

The kettle, too, was evidently nearer boiling than usual, and the bacon had begun to be fried. He thought during tea that his wife's good-natured careless face looked a little pale and anxious, and he wondered whether there was anything the matter.

Before the meal was quite finished, Mrs. Ellis sent out their two little girls on an errand, fidgeted a little, and then began—

"John, I sent the children away because I want to tell you that I'm sorry to say that I've done something wrong. You said that I was not to lend Mrs. Jervis that half-sovereign, but somehow she got hold of it, and I can't get it back."

"And you never will," replied her husband, only half angrily, for he was touched by her tone.

"I've told you now, and I'm sorry enough about it, John. If she doesn't let me have it again, I'll try and save it, week by week, from what you give me."

Ellis felt softened. His wife had never confessed anything to him before, and now she was even offering to make up for what she had done.

He remembered also that paper which one evening he had been persuaded to sign, for the consequences of which both his wife and children had been obliged to smart as well as himself.

"I must see what can be done," said Ellis. "Our landlord will have to wait a little for once."

The next week Miss Stanton found that she had been enabled to strengthen Mrs. Ellis to do right, and that a better and more useful friendship had sprung up between them than is ever likely to arise from the careless lending of money.—'Friendly Greetings.'

The Chief Sat Still.

Dauan Island is in Torres Straits, and is divided by a narrow strait from the mainland of New Guinea. It is a beautiful and fertile place, but the inhabitants were, a few years ago, fierce savages, delighting in war and in skull-hunting. When the New Guinea Mission was started, in 1871, by Mr. Murray and Dr. Macfarlane, they placed on Dauan Island four teachers and their wives from the South Seas, and, having committed them to the protection of an old chief, sailed away to found other stations. Not long afterwards a trading-ship came to the place; and the crew, consisting of South Sea Islanders under the command of two white men, landed and commenced to plunder the plantations and orchards. Some of them kept off the savages with loaded guns, while the others filled their boats with yams, bananas, coconuts, and other productions of the place, with which they sailed away.

The natives were naturally furious at this robbery, and thirsty for vengeance. The robbers were out of reach; but here were the teachers—people of the same race, and possibly, so they thought, implicated in the outrage. Accordingly, they determined to kill the teachers, and, dressed in feathers, paint, and shells, gathered with their weapons outside the house where these lodged, and commenced the war-dance. The teachers saw no hope of escape; they could only commit themselves to God and pray for his help. Before the people could kill the teachers, they had to get the permission of the old chief, who had promised to take care of them; and though he was a heathen and a savage, he meant to keep his word. One after another persuaded, threatened, and entreated him to give up the strangers to their vengeance, but all in vain. The old man sat on the ground with his head sunk on his breast. He knew that if he made a movement it would be taken as a sign of assent, so he sat like a rock the whole night

through, and until the next day broke. What a night that was for the threatened men and women! Outside, the yells of the war-dancers and the clash of their weapons; inside, continuous and agonizing prayer for grace and life. When the morning came, two of the teachers with their wives could bear the strain no longer; they crept out to their boat and set sail. The others refused to desert their post; and after a while the fury of the people subsided, and quiet was again restored.

Those who escaped in the boat sent the news of what had taken place to the missionaries, saying that they feared their comrades had perished. The missionaries, heavy at heart, started at once for Dauan; with them were two South Sea teachers, not yet settled. These men, with such an example before them of the danger of a cruel death, might well have shrunk back and asked to be sent home, but the request which they actually made was very different. They said, "If we find that the people have killed the teachers, we want to take their places; and if we find that they are not killed, then we will take the places of those who have run away from their post." Their wish was granted, and the four heroes settled down to try and win these fierce and bloodthirsty islanders for Christ.—'Christian Herald.'

The Pensioner's Question.

An old pensioner once accosted a gentleman, who was, like himself, taking a morning walk, and, without any introduction or ceremony, put the question—

"Sir, can you tell me what is saving faith?"

The gentleman paused for a moment, sent up a desire to heaven for wisdom to speak a word in due season, and answered—

"Saving faith is to believe the Word of God so as to act upon it."

As the pensioner made no reply, but apparently waited for some further explanation, the gentleman added—

"Let me try to give you an example from what might happen in things concerning the body."

"If you were afflicted with a sore disease, and if you had said, 'Do you know of any remedy by which I may be cured?' and if I, after hearing a description of your complaint, should say, 'Yes, indeed, there is a person living up the hill yonder, who has cured many who were afflicted with the same grievous complaint, and who is willing to cure all that come to him, without charging them anything for it,' how would you show that you believed my words? Would it not be by going at once to the person named, in order that you might obtain the cure you so much desired?"

"Thus your faith in my words would lead you to act upon them, and take you to him who had the desired remedy."

The pensioner seemed deeply interested, and the gentleman continued—

"Well, just so does saving faith act in that which concerns the soul. When the Holy Spirit has convinced a man that he is a sinner in the sight of a holy God, that the wages of sin is death, and that he is in danger of perishing, then the awakened sinner puts up the cry of alarm, 'What must I do to be saved?'"

"Then as a convinced sinner he hears the glad tidings of great joy which God has commanded to be preached or proclaimed to every creature: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"When he hears this 'faithful saying,

and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief," and learns that the Saviour invites all who labor, and are heavy laden to come to Him, and promises to give them rest, saving faith, the work of the same Holy Spirit, receives the good news, and the awakened soul is soon brought nigh to his God and Father, confessing his sins and thanking Him for His unspeakable gift.

"Thus you see saving faith believes the Word of God, acts upon it, comes to, or, what is the same thing, receives the Saviour; and oh, how blessed is the result! For we read in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name.' And to prove to us that this great change is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is added, 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'"

The old pensioner thanked the gentleman, and went on.—'Friendly Greetings.'

Only Four Years Old.

(The following lines were suggested to their author by hearing of a tombstone in a country churchyard in Wales, on which was inscribed the name of a man who had lived to some years above eighty, yet was said to be (alluding to his conversion to Christ) only 'four years old when he died.' The incident recalls a message sent by the beloved and venerated Dr. Marsh, to an aged man—over one hundred—in the writer's parish at St. Nicholas's, Worcester, named 'Hope': 'Tell him I trust he has a "good hope through grace": but if he has not, give him the verse:—

"Youth is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to ensure the great reward;
But whilst the lamp holds out to burn,
The oldest sinner may return."

If you ask me how long I have been in the world, I'm old, I'm very old;
If you ask me how many years I've lived,
it'll very soon be told:
Past eighty years of age, yet only four years old!

Eighty years and more astray upon the mountains high,
In a land that's full of pits and snares, and that's desolate and dry,
I've oft been weary, oft been cold, and oft been like to die;

And there I'd have wandered, wandered still,
as I wandered many a day;
I'd lose the track-marks of the flock, I'd got so far away,
If Jesus had not met me, that seeks for them that stray.

He's God Himself come down from Heaven to raise us when we fall;
He's come to heal us when we're sick, to hear us when we call;
If He hadn't come to do us good, He wouldn't have come at all.

And 'Ask,' He says, 'and I will give, and knock, and I to you
Will open,' Jesus says to us—and I know that it is true;
It isn't Him would say the things He doesn't mean to do.

He didn't come to judge the world, He didn't come to blame,
He didn't only come to seek, it was to save He came:
And when we call Him Saviour, then we call Him by His name.

He sought for me when I was lost, He brought me to His fold;
He doesn't look for much from me, for He doesn't need be told
I'm past eighty years of age, and yet but four years old.

—Dora Greenwell.