



butter, with a slice from a brown loaf, one of which was baked every week, formed his food. He lived on what the good earth, at God's good bidding, supplied him, and he neither asked nor craved for more. When he was fortunate enough to get a few eggs, they speedily found their way into a poor neighbour's cottage; when he killed a pig, every one around him got a good meal; in short, when he did so, it was almost as much a village ceremony and festival as a sheep-shearing or sheep-washing day.

John appeared to have been born with that native tact which could do almost anything to which he turned his hand. He was never brought up as a shoemaker; but he could cobble a pair of child's shoes in a workmanlike way, which would make its mother smile with delight. He was never brought up as a carpenter or glazier; yet if there was a chair or table or bit of floor to be mended, or a window wanting a pane of glass or piece of brown paper, he would set about the work as if it had been the one thing to which he had been quite accustomed all his days. Certainly, he never was brought up to be a surgeon; yet people used to come miles for him to use the lancet on their arms. By simply doing the best and kindest for every one within his reach, the old man had gained an influence and a loving respect which those far more learned and wealthy than himself would never have succeeded in gaining.

Once I heard him preach. On a beautiful harvest evening he stood on an old horse-block in front of a neighbour's cottage, and began to read passages from the Bible, but in a tone of belief and a depth of

pathos which awoke a tender feeling in every villager's heart.

"I will tell you why," he said, in a trembling voice, "why I read from this book rather than say any poor words of my own. I was a young man before many of you were born. We had not so many Bibles then as we have now, and in this old valley, which seems old enough to have been made by Noah's flood, I grew up without any religious instruction. When I hear the Gospel now in our old church, I think how glad I should have been to have heard it forty years ago. When I see children with picture-books in their hands, and you, dear men and women, with Bibles, I think what a village this might have been by this time if we could have seen the same pleasant sights years ago! My first bit of the Bible I got from an old pedlar, who treated with contempt the few leaves he gave me for a drink of milk. But after many days I got a whole one for myself. Here it is," he said, with a radiant smile, holding up a well-worn book; "and from that alone I learned to know my need of a Saviour, and to know also that God in His mercy had provided one equal to my need. Oh! dear friends and neighbours, you will need no human teacher, however clever, if you will make that best of books your chief and most prayerful study."

It was his conviction of the superiority of the Word of God to all human teaching that led him, whenever he had an opportunity, to read it to young and old. I have heard him reading it to little children who were waiting to have their boots mended; I have heard him read it to sick and aged men and women, finishing up a chapter or a promise with the simple words, made eloquent by his own deep faith and feeling, "Isn't that good? Isn't that grand? And mind, it's all true!"

I cannot tell you the good this simple Christian was enabled to effect in his own neighbourhood. He was a light in a shady place; day by day he was an unwritten and an unspoken sermon, and induced many to think of their eternal welfare. To the faithful minister who attended him on his death-bed, and who never could enter his chamber without tears, he often said, "There is nothing to regret save that I have been such an unfaithful servant; everything in the future is bright and hopeful, through the mercy of my precious Lord; my fond and faithful wife is waiting to receive me into everlasting habitations, and then we shall be for ever with each other, and for ever with the Lord. What, then, is there to regret?"

"I shall miss you, old friend, as long as I live."

"You can't miss a poor old man like me, sir,"—with something like surprise in his dying eyes. "I have done nothing; Christ has done all; Christ is all, and in all. Amen!"

He was missed for many a day. There was scarcely a Sunday when, after service, some were not seen around his grave—which was always kept bright and fresh with flowers—mourning for his loss. He was a light shining in a very shady place, but its radiance could not be hid, and made many the happier for its shining.