

'It may be that these very robbers they tell one of live here,' he said to himself uncomfortably; but I can't wander about the forest all night.'

So he dismounted, knocked at the door, and asked for shelter. A poor haggard-looking woman, with some little children crouching behind her, admitted him. 'Yes, he might shelter,' she said; 'her husband would be in by-and-by, and then she would see if they could give him a shakedown in the loft.'

The hovel was dark and miserable, and the young man was in no way reassured when the father of the family came in, a rough-looking fellow in a bear-skin cap. He trembled for his bank notes, and utterly refused all invitations to go up the steep ladder into the loft overhead in search of a bed. It would be easy to murder him up there. He would sit by the fire; he should prefer that.

'Every man to his taste,' was the man's reply, 'but I shall be glad to stretch myself on the straw above, so if you'll hand me down that big book behind you, my friend, I'll read a few words of Holy Scripture as is our custom, and then be off to rest.'

The young clerk, still with his hand

on his revolver, did as he was asked, and by the time the reading was over had quite recovered his composure.

A man who could read the Bible to his family could hardly be contemplating robbery and murder! The clerk's watch by the fireside soon became a heavy sleep, and when he woke at daylight he found all his possessions safe, a portion of black bread and milk set ready for him, and a little lad of eight years old ready to guide him on his journey.

Wishing his rough friends good-bye, he he started on his way. When his little guide had put him on the right road and left him, the thought struck the young clerk, 'What a fool I must be to despise religion, when I know that it makes men honest, and true, and merciful!' Then he thought of his mother who had so carefully instructed him as a child, of his father who had said when dying, 'Serve God,' and at last smitten to the heart, he cried out aloud, 'Oh God, teach me to know Thee. Forgive me all the ignorant and foolish words I have said concerning Thee.'

And from that day forward no one heard the young man declare himself an infidel.

Who'll Help?

WAS up near the City Road one day,
Some chaps were digging a drain;
The sky was dark and the streets were grey
With a misty, drizzling rain;
I had done my work, and was hurrying by,
But a chap is bound to know
What's up when he hears a frightened cry,
And a crowd begins to grow.

Ill news flies fast. The word was passed:
'The drain!' 'the props!' and 'save!'
The earth had slipped, and the men were fast:
Three souls in a living grave.
They had mates at hand, by luck, poor chaps,
Who hurried with pick and rope;
Thought I, They'll dig 'em out sharp perhaps,
But little the worse, let's hope.

So I stood and watched them for a while,
As I'd nothing else to do.
They threw the earth in a goodly pile,
And one of the lads got through.
'Hurrah!' went up from the watching throng,
And rang through the misty air.
A girl I knew came running along,
And sighted me standing there.

'Oh, Jem!' she gasped; 'can't you help? go, go,'
And she seized and shook my arm;
'It's your brother, lad, that is down below,
And you standing there so calm!'
'My brother!' There, in a second's space
I was digging away like mad—
Fearing to light on his poor dead face—
The only brother I had!

And I got him out! with a bruise or two,
But nothing of harm beside.
You'd scarcely think what I say is true,
But I fair broke down and cried,
To think I'd been standing staring there
When my kin was like to die,
Letting the others do all my share,
Out of sheer stupidity.

It seems to me, when I come to think,
That our life on earth goes so;
Some standing safely upon the brink,
Some sunk in the depths below.
And I'm sure, if people only knew
That their *brothers* were like to die,
They'd hasten to see what they could do,
Instead of just standing by.

F. L. H.