

## SEPARATED AND UNITED.

IN an ancient shaft of Falun  
Year by year a body lay,  
Preserved, as though a treasure  
Kept unto the waking day

Not the turmoil nor the passions  
Of the busy world o'erhead,  
Sounds of war, or peace-joyfings,  
Could disturb the placid dead.

Once a youthful miner, whistling,  
Hewed the chamber now his tomb;  
Crash! the rocky fragments tumbled,  
Crossed him in abyssal gloom.

Sixty years passed by ere miners,  
Felling, hundred fathoms deep,  
Broke upon the shaft where rested  
That poor miner in his sleep.

As the gold-grains lie untarnished  
In the dingy soil and sand  
Till they gleam and flicker, stainless,  
In the digger's sifting hand;

As the gem in virgin brilliance  
Rests till ushered into day,—  
So, uninjured, uncorrupted,  
Fresh and fair the body lay.

And the miners bore it upward,  
Laid it in the yellow sun:  
Up from out the neighbouring houses  
Fast the curious peasants run.

"Who is he?" with eyes that question;  
"Who is he?" they ask aloud.  
Hush! a wizened hag comes hobbling,  
Panting, through the wondering crowd.

Oh! the cry—half joy, half sorrow—  
As she flings her at his side!  
"John! the sweetheart of my girlhood!  
Here am I, am I, thy bride.

"Time on thee has left no traces,  
Death from wear has whittled thee;  
I am aged, worn, and wasted,  
Oh, what life has done to me!"

Then, his smooth, unfurrowed forehead  
Kissed that ancient, withered crone!  
And the death which had divided  
Now united them in one.

## THE ODD THREE HALFPENCE.

## A TRUE STORY.

ON the first Monday evening in every month a clergyman used to have a little missionary meeting in his school-house, to pray for the missionaries in foreign lands. One evening he was telling the people who were assembled, what cause there was for sending missionaries to these distant lands.

While the minister, Mr. B., was speaking, he observed all the time a poor working-man, black with labouring in the neighbouring iron-works, who had come in rather late, and stood with his back to the wall, at the end of the room, exactly opposite to him. It was not the man, however, who attracted his notice so much as a little girl he held in his arms. She was a very little one, and looked very delicate; her face was pale and thin, and her eyes too bright and large, as if she were in a decline. But what surprised Mr. B. was to see the deep earnest attention with which this sickly-looking child listened to every word he said. Whenever Mr. B. looked at that little pale face, it was the same, quite full of earnest attention and interest. When all was over, he reminded his people that the poor heathen could not hear of God without a teacher, and no preacher could go to them unless he was sent; and that to send him, and to build school-houses, and give him the means of keeping them up, and of living himself, a good deal of money was necessary; and that no one should go to missionary meetings, and hear what

they had been hearing, without doing something to help the expenses of missions. He had brought some little tin boxes, prettily covered, and with pictures of some Indian places on the side; and he offered to give one of these boxes to any one who would undertake to save a little, over so little, from their own expenses, and drop it in these to help the heathen. He told them that a penny saved from self might be a penny given to God; and that a penny saved by self-denial was worth more than a pound which cost the giver nothing.

Now, while he stood holding one of the boxes in his hand, and speaking thus, he could scarcely help smiling to see the sickly child, with one arm round the blackened neck of her father, the other pointed to the box, while her little coaxing face and eager manner showed she was trying to get her father to go forward and ask for one for her. Mr. B. could easily believe that the pretty box pleased the child, and when he saw that she had partly prevailed on her father, and that he had moved on a good deal nearer, but was still ashamed to come quite up and ask for the box, he held it out, and said,—

"Will you take a box, my friend? Perhaps your little girl may some day earn something to put into it!" The child smiled, as her father answered, "Why, yes, sir, if you please. My little girl here wants to have one; but I do not know if the lass will be able to gather much for you."

Mr. B. smiled, and said, "Let her try; where there's a will there's a way; and if she saves or earns one penny for God's work, it will do herself good."

The child eagerly received the box, and a flush of pleasure passed over her pale face.

A year passed away. A year makes many changes in the world; changes in ourselves, changes in the few people we know. There was another missionary meeting, and the boxes were to be sent in that had been given out. But a year had passed and made its changes; some hands had taken them, and other hands brought them back. The year before they had brought a sad change to the poor blackened man and his little girl; his wife had died. The child had lost her mother, and she was delicate, and wanted her; but she was her father's only one, and he loved her tenderly. His wife's long illness and death left him many debts: all his work and labour could scarcely pay them; but he did pay them, and then he was content to labour on for his little girl and himself.

And now another year had come, and another change had come too. That time last year the man had stood leaning against the wall, holding his child in his arms, and she loved him dearly. He stood there now again, leaning against the wall; but the child was not in arms, and tears were in his eyes.

Where was she? His hand held the missionary box which hers had so gladly taken; she was with God, far better, far happier than she had been when her kind, tender father held her feeble little body in his arms. The child was gone to the Saviour, who had hidden her come to him.

When everyone else had given up their boxes, counted the contents, and gone away, the man stood near to Mr. B. His words were few; Mr.

B. had buried his child, and knew that the lamb had been taken to the fold above; but the father's face was pale with feelings which his manner did not show.

"That was her box, sir," he said; "the box she got this night twelve-months. She made me give her a halfpenny every Saturday night out of my wages, when she had been good and pleased me: she never lost her halfpenny, sir;" and then one great tear burst out, and rolled down his cheek. "Count it," he said, hastily pushing the box over the table; "there were fifty-two weeks; fifty-two halfpence is twenty-six pence; two and twopence, sir. You will find it all right, I think."

"I am sure of that," said Mr. B.; and they counted the money, which seemed to be all halfpence. At last up turned a large penny piece; and, when all was counted, there was two shillings and threepence halfpenny, instead of two shillings and twopence. Mr. B. did not mind the difference at all; but the father looked quite puzzled. He counted it over again; but there it was, just three halfpence too much;—and that big penny, too, which he had never given his child.

"I cannot make it out, sir," he said, rubbing his forehead; "my blessed child would never do anything wrong; but there it is. How that odd three halfpence came there, I do not know."

"Perhaps you may think of it again," said Mr. B., seeing he looked distressed about it, but not knowing why. "I will look in upon you sometimes in the evenings, and trust God will comfort you, and be a father to you, instead of the child he has taken."

The man bowed his head, and went away; but long and painfully did he think how these odd three halfpence got into the missionary box.

The poor have often a strong sense of honesty; indeed, honesty and industry are the first lessons taught by the respectable and decent parents of England to their children. Now this was the secret of that poor man's distress. His little girl used often to go on messages to the shops, both for him and for the neighbours, who kindly assisted in the care of his house after his wife died. The father knew how anxious she had been to put money into the box, how eagerly she ran to it with her halfpenny every Saturday night. He could not bear to think that the dear child, who was now in the grave, could have been so foolish and ignorant as to suppose she would do God's service by giving money she had not properly earned, to any good object; or that she could be tempted to drop the penny into the missionary box, which she had not paid at the shop. The thought, however, distressed him much; he feared he was wronging his departed child by even imagining it; yet how could the three halfpence get there? His child never got any money but what he gave her for it.

Thus was he still meditating as he sat at his lonely fireside one morning, just after his breakfast was ended. A lady, knowing that it was the only hour to find him in, called at the door about some message. She spoke kindly to him of his affliction, and consoled him by expressing affection for the dear child he had lost, whose sweetness, gentleness, and patience in suffering, she had been much touched with.

In the fulness of heart, the bereaved father mentioned to this kind lady the anxiety he felt about the odd three halfpence in the missionary box. "My sweet child would never do what was wrong about money," said he; "but how came they there?"

The lady thought for a minute, and then cried out quite joyfully, "I can tell you!" She then told him that the day before Elly's death, she had called in to see her, after having been shopping in the town. The child's mouth looked hot and dry, and she asked her if she would not like an orange. "Very much," was the reply. She searched for some money, but had only three halfpence left, which were folded in a shop bill. She gave them to the dying child, and desired her to send the old woman who nursed her for the orange.

"I remember it perfectly," she said, "because I was so sorry I had no more to give; there was a penny piece and a halfpenny in the paper. I was sending my maid, the next morning, with some nice things to the child, when the old woman came up to say she was dead. I asked her if she had got her the orange, and she said she had never heard the child speak of it. I reproached myself at the time, as we all do when kindness is too late; I thought it was weakness that prevented her from asking for what she wished to have, and regretted I had not gone and got it myself."

"God be praised, and may he forgive me!" said the poor father, "the child denied her dying lips the orange, and so the odd three halfpence got into the missionary box."—*Missionary Present.*

## A WORKING BAND.

THE "working band" is made up of girls eleven, twelve and thirteen years of age. They like to play and have "good times" as well as other girls, but when I tell you what they did one summer vacation not very long ago, you will see that they have learned something about self-denial. These are all school-girls, and when the hot days came on it was very pleasant to think about vacation. You know how that is, girls and boys, and so you are the better able to appreciate the self-sacrifice which led these girls, as soon as school was closed, to unite in a working band, which was to meet every Saturday afternoon. A dear lady who had long been an active worker in the Lord's vineyard won these young hearts to the work, and they met at her house.

We will not tell you about their meetings, but we will tell you this, that in the autumn they sent away a barrelful of warm, serviceable clothing which they had made or collected from friends who were willing to help on the good work, to a home for poor old people who had no children to love and care for them, but who were tenderly cared for by one of the Lord's children. Among the articles in the barrel were three quilts pieced by the school-girls and sewed with their own hands. So you can see that these same hands were doing something besides fancy-work.—*S. S. Work.*

True goodness is like the glow-worm in this, that it shines most when no eyes but those of heaven are upon it.