

when the children trample the garden or break my pipe. What, going already, Jem; I thought you were going to stop the evening.

*Jem.* Not to-night, George, I've an engagement. Good-night, it's time I was off.

### Keep out the Sun.

**A** YOUNG housemaid was sweeping a room one summer morning. The sun shone, clouds of dust arose and danced in its rays. 'Dear me, I must pull down the blind,' said the girl, 'the sun does make so much dust.' And, having done that, she contentedly went on with her sweeping. She thought the sun made the dust, and when she had shut out the bright light she fancied it was all right.

I knew a man who lived at No. 3 Prospect Row; he was not such a bad sort of fellow; he worked hard, and brought his wages home to his wife when he had no special reason against doing so, but there it all ended. Now at No. 2 and No. 4 lived two other men with their families; they were just in the same position of life as No. 3, and were inclined to be friendly with him. They took their children to church with them on Sundays, they taught them to pray and to own God for their Father; in fact, they remembered that there was another world beyond this one, and they tried to prepare themselves for it. When No. 2 realised this it made him feel uncomfortable: he saw that his way of living, though easy, was not the best way. He was letting his children grow up ignorant of the best knowledge, he spent his Sundays as if they were just Saturdays or Mondays—in a hundred ways he discovered that there was a better way of living than his own.

But he feared that that new way might prove a hard way—give him trouble—so after a while he told his wife that he had a fancy to live in Green's Court (where people were less particular in their behaviour). She did not guess why he wanted to move, but I have told you the real reason. The sun had lighted up his life and shown

him the dust, the sin in it, and he wanted to pull down the blinds.

Was he more comfortable in Green's Court? Yes, he was; I am bound to confess that. He did not see the dust there. But was there no dust, no sin, therefore? You all know that there was just as much as ever, and that that man would be righteously judged one day for knowing how to do good and doing it not.

And now how often have you felt vexed with a person who openly tries to live a godly life? Why is this? Many reasons you give, perhaps. Because he sets up to be better than his neighbours. Because you fancy he must be a hypocrite—it isn't *natural* to behave in that way. Because his father, a very good fellow too, never went as far as he does.

All poor sorts of reasons, and wanting proof. The real reason for feeling vexed with a man who leads a holier, better life than you do is that he lets in the sun on your life, and shows you the dust, the motes of your sins, floating about in the light.

The mote of forgetfulness of God. The mote of selfish ease. The mote of neglecting your children's best interests. The mote of ingratitude to the Saviour who died for you. The mote of folly in living for this brief world, when you know there is eternity to be provided for. And a thousand other motes of dust, all teasing you by dancing in the sunlight of the better and wiser life of your neighbour.

It is a great temptation to pull down the blinds and keep out of that man's way because he makes you uncomfortable.

And suppose you do manage to pull down the blind to avoid him, to forget his 'odd ways,' to live as if you had never seen or heard of them: what then?