

have longed to be gone even without that burden of an uneasy conscience that weighed on him night and day, and the reason of which he had told to no one.

He went to church, however, as he had promised Mr. Wilmot, and told it there. There are some faults that we can hardly confess to God till we have owned them to our fellows; but this was not one of them. To no man but his father would Oliver confess that he had known him from the first and had hardened his heart against him. But he owned it to God—on his knees, in that special corner of the chancel where he had made so many good resolutions and sometimes felt so happy—and entreated, earnestly enough, to be forgiven and helped to find his father again.

He did not ask, however, that his father might be brought back again at once to Boskyfield, or that he himself might be shown whether his duty was to go or stay. Perhaps we are all more ready to ask God to help us to go our own way than to lead us in His; and in spite of his deep religious feeling Oliver had not *begun*, as yet, to give up his own will.

He heard all that the Rector, and Mr. Wilmot, and his uncle and aunt had to say on the matter; but he took his own

way at last, leaving them vexed and angry, and yet ready to forgive him, because he was plainly so unhappy, and they were so fond of him.

Oliver knew that his father and the other man had gone to London, for he had found out at the station that they had taken tickets for Kentish Town. Beyond that he had no clue, and he never told anyone how little idea he had of what course to pursue when he should have reached London himself.

John Haythorn advanced him some of the money that had always been called his, and promised to let him have more when he should reasonably require it—reserving to himself, in his own mind, the right to stop the supplies and order the lad back as soon as Oliver had time to convince himself that his search was useless.

Of his weeping aunt and his dismayed little cousins, his old home, and all his boyish haunts, Oliver took leave like one in a dream, who knows that he ought to be sorry, but cannot feel it. Right or wrong, wise or foolish, he *must* go—now. He could no more go back to the happy, narrow life of old than Adam and Eve could stay in Paradise; and the wide world lay all before him as it did before them.

(To be continued.)

Mrs. Huckerby.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

THREE weeks passed away, and the sunshine of spring found its way even into Peckitt's Row; but it came too late to revive the sick man.

As the doctor had prophesied, he never left his room again. Once or twice he had got Mrs. Huckerby to prop him up in bed, and to bring him his carving tools and the unfinished primrose leaf, but latterly he had lain very silent and quiescent. Day

by day he was getting thinner and weaker, and the cough must have shaken his gaunt frame terribly. He rarely spoke, however, of his suffering, and gave no sign of knowing that he was fast going down into the valley—that, indeed, its shadow was already cast upon him.

As for Mrs. Huckerby, she found the fight a hard one. Sometimes she was all but beaten. From morning till night there was not a moment's pause in the weary round of toil. Now it was a customer to be served, then it was the bit of cooking