

the end of the mantleshef. When I had found them, and lit a candle, I smoothed out the bit of paper, and read these words:—

"A lady wishes to adopt an orphan, the child of respectable parents, and will provide for the maintenance and education of the same. A boy preferred, who must come for three months on trial. All expenses paid. Address—E. D., G. P. O., London."

"Well?" I exclaimed, more puzzled than before.

"I wrote to her out of my own head," said Pippin, "and she's sent money for me to go to London to-morrow."

"I never heard of such a thing!" I cried. "Don't you know any more about her, Pippin, my dear child?"

"No," he said. "I wrote of my own self, and she's sent the money to Mrs. Brown for me to go. Only if I don't do for her, you know, I'm to be sent back in three months; and Mrs. Brown says she doesn't know who's going to have me, for she can't. She says I must go to the Union, and that's a dreadful place."

"Ay, ay—so it is," said Transome, whose eyes were fastened on the boy.

"Couldn't you have me?" he asked, coaxingly, and putting his little arm about my neck. "You're kinder to me than anybody else. Don't you let me be sent to the Union—please don't."

I looked across at Transome, and his face looked happy and pleasant, and he nodded his head at me. We had lived together so long there was no need for him to speak. It was as much as if he had said, "Ally, my lass, do as thee likes!" It was getting harder work than ever to win bread for him and me; but I could not bear to think of my clever, bonny boy being sent to the Union; and his uncle rolling in riches.

"Yes, yes, my laddie," I said, "if you come back we'll find a corner for you, and a morsel to eat, and a sup to drink. The Lord, He'll provide for us all. But she won't send you back; the lady in London is sure to love you, if she hasn't a heart of stone."

"But I must come back some time to pay you," answered Pippin. "I'll not forget it, never! So I've brought you a bit of money father gave me long ago. That's all I've got now: but I'll pay you lots when I'm a rich man."

"That's reet and honest, lad," said Transome: "faithful in little, faithful in much."

It was nought but a small foreign coin, with a hole bored through it, and hung on a blue ribbon, like a coronation medal. But it was all Pippin had, and he would not take it back again, so I put it away carefully into a small box, where I kept a curl of Willie's hair and the little Testament he had learned to read in.

"It's earnest-money," I said. "The Lord will know when to give us the rest."

So we bid Pippin good-bye, not without tears even in Transome's eyes, though he was growing too old to shed tears at little things.