

"They are, indeed, and Lucerne can't help showing that she is a lady; I often tell her she looks more elegant in her poor old clothes than many women do in the richest costumes. But, sir, I should be glad if she could obtain better remuneration for her labour. She cannot leave her home because of myself and the children. I need a great deal of her help, for I am paralysed, and these three dear children, they are all that is left to us of my only son, and Lucerne has undertaken to provide for them. He, poor fellow! was not successful. He was an artist, and there are no means whatever left: he and his wife both died of fever in some imprudent place they went to, abroad. Charlie was a baby then; Lucerne went off to them in their trouble without a thought for herself, and managed everything, I can't think how, and brought home the children, and she has taken care of us all ever since."

"Noble girl!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

"I owned a nice house in the city," said the old lady, "and this little one here; my son unfortunately got through some money of ours as well as his own little fortune—poor dear Tom! he was not a business man. We have let my house that we used to live in, and the rent is a nice help, thirty pounds a year; but Lucerne has to work so very hard, poor dear! to make up the rest."

"And what does she work at?" I asked.

"Honiton lace-making," said the mother. "You brought home that bundle of things for her to trim with delicate narrow lace; she also makes a great number of most exquisite collars and other articles, and she always designs her own patterns. Most fortunately for us now, she learnt the art when a child from her nurse, who used to keep her quiet for hours, teaching her more than I knew of, or should have approved of at that time; but now it is a great resource for us. Our only trouble is, she has to wait so long for payment. She has rarely the opportunity of selling her work direct to the purchaser, and thus she loses much of the profit, and is sometimes kept waiting for a long time for her earnings."

I promised at once that I would use my influence to procure some more remunerative orders. I was the favourite nephew and godson of a very rich and very kind-hearted old aunt, who was quite a connoisseur in laces, and I felt I might depend on her employing Lucerne when she learnt the story of her noble struggle against adversity for the sake of others.

In the midst of our talk, Lucerne appeared, and as she took her lace-pillow from a cupboard and sat down to work, she said, "Now, Nanette, bed-time, dear!"

The gentle child came to me courteously to say "good night," but her pretty, demure little face became dimpled with smiles when she received a bright shilling for a New Year's gift. Presently we heard her young bird-like voice singing Keble's sweet hymn, "Sun of my soul," "as a lullaby," Lucerne said, "to herself and her brothers." Before it was finished the little voice ceased, and the children were in the land of dreams. We were busy down stairs, the dear old mother and I looking over the exquisite patterns of lace which Lucerne kept treasured in an old workbox, the while her nimble fingers flew in and out with the bobbins like magic; and I, who had been caught in the soft beauty of the snow, was now equally caught in the delicate tracery of the Honiton lace. I found it difficult to leave that peaceful home, and stayed so late that I was obliged to apologise; but the old lady declared my visit had done her good, and after that what could Lucerne do but smile on me as she bade me "good night"? I walked home through the sweet bell music which mingled with the music of my hopes, and I watched the new year in, with wonderfully happy thoughts of what the future might and should bring to me, if by all my efforts I could win the love of the noble woman I had met that night.

I don't think I need lengthen this story, my sensible readers must know by this time that I was caught by the heart in that snowstorm. But they could not even guess the trouble I had to convince Lucerne that it would be for my good if she became my wife. There are difficulties even in a woman's selfishness. She could not give up her scheme respecting the children, and she could not leave her mother, and for a long time she positively refused to burden me, as she called it, with her family cares. But "Persevere and conquer" was my motto. The world without Lucerne was very dark to me, and directly I was offered a living I persistently refused to accept it, unless she would consent to share my vicarage home. She called me obstinate, and wilful, and unwise, but at last gave way. And the rambling, lonely old house belonging to my living in a Cornish sea-coast parish would have been far less cheerful without the dear mother and the merry children, and

what it would have been to me without my Lucerne I do not care to think.

## TREASURES.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death. *Prov. x. 2.*

AN individual has been in business for several years. Has he been successful? To answer the question with accuracy, he must carefully consider two things—his profits and losses and then strike the balance. Let us do this for the man who has accumulated material wealth for wickedness. He has been pursuing his crooked and fraudulent course for half-a-century. He is now in the winter of life, and on the margin of eternity. What has he gained? As much as to make him worthy of the designation, a millionaire. None of his wealth has ever flowed into his being so as to become a part of himself. It could not do this, but it is invested in beautiful surroundings and well-tested securities. What has he lost on account of his wickedness? The affection of his fellow-men, the smiles of his own conscience, the happiness of doing good to others, the favour of God, and a thousand opportunities of being prepared for a glorious immortality.

The word righteousness signifies a life of faith in God, love to God, and constant obedience to His will. He who has this righteousness is in possession of a most invaluable treasure. It has merged into his being, and is more a part of himself than his blood. It is colouring his thoughts with its beautiful tints, purifying his affections with its radiant light, and moulding his conduct into all that is ennobling and God-like. It has delivered him from spiritual death, since he is a member of the Divinely-adopted family. It has delivered him from temporal death, because it has changed the hissing, stinging, poisonous serpent into a calm and gentle sleep. When he goes away from the body like the Arab from his tent, it will lead him to everlasting life.

Observe Dives, who was wealthy yet wicked, and Lazarus, who was poor yet righteous. In life, Dives had pleasure, Lazarus had blessedness. In dying, Dives was all alone, Lazarus was encompassed by holy angels. In eternity, Dives is in misery, Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom. Look on this picture and on that. Beneath the one we must write profitless, and beneath the other profitable.—*Dr. M'Aslane.*

## SATURDAY NIGHT.

Pause, my soul! a week has ended,  
One the less for thee below;  
In this week there hath been blended  
Hope and fear, and joy and woe.  
Weary heart! Thou canst not murmur,  
O'er the sky a bow is cast;  
One week to thy haven nearer,  
One week nearer to thy last.

Pause, my soul! a week hath ended,  
What its record borne for thee?  
Whom oppressed hast thou befriended?  
Who the happier been for thee?  
Hast thou love for hate required?  
To thy neighbour wert thou true?  
What, my soul, hast thou neglected?  
What performed thou shouldst not do?

Pause, my soul! a week hath ended,  
Time is bearing thee away;  
Only for awhile extended  
Is the life we live to-day.  
What may be upon the morrow  
God in mercy hides from thee;  
But so live, come joy or sorrow,  
As thy day thy strength shall be.

Oh, if the heaven and the heaven of heavens were paper, and the sea ink, and the multitude of mountains pens of brass, and I were able to write that paper within and without full of the praises of my fairest, my dearest, my loveliest, my sweetest, my matchless well-beloved!

If the weakest saint is only leaning on the Lord, he is stronger than all the powers of Satan, because the Lord is within him.