would take my child for nothing, and provide her only with her old clothes.

"Nay, neighbour Brown, don't laugh, but hear reason. My child is to be a servant, that

is the way of life I have chosen for her; now a girl out of such a poor house as mine cannot be supposed to understand much of household work, and ought not we to consider ourselves very happy if, when we first start our young ones in the world, we can meet with good ladies who will take them only for their maintenance, without counting wages at all? Is it not the custom to pay a premium for a child to be taught the poorest trade? and when we put a lad 'prentice, don't we look to the character of the master? and yet, when a girl is to be put to service, we count the character of the mistress next to nothing; and put no value at all upon her instructions, or her care, or her management, though these things in after life (not to speak of the world to come) may be worth pounds, and scores of pounds, to the young person."

"There is something in what you say, neighbour Fairfield," said Mrs. Crawford, turning round from her ironing-board, "and I'll tell you what, if you will just run over these few pocket handkerchiefs, I'll put on my bonnet, and step up this very moment, and I hope that I shall bring you good news before an hour is out."

The widow expressed her gratitude in the strongest terms, and taking her neighbour's place at the ironing-board, Mrs. Crawford set out on her errand, being followed out of the house by Grace Brown, who, as she stepped over the door-sill, said to the widow, "Well, good woman, take your own way, but I tell you your lass will get nothing but sheep's heads and cold 'tatoes for her Sunday dinner."

It was more than an hour before Mrs. Crawford returned, but the widow was aware of her being at hand before she could catch a sight of her at the window, for she heard her neighbour Brown call to her as she entered the court, to inquire how she had sped on her fool's errand.

"Fool's errand or not," replied Mrs. Crawford, "neighbour Fairfield is to go up with her daughter on Monday morning, and I count the matter as all but settled."

"Well done, Dame Crawford," said Grace; "and now as you've done a good turn for one neighbour, you won't refuse as much for another; for since you left us I have made up my mind to put Hannah to service, so turn about, and go and speak a word for her with Mrs. Smith."

"What, at the 'Sow'?" returned Mrs. Crawford; "have you forgotten it is Saturday night, and the house as full as it can hold? with such a noise and ranting, that I could not make Mrs. Smith hear if I was to shout to the very top of my voice: no, no, good neighbour, that would never do. Stop till Monday, and I will manage the matter, only remember that I must have a new ribbon for my trouble."

"And what will you have from neighbour Fairfield?" asked Grace.

"Oh," replied the other, "I shall be content with her good-will, for the creature has not one penny to rub against another. And if Mary can get shoes to her feet at Madame Shirley's, it will be as much as she can do."

"So that's all you get by serving such folks as those," said Grace, turning in at her own door, whilst Mrs. Crawford hastened to tell the widow Fairfield how much she was indebted to her.

And now, inasmuch as I must not make my story too long, I shall content myself with saying that the widow took her daughter on the Monday morning to Mrs. Shirley's, when the old lady was so pleased with the mother

that she hired Mary, and appointed her to come the next Saturday—engaging only to find her with clothes for the first two years. In the meantime Hannah Brown was hired at the public-house, and went to her place about the same time that Mary went to Mrs. Shirley's.

We will not trouble ourselves very much with Hannah's proceedings at the public-house, but shall only remark that the gains were quite equal to what Mrs. Crawford had represented them; that is, if we may judge by the new gowns, bonnets, ribbons, and gloves which Hannah displayed when she came to see her mother; for, as Grace Brown very properly remarked, such handsome things were not to be got for nothing. But we hope that we shall better satisfy our reader by giving an insight into Mrs. Shirley's small, neat dwelling on Henwick Hill.

Mrs. Shirley's house was placed on a sloping bank, commanding a fine view of Worcester on the opposite side of the river, with its many spires and venerable towers. A little garden, cultivated by the hands of the old lady and her maid, and abounding in the season with roses, pinks, and tulips, encom-

passed the small building, and shed its fragrance all around. The house consisted of an exceedingly small entrance, with a very little parlour on one side, and a kitchen on the other. Two bedrooms, a store-room, and a small back kitchen made up the rest of the building. The mistress occupied one bedroom, and kept the other in great order for the reception of an elderly cousin, who now and then visited her; and the little maid, in consequence, slept in a kind of closet over the entrance: but small as this place was, it had a window, which opened into the garden, and, beside the bed, there was room for Mary's box.

The old lady was accustomed to ring her bell at six o'clock, and she required her maid to have everything prepared for breakfast in the kitchen between seven and eight; the good lady breakfasted as soon as she came down, and the maid had her teapot afterwards, and took her breakfast at another little table, for everything was of a small size in this good lady's house. After breakfast all was washed up and put away, and then the old lady read a prayer with her maid; and whilst she occupied herself with her

needle, darning and patching her old linen, for she had little money to buy new, the maid read to her one chapter from the Old and one from the New Testament. After which she was employed in rubbing the furniture and cooking utensils, and making all things bright and clean in and about the house, and orderly in the garden, the good lady in the meantime following her about, directing, approving, and finding fault, or sending forth her orders from her seat in the kitchen.

The cooking, it may be certain, was not much in this house, but Mrs. Shirley would have everything done well, and would allow of no flutter or confusion whilst dinner was getting ready. She also insisted upon having her dinner to a minute; that was precisely when the cuckoo-clock in the kitchen announced the hour of one. After which, the maid was to clean up her things, change her working dress, and prepare herself for a walk with her mistress. This was Mary's chief delight, for when, after a while, Mrs. Shirley found that she was a modest, good child, she used to talk to her when they went out, and often told her stories about people who had lived in the country when

she was a very little girl, and explained to her their old-fashioned customs and ways of living. She also often talked to her about the Bible, and told her of the happy deaths of her father and mother, of her husband (for she was a widow), and of her only son, who had died when about nine years of age.

There are a number of most lovely walks in the neighbourhood of Worcester, for the country abounds with hills and valleys, orchards and hop-yards, fragrant fields and shady hedgerows ; and the lady had great delight in these scenes, and took pleasure in pointing out to Mary what was most lovely in the works of God, teaching her to look up from the works of creation to the Creator himself. And you may be assured that on these occasions she did not forget to lead her thoughts to the great work of man's redemption by Christ, who took our nature, and died on the cross to save sinners.

After their walk, the lady and her little maid had their tea, and then the maid was obliged to sit and sew till bedtime, whilst her mistress looked over her work, and was sometimes even so good as to read to her ; but if that did not suit her convenience, she

always made her take a hymn-book before her, and repeat a hymn whilst she was sewing.

Thus day after day passed with little interruption, and no change took place, excepting when that formidable week arrived when all the linen in the house was washed and then Mary was obliged to get up very early, and wash till late at night, and if the washing was not well done she was forced to do it over again ; besides which she was made to iron, and plait, and stamp, and clap, and clear-starch, and puff, and fold, and go through all those tronblesome businesses, which some young girls dislike so much that they would rather be dirty all their days than learn to perform them.

Mary Fairfield was fifteen years of age when she went to live with Mrs. Shirley, and from that time till she was seventeen she was as happy as it is possible for any one on this earth to be. Certain it is that she was not dressed so smartly as Hannah Brown, and that she lived plainly ; but then she was kept as much out of the way of sinful and low company as the first lady of the land, and was always learning something new and

useful. Some people said that it was very hard for her to be made to work in the garden, but then these people did not know that Mary found both health and pleasure in the garden, and that she was as delighted to see it neat, and to see the various colours of the flowers, as if they had been all her own ; and for that matter, were they not her own ? For were not their beautiful blossoms spread before her eyes, and was she not continually refreshed with their delightful colour ? And was she not allowed, during the season for flowers, to send a nosegay every Saturday evening to her mother, by the hand of the milkwoman, who lived close to the widow ?

Once a week Mrs. Shirley, when she was quite well, used to drink tea with an old lady, who lived near her on the hill, and on that day Mary was allowed to take her work and sit with her mother, upon condition that her mother walked back with her to the place where Mrs. Shirley was drinking tea. And thus the young girl was as much watched and cared for as if she had been one of the best of people's children ; and her mother never failed to thank God for having provided her child with such a friend.

PART II.

THE TWO SERVANTS.

IN the meantime Mary grew very tall, and from the care which was taken to keep her out of bad company, and the regular food and proper rest which she enjoyed (for she was always in bed, and perhaps asleep, before nine o'clock, she became, with the Divine blessing, so comely a girl, that many persons remarked it to the widow, and even those who envied the good woman could not help saying that Mary Fairfield, even in her linsey pinafore, looked better than most of the smartest girls in Worcester: not considering what is, however, very true, that it is not heaping fine clothes on an awkward person which can make such a one look well, but that cleanliness, good manners, and modesty will set off the most ordinary face; and that girls who are not well brought up, and kept at home, might deck themselves out in every kind of finery which the shops could afford, without looking one bit more like ladies than they would if they wore a linsey petticoat and a coarse apron.

I have often thought that there is no reason

why poor people should be so coarse and vulgar as they generally are ; nevertheless they will remain so till they can understand that the particulars in which they differ from their betters are not so much in those things which affect the outside, but those which belong to the heart and understanding.

Mrs. Shirley had promised, if Mary behaved well for two years, instead of finding her with clothes, to give her three pounds, and she was as good as her word ; but it was agreed that the widow should have the money, to lay out for her daughter in what way she should think best.

It was soon after Mary's second year with Mrs. Shirley had elapsed, that she was one evening allowed to go to her mother's, and it very unfortunately happened the same evening that Hannah Brown was also at home, having had leave from Mrs. Smith to see her father, who was arrived that day from a voyage down as far as the Channel.

As Hannah came into the yard she nodded at Mary, who looked with wonder, and I am afraid with something like envy, at her glazed cotton gown, which hung in a train behind, according to the fashion in

those days, and the fine ribbons in her bonnet.

"Well, mother," said Mary, "how fine Hannah is! I am sure she must have great wages to buy such grand things." The widow Fairfield answered shortly, "Yes, my dear, the wages at Mrs. Smith's are very good;" and then tried to turn the discourse to some other subject.

Mary went on with her work, and Hannah passed in and out of the yard, sweeping her train by Mary, and talking about the races, which were to take place next week.

"Mother," said Mary, "I should like to have such a gown as Hannah's."

"May be you might," replied the mother; "but there are two reasons why you will not have such a one. The first is that you have no money to buy such a gown, and the second is that neither your mistress nor I should like to see you dressed in such a way."

"What, mother!" said Mary, "do you think that gown is too fine for me? Perhaps it may be; but if it is too good for me, it is too good for Hannah Brown; and I am not sure, when I look again at her, if I don't think so too."

"And what business," replied the widow, "have you to think at all about it? I am sure your mistress does not teach you to meddle with other people's concerns."

Mary made no answer, but whenever Hannah appeared, her eye followed her; and when she observed her light conduct, for she talked and laughed somewhat loudly, romping with her brothers and the young sailors—Mary drew up her lip and looked contemptuously at her: the widow, however, did not perceive this, otherwise she would surely have reproved her, for we have no right to despise our neighbours, though we should shun their faults. But as the noise and uproar in the yard did not please her, she directed Mary to come from the door, and sit where she could neither see nor be seen.

It was not long after Mary had changed her place, before a woman came in a great hurry out of the street, to call the widow to a person who had been taken suddenly ill, in consequence of which her mother was obliged to leave her alone in the house.

The widow had not been gone out of the court many minutes, when Hannah Brown

put her head in at the door, exclaiming, "So, old playfellow, you are there alone. Well, I am glad of it, for I have a great deal to say to you.

"I want you to look at my gown. I put it on to-day to show father ; it was bought for the occasion of the races ; we have always a sight of genteel company at the races ; besides, mistress lets me go to the course once, if not twice, only I must be back a little before the crowd, to get things ready against the company comes in.

"And now tell me, how do you like being boxed up with the old lady ? I would not be shut up as you are in that dull place if you would give me all the world ! and such poor wages, too, as you have. I should not wonder if you had never touched a farthing of the old lady's money to this very day."

In this manner, and to this purpose, she went on for a long while ; Mary in the meantime not answering a single word, but blushing up to her eyes, as if it were a shame to her to be kept close at home, and made to mind her work and improve herself. "You don't speak, Mary," said Hannah, after she had stopped to take breath ; and "I don't wonder

that you are ashamed at the way in which your mother treats you. Why, are not you seventeen and more? and yet you are kept up like a babe, that does not know its right hand from its left. Mother tells me you might have had the very same place as I now am in. Why, Mary, I am sure if I were to count up all my gains since I was at the 'Sow,' it would not be less than twelve good pounds. For I have bought this gown that I have on my back, and the one I wore last Sunday, and the yellow striped one, and that with the large flowers."

"Oh, stop, stop, Hannah," said Mary, quite worked up into a fit of vexation; "don't trouble me with these long tales about your gowns. How can I help your being so much better off than I am? Must not I do as my mother bids me?"

"No," replied Hannah, steadily, and at the same setting her arms on her sides.

"Why, what would you do if you were in my place?" asked Mary.

"Why, I would not wear such a gown, such a cap, or such an apron as you do," answered Hannah; "but I would make the old lady come down with her guineas, else I would let

her understand, that I would be looking out for a better service. You have learnt a great deal, I doubt not, at the old lady's, for she is mighty faddy, everybody says ; and you are now fit for a better place than hers, and if I were you, I would tell her so, before I was a day older ; and I would go to the races, too, that I would ; and neither she nor all the old women on the hill should hinder me : and that's what I would do."

Mary looked thoughtful, and fretted, and Hannah went on ; but as I suppose you have heard enough of her discourse by this time, I shall give you no more of it, but shall only add that she continued talking to Mary till one of her brothers came to the door to tell her that the widow was returning, on which she made off as quick as she could, leaving Mary to suppose that she had set her brother to watch, lest she should be surprised in her neighbour's house.

The widow Fairfield, when she returned, was so full of the scene of distress which she had just witnessed that she did not observe that Mary's looks and manners were different from what they generally were, and as it was quite dusk when they walked home,

and as she had much to tell her daughter respecting the sick person, she never remarked that all was not right with her, though it was as much as Mary could do to refrain from bursting into tears, and expressing uneasiness ; for the words of Hannah had sunk deep into her heart, and she really began to think that she was dealt harshly by, and unnecessarily deprived of pleasures and advantages which many others of her age were allowed.

Next day was that day of bustle which occurred every month in the house of Mrs. Shirley, a day when all the clothes in the house were to be subjected to the various processes of rubbing, boiling, drying, folding and smoothing ; a time when good Mrs. Shirley was full of care, and, to speak the truth, now and then somewhat peevish. Such things will happen in all families, and servants in the most agreeable places must expect these things ; but Hannah Brown's discourse was no good preparation for this occasion, and Mary was at that time so very much out of sorts, that when her mistress found fault with her for slighting some piece of work, she returned a very impertinent

answer, and told her that if she could not give satisfaction it would be much better for them to part.

Mrs. Shirley really loved Mary, and believed her to be a truly good girl; she was therefore much hurt and shocked at her behaviour, and busy as the day was, she bade her put on her bonnet that moment, and call her mother.

Mary's passion had not yet cooled, she therefore instantly set off to run down the hill, resolving as she went, to tell her mother that she would not be shut up any longer with Mrs. Shirley, to receive no wages, and nothing but affronts. But in proportion as she got nearer her mother's house, the fear of her parent's displeasure cooled her courage, and had not she been withheld by pride, she would have gone back to beg her mistress's pardon. Indeed, I do not know whether she would not have done so as it was, had she not fallen in with Grace Brown just at the moment when she was half inclined to turn round, who was standing in the road, looking over the water at some men, who were building a booth on the race-ground which lies between the city and the river.

Grace Brown no sooner espied Mary, than setting down a ragged child of about four years old, which she held in her arms, she approached a step or two, and bursting into a loud laugh, "Why, Mary," she said, "whither away so fast? how is old madam? I wonder she is not afraid of trusting you so far by yourself; or mayhap you have made a stolen march, and taken what they call thieves' liberty." Mary now felt more ashamed to go back than ever, and the consequence was that she went on, though she became every moment more and more alarmed.

Mary found her mother at home, and my reader may be well assured that she made the best of her own story, and endeavoured to make it appear that her mistress had been both unjust and cruel; and had the widow Fairfield been like too many other mothers, had she at this time taken her daughter's part, and promised to receive her home as soon as she should leave her place, she would probably have ruined her prospects for life; but this wise and good woman behaved on this occasion as a mother ought to do, and told her daughter that unless she

went back instantly, and begged her mistress's pardon, she might never more expect any favours from her; and thus cutting the matter short, she took Mary by the hand and did not leave her till she had made her beg pardon of her mistress, and confess her folly and ingratitude. "And now, child," said this wise parent, as she took leave of her daughter. "I will tell you my opinion of the place you have got. That if I could afford it, so far from asking wages from your mistress, I should think three pounds a year too little to offer her for her kindness to you. Is she not giving you an education which, if it be not your own fault, may be the making of you for life? If you waste and undervalue the advantages you have here, believe me, you will come to want them hereafter; and if you rate the little trifle of money which Hannah Brown gets at the public-house above the care and instruction of your respectable mistress, I shall count you henceforward more of a simpleton than I ever had reason to do through all the days of your life before." So saying, the mother departed, turning away without even allowing her child to kiss her,

a thing which she had never before done within her daughter's memory.

I rejoice to say that this wise conduct of the mother was, through the Divine blessing, of the highest benefit to her daughter, in settling her mind and making her contented, for from that time till she was twenty years of age, she lived with Mrs. Shirley, and after a while, as the poor old lady became more infirm and helpless, was more like a daughter than a servant to her mistress. In the meantime Mrs. Shirley offered to increase her wages from three to four pounds, but as Mary knew that her mistress had some difficulty in making her little income serve, she very handsomely refused to take any more. "For," she said, "you have been my best friend, madam, next to my mother, that I ever had in the world ; and I hope that God will give me a heart to be grateful."

"But you must not think," said the old lady, "that I shall be able to make it up to you when I die, for all I have goes with me, as I have nothing but a little annuity to live upon."

Mary wept when her mistress spoke in this manner, for she had never thought of

getting anything when her mistress died, her mother never having spoken of any such thing, and she herself being too young and ignorant of the ways of the world to have any such expectation.

Mrs. Shirley was therefore sorry for what she had said when she saw her tears ; and holding her hand to her, she added, " I have hitherto found you a good girl, Mary, and I pray that I may never have occasion to alter my opinion."

In the meantime, whilst Mary still continued to serve her first good mistress, Hannah Brown changed her place several times. After the second year she grew so saucy to Mrs. Smith that her mistress gave her warning, and she returned to her father's house, with some fine gowns and caps, indeed, but without a shilling in her pocket. It was some weeks before she could get another place, and as her hand was out for the gloving business, she was obliged to pawn many of her clothes to support herself, for Ben Brown was at that time ill in his bed, and there was nothing to keep the family but what the mother earned. At length Hannah got a place in the Foregate Street,

which was a pretty good one, and there she stayed a year, at the end of which time her mistress gave her warning ; and all the gains she could boast for this year's work was the redemption of her clothes from the pawnbroker's shop.

Thus three years and some odd months of her time passed away, and I think she was then at home only a month, during which time she renewed her acquaintance with the pawnbroker, and afterwards was engaged by a butcher's wife not far from her father's house, where she got plenty to eat, indeed, but lower wages than she had had in any of her other places.

In this situation, that is, as maid of all work at the butcher's shop, she was going on for the second year, for as her father was still ill she was afraid to come home, when the change took place which I am about to relate.

When Mary had been five complete years with Mrs. Shirley, and had commenced her sixth year, she one morning, to her great terror, found her mistress cold and dead in her bed ; she did not suppose, at first, that she was dead, and called aloud to the

neighbours for help : all help was vain, and she was obliged to make up her mind to be parted from one who was now become as dear to her as a parent. The day before she had been reading to her, and had led her round the garden, and heard her, for the last time, speak of her Saviour, and the profitableness of godliness, not only in the world to come, but also in this life. But that tongue which had imparted to her so much useful and holy instruction was now for ever silent, and she remembered, with bitter sorrow, every little negligence and unkindness which she had ever shown towards this dear mistress. As soon as it was known that Mrs. Shirley was certainly dead, the cousin before mentioned was sent for, and Mary remained in the house till after the funeral, having been provided with a black stuff gown and mourning cap, which Mrs. Shirley's relation undertook to pay for herself, if it was found that there was not money enough, when the bureau was opened, to pay the expenses attendant on the funeral and other matters. Mary followed her dear mistress to the grave, after which she returned to the house, which looked to her a solitary place indeed ; for

whilst the remains of her dear lady lay therein she had not fancied it quite forsaken. She slept that night in her little room, and not only cried herself to sleep, but awoke in tears in the morning.

Mrs. Shirley's cousin had brought her own maid with her, she had, therefore, no need of Mary's services; so after breakfast she called her up into her sleeping-room, and giving her a letter, "Here, Mary," she said, "is your character; it was written only a week ago, and is the dying testimony of your departed mistress to your good conduct. I found it this morning in her bureau, and enclosed in it five guineas, which she desired might be given into your hands, together with two printed calico gowns, and a bundle of her old clothes, which were all marked for you. And now, good girl, go back to your mother, and receive my thanks for the comfort you have given for some years past to my poor relation."

"Oh, don't call me good, madam," said Mary, quite overcome, "I am not good—I have not done my duty to my dear mistress; I have often been sulky and unthankful, and now I feel my sin, and have need only to implore the pardon of God."

Mrs. Shirley's cousin shook Mary's hand, and the young woman then taking up her bundle and the five guineas, and having engaged a boy to carry her box, went out of that house, where she had spent five blessed and happy years in the acquirement of such virtuous and industrious habits as were a blessing to her through the whole course of her life; and such instructions as, with the Divine blessing, would promote her everlasting happiness in the world to come. As she passed through the garden she plucked a rose from her old mistress's favourite tree, and walked down the hill under the influence of a grief so deep, that even the last testimony of her mistress's love and bounty was, for the present, unable to afford her any consolation.

Mary had restrained her tears in the street, but when she came into her mother's house she cast the five guineas, which she held in the palm of her hand, and the bundle she carried on her arm, upon the table, and, without speaking a word, threw herself into her mother's arms, and sobbed so loud that Grace Brown came running in to see what was the matter.

"Hey day!" said she, "what's got the girl?"

"Nothing," replied the widow Fairfield; "let her alone, she will be better presently. We must allow a little time for her getting over her trouble."

Grace stood still, and looked at Mary's black gown, saying, "Poor thing, nothing but a trumpery stuff; it's enough to vex her, after being a slave so many years; but it's all your doing, neighbour Fairfield, I told you from the first how it would be. Why, every one knew that the old lady had nothing but a 'nuity, and scarce enough to keep her alive; and how could you be such a fool as to keep the girl there, thinking that she would get anything at her death? But wilful folks will have their own way."

The widow looked up with amazement, and Mary was so struck that she ceased to sob.

"Well," continued Grace, "it's just what every one expected, and I always rejoice when greedy folks and long-sighted folks are disappointed. And I hope, Mary, my lass, when you look out for another place, you will demand creditable wages, and not depend on old ladies' favours for a future

time, 'for a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'" So saying, the busybody was turning out at the door, when her eye fell on the five sparkling golden guineas, and at the same time she saw a corner of the fine chintz pattern peeping out of the bundle.

Had she seen a serpent looking at her from the wall she could not have been more struck, and such was the change of her countenance, and the fixed look of her eye, that the widow naturally turned to see what she was gazing at, and for the first time observed the guineas.

"Oh, my God, Thou art very good," she exclaimed, clasping her hands together; "this is what I did not look for; this is indeed added over and above all to Thy mercies." And whilst she stopped to gather up the money from the low table, the waterman's wife made off, and the widow was left alone with the daughter.



PART III.

LIFE AT THE FARMHOUSE.

THE widow, it may be certain, was very happy in the company of her daughter, and when she observed her improvement in knowledge, and her dutiful and modest behaviour, her heart was lifted up in gratitude to that God who had led her to sacrifice all other advantages in order to obtain holy and useful instruction for her child.

Mary had not, however, been at home many weeks before her mother was informed by butcher Oakes, the person in whose house Hannah Brown then lived, that there was a place vacant in a farmhouse about fourteen miles from Worcester, on the Herefordshire side of the country, and by the character which the butcher gave of the place the widow did not doubt but that it might suit her daughter; accordingly, having inquired where Farmer Taylor put up on a market day—for the old gentleman always kept Worcester market, she took occasion to see him, and showed him the letter which was left by her daughter's late mistress; which when the farmer had

read, and looked for a moment on Mary, he hired her without another word, excepting such as related to the work which it was expected she was to do.

Mrs. Shirley died in the early part of the summer, and it was the end of August when Mary took leave of her mother and set off to Hanley, the parish in which her new master resided.

Mary had never been so far from home in her life, and never walked above two or three miles ; she was not, therefore, sorry when she found herself about four miles from Worcester, to get into a waggon, which, although it moved slowly, brought her about dusk within half a mile of Farmer Taylor's house.

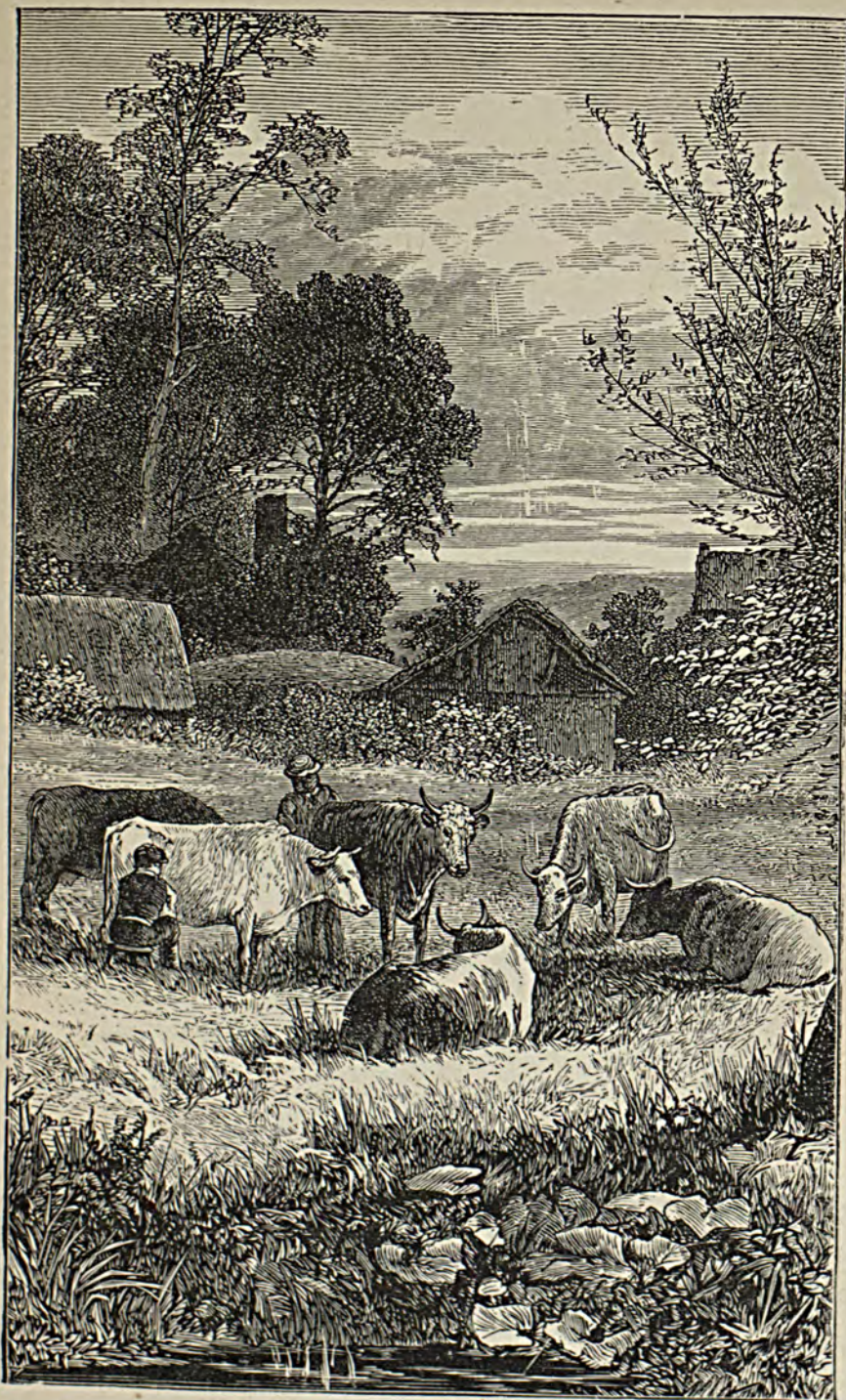
Mary had been taught by her late dear mistress to admire the wonderful works of God, as they are spread before the eyes of man in the heavens above and on the earth beneath ; and on this occasion of her first journey to any distance from home she had abundant subject for her admiration and wonder ; for as she travelled further from Worcester and advanced towards the borders of Wales, she was more and more surprised

at the beauty of the orchards, in which the trees were bending down with the weight of their golden fruit, the multitude of little hills and green valleys, the number of brooks of water, bordered with willows and saplings, the various shadowy lanes branching off from the high road, the hop-yards and pasture-grounds, coppices and green lawns, varieties of which continually presented themselves to her sight as the waggon rolled slowly onwards, and reminded her of that lovely description of the Holy Land which is found in the Book of Deuteronomy,—
“A land of brooks, and fountains, and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills ; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil, olive, and honey ; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it.”

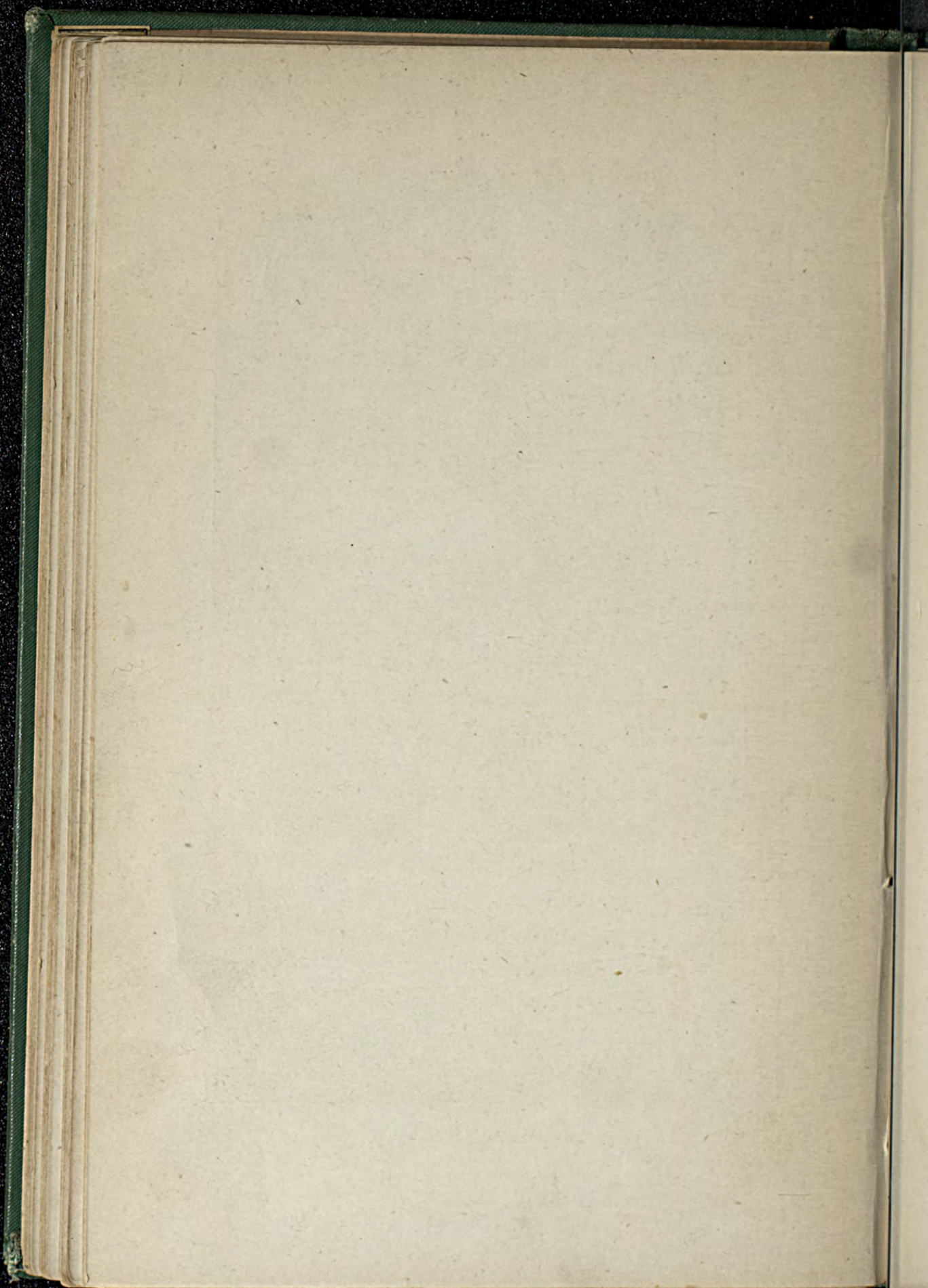
Towards evening, however, having descended into a very deep valley, and crossed the river Teme by a stone bridge, the heavy carriage began to ascend on the other side, and coming at length to a place where the road was shaded on each hand by very high trees, the old waggoner suddenly stopped

his horses opposite to a stile in the hedge, which separated one of these woods from the road ; and pointing out a path which wound away through the trees, he directed Mary to get out of the waggon, saying, "There, my lass, if you are bound for Farmer Taylor's, you have no longer any business with me ; my way lies to the left, yours to the right, follow yon pathway to the brook, cross it by the wooden bridge, climb the piece you will see beyond the brook, and you will then find yourself at the very door of the house."

Mary presented the old waggoner with a shilling, took off her bonnet, and placed her small box on her head, and presently found herself all alone in the midst of a shadowy and beautiful wood—such a one as she had never before seen. Having continued her walk some time through this wood, she at length came to the brook which the old man had mentioned, and having crossed it by the bridge, she began to ascend a steep pasture-ground, scattered over with bushes ; amongst which a number of milch cows were at that time feeding. It was with difficulty that Mary, who had been little used to labour out of doors, dragged herself



AT FARMER TAYLOR'S.



and her burden up the hill ; but when she felt herself almost exhausted, she was inspired with new courage by a sight of the many-shafted and clustered chimneys of the old farmhouse ; the gable ends of which venerable tenement next presented themselves to her as she ascended a little higher, frowning over the steep ascent, and overlooking the mighty mass of woods, which seemed to extend themselves over the whole vale below. With another effort Mary gained the top of the pasture-ground, and found herself at the entrance of a farmyard, the house itself being extended in front of her. She entered the farmyard between a barn and a hay-rick, and the next moment found herself in as busy a scene as that which any street in her native town could have supplied. The yard itself was encompassed on each side with barns, cow-houses, ricks, and stables ; in one corner of it was a waggon laden with hay, which a number of men were unloading to make a rick ; in another, a red-armed Welsh girl was feeding a number of pigs ; the farmer himself was standing at the top of the rick, delivering his orders with a voice as loud

as a church bell ; and on a flight of steps at the kitchen door were the farmer's wife and mother, the mother being a very old woman, and the wife such a bustling, tight, and notable dame as would not easily be found in the present day. The rest of the family, consisting of four great boys and two smart girls, the farmer's children, were, as it afterwards appeared, all engaged in the hay-field.

When Mary presented herself she was received with much rough kindness by her mistress, who said she hoped that she would not belie her good character : and as the next day was to be a busy one, she was bid to take her supper and go to bed ; the Welsh girl being directed to show her the bread and cheese cupboard, and point out the way to the garret in which she was to sleep.

Whilst Mary was eating her supper at a long oaken table at one end of the great kitchen of the farmhouse, she ceased not to marvel at the whitewashed wall, the chimney, the long casement windows in their stone frames, and small green panes, the quantity of fitches of bacon hanging

from the smoky ceiling, the smell of wood smoke, and the old-fashioned appearance of every piece of furniture which fell within her notice. She was, however, so much tired that she was not sorry to go to her bed, and was very ready to follow her fellow-servant, whose language she did but half understand, up two or three flights of stairs, and through several long white-washed passages, into a loft at the very top of the house, where she was to sleep. This room, such as it was, was illuminated by a little window in the roof, and smelt so strongly of cheese and apples, that Mary felt she should have been suffocated had she not forced open the casement, to the annoyance of many spiders, who had spun their slender webs across the opening, and thus admitted the air, which blew sweet and fresh from the valley below. Here, however, she was happy to find that she was to sleep alone; and though the room was dirty, and the bedding far from clean, she trusted that she should be able to make such an amendment in both as would soon render her chamber a very comfortable place of rest.

Between four and five o'clock the next morning all the family were roused up. The farmyard was all in a bustle, the horses were put to the waggon, and sent off to the hayfield, and Mary heard her mistress calling her maids to come down immediately.

Mary had, however, gone to bed early, and slept well; she was therefore already much refreshed, and as she stood at the window to put on her clothes she could not but admire the beauty of the morning, as seen from the eminence on which the house was situated. And though little time was given her for prayer, yet in that short time she was enabled to lift up her heart to God, and seek a blessing for the day. From the time when Mary first appeared before her mistress in the early morning, till eight o'clock at night, she was in one continued bustle. It was harvest-time, and she was to fulfil the treble duties of housemaid, cook, and dairymaid, all of which labours were to be executed under the superintendence of the mistress, who, though she understood all branches of household work necessary for persons in her situation, was so confused in the directions which she gave to her servants, that it was

next to impossible for them to understand at first what she would have them to do ; and poor Mary felt herself so entirely lost in the long passages, wide cellars, larders, and dairies of the old farmhouse, and so puzzled with the odd names which her mistress gave to the different things which were to be used in the kitchen and dairy, that the poor girl was quite in despair ; and before the morning was half over she heartily wished she had never undertaken the place.

At twelve o'clock, the pork and beans being duly boiled, and smoking on the long oaken board, with many deep jugs of cider, Mary was directed by her mistress to go to a little hillock, on the brow of the hill which she had ascended the day before, and call with all her might, in order to collect the family to dinner, a business for which her quiet life with Mrs. Shirley had very ill prepared her. However, she succeeded in making some of the family hear, and presently the master, the sons and daughters, the servants and labouring people, all came crowding into the kitchen, and sat down together at the board, the master and mistress and their children being at the

head of the table. An immense fruit pie followed the meat and vegetables, not a morsel of which being left, the master rose, and the whole party returned to the field, from which they did not again come back till evening, when another coarse and hearty meal was provided, and every one retired to rest a little before ten o'clock. This mode of life continued till the end, not only of the hay, but the corn harvest; and during this time Mary was heartily weary; but when this busy season was over, she found her situation vastly more comfortable; and by arranging her work she discovered that it would be generally in her power to dress herself neatly, and sit down to her sewing, a little before four o'clock every afternoon: her especial business was to clean the house, to wash and iron, and to wait on old Mrs. Taylor, who was almost childish. In harvest-time it was the custom of the family to take their meals all together; but on other occasions the mistress and her children generally sat in a small parlour within the kitchen, where they breakfasted and drank tea. Though the mistress commonly had a close watch upon her servants

yet Mary soon found out that she was not yet quite acquainted with all their tricks.

It was only during harvest-time that the workmen had their meals in the kitchen ; at other times the family only consisted of the housemaid and dairymaid, an old man, in whom the farmer placed much trust, and a ploughboy. The chief business of the dairymaid were those things which appertained unto her dairy, but as the mistress directed all these concerns, little skill was necessary ; however, it was found that the Welsh girl with red arms, of whom I before spoke, would not even learn the little that was necessary for her to learn, and as she was, moreover, very obstinate and very impertinent, it was agreed that she should be sent away, and another servant be sought after when he went to Worcester Michaelmas fair.

Mary was not sorry at first at the prospect of parting with Welsh Patty, as her fellow-servant was commonly called, as she never could understand either her Welsh or her English ; but she would not have been grieved to have kept her a little longer, when, on the return of her master

from Michaelmas fair, he informed his wife, in her presence, that butcher Oakes had recommended a servant to him, and that her name was Hannah Brown.

"What sort of a girl is she?" said Mrs. Taylor. "A good stirring girl," replied the farmer, "though I am 'most afraid you will think her a little too smart."

"That is the fault of all the lasses in the present day," remarked the farmer's wife; "but if she will mind her dairy, I sha'n't quarrel with her about her dress, for I am sure Patty is plain enough, yet I never could make her understand her work."

Mary had not been unhappy at Farmer Taylor's since the bustle of harvest had been over; she did not, indeed, enjoy the opportunities of instruction which she had had in the house of her late excellent mistress. It is true she went to church in turn with the other maid once a fortnight, but between these periods of public worship she heard no more of the Bible, or of anything belonging to it, than if there never had been such a book in the world: there was no such thing as family prayers at the farmer's, or so much as grace before or after meals. Never-

theless Mary enjoyed some sweet seasons on Sunday evenings, and on many other occasions, when she retired for the night to her little room at the top of the house; which, by means of airing and scouring, she had made a comfortable place. And often when she went up to clean herself after the dirtiest of her work, she was filled with very sweet thoughts concerning the Creator of all things, by the contemplation of the woods and valleys spread beneath her; the cows feeding quietly on the bank-side, the dripping waters, which ran down the bottom of the dingle, and the blue hills beyond all these. At these times many sweet verses of Scripture and portions of hymns, which her dear mistress and mother had taught her, would return to her mind; and she would often set her Bible open before her when she was at work, in order that she might commit other verses to memory.

In the meantime she was assisted in the performance of all her little duties, and she found much quiet and comfort in pursuing her various employments about the house, and in making everything appear as clean and creditable as possible. She observed

carefully all orders which were given her, and did everything exactly according to the directions of her mistress. After the harvest most of the farmer's children had gone to school, with the exception of the two elder boys, who helped their father in his work; and this was a great comfort to Mary, for Miss Bessy and Miss Dolly were so extremely rude and noisy, that the house was vastly more agreeable when they were from home. Thus Mary found herself much happier than she at first expected she should have been, and she was sorry when she heard that she was likely to have such a companion as Hannah Brown, from whom she might expect some evil, but could hope for nothing good.

At length the day arrived when Welsh Patty was to go away, and Hannah Brown arrived with her father, Brown Ben, the same evening.

So smart a figure as Hannah's had not been seen at the farm for some time, and when Mrs. Taylor first looked upon her, she said to her that "she feared she would find her long trains somewhat in the way in the dairy."

Hannah replied that she had proper dresses for work as well as for going out; and answered that she knew the management of the dairy as well as any country girl in Worcestershire, having been well instructed by Mrs. Oakes. "Well, we shall see," replied the farmer's wife, "but you will be so good as to cut off some of those tails to your gown, and lay aside some of your top-knots, or you will never do for me or I for you; for I don't see how six guineas a year is to provide all these things." Hannah made no answer, for it suited her at that time to please Mrs. Taylor; and having made a curtsy, she came out of the little parlour into the kitchen, where Mary was inquiring of old Brown concerning her many former friends and neighbours at Worcester.

"Well, old acquaintance," said Hannah, "so here we are met again at the world's end: did ever any one see such a wilderness as this? such banks to climb, and such wild places to go through! Why, I thought I should have torn the very clothes off my back in coming through the piece just below.

"But don't you find it very dull?" she

added, looking round the wide kitchen. Before Mary could reply, Ben Brown informed his daughter that he was going, and the father and daughter went out together through the fold-yard.

It was some minutes before Hannah returned, and then sitting herself down by Mary, who was engaged with her needle, she asked her how she liked her place; saying that for her part, had she had any idea of its being such a wild, out-of-the-way country, she would never have come into it. "Though," added she, "I am heartily tired of the town, and was glad to get anywhere to be out of it." The truth was that her name was not over-good in the town, and that it was not very easy for her to get a place in it; but of this she said nothing to Mary: and the mistress having desired Mary to direct the new-comer in her work, and to teach her a little the ways of the house, she lost no further time in talking with Hannah, but showed her into the dairy and pantry, and all those places in which her business lay.

By the little Mary saw this evening of Hannah Brown, she was convinced that she

was not improved, and was very thankful that she should have so little to do with her in the way of her work. However, as she was her townswoman, she wished to keep on friendly terms with her, and sometimes it came into her head that perhaps it might be possible to do her good by speaking to her on religious subjects, now that she was, as she trusted, so far removed from ill company and bad example. But Mary did not know that those who love bad company are never long in finding or making such companions as they like ; and that although she herself had seen none since she came to Hanley but persons who behaved themselves decently and properly, yet there were not wanting many such in the parish as could conduct themselves in a very contrary way.

Just at the bottom of the dingle, and near where the brook fell as much as five yards from the summit to the foot of a rock, was a thatched cottage, where dwelt an old woman and her son. The son seemed to be a tidy young man, and was employed about the farm. Mary had often seen him, but had seldom spoken to him ; the old woman,

however, who was called Esther Stephens, seemed to lie under suspicion of Mrs. Taylor, for she was forbidden to come nigh the house, and the mistress had more than once advised Mary to have nothing to say to her ; and as Mary did not wish for any acquaintance, it was not difficult for her to observe the admonition. But Hannah Brown had not been a week at the farm before Mary, early one morning, saw her, from the window of her little room, talking to this poor body, as she was going out to milk in the piece near the cottage. And more than this,—she saw her take something from her pocket and give it to her. This was the only thing which Mary thought very suspicious in Hannah during the first month of their being together ; though, as to the rest, she feared she was an exceeding bold and forward girl, having something free to say to every one, and some joke to pass with every person who came within her hearing. Hannah was, however, active and bustling in her work, and pleased her mistress very well, who said she had nothing to complain of but her long sleeves and the tails to her gown. But as Hannah consented to

have a linsey petticoat and bedgown to do her hard work in, and only desired leave to wear her finery on Sunday, Mrs. Taylor seemed to be satisfied, and all things went on well for a while. In the meantime Mary never found any opportunity of entering with her fellow-servant on those subjects which, through the Divine blessing on her parent's care, and the instructions of her late mistress, were ever present to her own mind. However, the two young women agreed pretty well when they met together, but as their meetings were generally in the presence of their mistress, there was the less wonder that two so entirely different should be enabled to rub on for a time without any open disagreements.



PART IV.

THE PROVERB PROVED TRUE.

IT was some time after Michaelmas when Hannah Brown entered Mrs. Taylor's service, and during the following winter things went on pretty well, the eye of the mistress being constantly on Hannah; but the winter had been a very severe one, and in the spring the mistress was taken with a violent rheumatic complaint, which confined her to her bed, and filled her with trouble, because she could no longer watch her maids, and see that all went on rightly and properly in the dairy and kitchen. The rheumatism is not a dangerous complaint, but it is a painful one, and pain is a monitor which, if rightly attended to, may, with the Divine blessing, teach many valuable lessons, and fill the mind with a contempt of earthly things, and of the excellence of Him who endured the pains of death itself to redeem His chosen ones from sorrowing and suffering for ever. But poor Mrs. Taylor seemed to have no idea of taking these things properly to heart; all her thoughts during her confinement to her bed were

occupied about her dairy and kitchen, and she was constantly sending for her maids, to question them, and give them fresh directions. Neither did she seem to know which of the two she might best trust; for, as she remarked, the one was so silent, and the other so full of fine talk, that she feared they had neither of them much good in their minds. However, she could not help herself; neither was her husband's mother able to help her, for the old lady was lately become quite childish.

In the meantime it was Mary's wish to go on just as usual, and to observe all her mistress's rules, whether of great or little importance; and she hoped that when her mistress should come about again she would find things as she had left them. But in the interval difficulties arose, which she had not foreseen, and under which she did not know how to act. The farmer himself was obliged to be much from home to look after his servants in the field; and when he was out Hannah had full rule of the kitchen, and full command of the milk, the cream, the butter, the cheese, the bacon, and the eggs; and the first bad use which Mary perceived

that she began to make of her liberty was, that she invited one and another of the men to come and eat in the kitchen, regaling them with the best she had.

When Mary had observed this once or twice, she thought it was but her duty to mention this to her. "I do not speak, Hannah," she said, "of the trouble which you may bring upon us both by this thing, for it will surely be found out; but I wish to point out to you that we have no right to give away what does not belong to us." And on this occasion Mary ventured to say a word or two on the subject of the fear of God, which ought to rule the actions of every servant as well as every master.

Hannah, who was skimming her cream in the dairy when Mary thus addressed her, heard her out without speaking one word; and then, turning sharp upon her, whilst her cheeks were crimson with passion, "Now, Mary," she replied, "go and repeat all you have just now said to the mistress, and let her see how spiteful you religious folks can be: but mind this, if you do, I'll be revenged upon you as sure as my name is Hannah Brown."

"I shall not say a word of what is past to the mistress, Hannah," returned Mary, "and that I promise you ; but I make no promise for the time to come : so you now know what you have to trust to."

"I do," replied Hannah ; "and now, mistress Mary, please to walk out of the dairy." Mary did as she was desired, but as she was going through the long passages which led from the dairy to the kitchen she met William Stephens, the son of Esther, who was one of those who had been most often feasted in the farmer's kitchen since the mistress had been confined to her room.

Mary had not been able to check a few tears which had come into her eyes when thus unkindly answered by Hannah ; and William, observing these tears, asked her the cause of them ; expressing, in a rough way, a hope that no harm had come to her.

"Since you ask, William," returned Mary, "I will tell you what has troubled me ;" and she repeated all that had passed between herself and Hannah ; adding, "Now, William, I only wish that you, for one, would not be drawn in to do wrong. Do keep out of

the kitchen, and just do as you would if mistress was about. I am sure, even as far as this world goes, it is always best to do right; and then, as to the next, there can be no question but that he who has loved the Lord most will be the best off in the world to come."

The ruddy face of the young man became of a deeper red as Mary spoke, and he gave her a look of which she could make nothing at all, either good or bad; but she observed that from that period, during all the illness of her mistress, he never once again set his foot in the kitchen.

From this day there was not quite so much junketing in the farmer's kitchen by broad daylight as there had been before Mary had spoken to Hannah; notwithstanding which Mary did not feel herself at all the more assured that things were going on well.

There was one circumstance which she particularly observed, and this was, that pieces of beef, or pork, or bacon, sometimes appeared for once on the table, and then never again. She also found many bits of broken crusts in different parts of the kitchen

and wash-house. She saw drops of milk set aside in various cups and basins, and other signs of waste, which I have not time to mention in this place.

"Why, Hannah," said she one day to her fellow-servant, as she put together some bits of broken meat and bread, left on the plates after dinner, "I remember the time when mother and I should have been glad of these bits: I wonder you should give the man and the boy so much at one time, it's tempting them to be wasteful; here's enough in these plates to keep a hearty man for a day."

Hannah, who was taking a kettle of water off the fire to wash her dishes, looked round her as Mary spoke, and said, "You had best take up those bits and show them to mistress, and tell her how ill I manage her affairs."

"I wish you would not answer in such a scornful way," returned Mary, "surely I may speak to you, Hannah, if I use no ill language; but the truth is, I don't love waste, neither of my own things nor of another's; I often think of a saying which was sometimes in my mother's mouth, 'Wilful waste

makes woful want'; and I often fancy that there is never a bit of food wasted, in a wilful manner, which may not hereafter come to be wanted by the very person who threw it away. Now look you here, Hannah, here is a dish of broken meat, enough to dine a couple of grown persons. It cannot now be eaten by decent persons, because it has been thrown about and gnawed; and yet I will tell you what, Hannah, I think it more than probable that you yourself may come to be glad of such a dish."

"And why so?" said Hannah; "and why am I more likely to come to want than you, Mrs. Mary, with your fine talk?"

"Because you are wasteful," replied Mary, "and always have been so ever since I knew you; spending all before you, and taking no thought of the time to come, nor even trying to lay up for yourself a good name, which might serve when all else was gone."

"And pray," said Hannah, "why is not my name as good as yours? I'll tell you what," added she, snatching the plate from her hand, "I wish you would go upstairs and mind your sewing, and not meddle with things which don't belong to you."

"Hannah," returned Mary, "I don't meddle with what does not belong to me ; was I to let you waste my master's goods without speaking a word, I might be set down as an accomplice in your fault. He that is a partner with a thief is all the same, as to guilt, as the thief himself."

"Ay, !" said Hannah, "surely you don't mean to call me a thief?"

"By no means," replied Mary ; "I had no such thought ; I only warned you against being wasteful. And I do entreat you, my dear Hannah, to listen to me, and avoid these practices, which lead to ruin." She then went on to say something on the importance of religion, of endeavouring to please God, and the happiness of those who were early led to seek him, when Hannah suddenly interrupted her by opening the kitchen window, and throwing out the whole contents of the plate of broken meat upon a dunghill, or heap of ashes, which lay just under it.

This window of the kitchen was on the side of the house which was least frequented, and opened upon a narrow lane which passed thereabouts from a gravel-pit to the turnpike

road, and which lane was seldom passed, excepting by carts going for gravel. This was, therefore, a convenient place for throwing out all that offended from the kitchen; this collection of bones, meat, and crusts, were not the first which had been thrown in this way from the kitchen upon the dunghill by Hannah, and others of the farmer's servants who had gone before her. Mary had been startled at the quick motion of Hannah, and she was not the less surprised, when the young woman turning to her said, "Are not you much obliged to me, Mrs. Mary? have not you got something to tell of me now? Why don't you go up to mistress, and let her know at once what a vile hussy she has in her house?"

Mary stood one moment, hesitating what she ought to do; not knowing whether she should again try persuasion with Hannah, or at once tell all her misdemeanours to her mistress, when suddenly a gentle tap was heard at the kitchen door, and Mary's mother walked in.

Mary would have rejoiced to have seen her mother at any time, but she was particularly well pleased to see her at this moment,

when she stood in so much need of advice, and the widow was not less pleased to meet her daughter. Hannah Brown, however, looked a little shy of her old neighbour, and walked off to her dairy, without so much as offering the poor woman a bit of bread.

The widow was not, however, without a welcome; for the mistress being told that she was come, sent to see her, and kept her at the farm as much as a week; for she fancied that she had a better method of handling her swollen limbs than any one thereabout. And so pleased was she with her on further acquaintance, that she invited her to come again in harvest-time.

Whilst the widow was at the farm, Mary took occasion to tell her of the trouble she was in about the waste and destruction which was going on in the kitchen, and asked her whether it was not her duty to tell mistress of what she had seen amiss.

The widow gave her opinion, that it was always wrong to conceal sin, and by so doing giving encouragement to that which is amiss: "But," added she, "before we tell of the poor sinful girl, let us make one more trial to set her right. I will take occasion to talk with

her, and to lay before her the sin of her conduct; and perhaps the Almighty may bless my endeavours." Accordingly the good woman followed Hannah into her dairy the same evening, and there held a long and affectionate discourse with her.

She took occasion at this time to lay before her the whole nature of man's state on earth, to show his fallen state, and to explain the remedy provided by God the Father for the restoration of his lost creatures. She showed how man had been at first made innocent, and how he had rendered himself corrupt; and she pointed out the consequences which must surely follow if we obey the dictates of our corrupt inclinations. She endeavoured also to make her understand that the only means of obtaining peace on earth and happiness above, was by faith in Christ the Saviour, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

"There is no good thing, my dear Hannah," said the widow, "which is needful for the servants of God in this world which they do not enjoy; neither is anything refused them but what would be for their hurt; and whoever is persuaded of this truth, will be con-

tent with that which he has, and will never endeavour to appropriate to his own use the good things which belong to another, neither will he waste the property of another, because he is well assured that he will be called to account for such waste, if not in this world, yet in that which is to come."

In this manner did she discourse with Hannah, entreating her earnestly to take heed to the concerns of her soul; and beseeching her to refrain from all those low and underhand proceedings, by which masters and mistresses are impoverished, and servants brought to ruin. Hannah spoke little in reply to all Mrs. Fairfield said; though certain it was, that from that time she was more cautious of what she did in the presence of Mary.

At the end of the week Mrs. Fairfield returned to Worcester, and Mrs. Taylor began to be about again, though it was a long time before she was as active as before her illness. It was not Mary's business to watch her fellow-servant, and as nothing came directly before her eyes, she hoped that Hannah was really become more faithful towards her master; but one evening

just at that time of the year when the sun sets about six o'clock, as she was sewing in the window of her garret, which overlooked the whole garden at the back of the house, she saw Hannah go quietly down a grass walk, which ran in a line with the hedge, and enter into an arbour at the bottom, from which she presently returned, pretending, as she walked along, to be looking out for something growing in the beds. Mary would have thought the less of this, if, a few minutes or a quarter of an hour afterwards, she had not seen Esther Stephens come creeping up the bushy piece so often mentioned before, and advance to the corner of the garden behind the arbour, where, for a while, she could see her no longer; and as the evening became every moment more dusk, she could never give any account of the length of time which she stayed in that place.

Mary, however, resolved that she would disturb these people, if they were about any mischievous scheme; and accordingly that same evening she told her mistress, in the presence of Hannah, that she had seen Esther Stephens creeping about the garden

hedge, and she only hoped that she was about no mischief.

"You may be sure," said the mistress, "that she was about no good; for she is one of the most dishonest bodies in the country round."

Hannah had taken no notice of Mary whilst she spoke, but Mary observed that she was particularly sulky with her all the next day; and as she never saw Hannah walk down to the arbour again in the dusk, she hoped at least that, if there had been any mischief, she had put an end to it. From that time till harvest, everything seemed to go on pretty smoothly: Mary's year was up in the middle of harvest, and she received five guineas, and agreed to stay another year for six. Of these five guineas she was enabled to send two to her mother, to put to the five pounds which had been left her by her late mistress; and more than this, she sent her mother two pair of woollen stockings of her own knitting, and one or two other little matters.

I must not hide it from my reader, that when Mary found she was worth seven guineas, she began to think very highly of

herself, and once or twice answered her mistress rather impertinently ; but her excellent mother happening to arrive about this time, she made her beg pardon of her mistress, and laid before her the ingratitude of such conduct, both towards God and man, in colours so strong, that Mary became thoroughly humble and ashamed of herself.

I could say much on the sweet instructions given at this time by this wise and holy mother to her daughter ; but as I have much to say, and little space for saying it in, I must proceed to other matters.

During the bustle of harvest it was observed that Hannah had become much more impertinent to her mistress, and had taken less and less pains to please her : she had contrived during the year, by little and little, to get all her wages from her master, and on the Saturday before the Hanley Wake she got a few more shillings from him, on pretence of paying a woman whom she was to see at church, for some wool which she had been spinning for the boy's stockings. It was Hannah's turn to go to church on the Wake Sunday, and she asked Mary, in order to give her time to enjoy herself, to

milk the cows for her in the evening, and to put the new milk in the pans. To all this, Mary consented, and went out at the usual hour, with a pail on her head. In the bushy piece, where the cows were she met William Stephens, who offered to bring up the cows for her to the top of the field.

"How comes it, William," said Mary, "that you are not at the Wake?"

The young man coloured: "Because," he answered, "I am beginning to have some thoughts about these things which I never had before.

"Our parson, to be sure, is a good man," continued William, "and when I have heard him preach, I have thought, sometimes, how desperately wicked we all are; but somehow, none of these things took much hold upon me, till I met you that day in the passage, and you dropped that word about honesty, and the duty of us servants, and the blessing of God; and since that I have wished to do better, and have said a deal to my mother about her ways."

Mary made some answer to William, by which she endeavoured to encourage him in his wishes to do well; and thus they parted.

The great clock in the kitchen had struck ten before any of those who had been at the Wake were at home again : the farmer himself was the foremost, and the first question he asked was, "Where's Hannah?"

"Why, at the Wake," replied the mistress.

"No," said the farmer, "I have not seen her all the evening." A general inquiry was then put on foot concerning Hannah, but no one could give any account of her, nor was it till several days afterwards that it was discovered, that she went off with a parcel of people, who went about the country with a show, with one of whom she had made acquaintance nobody knew how, and nobody knew when ; though it was pretty certain that Esther Stephens, who sometimes went about the country telling fortunes, had helped her in keeping up this acquaintance.

After the loss of Hannah—for nothing more was heard of her for several years—many changes took place at the farm. The old mother of the farmer died, and the two daughters came home from school. Mary undertook the dairy-work and the cooking, and got another guinea a year ; and the mistress continuing to be rheumatic, and her

daughters fit for nothing in a useful way, much fell on the hands of this good young woman, which, when her mother saw, she left the town, and came to live near the farm ; not that she might gain any advantages through her daughter's means, but that she might, from time to time, uphold her in well-doing.

Mrs. Taylor found no small difference in her housekeeping under Mary's care, and that of poor Hannah Brown ; for Mary encouraged no persons to come about the house for what they could get, though she was ever willing to plead for persons in real want, and to make the best of anything which was allowed for soup or broth, for the poor. Mary, by her mother's management, contrived to save a few guineas every year, and when she had lived about seven years with Mrs. Taylor, she had saved as much as twenty pounds, and had a decent stock of linen, and other garments of a plain kind into the bargain.

About this time, old Esther Stephens dying, Mary was married to William, who for many years past had been enabled to lead a respectable life. The old cottage by the brook was repaired, the garden cleaned up

and planted, the walls white-washed, and Mary and William, having put a little money together, found themselves as comfortably settled as they could ever have had reason to expect. Mary's excellent mother also became an inhabitant of the cottage, and, by her piety and industry, did all that in her lay to advance the temporal and spiritual happiness of her children.

William and Mary had been married two years, and had been blessed with one little healthy girl, when Mary, as was frequently the case, was one day sent for to the farm, and directed to take the place of the dairy-maid, who had been taken suddenly ill.

Mary was always at home in the old kitchen or dairy, and was exceedingly busy with her work, when she heard the cry of a child, which, though faint, and not at all resembling the voice of her own child, which had been left with its grandmother, filled her with some painful feelings, as mothers only know.

She immediately ran to the yard door, expecting to see some poor beggar, with an infant in her arms ; but seeing no such person, she returned to her work, and had

been busied with it some time, when again another faint cry reached her ear, and she now was aware that the sound proceeded from that end of the kitchen where the old casement window opened upon the private road which led to the gravel-pit.

Being directed by the sound, she ran to the window, and throwing it open, saw a miserable ragged woman, lying on the dung-hill or ash-heap, which the slovenly habits of country life still left under the window, and which had greatly increased in magnitude since Mary had ceased to preside over the kitchen of the farm. The unhappy stranger had laid her head upon the ashes, and misery and death were painted on such parts of her hollow cheeks, and sunken features, as were visible to Mary.

Near the head of this miserable creature, and on the top of the heap of rubbish, was placed a wretched infant, pale and meagre, and, though evidently as much as fourteen or sixteen months old, unable to support itself in an erect posture. Its little hands were busy in collecting such refuses of food as the careless servants had thrown out of the window together with the dust and litter

of the house ; and at the moment in which Mary opened the casement, it was conveying to its mouth a blackened and mouldy crust.

“What do you want?” said Mary, as she opened the window and looked down on the wretched stranger. “Good woman, have you no home? has this poor infant no father? what can have reduced you to this wretched condition?”

As she spoke the woman looked up, and uttered a heavy groan, and the child renewed its faint and miserable cry.

The mistress was not in the house, but Mary knew that she would never suffer any one to die for want at her door ; she therefore took a porringer of soup from a kettle of the same which was boiling over the fire, and breaking some bread into it, went out of the house through the fold-yard, and behind the ricks into the lane, where she found the wretched wanderers, just as she had before seen them.

She tried to rouse the woman, but she had turned her face in such a direction, that Mary could not obtain a view of it, neither could she get her to utter one word. She hastened, therefore, to cool the broth, and

feed the child, who received it with the eagerness of one ready to perish; and whilst she was thus employed, some of the men-servants came up, and at the entreaty of Mary, carried the miserable woman to an out-house, where they laid her on straw.

Clean and decent as Mary always kept herself, she found some unwillingness in her mind to lift up the miserable baby from the ash-heap; but while she hesitated, and the unhappy little creature held out its arms to be carried after its mother, she remembered these words of the prophet Ezekiel, "None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person;" and when she recollected them, she took up the baby and carried it after its mother.

Can it be doubted, by any one who may have read this history, who this miserable woman was whom Mary found gasping on the ash-heap; and whose child was glad to appease its hunger where dogs would almost have refused to feed?

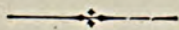
This unhappy woman was Hannah Brown; but as she expired within a few hours of her

arrival at the farm, it was never known how she had spent the seven years of her absence from the farm, nor who was the father of her miserable child. Hannah died in Farmer Taylor's out-house, and was committed to the dust in as humble and private a way as possible.

The poor infant was taken home by Mary and William, and they had just resolved to keep him with their own, and do the best they could for him, when Farmer Taylor informed them that the parish were willing to give them two shillings a week for his keep, and that the lady of the manor, having heard the story, had determined to add another shilling a week to that sum, and promised to send the little orphan a coat every year.

Several years are passed since the death of Hannah Brown, but the good widow and her family are still living in the cottage by the brook, and the blessing of Heaven is shed on all its inhabitants; for "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," Psa. xxxvii. 25. "Godliness with contentment is great gain," 1 Tim. vi. 6. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation

hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus, ii. 11—14.



SOME think it hardship to work for their
bread,

Although for our good it was meant ;
But those who don't work have no right
to be fed ;
And the idle are never content!

An honest employment brings pleasure
and gain,

And makes us our troubles forget ;
For those who work hard have no time
to complain,
And 'tis better to labour than fret.

And if we had riches, they could not
procure

A happy and peaceable mind ;
Rich people have troubles as well as the
poor,
Although of a different kind.

It signifies not what our stations have
been,

Nor whether we're little or great ;
For happiness lies in the temper within,
And not in the outward estate.

We only need labour as hard as we can,
For all that our bodies may need ;
Still doing our duty to God and to man,
And we shall be happy indeed.

WHATEVER work we have to do
Should never be delay'd ;
Because the same excuses too,
To-morrow will be made.

Let each day's work be done by night ;
The present moment seize ;
For that will make our labour light,
And set our minds at ease.

Delay is dang'rous—and it turns
To trouble in the end;
But chiefly in our soul's concerns
It must to ruin tend.

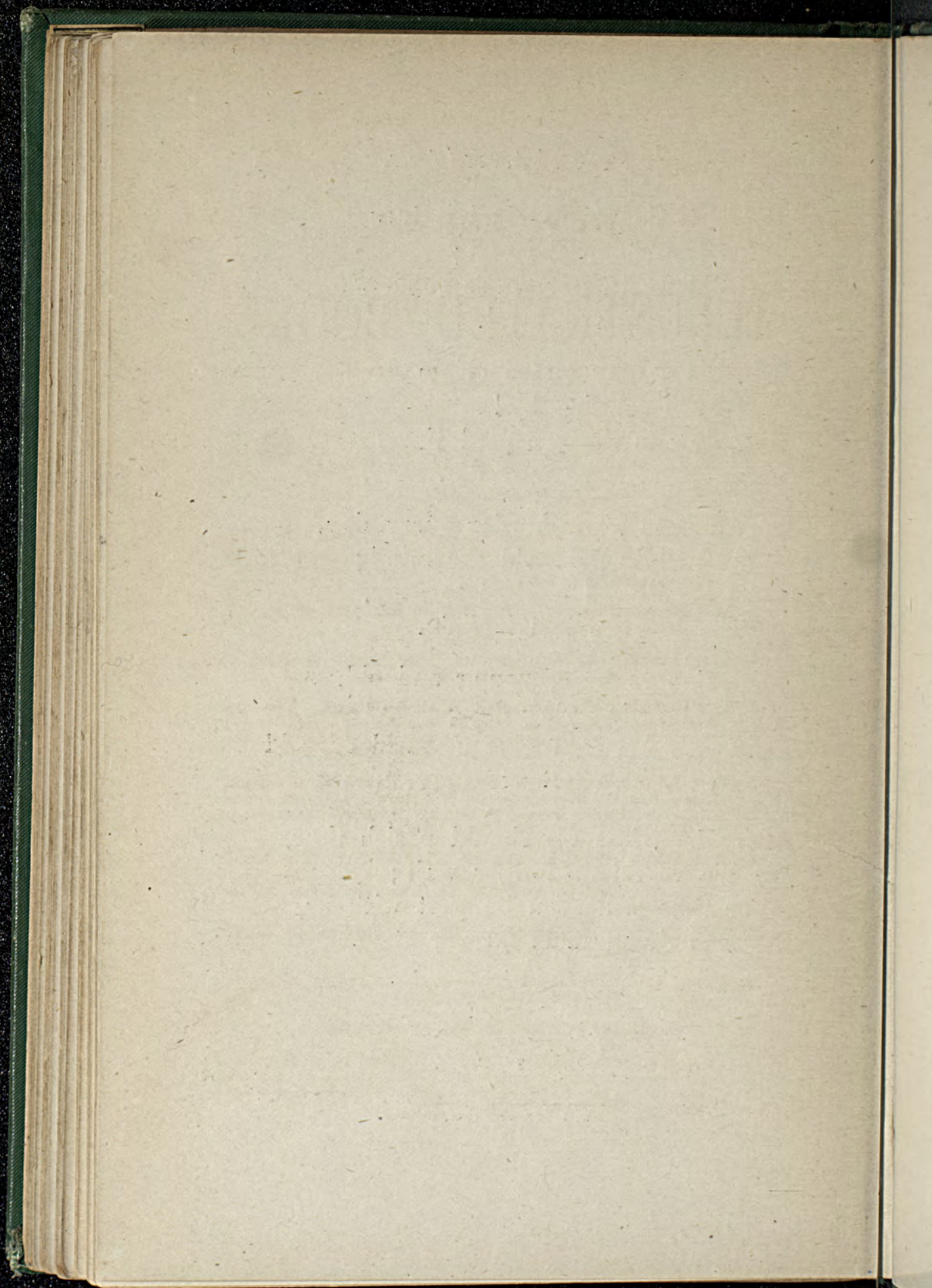
Oh, 'tis a folly and a crime
To put religion by!
For now is the accepted time:
To-morrow we may die.

Our hearts grow harder every day,
And more deprav'd the mind;
The longer we neglect to pray,
The less we feel inclin'd.

Yet sinners trifle, young and old,
Until their dying day;
Then they would give a world of gold
To have an hour to pray.

Oh, then, lest we should perish thus,
We would no longer wait;
For time will soon be past with us,
And death must fix our state.





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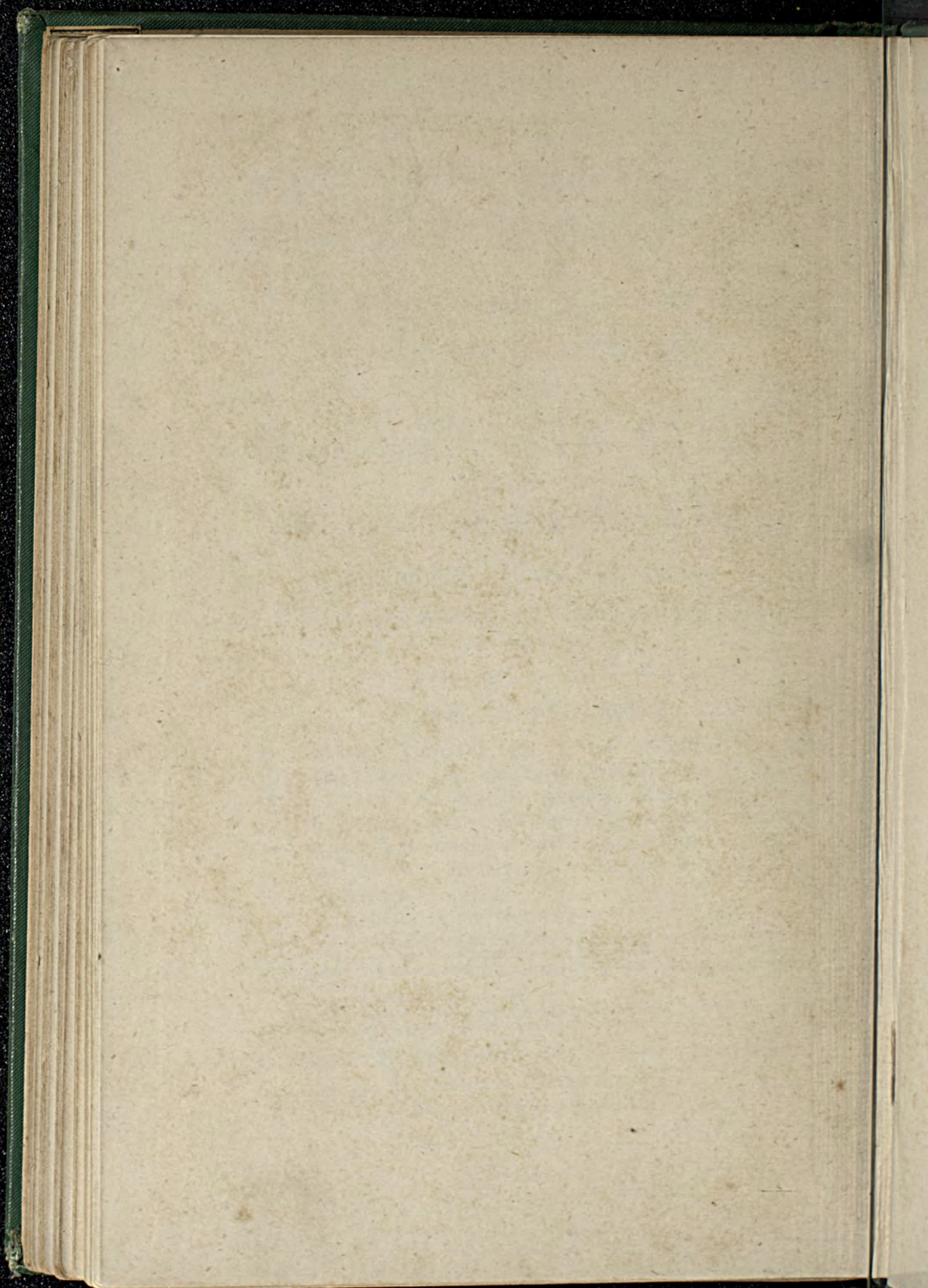
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