

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Short Weight.

(Samuel Goodall in 'Cottager and Artisan.')

'Have any of you heard about Thompson, who kept the chandler's shop in Sandgate? He was up before the magistrates yesterday, and they fined him £10 and costs for giving short weight. Ned Trotter was in the Court all the time the case was going on, and I saw him last night at the Belvoir Arms, and he told us all about it.'

The speaker was George Moffat, and he asked the question of three of his fellow-workmen, who, along with himself, were

spoken, 'that Thompson is a great man at a chapel of some sort or other where he goes.'

'I have heard that, too,' said Moffat; 'but there are only too many of the same sort; and I would not trust a man a bit better for reckoning to be ever so religious.'

Seated in a corner of the carriage when the men entered it was a staid-looking, elderly man, whom none of the party knew, though one or two of them thought they had seen him before. His name was Bowen. He was a good man, who having retired from business on a small competency, had found occupation for his leisure in various works of Christian usefulness; and, amongst

done things just as bad, if not even worse.'

'Yes,' said Hopwood; 'and there are a good many more that some of us could tell about.'

'Well,' replied Mr. Bowen, 'even admitting that all you have said, and all the stories of the same kind that you could tell, are quite true, I should like to ask you a question. Did the men do those bad things because they were religious? I might put it in another way: Is there anything in the bible that either commands or encourages them to do such things?'

'Maybe not,' replied Moffat; 'but this is what I say: that when people reckon to



HIS CUSTOMERS WERE MOSTLY POOR FOLKS.

seated in a railway carriage, on their way home from a day's work in the country.

'I'll see,' said Harry Gregson, another of the men, 'that he gets no more of my money. My wife has gone to his shop ever since we went to live in Morley street, and that will be three years come August. My word! he's got a rare lot out of us that he had no business to get. I wonder my wife never found it out, for she's a tolerably sharp one.'

'I would not have thought so much about it,' said Moffat, 'if his customers had not been most of them poor folks; some of them as poor as poor could be.'

'And I have heard,' said Will Hopwood, the only one of the party who had not yet

other things, he had taken an active part in conducting a mission, in the very district in which Thompson's shop was situated.

Of course Mr. Bowen could not help hearing what passed; but for some time he said nothing. At length the subject on which the men had been speaking seemed to be talked out, and they were all silent. Then he spoke.

'I beg your pardon, friends,' he said; 'but will you excuse my saying a word or two on the matter of which you have been talking? I am sorry to hear what you have said about Mr. Thompson; and then, too, some of you have spoken of other men, who, professing, like him, to be religious, have

be religious, they set themselves up to be so much better than other folks; and they are no better after all.'

'I don't think,' replied Mr. Bowen, 'that is exactly the way to put it. So far as I know religious people—and I know a good many—they don't set themselves up to be better than others who are not religious. All they say is that they believe it to be their duty to do everything that is right, and that seeking God's help, they are trying to do it. Still, any good man would tell you very humbly that he often comes far short of what he aims at.'

'But now there's another thing I should like to say: I don't think Mr. Thompson is