

What Have You Done To-Day?

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

I SAW a farmer when the day was done;  
The setting sun had sought its crimson bed,  
And the mild stars came forward one by one;  
I saw the sturdy farmer, and I said:  
"What have you done to-day,  
O farmer, say?"

"Oh, I've sown the wheat in yonder field,  
And pruned my orchard to increase the yield,  
And turned the furrow for a patch of corn—  
This what I've done since early morn."

I saw a blacksmith at his smithy-door,  
When the day had vanished and the west  
grew red,

And all the weary noise and strife were o'er;  
I saw the kindly blacksmith, and I said:  
"What have you done to-day,  
O blacksmith, say?"

"Oh, I have made two ploughshares all com-  
plete,  
And nailed the shoes on many a horse's feet,  
And, oh, my friend, I cannot tell you half."  
The man of muscle responded with a laugh.

I saw a miller, when the day was gone,  
And all the sunlight from the hills had  
fled,  
And the tender shadows had crept across the  
lawn;

I saw the dusty miller, and I said:  
"What have you done to-day,  
O miller gray?"

"Oh, I have watched my mill from morn till  
night;  
Did you ever see flour so snowy and white?  
And many are the mouths to-day I've fed."  
The merry miller laughed as this he said.

I saw another when the night drew nigh,  
And turned each daily toiler from his task;  
When gold and crimson cloudlets decked the  
sky;

A drink-seller—and of him I asked:  
"What have you done to-day,  
Drink-seller, say?"

But the drink-seller turned with drooping  
head,  
And not a single word in answer said.  
What had he done? His work, he knew full  
well,  
Was plunging souls in deepest hell!

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER VII.—BESS BEGINS BUSINESS.

BESS had not forgotten that the redemption of her mother's wedding-ring rested upon her, and that she had pledged herself to get it out of pawn. She tried in various ways to get some work to do; but she had neither strength nor skill to make her work valuable. At last she took counsel with Victoria, who proposed to her to go out selling water-cresses like her father; and he offered to take her with him to the market where he bought his daily supply, and start her on a beat of her own, apart from him, as he could not afford to divide his customers and his profits. A few pence, a few haipence even, would set her up in this line of business; and, with luck, she might earn sufficient to keep herself, and redeem the ring.

It may be pleasant to rise at four o'clock in June, and quitting the thick and nauseated atmosphere of the overcrowded and unventilated dwelling-place, to escape into the sweet dewy freshness of the early morning, which, even in the streets, is scented with the breath of country hay-fields and blossoming gardens; but four o'clock on a winter's morning, when Bess hurriedly dressed herself, without a light, in the thin and tattered clothes, which were all she had, and thrust her naked feet into her mother's old boots; and kissing her mother, who must lie still and lonely till she came back, stepped out into the half-slush, half-frost of the pavement, and the biting air,—this was a sharp test of her endurance.

But Euclid was waiting for her with his basket, and she trudged along at his side through the slush and the frost, carrying an old battered tea-tray a neighbour had lent her the night before. It was nearly three miles to the market. Early as the hour was, and dark as midnight still, life had begun again at the East End; and many a shivering fellow-being, shuffling along the slippery pavement, and maintaining a sordid silence, passed them like ghosts. Bess had never been out at this hour before, and she kept close to Euclid's side.

The old man, too, was silent: he felt put out

by the presence of a companion. For twenty-five years, ever since he had recovered partially from the accident that disabled him as a labourer, he had taken this walk alone through summer and winter; and it was bewildering to him to hear the light footsteps of Bess pattering beside him. He had so long lived altogether without intercourse with his neighbours, that he was surprised, and not altogether pleased, to find himself taking an interest in Mrs. Fell and David and Bess. Might not such an interest come between him and the sole aim of his life? For, if he yielded too much to the stirrings of compassion and pity in his heart, some danger might arise to his slowly accumulated hoard, now lying safely under Victoria's head.

Yet Euclid felt that he could not stand by and see his neighbour die of starvation under his very eyes. No, no; that could never be. He glanced at Bess, as they passed beneath a lamp, and caught a half-smile of trustfulness in him shining in her eyes, like the look of his little children, dead long ago, who had been used to run to meet him when they heard his foot on the stairs. They were all gone to heaven now, where his wife was. He had no idea of heaven beyond a vague fancy dwelling in his brain that there would be somewhere—out of the world or in the world, he did not know—a little cottage on a hillside, such as the early home he dimly remembered, where they would all live together again, and where there would be no winter, and no more hunger or sorrow; no parish pay, and no workhouse. His lost wife would be young again, and all his children little ones; and there would be a garden for him to work in, lying round the cottage. That was Euclid's heaven.

He was still dreaming of it when they reached the market, and joined a crowd of old folks and young children waiting for the gates to be opened. It was not yet five o'clock, and the yellow glare of a few gas-lamps shed a dim light upon the scene. The crowd was very quiet and subdued. All who were there were feeble folk, and did not care to waste their strength in noise and pushing. As each old person or little child came, they took their place as near to the gate as they could get; and most of them sank into silent waiting. The poorest of the decent poor were there,—those who were willing to struggle to the bitter end to earn an honest living, and keep out of the workhouse. Euclid did as the rest did, and with Bess beside him, stood in patient muteness till he could make his purchases for the day.

As soon as the gates were opened, there was a quiet crush through them. Euclid took more care in buying a stock of cresses for Bess than for himself; though he was fastidious in his choice, passing from hamper to hamper, and peering closely at the green leaves to detect any specks upon them. As soon as his purchases were made, he hurried Bess away to the steps of a church close by, where he showed her how to make up her bunches, and slung the old tray round her neck by a bit of cord he drew out of his pocket.

"Now we must be as sharp as needles and pins," he said. "I've heard somewhere of a early bird as picked up a early worm. Folks'll be gettin' their breakfasts soon, and we must be in time to catch 'em at it. Don't you waste your time along the bittermost streets, Bess; but stick to the courts and the mews and the streets where workin' men live. Rich folks ain't thinkin' o' gettin' out o' bed yet; and they don't eat cresses for breakfast, but ham and eggs, and hot things. Mewses are good places in general. Walk pretty slow, two mile an hour; and keep your eye on the doors; and windows for fear somebody's beckonin' at you. There now! I'll stand at the end o' this here street, and hearken how you can cry, 'Cresses! Fresh water-cresses!' till you're out o' my sight."

Euclid stood watching Bess, with her trayful of cresses, as she paced slowly along the street, her clear, pleasant voice singing, rather than crying the familiar words. Then he turned away with a heavy sigh. His own voice sounded husky and hollow in his ears as he shambled along his customary beat, drawing mournfully, "Cre-she! cre-she!" He felt an older man than usual, as though some additional burden of years had suddenly fallen upon his bent shoulders and bowed-down head. Yet he was only in his sixtieth year, and there was much work and much power of endurance left in him still. He had never starved quite as much as he could; and his old clothing had never been as utterly tattered as if might be. But he saw depths of poverty below even him; and for once his heart felt heavy enough to sink him and Victoria into those lowest dreeps.

"The parish!" he muttered to himself half aloud, as he rested his dry throat for a minute or two, "the parish! And be parted from her! Not bury Victoria in her own coffin, like the rest of 'em! The parish! God help these old legs o' mine!"

As if some new strength had been breathed into him, Euclid started on again, crying his

street-cry with more energy than before. The thought of the parish had run like a stimulant through his whole frame. He had more luck than usual, and sold so many bunches of cresses that he felt justified in buying one of the best of Yaumouth bloaters, which he chose with close cautiousness, as if he was difficult to please, at a shop he passed on his way home. It was for a relish for Victoria's tea, more than for himself. He had made as much as two shillings by his day's toil and his ten miles' tramp through the slushy streets; and, after he had taken enough for the day's food and rent, there was as much as nine-pence to put by.

"Let us look over our little store," he said, when their leisurely tea was ended.

He was counting up the silver and copper coins on the empty soap box, turned on end, which served as a table when it was not wanted, as a seat, when a low knock was heard at the door. There was neither lock nor latch upon it, the sole fastening being a stick passed through a staple and holdfast in the roof. But there was no other room in the roof, and the steep ladder-like staircase was seldom trodden by any one but themselves. Euclid made haste to gather the money into the handkerchief that usually held it, before Victoria opened the door. But Bess, who was the untimely visitor, had already seen the heap of coins through a chink in the old door, and heard their jingle as Euclid swept them out of sight. She stood thunderstruck on the door-sill, gazing in with large, wide open eyes.

"What is it, Bess?" asked Victoria.  
"Oh! no her's sent me up to say as I've had good luck," she stammered, "and it's thanks to you, Mr. Euclid; and, oh! please may I go again to-morrow morning?"

"Ay, child," answered Euclid, shortly.  
Bess went downstairs with a far slower step than she had gone up. Never in her life had she seen so much money at one time as when she had put her eye to the chink in the door, and peeped in on her friends. It seemed to her as if the whole end of the soap-box had been covered with it. Mr. Euclid, in spite of his old clothing and his poor attic, was then a rich man! If such riches could be made by selling water-cresses, then she too was on the high-road to be rich. Already to-day she had earned more money than she had ever owned before; and her mother had smiled for the first time since David went out begging when she poured the haipence into her lap. Like Euclid, she had trudged through the mud of the partially frozen streets for nine or ten miles, besides her walk to the market; and her limbs were weary and her throat somewhat tired. But her heart was very light. Then the wonderful sight of heaps of money on Euclid's table had dazzled her. Why had they never thought of this trade before? A thousand pities it was: for, if they had begun early enough, she and David might now have heaps of money too, like Euclid and Victoria.

Bess was up again before four o'clock in the morning, and was waiting for Euclid when he came downstairs. She was eager to be away making her fortune. By-and-bye Euclid grew used to her company, and liked to hear her talk as she tripped along by his side. Morning after morning, through darkness and frost, snow and fog, the gray-headed man and the young girl started off on their toilsome tramp,—the one with the uncomplaining fortitude of old age, the other with the hopeful courage of youth.

"It'll not be such a lonesome shop when I'm gone now, father," said Victoria one day.  
"Why, so, Victoria, my dear?" he asked.  
"There's Bess," she answered, smiling, but somewhat sadly. "You'll take to her, daddy, you two 'ud be two lonesome ones if you didn't take to one another. Mrs. Fell's very near her end; and I am, p'rhaps."  
"Do you feel worse, Victoria?" he inquired anxiously.

"Not worse," she said; "but it's so long, the winter is; and there's so much dark, and I lie here doin' nothin'. If it wasn't for mother's verses and hymns, I don't know what I'd do. I've been sayin' one of 'em all day."

"Which is it, my dear?" he asked.  
Victoria's voice fell into a low and solemn tone as she said these words:

"There is a house not made with hands,  
Eternal and on high;  
And here my spirit waiting stands  
Till God shall bid it fly."

"Ay! she were always a-sayin' them lines," Euclid murmured softly, "afore you was born, my dear."

"There's enough money to pay for my buryin' now, isn't there, father?" asks Victoria.

"To be sure there is, my dear; lots enough," he answered, "and a bit o' black for Bess, if that'll be any comfort to you."

"She's strong, and can help you to get a livin'," observed Victoria, almost joyously; "and there'll be somebody to see as you have

a coffin of your own too, daddy. I'm glad to think you'll take to Bess when I'm gone."  
"My work'll be done then," said Euclid, "I'd promised your mother what I'd do, and I've almost done it. Then I'm ready to go. It's a queer shop, this world is!"

(To be continued.)

WHY HAVE A JUNIOR LEAGUE?

BY REV. T. M. FUREY.

THERE are at least three reasons. The first that I will mention is the importance of work among children. I once went into the woods with a friend who was visiting us to look for specimens of funguses. We found a fine one, upon the fleshy portion of which I drew, with a needle, a landscape. It was easily done, as the slightest scratch upon the soft surface produced a dark line. This fall I saw that same fungus. There was the picture, indelibly inscribed upon it, for, during the lapse of nearly two years, it had become dry and hard and no longer could such an impression be made as was done when it was first obtained. The hearts of children are impressible, like that fungus. We may inscribe upon them such character pictures as we please. Many artists are at work there. God and Satan, good and wicked men, have a share in the work. So, also, do the companions with whom the children are daily associating. Who shall succeed in making the picture that is to abide? Those hearts will not always yield to the artist's touch. The characters formed now will become permanent. If we can, by our earnest effort, crowd the world and Satan out, we may assist in forming noble characters that will be difficult in the future for the hosts of sin to change—settled, established characters.

Revival work among adults, and especially among those of middle life, or past, is exceedingly discouraging. Not so is such work among children. They are easily brought to Christ. An eminent Roman Catholic said, in substance: "Give me a child to train until it is seven years old and I care not who has the training of it after that. It will be a Catholic." Let a child be really converted to God before that age and the probabilities are that it will grow up to be a Christian man or woman. The Junior League is proving itself a valuable agent in bringing about this result, therefore we cannot afford to be without it.

A second reason is that this work cannot be so successfully accomplished in the regular local League as in an auxiliary society, as it is impossible to give the Junior members the attention there that their needs require. Educators find it necessary to grade the public schools because the younger scholars cannot receive sufficient attention in the ungraded schools; also, because their presence is a hindrance to the progress of the older pupils. Much the same may be said of the Epworth League. It is for the good of both its older and younger members that it be divided into its organization.

The third and last reason of which I will speak is that experience has demonstrated the advantages of this kind of an auxiliary of the local League. While it can hardly be properly called a distinct organization, its members enjoy the benefit of separate and special instruction and training, which are of inestimable value to them. They are also inspired with greater interest from the fact that it is their own society, they having their own officers, their own meetings, their own work.

If only an efficient superintendent can be secured who will do enough and not too much; one who loves boys and girls and is able, not only to entertain, but to instruct them; one who is devoted to God, success is insured. These Leagues are advancing grandly where they have been formed, and are the hope of the Church. The Junior League is the primary department from which pupils are promoted to the local League. Every League needs a reserve force from which to draw to fill its depleting ranks. The Epworth League, both Junior and Senior, is training a generation of better Christians for the Church of to-morrow. — *Epworth Herald*.

CATHEDRAL OF SPIRES.

ONE of the finest minsters in the world is that of Spire. It is four hundred and thirty-one feet long. The vaulted roof rises to the height of one hundred and five feet, and four lofty towers are weathered with the storms of well-nigh a thousand years. Here the German emperors wear buried for hundreds of years, till their tombs were ransacked by the soldiery of Louis XIV. Just a hundred years later the tombs of the French kings at St. Denis were similarly despoiled by German soldiers. It is from the protest of the Lutheran princes at the Diet held in this church by Charles V., in 1529, that the name Protestant is derived.