

you had another Friend, if you had only known Him. A friend who once was a little Child, homeless and lonely."

"The Child you told them about in big room, what came from a beautiful great City? They said as how this ere wor a great beautiful City, but it ain't been beautiful to me: leastways, I ain't seen nothing beautiful."

Raymond looked at him fairly bewildered, and he began to wonder if the boy was in the full possession of his senses.

"When did I tell anybody about the City?" he asked, looking fixedly at him.

"Right away down in the country, where the birds was; when you told the boy that God took care on 'em, even the sparrows. I used to watch 'em as I come along, and I minded me what you said; and they'd sing to me, as I give them the crumbs o' bread."

"What is your name, and what place in the country did you come from?" asked Raymond, getting more interested in him, but still greatly puzzled at his statements.

"They used to call me Ragged Rover down there, near Copswood; but I ain't called nothing now, though I'm a deal raggeder," he added, with a doleful glance at his jacket.

"Copswood! you lived near Copswood?" exclaimed Raymond; "and you heard me speak at the Orphanage?" he added, a sudden thought rushing through his mind. "And who did you know down there?"

"Didn't know nobody much, 'cept Maister Greeves, as I worked for, and the boys as took the nest. Father, he died afore I come to Copswood, and I ain't got no mother."

"Poor boy, then you are quite alone?" exclaimed Raymond, meditatively. "And you worked for Mr. Greeves, you say? Then I can learn all I may want to know from him," thought the young clergyman, beginning to put into execution the idea he had formed, of taking the boy home with him, and sending him to his sister's Orphanage.

"Here, this way, my lad," he said, as they reached the station. "What will you do if I take you back to Copswood with me to-night?"

"Copswood to-night, with ye?" repeated Rover, in utter amazement. "Does yer honour mean it?" he asked, opening his eyes in inexpressible surprise.

"Certainly I do, if you will pay attention to what I say. Come along, and keep close to me, and do exactly what I tell you."

He was a sorry-looking object, as Raymond was well aware, and painfully conscious of; and for this reason he had stooped to the indignity, as he considered it, of travelling third-class, that he might be the less open to remark. But there were so many people about, and all were so engrossed with their own concerns, that he was but little noticed, and the boy himself was so bewildered at the novelty of his position, and so confused with the noise of the train, that he was very quiet. But he presently asked, as if from a sudden recollection, whether they were all going to the beautiful City, and if they would see the Holy Child?

"Alas! no; for many of those travellers thought nothing at all about the City, or even remembered Him Who once came down from it, and who will some day come from it again. It was only the few who looked up into the clear, bright sky, where the quiet stars were shining, and in spirit rejoiced, as did the holy men of old, who were guided by the Christmas Star, with exceeding great joy."

"It is not every one, Rover," answered Mr. Desmond, "who can see that Holy Child; only those who want to love Him, and who try to do good. And even then we can't see Him, as you can see me, but only by faith. You don't know what that means yet, I am

afraid, but you will know more I hope, before another Christmas."

"Like what they had down at Copswood, all bright and shining, with toys and books?"

"That was a Christmas-tree. But have you never heard the meaning of Christmas Day? Never head of the Lord Jesus Christ?" asked Raymond, inexpressibly shocked at his ignorance, and grived that one in a Christian land should have been so long neglected.

Rover slowly shook his head.

"Haven't you ever been to Sunday-school?" asked Raymond, "and heard about God's love for us—for all of us?"

"Father and me we didn't stay long enough anywheres, but I heard what you said about Him caring for the birds."

"Then if He cares for them, don't you think He cares much more for you? Has no one ever told you that it was Jesus Christ the Son of God, Who was born as a little Child, for you and me, because He loved us? and that that is what Christmas means?"

"For me and you?" asked Rover; "for both on us? He don't need to give the same to me as He do to you. There ain't no one as cares for me."

"Indeed but there is, my poor Rover," replied Mr. Desmond, earnestly; "you have the same kind Friend that I have, and I am taking you with me now, that I may teach you to know and love Him."

"You's my friend," said Rover, shyly shifting his eyes to his face.

Raymond gave him akin smile in reply, and after that he thought it best to be silent, and leave the first few words of simple teaching to work by a Power unseen.

—The Penny Post.

AT A LOVED ONE'S GRAVE.

We mourn our loved ones, visit oft the spot
Where in firm faith that they will rise again,
We lay the dear forms which we cherished so,
And place the sacred cross, their hope in life, in
death their trust,

'Mid flowers they loved, when here. But what endeared them to us,
Made them so precious, lies not beneath the green mound

Where we kneel in prayer for resignation to God's will

In taking what we fondly used to call our own;
But which He only lent us for a while, to cheer life's journey.

The casket is but there, the precious gem has left it

To reunite, when the Blest Saviour summons each to each.

Oh, if it were not for the hope assured, that we should meet

And know our loved ones in a better world—
We ill could bear the heart-felt loneliness; when they have left us

It must be endured to know the sorrow—
'Tis strangely sad how soon those dear in life

Are oft it seems forgotten: the place that knew them
Here, knows them no more, and, ere while,

The blank is scarcely noticed—save by some lone one,

Who oft in loving memory recalls each feature, look,

The very tone of voice, which never can be heard again on earth.

Yes, we love our dear ones, but 'tis selfish love;
For when they have, at God's bidding, laid their weapons down,

Their warfare ended, and the victory won,
We wish them on life's battle-field again; but if

At earnest prayer they could return, they would not leave the blissful, holy calm where there is no more sea.

The haven reached, the anchor safely cast—
Far rather would they watch to welcome us

Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Let us poor voyagers still amid the waves, so hard to buffet with,

Brace every nerve to gain the promised shore,
Which we can never reach without The Pilot,

Who alone can steer our frail bark thro' the breakers, which else

Would wreck us—If He is at the helm the Port is sure;

The winds are hushed, the wearied waters rest Obedient at His bidding—"Peace, be still."

S. F.

A WORD ABOUT CHRISTMAS.

When what was designed to be a pleasure becomes a burden, it is time to stop and examine it carefully and see if it is the thing itself which has grown to be such a weight, or whether it is simply an awkward manner of carrying it. Certainly there must be something wrong in any celebration of Christmas which results in serious fatigue of mind and body. During the first three months of the year, nothing is more commonly given as a reason for ill-health than an overstrain during the holidays. "She got so worn out at Christmas," or "She worked too hard in finishing her Christmas presents," or "The week before Christmas she was tired out with shopping," are excuses which appear as surely as January and February come. The question must occur sometimes to every one, whether all this worry and wear of heart and hand and brain are really worth while. Is there not some better way of celebrating this day of days than for women to wear themselves out in making or buying pretty trifles for people who already have more than they can find room for? Setting aside all effort of eyes and fingers, the mental strain is intense. Merely to devise presents for a dozen or more people, which must be appropriate and acceptable, and which they do not already possess, and which no one else is likely to hit upon, is enough to wear upon the strongest brain; and when one's means are not unlimited, and the question of economy must come in, the matter is still more complicated. The agony of indecision, the weighing of rival merits in this and that, the distress when the article which is finally decided upon does not seem as fascinating as one had hoped, the endless round of shopping, the packing to send to distant friends, the frantic effort to finish at the last moment something which ought to have been done long ago, result in a relapse when all is over into a complete weariness of mind and body which unfits one for either giving or receiving pleasure. Now, when all this is looked at soberly, does it pay? It is a remarkable fact that, although Christmas has been kept on the twenty-fifth day of December for more than a thousand years, its arrival has been as unexpected as if it had been appointed by the President. No one is ready for it, although last year every one resolved to be so, and about the middle of December there begins a rush and hurry which is really more wearing than a May moving.

It seems to be a part of the fierce activity of our time and country that even our pleasures must be enjoyed at high pressure. While it is almost impossible, in matters of business, to act upon the kindly suggestions of intelligent critics that we should take things more leisurely, surely, in matters of enjoyment, we might make an effort to be less overworked. Cannot the keeping of Christmas, for example, be made to consist in other things than gifts? Let the giving be for the children and those to whom our gifts are real necessities. As a people we are very negligent in the matter of keeping birthdays. If these festivals were made more of in the family, especially among the elder members, we should not find that we were losing the blessedness of giving and the happiness of receiving, even if we did omit presents at Christmas time. In many large families a mutual understanding that the Christmas gifts were all to be for the children would be an immense relief, although, perhaps, no one would be quite willing to acknowledge it. Sometimes a large circle of brothers and sisters can unite in a gift, in that way making it possible to give something of more value, and at the same time to lessen the difficult task of selection.

Above all things, if you give presents, be more anxious to give something which "supplies a want" than to send some pretty trifle which can only prove in the end an additional care. A little forethought and friendly putting of yourself in another's place will make this possible. In the great world of books something can be found to suit every taste. Flowers are always a graceful gift, and can never become burdensome by lasting after one has grown tired of them. There are numberless other things which can be procured without a wear and tear of mind and body which make the recipient feel as David did of the water from the well of Bethlehem, that what cost so much was too valuable to be accepted.

Susan Anna Brown, in The Century.

Humility is to make a right estimate of one's self. It is no humility for a man to think less of himself than he ought, though it might rather puzzle him to do that.—Spurgeon.