

Goodwin of his sister, the evening before he left.

"No," she said, quickly, "I should think not, and pray do not mention the subject to the boy; his heart is there still, he seems to feel he must be nearer to his mother there. I suppose you have not found out any more of his parentage?"

"No, I wish I could; but his old granny will not admit me to the house at all now."

Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin had only been home again about three weeks, when one morning a messenger came to their house, asking Mr. Goodwin to go round at once to "The Battlefield," as Mrs. Jackson was dying. He went, and found the old woman lying in a filthy bed, the room smelling strongly of drink, and a glass and bottle standing on a chair within reach of her hand.

"I didn't send for you to come and talk to me," she said, speaking with difficulty; "I'm a-goin' to talk to you, if yer'll listen. It's about that lad, Greg; he ain't my grandchild." And she paused for breath. "I expect I'm took for death," she went on, "an' it'll ease my conscience to tell yer. Will yer reach me that book?" and she pointed to a book on the top of a chest of drawers in a corner. It was covered with dust, but Mr. Goodwin saw it was a Bible.

"Open it," said the old woman, shortly; "look at the beginning."

Mr. Goodwin did so, and read on the title-page: "To Patience and Gregory Dowcett, with their mother's love and blessing, and be sure you both meet me in heaven."

"How did you come by this?" he asked.

"Well, I'm a-goin' to tell yer. It's ten years ago since I wor goin' along the street one night, and I saw a young woman, very respectable and decent she looked, but very ill. She had a baby in her arms, and another little one running by her side. She spoke to me. 'Can you tell me where I can get a night's lodging?' she said; 'I'm a stranger in London.'

"No, I can't," I said, for 'twornt my business to look after strangers. 'I've got some money—I could pay for it,' she says. So I thought I'd make something out of her. 'All right,' I says; 'I'll take yer to a lodgin, and I brought her here. She didn't seem to like my room over well, but she wor very ill, and she laid down in the corner in a faint. She said she had just heard her husband had been drowned, and she had come up from the country to be sure, and to-morrow she'd go back. But, bless ye, she wor too ill.'

Again Mrs. Jackson paused, and reaching out her hand for the glass, drank it off at a draught.

"That won't do you any good, Mrs. Jackson," said Mr. Goodwin. "My wife shall send you round some beef-tea."

"I don't want none," she said, fiercely; "gin's better than all the beef-tea that was ever made. Do yer want to hear any more?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Goodwin.

"Well, that baby wor Greg. His mother died afore the week wor out."

"Did you find out nothing more about her family?"

"No; how could I? 'twornt no business of mine."

"What became of the little girl, Greg's sister?"

"The day after Mrs. Dowcett died, my sister says, 'Aye, Moll, you've done it now; yer thought to get money, and yer've got two bairns on yer hands!' Mrs. Lister wor there. She were always soft over children: she says, 'I'll take the little girl, she shan't go to the workhouse, and I wor glad enough to let her go. There wor only three pounds in the poor body's purse; I had that, and her clothes, that wor all.'

"And you kept Greg?"

"Yes, I don't know why; he's been more bother than he's worth. You can send him that Bible if you've a mind."

Mr. Goodwin tried to get all the information he could out of her, but the old woman seemed determined not to say anything more; she turned away from him and would not speak. Mr. Goodwin read a few verses and spoke of the Saviour, and saying she had given him information for which he was much obliged, and he should look in again soon, he left the house. He went home, and after telling his wife about it, they decided that they ought to write to the Thompsons and let them know of this, as they had so taken the child to their hearts.

"And what about the poor woman?" asked Mrs. Goodwin.

"We will go together and see her by-and-by; perhaps she will open to you."

But when they went the door was locked, and though they knocked and waited, they could gain no admittance.

Next day, to their astonishment Mr. Thompson walked in.

"Your letter startled me considerably," he said; "but first of all I must tell you a story you never heard. I had a sister younger than myself, and about fifteen years ago, just before my own marriage, she ran away with a young sailor named James Dowcett."

Mr. Goodwin started. "Then Greg is your own nephew?"

"I fancy so. Dowcett had been about the village for some time; he had not a relation in the world, and he gave all his heart's love to my sister Patience, and she loved him devotedly in return. But my father would not hear of it; he said his only girl should not marry a sailor—so they ran away. And father was so angry he would never hear their names mentioned again. By-and-by I married, and moved away to

where we live now, and I never heard any more of my sister; but the name 'Patience Dowcett' seems to settle the matter beyond dispute. Will you let me see the Bible?"

Mr. Goodwin handed it to his brother-in-law, who exclaimed the moment he saw it, "Why that was my mother's Bible!" and turning to the first chapter of Genesis, he saw on the margin, written in a fine small writing, "Patience Thompson." "We often wondered why mother should write her name there instead of on the blank page at the beginning of the book; and she said that that page might easily be torn out, but this would not, and she should like her children always to know it was their mother's Bible. She must have given it to my sister, and no doubt she read it and learnt to trust in Christ."

There was silence a little while, and then Mr. Goodwin said, "How wonderful God's ways are! How remarkable the chain of events—your wishing to adopt a child, our knowing that poor needy one, and your great love for him—and now to find he is really your own!"

"Yes, it is remarkable. Now we must find the girl, if she is still living. Why, we shall be quite rich with two children! But first of all, I must see that old woman and find out all I can. Had we not better go at once?"

So Mr. Goodwin and his brother-in-law made their way to "The Battlefield."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ANXIOUS SEARCHING.

Mr. Goodwin tapped at the door, which was answered by a woman whom he recognized as a next-door neighbor.

"Can we see Mrs. Jackson?" he asked; "how is she now?"

"You can see her if yer've a mind to; she died about two hours since."

"Died! so soon! I had no idea she was so near her end."

"Yes, she was took quite sudden at last."

"I am very sorry," said Mr. Thompson; "I particularly wanted to see her. Have you known her long?"

"Oh yes, I've lived agen her ever since she lived in this court."

"Then perhaps you can remember a sick woman coming here with two children."

"What, Greg's mother? Oh yes, I remember her well enough, though I only saw her twice. She was in a fine way when she felt herself dying, and knew she'd have to leave the childer with old Moll; but just before she died she said, 'My trouble's gone. God will take care of my little ones; I will leave them to Him.'"

"Poor thing!" said Mr. Thompson; "I wish I could have seen her again. Was Greg always deformed from a baby?"

"Oh no, he wor as fine a babby as ever you saw—a deal too big and hearty for his poor mother to nurse and tend to. But old Moll didn't half feed him, and she used to sit him up in a corner and leave him by hisself long afore he could walk. He's been knocked about ever since his mother died; it's a wonder he ever lived at all; it would ha' been a mercy if he'd been took too."

"How can you talk like that?" said Mr. Thompson, indignantly; "who can tell what a blessing he may be to the world yet? Did you ever do anything to comfort the lonely child?"

"Not I," said the woman, sullenly; "I'd enough to do without looking after him."

"Did you know the Mrs. Lister who took the little girl?"

"Yes, course I did. Didn't she live in Eagle Court? She wor real soft over children."

"It was a good thing the poor little girl fell into such hands. Where is Eagle Court, and does Mrs. Lister live there now?"

"I never see her now. I don't know where she lives, I'm sure."

"Eagle Court is not far off," said Mr. Goodwin, "but there is no Mrs. Lister there now; however, we made some inquiries."

After visiting many houses and asking many questions, the only thing they could find out was that a Mrs. Lister, a hard-working woman, with a young girl once lived in that court. But four or five years before, the poor woman had met with an accident, and was taken off to the hospital; the child stayed on in the same room by herself for awhile, but after a few weeks the landlord had seized the goods for payment, and had turned the child out-of-doors. What became of her, nobody knew.

"We seem to have lost the clue," said Mr. Thompson, as he and his brother-in-law retraced their steps. "I must find the girl, but the question is, how? I cannot stay away from home longer now, I must return by this evening's train; but if you could suggest any plan for finding her, I would come up again."

"The only thing I can think of is to find out, if possible, which hospital Mrs. Lister went to, and try and trace her from there. I will do what I can, and will let you know."

The next morning Mr. Thompson arrived at home, and told his wife all his news. She was delighted to learn that Greg was really their own nephew, and that she never need fear his being taken from them, as they were his nearest relatives: and she was as anxious as her husband to find the little lost niece.

"Shall we go and tell Greg at once?" asked Mr. Thompson.

"To be sure!" exclaimed his wife, "how delighted the child will be!"

(To be continued.)