

comed, otherwise he used to meet with a rude, church reception. This did not, however, discourage him. He went to do his Master's work, not for his own pleasure, and the worse the people were, the more did his heart yearn over them.

One summer day Mr. Hodson set out for a long ride. The air was very sultry. The wind, unlike our English breezes, was laden with burning sand and only increased the heat, and when he passed through the wood, the scanty foliage of the gum-trees cast no refreshing shade. Mr. Hodson rode on, however, without any hesitation, only relieving his poor horse sometimes by leading it for a mile. He was bound for a hamlet he had never visited before. Its inhabitants bore a bad character, but he had heard of a sick man lying there, and would not delay finding him out.

When he reached the place, he tied up his horse, asked a child where the sick man lived, and went into the hut she pointed out. It was a wretched place, hardly keeping out wind and weather. An untidy woman was at the wash-tub, two or three children were quarrelling on the floor, while the poor invalid lay stretched on a bed at the further end of the room. He was their lodger, the woman said, had been hurt some weeks back by the fall of a tree, and though, as far as they could tell, no bones were broken, he seemed to have received some inward bruise and to be wasting away. After hearing this Mr. Hodson turned to the man, who certainly looked exceedingly ill as he lay quite still. His eyes were closed, yet there was none of the repose of sleep over his countenance. "Poor fellow," said the clergyman, "I would not disturb him now on any account, yet I should like to see him again, and hear how he is going on. I will call the next day I can come." After a few more words with the woman he turned back to look again at the invalid, whose face seemed familiar to him. The eyes were still shut, but tears were stealing through their lids and flowed down his pale cheeks. Mr. Hodson paused in surprise. He felt sure that the man was not asleep, yet not liking to force himself upon him he took his leave with a determination to come again soon.

He did so, and this time found the patient alone. Half rising from his bed, the poor man cried out eagerly. "Oh! Mr. Philip, have you really come to see me again, and will you ever forgive me?" Then noticing Mr. Hodson's surprised look he went on, "Don't you remember Dick Wild?" "To be sure I do now," said Mr. Hodson when he heard the name, "I thought I knew your face the other day when you shut your eyes and would not look at me. But what am I to forgive you for? I never knew of your doing me any harm." "The watch, sir, the watch!" cried poor Dick; then a violent fit of coughing came on, and it was a long time before he could finish his confession.

The history was briefly this. Dick's father had been gardener to old Mr. Hodson, but had been discharged for idleness and suspected dishonesty a few months before the loss of the watch, and only earned his bread by getting job work for himself and his son. Dick was a sharp, clever lad, but without fixed principle. He had often pilfered in a small way, and was lurking about Mr. Hodson's premises, in the hopes of picking up something, when he was attracted by the light in Mr. Philip's room. He watched the young gentleman lay down the watch and go to bed; the thought of how it might be stolen darted into his mind, and he quickly accomplished it. "I was very miserable when I had got the watch," said Dick; "I'd been very angry before about father's being turned away, but now I thought how kind you used to be to me when I was a boy working in your garden. However, I took the watch home to father; he was terrified at first, and said I should be hung, then as nobody came after me he began to praise me very much and said I should be the making of the family. He took it to London himself the next day and brought home five pounds for it, but he said I was not safe in the place, he must send me off to the country. So he got me into a seedman's shop at Guildford, and bought me some clothes out of the money; but I couldn't settle; I couldn't bear to be quiet—it frightened me to think, if only for a minute. So I turned very wild, spent everything in the skittle-ground and at plays, got into debt, and when the money had to be paid I broke open the till, and tried to make it appear that the shop was broken into from the outside. They found me out, however. I was tried and sentenced to seven years' transportation. A wretched time it was, but it passed. When I was free I came out here to work in the bush, but the tree fell on me soon, and here I've been lying ever since. Oh, Mr. Philip, I know I'm not long for this world! Will you forgive the poor creature that stole your watch?" "Indeed I do," said Mr. Hodson, "as freely as I hope to be forgiven." Then sitting down he talked to poor Dick about the heavenly Father he had offended, and the Saviour who came into the wilderness to seek His lost sheep. "You have strayed far from His fold, but He has come to seek you. He will lay you on His shoulders, and carry you back again. Will you not

give yourself to Him?" Dick Wild's heart had been much softened by lonely suffering, and God's good Spirit had been working in him as he lay on his sick bed. With many tears he confessed his past sins, and Mr. Hodson gave him assurance of God's free forgiveness on his hearty repentance. Only three more weeks of life was granted him, but they were well employed. On his last Sunday evening Mr. Hodson administered the Holy Communion to him, watched all night by his dying bed, and closed his eyes the following morning.

Slowly and full of thought did the clergyman ride home when all was over. "How wonderful are God's dealings!" he said. "Was I really sent to Australia to find out this wandering sheep and lead it home? His ways are indeed past finding out. Thanks be to Him for this mercy."

LET JESUS IN.

"BEHOLD, I stand at the door and knock." A little boy, hearing his father read that passage aloud, rushed away from the window where he was playing, and looking with wondering and eager eyes into his parent's face, said feelingly, "But father, did they let Him in?" Friends, you have heard the knock in some powerful sermon, some faithful warning, or when your cheeks ran down with tears and your very heart-strings were breaking as they lowered the little coffin with your dear little babe into that cold grave. But did you let Him in? Perhaps you say, "I fain would, but cannot." A minister once knocked at the door of a poor, aged, and lone woman, but he received no answer. Louder and louder still he knocked. At length, as he kept his ear close to the door, he heard a feeble voice saying, "Who is there?" "It is I, the minister," was the reply. "Ah, sir," said the woman, "I am lying very ill, and cannot rise to let you in; but if you would come in, just lift the latch and open the door yourself." The good man cheerfully complied, and went in to comfort the dying sufferer with the consolation of the Gospel. Now, my hearers, you say you cannot open the door yourselves. I well believe you. But there is a remedy for your helplessness; ask the Lord Jesus to open the door for Himself and come in. And He surely will. Believe that this? Some of you who once heard the knock of Christ, hear it not now. Well do I remember being startled and kept awake by the boom of the cannon when I went to the Crimea. After a time, however, I grew accustomed to it, and could sleep amidst the roar of the artillery. So it is with many. Jesus knocks at the door in vain. His knocking does not trouble you now as once it did. In vain He pleads with you, telling you that His locks are wet with the dews of night. He is out in the cold, dark, wet night; but you care not. He is threatening to depart and leave you to perish; but you are too drowsy to listen to or care. To-night He may go away forever. The last knock will be given. This may be the last one. What then? Oh! what then?

BEAUTIFUL WORDS TO A BRIDE.

The following beautiful letter was written several years ago by a gentleman to a bride on receiving her wedding cards. It is exquisitely fresh and original, and full of poetry. Though not intended for publication, it found its way into print, and we think it too much of a gem to be lost entirely.

"I am holding some pasteboard in my hands. Three stately pluckings from the bush of ceremony! I am gazing upon a card and a name—a name with which your gentle life began—a name with which your throbbing heart was lost. There was nothing strange about that card. The maiden sign still looks from it, calm and customary, as it looked on many a friendly visit, as it lies in many a formal basket. I am gazing too upon a card where the nearer parent tells the world she will be 'at home' one day, and that is nothing new. But there is another card, whose mingling there puts a fiery tongue into this speechless pasteboard, enameling fate on common-place. It tells us that feeling is maturing into destiny, and that these cards are but the pale heralds of a coming crisis, when a hand that has 'pressed friends' hands and plucked flowers, shall close down on him to whom she shall be friend and flower forever.

"I have sent you a few flowers to adorn the dying moments of your single life. They are the gentle types of a delicate and durable friendship. They spring up by our side when others have deserted it, and they will be found watching over our grave when those who should cherish have forgotten us; it seems meet to me that a past so calm and pure as yours should expire with a kindred sweetness about it. The flowers and music, kind friends and earnest words should consecrate the hour when a sentiment is passing into a sacrament.

"The three great stages of our being are the birth, the bridal, the burial. To the first we bring only

weakness; for the last we have only dust. But here at the altar, where life joins life, the pair come throbbing up to the holy man, whispering the deep promise that arms each other's heart to help on the life struggle of care and duty.

"The beautiful will be there, borrowing new beauty from the scene; the gay and frivolous, they and their flounces will come to gaze on all its scattered thoughts pant for; and age will totter up to hear the old words repeated that to their own lives have given the charm.

"Some will weep over it as if it were the tomb, and some will laugh over it as if it were a joke; but two must stand by it; for it is fate—not fun—this everlasting looking of their lives.

"—And now can you, who have queened it over so many bended forms, can you come down at last to the frugal diet of a single heart?

"Hitherto you have been a clock, giving your time to all the world. Now you are a watch, buried in one particular bosom, watching only his breast, marking only his hours, and ticking only to the beat of his heart—where time and feeling shall be in unison, until these lower ties are lost in that higher wedlock, where all hearts are united around that great central heart of all.

"Hoping that calm sunshine may hallow your clasped hands, I sink silently into a signature."

THE "GOOD OLD TIMES."

It is a blessed characteristic of memory that it holds fast so much more tenaciously the pleasant things of the past than the unpleasant. But sometimes even this is made the means of harm to ourselves and of injustice to the present. We remember the pleasant experiences of long ago, and compare them with the unpleasantness of the present; and straightway we bewail "the degeneracy of the times." Yet this whole process is unfair and the result unreal, fanciful. Compare the facts of the past, not our memories, with the facts of to-day, and instead of complaints and lamentations our hearts will overflow with gratitude to God for the progress His Spirit is making, and the great physical and spiritual improvement in the condition of man that He has brought about. Take for instance such facts as these: we know of three churches which a century ago openly held a licensed lottery; one of them to pay an immense debt resting upon it, another to build a parsonage and parochial school building, and the third to erect a more imposing steeple and otherwise improve its property. One of these lotteries sold tickets "for the cause of the Lord," for four years before it had raised the desired amount. And all this without any sense of impropriety on the part of members or ministers, or the community at large. Where in evangelical Christendom would such a sacrilege be sanctioned to-day? Among the expenses of building one of those churches, moreover, is found an item for scores of dollars for rum and barrels of beer for the workmen! This was in the "good old times" for which so many are sighing. Would they really wish us to return to them? Would it not be better, instead of decrying the evils of the present, to thank God for the good, and earnestly set to work to correct the evils? Nothing is accomplished by weeping over the days gone by. We live in the Now, thank God! And we work and hope for the still better To-be. It is our fault alone if its speedy coming be delayed.

How It Worked at the Murray House.—Among the cosiest hotels in Ontario, is the Murray House of St. Catharines, kept by Mr. Thomas Sculley, where the writer always stops when in that city. Upon a recent trip the writer was speaking with Mr. Scully concerning his old ailment, weak back, when Mr. S. observed: "I take sincere pleasure in recommending St. Jacobs Oil to all sufferers. I have found it a most excellent remedy myself, and I know of others who have used it with great success. I would not be without St. Jacobs Oil, nor do I believe any sensible man ought. I caught a cold about three years ago, which settled in my back and sorely afflicted me between my shoulders. The pain was almost unendurable at times, especially at impending changes of the weather; and at such times, I used to be incapacitated from attending to my business. I tried electric baths, salt baths, various strengthening plasters, and other such means, without success. Finally I tried St. Jacobs Oil, the Great German Remedy, and was cured at once and permanently. St. Jacobs Oil is a most excellent remedy, and I would not be without it at any price."