

GRANDFATHER ROGER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JACK THE CONQUEROR."

As for old Roger, he resolved to go back to London and see whether he could not get something to do in the service of his former employers. Like many active-minded old men, he could not bring himself to believe that he was past work, and he had a sort of vague hope that he might possibly be able to earn enough to enable him one day to have his darling with him again.

The neighbors shook their heads. They were better aware of how far the infirmities of age had gained on him than he was himself. Roger's mind, however, was made up. The workhouse was before him if he remained at Motfield, and he knew how good a character he had borne with his employers in the City. Thither he would go and try his fortunes, even at this late hour of the day.

The excursion train we have named enabled him to get to town cheaper than he could otherwise have done, so he fixed the day for his journey accordingly; and with almost breaking hearts he and Lily bade adieu to each other, as we have seen.

It was a great change to Lily to go from her pleasant cottage home to the gloomy town-like house occupied by Miss Hunt, who was a dressmaker of some importance in her way. The child hated having to sit hour after hour, learning to run seams and hem flounces. Miss Hunt had little consideration for her tender years, but expected her to be occupied for as long a time as the grown-up girls. She was very strict, and scolded without mercy if her work was not done well. But the greatest trial of her life was the separation from her beloved grandfather. She felt very anxious about him; she knew he went to seek a living for himself, and Lily was much older than her age in many ways. Often while running together the endless seams, which fell to her lot because she had learned to do them neatly, her little head was wondering what her grandfather was about, and whether he would ever be able to send for her to live with him. When some time had passed by

and she heard nothing of him, except from a few lines he wrote soon after he arrived in town, she grew restless and unhappy, and longed to set off to London to look after him.

At last a letter arrived, telling her he had not been successful in getting any regular employment since he came to London, and that he was not very well. He had applied at his old firm in the City, but his former master was dead and his son away on the Continent. The partner, who remembered him, had given him a recommendation to a house

cheerful old grandfather, that made Lily very unhappy as she read it. A piece of folded paper had fallen out of the envelope as she opened it, as if pushed in after it was sealed. She examined it, and found a few lines written in a very scrawled sort of hand: "Roger Prynne is not well. Things are going hard with him. You had best come and see after him.

"Signed, MARTHA DREWET."

"P. S. — He don't want you to know how bad he's been."

Poor Lily! she felt almost beside herself. Never till that

for his ticket. Yet go she must, even if she walked all the way.

She knew that Miss Hunt could easily pay her journey if she chose, and with a beating heart she went to her parlor, where she was sitting making out bills for her customers.

She lived in great fear of Miss Hunt, but her anxiety for her grandfather made her bold now, and she showed her the letter, and Martha Drewet's slip of paper. But they aroused no apparent sympathy in a mind which was filled with thoughts of a very different kind. She was only impatient at being interrupted whilst adding up her accounts.

"Your grandfather is getting an old man," she said; "you must expect him to grow feeble, and not be able to do as he has done. It's a good thing he hasn't got you on his hands to keep as well as himself."

"But he is not well," said Lily, with a quivering lip.

"If he isn't you can't help it," was the unfeeling answer; "so there is no use in fretting."

"But I want to go to him," said the little girl. "I know he wants me. Oh, Miss Hunt, do please pay my journey, and let me go and see him."

The dressmaker opened her eyes wide with astonishment.

"Are you mad, child!" she exclaimed; "do you think I've nothing better to do with my money than to give it to you to go off on such a silly errand as that! Go to your work, and don't be idling any more time. Your grandfather will get well soon, I daresay."

And Miss Hunt turned to her bills with a look that, even more than her words, told Lily she need not stay there any longer.

The child went away, but the burning tears fell as she crossed the passage to go to the workroom.

A lady was there looking at a dress, about which she was giving some orders to the forewoman. She noticed Lily's face of distress, and kindly expressed a hope that she was not ill. Lily shook her head, and her tears came faster at the voice of sympathy. At that moment Miss Hunt entered, and rather



which had employed him with temporary work during the illness of one of the clerks; but that was over now, and there was a hard struggle before him. He was lodging with a kind woman in the City, named Martha Drewet, whom he had known in former days; but he said he missed his little Lily sadly, and that sometimes he feared he might never see her again. "Anyhow," he added, "he prayed often that God would bless her, and bring them together one day in heaven, if not on earth."

There was a tone of sadness in this letter, so unlike her dear,

moment had she known how she loved the dear old man, whose side she had scarcely left all her life till she came to Stanmoor. She must go to him, for she felt sure he was ill and needed her, and Martha Drewet, whoever she was, said she ought to go. Oh, how cruel, how almost wicked it seemed not to fly to him instantly!

But then came the remembrance of her entire helplessness; London was many miles away; she had very little money of her own—only five shillings and a few pence. It had cost her grandfather double that sum