

remarked Daisy Barradell, coming up behind Elsie's chair.

'I should say she didn't,' said Nina, craning her neck to get a good view of the picture without leaving her seat. 'Isn't that a face. If my mother had lived, I should want her to look just like that.'

Elsie buried her face in her hands and commenced to sob. Daisy knelt beside her and tried to quiet her. Neither she nor Nina felt very much acquainted with Elsie Coen, but they had the kindest of feelings for their fellow worker.

'Miss Coen—Elsie, tell us what is the trouble,' they both pleaded, but her sobs only increased.

Suddenly she stood up, and, brushing away the tears, said, 'That is my mother as she looked when I saw her last. Several times since I left home, six years ago, she has written me asking if I wouldn't come home, and every time I refused to go.'

'Oh, you poor dear!' exclaimed sympathetic Nina.

'My poor mother, you should say,' answered Elsie. 'Girls, I'm going home to-night. I can't wait another day.'

When Elsie Coen asked Mr. Board to release her from her engagement, he was very much astonished and refused to grant her request without sufficient reason. Whereupon Elsie, with the blush of shame upon her cheek and a little tremor in her voice, said, 'That old lady who wanted the wrinkles taken out for her daughter's sake is my mother.'

'And you are the daughter?' asked the astonished man.

'Yes, sir; I never realized how much my mother needed me until I saw that negative, and I feel as if I must go home.'

'To smooth out mother's wrinkles,' suggested Mr. Board, with a kindly smile.

'I hope so.'

'Then I will be glad to release you, and may God bless you.'

To Elsie the intervening hours before train time seemed interminable. She soon packed her trunk and sent it to the depot three hours before it was to leave the city.

While she sat in the waiting-room, she thought of her mother as she remembered her, of her letters that had been answered so tardily, and of several urgent requests for her to return home if only for a short visit. But she had always spent her vacations at some pleasant resort with merry companions, and her mother's desires were unheeded.

As she sat there, her conscience was continually giving her little sharp pricks of remorse, and she was not sorry when the whistle of the train interrupted her self-condemning reflections.

She entered the car, and, with her bundles, occupied an entire seat. Having actually taken her place in the homebound train, she allowed herself a little glow of anticipated joy. Just to think, she would soon be home again! How surprised and rejoiced her dear mother would be!

The car was rapidly filling up, but Elsie did not feel in the mood for a seat mate. However, when an old lady went through the aisle, vainly searching for a seat, Elsie eagerly motioned to her.

'Thank you, dear,' said the grateful recipient of Elsie's generosity.

The old lady proved to be very chatty.

'Are you going far?' she asked.

'To Keithsburg. I'm going home to my mother.'

'Well, now, ain't that nice? I just know

she'll be real glad to see you. I'm going home to my mother, too.'

'Does she live in Keithsburg?' inquired Elsie.

'No. She's been in Heaven for fifteen years.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Elsie, with a thoughtful look.

'Yes,' continued the old lady, 'it's a straight and narrow way, but I thrust I shall never stray away from the right path. I hope you are travelling the same road,' with a solicitous glance.

'I don't know,' said Elsie, hesitatingly; 'I'm going home to mother after being away six years. Somehow, that seems more important than anything else, just now.'

The stations were called out one by one by the vociferous brakeman, but Elsie took little interest in the almost forgotten names until near the end of the journey. Then with feverish eagerness she gathered her bundles together and sat erect on the edge of her seat.

'The next station's Keithsburg,' she said, while the tears welled up in her blue eyes as every moment brought her nearer home.

'Good-bye, my dear. You are travelling in the right direction when you are going home to mother,' were the old lady's parting words as Elsie left the car.

Depositing her bundles on a seat in the little waiting-room, she walked up the road towards home with as little conscious effort as if she wore winged sandals.

Outside the familiar little white house two small boys were playing. They looked at her as they would a stranger, and she failed to recognize them.

Surely she had not mistaken her father's house. No, this was the right place, for out of a side door came a freckle-faced boy of fifteen bearing a pan of dirty water. In spite of his added inches she knew him.

'Oh, David, where's mother?' cried Elsie, approaching the astonished boy, who almost dropped his pan of water.

'Well, I think it time you were coming home. I've had enough of dish-washing,' was his doubtful welcome.

'Who are those little boys in front of the house,' she asked.

'Cliff and Harvey. What's the matter with you, Elsie?'

Elsie hung her head. They were her own brothers, and she had not known them.

'But where's mother?' she inquired once more.

'Upstairs, sick abed. Say, Elsie, have you come home to spy on us or to help us out?'

'I'm going to stay home and help mother,' answered Elsie, entering the house.

'Hurrah for sister Elsie!' came from a pair of lusty lungs, as David emptied his pan and followed her into the house.

Another brother faced her at the stair door and impeded her progress.

'This is fine, Elsie. Mother has just been fretting and wishing to hear from you. This will do her more good than medicine,' said Ray Coen, a sturdy six-footer.

'What's the matter with mother, Ray?' asked Elsie, anxiously.

'Overwork and worry, the doctor said. It does seem good to see you again,' and the honest, kindly face of brother Ray glowed with delight.

Elsie's eyes overflowed as she flew upstairs to mother. How glad they were to see her and how little she deserved her welcome.

Her heart was too full to utter a word as she knelt beside her mother and hid her face in the bedclothes.

As for her mother, she understood—mothers always do—and her own joyful surprise found

vent in repeating over and over again, 'Oh, Elsie, Elsie! Mother's only daughter! Mother's dear, good girl.'

And Elsie felt that no sacrifice would be too great to atone for those years of selfish neglect.

When the doctor came next day he told Elsie her mother would have no further need of medicine, and as Elsie looked at her dear, loving face, beaming with joy, she knew he had told the truth.—'Christian Standard.'

The Crowns of England, and King Alfred.

(Somerville Gibney, in the 'Boy's Own Paper'.)

With many boys the chief attribute of a king is, I suppose, his crown. In their minds, it takes a more prominent place than either his throne, his sceptre, the orb, or his robes, in fact it is the crown that makes the king. And this being so, it may interest some 'B.O.P.' readers at the present time, when, after so many years, we once more have a King to reign over us, to glance at the crowns of England.

It is a mistake to talk of the crown of England as though there were only one, and that one handed down from sovereign to sovereign, as the sceptre and orb are, for each monarch has his own crown or crowns much in the same way as he has his own hat, and when we come to think of it this must be so, for the heads of our sovereigns cannot all have been exactly the same size and shape, so that the crown of one might slip over the ears of his successor and bonnet him (a most undignified position for a king), or it might be many sizes too small, and only rest on the top of his head like the apple on the head of William Tell's son, which would afford an equally ludicrous spectacle. And it is partly for this reason, and partly because there is a fashion in crowns as in most other things, that the crowns of England, from the earliest times, show such a diversity of appearance.

But their design is a subject upon which we have more pictorial illustration than almost any other, from the coins of the particular reign, the Great Seals, the tapestries, illuminations, pictures, tombs and monuments, so that we have no difficulty in saying what the crown of any monarch was like. Under these circumstances it seems hardly worth while going through what is open to any casual inquirer, but a few particulars and incidents respecting some of them may not be out of place.

The first of the English crowns of which we have any very definite or interesting record is that of Alfred the Great, and Alfred was the first of our kings, who, as far as we can judge, was crowned, for in all previous instances we only hear of 'election and consecration,' but never of 'coronation,' as in his case, and afterwards. In the inventory of the regalia, which was removed from Westminster Abbey to the Tower when Henry VIII. laid a heavy hand on the religious houses, it is described as of 'gould wyerworke sett with stones and two little bells.' The little bells sound curious, but that is no reason why they were not used in the decoration, and, to my mind, there is further evidence to be found in the costume of the Court Jester. This official was part and parcel of the court, and used to parody and burlesque the monarch for the amusement of him and those about him; his staff with the bladder attached was a mockery of the sceptre, and in many instances we find his long-eared headdress terminating in little bells. Might not these have been suggested by those on the crown of King Al-