

by the lighted lamp souls at sea were watching it. The three boats had been bewildered in the fog. Two of them had stumbled on a little island, in one of whose coves they sought shelter for the night. The boat belonging to Pierre's father had not been so fortunate. When the wind rose and the fog scattered Cosette's keen eyes were turned in every direction, searching for some ray from a guiding light.

"Oh, there! See!" she cried, pointing toward a dim flash of gold off on the water's edge.

"Make for that," replied her father.

The bow of the boat was pointed toward that golden spark. Slowly but steadily they advanced through the rough waters, and the boat was beached in a little sheltered nook not far from the home under the willows.

"Here we are!" shouted Victor, at the door of the house.

"Oh, thank God!" cried the mother, coming down the stairway, her lamp in her hand. "Oh, how did you get here?"

"We steered by 'mother's light,'" said Cosette. "We saw it in the window, though we did not know what it was out there."

"Ah!" thought Pierre; "it is time I were steering by mother's light." When he lay down that night, he first knelt and asked God to guide him over life's rough sea.

The months went rapidly by. The cold, hard blasts of the winter drove across the sea, and like ploughs they turned up the dark waters. Then came spring, with its softer airs, and the longer days kindled in the sky that longer light in which the sea rolled and flashed like a vast crystal. Spring, though, did not soften the cough that had attacked Pierre and with which he vainly wrestled.

"He can't live long," said the old doctor of the family; "he may go any day."

One stormy night the boy lay dying; father, mother, Cosette, Victor, Clementine, gathered in tears about his bed. Pierre was wandering in his thoughts; he fancied he was far off on the sea. The waves, he said, were running high.

"Don't you be afraid for me," he said, in low tones, looking round on those who wept at his side. "I shall—make—harbour: I'm steering by mother's—light;" and, guided by prayer, steering by a mother's light, the fisher-boy quickly reached heaven and home.—*Forward.*

The Crown of Thorns.

They did not seek the pearl's unsullied whiteness,
Nor the dark splendor of the ruby's shine,
Nor flash in dazzling light the diamond's brightness,
Nor bring their cherished gold up from its mine,
To place in glory on that head of Thine.

Nor did they strip with eager haste their gardens,
Nor send to Sharon for its roses red;
Nor shower sweet lilies (through them craving pardon
For all the bitter things their lips had said)
And weave these into garlands for Thy head.

Nor did they crown it, lone and unbefriended,
With heartfelt blessings for its weary years;
Nor on those looks where night-dews oft descended
Let fall the balm of grief's repentant tears,
And strive with love to wipe out sin's arrears.

Ah, no; with none of these. Those eyes undaunted

Shone calm the while the blood drops trickled down,
So through all time men's memories are haunted
With visions of the crowd in Salem's town,
And of that Christ who wore the thorny crown.

'Twas not the Roman soldiers' coarse reviling,
Not the fierce rabble's spurning of His name,
Not these alone. The world is hourly fling
New chains for Him, of mockery and blame—
'Tis we who put Him to open shame.

'Tis we although His love is still defending
Our path from foes we never could subdue:
No less for us the prayer is still ascending,
The prayer of old, and yet forever new—
"Father, forgive, they know not what they do."

For we indeed brook not the least delaying
In swift pursuit of pleasure's golden dower;
Grow heedless near the places of His praying,
Let slumber rob His pleading of its power,
"Could ye not watch with Me one little hour?"

Glad seraphs tune their harps in mighty chorus,
Archangels praise Him in the white-robed throng,
But to the ear which Christ is bending o'er us
It is earth's coldness sets the music wrong,
And steals the sweetness from the angels' song.

Oh, Thou whom heaven contents not! interceding
For souls, so heedless, for whom Thou hast died,
Draw them to place—O, Saviour, ever pleading—
Their hands of faith within Thy pierced side,
See of Thy travail, and be satisfied.

How Joe Preached Before the Squire.

"ABOUT thirty-four years ago," said a veteran Methodist minister, "I was stationed in a rural district in Yorkshire. I was one evening going to an appointment at the village of Norton, when I was accosted by a farm-labourer just returning from the field. He was a class-leader, and, in his own eyes, a man of great importance. When he saw me, he called out in a loud voice—

"'Halloa! parson.'
'I stopped, and asked him how he was.

"'Oh! hearty,' he cried. 'I suppose you haven't heard?'

"'Heard what?' I enquired, thinking something serious had occurred.

"'Why,' said he, grinning in a most ludicrous manner, 'Th' Squire and his lady wor at th' chapel on Sunday.'

"'I'm glad to hear it,' I remarked. 'I hope they heard a good sermon, and profited by it;' and reminding him of the evening service, I walked on, leaving him standing in the middle of the road, evidently astonished that his important piece of news had not taken a greater effect on me. I was not at all surprised at the Squire's visit, though, I must confess, I felt a little pleased to hear that he had been among our people. He was a rich man, and well educated, but quite plain in his manners and conversation. I had several times called at his house to ask for donations towards carrying on the good work, and he had always responded liberally, and expressed his good-will toward us; 'for,' said he, 'it is a good work, and there is plenty of it to be done before you get the people civilized.'

"On reaching the chapel, I found the one topic of conversation there was the Squire's visit; and at our official

meeting after preaching the leaders began discussing the merits and demerits of the local preachers, and their fitness to preach before the Squire, and even myself and my colleague came in for our share of criticism.

"'It wor a blessing,' said a grey-headed old man of near three score years and ten, 'that Johnny wor planned last Sunday; for if it had been some on 'em as are on th' plan th' Squire would ha run away. I fairly trembled lest Johnny should begin a shouting as he does sometimes.'

"'Aye,' said another, 'we mun be more careful who we han in th' pulpit. Th' head parson there mun get here as often as he can of a Sunday.'

"'But how do you know, my good man,' said I, 'whether the Squire would care to hear me preach?'

"'Well,' replied an old farmer. 'I think he would; though for that matter, yo' make a girt noise sometimes.'

"I could scarce keep from laughing outright at these foolish men; and yet I felt sorry to see this spirit of pride and worldliness creeping in among them. It was quite evident the Squire's coming among us would have a bad rather than a good effect, for the congregation would hear the sermons not for themselves, but for him; and if this was the case, the spiritual life and power of our little society would soon die. I scarcely knew what to do or what to say. I was instructed to be careful who I sent to preach, and I found there were only two or three of the local preachers who were considered fit to preach a sermon to the Squire and his lady. However, I told them not to say too much on this matter, but pray to God to give them more grace and humility; and as to the Squire, why he might never come again among us. With this advice, I left them.

"Several months passed away, and the work of God prospered under our hands in all places except Norton. Here great changes had taken place. The Squire and his lady now attended our chapel regularly, and a special pew had been assigned them. This pew was lined with crimson cloth; velvet cushions were on the seats, and stools, covered with rich carpet, were used for foot-rests. The Squire's pew was so grand that a number of the officials embellished their pews with cushions; and a sum of money was voted for repairs and painting. The communion table must be re-polished, and the pulpit stairs have a carpet on; and it was whispered about that the window behind the pulpit ought to be of stained glass, so as to throw a softer light into the chapel, and keep the sun from coming too powerfully into the eyes of the Squire and his lady. It was astonishing, also, to see the change in the dress of the congregation. The women (especially the young ones) tried to imitate the Squire's lady, and the men imitated the Squire. They also began to talk fine; and I laughed heartily at their attempts in this respect—such a mixture of vulgarity and refinement!

"But what became of their religion? Where was their love for perishing souls? What had become of their impassioned prayers for the outpouring of God's Spirit? No hearty 'Amen's' now proclaimed the happy enjoyment of the sermon. Scarcely a sound was heard while the preacher was pleading with God in prayer. If he spoke in a loud tone, the congregation blushed and hung down their heads, or cast side

glances at the Squire. And woe be to him if he blundered, or became puzzled what to say. The officials would gather round him at the close of the service, and frowningly ask him whether he thought himself fit to preach in their chapel. What would the Squire and his lady think! And he was warned not to come again, unless he had got something better to say, and could say it in a better manner. The consequence of this was, I had a difficulty to get any of the local preachers to preach at Norton; and several of them were so insulted and grieved that they threatened to have their names taken off the plan.

"I was sorely perplexed what to do. I saw with sorrow the change which had come over this once humble people; and the words, 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion,' often came to my mind. I preached to them faithfully from the pulpit, and talked to them plainly in the official meetings; but all to no purpose. The evil grew; and I saw that something must be done, or there would soon not be a spark of vital religion left among them. Pride and vain-glory were eating godliness up.

"I never possessed the bump of craftiness to any great extent; but I saw I should have to exercise craftiness in order to put a stop to this growing evil. The disease had become desperate, and a desperate remedy would be needed; and I waited my time to carry out an idea which had come forcibly into my mind.

"In one of the villages distant about nine miles from Norton, lived a man whose heart God had changed. He was one of the roughest and most uncultivated men I ever knew. His ignorance before his conversion must have been fearful. When a lad only six years old, he was left without father and mother, and his grandmother took him to live with her. But she was so poor, that little Joe had to go and work in the coalpit. As he grew in years he grew in sin; and there was not a more wicked young man in all Yorkshire. He delighted in drinking, fighting, foot-racing, bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and every description of wickedness. His mind was dark as night. He could not tell one letter from another. His old grandmother, a good though ignorant woman, talked and prayed with him often; but all to no purpose. He sinned continually, and was deep-dyed.

"But Joe one night entered our chapel at Gainsford, and there the Spirit of God showed him his vile and polluted condition, and he was soon as miserable as a guilty soul and an awakened conscience could make him. He wept, and cried for God to have mercy on him, in the chapel; but it was no use. He went out of the chapel into the lanes, and there he startled the rabbits from their nests, and made the birds run away in fright by his cries for mercy. Sometimes he ran as fast as he could, and then suddenly prostrated himself on the ground, weeping and crying to God to tell him He forgave him. Thus Joe rambled about until near two o'clock in the morning, and then, prostrating himself before the cottage door in which he lived, he told God he wouldn't enter there again unless He blessed him. God did bless him, and he sprang upon his feet, shouting and praising God so loud that he wakened all the people in the house, who came running down