

The children pounced upon the basket, wrangled and fought for the bread, and each wished to get the largest loaf; and at last went away without even thanking him.

Francesca alone, a poor but neatly-dressed little girl, stood modestly apart, took the smallest loaf, which was left in the basket, gratefully kissed the gentleman's hand, and then went home in a quiet and becoming manner.

On the following day the children were equally ill-behaved, and poor Francesca this time received a loaf which was scarcely half the size of the others. But when she came home, and when her sick mother cut the loaf, there fell out quite a number of bright silver pieces!

The mother was alarmed, and said, "Take back the money; for it has, no doubt, got into the bread through some mistake."

Francesca carried it back, but the benevolent gentleman declined to receive it.

"No, no," said he; "it was no mistake. I had the money baked in the smallest loaf, simply as a reward for you, my good child. Always continue thus contented, peaceable, and unassuming. The person who prefers to remain contented with the smallest loaf, rather than quarrel for the larger one, will find blessings in this course of action still more valuable than the money which was baked in your loaf."

"Better a poor but peaceful life, Than wealth and fortune bought with strife."

### THE LAME COBBLER.

Poor, old, and feeble, the mother toiled hard for her daily bread; and a sad accident made her son a cripple, just when he would have been most useful to her in her declining years. So far as human wisdom could foresee, things looked dark and dismal enough. But there was a sunbeam in that cottage, a life and energy in the crushed and

maimed form of the afflicted youth, that seemed to hail in the dim distance a light ahead.

"Do you think I shall be lame always, mother?"

"So the doctor says, Johnny," replied the mother in a desponding tone; adding in a still lower one, "My poor Johnny! my poor little lad!"

"Do not take on about me, mother; and above all do not think that everything is lost, because my limbs are crippled and deformed."

"But I must, Johnny. How are we to get along now, when you are not able to stand on your feet; still less to go out and seek for work as you used to! Mother must soon leave you, lad; and then nothing but the workhouse for my poor boy."

"No, mother; not while I have my two hands," said Johnny, with a look of determined energy. "If I cannot walk, I can sit and work, you see."

He held up to his mother, as he spoke, a pair of well-mended shoes, which he had contrived to sew at in old times, when she was busy with her household affairs or absent from home. She looked surprised and pleased; as he had hoped she would be.

"There, it wasn't for nothing that I used to spend so much time with old Giles, the cobbler. I have stolen the trade, it seems. But the poor old man is past work now, and won't grudge me a share of the custom. So we shan't go to starving yet, mother; shall we?"

"O Johnny," said the poor woman, while tears of gratitude rained down her pale cheeks, "how wicked I was to distrust that God who has always been so good and mindful of us both! Do we not read in His own blessed Book about 'casting our care upon Him; for He careth for us?' And when times are darkest, His promises shine ever the brightest."

John Pounds afterwards became a very useful man. About thirty years ago he might have been seen in his