

Squire will give you work in the gardens: and I'm all right, too, for I've got a letter from the head man at the works, and I'm to be off the day after to-morrow."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed James, "who would have thought of the Squire taking me on again? Sam, you have been a good fellow to me, you have. There, I believe it all comes from your doing what Mr. Glover taught us at those classes. As for me, I learned strings of texts, but never one did I practise; and as for your Bible, oh, Sam, the fellow chafed me so that I got savage and chucked it out of the window in the train. There, now I've told you: that has been on my mind as much as all the rest put together."

"Poor fellow!" was all that Sam could reply, though the statement about the Bible was simply appalling to him. Now he guessed why poor James had gone so wrong. He could not speak about it, and James said, "I say, Sam, I won't spend your money any longer; when I have wages, I'll go and live with mother, and pay her for my room and my keep."

"If you do well, you may get a cottage of your own some day," said Sam; and then he added in a gentle, patient way, with an effort at a smile, "There might be some one you would rather have with you than even father and mother."

"Oh! Sam, do you guess? I can say anything to you, though, old fellow, whether you guess or not. Fancy, Mary has been faithful to me all these years. Poor little soul! she made up her mind not to believe I was married until she heard it from myself; and there she has been thinking of me, and praying for me day and night, for me who had nigh broken her heart. She told me all this the day before yesterday, though I don't know how I had the face to speak to her of what we once were to each other; but I did speak, and that is what she said; and then she told me that if I would be true,—true to my God, and true to myself, and true to my fellow-men,—she would be true to me for ever; and, God helping me, I will be true, for sure He has brought me low enough, and it was pride which caused me to sin so awfully."

Sam listened breathlessly. Yes, his later suspicions had been correct, and oh, how good God had been to him! He had kept him from giving Mary fresh pain; He

had permitted him to offer up, as a sacrifice acceptable to Himself, his own foolish heart's desires, instead of allowing him selfishly to seek that which could only be denied. Oh, thankful did Sam feel as he recollected his short prayer, his immediate return to Petersley. How much sorrow, how much pain, how much humiliation and misunderstanding had been spared through God's love in giving him grace to tread the right road. And none knew of this sacrifice, of this which had been really the greatest sacrifice of his life; none knew but God,—that was the sweetest thought of all.

Sam was quite right, no one did know; even old Dame Gillan did not know that the question had never been put; and Dame Gillan learnt her own lesson meekly, and never again tried to make a match, but trusted to God only to bring about that which He might choose to be.

Sam left for his new work quite comforted, and almost happy. He did not attempt to explain his movements to any one, and even James believed that he had gone to the iron-works in order to get higher wages than he could do at Petersley. Sam did not return to his native village for several years. When he did so, he went for a while to stay with James and Mary, who had been married, and were living at the gamekeeper's cottage; for James's conduct had been so satisfactory, that at last he had been appointed to the office once so urgently pressed upon Sam.

Barrow had died, and Susan was living with her elder son. Sam did not stay with them all very long. He learnt to love one who had loved him, first with the sweet love of a child, and then with the deep, tender, fervent affection of a woman, who had loved him as long as she could remember anything. And the same voice that had in its infant tones declared in Court that Sam was "the best boy in all the world," promised in God's Church to love, honour, cherish, and obey him as a wife. Never was a happier marriage than that of Samuel Barrow and Mercy Power.

Mercy one day, in her innocent, child-like way, said to her husband; "Sam, I never loved any one in my whole life but you; I wonder if that is always so in cases of true love, for I don't think you ever loved any one but me."

What could truthful Sam answer? what, but the truth.

"Mercy, dear, once I did love some one nearly as much as I love you now; but my love to you has been my true love, you know, because that has been the love which God approved."

And Mercy was quite satisfied, and refrained from further questions or speculations.

SISTER MARIA.