

the boy, Lawrence; you have no one to think of except yourself, unless, indeed, Mrs. Evan—" "Oh, she's all right!" broke in his cousin; "I believe she has taken a fancy to Wikkey." "Then I do not see why you should not take your own way in the matter, provided always that the boy's belongings do not stand in the way. You must consider that, Lawrence; you may be bringing a swarm about you, and Wikkey's relations may not prove as disinterested as himself."

"But that is just the beauty of it, he hasn't any belongings, for I asked him; beyond paying a shilling for a bed to some hag he calls Skimmidge, he seems to have no tie to any living creature."

"That being so," said Reginald, slowly; "and if you do not feel alarmed about your spoons, I don't see why you should not make the little soul happy, and"—he added with a smile—"get a blessing too, old fellow, though I doubt you will bring a sad time on yourself, Lawrence."

Lawrence gave a sort of self-pitying little shrug, but did not look daunted, and his cousin went on—

"Meanwhile, I think the hag ought to be made aware of your intentions; she will be looking out for her rent."

"Bother! I forgot all about that," exclaimed Lawrence; "and I haven't a minute to spare; I must race back to set the boy's mind at rest, and it's close upon nine now. What's to be done?"

"Look here, I'll come back with you now, and if you can get me Mrs. Skimmidge's address I'll go and settle matters with her and glean any information I can about the boy; she may possibly be more communicative to me than to you. I know the sort, you see."

As Lawrence encountered Wikkey's penetrating gaze he felt glad that his mind was made up, and when the question came in a low, gasping voice—"I say, guvner, are you going to send me away?"—he sat down on the end of the sofa and answered,

"No, Wikkey, you are going to stay with me."

"Always?" Lawrence hesitated, not knowing quite what to say.

"Always is a long time off; we needn't think about that; you are going to stay with me now," and then, feeling some compensation necessary for the weakness of his conduct, he added very gravely—"that is, Wikkey, if you promise to be a good boy and to mind what I and Mrs. Evans say to you, and always to speak the truth."

"I'll be as good as ever I know how," said Wikkey, meekly; "and I reckon I shan't have much call to tell lies. Yes, I'll be good, guvner, if you let me stop," and again the black eyes were raised to his in dog-like appeal, and fixed on his face with such intensity that Lawrence felt almost embarrassed, and glad to escape after eliciting the "hag's" address and promising to return in the evening.

"I will look in this evening and tell you what I have done," Reginald said, as they went out together; "and also to get a peep at Wikkey, about whom I am not a little curious."

"Yes, do, Reg; I shall want some help, you know, for I suppose I've got a young heathen to deal with; and if he's going to die and all that one must teach him something, and I'm sure I can't do it."

"He has got the first element of religion in him at any rate—he has learned to look up," Lawrence reddened and gave a short laugh, saying—

"I am not so sure of that;" and the two men went on their respective ways.

The "hag" began by taking up the offensive line, uttering dark threats as to "police" and "rascals" as made off without paying what they owed. Then she assumed the defensive—"I am a widow as has to get their living and must look sharp after their honest earnings;" and finally became pathetic over the "motherless boy" on whom she had apparently lavished an almost parental affection, but she could give no account of Wikkey's antecedents beyond the fact that his mother died three years since, the only trace remaining of her being an old Bible, which Skimmidge made a great merit of not having sold when she had been forced to take what "bits of things" were left by the dead woman in payment of back rent, omitting to mention that no one had been anxious to purchase it. Yes, she would part with it to his reverence for the sum of two shillings, and Mr. Trevor, after settling with Mrs. Skimmidge, pocketed the book, on the fly-leaf of which was the inscription—

SARAH WILKINS.

From her Sunday School Teacher.

Cranbury, 18—.

Wilkins! might that not account for Wikkey's odd name? Wilkins, Wilky, Wikkey; it did not seem unlikely.

That evening, Reginald, entering his cousin's sitting-room, found Lawrence leaning back in his arm-chair on one side of the fire, and on the other his strange little guest lying propped up on the sofa, which had been drawn up within reach of the glow.

"Well," he said, "so this is Wikkey; how are you getting on Wikkey?"

The black eyes scanned his face narrowly for a moment, and then a high weak voice said in a tone of disapprobation—

"It wouldn't warm a chap much fur to look at him; he ain't much to look at anyhow," and Wikkey turned away his head and studied the cretonne pattern on his sofa as if there was nothing more to be said on the subject.

Evidently the fair, almost fragile face which possessed such attraction for Lawrence in his strength had none for the weakly boy; possibly he had seen too many pale, delicate faces to care much about them. But Lawrence, unreasonably nettled, broke out hotly—

"Wikkey, you mustn't talk like that!" while the curate laughed and said—

"All right, Wikkey, stick to Mr. Granby; but I hope you and I will be good friends yet;" then drawing another chair up to the fire he began to talk to his cousin.

Presently the high voice spoke again—

"Why mustn't I, guvner?"

"Why mustn't you what?"

"Talk like that of him?" pointing to Reginald.

"Because it's not civil. Mr. Trevor is my friend, and I am very fond of him."

"Must I like everything as you like?"

"Yes, of course," said Lawrence, rather amused.

"Then I will, guvner—but it's a rum start."

He lay still after that while the two men talked, but Reginald noted how the boy's eyes were scarcely ever moved from Lawrence's face. As he took leave of his cousin in the hall he said—

"You will do more for him just now than I could, Lawrence; you will have to take him in hand."

"But I haven't the faintest notion what to do, Reg. I shall have to come to you and get my lesson up. What am I to begin with?"

"Time will show; let it come naturally. Of course I will give you any help I can, but you will tackle him far better than I could. You have plenty to work upon, for if ever a boy loved with his whole heart and soul, that boy loves you."

"Loves me—yes; but that won't do, you know."

"It will do a great deal; a soul that loves something better than itself is not far off loving the best. Good-night, old fellow."

Lawrence went back to Wikkey, and leant his back against the mantel-piece, looking thoughtfully down at the boy.

"What did the other chap call you?" inquired Wikkey.

"Granby, do you mean?"

Wikkey nodded.

"Lawrence Granby, that is my name. But, Wikkey, you must not call him 'chap,' you must call him Mr. Trevor."

"Oh, my eye! he's a swell, is he? I never call you anything only guvner; I shall call you Lawrence; it's a big name like you, and a great deal nicer nor guvner."

Lawrence gave a little laugh. Was it his duty to inculcate a proper respect for his betters into this boy? If he were going to live it might be, but when he thought how soon all earthly distinctions would be over for Wikkey, it seemed hardly worth while.

"Very well, he said. "By the by, Wikkey, have you recollected your own other name?"

"Yes, I've minded on it; it's Whiston."

"Do you remember your father and mother?"

"I don't remember no father; mother, she died after I took to the crossing."

"Do you know what her name was before she married?"

Wikkey shook his head. "Don't know nothink," he said. Lawrence showed him the old Bible, but it awoke no recollections in the boy's mind; he only repeated, "I don't know nothink."

"Wikkey," said Lawrence again, after a silence, "what made you take a fancy to me?" "I dunno. I liked the looks of yer the very first time as ever you came over, and after that I thought a deal of yer. I thought that if you was King of England, I'd have 'listed, and gone for a soldier. I don't think much of Queens myself, but I'd have fought for you and welcome. And I thought as I wouldn't have had you see me cheat Jim of his coppers. I dunno why;" and a look of real perplexity came into Wikkey's face as the problem presented itself to his mind.

"Did you often cheat Jim?"

"Scores o' times," answered the boy, composedly. "We'd play pitch-and-toss, and then I'd palm a ha'penny and Jim he'd never twig." A quick turn of the bony wrist showed how dexterously the trick had been done, and Wikkey went off into a shrill cackle at the recollection of his triumphs. "He's the biggest flat as ever I came across; why, I've seen him look up and down the gutter for them browns till I thought I'd have killed myself with trying not to laugh out."

The puckers in the thin face were so irresistibly comical that Lawrence found it hard to preserve his own gravity; however, he contrived to compose his features, and to say with a touch of severity—

"I can tell you why you wouldn't have liked me to see you; it was because you knew you were doing wrong." Wikkey's face expressed no comprehension. "It was wicked to cheat Jim, and you were a bad boy when you did it."

"My stars! why, he could have got 'em from me in a jiffy; he was twice my size. I only bowed 'em cos he was such a soft."

The explanation appeared perfectly satisfactory to Wikkey but, Lawrence, feeling that this was an opportunity that should not be lost, made a desperate effort, and began again—

"It was wicked all the same; and though I did not see you do it, there was Some one Who did—Some one Who sees everything you do. Have you ever heard of God, Wikkey?"

"Yes, I've heard on Him. I've heard the Name times about. "How used?" wondered Lawrence.) "Where is He?"

"He is everywhere, though you cannot see Him, and he sees everything you do."

"Is He good?"

"Very good."

"As good as you?"

"A great deal better." Poor Lawrence felt very uncomfortable, not quite knowing how to place his instructions on a less familiar footing.

"I don't want no one better nor you; you're good enough for me," said Wikkey, very decidedly; and then Lawrence gave it up in despair, and mentally resolving that Reg must help him, he carried Wikkey off to bed.

(To be continued.)

HEARTH AND HOME.

SINGLENESS OF PURSUIT.—An absolute singleness of pursuit almost means a mind always in one attitude, an eye that regards every object, however many-sided, from one point of view, an intellectual dietary beginning and ending with one article. Exclusiveness of this kind is apt to produce serious evils. It disposes each man to exaggerate the force and value of his own particular attainment, and perhaps therewith his own importance. It deprives the mind of the refreshment which is healthfully afforded by alternation of labour, and of the strength, as well as the activity, to be gained by allowing varied subjects to evoke and put in exercise its wonderfully varied powers.

IMPROVING A HUSBAND.—Though the dangerous experiment of educating a wife may be occasionally accomplished triumphantly, no woman need ever hope to improve a man by marrying him. He seems to settle in a certain form long before he is five-and-twenty. There is no possibility of remodelling him than there is of remodelling a cast in plaster of Paris. Women are often of clay or of wax in these particulars, but as a man comports himself in his youth, so he will in his age, if indeed his peculiarities are not then exaggerated. In his opinion, advice from his wife is not only useless but insulting, and no woman ever stooped very low in the process of putting her head into the matrimonial noose who did not regret it.

MENTAL REST.—As modern European life is constituted, complete mental rest for days and weeks together, says a contemporary, is necessary, in periods more or less frequent, for every brain-worker. By rest indeed the writer does not mean self-imposed inactivity or banishment from all else but ourselves and our thoughts, for, with Cowper, he believes that "absence of occupation is not rest—a mind quite vacant is a mind distressed." Probably this kind of mental inaction is seldom necessary, or even advisable. But, besides the directly physical benefits of cessation from professional work, change of air, and other slight changes, restful elements are to be sought in the semi-emotional, semi-intellectual recreation of music and art, and of unfamiliar scenery; in such social exercises as acting and play-going, debating, card-playing, singing and dancing; and above all, in the pleasures of friendship and social intercourse.

THE TREE WIFE.—Oftentimes I have seen a tall ship glide by against the tide as if drawn by an invisible tow line with a hundred strong arms pulling it. Her sails unfurled, her streamers drooping, she had neither side wheel nor stern wheel; still she moved on stately in serene triumph, as with her own life. But I knew that on the other side of the ship, hidden beneath the great bulk that swam so majestically, there was a little toilsome steam tug, with a heart of fire and arms of iron, that was tugging it bravely on; and I knew that if the little steam tug untwined her arms and left the ship, it would wallow and roll away, and drift hither and thither, and go off with the effluent tide no man knows where. And so I have known more than one genius high-decked, full-freighted, wide-sailed, gay-pennoned, but for the bare toiling arm and brave warm beating heart of the faithful little wife, that nestled close to him so that no wind nor wave could part them, he would have gone down with the stream and been heard of no more.

MAGNANIMITY.—The magnanimous man will be a great man intrinsically—that is, he will have something within him that will raise him above what is petty and trifling. In everything he will prefer the greater to the less, the higher to the lower, the better to the worse. And this he will do not so much from a sense of duty and by a self-denying effort as from a simple love and preference for the good. If, for instance, he is called to choose between a successful stroke of business and a truthful statement, he cannot hesitate; all his impulses tend to the latter, as the greater of the two satisfactions. If he must decide between personal comfort or ease and the helping of a neighbour in distress, his warm sympathies forbid a moment's doubt. If he is offered some much-prized luxury in exchange for a little meanness of conduct, he refuses it with scorn. Such things are no temptation to him, because his mind at once gauges their comparative unworthiness, and his heart recoils from them.

DESOLATION.

(Translated from Théophile Gautier.)

Down yonder, by some trees concealed,
A hunch-backed cabin stands alone;
Its roof is cracked—its walls have peeled—
And o'er its threshold moss hath grown.

Athwart the casements boards are nailed,
But still—as oft a frosty morn
Makes visible warm breath exhaled—
Life from yon oot is upward borne;

And smoke, with undulating roll,
Mounts in the vapour from the hut,
Reminding God that some poor soul
Within that mouldering den is shut.

Montreal.

GEO MURRAY.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

MADAME TREBELLI and our Montreal favourite Mrs. E. A. Osgood, are, we see, making a triumphal Concert tour through England at present. York and Liverpool papers have reached us, and they give no uncertain sound as to the effect produced by the singing of both ladies. After speaking of Trebelli and her double recall, the *York Herald* continues:—Mrs. Osgood, who appeared for the first time before a York audience, at once confirmed the high reputation which had preceded her. Possessed of a sweet, clear voice, the faultless style and the genuine expression in which she sang Spohr's exquisite air, "Rose, so Softly Blooming," won for her the highest opinions, and twice did she return to bow her acknowledgments before the applause subsided. Her success was fully as great in Roedel's song, "That Traitor Love," her interpretation of which was so fine that she was compelled to accede to the general acclamations, and gave "Coming through the Rye." Mrs. Osgood also took part in Verdi's "Miserere," with Mr. Shakespeare, and in the tzeretto, "Zitti, Zitti," from Rossini's "Barbieri." It gives us great pleasure to chronicle this latter lady's success. No artist that we remember has ever visited us, who has left behind so pleasant an impression, as to her voice, her art, and her unpretending manner.

LITERARY.

MRS. JAMES, the widow of G. P. R. James, the novelist, is living at Eau Claire, Wisconsin. She is eighty years old and is cared for by her sons.

MISS AMELIA B. EDWARDS' new novel, promised some time back for the first week in January, has been postponed till the first week in February, when it will begin and continue weekly in the *Graphic* under the title of "Lord Brackenbury."

MR. MURRAY promises a new volume by Dr. Schliemann, to be entitled "Ilios; the Country of the Trojans," in which the indefatigable explorer will give an account of his latest researches in the Plain of Troy. Four hundred plans and illustrations adorn the work.

MESSRS. MACMILLAN & Co. have in the press, and will publish about the opening of Parliament, a small volume by the Marquis of Bath, "On the Social Conditions and Political Prospects of the Bulgarians in their New Principality and in Eastern Roumelia," the result of his lordship's recent journey to those regions, where he had the fullest opportunities of observing the state of things.

THE HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD is at present engaged on a story suggested by the condition of the convict prison laws, in which he will essay to give a faithful picture of penal servitude as it is, in contrast to the *tableaux* presented in recent publications by ex-convicts. The tale, which will be ready for publication in about six weeks, will probably be entitled "Brother Nipin; a Study of the British Felon, drawn from the Life."

MESSRS. C. KEGAN PAUL & Co. will publish in a few days, as a companion volume to the "In Memoriam" issued at Christmas, a small edition of "Poems Selected from Percy Bysshe Shelley," printed on rough hand-made paper and bound in parchment. The volume is dedicated to Lady Shelley, and has a preface by Mr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum.

FASHION NOTES.

THERE are nine women on the London School board.

THE Marveilleuse is the latest large lace cravat bow.

THE most popular overskirt takes the name of the Tallien.

WIDE ribbon sashes will be much worn during the coming season.

SPANISH LACE has been revived in Paris since the Spanish marriage.

THREE-CORNERED silk handkerchiefs are popular for neck wear.

THE roses most used for flower garnitures are Jacquemont and Marshal Neil.

FLUSH collars and cuffs will be much worn on early spring dresses and wraps.

DEEP gauntlet cuffs, reaching almost to the elbow, have been revived this season.

TOILE RELIGIEUSE, or nun's cloth, is only another name for white French bunting.

THE fashion of having the corsage of different material from the skirt will prevail in the spring.

APPLE-BLOSSOMS make lovely flower-panels for the side garniture of young girls' evening dresses.

PLATINUM and gold are often used in combination in jewelry and in the setting of diamonds.

ICE parties, at which skating is the substitute for dancing, are the fashionable entertainment in England this winter.

THE novelties in gloves for evening wear are those with kid lace tops and those trimmed with real lace and lace insertion.

WATER lilies, and occasionally calla lilies, used sparingly, are among the favourite flowers for ornamenting diaphanous ball dresses.

DESIGNS of birds wrought with peacock and other feathers, in natural colours, on canvas, are among the novelties in fancy needlework.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.