

"I do, sir," said Mrs. Grant; "but they shan't have done it for nothing."

"Tis a downright shame, that it is," said a neighbour, looking over the hedge; "for you were growing them for the show, weren't you, Mrs. Grant? and you were sure of the first prize too!"

"Yes, that's it," returned Mrs. Grant, holding up the cucumber, almost with tears in her eyes. "It has been done out of jealousy. Dear, dear! that people should have such a bad spirit! But wait a bit, I'll get Jim to pay them off."

"Do you think this has been done to prevent your winning the prize?" I asked.

"That's it, sir," was the answer; "but if I don't get it, they shan't either. There is a lot of potatoes kicked about, and peas and things all trampled!" and the poor woman sat down in her cottage a picture of vexation.

"Jim and I were looking at them last evening," she continued; "and he said we were sure of first prize, as they would be just fit by show day. But I know who must have done it, and I would not be them for something, for Jim will be just about wild when he comes home."

About mid-day I walked down to the mill where Jim Grant was at work, in order to have a little talk with him at his dinner-hour.

After some conversation, I said, "I know a man, Jim, who has had a petty wrong done him—to spite and harm him, it is said. Now, I am almost afraid he will be led to pay it back in the same coin."

"That won't do, sir," said Jim, who was fond of talking on serious matters, and knew as well as any one what was right.

"No," said I; "it is very wrong to take revenge. We ought to forgive and forget; but, Jim, that is not an easy thing to do, and especially when one is taken unawares."

"True, sir," he returned; "and I don't know but that I might be almost afraid of myself, if it came upon me on a sudden; but that it would be wrong, there can be no doubt at all. We have our Master's pattern set us, that we should follow His steps, 'who, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.'"

I was both curious and anxious to know in what temper Jim would bear the unwelcome news of the destruction of his prize vegetables, and I made a point of looking in upon him the same evening.

Jim was sitting very sulkily in a corner of his

cottage; and his wife, in no better humour, was washing up her tea-things at the table.

"I somehow thought you meant it for me when you came to the mill and talked like that this morning," said Jim, at length.

"Yes," said his wife; "but I don't see why those who hurt their neighbours in wicked spite shouldn't suffer for it."

"But I am glad to hope that Jim is not going to take the matter into his own hands, and return evil for evil," I said.

"As to that," was Jim's reply, "I'm not going to be of one mind in the morning and another at night; but"—and then he stopped speaking, but stamped his foot on the floor, and plainly looked as though he would not spare somebody's vegetables if he had them under his heel.

"Ah! Jim," said I; "I see the snake is only scotched, and not killed."

Jim looked at me, and his wife turned from her tea-things, as if neither at all understood what I meant; but before another word was spoken, a lad stood in the open doorway.

"If you please," said he, "is it your garden that our donkey broke into last night? It must have come through the hedge, or have opened the gate—for 'tis clever enough—and it gives us a deal of trouble."

"And so 'twas a donkey after all!" exclaimed Jim. "I seemed to think they were curious marks."

"Well to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Grant.

"Master bid me say," continued the lad, "that

he is very sorry it should have happened; and if you will step up to-morrow morning he will pay the costs of the damage."

Jim and his wife exchanged looks as the boy went away.

"And so 'tis all for the best, wife," said he, "that I didn't take your advice about giving 'tit for tat.'"

I left Mr. and Mrs. Grant at length, having endeavoured to recommend, by this opportunity, the special graces of Christian people—forbearance, forgiveness, and love.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

