

Family Reading.

"BURN YOUR NETS."

Two years ago there lived in the village of S—— a very wicked man. His lips were full of oaths and cursing; his passionate temper was the misery of his family; while his understood occupation was that of a poacher.

Some eighteen months ago, the sexton of the parish being ill, this man was employed to dig a grave. It was that of a young lady, cut off suddenly, though not unprepared. Often had she spoken to this man of his sins, and of the sinner's Friend—often had she longed and prayed that the hearts of many in that village might be touched by the Spirit's power. Whilst digging the grave the thought crossed his mind—"She is safe, I know; but what am I? If my grave were being dug this day, where should I be?—*in heaven, or in hell?*" The thought which came to him thus suddenly, was a nail in a sure place; the man could not escape from it; and a dangerous illness which followed, made him feel still more his sin and danger. Nothing for a time could give him comfort—he feared that his sins were beyond pardon. Could such a one as he ever be saved? By and by the light dawned. The promise, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out"—brought him in faith to Jesus; and now his very look told of the peace he had found. For a time his life hung in the balance; but in answer to prayer, God restored him to health, that he might bear witness by a new life, to the grace which had sought and found him. His former practices he can no longer follow. He becomes an epistle read and known of all men. Morning and evening he has prayer in his family. He loves the public means of grace, and is now a regular communicant. The change in his home, too, is very apparent—his children are sent regularly to school—his wife attends church, and declares she has now a happy home. One incident deserves special mention. As a poacher, he had nets worth some thirty shillings. What should he do with them? Should he sell them? He resolved not to do this, lest others should use them as he had done. Though but a poor man, with seven children dependent upon him, he burned the nets which had been the instruments of his unlawful gains.

Reader! learn from this simple but true story two or three lessons.

1. *The sight, by anticipation, of our own grave may be of use to us.*—In the case of this man, it was the first step to conversion. Does the thought ever cross your mind "Where shall I be when my grave is being dug? When my body lies cold and still within the chamber of death, will my spirit be in peace, or entering an eternity of woe!"

"Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live" (2 Kings xx. 1).
 "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whether thou goest" (Eccles. ix. 10).

2. *The Saviour's free promise is the sinner's surest comfort.*—Here is the promise—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). This man tried it, and it did not fail him. Why should not you? Cast yourself entirely on Christ, as a bankrupt, for free pardon through his blood—as helpless, for the strength and power of his Spirit. Say thus to thyself:—

Ah, wherefore do I ever doubt?
 Thou wilt in no wise cast me out,
 A helpless soul that comes to thee,
 With only sin and misery.

One pound of gold may be drawn into a wire that would extend round the globe. So one good deed may be felt through all time, and cast its influence into eternity. Though done in the first flush of youth, it may gild the last hours of a long life.