

## FOLK-FALES

on evil times. As he took the gleaming bar in his hands, while murmuring his astonished thanks, he knew by its weight that it was not gold.

"You have made a mistake, my friends," he cried. "This bar is not what you think it, though I own that most men would be deceived."

Greatly surprised, the old woman took it from him, and polished it with her apron in order to show him how brightly it gleamed. As she did so, an inscription appeared, which neither she nor her husband had noticed before. Both listened with great interest as the stranger read it out for them.

"It is less a matter of actual want," it ran, "than the fear of what the morrow will bring, which causes the unhappiness of the poor. Then tread the path of life with courage, for it is clear that at last you will reach the end of your journey."

When the stranger paused there was a dead silence, for the old man and woman were thinking many things, and words do not come quickly when one is deeply moved. At last John offered the stranger a tremulous apology for the disappointment he must now be suffering through their innocent mistake.

"On the contrary," he replied warmly, "the lesson that bar has taught me is worth far more