

Fourth Department.

THE HIGH MERCHANT.

It was late last night, and the streets were deserted the more especially as it was snowing fast. A single traveller, however, might have been seen, wrapped in a thick overcoat, urging his way against the tempest by the light of some dim lamps. Suddenly, as he passed a ruinous tenement, the figure of a girl started before him.

"Please, sir," said she, "it's only a penny. Mother is sick, and we have eaten nothing to-day."

The first impulse of the moment was to go on; his feet had to stop. He looked at the girl. Her face was thin and pale, and her garments scanty. He was a man of impulse, so he put his hand toward his pocket, intending to give her a shilling. She saw the act, and her listless eye brightened. But the traveller had forgot that his overcoat was buttoned over his pocket.

"It is too much trouble," he said to himself, "and the wind is very cutting. Besides, these beggars are usually cheats. I'll warrant this girl wants the money to spend in a gin-shop." And, speaking aloud, he said rather harshly, "I have nothing for you. If you are really destitute, the guardians of the poor will take care of you."

The girl shrank back without a word, and drew her tattered garments around her shivering form. But a tear glittered on her cheek in the light of the dim lamp.

The man passed, and, turning the next corner, knocked at the door of a splendid mansion, through whose richly curtained windows a rosy light streamed out across the storm. A servant obsequiously gave him entrance. At the sound of his footstep, the parlor door was hastily thrown open, and a beautiful girl apparently about seventeen, sprang into his arms and kissed him on each cheek, and then began to assist him to remove his overcoat.

"What kept you so long, dear papa?" she said. "If I had known you were, I would have sent the carriage. You never stay so late at the office."

"No, my love; I was at my lawyer's—busy—very busy, and all for you." And he patted her cheek. "But, now, Maggy, can't you give me some supper?"

The daughter rang the bell, and ordered supper to be served. It was such a one as an epicure might delight in—just a supper for a traveller on a night like that.

"Pa," said the daughter, when it was just finished, "I hope you are in a good humour, for I have a favor to ask of you;" and she threw her arms around his neck and looked up in his face with a winning smile and these beautiful dark eyes of hers. "I wish to give a ball on my birthday—my eighteenth birthday. It will cost, oh! a sight of money; but you are kind, good papa, and I know you have been successful, or you would not have been at your lawyer's."

"Yes, my darling," he said, fondly kissing her, "the cotton speculation has turned out well. I sold all I had of the article this afternoon, received the money, took it to my lawyer's, telling him to invest it in real estate. I think I shall soon give up business."

"Oh do, papa. But you will give me this ball, won't you?"

"You little tease!" said the father, but he spoke smilingly; and, putting his hand into his pocket-book, he took out a note and placed it in his child's hand. "Take this; if it is not enough, you must have another, I suppose. But don't trouble me about it any more."

The next morning broke clear, but the snow was a foot deep on the level, and here and there lay in huge drifts, blocking up the doorway. At ten o'clock the rich merchant was on his way to the counting-room. He turned down the street up which he had come the previous evening. A crowd gathered round the door of a ruinous tenement. The merchant paused to inquire what was the matter.

"A woman, sir, has been found dead below there," said one of the spectators. "She starved to death, it is said, and they have sent for a coroner. Her daughter has just come back, after begging out all night. That's her meaning."

"Ah!" said the merchant, and a pang went through his heart like an ice-bolt, for he remembered denying a petition the night before. He pushed through the crowd and descended the cellar-steps. A girl cowered over the emaciated corpse that lay on a heap of straw in a corner of the damp apartment. It was the same girl he had feared it would prove. The merchant was horror-struck.

"My poor child," he said, laying his hand on her shoulder, "you must be cared for. God forgive me for denying you last night!" and he put a bill into her hand.

The girl looked up and gazed vacantly at him. Then she put back the proffered money.

"It will do no good now," she said: "mother's dead!" and she burst into hysterical tears: and the merchant at that moment would have given half his fortune to have recalled her to life.

The lesson thus learned he never forgot. The merchant personally saw that a decent burial was provided for the mother and afterwards took the daughter into his house, educated her for a respectable station in life, and, on her marriage, presented her with a proper dowry. He lived to hear children hush their gratitude.

Selections.

THE Rev. Dr. Livingstone, returned to England after an absence of sixteen years, was welcomed by among other bodies, a large meeting in Freemasons' Hall, on which occasion the Earl of Shaftesbury presided.

As Dr. Livingstone entered the hall, the whole assembly rose to receive him. He is a man of small stature, sunburnt, but not so much so as might have been expected, his face having at one time become almost black. His manner was modest and retiring, but without bashfulness, and his address was marked by unaffected simplicity. He was plainly dressed, and carried a naval cap. His command of English was remarkable, considering that he had scarcely spoken it for sixteen years. He seems, however, to have acquired somewhat of a foreign accent. He is evidently a man of clear mind, much self-possession and a determined purpose, with whom the attainment of fame was the very last thought—the opening up of a way for the gospel the first. He has, we believe, declined offers to engage his services in merely a scientific enquiry, which would have involved a relinquishment of his connection with the London Missionary Society. It may be well to explain that he was sent to Africa in the double capacity of physician and missionary. Mrs. Livingstone, daughter of the celebrated Moffat was also present, and shared in the congratulations of the assembly. The Earl of Shaftesbury's opening statement gave the proceedings an admirable tone, which succeeding speakers fully sustained. The chair having been taken, prayer and thanksgiving were offered by the Rev. C. J. Goodbart.

After a speech from the Earl of Shaftesbury and some farther doings,

Dr. Livingstone came forward and was greeted with long continued cheering. He said that the kind expressions with which he had been greeted, had quite oppressed. While he was trying to receive them with proper gratitude, he could not help feeling that he did not deserve them. Having scarcely spoken his native language for sixteen years, he had forgotten many of its phrases, and he felt more inclined to speak in the tongue of the natives among whom he had lived than in English. (A laugh and cheers.) The meeting had but a faint idea of what missionary life was. There was very little of that excitement in it. (Cheers and laughter.) It required enthusiasm, but it also required hard work, and it was also necessary to go through a great deal of work to keep up the enthusiasm. The missionary cause suffered because its friends expected more than could be given. (Hear, hear.) They expected that the natives would listen to the gospel, and either believe it or reject it. But the natives at first judged a missionary by their own motives. They suspected that there was something behind, and that he had some other object in view besides his preaching. He must first labor and do good to their bodies, and endeavour to obtain for them temporal advantages, in order to procure a good name and convince them that he was anxious to promote their welfare. (Cheers.) The African races were very slow in the motions of their minds, and were in this respect very unlike the South Sea Islanders. You could not meet a single tribe in Africa, which had embraced the gospel at once, as had been the case in the South Sea Islands. An African chief asked him whether he believed his tribe would ever believe without beating them. He replied that beating them was not the way to make them believe, but the chief rejoined, "Oh, you don't know them as well as I do. I am sure we could beat belief into them if we tried." (A laugh.) They had great confidence in Englishmen, and one chief, Secheli, told him he was going to Queen Victoria. He endeavoured to

dissuade him from going, telling him he would have no one to interpret for him. But Secheli would not listen to him, and went to the Cape, a distance of one thousand miles from his own town. He was obliged to return because he could not find the means of getting to England, but he had great confidence in Queen Victoria's wish to see justice done to him. North of the Makololo country were the Bechuana, who opened the path into the interior, and in whose steps he followed. The Beers at the outskirts of civilization were desirous that the trade in the interior should remain in their hands, and they were determined that no Europeans should open up a communication with the natives. He, on the other hand, was determined that the country should be opened up, and he had accordingly opened up two paths into the interior. (Cheers.) The directors of the London Missionary Society had given him a free commission to open up those paths, and he wished to acknowledge the great kindness with which they had always treated him, so that for sixteen years he had never had a word of difference with them. (Cheers.) We used to speak of Africa's burning sands, and that was true of the country south of twenty degrees of latitude. In this dry country the population is very small, but farther north a very different country and people were found. The traveller here came upon the true negro family. This was the country from which we used to derive our slaves in bygone years, and from which Cuba and the Brazils drew what slaves were landed upon their shores. In the centre the tribes were civil and kind to him, but hitherto there had always been a fringe of population about them which had prevented commerce from entering into the interior. They were now delighted to have a path to the sea by which they could trade with the white man. They looked upon the missionary as 'a thing not to be killed.' (A laugh.) He was respected, not because they loved the gospel, for that came afterwards, but because they saw he laboured for their welfare. He took some natives from the interior to London, and persuaded them, not without some misgivings, to go and see the British ships of war there. They had been told by the villagers as they came along, that the white men on board the ships would fatten and eat them; but when they went on board they were treated most kindly by the sailors who gave them beer and meat. Afterwards they almost worshipped him, and used to fall at his knees, when he spoke to them, until he made them desist. This arose from having seen these proofs of the power of England, and the idea of their unlettered minds seemed to be that if the English were so wise as to make these ships, their religion must be true. (Hear, hear.) He had found a river, called by different names, all however signifying the river, which ran through the centre of the continent, from north to south until it came within a short distance of Lake Ngami, when it trended to the east, until it emptied itself into the Mozambique Channel. The country about Makololo was so well watered that it was impossible to have a wagon path at one season of the year. As to dangers he had undergone he should say nothing about them until he became garrulous and reached his dotage. At present he became quite oppressed when he thought of what had yet to be done in these countries. (Cheers.) It was not by fine speeches, by great excitement, or grand meetings that the missionary worked, but by labouring patiently, with a sense of God's presence in his bosom, and without the expectation of seeing the fruit of his labors. (Cheers.) Some of the districts of the interior were perfect sanatoria, and among the pure negro family many diseases that afflicted the people of Europe were unknown. Smallpox and measles had not been known for twenty years, and consumption, scrofula and cancer, and hydrophobia were seldom heard of. Notwithstanding all the wars and kidnappings, the negroes "dwelt in the presence of all their brethren," and they appeared to be preserved for the purpose of Divine mercy as much as the Jews. He had adverted last night to the respect in which women were held by negroes in the interior. In case of divorce it was the woman who took the children. If a young man married a woman of a neighbouring village, he left his own village and went to live with his mother-in-law. It was his duty to pay her the greatest respect, and to supply her with firewood. Near the Zambesi the young men had to make long journeys into the country in order to procure firewood for their mothers-in-law. He had been told that to undertake such an expedition was tempting providence, but at such assertions he only laughed, and he regarded those who made them as his "weak brethren." (Cheers.)