

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE RICH HUNCHBACK.

"OH, my! what a funny little old man!" said a thoughtless young girl in a loud whisper to her companion, at a prayer-meeting in a certain large manufacturing village in New England.

I glanced up. There was a funny little old man indeed, walking with a painful limp up the aisle in quest of a vacant seat.

"It is old Uncle Jerry Phillips, the humpback shoemaker. Prepare yourself for a pleasant surprise if he takes a part in the meeting, as he doubtless will," explained the friend at my side.

It was a pleasant social gathering. A deep devotional feeling seemed to prevail, and one after another spoke words of faith and hope and promise.

By-and-by there came a lull, and then Uncle Jerry's gray, bushy head appeared just above the tops of the settees. He began his remarks in a sweet, pathetic, trembling voice, so winning in its tones that all instinctively bent their heads to listen.

"Friends, it would no doubt seem to many here a very sad thing to be only Jerry Phillips, the poor, old, cross-eyed, crooked-limbed, humpback shoemaker; to be without relatives; to be often without work; to sometimes be hungry; to have no home except one little bare room; to be often laid up with rheumatism, and for days not to see a human face excepting now and then when a kind-hearted neighbour looks in.

"All these things are very sad, but, dear friends, there are sadder things. It is sad to be poor as regards this life, but it is sadder to be poor in reference to the life that is to come. I am a poverty-stricken, 'funny'-looking old man in the estimation of most of you, but I am rich in faith, and through the blessed faith Jesus clothes me in the robe of his righteousness, and feeds me with the bread of heaven.

"This unsightly hump on my back is far less onerous than the load of anxiety, remorse, and sin, carried by many rich people who ride in fine carriages, and are clothed in goodly apparel. I shall drop it off some day, after I have borne it long enough to fulfil His purpose, and with it I shall lose my crooked limbs and cross eyes.

"These deformities, I must confess, have been something of a burden to me all my life, but whenever the thoughtless jeer at me, I remember that the Master always looked kindly upon the halt and the maimed. Jesus, too, was the friend of the poor when He was in this world, and He is so still.

"Do you not remember? 'He had not where to lay his head.' And do you not recall the words of James? Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?' Yes, I speak from my heart when I say to you that I had rather be poor in purse and rich in faith, than poor in faith and rich in purse.

I hope none of you will be poor in both ways. If you should be, the fault will be at your own door, for every one of you can be rich by taking Jesus as your friend. And I

trust that those who are already rich in this world's goods will so live as to share in the riches of the world to come. It would be unspeakably unfortunate my friends, oh, far more unfortunate than anything that has yet befallen me in this life, to pass out of worldly wealth into eternal poverty."

The old man sat down, and Col. Rogers, the so-called richest man in town, sank upon his knees, saying with much emotion. "Let us pray." The supposed wealthy manufacturer offered a petition, with a true prayerful unction, for faith and grace and strength and charity, and for a thorough cleansing from all moral and spiritual deformity, that found a response in many hearts and brought the tears to many eyes.

The next day the entire community was electrified by the news that Col. Rogers had failed, and assigned his property for the benefit of his creditors. All who had been present at that meeting the previous evening recalled the now ruined manufacturer's prayer, and said that the poor man must have been passing through a fierce mental struggle at the time.

He met Uncle Jerry Phillips in the street that day, and taking him by the hand, said, "I am as poor as you are this afternoon, Uncle Jerry, I have thrown up the hump of 'anxiety, remorse, and sin,' but I am weak from carrying it so long. And although I did not realize it before your most opportune words of last night, I think I had been looking in all directions for the main chance in business so long that I was getting to be cross-eyed myself.

"Now, Uncle Jerry, I want you to pray that I may become as rich as you are, for it was your talk at the prayer-meeting that prompted me to make the move I have. I had my plans all perfected by which I was to fail 'successfully' in my business, that is to make a compromise with my creditors, offer to them a certain per cent. of my indebtedness, and go on again. But instead of that I have turned over everything to my principal creditor, who will carry on the business. By doing what I have, I am enabled to pay every cent I owe. I could not bear the idea of 'eternal poverty,' Uncle Jerry."

"I hated to speak," said the deformed little man. "It is always a cross for me, and it was more of a cross last evening than ever, because I heard some girls giggling about me when I came in. But something kept whispering, 'Get up and tell them that you are not so poor and forlorn as you seem;' so I spoke the words that the Lord gave me."

THE SPIDER AND THE BUTTERFLY.

THE spider was full of business; he darted this way and that, fastening his thread now to this leaf, then to that flower, crossing it at regular distances with wonderful care; he did not stop to rest, for Mistress Spider was hungry, and there was no dinner for her as yet; so he darted round and round, up and down, until at last the web was finished. He retired under a leaf to watch, with all his eight eyes, for the approach of some thoughtless insect. The minister and his little daughter passed that way, and seated themselves on the

bank to watch that spider. "O papa, I wonder if he will catch anything!" whispered the child. She was not long kept in doubt, for at this moment a white butterfly was seen dipping his long proboscis into the depths of a flower, then flitting in the sunlight until he came to another, every time getting nearer and nearer to the web and the watchful spider. The beautiful insect did not dream of danger as it sported with a companion, or folded its delicate wings for an instant to rest on some blossom. Then again it flitted nearer and nearer, happy in its ignorance of the hidden snare, for the web was so placed that only in one light could its delicate threads be seen. A convolvulus was growing on the other side of the web, and the butterfly flew straight towards it, thinking what delicate honey there would be in its painted cup; but, alas! at that very moment its beautiful wings were entangled in the silken trap, and the spider starting from its hiding-place, rushed upon its victim. The butterfly struggled, but it was in vain; the treacherous threads seemed only to hold it the tighter, and its enemy, approaching cautiously, began to weave round it a close web, so that it soon hung helplessly, unable even to struggle.

All this while the little girl had been looking on with breathless interest, and now she uttered a cry of distress, and turning to her papa, she exclaimed:

"Papa, save it—save that poor butterfly!"

The clergyman stretched out his hand and began to disentangle the insect; the frightened spider darted back to his shelter, the web was broken, and the rescued butterfly once more fluttered feebly in the sunshine.

"I am so glad it is safe," cried the child, as, after resting for a moment on a leaf, the pretty creature flew gaily away. "You look grave, papa; are you not glad, too?"

"My child," her father replied, "I was thinking of other snares and other victims."

"Where, papa?"

"They are most dangerous where they are expected least."

"I don't understand you, papa; who makes them and why?"

"Our great enemy makes them, my child, that he may ensnare all those who forget to watch, and we call those snares, temptations." The child looked thoughtful, and her father went on: "Just as the spider puts its web where it can least be seen, so Satan puts his traps where we think it least likely that we should find them; when we feel least disposed to think of hidden dangers, then is the time we should look out for them most, for they are sure not to be far from us; and when once we fall into them, no power of our own can save us."

"What would happen to us then, papa?"

"There is a hand ever ready to help the helpless, and an ear that always hears the cry of the distressed; just as you saw the poor butterfly, though it could not help itself, saved by a strength not his own, so our heavenly Father hears and saves those who cry to Him for aid in their time of need."

"But what must we do to keep from falling in Satan's traps?"

Her father looked up and answered:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."