

"Stay," said the stranger, laying his hand on her shoulder, "you have been weeping, what is it that grieves you? Perhaps I could do something to relieve your sorrow. Nay; never fear to tell me, child," he added in a kindly tone, as the girl shrank from his enquiring gaze. "I am old enough to be your father almost; tell me at once what troubles you, and if I can do no good, be sure I will do no harm."

There was something in the stranger's look and manner that won Margaret's confidence, her nature was honest as well as artless, and in the excitement of the moment she told him plainly but briefly how the case stood.

"Twenty-five thalers," said the stranger, as if talking to himself; "could one do so much good with that sum?" and then in a louder tone he said, clapping Margaret on the back, "Don't be afraid my good girl, your father shall not lose his house, nor your lover go away if I can help it—but say no more about the matter, only run and fetch the blacksmith here to me."

Margaret did exactly as she was told, it was her habit, and in another minute Ludwig Estermann, with a much astonished look, made his bow to the stranger. "Your forge is cold and deserted, Mr. Blacksmith," said the latter, "and I want an important piece of work done; one of the wheels of my coach has broken down on this wretched road of yours," and he pointed to one of the massive carriages employed by the rich and noble of the day, which now appeared at the top of the steep and rugged road leading to Grunderwald, slowly lumbering on with its broken wheel, six tired horses and several men assisting in its motion. "Can you mend that wheel for me without delay? I am anxious to get on and would pay you handsomely," said the stranger.

"I can do anything in ironwork, sir," said Ludwig, "but I have no one to blow the bellows; Margaret is not accustomed to the like, and my apprentice is gone to the mass of Ste. Cunagunde in the church yonder, where all the inhabitants of the village are gathered; and if it were over, not a soul of them would do any kind of work to-day."

"Are they all such strict observers of saints' days in your village?" said the stranger, casting a keen glance on the unrepaid houses and ill-cultivated fields around him.

"All but myself and my daughter," said Ludwig. "We hold it no sin for poor people to follow the honest callings by which they must live, on any day of the week that God has given them, seeing it will do neither good nor honor to those holy men of old whom they call saints, to waste day after day in harvest or seed time, with mass in the morning and idleness all the hours after."

"You are right, my friend; but your neighbors don't agree with you it seems," and the stranger again glanced at the decaying village.

"They do not, and to tell the truth I have got into such bad repute with them about working on these saints' days, that all the custom has left my forge, and gone to another blacksmith from Innsbruck, though I am a better workman than he, or any of the town's folk, as your honor should see by the mending of that wheel, if I had somebody to blow the bellows."

"I will blow them myself," cried the stranger.

The astonished blacksmith made haste to stir up the smouldering embers of a charcoal fire that remained in his unfrequented forge, and heaped on fuel till a strong and brilliant flame was kindled. The men brought up the coach and its broken wheel, the stranger fell to the bellows, and, after a few directions as to the mode of blowing, worked at them with a will, while Estermann hammered away till the job was fairly done.

"Now," he said, looking proudly on the repair he had made, "your honor will find that wheel go as safely through the ruts and over the stones as the best of its three brothers."

"I hope it will," said the stranger; "but let the coach go on a little way to prove its safety, while you and I settle accounts. Take it to the top of the village street; I will meet you there," he added to his men, and then turning to the blacksmith said: "What have I to pay, my friend, for your good work, and also for learning to blow the bellows?"

"Well," said Ludwig, "that must be taken off the charge, as I had no one else to blow; but the job was a hard one. Would your honor think ten sols too much?"

The stranger turned a few steps aside, took out a richly-embroidered purse, counted

some coins out of it, which he folded in a piece of paper, put it into Ludwig's hand, with "Good morning, my friend," smiled kindly on Margaret, as she stood in the porch, and walked quickly away to his carriage.

The lengthy service of Ste. Cunagunde's day was finished, and the villagers came pouring out of church just as the coach stopped at the top of the street, and the stranger walked up to it. A coach and six fine horses, with servants in handsome livery, was a sight rarely seen in Grunderwald. The liberated congregation crowded round with wonder and curiosity in every face, which were rather increased when Ludwig Estermann, with a small packet in his hand, rushed up to the stranger, exclaiming:

"Your honor has made a mistake: instead of ten sols you have given me ten gold pieces, not one of which anybody in this village could change."

"You will get change for the ducats in the nearest town, my friend," said the stranger, smiling. "I made no mistake in the matter, but gave you the gold intentionally to pay off the debt on your house, that you and yours might henceforth live there without fear or trouble, as honest people should. Besides, I thought that the Kaiser of Germany ought to pay something extra for learning to blow a sound pair of forge bellows. Yes, my good people," he continued, as every mouth opened, and every eye stared wide with astonishment, "I am the Kaiser Joseph, making a quiet journey to see my Italian dominions, and I have found a happy opportunity this day to help out of his difficulties the only sensible man in Grunderwald, the one individual among you who was wise enough to mind the work that was useful to himself and to others, instead of wasting the day in superstitious rites and disgraceful idleness. Ludwig Estermann, you shall henceforth be the Kaiser's blacksmith in this part of the country; all the ironwork wanted by government officers shall be done in your forge; and I desire that all my loyal subjects in your neighborhood shall have their ironwork done there also, as but for your good sense and firmness in rejecting the foolish custom of your people, I must have been put to serious inconvenience and delay." So saying he waved his hand to Ludwig, and stepped into the coach, which was rapidly driven away.

The crowd remained for some minutes dumb with amazement, but soon every tongue was in motion, enquiring of the blacksmith, whom they followed home to his house, how it had happened, and all the particulars of the event which they had missed by attending Ste. Cunagunde's mass. Ludwig satisfied them, and for weeks after there was nothing else talked of in Grunderwald or the country round. In process of time the incident became one of those traditions related in friendly gatherings by the mountain firesides, but in its own generation it had some good and lasting effects. The first was that saints'-day keeping, so rebuked by imperial lips, went rapidly out of fashion. It is said Father Felix was the first to take advantage of the change in popular opinion, and surrounding priests and parishes gradually followed his example. The next was, that Ludwig Estermann became a man of mark and of substance. Had he not been appointed blacksmith to the Kaiser? Did not every villager immediately discover how inferior was the work of his rival from Innsbruck, till that unlucky craftsman had no alternative, but to pack up and return to his native town? The loyal subjects brought every scrap of work they wanted to the forge which had been graced by the presence of an emperor, and the bellows his imperial hands had blown became one of the sights of Grunderwald. The debt on Ludwig's house, much to the disappointment of Adam Finkler was fully paid, and Ernest did not go to seek work in the Austrian states, for he and Margaret were married with the cordial approbation of all the Mullers.

It is said that the effects of the numerous and strictly kept saints' days, which Joseph II. observed in his incognito journey through the Tyrol to Italy in 1769, occasioned the famous edict for the regulation of holydays, which he published some time after. It was not issued without much opposition by many of the clergy, and even by his mother the Empress Queen. Her scruples were finally overcome by her son's relating, as a proof of the necessity for such regulation, how himself had been obliged to blow the bellows for the blacksmith of Grunderwald.

## JOE'S PARTNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BABES IN THE BASKET," &c.

(National Temperance Society, New York.)

### CHAPTER V.—MR. BROWN.

Harry Barber's little family were gathered at the breakfast-table, on the morning after his escape. It was a scanty meal, just a warm loaf, and a pitcher of fresh water; but as the husband and wife looked at each other, there was a silence: the same deep feeling of gratitude was filling their hearts.

Harry folded his hands, and looked upward, saying:

"We thank God for His mercies; we thank Him for daily bread; may He help our souls. Amen."

The words were few and simple, but this was the first family prayer in that household, and as Kate broke the bread and gave it to the children, she felt as sure that the Saviour was lovingly present, as when on the mountain-side He blessed the loaves, and gave them with His own hands to the disciples.

All the Barbers were again cheerily at work in the fields together, when they heard the sound of the letting down of the bars by the turnpike.

The stranger quietly tied his horse to the fence, and then came toward the little party, who stood waiting to see what he could want.

"Mr. Barber, I believe?" he said looking respectfully at Harry. "I'm a stranger to you—my name is Brown."

Mr. Brown went on to give the little group a very flattering sketch of himself. It was a wonder that the virtuous and prosperous life he described had not given him a more pleasing appearance. He had been in the grocery line; always doing a good business wherever he was. He had a good name in the country—that was a comfort. He had never been a drinking man. He thought it a shame for any man to take more than was good for him. The way to avoid that was to have a respectable place, where a workman could take a dram and be never the worse for it. In short, he was going to have just such a place, where an honest, respectable man could step in and take a drink and never find bad company. He did not mean to have any noisy, low doings about his place. Why, if a man came to the shop drunk, he must be put out the door and sent about his business. That was the only way to manage the matter.

He had his license; his shop was open and promised to do well—so well, that he needed a clerk. He had heard of Mr. Barber; that he was a man to be trusted, one that was a favorite, with a pleasant way with him, and a civil word for everybody. He had heard, too, he did not mean to take anything more himself. That was a good thing. A drinking-man in a liquor-shop would never do. That was poor management. He couldn't offer Mr. Barber much. Six dollars a week was, to be sure, no great sum, but still it would help to make ends meet. Here he looked at the hard, tough soil, and then at the thin woman and eager-faced little boy.

"You wouldn't be needed before eight o'clock in the morning," he continued; "and then, as to going home at night, that would be as the custom should be. If you got belated any time, why, here's the wagon; and Billy he'd bring you out in less than no time, and you could drive him in in the morning. You see, I like to accommodate," and Mr. Brown drew up his little, fat figure, and tried to look amiable.

"It might do," said Harry, looking at Kate. "We can't go on in this way. Why, it will be winter before we get anything to speak of off the place."

This he said in an undertone, as he drew his wife away from the group.

"Don't do it, Harry," said Kate, earnestly. "Remember the prayer about keeping out of temptation."

"It seems to come to me a safe kind of a place just when I want to do well," he urged. "When I see you look so thin and pale, and think how I have brought you to it, I can't bear it. You must have nourishing food, and so must the children."

Here Harry stepped back toward Mr. Brown. That worthy man hastened to say:

"I mentioned six dollars a week, but there are little things that come in that I could throw in your way to get for a trifle. We often have a hat or a good coat or something of that kind that you could get for half its value—yes, almost for nothing, if you do well by me. Why, I have a coat now that would be just the thing for you for Sunday."

Now Kate loathed the thought of those garments, pawned, no doubt, for drink by some poor wretches who almost give their souls for one more cup of the poison that was destroying them.

"Harry," she said. "I must speak out plainly." She saw he was yielding, and did not mean to give her another private hearing.

"Harry, I would rather see you in rags than in clothes some poor drunken creature has sold for drink. Touch not, taste not, handle not is the only plan for you. Keep away from the very smell of drink. Don't risk your soul by standing selling poison to men who are crazy for it, to send them beside themselves, to make some poor wife miserable. I hate the very name of a liquor-shop. I wish they were all shut, so that poor, weak men and women might have a chance to keep their good resolutions. Yes, Mr. Brown, my husband has a pleasant way with him, but he won't use it to lead other men into the pit he means to keep out of himself."

Kate paused from the very excess of feeling.

"Very well talked, ma'am," said Mr. Brown coolly. "That does for you women, but a man who feels the responsibility of providing for a family, feels differently. In these times he can't choose his business. When an opening comes he must take it. I understand just how it is with you, ma'am. I take no offence, but you needn't be so wrought up. Your husband here can be just as temperate a man in my shop as out here, where there's nothing to drink, and maybe not so much to eat, either."

It was plain that Harry was being influenced—what could the poor wife do?

"Yes," continued Brown, seeing he was gaining ground. "Yes, and there'd often be work for the boy too, taking home a trifle for a customer, an errand here or there. Would you like to turn an honest penny, my boy?"

Kate put her arm around Joe, as if Mr. Brown was going to carry him off bodily. She need not have feared for the giant; he had already a mind of his own.

Joe drew himself up in his fiercest way and said, "That's not the work for me, Mr. Brown; I hate the very sight of liquor. Please, father," he urged boldly, "I just want to say one thing to you; don't do anything till you see the young gentleman—the one who was here last night; I know he has got something in his head for us. Just wait a day or two and you'll find out about it."

"Nonsense!" said the father hastily. "Nonsense! your young gentleman who went off this morning without so much as saying thank you for his supper and lodging, won't be likely to give us six dollars a week out of friendship!"

"Waiting won't do," said Mr. Brown; "I must have my answer this morning; I have another man in my eye: a single man with no wife to keep him in leading-strings."

"Harry," said Kate solemnly, "remember the last great day! How would you like then to see a picture of all the men you had tempted to drink, coming up to look you in the face, and reproach you for what you'd brought them to? I'd rather starve. I'd rather work my hands to the bone, than see you going right into temptation, and being a decoy to wile other men down to ruin. Bid Mr. Brown good-morning, and tell him we have a heavenly Father, who will never suffer us to lack our daily bread while we are trying to serve Him."

"Good-morning, Mr. Brown; I will not take the place," said Harry firmly. "Get out of the business yourself, sir, as soon as you can; you will not like the look of it when this world is over. Thank God, Kate, you have saved me. Yes, we'll try and stand by the right, wife, and God will help us! Good-bye, Mr. Brown; we've done with drink in this house; a crust and honest work is better for us, with God's blessing on our little home!"

Mr. Brown saw that Harry was in earnest now, and had really made a decision.

The liquor seller did not look very amiable as he untied his horse, and drove rapidly over the rough road without once looking behind him.

(To be Continued.)

ANOTHER trophy for rum. The cause of Gen. Burrows' defeat in Afghanistan, heretofore a mystery, is now ascribed to the drunkenness of his soldiers, who helped themselves to the liquor in broken rum-casks.