

arisen like a cloud to dim the horizon of his future—"you see, if I had come for you, it would have been at a great risk and loss; and as you were both to share my home, I thought it better that I should meet you at the landing-place, then get married in town, and after that take you on to my little place. Still I suppose *she* did not like the plan; every woman likes to choose her own way of being married."

They had reached the gate of the enclosure surrounding the white cottage, and George Hallen made as though he would have entered. "And how came you to risk leaving now?" Belle had laid her hand on the gate while speaking, so that he could not well do as he wished. "Because I could not do otherwise. I knew Rose was pining for a sight of me, and it was too much to expect her to come all the way to Australia for me." Poor fellow, he loved her so, this fair, false woman with the hollow heart!

"George!" There was deep anguish in the tone of Belle's voice. "George, it is true, what I told you."

He had removed her hand from the gate, and was already some steps up the gravel walk. "George, you believe me, don't you? God knows I would not pain you for nothing! Come away, George, dear George. I am sorry you are here at all, and by-and-by she will be sorry too. Oh, George, speak to me." She had tried all along to be quiet, and not to grow excited; but now she scarcely knew what to do or say. "Tell me all, Belle." His voice was so cold and harsh that it made her shiver.

"It would take a long time to do that, and would only pain you. Won't you go away and forget it?"

"Forget it! That is just like you, Belle. Besides," and he again grew fierce, "I won't believe it. You don't understand her. You have never known what it is to love and grow tired of waiting. I will see her for myself."

The curtains were not down in the parlour, so, poor girl, what could she do but lead him on. The room was all aglow with rosy light, and the others, as Belle had guessed, were gone away, so as to leave the lovers to themselves. There, standing just where the light fell strongest, they stood: Rose sweetly bashful to the outward eye, Hugh all tenderness and adoration. They were to be married on the morrow, so what would-r? George turned away with a groan. He had come from Australia for this! He scarcely noticed Belle as she clung to his arm, for oh! it seemed that she could not let him go. Yet he turned from her, this girl to whom he had said that she knew not what love was. Did she not know? She had loved him all her life; but what of that? He had preferred Rose, and now in his great trouble he drew no nearer, took no comfort from her lips, nor recognised the worth of her heart's best offering.

Years after, when Rose had grown matronly, news came of the good which George had wrought on his Australian farm, and Belle, who still lived on in the white cottage, with the maiden aunt who was to have shared her brother's home (had her two nieces left England, as had been thought likely), smiled as she remembered how silly she had been to give her love all unasked. George had not wasted his life; nevertheless, how much more noble it might have been, blessed with a true woman's affection, is yet unknown.

Down in Cornwall, where the blue sea washes up high upon the land, and the tide rises to the very graves, in a tiny churchyard, is a little mound, and "Bright Olive," though dead, still speaks; for all her sunny looks and words are remembered, while the sad weariness of her last days are put aside for ever.

Alexander Cruden, author of that invaluable book, the Concordance, died on his knees while praying. He was a man of remarkable industry and fervent piety. His heart beat warmly for the poor and suffering. He consecrated the entire profits of the second and third editions of his book to relieve the poor. It was his soul's delight to minister to their wants. He was a fine illustration of that Gospel precept: "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The first copy of the Concordance he presented to Queen Caroline, wife of George III., in 1737. The Queen was so well pleased with it, she promised to reward him; but sixteen days after, she finished her brief life. Poor Cruden's hopes were disappointed. He kept on his back store, in London, in the Royal Exchange. When nearly seventy years old he was missed. Search was made in his lodgings, and the man of God was found kneeling by his chair, with the open Bible before him—his face calm and peaceful. Thus he died alone! Yet, not alone. He who says: "Lo, I am with you always," was with him. How blessed thus to fall asleep in Jesus!

THE FROST-BITTEN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY REV. ALFRED TAYLOR.

WHEN the cold weather of winter sets in, many a weak country Sunday-school wraps itself as it were in a winding sheet of dejectedness, calls its friends together for a funeral meeting, and prepares to go into winter quarters. It continues in a state of suspended animation until the winter is over, and the worst of the mud has dried up from the roads. Then, as bears, snakes, and alligators arouse from their winter sleep, and come from the nooks, crevices, and caverns in which they have hibernated, so does such a benumbed concern-half-confidently open its eyes, stretch its limbs, look around to survey the situation, and begin to manifest signs of vitality in a very moderate way.

There is little use in scolding the people who close their schools in winter. There is a set of well worn arguments in favour of keeping open throughout the year. We are told that the public schools and blacksmiths' shops are open all winter, and that the whisky-shops never close their doors on a customer, except when he is too drunk or too poor to pay for his stimulants. When these arguments fail, somebody gravely comes along and asks if the devil gives holiday in winter. The sum of the matter seems to be that, if all these agencies can carry on their operations all winter, the Sunday-schools ought also to go as steadily on.

Well and good, as far as the theory goes. All the schools ought to keep open. Every teacher ought to come with his lesson well studied, even though the school is seven miles from his home, and he must ride on the back of a hard-trotting mule. Every child ought to come with bright eyes, clean face, and a light heart, though he need to tramp through snow-drifts, or trudge through saturated clay, one pound and a-half of which cleaves to each foot at every step that is taken.

But we cannot have every thing to please us. Beautiful as the theory is of plodding through wind, snow, rain, sleet, ice, and mud, there are a great many people who, much as they desire it, cannot accomplish all they would. Some of them have really wearied themselves in the work of the week, and to such an extent that they must rest on the Lord's Day. It is comparatively easy for city folks to walk to church over well-cleaned pavements, or ride thither in street-cars, and on the way legislate concerning country Sunday-schools, and declare that they should be kept open all winter. Some of the self-same consider themselves guilty of no inconsistency when in July (when there is neither snow nor mud, and all the ice they see is in the form of ice-cream; when there is no biting blast, nor pelting storm, nor slippery walk, nor any obstacle greater than hot sunshine) they declare themselves unable to continue their Sunday-school till the middle of September.

If this matter were thoroughly investigated, there would be startling revelations, disclosing the fact that there are a great many schools which have been closed during winter which might as well have been kept open.

A frost-bitten Sunday-school deserves pity, just as we pity a man who suffers with rheumatism. It would be better if the man were free from it; but he has it, or, rather, it has him, and let him make the most of it. A man with no rheumatism can do a great many things that a rheumatic man cannot. A school which has vitality enough to keep open all winter can do a great deal more than one which hibernates.

Welcome to you, O ye frost-bitten, as ye wake from your winter slumbers! The spring-time has come; the coldness is over; the vigour of new life is felt; the bustle of returning activity is a stir; there is now no show for the sleepers. Let everybody be in his place, and awake to all his duties and all his joys.

Open the damp old schoolroom, and let the light of heaven come in. Throw up the window-sashes, and let the health-giving May breeze sweep through. Whitewash the walls, and mend the broken hinges, and clear away the ash-heap, and wash the sooty panes of glass and the muddy floor. Arrange the seats in the coziest pattern, and deck the sides and corners of the room with neat Scripture mottoes. Bring all the flowers the neighbourhood can afford, and give to each poor child who has no flowers at home a bunch to cheer the house. Gather the children, reconstruct the roll, and let the house be full.