



## HE WAS THE LEADING DEALER IN FISH AND GAME.

Mr. Josiah Mason was the fishmonger of the village. There could be no doubt about that. He was the leading dealer in fish and game, indeed, for miles round, and, as he said in his handbills, which were sent out to all new settlers in the district, 'patronised by all the nobility and gentry.' Farmers, on the way to their homes in distant villages, would sometimes carry to their wives some of his goods, so that his name was known all over the country-side.

Moreover, Mr. Josiah Mason was a person of some importance outside his business, being no less than a churchwarden at the parish church, and much respected by all who knew him.

Among his other good qualities was the possession of a generous nature—one that led him to do many acts of kindness quite unknown to the little world around him.

One of his good customs was to serve out to the deserving poor such fare as he had over on Saturday nights at very cheap rates, so that there might be at least a good fish dinner on the Sunday for those who cared to have one.

Mr. Mason's kindly face was seen to best advantage on such an occasion, as he had some joke to make to all those who came, the children especially. In fact, Mr. Mason's love for the youngsters was so well known that they were generally sent, because they seemed to get the best fish.

One Saturday Josiah had put aside two extra fine fresh mackerel for little Tiny Bussey, whose mother was in the depth of poverty, but who always managed to send her two boys with the coppers she had scraped together for their Sunday meal.

Hers was a very sad case, and it called forth all Josiah's sympathies; so much that Tiny always had the best the shop could

offer in the shape of mackerel on Saturdays, that fish being Mrs. Bussey's favorite.

On this particular Saturday Mrs. Benson, the squire's wife, drove up to the shop, and, alighting, asked for a half dozen fine mackerel 'which must be quite fresh.' Josiah flushed up at such an unusual sight as the squire's lady doing her own shopping, and explained that he had only four left.

'Let me see them, please.'

Having inspected them approvingly, Mrs. Benson's gaze fell on the two set aside specially for Tiny. 'Why, here are two more, Mr. Mason, put them up as well, please.' Josiah flushed again.

'I'm sorry, but I cannot let you have them, ma'am.'

'Are they sold?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Then I must have them, Mr. Mason.'

Josiah flinched and rolled up his apron.

'If you please, ma'am, I must ask you to excuse me.'

Mrs. Benson was not a woman to be put aside, and so with a 'Don't trouble further, Mr. Mason,' she left the shop, declining the four fish already wrapped up.

Mr. Josiah Mason's face for once looked troubled, but business was brisk, and soon took his attention; and when Tiny came that night, and Josiah handed him the two fish, he felt happy once more as the lad went away with his brother, the fish being safe in his big market basket.

The next day the squire's good lady, for the first time, deigned to take no notice of Josiah's salute as she entered her pew; and it was a very cold gaze that she had to meet him with as he tried to hand her to her carriage after service.

About a month later Mrs. Benson again

drove up to Josiah's shop, very much to that good man's surprise.

'Mr. Mason,' she cried as she sat in her carriage; and when he came to receive her orders she said, 'Have you still two mackerel set aside not to be sold?' and she quite smiled at him.

Josiah colored to the roots of his hair.

'Yes, ma'am,' was all he could get out.

'And are they going to the same place as those of last Saturday?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'And do two go to the same place every week?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Then shake hands, please, Mr. Mason, and forgive my bad temper a month ago. Only yesterday, my maid, in calling upon Mrs. Bussey, poor old soul, heard of your goodness to the bed-ridden cripple. I shall not soon forget my rudeness or your kindness done in secret.'

And Josiah rubbed his hands as she went away, often to come again, you may be sure. And so it came about that, in a still wider business (for Mrs. Benson recommended many a friend to his shop) Josiah found an earthly reward for his kindness, to say nothing of the joy which always attends self-denial for the sake of Christ.—'Friendly Greetings.'

## The Perils of Pudding Sauce.

(By Mrs. Flower.)

'Nobody would believe what danger may lurk in a Christmas pudding, or, rather, in its usual accompaniment,' said a thoughtful, middle-aged man one day, when speaking on the incentives to intemperance. 'And I can prove it, if you have time to hear a true story.'

'Plenty of time; go on.'

'Oh, the pudding is not in fault; it's the ——. But you shall have the story. It all happened long ago, when these grey hairs of mine were like John Anderson's in his youth. I had just returned to my native town after an absence of several years, and was rambling about in a haphazard fashion. The memory of many a boyish lark and many an honest friendship stirred into fresh activity with every step I took, and when at last the office of a leading solicitor came into view, I quickened my step involuntarily, and pushed open the door with a whole flood of happy memories racing through and through me. His son had been my greatest chum when we were lads, but somehow we had managed to drift apart of late years, and beyond a dim impression that he had been articled to his father, and in due course had become his partner, the whole of my old friend's history was a blank to me, and Mr. Lenox, whom I found in his usual place, had barely grasped my hand in cordial greeting before I burst out with an inquiry concerning Hal.

'"Where is he, and what's he doing? Can I see him at once?" said I impetuously. But the change that instantly passed over Mr. Lenox startled me so much that I could only stare at him in wonder and fear. I had thought him looking older and whiter than when I left home, but at his age such changes were to be expected. Not so, however, the trembling lip and hopeless misery of the fine old face, that looked at me for an instant, and then bent over his desk in a silence that implied more than could be put into words—the silence of despair.

'"My dear sir, what is amiss with Hal?" I cried in cruel agitation. "We were like twin brothers once, you know, and even now nothing can touch him without touching me