

bearing the weight of three such men as you in safety?"

"Not if there was one weak link in it, sir, that I felt sure would not bear my weight: as well all be faulty as one, every bit sir, for any safety there would be in the chain."

"Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do, sir."

"Well, being sure of it, you may as well set the chain to rights. And now, to change the subject, we will go back to this hitch of yours, my friends, if you please."

The carpenter smiled; the shoemaker rubbed his hands; the tailor put his into his pockets; the blacksmith rubbed his forehead; and then he said, in a subdued tone, "You have beat me, sir. I see what you mean; and looking at it in the light you put it in, there's not any hitch, sir, that I can see."

"Ah, I fancied you would say so," replied Mr. Gresham, kindly; "and I think you can understand how it must be that though we may keep the whole law of God—the good and perfect law—seventeen hundred and ninety-nine times, or seventeen million times, and fail once, we cannot depend on our uniform obedience for eternal safety; but, if we are saved, it must be by grace alone, as much as though every link in the chain of obedience were rotten throughout."

"I see it, sir; I see it now," said the blacksmith.

"And yet," said Mr. Gresham, "the two cases do not agree in all points, as generally happens when people try to illustrate great truths in figurative language. Do you see where the difference is, either of you?"

"I think I do partly, sir; but I would rather you should say where it is," said the carpenter.

"Well, our friend Parsons can repair the defect in my well-chain, and make it as good as ever; but one single transgression of the Divine law cannot be repaired. The link is broken, and the poor soul depending on that faithless chain, is already falling—falling."

"I see, sir," said the blacksmith, almost with a shudder as the idea presented itself to his mind of a man falling down a well. He had been down a well, and could realize the horror of such a situation.

"But then the almighty arm of Divine mercy plunges down, reaches to the lowest depths of human misery and hopelessness. But perhaps you would not lay hold on that gracious hand, my friend, seeing that only one link had broken, while all the rest were sound?"

"Wouldn't I, sir? wouldn't I grip it? Yes, sir; and you have beat me out and out," said

the honest, hearty blacksmith—"and I see now that salvation must be of grace."

"And 'not of works, lest any man should boast," added Mr. Gresham; and then the little group thoughtfully dispersed.—*Tract Magazine.*

A SCRAP FROM GOUGH.

I was lecturing in a small town once, and when the lecture was over, many persons came up to sign the pledge. A number of young ladies were standing by, and were looking at the signers with interest. Directly some of them came to me, 'Mr. Gough, go out there at the door and get Joe to sign the pledge.' 'Why, I don't know Joe.' 'Well, he is standing out by the door.' Out I went, and standing there was a poor fellow, with an old tattered cap on his head, torn shirt, dirty clothes, old boots, and a woe-begone look. Says I to myself this must be Joe, 'How do you do Joe?' said I. 'How do you do, sir.' 'Joe I want you to sign the pledge.' 'What for?' 'Why, Joe, those ladies there sent me after you.' 'What, who? why I didn't think that I had a friend in the world.' 'Come on, Joe, come on,' said I. He stopped, and said, 'Look here, some fellows told me to bring a bottle of liquor in the meeting to-night, and get up and say, here's to your health! They said they would give fifty cents if I did. Them's 'em all long the gallery up there; there they are. I ain't going to do it.' He went to the door, and we heard him smash the bottle on the steps. He came in and went up to the table and commenced to write his name, but he could not do it; so he braced himself and caught hold of his arm, but he could not. Says he, 'Look here, that's my mark.'

Then the ladies came up and shook hands with him, but he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and now and then he wiped a tear away. 'Stick to it, Joe,' says one. 'All right, Joe, all right.'

Some three years after that I was in the same place, and while going along the street I saw a gentleman coming along dressed in a good suit—nice black hat, boots cleaned, and a nice shirt collar, with a lady on his arm. I knew it was Joe. Says I, 'You stuck to it, didn't you?' 'Yes sir, I stick to that pledge, and the girls have stuck to me ever since.'