

GIVING UP THE KEY.

I HAVE been staying for a few weeks in a very beautiful part of Wales.

There is a certain cottage among the hills where I often stopped to rest on my way to a favourite spot which some of our party were sketching. The good woman who owned the cottage would give us a basin of milk, or some hot water for tea, and make us welcome to rest as long as we liked in her quiet little room.

One day when we were within half a mile of the cottage, we met her coming towards the village. She instantly offered to turn back with us; but this we would not allow.

"I'm only just going, ma'am," she said, addressing me, "to meet my child. She's the only one, you see, and weakly, too, and she's a great pet. I've sent her into the village for some milk, and I know the can will be over-heavy for her to carry all this way, so I just put on my bonnet thinking I'd help her. But if you'll please take this key, ma'am," she added, giving me the key of her dwelling, "I shall be so glad if you'll go in and rest till I come back."

I took the key, and thanked her very much; but we did not go into her house. We sat on a bank outside waiting her return; and I could not help meditating gratefully, and yet sadly, on the lesson she had taught us. How she had trusted us with all she possessed, and yet we were nearly strangers to her.

There was something very touching in her perfect faith and confidence in us—it was so child-like, the spirit which our Lord loves; for He tells us that we must become as little children if we would enter into the kingdom.

"Oh, that we could have the faith in our dear Saviour that this poor woman has in us!" I thought. "That we could just give Him the key of our hearts, and entreat Him to enter in, and not only rest awhile, but dwell there."

I asked myself, and I now ask you, dear reader, this solemn question, Have you done so? Have you gone to Christ and begged Him to come and dwell within your heart and take complete possession?

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock," He says. "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Happy indeed is he who opens the door; for when the Lord comes to dwell with man He makes the desert "blossom as the rose," and every waste place becomes fragrant with flowers.

And yet, so far from going out to meet Him and giving Him the key, how often, alas! do those whom He loves, those whom He died to save, shut their hearts altogether against Him.

Many of us do not hear Him knocking. There is so much going on within the house, we seem to have no time for listening. We have our living to get, our

children to provide for; all our waking hours are filled with toil, and at night we are so weary we must sleep, to be ready for the next day's work.

But now, let us ask ourselves—If a dear friend should come to our house, and sit down, and have a quiet, comfortable talk with us, would it not refresh us, and make us stronger for our work? We should not, I think, grudge five minutes to a visitor like that, especially if he spoke of help that he could give, and of a good time coming when every innocent wish of our hearts will be satisfied, and all pain and sorrow cease. Just such a friend is the Lord Jesus.

If you want to know what He will do when He comes to your house, read the thirty-fifth

chapter of Isaiah. Here are a few verses from it:—

"He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes."

As some who read this may not quite understand these Scripture words, I will tell you a true story of one to whom Christ came; and this, I think, will make them clear.

There was once a poor collier who had a wife and

