

I WILL KNOCK AGAIN.

It was a bitterly cold day, with a cutting north-east wind and a sharp frost; and these were very keen on the high, bare downs, over which poor Richard was slowly and laboriously making his way. With a threadbare coat upon his back, and a pair of way-worn shoes on his feet, he bore up, as manfully as he might, against the breeze.

Of itinerant vendors of good things, poor Richard was one of the least obtrusive, and the most simple. Rarely did he venture beyond the meek inquiry, "Any good oranges to-day, ma'am? Any good nuts to-day?" A single "No" generally decided the question for him at once. On this day, from various causes, there was no demand for oranges and nuts. In vain did poor Richard trudge from one door to another; in vain did he ask, in his most persuasive tone, "Any good oranges to-day? Any good nuts?"

Poor Richard! at every fresh refusal his countenance fell, and his steps became more faltering, his knocks more timid. In all his weary progress he had met with but one customer, "and now there is but one more chance left for me," he thought to himself, as he drew near to the house of Mr. Graham.

Thus hoping, the poor shivering orange-seller opened the little garden-gate, walked slowly up the path, and lifted the knocker of the door. It was a feeble, hesitating sort of knock he gave, but it roused Mr. Graham. "I may as well answer it myself," thought he; "they cannot have heard that little knock in the kitchen." He forthwith proceeded to the door, and opened it.

"Any good oranges to-day, sir? Any good nuts?" said Richard, with a hopeful gleam on his simple features.

"None to-day, my good man; none to-day."

Poor lame Richard! his hopes died away as the door was thus shut on him. There was no help for it, he must travel another long mile before he could find another chance of disposing of his basket-load, and he was both tired and hungry, to say nothing of cold; or he must return homewards with only a single penny in the world, for all his capital was invested in the basket and the bag. He heaved a heartfelt sigh, and slowly, very slowly, lifted his basket upon his back; and slowly, very slowly, retraced his steps to the little garden gate.

So slow were his movements, that the curiosity of Mr. Graham was excited. "Why does not the man go?" he muttered; and from his easy chair by the fireside he looked out at the window. By this time Richard had reached the gate, and there he stopped, unconscious of being watched. There was something like a struggle in his mind: this was easy to be seen, for the watcher observed it in his face. His lips quivered; the muscles of his mouth involuntarily moved. He looked back at the door from which he had been repulsed, and a sort of desperate determination settled upon his countenance. Quitting his hold of the gate, which until now he had been swinging to and fro, and apparently spurred on by some strong impulse, he hastily stepped back to the door, and raising the knocker, brought it down with such force as almost to startle Mr. Graham.

"What's come to the man?" thought he, once more rising from his seat; "he means to take the house by storm." "I told you," he said, when he had again opened the door, "that I should not buy any to-day."

"Sir," replied poor Richard, "I hope you will forgive me. It was very bold to come back, but"—and his hands and his lips trembled with emotion—"but I can't sell my oranges, and they are very good ones, and I have come a good many miles, and I have called at every house in the place, and I have only taken a penny. If you please, sir, do buy a few of me, for I am hungry and this penny," showing it, "is all I have got in the world, it is indeed. Look, sir," he continued, taking up one of his oranges, "they are very good ones, they are indeed."

And poor Richard succeeded. And Mr. Graham learned a lesson from poor Richard, worth far more than the money the oranges and nuts had cost. He thankfully received the teaching, and reentered his parlor a different man.

"I will knock again, and again, and again," said he. "Faithless that I was to think myself rebuffed and rebuked, and repulsed, and frowned upon because my prayer has not been immediately answered. Paul besought the Lord thrice, that his thorn in the flesh might be removed; and why

should I claim that mine should be removed for once asking? I have been proud, wayward, independent, and I must humble myself, retrace my steps, knock again, knock more earnestly, and plead more fervently. God, help me!"

And he did knock again. Christian reader, do you ever pray and fancy that your petitions are unheeded? Then pray again.

Guilt-burdened sinner, have you ever knocked at the door of God's mercy and found no relief. Then knock again.

Let all knock at the door of mercy and of pity. Is not God more tender and loving than man? Has He not proved His kindness, not only in the multitude of His benevolent gifts to men, but above all in this: "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

"And why not, pray!"

"The reasons for not going are strong. She will not heed you, or if she does she will kick you down the stairs. She is a perfect brute when in liquor, and my advice is to stay away from her; and you will do well if you listen to my warning."

"I must go to see her, and try to aid her," answered the benevolent woman, whose mind was fully made up on the subject.

And go she did, intent on doing good. She reached the place, and mounted the rickety stairs that led to her miserable room, groped her way to the door, and peeped cautiously in; and in the far corner of the room she saw what seemed to be a great bundle of rags. Going over to the spot she found it was the poor wretch she was seeking, and she laid her hand upon the inebriate's shoulder without speaking a word.

in a locality where vice grew like weeds, and he labored willingly as a missionary among the poor and degraded, feeling that such was his Master's work for him.

After service it was his wont to ask any who felt their need to stand up for prayers, and on the evening above referred to he followed his usual custom, and up before his view arose the drunkard, Mrs. W—.

"Ah!" thought he, "now here is trouble; there will be a row raised," for well he knew the vileness and strength of the fallen woman.

"What do you wish, madam?" he politely asked, hoping to quell her rage.

"I wish—to—be—prayed for," she stammered.

"What do you wish?" repeated the pastor, not believing his senses.

"I want—to—be—prayed for," she again answered, looking him full in the face from out her bleared eyes.

He was just about fulfilling her request, when the poor wretch added, "But I want her to pray for me;" and she pointed to the good woman at her side.

"What could I do?" said the pastor; "it was against the rules of our church to ask a woman to speak in meeting, but I could not heed rules under such circumstances; and I said: 'Madam, here is a poor soul wants your prayers—pray for her.' Down knelt the good sister, and earnestly prayed. The prayer was not eloquent, neither lengthy. It was simply these words: 'O Lord, help her to do better; she wants Thy help. Do come and help her to do right, for Jesus' sake. Amen.'

They arose, and went their way; but God hears prayer, and that was the commencement of better things for the poor, degraded Mrs. W—.

Two years after this there was in the same church a great temperance meeting, and the women marched in a procession. At their head came a large, handsome woman, bearing a blue silk banner on which appeared the words, "Woman's work for woman's weal." The good pastor had a friend with him in the pulpit who asked:

"Who is that large, fine-looking woman?"

"That is Mrs. W—."

"And pray who is Mrs. W—?"

The pastor then related the story we have just told.

"And what wrought a reform in one so base?" asked the friend, in surprise.

"It was the power of the gospel, sir," answered the pastor.

"And how did the gospel reach her? Was it through your preaching?"

"I think not; but let us call her and ask her;" and the pastor beckoned the woman to come forward. She modestly advanced, and he asked: "Mrs. W—, what wrought your reformation?"

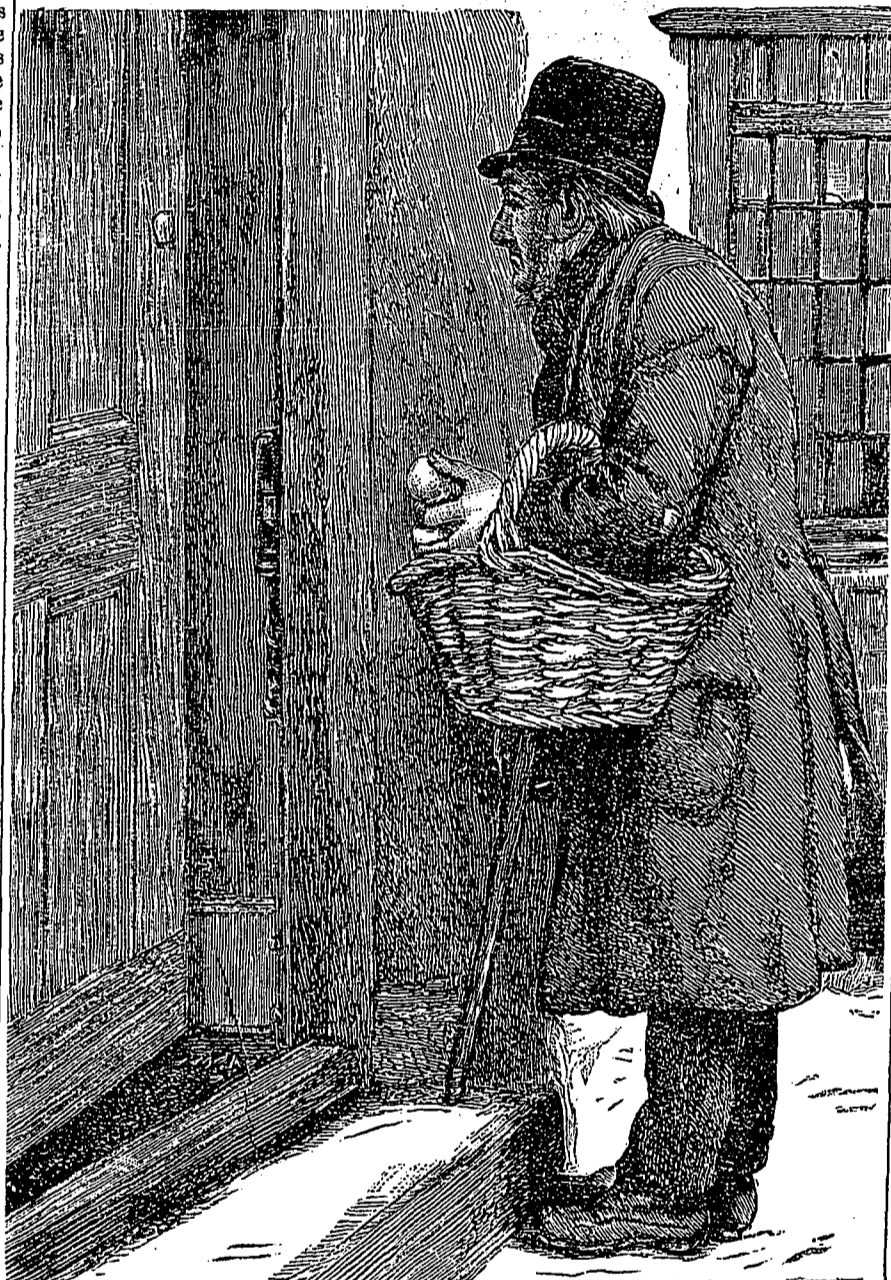
"It was the power of a kiss;" and she again repeated the story we have told, and added: "Ministers of the gospel had talked to me of my degradation, and told me how dreadful the life was I was leading; other men had upbraided me, and told me that I ought to be ashamed—a woman making herself such a spectacle, and sternly bade me do better. This did no good, nor influenced me in the least; but when that dear, good, angel woman came to me and kissed me, my hard heart was softened; and when she told me that it was because she loved me I was melted to the soul, and she, under God, was the means of my reform."

And now Mrs. W— to-day is leading the life of a Christian.—*The Christian at Work.*

A DEAR LITTLE BOY, just five years old, whose father was from home and his mother sick and in her room, when seated at the table one evening with his little sister, was told by his nurse to commence to eat his supper. He looked up into her face, saying:

"Why, we ought to ask a blessing before we eat." The nurse said to him: "Well, cannot you ask one yourself?" His reply was: "Of course I can." Reverently folding his hands, with bowed head, he said: "God bless this for Jesus' sake. Amen."

A LONDON INFIDEL wished that all the churches were "wiped out," beginning with Spurgeon's. "Then," asked Dr. MacLewen, "which of you infidels will be the first to take upon himself the responsibility of Mr. Spurgeon's Orphanage?" It does not require much thought to see that the Christian Church not only is the foundation of the systematic benevolence of our civilization, but also of nearly every good institution of society. Even education would languish without the motives supplied by religion.



IN VAIN DID POOR RICHARD TRUDGE FROM ONE DOOR TO ANOTHER.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—*Friendly Greetings.*

THE POWER OF A KISS.

A. D. WALKER.

There was in our city, a few years ago, one of the hardest cases I have ever met in the form of a woman. She would drink at morning, noon, and night, and drink made her like an infuriated beast. Why, I have seen her led along by two policemen, one not daring alone to lay hands upon her. She wholly lost her self-respect, and was the most degraded object that could be met anywhere.

After the temperance society was organized, one good lady said to another: "I am going to call on poor Mrs. W—, and see if I can do her any good."

"Do not go! I beg you will not!" said the other, frightened at the thought.

The fallen woman raised her face, and, oh! what a face it was, bloated, scarred, red, and vicious!

The benevolent woman silently leaned over and kissed that truly repulsive face, still without speaking.

"What did you do that for? What did you do that for?" eagerly questioned the poor creature.

"Because I love you and want you to do better."

Heeding not the answer, the drunkard rocked back and forth, still repeating the question: "What did you do that for? I have never had a kiss like that since I was a child—a pure little girl, not a vile drunkard. Oh! what did you do that for?" and she broke into sobs, uncontrollable sobs.

The good Samaritan assisted her to rise, helped her down the stairs, and led her to her own house, where she was decently clad, and when evening came she willingly went with her benefactor to a religious meeting, a meeting where the poor outcast was welcome. The good minister who led the meeting was pastor over a church situated