

"You ought to like our cows, if it is only for the pure milk they give you. You could not get that in London."

"I had forgotten that. Well, I'll try to like your cows; at any rate I must endeavour to be grateful to them, for I like nice milk."

"And so you like flowers," said Margaret, half wondering that this unpoetical-looking child had a taste for flowers and clouds.

"Oh yes," was the reply given with a bright smile, "I am very fond of them. We used to have a Ward-case. You know what a Ward-case is?"

"Yes, and you put ferns inside."

"Yes, but then they were only green, and the moisture made the glass dim."

"It was better than nothing."

"Yes, it was: but it was not like a garden full of flowers of all colours. Oh, I do so love a garden."

"And I think you have a nice one now."

"Yes, such a beauty; at least," added the speaker, fancying she detected a smile on her listener's countenance, in the interpretation of which she was, however, mistaken, "it's what we call a beauty, because we've seen nothing of such things in London. Perhaps you who are used to a garden would not think so much of it."

"It would be a sad thing," said Margaret, in a pleasant but grave tone, "if the more God gives to us of pleasures the less we should think of them. I should be very sorry if I cared less for flowers now than I did when I was quite a little girl. I grow fonder of them every day."

"So do I," replied the little Londoner, feeling still more at home with the strange lady, and looking at her with a timid but searching look. This look seemed to say, "Could I make a friend of you?" Margaret felt the scrutiny, and bore it quietly, while she scrutinized in return. The look of investigation quickly changed into one of satisfaction on both sides, for Margaret thought she could detect a warm heart and a strong purpose, although the exterior promised nothing.

They went on with their talk about flowers till Margaret thought it was time to pursue her walk. So she asked the little girl to accompany her, which Lilius was very glad to do, in anticipation of more cows.

However, they did not meet any more cows, but soon reached Holmbrook Farm, where the conversation changed to eggs, butter, and other interesting matters, as they seated themselves on the heavy wooden chairs in the ample farm kitchen.

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## HE MISTOOK THE LIGHT!

AND what was the consequence? Why, the largest steamship in the world with a rich cargo, and a company of three hundred souls on board,

was wrecked, in a dark and stormy night, on the most dangerous part of the coast of Ireland.

The noble ship, which cost upwards of £200,000, left her port that very afternoon in fine trim, and with every prospect of a safe and speedy voyage, and at nine o'clock she was thumping upon the rocks, the sea breaking over her with terrific violence, and threatening to send people, ship, and cargo to instant destruction!

But how could they mistake the light? Were the captain and his officers on the look-out? Yes. Was the chart, or map of the coast, closely examined? Yes. Was the compass all right? Yes. And were the common precautions taken to keep the ship on her proper course? Yes, all this was done.

How then could she have met with such a sad disaster? Why because a light appeared which was not noted on the chart, and the captain was deceived by it. He mistook it for another light that was on the chart, and so, when he supposed he was running out to sea, he was really running in upon the breakers! How great a mistake, and how terrible the consequences!

Every reader of these lines is sailing on a more hazardous voyage than the "Great Britain" attempted, and has the command of a nobler vessel and a richer freight than hers. Yes, richer than all the treasures of the world! Thousands of plans are laid to mislead and divert him from his course. False lights are purposely held out to betray him, and tides and currents, of almost resistless power, set against him from every point of the compass. Will he steer clear of them all? Shall we see him push out into the broad sea, with a bright sky, a fair wind, and sails all set for the desired haven? Will he accomplish the voyage, and his fears and perils be all exchanged for the tranquillity and joy of a happy home?

It will depend on two things:—First, whether he has the true chart, and takes good heed to it. It is known as the Holy Scriptures, and it lays down the position of every light on the voyage; and he may be sure that any light that is not found on that chart is to be shunned. Secondly, whether he commits himself and the whole direction of the voyage to Him whose footsteps are on the sea, and who rides upon the wings of the wind. No one ever put his trust in Him and was confounded.

Farewell, then, dear voyager! Be sober—be vigilant—keep your chart always spread before you, and daily ask Him, to whose direction you have committed the voyage, what course He would have you, this day and this year, to steer.

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## THE BOY AND THE FIRE.

WHAT a bitterly cold day it is! Frost on the ground, frost on the window-panes, and frost in my poor fingers and toes! How pleasant it is to



see such a good blazing fire when one comes into the room. I only wish every poor person was as well off as I am this morning!

"Now, Mr. Coal, what did you tumble off that front bar for? I must reach the tongs and put you back, for such a fine large piece as you are ought not to be wasted. There, you look quite bright and comfortable again. What do you call yourself, Mr. Coal?"

"What do you think I am?"

"Are you a mineral?"

"I am, and I am not."

"Explain such an apparent contradiction, if you please."

"I *look* like a mineral, and I possess all the external characters of one, but I certainly used to be a vegetable."

"A vegetable! You must be joking!"

"Never more serious, I assure you."

"Well, I cannot believe that."

"You can do as you please about believing it, but it is quite correct."

"How shall I know it is correct?"

"If you were to examine me by the microscope, and by chemistry, you would find that I should turn out to be vegetable matter, and nothing else, only changed in a very slight degree."

"What sort of vegetable were you, then?"

"I was part of a tree which grew long, long ago, in a huge forest."

"And how did you turn into coal?"

"In process of time these trees decayed, sank into the ground, and the pressure above them, and the heat of the earth around them, slowly transformed them into coal."

"It would not be polite to doubt what you say, but what *proof* is there of this?"

"The coal itself reveals this wonderful fact. If you could go down into a coal-pit, you would be surprised to find that the roof was covered with vegetable remains partially converted into coal; leaves, branches, and stems of the most elegant forms are embedded in the dark, shining surface, hundreds of feet below the top of the ground. Professor Buckland, who visited the coal-mines in Bohemia, says that the most careful imitations of living foliage upon the painted ceilings of Italian palaces, are not to be compared to the beautiful profusion of vegetable forms with which these coal-mines were overhung."

"What kind of a tree did *you* come from, Mr. Coal?"

"From the *Lepidodendron*. It had a tall, scaly, branched trunk, and was seventy or eighty feet high."

"I never heard of such a tree before!"

"Which does not greatly surprise me."

"Does it grow here now?"

"Oh no; some people say that not any of the plants belonging to the period when *I* was born, are now alive. But others will tell you that some of them bear a resemblance to plants still in existence, only that they were very gigantic in size.

There are no traces of grass, or of the innumerable herbs and shrubs which now make the earth so beautiful; and the size, the form, and the whole character of the coal-plants, lead the learned to suppose that the climate of this part of the world was much hotter than it is now."

"Well, you have told me strange things, Mr. Coal! I shall often think of them as I look at my pleasant fire, and remember how much I am indebted to you for such a winter comfort."

"Yes, I am a good friend to you. I help to make you warm this cold weather, and to preserve you in health by keeping your houses dry. And my bright fire gladdens you with its cheerful blaze, and also enables you to prepare your food nicely. What would you do without me?"

"Now don't be conceited, Mr. Coal. I suppose I *could* burn wood."

"You could. And in all new countries where the ground is covered with forests, wood furnishes the inhabitants with fuel; and in older countries, where coal has not yet been found, extensive woods are preserved and planted for this purpose. But this occupies ground which might otherwise grow *corn*. And as the people multiply, the wood, as in many parts of Germany, becomes scarce and dear every year, and the poor suffer sadly in consequence."

"Ah, I did not think of that."

"Besides, you have forgotten how you depend upon *me* for your *gas*, your *steam-engines*, your *steam-boats*, and your *railways*."

"So I had, Mr. Coal. Why, the steam-engine never could have been invented but for you! What shall we do, then, when we have burned you all up, as we must in time?"

"I don't think you need trouble yourself about that. There is sufficient coal, it is said, in South Wales alone, to last you for the next two thousand years."

"That is a good thing. I suppose there are several coal-mines in our country?"

"They are generally spoken of in England as *coal-fields*."

"Why is that?"

"Probably because they were originally vast fields or forests of vegetable growth. Coal-fields are found in Northumberland and Durham, and the midland counties of Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester. Besides these, there are others of vast extent in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, and in North and South Wales."

"Any in Scotland and Ireland?"

"Yes, in both. But in Scotland it is not so abundant, nor of as good quality as in England."

"What is it in the Emerald Isle?"

"In Ireland the coal is excellent, but it has not yet been worked with the same amount of industry and skill."

"Any coal abroad?"

"Coal exists in many parts of the Continent; in France, Belgium, Spain, Bohemia, some parts



of Russia, in Greece, and north of Constantinople. It has long been obtained and burned in China, though it is said not to be of first-rate quality there. It is found in many parts of India, in Australia, and Van Diemen's Land. And the vast continent of America abounds with rich coal-fields."

"Has coal always been got in England?"

"Whether the ancient Britons made use of it or not, I do not know; but the Romans were evidently acquainted with our family, because ancient coal-cinders have been found in the walls of some of their buildings still remaining in this country. The first discovery of coal at Newcastle-on-Tyne is supposed to be about 1234; but so great was the general prejudice against it, that its use was forbidden in and near London, as being 'prejudicial to health,' so that smiths even were obliged to use wood. In 1400, in spite of the general complaint against coal as a public nuisance, it was generally burned in London; but it was not in common use in England until the reign of Charles I., 1625."

"Thank you, Mr. Coal, for this information. I always thought very highly of you, but now that I know what a great blessing you are to the world, I shall value more than ever."

"And as you think of *me*, think how God's wonderful providence is shown in preparing such large coal-fields for the future wants of mankind. He not only opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living creature, but He arranges things beforehand, which He knows will be needful for their comfort and happiness."

"Your daily life His goodness shows:  
From his kind hand all blessing flows;  
For all your needful wants He cares,  
And future bliss for you prepares.  
Then should not you delight to raise  
To Him your joyful song of praise?"

## THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

**CORN PAPER.**—The manufacture of paper from the leaves of Indian corn is becoming extensive in Austria. The paper is said to be tougher than any ordinary paper made from rags, while it is almost wholly free from silica, which makes paper produced from straw so brittle.

**INTELLIGENT BEES.**—Bees are not productive in tropical zones, because the climate is so equable that flowers are blooming all the year round, and the bee loses the instinct of hoarding honey for a winter that never comes. This fact is proved by the experiment of a German who took a few hives of bees to Peru, where the insect had not before been known. The first year he obtained a plentiful supply of honey, but year by year it decreased, until now the bees will hardly collect any.

**VALUE OF ONE HALF-PENNY.**—A French mathematician has been calculating what would now be the sum produced by one half-penny put out at

five per cent. per annum, compound interest, at the commencement of the Christian era. He estimates what would be the value of a ball of solid gold, equal in size to the earth. He then makes the astounding statement that had one such ball of gold fallen each minute during the past eighteen hundred and sixty years, the value of all these globes together would not amount to so much as the sum produced by one half-penny at compound interest, during the same period.

**THE INSECT WORLD.**—Professor Agassiz says that more than a lifetime would be necessary to enumerate the various species of insects and describe their appearance. Meiger, a German, collected and described six hundred species of flies, which he collected in a district of ten miles' circumference. There have been collected in Europe twenty thousand species of insects preying on wheat. In Berlin, two professors are engaged in collecting, observing, and describing insects and their habits, and already they have published five large volumes upon the insects which attack forest trees.

**CURIOUS BIBLES.**—There is now in a state of good preservation at Gottingen, a Bible written on palm leaves, containing 5376 leaves. Another copy, of the same material, is at Copenhagen. There were also in Sir Hans Sloane's collection more than twenty manuscripts, in various languages, on the same material.

**MINIATURE OAKS.**—If an acorn be suspended by a piece of cord within half an inch of the surface of some water contained in a glass, and permitted so to remain without disturbance for a few months, it will burst, send a root into the water, and shoot upward a straight tapering stem with beautiful little green leaves. In this way a young oak tree may be produced on the mantle-shelf of a room, and become an interesting object. The chesnut will also grow thus, and probably other nut-bearing trees. The water should be often changed when the plant has appeared.

**INTERESTING FACTS.**—Some female spiders produce 2000 eggs.—About thirty fresh-water springs are discovered under the sea on the south of the Persian Gulf.—A wasp's nest usually contains 15,000 or 16,000 cells.—There are six or seven generations of gnats in a summer, and each lays 250 eggs.—There are about 9000 cells in a square foot of honey-comb; 5000 bees weigh a pound.

## EDITORIAL NOTICES.

**LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR** (the Rev. W. MEYNELL WHITEMORE) may be addressed to him at the Publishers', 24, Paternoster Row, London. His best thanks are given to those kind friends who have been, and still are, actively canvassing on behalf of this magazine.

**PROSPECTUSES** may be had on application to either Editor or Publishers. In writing for them, please to state how many are wanted, and of which sort, *i. e.*, whether the ADDRESS TO TEACHERS, or the ILLUSTRATED CANVASSING BILL.

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