

How John Gregg Lost His Place.

(Friendly Greetings.)

'John's lost his place, father,' said Mrs. Gregg to her husband, as they sat together by the fire. Their youngest child had just finished her lessons and had gone up to bed. It was at this hour of the evening that they generally managed to have a few minutes' chat together, before the two elder sons came in from their evening class or walk.

Gregg had been wondering what made his wife so silent. She was generally bright enough while he was eating his supper.

And now he did not quite understand why she should be looking so sad and anxious. He and their other son James were in receipt of good wages, and working for the

ed that no word had been exchanged by the brothers about the lost place.

John had had a good master. He had served an apprenticeship of seven years, and was now in receipt of a man's full wage. After having paid his mother all she would take for boarding and lodging her son, he had a fair sum left over, which he was carefully putting by in the hope of some day forming a little home of his own.

Annie, he knew, was doing the same from her comfortable situation in London.

Somehow or other, the week before, John's master had mislaid five pounds, just as he was going to pay it away. Diligent search had been made for the money, but, strangely enough, it had not yet turned up.

John's was one of those peculiarly sensitive natures which sometimes almost seem to attract suspicion to themselves. His

But John remained silent.

'If you would but confess, my boy, I could look over a great deal for your father's sake,' said his master the evening he paid him off.

The poor fellow was almost tempted to wish that he had something to confess; and so the day ended.

He knew his master would not mention the matter against him, as his guilt had not been proved, and thus his family need never know why he had been turned off. Not even his fellow workmen knew certainly the reason that John was no longer among them. He might have left of his own accord for aught they knew.

God knew the whole—that was a relief to the young man, and in that fact he rested during those midnight hours.

Before he appeared at the breakfast table the next morning, his burden had been so definitely cast upon the Lord that the calm brightness of the son's face lightened the mother's heart.

He was down as early that morning as though he had had work to go to, and bravely he set off to make enquiries for some during that and several other mornings. Bravely each afternoon he awaited results, whilst humbly doing odd jobs at home, which is more than all young men will trouble themselves to do.

Bravely, when Saturday came round, did he insist upon paying his mother the same sum as usual. He had not the heart to add those two sovereigns to the rest of his savings in the bank.

When the Sabbath came round, John did wonder a little why the Lord had allowed him thus far to be unsuccessful in the search for work. He ceased to wonder, however, when, early Monday morning, a message came from his old master, asking him to step down.

'Gregg,' said he, when the young man stood again in his office, 'Mrs. Hobbs and I were walking round the garden, as we generally do on Sunday afternoon, when her eye fell on this,—and he pointed to a little heap of five sovereigns. I must have carelessly laid them down last Tuesday, when I stopped a moment to tie up that rose-bush. It will be a lesson to me in future.'

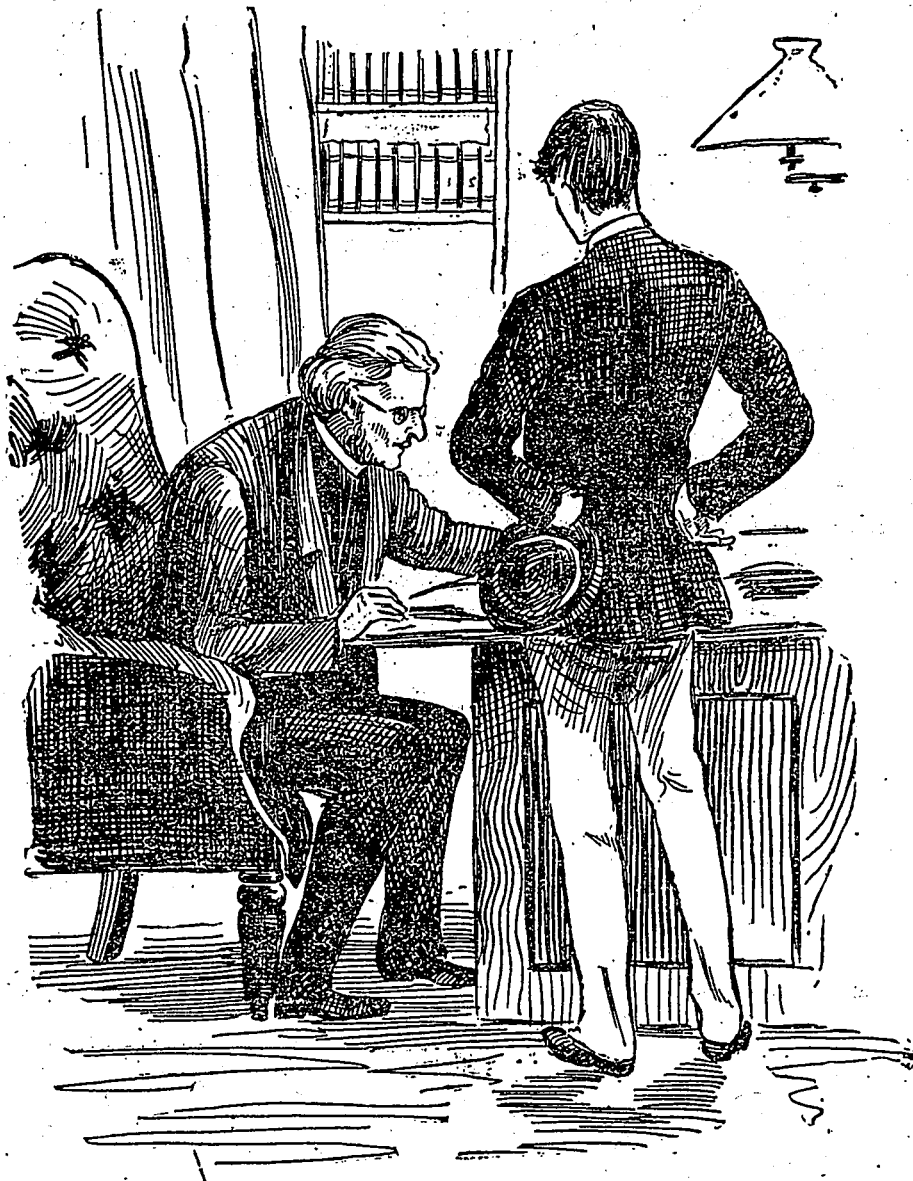
Poor John looked as constrained and as uncomfortable as though his guilt were now fully proved.

'I want another man this week, John—at least, I want you, if you'll come back—and I wish your weekly thirty shillings to become two pounds from this time.'

John demurred at this, though words did not come any more readily than usual to him. But his master answered the difficulty by the remark.

'You know very well that I always engage men on my own terms, and I'm not going to make you an exception. Look up straight to God, my boy, then I believe that your face will gain something that will prevent suspicion falling so easily on you again. He is Sun and Shield, remember. "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." I'm glad your righteousness is clear again, John.'

There is a great profit in the cigarette business, and largely for this reason it is carried on in its present enormous proportions. The American Tobacco Trust claims that in one year it made, clear profit, four million dollars from the sale of cigarettes alone.



JOHN AND HIS EMPLOYER.

same master. Should John happen to be a few weeks out of work—well, he had laid by something, and it meant nothing very serious.

So he said, 'Well, my dear, and do you know why his master has sent him off? Is trade slack?'

'No; John; that's just the trouble. I cannot make it out. Mr. Hobbs took on two hands last week, I heard.'

'What does John say about it himself?' inquired the father.

Just then the two brothers entered the room, and instead of chatting with his parents as usual, John bade them a hasty 'Good night,' and went straight upstairs.

James lingered a little in silence, then casually remarked that John seemed out of sorts that evening. The mother soon guess-

conscience was clear enough, but he looked so uncomfortable and evidently felt so constrained that, under the circumstances, his very appearance had gone against him. Then as soon as suspicion was really aroused, his discomfort and constraint increased tenfold, of course. Next, as though to prove his guilt, just as his master was passing him, John pulled out his handkerchief, and with it two bright sovereigns rolled to the ground.

John did not attempt to explain that they had been fairly earned, and that he had been hoping to add them to his savings-bank account that very day.

Had he attempted to explain, his master might very likely have believed him, for it was difficult to believe that a member of the Gregg family had been actually dishonest.