

to one of the men. You don't want me, I'm sure.'

'Oh, yes, I do,' said Peter: 'it's no use speaking to any one else; I've tried that.'

'Be off with you,' said the man roughly; 'don't hinder me.'

Everybody told him to 'be off'; why should he not 'be off'? so Peter thought to himself. But no—with such a weighty secret on his mind he was not going to be silenced in that way. He stood between Mr. Downe and his conveyance, and cried out aloud: 'Stop, sir! there'll be somebody killed if you don't; and you'll be ruined, too!'

'Ruined! Me ruined! It would take something to ruin me,' said the man, with a rough laugh.

'Somebody killed!' cried Mrs. Downe, 'What does the boy mean?' Do stop a moment and hear what he has to say.'

The builder stopped at his wife's bidding, and Peter told his story as quickly and coherently as he could.

'It's worth looking to,' said Downe, moved by the boy's excited and earnest manner. 'I'll drive round that way. Come up into the trap with me, youngster; and if I find you are playing me a trick—'

'I hope you'll be in time,' said Peter, too much preoccupied to notice the remark. 'Drive on, sir, please; drive as fast as you can.'

Mr. Downe noticed that the boy was in a great heat, and trembling with excitement. In spite of himself, he could not help catching a little of the infection, and he drove on as quickly as the crowded state of the streets would allow him.

'Now then,' he cried, pulling up suddenly in front of the hoarding, 'get down and hold the horse.'

They both alighted, and Mr. Downe disappeared behind the planks. Peter could see that the bricklayer who had ordered him to 'be off' was called down, and that several others left their work and came to look at the props; and after a long delay Mr. Downe returned to the cart and took the reins into his hands.

'You were not far wrong, my lad,' he said. 'I don't know that any harm would have happened, but there was a bit of a shake in one of the uprights, and it might not have been quite safe to trust it. We shall have another put up by the side of it, and there will be no risk then. There's half a crown for you. What's your name?'

'Thank you, sir,' said Peter, clutching it, eagerly. 'My name's Hawkins—Peter Hawkins.'

'Hawkins—Hawkins? Who does your father work for?'

'He used to work for you, sir; but he doesn't work for anybody now.'

'Oh, yes, I know. A tall man, isn't he—rather short-tempered.'

'I don't know that he's any shorter-tempered than other people,' said Peter, abruptly. 'He don't drink, like some men, and he don't like to have it said he does. You wouldn't.'

Mr. Downe looked at the boy with surprise, but presently broke into a laugh. 'Well, I don't know as I should,' he said. 'So your father hasn't got a job yet, hasn't he?'

'No, sir.'

'And he don't drink.'

'No, sir; never. I wish you would take him on again. We are very—badly—off.' What with the excitement of the last hour, and the anxiety and the joy, and other sensations, Peter was by this time a little overcome, and began to cry and sob as he made this bold request.

'I'll see about it,' said Mr. Downe. 'There, go along; make yourself happy; I'm in a hurry now, but I won't forget. There, there—that's a good lad.'

So saying Mr. Downe patted the boy, rather heavily, upon the shoulder, and jumped into his trap, and drove quickly away. Peter soon recovered himself, and ran off, almost as rapidly, in the opposite direction, towards his home.

'There, mother,' he cried, rushing into the house, and throwing down the half-crown upon the table. 'What shall we have for dinner? Where's father? Mr. Downe gave me that; and he's going to see about work for father'; and in a few minutes he had told her all his story.

The same evening Mr. Downe himself came to the house. Hawkins had returned a short time before, not wholly unsuccessful, but with no permanent prospects. Peter's adventure had put them all in good spirits; but his father was doubtful whether Mr. Downe would think any more about the matter, and asked a great many questions as to how he looked and how he spoke.

'I shouldn't put much trust in him,' said Hawkins. 'It all depends upon the humor he's in. We shall very likely never see him again.'

'Here he is,' said Peter.

Mr. Downe nodded to them, but addressed himself to Peter. 'I've been round to look at the house again, my lad; on my way home; it's all right. It wouldn't have been all right, though, if you had not come and told me about it. That shaky prop began to give the moment the weight came on it; and if there had not been a good one up by the side of it, it would have broken in two, and the house must have come down. I felt as if I ought to come and tell you. Two or three men might have been crippled, or lost their lives, if it hadn't been for you. It's well that some folks have got eyes in their head, and know how to use them; but I wonder that a little chap like you should be so sharp.'

'Bless you, sir,' said the mother, proudly, 'he sees everything, Peter does; he takes a deal of notice, and always did when he was a baby; he never passes a place where there is any work going on without stopping to look on, and when he comes back he tells us all about it. He can use his hands, too; look at this little cart he made for baby.'

'The boy seems to have a good notion,' said Mr. Downe, after he had examined the rude specimen of Peter's carpentering. 'But what made you come to me at all? Didn't you know that your father and me had a bit of a fall-out?'

'Yes, sir; I knew all about it,' said Peter. 'I couldn't help knowing it; we all knew it, and felt it, too; but I thought somebody might be killed, and that you would perhaps be ruined.'

'Ruined! No; it would take a deal more than that to ruin me,' said the man, laughing. 'It might have cost me a hundred pounds, though; and I wouldn't have had it happen for a thousand. But I wonder you thought about me.'

Mr. Downe was serious for a few moments, and had quite lost his old rude and blustering manner. 'Some lads would have borne a grudge,' he continued presently. 'You didn't.'

'No,' said Hawkins, 'he has been better taught. Not by me, sir, I can't take it to myself; it's his mother's doing, not mine. What was that text your mother taught you, Peter, only a week last Sunday?'

'"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." But it wasn't meant for you in particular, Mr. Downe,' the boy added, hastily; 'for it was in the Sermon on the Mount, and I learnt it before anything of all this happened.'

'Never mind,' said Downe; 'you've got your lesson well. I owe you something.

You can come to the shop if you like, and make yourself useful; and if you are a good boy, and get on well, we may perhaps make a joiner of you. As for you, Hawkins, you can go to work as soon as you like. You didn't do quite right the other day; but we won't say any more about that. I'm sorry I turned you off so sharply.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Hawkins. 'I lost my temper, sir, I know.'

'We all have our faults,' said his wife apologetically. 'John means well, and does well, most times; but he was put upon by the other men, and did not like it; and then you were angry with him when he thought he did not deserve it. If you see anything wrong another time, sir, go and tell him his fault between you and him; he'll do anything for a kind word, John will, and so will Peter.'

'All right,' said Downe, turning to leave the house. 'He is like most of us, I suppose—a bit of a shake somewhere. Its a good thing when there's a friend who will tell us kindly where the shako lies, and point out the consequences.'

'Yes, sir,' said Mrs. Hawkins. 'It's good, too, when one will stand up to help another, instead of being offended at his faults. "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so fulfil the law of Christ."'

'Like those props,' said Downe, laughing. 'The weak one would have been shivered to pieces if the strong one had not been ranged up alongside of it. We must help one another in this world, I suppose. Well, Peter shall come and try what he can do; and I'll stand by him, as I said before. If he turns out well, as I don't doubt but he will, he will have to thank his mother for it.'

'He'll look higher than that, I hope, sir,' was the answer.

And that same night Hawkins and his wife and Peter gave thanks together to their heavenly Father for the good providence by which the burden of their care had been so unexpectedly removed and their necessities supplied.

Why Farmer Finch took the Pledge.

(By Mrs. John Brett.)

'It's of no use, so I tell you, Mr. Stanley. What I believe, I believe; and you might as well talk to the man in the moon on that subject. I am glad for you to call in, but, somehow, sir, your conversation always seems to drift round, by hook or by crook, to teetotalism, and that I hate and don't want to hear about!'

Mr. Finch planted his foot resolutely on the fender, and showed a disposition to turn the 'cold shoulder' on his visitor, who was a man of gentle spirit, and whose life was devoted to preaching the Gospel and seeking to save the lost.

'Really, Mr. Finch, I must apologize,' he answered, 'I had not the slightest intention of boring you on any subject. You will grant me that my mind must naturally be deeply impressed with the enormity of the curse resting on England in the shape of the drink traffic. But I was only stating facts. Facts are facts, you know.'

'I have no objection to facts as facts, sir. No man in his senses can shut his eyes to facts. There are plenty of them in the paper every day. What I say is this. There are hundreds of drunkards—drunkards, sir—for you to talk to and work upon. Go, by all means, to them with your teetotalism. But I am a strict temperance man. I can rule myself. I hope I know how to use without abusing.'

Mr. Stanley looked at Mr. Finch and saw that that gentleman's bald head was assuming a rosy tint, and that the veins about his