

The Rona Lighthouse.

A WOMAN stood at a cottage door—

A crofter's cottage and mean and small;
But her heart was rich, if her home was poor,
For her sons were kindly and strong and tall,
And her own good man was as brave and true
And handsome as even a king could be,
And she did not envy the queen; for who
Could be better cared for and loved than she?

The wee green island was all their own
(While they paid to the factor the laird's fair rent);
Little it bore but a crop of stone,
Yet the Rona people were well content.
They had a sheep or two on the heights,
And a few oats grew in a sheltered place;
And they had at sunset such glorious lights,
That it seemed heaven came to their little space.

They gathered at need, in their own Scotch right,
The bountiful harvest that grew in the seas;
And they worked in the day and rested at night,
Thankful, contented and quite at ease.
So the woman stood at the door, with eyes
That scanned the sea for the little boat;
Since all that she had in the world to prize,
Her brave, bonnie laddies, were there afloat.

The dark came rapidly down that night—
A deep, thick darkness without a ray;
There is almost always a gleam of light
On the sea, but then it had passed away.
"They are very late," the woman said,
"And in the muck the water is rough;
But they're in no danger"—she raised her head—
"My men are trusty and safe enough."

She lighted no candle, for there, with a,
Was nothing to do, and naught to see;
She steeled herself, and would not begin
At first to yield to anxiety.
And the hours went by as she waited there,
But her heart grew heavy with dread at last,
And she shivered with fear, as she cried in prayer,
"O God, let the terrible night be past!"

The morning broke on the sullen sea,
And over the cliffs the woman peered,
And round the island in haste went she,
Till at last she saw the thing that she feared;
For there on the rugged rocks she found,
Cold and lifeless, her dearest ones,
Battled by darkness, wrecked and drowned—
Her noble husband, her bonnie sons!

And, oh, the pang of the vain regret,
The deepest trouble, the worst to bear!
She saw that they might have been living yet,
If only a light had been burning there.
They had sought in the dark for the landing-place,
But no gleam had shone for their anxious gaze;
Ah, weeping widow, with covered face,
It is this that will haunt your nights and days!

But out of the sorrow one blessing arose;
She would do for others, though strangers they,
That which she ought to have done for those,
Her best and dearest, passed away.
So ever after when gloaming came,
In her upper window there shone a light;
And many a man's wife blessed the flame
That rebly gleamed on the sea at night.

"I do my best, but the light is small;
Oh, for a beacon that could not fail!"
So the eager woman spoke to all,
In the earnest tones that must prevail.
Soon a great light shone o'er the western sea,
Tended ever with loving care,
And the lighthouse-keeper was none but she
Who had lived and loved and suffered there.

Alas, for the good that we might have done,
For lamps unlighted, and helps forgot!
Yet peace and pardon and hope are won
If we lighten the gloom of another's lot.
Let us throw some gleam on the troubled sea;
Let us save our brothers some pang of pain;
For if their journey may lighted be,
We shall not have suffered and prayed in vain.

THERE is a good deal of meaning in the proverb
that "It is easier to go up hill with God, than to
go down hill without him."

IN THE WOODS AND OUT.

I MUST say Eben was heavily loaded. He had a basket on one arm and a pretty full pail swung at his left hand. His grandmother Carey was to have the contents of both basket and pail—not his real grandmother, but a dear old lady who lived in a tumble-down house just at the edge of the woods; she was grandmother to all the children, and she lived well, for the children's mothers were sure to remember her when they did their baking to last over the Sabbath.

In Eben's basket were a layer of sweet biscuit, an apple pie, a baked chicken cut in pieces and nicely packed in a bowl, and all the chinks were filled up with caraway cookies. The pail was full of soup; grandmother's dinner was over for the day, it is true, but the Sabbath was coming, and what could be easier to do than warm a bowl of the nourishing soup for the Sabbath dinner?

Everything would have gone on nicely if it had not been for meeting Eddie Burns just as Eben entered the woods. Not that Eddie Burns was a bad boy, but he always had some plan that he wanted others to help him carry out right away. No sooner did he catch sight of Eben than he began:

"Oh, ho! you're just the fellow that I want; come back here a little way and hold the limb of a tree down for me a minute, and I will show you something pretty."

"Can't," said Eben; "both hands are full, and the things are heavy enough without holding any limbs."

"Oh, but set the things down just a minute; it isn't a rod from here, and it won't take you but two minutes. Come along," he coaxed.

"Eddie Burns," said Eben severely, "are you trying to rob a bird's nest?"

"Now," said Eddie, looking injured, "you know I wouldn't do that any more than you would. Some bird has got scared and left her nest; the eggs are all drying up, there are three of them, the cutest things—a different kind from any I ever saw before. I can't get them because that branch is in the way, and I'm afraid I'll break them. If you will come and help me, I'll give you one of the eggs for your collection."

"Wait till I come back from Grandmother Carey's, and I will."

"I don't dare do that. Joe Ball is hanging around in the woods, and I'm afraid he'll get them; besides, I've got to be home by four o'clock, and it's 'most that. Oh, come, Eben—do! it won't take a minute, and you can set your things right down here under the tree."

It looked innocent enough, so Eben set down the things and went. Alas for Grandmother Carey's Sabbath dinner! The basket with its cover tied down was unhurt, but when in ten minutes Eben came back with the eggs, the pail was lying on its side and nearly all the soup was gone.

Now begins the worst part of my story. What do you think that boy made up his mind to do? Why, not to say a word about the soup to his mother. "I won't tell a lie," he said, growing hot and angry with himself for thinking such a thing. "Of course not; but there's no use in worrying her about it if I can help it. I'll just keep still. She won't see Grandmother Carey in weeks, maybe."

His mother rather helped this resolution along by her questions: "What did grandmother say to the chicken?"

"She said it looked 'most too good to wait until to-morrow, that she had not had a taste of chicken for a long time, and the caraway cookies are just such as her mother used to make for her when she was my age—only, mother, I know hers weren't near so good as you can make."

"And did you carry the things down the cellar for her?"

"Yes'm, and put them all away; and she said 'Tell her I never can thank her enough.'" And Eben went away whistling before more questions came.

It was not a nice afternoon, after all. He did not care for the speckled egg, and thought some of throwing it away. He had a chance to ride on Whitey to pasture, and did not want to do it. His father said, "I'm afraid the boy is sick;" but the mother said, "No, I think not."

By and by, to Eben's satisfaction, the day was done; he wanted to go to sleep and forget it, but to his dismay he found that there was no sleep to be had out of his bed. He turned his pillow five times, and it was every time. At last he sat upright and called, "Mother!" Of course mother went upstairs.

"Mother," said Eben, "I want to tell you: I didn't mean to, and I didn't think it was wrong, not to, but now I know it is: I spilled every drop of the soup before I got to grandmother's at all, and I left the pail behind a tree, and grandmother doesn't know anything about it."

"But I did, my son," said mother, quietly sitting down beside him and taking Eben's hot, rough little hands in hers.

Then was Eben astonished. "You did?" he said. "How?"

"The pail told me first. It was all sticky on the side, and grandmother never sends home dishes that way. Then your shoes told me; when you changed them for slippers this evening I saw that they were all greasy and smelled of soup. Then your face told me all the afternoon that something was wrong, and I have been waiting to hear about it. Shall I tell you what has made me feel bad? That it took you so long to make up your mind to tell me."

There was a long talk about soup and several other things; and when Eben lay down again he said with a satisfied sigh, "Mothers know everything, and they are nice every time, and I won't try to hide anything, even." Then he found to his joy that his pillow was full of sleep.—*Pansy.*

OIL YOURSELF A LITTLE.

ONCE upon a time there lived an old gentleman in a large house. He had servants and everything he wanted; and yet he was not happy, and what things did not go as he wished, he was very cross. At last his servants left him. Quite out of temper he went to a neighbour with the story of his distress.

"It seems to me," said the neighbour, sagaciously, "could be well for you to oil yourself a little."

"To oil myself?"

"Yes, and I will explain. Some time ago, one of the doors in my house creaked. Nobody, therefore, liked to go in or out of it. One day I oiled its hinges, and it has been constantly used by everybody ever since."

"Then you think I am like a creaking door," cried the old gentleman. "How do you want to oil myself?"

"That's an easy matter," said the neighbour. "Go home and engage a servant, and when he does right praise him. If, on the contrary, he does something amiss, do not be cross; oil your words with the oil of love."

The old gentleman went home, and no harsh or ugly words were ever heard in the house afterwards. Everybody should have a supply of this precious oil, for every family is liable to have a creaking hinge in the shape of a fretful disposition, a cross temper, a harsh tone, or a fault-finding spirit.