

"Well, as he said to me t'other day, Tom, he's got to be pretty lively to make up for lost time."

"Well, I wish, then," said Tom, meditatively, "that he hadn't never lost no time, 'cause it's takin' all the spirit out o' me, to be hammered at all the time in the way he's a doin'. I just tell you what it is, Billy," said Tom, stopping short and smiting the palm of one hand with the fist of the other, "I've half a mind to go to steady work of some kind, if dad don't let me alone."

"Mis' Prency was talkin' to me the other day about dad," said Billy, "an' she asked me whether he wasn't workin' awful hard at home after he left the shop, an' I said 'Yes,' an' she said, 'I hope you all do all you can to help him?' an' I kind o' felt ashamed, an' all I could say was that I didn't see nothin' I could help him about, and she said she guessed if I'd think a little while I could find out. Say, Tom, let's get to work a-thinkin' an' see if there ain't some way to give dad a lift. Seems to me he's doin' everythin' for us all the whole time, an' we ain't doin' nothin' at all for him."

"Oh, now! quit your preachin'!" said the elder brother, contemptuously.

The younger brother prudently lapsed into entire silence, and the couple soon reached home.

CHAPTER XV.

"Well, doctor," said Deacon Quickset to his pastor one morning, "I hope you have persuaded that wretched shoemaker to come into the ark of safety, and to lay hold of the horns of the altar."

"My dear sir," said Dr. Guide to his deacon, "the conversation I had with that rather unusual character has led me to believe that he is quite as safe at present as any of the members of my own congregation. I don't propose to disturb his mind any further. 'Milk for babes,' you know, the apostle says, 'and strong meat for men.' After he has proved himself to be equal to meat there will be ample time to experiment with some of the dry bones which you seem anxious that I should force upon him."

"Dr. Guide," said the deacon, with considerable dignity, "I didn't expect this kind of talk from you. I have been sittin' under your ministrations a good many years, and, though sometimes I didn't think you were as sharp-set as you ought to be, still I knew you was a man of level head and good education, and knew everything that was essential to salvation, else otherwise why did the best college of our own denomination make you a doctor of divinity? But I've got to let out what is in my heart, doctor, and it is this, that there is no stoppin'-place for any one that begins to walk the straight and narrow way; he has got to keep on as long as he lives, and if he don't he is goin' to be crowded off to one side."

"You are quite right, deacon," said the minister, "and, there-