

THE MILLER AND THE KNAPSACK MAN

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CHAPTER I

THE MUSICAL MILLER

"THERE dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
Beside the river Dee;
He worked and sung from morn to night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be:
I envy nobody, no, not I,
And nobody envies me.

Such was the cheerful song which David Grisewood was singing as he stood leaning his elbows on the white protecting rail of the circular platform which projected from the second story of Burnham mill. "Hale and bold," he certainly was; "work and sing", he certainly did; but I am somewhat doubtful as to his absolute freedom from the envy of which he sung, and more than doubtful as to his neighbours' freedom from that infirmity, so far as he was concerned.

A stout, ruddy-faced, good-tempered miller was David Grisewood, as could well be found in all that region, the said region including all the eastern borders of "Canny Yorkshire"; and in that respect the miller of Burnham Pool was quite the equal of the more celebrated "miller of the Dee". According to popular report, and in this instance that unsubstantial authority was not far wrong, he was rather a "warm" man in a financial sense. The perpetual streams that flowed down his meal-spouts and into his meal-sacks, caused a considerable stream of another sort to flow also into his money-bags, and from thence to overflow into the "Yorkshire Bank", in the neighbouring town of Knutley, and other reservoirs, for safe keeping.

His round, clean-shaven face, and his close-cropped iron-grey hair, indicated, together with a slight stoop in the shoulders, that he was fairly beyond what is called middle life, and that, the summit having been reached, he must expect for the future to make life's journey all down hill. Old Time, however, was dealing very gently with him, and there seemed to be every probability that the slope would be long and easy.

Directly under the narrow platform on which he stands is the long, low-roofed, whitewashed house, in which he, his father, and his grandfather were born, for the mill is quite a long-descended heritage; and in that house, he and his wife and a family of youthful Grisewoods now reside. It is nearly covered on two sides with climbing roses, honeysuckle, and jasmine, and at the latticed porch, whose wooden framework is all but hidden by flowering creepers, are two good-sized laburnum trees, which, when covered with their glory of golden tassels, make the rural picture very beautiful to see.

Behind the house there is an extensive enclosure, half orchard and half garden. The various kinds of fruit-trees, especially the apple, pear, and plum trees, are just at this time bending beneath quite a wealth of ripening fruit; the gooseberries and the currants, raspberries, &c, have all been gathered in, except, indeed, a sprinkling of all sorts, which will gradually vanish before the prying eyes and venturesome fingers of the younger members of the family, who have each of them a sweet tooth for matters of that kind; the vegetables are both plentiful and thriving, for it is a splendid summer season, and David, as a gardener, is both skillful and diligent, and knows well how to handle spade and hoe.

In the middle of the enclosure is Burnham Pool, both broad and deep, in which at early morn and eventide the roach and dace may be seen busily catering for themselves among the flies that hover over the surface, and at each upward leap making little circlets of commotion on the silver flood. From this pool the mill derives its steady supply of water-power. Being well fed by the broad beck which flows from its source far away among the Burnham Wolds, it is always capable of driving the big overshot water-wheel with sufficient force to keep three pairs of mill-stones hard at work; and the rhythmic plish-plash of the wheel, and the steady drip-drip of the surplus water, make quite a pleasant music of their own, especially on such warm midsummer weather as now prevails.

Besides this, there are four ponderous sails stretching right and left and up and down like the limbs of some great giant, so that David, who thoroughly believes in the wisdom of having two strings to his

bow, can conduct the grinding process either by wind or water, or even both, should stress of business so require. Stress of business was by no means an uncommon experience with the thriving miller, and this may help to account for much of the cheerful song that made him notable among his neighbours. There is an old proverb which says that "a full purse jingles fine"; and as David Grisewood was strongly credited with such an article, perhaps it was that which made him jingle too.

When sails and mill-wheel are all at work together, there is a pretty commotion going on, I can tell you. The rush of the sails, the whirr of the stones, the clack of the hopper, and the mingled growl of the machinery, completely drowns David's song, however loud he sings it; and makes the roomy, old-fashioned house to vibrate in such a manner as, but for long familiarity with it, might well arouse fears as to its stability, and is enough to make a casual visitor "stand from under" for sheer safety's sake.

To-day, owing to an accident, the splash of the water-wheel is suspended; and although every strip of canvas on the sails is unfurled to catch any breeze that may arise, the big outstretching beams do not move a jot, for not a capful of wind, as the sailors say, can be raised, though David should either whistle or sing for it, both of which—in turn of course—he is thoroughly competent to do.

So David Grisewood leans on the gallery rail there, while all around him is sunnily silent, as nature is very apt to be on a hot summer's afternoon; and no voice or sound is heard, save the monotonous flow of the water through the 'scutt', and the clear tenor voice of the miller, as he chants the jaunty experiences of the "miller of the Dee". Not only is our musical miller a capital singer, but he is also an admirable player upon an instrument, such as would have delighted the heart of his Jewish namesake "the sweet singer of Israel". It was not the harp, however, with which David Grisewood's fingers were familiar, but the bugle; and when the inspiration was fairly on him, he could render the sweet music of "Woodman, spare that tree", or "Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon", or "The last rose of summer", with such pleasing power and effect, that the toilers in the neighbouring fields would straighten their weary backs and lean upon their tools and listen with delight, and the very cattle would cease from browsing and forget to brush away the teasing flies, while David, like a second Orpheus, exercised his magic power to charm, and flooded the valley with the silver tones which rang and rippled from out the responsive keys of his bugle-horn.

It is far too hot just now, however, for any such effort as that, so the bugle is laid snugly in its velvet-lined mahogany box, and hid away in a closet within the mill; and David contents himself with singing his favorite song:

"There dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
Beside the river Dee;
He worked and sung from morn to night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be:
'I envy nobody, no, not I,
And nobody envies me.'"

CHAPTER II

THE MAN WITH THE KNAPSACK

STILL wrapped in his lazily pleasant occupation, and still leaning on the white railing of the mill gallery, David Grisewood continued his favorite strain:

"'Thou'rt wrong, my friend,' said old King Hal,
'Thou'rt wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now, what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the King,
Beside the river Dee'.

The miller smiled and doffed his cap:
'I earn my bread', quoth he,
'I love my wife, I love my friend,
I love my children three;
I owe no penny I cannot pay,
I thank the river Dee,
That turns the mill, that grinds the corn,
To feed my bairns and me'."

"It's very kind of the river Dee, no doubt, my friend. Still, I don't suppose it would ever have turned his mill for him if 'Somebody else' hadn't had a hand in it. Do you think it would?"

Turning hastily round in the direction from whence the voice proceeded, David Grisewood saw a short, thick-set, pleasant-looking fellow standing in the doorway which led from the mill to the platform, with a smile on his face and a happy twinkle in his grey eyes, which commended their possessor to the favor of the musical miller all at once. The man had a kind of knapsack strapped upon his back, and a serviceable black-thorn walking-stick in his hand. His hot face and dirty boots—strong boots, for hard travel—gave sufficient evidence that he had come from afar, and had found it rather a trying occupation in that sultry July weather. Attracted by the miller's merry song, he had ascended the mill at unawares, and had stood leaning quietly against the door-post until David had finished his song.

Now, a country mill is a sort of domain that is supposed to be accessible to any respectable wayfarer through a sparsely-peopled district; and though the man was quite a stranger, his knapsack betokened him to be an itinerant vendor of something or other, and David Grisewood never thought of being surprised at the interruption. Still harping on the subject suggested by the miller's song, the stranger took off his low-crowned straw hat, drew the back of his hand across his perspiring forehead, and continued—"I don't suppose you would thank Burnham Beck for coming this way to turn your water-wheel for you."

"Hang it, man, but I would though," interrupted the miller, warmly enough. "Four generations of Grisewoods have lived on this spot, an' have gotten meal, meat, and money by Burnham Beck; I'm gettin' meal, meat, an' money out of it myself, an' there's meal, meat, an'

money in it for my bairns after me.

I believe in speakin' well o' the brig that carries you across; an' I say, 'thank Burnham Beck for all it's brought to me an' mine'. I'm not one o' your ungrateful sort, thank goodness!"

"Aye, aye, that's just it", said the stranger, who had by this time relieved himself of his knapsack, which now lay at his feet. Again, lifting off his hat and putting back from his brow the hair which was a little tinged with grey, "Aye, aye, that's just it: 'Thank Goodness!'"

"O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

"I'm fond of singing, myself", the stranger continued, looking out at the magnificent landscape of stream and vale, of spangled mead and fruitful field and tree-clad slope, which from that elevated position was extensive and striking. "It's enough to make anybody sing, this is." Straightway, with a voice clear, full, and evidently well used to it, he sang with the verve which comes to song when the heart's in it:

"We plough the fertile meadows,
We sow the furrowed land;
But all the growth and increase
Are in God's mighty hand;
He gives the shower and sunshine
To swell the quickening grain;
The springing corn He blesses,
He clothes the golden plain.

*Every bounteous blessing
His faithful love bestows;
Then magnify his glorious name
From whom all goodness flows.*

By him all things were fashioned,
Around us and afar;
He formed the earth and ocean.
He kindled every star;
His love ordained the seasons,
By him are all things fed,
He for the sparrow careth,
He gives our daily bread.

Every bounteous blessing
His faithful love bestows;
Then magnify his glorious Name
From whom all goodness flows.
All praise to Thee, O Father,
The Giver of all good,
Upon whose care dependeth
Our life and health and food.

We bring our glad thanksgiving,
Our gifts of love and praise;
Be thine our grateful service,
The harvest of our days:
Every bounteous blessing
His faithful love bestows;
Then magnify his glorious Name
From Whom all goodness flows."

There, miller! You were right enough just now when you said 'Thank Goodness'. 'There is none good but One, and that is God'.

"Then magnify his glorious Name
From whom all goodness flows."

Why its flowing about us now, flowing like a sea this blessed summer afternoon; and the very bees that suck the sweetness from your roses there, and carry the yellow treasure to their hives, keep humming *their* song all the time; and I'll warrant that if we could translate it out of the bee-language into ours it would be 'God is good'."

Now the miller had been listening to the song, silently and thoughtfully, and had not by any means lost sight of the lesson the stranger evidently intended him to learn. His first thought, however, was one of admiration of the stranger's power of song. He felt strangely drawn to him, and with undisguised warmth of feeling he exclaimed:

"I say, Mr. What's-your-name, you can sing, an' no mistake. You've got an amazing good voice of your own, an' it's in splendid tune. I guess you've been put under training when you were young. Them high notes are none so easy to reach, unless you know how to rise to 'em by degrees."

"You are right, miller; by-the-by, my name is Goodall -Caleb Goodall-at your service. I'm afraid it isn't all the same as 'All-good,' though I would fain be better than I am.

I wasn't put under training in the way you mean. I was always fond of singing, and seldom failed to pick up any new ditty that came in my way. But there came a day when it seemed as though the very spirit of singing got inside me. I'd been hearing about him who came from heaven to die for poor sinners like me; and after the sermon was over, the congregation—there was only a little handful of them altogether—began to sing about the love of Jesus and the faith that saves all them that believe. I thought, 'Well, I'll believe too', and I did; and do you know, I felt at first such a choking in the throat that I couldn't sing at all. I was right down dumb, an' I felt like as if I should burst; and then I felt so happy that it was forced to find vent somehow. So, I began to sing, and since then:

'My Saviour has been all my song, And shall be till I die!'

Ever since that happy day I've been put into training, as you said just now."

"Give us another stave," said the miller, who had not quite followed the meaning of his companion, though he had perhaps just a faint idea of his drift.

"With all the pleasure in life, miller", said Caleb Goodall. "Let's see; I sang just now about God's goodness, didn't I? Well, I can't mend that, or sing about it too often, so here goes":

Again, the stranger lifted his eyes for one brief moment towards the blue sky above him, though it is likely enough that his vision did not end there— people of Caleb Goodall's kind always see farther than they look when their gaze is upward; and with a voice that trembled with emotion, he sang:

"Thou, my God, art good and wise,
And infinite in power;
Thee let all in earth and skies
Continually adore.
Give me thy converting grace,
That I may obedient prove;
Serve my Maker all my days,
And my Redeemer's love.

For my life and clothes and food,
And every comfort here,
Thee, my most-indulgent God,
I thank with heart sincere;
For the blessings numberless
Which Thou hast already given,
For my smallest spark of grace,
And for my hope of heaven!"

"Praise God", continued the singer when his song was ended: "Praise God for my hope of heaven! You and I can't float to heaven either on Burnham Beck or the river Dee, miller; but on the love of God, through the merit of our blessed Saviour, we can, and go swimming and singing all the way; and as sure as my name's Caleb Goodall, that's just what I mean to do. What do you say to that, miller? What do *you* mean to do?"

Not one word did the miller say. His attention had been drawn away most effectually from the stranger's voice and singing; and he was thinking — thinking as he had not thought for many a long year — upon God's goodness, the Saviour's love, and a possible heaven to enter when he must, willy-nilly, turn his back for ever on Burnham Beck, which had hitherto bounded alike his attention and his hopes.

Caleb Goodall was evidently about his 'Master's business', and was peculiarly adapted for the mission on which he had been sent.

CHAPTER III

THE PEDDLER PROCEEDS TO BUSINESS

NEVER a word said David Grisewood in answer to the stranger's question. He stood looking at the singer in a sort of dazed wonder. It may be safely said that he had just received a revelation—an experience, that, which is apt to be received in astonished silence.

It may be safely said, too, that the good-tempered miller had never in all his life bestowed a serious thought on anything outside the familiar circle of his 'cadging round' for custom, or apart from the mill, the meal, the market, and the money, which these produced for him. His lot in life was cast in a rural district; a district somewhat thinly peopled with a simple, ignorant, and all but heathenish peasantry, with a certain sprinkling of better-off folks, almost as ignorant and as heathenish as they.

Burnham was a large parish as measured by its acres; the parish church was situated afar off; the clergyman was very aged and little better than non-resident; and it is to be feared that the lamp of religious truth in that vicinity burnt very low, and gave forth but a very feeble light. Had David Grisewood been in the habit of attending

the church services, which he certainly was not, it may well be questioned, under the circumstances, whether he would have known much more or have been much the better for that.

That was the state of things in this particular village in the days when David Grisewood sung his solos on the balcony of Burnham Mill. With the miller, as with his ancestors before him, those solemn and important matters that had to do with personal religion, and practical Christianity, were very thoroughly ignored. The mill, the wind, Burnham Pool, and Burnham Beck were to him a quaternion of *fetishes* to whom he had to look for all the good that came to him, and from which he received all that he got, with a dull notion that these 'familiar spirits' treated him very well, and had from him in the way of appreciation and gratitude all that his sluggish and uninformed nature was capable of.

Nevertheless, David Grisewood was a fairly honest man as times went. He was regarded by his neighbours as being not quite so grasping as his kind often are in the matters of surreptitious 'toll', and in his case the proverbial 'miller's thumb' was not in the habit of meddling with the measures of meal beyond what his fair and legitimate claims demanded. Among the farmers round he was known as "honest Dave," and that is a name and title a good deal better worth the wearing than some of a more pretentious sort.

His wife Millicent, or "Millie", as she was familiarly called, was in matters religious not one whit wiser than her husband. He had married her while she was still but a girl in her teens, from a solitary farmhouse up among the wolds; and from the day that she was installed as mistress of the white-washed mill-house, her poultry-yard and her dairy had absorbed all her interest and attention; except, indeed, on special occasions, when such minor matters as the birth and care of her children interfered therewith. Take her for all in all, she was a busy, bustling sort of body, a very 'Martha' in her over-carefulness about many things, an attribute which was not without its effect upon her general temper.

From this brief sketch of things as they were at Burnham Mill, the reader will perceive that Caleb Goodall's song, and his references to the inability of Burnham Beck to meet all the miller's necessities, brought that honest man face to face with a good many matters hitherto all undreamed of in his limited philosophy. So, as I have said, he looked at Caleb in silent wonderment, and found never a word to say.

This, however, was of all the less importance inasmuch as Caleb Goodall was quite capable of keeping the ball rolling; and when he saw a favourable opportunity of pursuing his calling, he was not wont to let it slip for want of redeeming the time. By this time his knapsack was wide open, and he himself was on his knees beside it. Taking up a brightly bound book with several pictures in it, he displayed them before the eyes of the miller.

"I've got a book here, miller," said he, "that I should like to sell you. Listen!"

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep, and as I slept, I dreamed a dream, and behold I saw a man

clothed in rags, standing in a certain place, a book in his hand, and a great burden on his back."

"Then it goes on to tell you all that happened to that man, all about the devils and the giants that he met with, about the castles and the palaces he got into, until the poor ragged fellow gets a royal robe, and changes his heavy bundle for a crown of gold. He's a capital singer, too, listen to this." Here again the colporteur lifted up his voice and sang as he knelt:

"Thus far I did come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest Cross! Blest Sepulcher! Blest rather be
The Man that here was put to death for me!"

"The book tells you all about it", he continued, "rags, book, cross, bundle, crown, everything. I've read it myself till I've both laughed and cried. It's only a shilling. Buy it for the Missis. It's the cheapest shilling's worth you ever bought in your life. I've got a lot more in my knapsack. Shall I show you some more?"

David Grisewood was greatly interested, he couldn't help it, and it was worth a shilling to hear the peddler sing. He was about to pull out of his pocket the silver coin required to make him the owner of the prize, when the mention of the "Missis" reminded him that his wife might like to have a peep at the pictorial treasures which the knapsack contained. He had had a glimpse of certain bright-colored prints such as he had never seen before.

"You had better come into the house", quoth David. "Millie'll be glad to have a look at 'em; and I daresay you won't be sorry to have a bowl of milk after a sweltering walk on such a piping hot day as this is?"

"Indeed, I shall be very grateful for it", said Caleb Goodall heartily. "I do feel a bit fagged and thirsty", and so gathering up his knapsack he prepared to follow the miller down the ladder and into those domestic regions over which busy, bustling Millie reigned supreme.

The worthy peddler was grateful, no doubt, for the invitation and the prospect of a cool draught from the miller's dairy, but he was even more delighted at the prospect of being "about his Master's business", by David Grisewood's hearthstone.

Wonderful and wise are the ways of Divine Providence. He makes both wind and calm to serve his purpose and to aid his chosen messengers to accomplish their appointed task. The miller had been strongly inclined to grumble that day, because at the very time that his mill-wheel was disabled there was not wind enough to fill the sails, so that his mill was idle altogether. He little knew that the sultry air was stilled in order that the breath of the Spirit, which "bloweth where it listeth", might bring the Bread of Life within reach of him and his household.

Had the mill been going, it may be questioned whether even Caleb Goodall, with all his aptitude for godly work, would not have failed to

draw the miller's attention from the meal-spout and the prospective gains which were sure to come to hand. Short-sighted mortals often grumble at annoying events, which are so controlled by the gracious Providence of God that they become channels through which He sends the most precious gifts of good.

Shouldering his knapsack and picking up his trusty black-thorn stick, Caleb Goodall followed his guide down the ladder, and for the life of him he could not help singing as he went:

"God loved the world of sinners lost
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation full at highest cost
He offers free to all.
Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wond'rous love,
The love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above
To die on Calvary."

Every word fell clearly on the ear of the listening miller, and being sung with the sweet pathos which glad experience alone can give, they fell not only on his ear but on his heart, and gave him more to think about than had been presented to him for many and many a day. David Grisewood was more than half sorry that the kitchen-door was reached too soon to admit of another stave from the same sweet song.

CHAPTER IV

MILLIE GRISEWOOD IS WON OVER

DAVID GRISEWOOD knew full well that it would not do, at that hour of the day, to expect his wife to leave the scene of her daily toil, and so he conducted the peddler direct to the back premises, so as not to risk a scolding by taking the stranger either into the parlour or the general "living-room", where things were kept in such apple-pie order that it was rather perilous to interfere with them. Millie, as a housewife, was a little despotic, and her edicts were not lightly to be interfered with or disobeyed.

"Millie, lass," said David to his wife, "here's a peddler with some nice picture-books. I thought you would like, mebber, to have a look at 'em. It's scorching hot, an' he's desperate warm with walking. Don't you think you could spare him a drink of milk?"

David had managed to put the matter carefully and cautiously, but it would not do. Millie was busily engaged in scouring the churn, and was in the act of putting a high polish on its bright metal bands, when the two men entered the kitchen. She looked very hot and flustered. This was partly due, no doubt, to the heat of the day and the vigour of her rubbing; but it was mainly due to the fact that Mrs. Grisewood was just then in an uncomfortable temper. I am bound to say that her normal condition was that of being "worrified," and as a general consequence, other people found her "worrying;" and just at this time two things had transpired which had had an ill effect upon her temper.

In the first place, last night's meal of milk, thanks to a thunderstorm, had gone quite sour—so sour as to compel its transference to the

pig-trough. This involved not only the loss of much cream and butter, but it had left an unpleasant odour on her pans, an odour which seemed to pervade the whole dairy; and Millie, who was the veriest pink of cleanliness, felt her soul to be sore vexed within her. To make matters worse, her little servant-girl had left a large pail of water in the backyard; and two or three young chickens, more curious than was good for them, or impelled, maybe, by an inordinate thirst, had perched upon the rim, and toppling over had committed involuntary suicide by drowning. David had happened on an evil moment, and in answer to his request that she would give the stranger a drink of milk, Millie replied not with that softness of voice which is such a pleasant thing in woman:

"Books! I've no time to waste over books an' pictur's; not I, any. I have my livin' to earn. Milk? No, I can't spare any. Last night's milk's gone sour; I shan't meddle with this morning's milk, it'll spoil the cream. There's the well, there, just outside; you can draw him a mug o' water", and without more ado, Millie handled her scrubbing brush more vigorously than before.

"Oh, thank you. Thank you kindly, Missis", said Caleb as warmly as if she had offered him a fortune. "I *am* glad you've got a well. I'll pull the bucket up myself, it'll be gloriously cool. As for milk, I've got some in my knapsack, so I won't trouble you; but I should like you to look at my books."

The miller looked at the speaker with a good deal of surprise. He thought Caleb might just as well have owned that before, and so have saved him from such a rebuff. He couldn't help thinking, too, that 'milk' was a queer article to put along with his books in his knapsack. Caleb had put his burden on a chair, and was just making for the well, when Millie, who had given him a good 'looking over', interposed: "Nay, nay", said she, "it isn't good to drink too much cold water when you're hot. I'll see what I can do."

You see, Mrs. Grisewood was a very decent sort of woman after all. Human beings, as well as cats, are all the more comfortably managed if you will stroke them the right way; and Caleb's pleasant smile and his hearty "thank you" for the cold water so curtly proffered had disarmed her entirely. She beckoned David to lead their guest into the front kitchen, and proceeded at once to the dairy to "cream" a bowl of milk, and bring the thirsty traveller a safer draught than would be got from "the old oaken bucket that hangs by the well".

When she returned, Caleb's knapsack was open, and his wares were spread upon the table. Millie's quick eye soon discovered that there was no flask or bottle there, and she jumped to the conclusion that Caleb's statement about his own supply of milk was simply an excuse to cover his retreat.

"Thank you kindly, Missis", said the peddler as he took the full basin from her hands. Then, taking a hearty pull at it, he smacked his lips, and said: "I say, ma'am, this *is* good. It comes out of a sweet dairy this, an' no mistake. But it isn't as good as mine, after all."

It was music to Millie that word about the "sweet dairy", especially as she remembered the consequences of the thunderstorm, and there was quite a smile on her face as she remarked: "Why, you haven't got any milk! What do you mean?"

"Haven't I, though?" said Caleb. "Wait a bit." He took from his knapsack a small Bible, with bright cover and gilt edges, and turning to the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, he read:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and *milk* without money and without price!"

Turning over the inspired pages, he came to the first epistle of Peter, and read again: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere *milk of the word*, that ye may grow thereby."

"Missis", he continued, patting the book lovingly as he spoke, "this is the Word, the milk of the Word; and for well-nigh thirty years I've been drinking it and enjoying it every day; and, like David, I can say, 'it's sweeter than honey and the honeycomb'."

"Like David?" said Millie, in a sort of half-contemptuous surprise; "why, how does *he* know? He's never mentioned it to me".

Strange to say, Millie had unconsciously preached a sermon to her husband in that sentence. The miller blushed with the consciousness that he never had, because he never knew of it himself. He was just about to explain when the peddler, who perceived she had misapprehended him, replied: "Nay, nay, I don't mean the miller, but his namesake in the Bible, who used to love this Book and sing about it every day. And no wonder, for he used to meditate in it day and night!"

Here again the peddler patted the Book, and without further warning he struck up a favourite song as his eye rested lovingly on its leaves:

"Blessed Bible! How I love it!
How it doth my bosom cheer!
What hath earth like this to covet?
O, what store of wealth is here!

I was lost and doomed to sorrow;
Not one ray of light or bliss
Could I from earth's treasure borrow,
Till my way was cheered by this.

Yes, sweet Bible, I will hide thee
Ever deeper in my heart;
Thou through all my life shalt guide me,
And in death we will not part.

Part in death? No, never, never!
Through its vale I'll lean on thee;
Then in heaven above, for ever,
Sweeter still thy truths shall be."

It would be quite impossible for me to describe the deep feeling—the tones which told that every word came from the heart—or the pious fervency with which Caleb Goodall sang these lines. His eyes were filled with tears; his lips quivered in his efforts to keep down the grateful choking in the throat, and his hearers became almost as much affected as himself.

Both the miller and his wife knew that there was a Bible. In the far-off days of infancy, they had heard of it; during their brief and ineffective term of schooling they had read in it; but that it should be so

precious to anybody, that it should be so full of sweetness as the peddler sang of—this was news indeed; and then and there was begotten a desire to look into its neglected pages, and to test for themselves the honey-sweet that gathers on its sacred leaves.

With admirable skill Caleb turned the advantage he had gained to good account. "May I read a few verses?" he said. Millie dropped upon the nearest chair with a silent nod that meant "go on", and straightway the evangelist began:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Slowly, tenderly, lovingly through the sweet psalm went he, and all the while his Master told him that *his* word should "prosper in the thing whereto He sent it".

CHAPTER V

THE MILLER IS UNDER A SPELL

MARTIN LUTHER calls the Twenty-third Psalm the "nightingale among psalms", and it is certain that as its sweet strains fell upon the ear of Millie Grisewood, that good woman listened with a strange delight. When Caleb Goodall came to the last verse, he quickly turned the pages of his Bible over and read the story of the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and then knelt down, and out of a full heart he prayed that the Lord might be the Shepherd and Saviour of the two poor wandering sheep to whom he had been sent, and that He would lead them both in the 'green pastures' and by the 'still waters' of his tender love and grace. For a brief moment or two they remained seated, as if they hardly knew how to act, and then they knelt too, and for the first time since they took their marriage vows were found in the attitude and the act of prayer.

After this Caleb had no difficulty in effecting several sales. Neither the miller nor his wife felt able to say much, and the evangelist was quite willing that the spell should work silently, for, said he to himself, 'work most assuredly it will'.

Two Bibles were purchased, an illustrated volume of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", and a few smaller books for the young folks. Then Caleb said, as he packed up his goods again, "I shall be round this way again in a few weeks' time, and then I'll give you another call. If you've bought anything you don't like, I'll change it then".

"Oh", said Millie, "there's no fear of that. I feel sure we shall like 'em; and we shall be glad to see you whenever you come this way. Shan't we, David?"

Now that question was itself an innovation. It was very rarely indeed that the capable and self-assertive Millie felt called upon to appeal to her nominal lord and master, and David could hardly believe his own ears when he was asked to endorse the peddler's welcome. For one moment, therefore, the expected answer did not follow.

"I say we shall *both* be delighted to see him here again", she repeated, inquiringly rather than imperatively, and David was glad enough to say, "Ay, *that* we shall", in the tones of a man who, having an unexpected privilege, is bent upon making the most and best of it. "Ay, that we shall, an' the sooner the better, say I."

"Thank you kindly", responded Caleb, as he shouldered his knapsack and resumed his blackthorn staff. "If it's God's will that we should meet again, I shall be here soon; but everybody and everything is in his hands, and", he continued, with a meaning look at David, "our course, like that of Burnham Beck, must be as He wills. God bless you, and good-day".

On leaving the house Caleb handed a little book of sacred songs to the miller. "I heard that you were a good singer", he said, "as I stood in the doorway of your mill. Please to accept this. You'll find some songs in it that are quite as good as 'The Miller of the Dee'. When I come round next time, if there's one of them you've taken a fancy to, I'll teach you the tune if you like."

Then twirling his blackthorn stick in very gladness of heart, because of the foothold he had gained, he strode across the mill-yard and out through the white gate, and along the narrow lane which led to the highway, singing as he went:

"My song shall be of Jesus,
His mercy crowns my days;
He fills my cup with blessing,
And tunes my heart to praise.

My song shall be of Jesus,
The precious Lamb of God,
Who gave Himself my ransom,
And bought me with his blood!"

David Grisewood followed the singer to the gate, leaned his arms on it after he had passed through, then followed him with his eyes, listening all the while as the gospel strains were being borne upon the air. "The precious Lamb of God", thought the miller. "What of Him?" "Who gave Himself my ransom, and bought me with his blood."

Herein, he felt, lay the kernel of the question. But he could not understand it. Like the Ethiopian nobleman before Philip joined himself to his chariot, he needed "some man to guide" him. Perhaps the Good Spirit Himself will make the glorious meaning clear. He had some indistinct idea of having repeated at church, while yet a lad, something about "Jesus Christ our Lord, born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, and who the third day rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven"; but as to what all this meant to him as a poor sinner before God, he knew but little and had cared less. Now, however, he longed with an earnest longing, and, like the recovered blind man in the Gospel, was saying to himself even more eagerly than he knew, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

After he had lost sight and sound of the retreating peddler, David returned to the mill without again entering the house. He ascended to the gallery, leaned his arms again upon the circling rail and cast his eyes on the fair waters of Burnham Beck and Burnham Pool, the former lying among the meadows like a sinuous thread of silver, the latter like a patch of cloud-flecked blue let down from heaven, and both shimmering in the red light of the westering sun. The familiar lines came readily to his mind, "I thank the river Dee that turns my mill to grind the corn to feed my bairns and me".

But they wouldn't come to his lips. The idea had become an offence to him all at once. What! thank Burnham Beck! He lifted his eyes involuntarily up towards the infinite blue, more beautiful for the fleecy clouds that floated there, and he seemed to feel himself in the presence of the God whom he had so long ignored. He peered wistfully into the azure depths, as though he expected, half desired, half feared, to catch a glimpse of his forgotten Maker.

The planet Jupiter, that kingliest of evening stars, looked down upon him. Conscious guilt construed it to be the eye of God, and as if shrinking from the Observer, he turned away and re-entered the mill. How still it was! How oppressively and solemnly still! What a weird solitude it had suddenly become! He felt as though it would be a relief if he could hear the creaking of the wheels and the whirr of the mill-stones. He was like Adam when he hid himself in the garden.

Nervous, troubled in spirit, and ill at ease, oppressed also by a nameless weight, he descended to the ground-floor of the mill. Standing on the doorstep he could catch a glimpse of the Beck, the only 'God' he had ever thought fit to thank, gleaming through the lilac bushes. Again, an upward look revealed the steady searching gaze of the evening star still fixed upon him, holding him as if it would not let him go. He walked across the yard, leaned his arms on the white gate through which the peddler had so lately passed. He looked down the narrow lane, all redolent with the bloom and breath of the wild rose, and half hoped to catch another glimpse of the man with the knapsack. That he could not do, for by this time Caleb Goodall was far away. But it seemed as if he could call up his figure as he strode off, twirling his blackthorn stick and singing as he went. Better still; he could remember the words he'd sung. They were borne in upon him like a breath from Heaven:

"The precious Lamb of God,
Who gave himself my ransom,
And bought me with his blood."

As he repeated the glorious lines, the tears came into his eyes. He rather felt their meaning than knew it. His tones grew tremulous. O, that he could ask somebody; talk to somebody! O, for more light!

Then he resolved to go into the house, wondering as he went whether Millie would spare a moment to him from her household cares. He went round through the backyard and into the kitchen. There stood the churn exactly where it was, and as it was, when he brought in Caleb Goodall to get him a bowl of milk. The scouring-brush was laid on it and the pail beside it, just as Millie left it when her heart softened and she went to the dairy on her kindly errand. What could she be doing? For bustling Millie to act like this was startling. He passed into the front kitchen, and, lo, there was Millie so deeply immersed in the sacred songs that she was startled at her husband's footstep, and blushed beneath his eye as if conscious she was acting altogether unlike herself.

"Millie, my lass," said David, "what's this that's come to us?" And Millie's answer was a sob, as she laid down the book, and with her apron wiped away a tear.

CHAPTER VI

DICK WHINBUSH CAN'T MAKE IT OUT

"MILLIE, my lass, what's come to us?" And as he spoke, David Grisewood laid his hand upon his wife's shoulder, and looked into her glistening eyes, and saw there an unaccustomed light.

"O, David", said she, "just read this. I wonder what it means. It sounds so beautiful".

David took the book and read aloud the song with which Millie had been captivated, and which had been giving her much food for thought:

"Only a step to Jesus! Then why not take it now?
Come, and thy sin confessing, to him, thy Saviour, bow.
Only a step to Jesus! Believe, and thou shalt live;
Lovingly now He's waiting, and ready to forgive.

"Only a step! Only a step! Come—for He waits for thee"

Only a step to Jesus! Then why not come, and say,
Gladly to Thee, my Saviour, I give myself away?
Come, and thy sin confessing, thou shalt receive a blessing.
Do not reject the mercy so freely offered thee."

"What step is it, think you, David? I should like to take it", said Millie, wistfully.

"And so should I", replied David in low but earnest tones. Truly it might be said of each of them just then, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God".

Their conversation was now broken in upon, for the miller's cart came rumbling into the yard, and that meant business for both of them—for David to receive the result of the day's journey, for Millie to get ready an evening meal for her son Jacob, and Dick Whinbush, the miller's man. Both of them were hungry as hunters, and tired, too, after a long day's toil. They had been making a long round among the various farmsteads of that wide district, carrying meal and flour, and fetching barley, oats, and wheat to feed the grindstones of Burnham Mill.

Dobbin, the horse, was a little restive, and apparently in an ill temper, and Dick Whinbush couldn't get him to back the cart fairly and freely up to the steps of the mill. As usual, out came a quick succession of loud words and strong, mixed with an oath or two, all for Dobbin's special benefit, and more than once the name of God was wickedly included. David Grisewood had come to the door to see what the cart contained, and to help to transfer its load to the floor of the mill. He stepped forward, laid his hand gently on Dobbin's bridle, and quietly did the backing business himself, saying the while:

"Stop that, Dick, my lad; stop that. Swearing's neither useful nor ornamental, and God's name mustn't be used here in that way anymore."

Dick Whinbush looked at his master, who had been quite in the habit of using loud words and low ones, too, when his temper was touched; and then he looked at Jacob in a sort of comical surprise, as if he should say, "What bee has the guv'nor got in his bonnet

tonight?" But there was a still greater surprise in store for him; for he soon discovered that Mrs. Grisewood had a twin bee in hers, and in her case, the humming, thought Dick, was certainly a change for the better.

During the supper, as the ordinary evening meal was called, which they all took together in the kitchen, Millie said but little, but an occasional sigh told of internal tribulation. What struck Dick Whinbush most was the kindly way in which she spoke to him, helped him to the best, and excused him from certain tasks which he often had had to do, when, according to his thinking, his legitimate day's work was over. Millie's worrying was mainly spent on Dick, and all this was a new and pleasant experience.

When supper was over, Dick sauntered into the mill-yard, and putting his arms on the outer gate he swung himself to and fro, cogitating aloud on the new and unexpected, but not at all unwelcome, state of things.

"I can't make it out," said Dick. "Summat's gone an' been an' happened, an' no mistake. The guv'nor's as mild as new milk; and as for the Missis, she's a miracle! I've many a time said that Whinbush is mine by name, an' hers by nature'; but she seems to me to have gone an' lost all her prickles at once. What's up, I wonder?"

Meanwhile Jacob, who, like his father, was musically inclined, had found his way into the front kitchen, and was much surprised to see the new purchases which had that afternoon been made from the peddler's pack. After he had given a passing look or two at the two Bibles, and had turned over the pictures in the smaller books, Jacob opened "The Pilgrim's Progress", and the grand old dreamer soon had Jacob with him to dream in his company. He followed that marvellous journey of the Pilgrim with an earnestness that was likely to bring him into 'Beulah land' when he ought to be in the 'land of Nod'.

By and by, the miller came, bugle in hand, to try over a few of the tunes whose printed score enriched one of the volumes that had been bought that day.

"Hallo, Jake!" said David to his son; "then you've found out what we've been after?"

"I've found out that you've gotten a first-rate book here from somebody. I've picked it up, but how to put it down again, I don't know. Where did you get it?"

"Why, a travelling peddler called here to-day. My word, Jacob! but he could sing! I never heard aught sweeter in all my life."

Just as the miller ceased speaking, Mrs. Grisewood appeared. She had often declared that she was always at work, "morning, noon, and night; from work to bed, and from bed to work, with only a 'snatch-time' either for meals or sleep". To-night, however, for some reason or other, she had laid aside her work, or finished it, I cannot say which; had put on her afternoon gown and a clean cap and apron, and when she came into the front kitchen, both Jacob and his father passed a silent verdict on her to the effect that "she looked real bonnie".

"Why, mother!" said Jacob, "it is a treat to see you like that, with no work on hand and ready for a bit o' talk. What nice books you've gotten here!"

There was quite a gleam of pleasure on Millie's face as she heard Jake's hearty word of welcome, and it was more than ever borne in upon her that life had a much higher, nobler, and brighter side than she had ever either known or cared to know; but which now, under the dawning light of the Book to whose words she had that day listened, seemed to her to be dearly worth the having.

Jacob, like his father, had a good knowledge of music, and his leisure hours had been devoted with very creditable and profitable persistency to the mastering of the mysteries of the violin. It requires an immense amount of patience and pains to learn them, and the process gives rise to the most unpleasant sounds in all creation; but there is as little question that when fully learned, there is no sweeter music possible than that which can be distilled from its magic strings. Jacob had become an adept, and had a reputation second only to his father's among the farmers and peasantry in and around the parish of Burnham Lee.

"Just get your fiddle a bit, Jacob", said the miller, "an' let us try one or two of these songs. If the tunes are as good as the words, they're pleasant music, you may depend on it."

Jacob was somewhat unwilling to lay down the absorbing volume in his hand; but there was something so novel and withal so nice in this sort of family gathering, that he put it aside without a word, and in a few minutes was busily at work screwing his instrument up to concert pitch and into tune.

"Here's one", said David, "let's try this"; and he read the following stanzas:

"Loving Saviour! Hear my cry,
Trembling to thine arms I fly;
I have sinned, but Thou hast died,
In thy mercy let me hide.
Oh, save me at the cross!

*Lord Jesus, receive me,
No more would I grieve Thee.
Now blessed Redeemer,
Oh, save me at the cross!"*

First they joined to sing it; then, as soon as David caught the drift of the tune, he accompanied Jacob and his mother on his bugle-horn; and lastly, Jacob enlisted his violin; and as the plaintive burden of the song fell upon their ear, it must have touched their heart, for every eye was wet with uncommon feeling as they sang, "Oh, save me at the cross!"

THE MILLER'S CONDUCT IS PECULIAR

THE three Grisewoods were having quite a musical evening, and intermingled with all their enjoyment of the music there was an unexpressed but very definite impression made upon them, especially upon David and his wife, of another and altogether higher kind. The fact is that they were "singing the Gospel", and its gracious messages were coming to them with no uncertain sound. They did not know that at that very hour Caleb Goodall was on his knees in his lodgings at the neighbouring market-town of Knutley, pleading with his God that He would water and bless the good seed that he had sown that day in the quiet of Burnham Mill. To my thinking, that had much to do, very much, with what was taking place in the front kitchen of the miller's house, and with the still more notable event which it is now my pleasure to record.

"It's getting very nearly bed-time," said David at length, "but I should like us to try just another. Here's a splendid thing that the peddler sang as he followed me down the ladder this afternoon. I should like to hear that over again."

The song to which the miller referred is that charming song, charming alike in words and music, now so well known as being a great favourite with Ira D. Sankey, the Gospel singer, entitled "Wondrous Love". By this time the three had so warmed up to their work, that the words came out with a force and spirit that left nothing to be desired; and if ever a plain, simple, and yet attractive Gospel was couched in simple lines, it is in the verses that echoed that night in the front kitchen at the Burnham Mill.

God loved a world of sinners lost
And ruined by the Fall;
Salvation full at highest cost
He offers free to all.

*Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love!
The love of God to me;
It brought the Saviour from above
To die on Calvary.*

E'en now by faith, I claim him mine,
The risen Son of God;
Redemption by his death I find,
And cleansing through his blood.

Love brings the glorious fulness in,
And to his saints makes known
The blessed rest from inbred sin
Through faith in Christ alone."

There was something touching in the way in which David Grisewood sang these inspiring lines. It was evident that he was trying to enter into the spirit of them and to appropriate to himself the truth they presented so clearly. Dick Whinbush had come near to listen, and was standing outside the window with his hands upon the stone sill, and he felt bound to own that whatever it was and whatever it meant, it was a grand improvement on "The Miller of the Dee".

Millie, good woman, declared emphatically that it was the best they had had yet; and both she and Jacob proposed that as it had gone so well, they could not do better than have it again. Nothing loth, but, on the contrary, eager to roll the words under his tongue like a sweet morsel, David started the song again; but it was noticeable that when he came to the chorus it was as much as he could do to command his voice, and the tears trickled down his cheeks all unrestrained. Still, he managed to get through the first verse, chorus and all. Then came the line, "E'en now by faith I claim Him mine".

The last word brought a change. It burst from David's lips with a *crescendo* force that was fairly startling, and leaping to his feet he cried: "Yes, I do, and now He is!"

In that moment David Grisewood understood the secret; he laid hold upon the saving truth of the Gospel, knew himself to be a sinner saved by grace, and became the happy possessor of a holy gladness of content never dreamed of by 'The Miller of the Dee'!

"O Millie, Millie, dear wife! I claim him mine, and He claims me. He's been doing it all the day, but I couldn't see it. Why, there's nothing to do but to take him at his word. Try it, Millie, and claim him yours!"

"Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love!"

And again, David went away into a solo of his own, while his hands were lifted and his eyes streamed with happy tears.

Dick Whinbush felt queer, and quietly stole away from the window to his former place by the outer gate. Things were getting serious, and he could not make them out. Jacob, too, was hardly prepared for such a remarkable interruption; and not knowing either what to do or what to say, solved the difficulty by carrying himself, his violin, and the "Pilgrim's Progress" out of the kitchen, and to his own bedroom, where, it is to be feared, he followed the fortunes of Christian and Faithful when he ought to have been in bed.

Millie, poor woman, did not feel like going away. She would much rather put in her claim, and felt half inclined to make David sing it over again, in the hope that a similar charm might fall upon her melted soul.

"Millie!" said David, taking her by the hand and pointing to the chorus; "don't you see? It says: 'The love of God to *me*'!" That means you - you know -, yourself. Don't you think it's true?"

"Yes, David". she said, tearfully; "I claim him *mine*. O my husband, my husband!", she continued, smiling and weeping all in one, and in that supreme moment David Grisewood knew that they were "partners of like precious faith". They knelt down together side by side, and in simple words, broken by sobs of tender feeling, the miller gave thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift, and then, with a great and peaceful gladness at the heart, they retired to rest.

From that day forward a marvellous change came over the little household at Burnham Mill. The whole moral atmosphere was changed. The miller was as musical as ever, nay, more so; but the inspiration was new, and the songs were new and of a higher order. David had been so constantly in the habit of singing the "The Miller of the Dee", that he found himself humming it at unawares, and then he would slide off into "God loved a world of sinners lost", and found

that the tune fitted the metre, and that with the aid of an occasional easy slur he could use his favourite tune, and sing of "wondrous love" as much as ever he liked.

The miller's walk and conversation evinced the reality of his spiritual change, and his son Jacob was fain to impart his opinion to Dick Whinbush that "Dad was as good as gold". Millie, too, was to all intents and purposes another woman. Worriting was at a discount. The little servant-girl, formerly a good deal scolded and sharply ordered, rejoiced that things had taken a far more pleasant turn; and Dick Whinbush did not hesitate to express his opinion that the "peddler was a *sorcerer*, and sold magic out of that pack of his", and that he felt inclined to become a purchaser himself. It may well be said that on the miller's household 'Peace' had fallen from the skies, and 'Righteousness' had looked down from heaven.

David had a daughter named Mary, who lived with an aunt at Knutley, and another son called Ned, who was in the employ of a corn-chandler in the same town, and the honest miller and his wife waited longingly for the reappearance of Caleb Goodall, that they might procure more riches from the "magic" in the knapsack, and obtain copies of the Bible for their three children, and even for Dick Whinbush and the little maid.

Meanwhile, in their researches among the sacred songs they had come upon another which had now become a great favourite. When they had first read it, they did not think much of it, but since the glad day when in their *hearts* they sang, "E'en now by faith I claim Him mine", it had expressed and was often made to express the grateful vows of their pardoned and rejoicing souls. It would have done Caleb Goodall's heart good if he could have seen David, leaning on the white rails of the mill-gallery, singing,

"O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God;
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad!
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!

*He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!"*

CHAPTER VIII

DICK WHINBUSH MAKES HIS REPORT

NEARLY two months elapsed before Caleb Goodall was in a position to redeem his promise and pay a second visit to Burnham Lee. The diligent and too ardent evangelist, eager to be about his Master's business, had overtaken his strength, and for some time had been laid aside from active work. A severe attack of sickness, acting on a weary brain and an overtaken body, had brought him very low indeed, and when next we meet with the excellent evangelist, he is far from strong, although he is making another effort to fulfil his mission, and especially to pay a visit to Burnham Mill.

One fine morning late in the month of September, when the farmers in and around Burnham were busily engaged in harvest operations, when the corn was standing in long rows of "stooks", waiting to be safely garnered, Caleb was trudging along the Knutley high road some half-a-dozen miles away from Burnham Mill. As usual, his knapsack was on his back; but his blackthorn stick was not, as usual, being twirled about by its hale and lively owner. He was now very much dependent on its aid, and there was an evident weariness upon him as he plodded along the dusty way.

On this occasion, although his spirit was probably quite as cheery as ever, and the "sing" in him was quite as free and musical, for Caleb could sing 'songs in the night', he had to be content to save his strength and hoard his breath, and do his singing silently as he went along.

By and by a miller's cart approached him, going in the same direction as himself. Caleb paused, and seeing that there was not much of a load behind the well-fed horse, he asked the driver if he would kindly give him a lift.

"Woa, Dobbin! old lass!" said the driver. "Jump up, sir, you're heartily welcome."

In a few moments the knapsack was safely lodged among some sacks of another sort, and the tired traveller was comfortably seated by the side of our old friend Dick Whinbush, who had never seen the peddler before, and was altogether unconscious of his identity with the "sorcerer" who sold 'magic' out of his bundle, and had produced so great a change at Burnham Mill.

Caleb opened the conversation, as his custom was, by asking a few leading questions, and he soon discovered that he was riding in the cart of the musical miller of Burnham Lee. He had often thought of the interview on the mill gallery, and his subsequent experiences in the white-washed house. And while he had been imprisoned by severe affliction, he had often asked God's blessing on his mission there.

"Oh, you come from Burnham Lee, do you?" said Caleb. "I know that neighbourhood... Well, and what's the best news from there?"

"News!" said Dick. "Why, for one thing the harvest is so heavy that the farmers'll find it hard work to find room in their stackyards for it. They say there's never been a sight like it for more than fifty years."

"Indeed; why, then, thank God for that!" said Caleb; and as he spoke, he wondered whether David Grisewood still continued to thank the river Dee.

"Why, then". continued Dick in answer to Caleb's question, "another bit of news is, that my gov'nor's turned 'Methodist', an' so has the Missis, an' it's all 'Hallelujah' an' 'Praise the Lord!'"

"Indeed!" said Caleb, pricking up his ears. "That's a funny thing. How did that happen? Do you know?"

"Why, I can't understand it, not exactly," said Dick Whinbush, speaking slowly, as though he was still willing to tackle a mystery that he had failed to solve. "It's been a queer business altogether. It fair puzzles me."

"Why? How? What do you mean?" said Caleb, hardly able to cover his strong anxiety to know all about it.

"Why, you see". said Dick, "there was some peddler-man or other that came that way. Me an' Jacob wasn't at home till after, so we didn't see him. He sold 'em some books, an' tracts, an' songs, an' magic, an' all, surely, for they've never been the same folks, I can tell you, from that day to this."

"Well, that's wonderful", quoth Caleb.

"Ay", said Dick, "an' I can tell you we've all got to mind our P's and Q's now, or we're in for it".

"In for it? What like?" inquired the peddler, inwardly amused. "It has not made them cross-tempered, has it?"

"Cross-tempered!" said Dick, raising his eyebrows. "Why, bless you, they don't seem to me to have any temper at all. It's all, 'Will you do this, Dick?' an' 'Will you do that?' instead of orderin' you about like a nigger, an' blowin' you up because you don't look sharp."

"Well, that is a pleasant change", said Caleb with a smile.

"Pleasant! Pleasant isn't the word for it," quoth Dick, who was getting quite excited. "The gov'nor used to rap out an oath, when he was vexed, as soon as look-at-you. Now he'd cut his tongue out first; an' if you happen to rap out a swear, without thinkin' like, he looks at you till you feel small enough to go into a pint bottle."

"Capital!" said Caleb, bringing down his hand upon his knee. "Why, bein' a 'Methodist' an' singin' 'Hallelujah' isn't so bad after all."

"As for the Missis", proceeded Dick Whinbush, "things is more surprisin' still. She wasn't what you would call a bad sort, takin' her altogether. But she had a temper like a file; not a regular blow-up, you know, an' have done with it; but rasp, rasp, rasp, gnarl, gnarl, gnarl, just like a rat at a skirtin'-board, till you felt as though you were bein' worried out of your seven senses. Now she's as mild as new milk, an' as nice as apple-pie, an' you feel as though you can't do enough for her. I'll tell you what, that peddler's 'Methodist magic' has made her as good—as good as a golden guinea".

"Well, well, I'm pleased to hear it. I should think you wouldn't mind trying a bit of the same magic yourself", said Caleb Goodall, fixing his kindly grey eyes on the lad. "I've a notion that it must be good all round".

"Why, to tell you the truth", said Dick, with much gravity, "I'm o' that opinion myself. Jacob, that's the young gov'nor, says that 'What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander', an' so it must be sauce for the gosling as well. He says that he should like to try it, an' so say I. All we're looking out for is the peddler to come this way again."

"Oh, he'll come, I've no doubt," said Caleb. "I'm very much obliged to you for giving me this ride. Can you sing? If you like, I'll give you a stave, just for goodwill"

"You should hear my gov'nor at *that*", said Dick emphatically. "Yes, I'm fond o' singing."

Caleb Goodall, who had been able to save his wind a little, thanks to this timely lift, began to sing:

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold—
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care."

Right through the stirring and tender song sang Caleb. He sang with all his skill, and, for Dick's sake, with all his heart. The beautiful parable got so strong a hold on his listener that he became lost to all surroundings, and Caleb had every now and then to draw the loose rein to prevent Dobbin from veering off the right road on to the greensward. When it was ended Dick heaved a great sigh as he said:

"Ay, it was lost; but He brought it back again, didn't He?"

"Yes", said Caleb, laying his hand on Dick's arm, and looking kindly in his face, "and He'll bring us all back as soon as we are willing to come".

At this point of the road Dick Whinbush had to leave the highway for a by-road to a neighbouring farm; so, with hearty thanks for the help he had received, and a compensatory sixpence for Dick's private pocket, Caleb Goodall shouldered his knapsack again, and trudged along to Burnham Lee.

It was a fine still golden afternoon, such as often comes in the early autumn; and being rested by his ride, and made glad of heart by Dick's report of matters at the Mill, our evangelist stepped along in time and tune, singing:

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross!
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss:
From victory unto victory
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed!"

CHAPTER IX

CALEB GOODALL HAS A GOOD TIME

By and by a bend in the road brought Caleb Goodall once more in sight of Burnham Mill. The sails were furled and still; but the familiar clack, clack, plish-plash told him that the overshot water-wheel was slowly revolving, churning the water which "turned the mill to grind the corn to feed" the miller and his household. He turned down the short and narrow lane which led to the white gate of the mill-yard. Standing on the gallery, and almost in the selfsame spot as he had first seen him, was David Grisewood. Now as then he was leaning his arm on the circling rail, and now as then he was singing, and singing the selfsame tune of "The Miller of the Dee".

"Oh dear, oh dear!" said Caleb to himself, with a despondent shake of the head, "I'm sorry to hear that. I thought, from what the driver of that cart said, that he had learned a better philosophy by this time. He's thanking the river Dee, I suppose, or Burnham Beck."

Nearing the gate, Caleb stood behind a tall hawthorn hedge and listened, as the jocund miller's fine full tenor voice was borne down to him from above.

"Hallo!" said Caleb, almost loud enough to reach the singer. It was an expression of delighted surprise. As he listened the tears came into his eyes, and he felt as though he must join in the song; for David Grisewood was having a good time of it, singing like a bird the sweet song that had led him to his Saviour.

"Love brings the glorious fulness in,
And to his saints makes known
The blessed rest from inbred sin
Through faith in Christ alone.

Oh 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love..."

Watching his opportunity, Caleb had gently stolen into the mill unobserved, had climbed the ladder, and by the time the chorus was finished, he stood once more in the doorway of the gallery.

"Praise the Lord! Yes", said he, "the love of God is the grandest subject in creation, miller. The river Dee and Burnham Beck are both in it, and every good thing besides!"

There was no mistaking or misinterpreting the gleam of joy that lit up David Grisewood's features as he gave the peddler a hearty welcome to Burnham Mill. He grasped his hand and wrung it in true East Yorkshire fashion as he said:

"Thank God, Caleb Goodall, that ever you came to Burnham Lee, and thank God that you are come again. But I say, "he continued in a graver tone, as he noted Caleb's look and frostier hair, "you are not looking well".

"Oh, I'm all right now, miller, though I have been a good deal out of sorts. I should have been here before this else. But I'm better now, and that song I heard you sing just now was a famous tonic, I can tell you. But what in the world made you put that song into the jacket of the 'Miller of the Dee'? It doesn't fit badly, but it sounded odd."

"Why, you see," said the miller, "it's a favourite tune, and I've been used to singing it for many a long year; and when by the mercy of God I got a change of heart, I didn't see why my favourite tune should not be converted too. But come along, there's somebody in the house that'll make you as welcome as the flowers in May."

All this was a happy endorsement of Dick Whinbush's testimony, and Caleb Goodall felt strangely warm about the region of the heart.

"Do you think she'll give me a bowl of milk after a long, warm walk?", said Caleb jokingly, referring to his first introduction to the bustling Millie.

"Good!" said David, rising to go, "let's try her; but I can tell you beforehand", he continued, with happy laughter, "that there's no thunder in these quarters now, an' nothing ever goes sour, either in the dairy or anywhere else".

"That's the way, praise the Lord", said the evangelist. "'Wondrous Love' has been at work, and 'Love brings the glorious fulness in'. The Lord grant that it may abide here forever!"

Down the ladder went David on his pleasant errand, closely followed by Caleb, and as before they entered the house by the back door. Mrs. Grisewood was busily engaged in her household duties, and, as was not now uncommon with her, was singing as she toiled.

"Hush!" said Caleb as they approached the door, and as they paused, they caught the words of Millie's song:

"Simply trusting every day, trusting through a stormy way;
Even when my faith is small, trusting Jesus, that is all.
Trusting as the moments fly, trusting as the days go by,
Trusting him whate'er befall, trusting Jesus, that is all.

Brightly doth his Spirit shine into this poor heart of mine;
While He leads, I cannot fall, trusting Jesus, that is all.
Trusting as the moments fly, trusting as the days go by;
Trusting him whate'er befall, trusting Jesus, that is all."

Caleb Goodall had some difficulty to restrain himself. Just then he felt as one who had obtained great spoil. He had gone forth sowing precious seed, ay, had gone forth weeping, for his whole soul was exercised by the importance of his mission; now he was returning to find that the harvest had already followed, and that golden sheaves had been given him as his great reward. There was a warm glow at his heart, and a bright gleam in his eye, and a sunny smile on his face as he said:

"Thank God! David Grisewood. I thank my God for you and yours."

"And I and mine", said the miller, "thank God for you every day that comes, and the day you first darkened the doorway of Burnham Mill."

"I say, Millie", cried David, as they crossed the threshold, "here's a man with some books and pictures. I thought you might like to look at 'em. He's come a long way, and it's warm walking. Mebbe you can spare him a bowl of milk."

By the time David had delivered himself of his little joke, Millie had recognised their visitor, and as she stepped forward to give him a warm welcome she said:

"Milk! why, he's got some in his own knapsack; and I'm bound to say he spoke the truth when he said that it was a good deal better than mine. O Mr. Goodall!", she continued, "there's nothing in this house, from parlour to pantry, that you're not welcome to; but...", said she, as she also noted his fagged and tired features, "you are not well!"

"I haven't been; but I'm getting all right again now, thank you, Mrs. Grisewood; and you and your husband have given me a famous tonic or two already. But I'll thank you for that bowl of milk, if you please."

As he spoke the peddler unconsciously sighed from fatigue, and sank somewhat spent upon the nearest chair. Millie instantly fetched him the refreshing draught. There was no dubiety now as to her hospitality; for she had discovered that when last she had brought that beverage to the warm and weary peddler, she had been entertaining an 'angel unawares'.

"You have been overworked", said Millie, looking with compassion on his wan face. "You need a long rest and a change".

"Well, I believe you are right", said Caleb. "I'm afraid I am not so strong again as I thought I was; but to tell the truth, I'm nervous and excited with what I've seen and heard since I came here to-day. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"

In another moment Millie had seized his hat, his blackthorn stick, and his knapsack too, and away she went with them into the best bedroom, a spacious and cheery chamber, overlooking Burnham Pool and the wolds that stretched away behind it.

"There, Mr. Goodall", said she triumphantly, "you'll not get them again until you promise to stay a month at least at Burnham Mill, and let me nurse you back to health and strength again. Please do", she said pleadingly, and half tearfully. "Let us do something in our gratitude and love".

"You'll have to submit", said David, who certainly had been an authority on that matter in past times. "Millie isn't going to give in."

"Nay, then", said Caleb, who had a certain view to his Master's business, "I'll give in myself, and for a week or two will thankfully be your guest."

CHAPTER X

JACOB AND DICK MAKE A MIDNIGHT CALL

I HAVE said that in accepting Mrs. Grisewood's hearty invitation, Caleb Goodall had a special view to his Master's business. Some such thoughts, too, had been stirring in the mind of his hostess, for in the course of the evening she opened her heart to him on the subject.

"Do you know, Mr. Goodall, glad and thankful as I am to have you here for your own sake, there's a bit of selfishness in it as well", said Millie with a smile. "There's my husband and me, we are very ignorant about the best things, and we do want you to teach us the way of God more perfectly. Then there's our Jacob; you wouldn't believe what a change has come over the lad. He was always either singing or playing his fiddle when his work was done, but now he's almost as silent as a dumb man, and unless we ask him, the fiddle hardly ever comes out of its case. I'm sure he's in trouble, an' I feel sure it's because he's feeling after God, if haply he may find him. And then there's Dick Whinbush. The change that's come over that lad is something wonderful.

Caleb could not help quietly smiling to himself as he recalled Dick's testimony concerning his "Missis", which was exactly to the same effect. He remembered, too, how Dick was taken with the sweet song of the "Ninety-and-nine", and he said to himself, "Yes, Dick's been wandering 'over hills away', but he's coming back to the shelter of the fold".

"And then", said Mrs. Grisewood, "my Mary, that's my daughter, is coming home from Knutley, and Ned, my other son, is coming too, to spend his holidays here; and there's our neighbours all round Burnham Lee. O Mr. Goodall, I do think that you are wanted here".

"That's right, Mrs. Grisewood," replied Caleb. "This is exactly as it ought to be. That's the way the Gospel news is to save the world. Let

them that feel it, tell it. Let them that have it, spread it. And the more we give it out, the more and the richer we get it back."

That very night, as Caleb conducted family worship, the 'campaign' was opened, and earnest prayer went up to Him that heareth that every member of the miller's household might find the "peace that passeth all understanding", the peace that can be found only in Jesus and his love. Just previous to retiring to rest, Caleb sang that sweet and touching song, "Return, O Wanderer", and the chorus was sung, soft and low, by the whole party:

"Return, O wanderer to thy home, thy Father calls for thee;
No longer now in exile roam in guilt and misery.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus;

Steal away, steal away home, for Jesus waits to save you."

When Caleb Goodall returned to the neat and cosy chamber which had been devoted to his comfort, his heart was too full for words, and beat so high with love and gratitude that he felt as though he could not yet retire to rest. The window was partially open, for the harvest weather was beautifully fine and warm, and the soft beams of the full moon lit up the chamber so that it was almost as light as day. He opened the window wide and looked out upon the Pool, the orchard, the meadows beyond, the still more distant cornfields, now dotted over with the 'stooks' of waiting corn, and the far-stretching range of wold still further away, all bathed in calm and silver light. The fair blue heaven, besprinkled with pale stars and flecked with fleecy clouds, seemed to him to be the veritable floor of heaven. The chorus of the song they had just been singing was still running through his mind, and he could not help applying them to the "home" he felt that he was soon to reach. And so looking heavenward he softly sang,

"Steal away, steal away home,
For Jesus waits to take me!"

And he felt as though a swift and glorious journey through the night would be so sweet that he had a "desire to depart".

But not yet, O evangelist! not just yet, O good and faithful servant. There is work, holy work left for thee to do. There are sheaves waiting for the busy sickle; there are more crowns for thee to win for thy loving Master and King. When these are gathered and won, then shalt thou hear the welcome word, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

As Caleb Goodall sat thus far into the night and pondered, he heard a low tap at the door, and said softly "Come in". Slowly his bedroom door was opened, and much to his surprise there entered Jacob Grisewood and Dick Whinbush, treading noiselessly on their stockinged feet.

Both the lads looked anxious and tearful. Said Jacob:

"We heard you moving, Mr. Goodall, and so as you hadn't gone to bed, we thought mebbe we might come in."

"Certainly", said Caleb; "I'm glad to see you; come and sit down. What can I do for you?"

"Oh!" said Jacob, letting his tears have free course, "both Dick an' me would like to steal away to Jesus."

"We want to find the 'shelter of the fold', Mr. Goodall", said Dick.
"Will you tell us what we must do?"

Would he! Ay, though his weary eyelids should never close with slumber through the night, for "wist ye not that he must be about his Master's business?"

In tender tones and simple language, he told the two lads once more the story of the cross, and how that just then and there Jesus was waiting to save them. Then they all knelt at the bedside, and he prayed with them and for them, prayed as they only can pray who have power with God to prevail; and as the moonbeams played upon the watching three, a softer, fuller, sweeter light entered the hearts of the seeking youths, and both almost at the same time found "sweet rest in Jesus", and arose with a new light in their eyes, a new joy at their heart.

"Now I can sing it!" said Jacob. "I've been trying ever since my father sang it the first time you were here"; and softly, but with strange pathos, he murmured—

"E'en now by faith I call him mine,
The spotless Lamb of God.
Redemption by the cross I find,
And cleansing by his blood!"

"And you are in the 'shelter of the fold' now, Dick", said Caleb with an exultant smile.

"Safe!" said Dick; "an' I'll never, never leave it!"
"And the Good Shepherd will never, never let you go."

Then they returned to their room, carrying with them unsearchable riches; and the happy evangelist laid his head upon his pillow, and fell asleep with the words "Praise the Lord!" still lingering on his lips.

Early the next morning Caleb was awakened by the rumbling of the mill-wheel, to which he had not yet got accustomed. He rose refreshed and strengthened, and looked from his window out upon the morning scene. David Grisewood was standing on the gallery humming "Wondrous love" to his favourite and long-familiar tune "The Miller of the Dee."

Caleb felt as though he would rather hear it sung to its own sweet and simple strain. He was gifted to a considerable degree with the spirit of poesy, and as soon as he was dressed, and had performed his morning ablutions, and offered his morning prayer, he took his pocketbook and pencil, and proceeded to dress up "The Miller of the Dee" in a new suit, with what success will appear presently.

On entering the kitchen, Caleb found the breakfast table spread and waiting for his appearance. Mrs. Grisewood met him as he entered. Her face was simply radiant with joy.

"Jacob's told me all about it", said she, "and Dick Whinbush too. I can only say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits', and 'bless *you*, you true and faithful minister of his that doeth his pleasure!'"

"I say, miller", said Caleb when breakfast was over, and taking out a paper from his breast pocket, "I've noticed how fond you are of that old song-tune I first heard you sing. I've been trying my hand at

converting the song for you, as you converted the tune. Will you try it?" David took the lines after Caleb had read them over, and sung them through with an enjoyment and a gusto that left nothing to be desired.

THE MILLER OF BURNHAM LEE

There dwelt a miller, hale and strong,
At bonnie Burnham Lee;
He worked and sang from morn to night
As blithe as blithe could be;
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be:
"I envy nobody, no, not I,
For God is good to me."

"Is it so, my friend?" quoth neighbour John,
"And pray what may it be
Makes thee so glad from morn to night—
A king might envy thee?
Pray tell me, now, what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
What makes thee happy as a king,
By bonnie Burnham Lee."

The miller smiled, and doffed his cap,
"I love my God," quoth he,
"I love my wife, I love my friends,
I love my children three;
The God of love, He loves us all,
He loves and prospers me;
And sends the stream that turns my mill
By bonnie Burnham Lee.

"The love of Christ, and a home in heaven,
A waiting crown for me;
That, neighbour John, is the reason why
I'm happy as can be."
"Good friend", quoth John, "that is a strain
To fill the heart with glee;
And thou dost well to sing thy song
By bonnie Burnham Lee".

Caleb's song became a prime favourite with the musical miller, and for many a year its strains were often heard floating from the wooden gallery of Burnham Mill.

CHAPTER XI

BURNHAM LEE HAS A NEW SENSATION

Just by the white gate that led into the yard of Burnham Mill, and within the yard itself, there was a spacious outbuilding, which was principally devoted to the housing of such store of corn of various kinds as had come to be ground in the mill, but which the mill itself could not conveniently contain. Overhead there was a loft in which peas and beans and hay and other stores were kept for the use of Dobbin, the cow, the pigs and poultry, and such other live stock as David Grisewood and his good wife possessed.

At this particular time of the year the lower portion of the building was all but empty, and was not likely to be required until the farmers should commence to thresh the produce of the current harvest; and as the agriculturists were not then living from hand to mouth, as many of them are in these times, the shed could be very well spared for another and widely different use.

Mrs. Grisewood, as we have seen, had hinted to the evangelist her great concern for the spiritual welfare of her neighbours in the village of Burnham Lee, most of whom it was to be feared were living in lamentable ignorance of the Gospel. They "sat in darkness and had no light", and were "without God and without hope in the world".

One evening after the work of the day was finished, and the evening meal had been cleared away, the household at Burnham Mill set themselves to enjoy a thoroughly musical evening, and three or four of their nearest neighbours had been invited to join them. David brought out his bugle, and Jacob his violin, the much-loved volume of songs and solos was ransacked for its best and most winsome melodies, and Caleb's voice was in capital feather; and as both Mrs. Grisewood and Dick Whinbush were capable singers, not to mention Jacob's serviceable tenor, they were able to get up a musical entertainment of no mean order.

Farmer Withell declared to his wife that he had never heard anything better "in London", to which big city he had paid an occasional visit. His wife was quite of the same opinion, and made the further remark that the words were as sweet as the music, and that such "nice religious" singing was "worth going twenty miles to hear".

"I say, miller", said Caleb Goodall, "why shouldn't we use that empty barn of yours, and invite all Burnham Lee to hear us? It would give me the opportunity of saying some good words for the Master; and nobody knows what good it might do".

Mrs. Grisewood looked at her husband wistfully, and David looked at her. The fact is that the same idea had been entertained by them, and had been the subject of repeated conversations. But in every case, they had dismissed it for one sad reason, and that was the unsatisfactory condition of Caleb Goodall's health. The fact was that the excellent colporteur not only did not get better, but it was evident to them both that he was getting worse.

As might have been expected, good Mrs. Grisewood did her very best for her beloved and welcome guest. All that skill and money and tender nursing and watchful care could do for Caleb was done, but it seemed to be of little avail. The greatest dainties failed to tempt his appetite. Morning after morning, in answer to their kind inquiries, he had to confess that he had slept but badly, and the dark rings around his eyes betokened a night of unrest, and a waking that brought with it no refreshment. They saw that his back was bending more and more, that his breath was sadly apt to grow short and gasping, and that a cough which had been gradually developing, gave him growing trouble and some pain. Hence, they had dismissed the idea of holding services in the barn, sorely afraid to put upon him more than he was able to bear. Now that he himself had mentioned it, they had but one reply.

"You must wait until you get better. You have not strength to spare just now for work like that", said David Grisewood. "We'll think of that by and by."

"By and by," answered Caleb, slowly and softly as if speaking more to himself than to his friends. "Sweet by and by!" And then he sang as they listened, listened with tears:

"By and by we shall know Jesus,
By and by, by and by,
Even now He looks and sees us
Journeying to his home on high.

And He smiles upon us, saying,
'By and by, by and by,
Cares and trials you'll be laying
With your earthly garments by.

O 'by and by', we sing it softly,
Thinking not of earthly care,
But the by and by of heaven
Waiting for us over there.

By and by we shall be standing,
By and by, by and by;
At fair heaven's shining landing,
While the river murmurs by.

And our friends will round us gather
By and by, by and by,
Saying, 'Welcome, for the Father
Loves to have His children nigh'.

By and by, we say it gently,
Looking on our peaceful dead,
And we do not think of earth-life,
But of heaven's sweet life instead.

By and by we all shall gather,
By and by, by and by,
In the home of God our Father,
That shall know no by and by."

The last sound had hardly died away when he seemed to rouse himself and recall his mind to the things of the present.

"Oh, I'm right enough", he said, as if in direct answer to David's objection. "It's a capital idea. Jack and Dick will soon put the place in order. Wilson the wheelwright will lend us some planks and those round lengths of elm that are meant for the naves of cart-wheels, and we shall have convenience for a couple of hundred people. Let us begin to-morrow."

And so, it came to pass that within a week the barn was ready. Jacob, and Dick Whinbush, and Ned Grisewood, who was now at home, set to work to adorn the place with branches of trees and flowering shrubs, and on the following Lord's Day two services were held in it, and on both occasions, Caleb put his heart into his work; and whether he sang the gospel, or preached it, the word was with power, and the villagers of Burnham Lee were melted into penitential tears under the shadow of the lifted cross. David's bugle and Jacob's violin gave much effect to the service, and the people went to their

homes, saying, as certain did of old, "We have seen strange things today".

The news of these services spread through all the neighbourhood, and the people came from neighbouring parishes to the next services that were held. Caleb, in a fervency of holy zeal would have them held night by night. The place was crowded to the doors, and scores of precious souls were the seals and the hire of his ministry. Then he insisted that David Grisewood should address the people; Jacob had to follow in the same path, and the young fellow soon gave proof and token to the observant Caleb that in him the Lord had won a young Apollos who could lift and keep the torch of truth aloft at Burnham Lee after his own mission was ended and his own work was done. I have no space to tell of all that was said and done and won for Immanuel during that never-to-be-forgotten time. It is remembered to this day as the Burnham Mill Mission, and its results will endure forever. At last David Grisewood insisted that the meetings should be suspended.

"Why, man," said he to Caleb, after a hot discussion, "you'll fall down upon the floor in the middle of your song some night!"

"What of that?" said Caleb. "I've always said I should like to sing myself into heaven, and I'd as soon do it on the floor of your barn as anywhere else, if the song was mingled with the music of the witness of a sinner brought to Christ."

Even while the colporteur was speaking, he fainted, and but for David's strong arms must have fallen where he stood. He was instantly carried to his chamber and laid upon his bed. In a few moments a messenger was galloping to Knutley for a doctor, for Caleb Goodall was ill indeed. By and by, however, he recovered somewhat, and on seeing Mrs. Grisewood standing, sad and tearful, by his bed, he smiled on her, took her by the hand, and said softly:

"All's well, dear friend. I think the shadows are falling and it is time to rest; for so 'He giveth his beloved sleep'."

The miller and his wife watched together by his bed; but he slept, on the whole, constantly and peacefully, and the dawn of the bright October morning brought refreshment to the sleeper and hope to the watchers' anxious hearts.

CHAPTER XII

CALEB GOODALL'S EVENSONG

WHATEVER hope the miller and his wife were led to entertain as the result of Caleb Goodall's restless night was thoroughly dispelled when the doctor came. After a long and close examination, he informed them that their guest was a dying man; that his ailment had been growing in an insidious fashion for a considerable length of time, and that in all probability his end was near.

No words of mine can tell with what a knell the doctor's testimony fell upon the hearts of the miller and his wife. But Caleb himself heard it without surprise, without alarm, without even a passing shadow of disquiet.

"It is just what I thought", he said. "That day when you told me that I must wait awhile before we turned the barn into a mission hall, and that we would see about it 'by and by', I've been expecting this. I've long known that I carried a fatal disease about with me, and it and I had grown so familiar that it never distressed me, and seldom came into my mind. My only regret now, dear friends, is the trouble to which I am putting you, and that is wonderfully lightened by the assurance of your love, and that you will bear with it for the Master's sake."

"Hush, hush!" said Mrs. Grisewood, with more trouble on her face than he had ever seen. "You must not talk so; I cannot bear it."

"Neither will I, dear sister, worthy of all my gratitude and love."

He was asked if there were any relatives for whom he would wish them to send.

"No," said Caleb, "I have none living, except very distant ones, and it is not worth the while. I never married, and for many years I have been a wanderer, having but one errand, one mission, and that was to spread the gospel as a colporteur and do what I could to bring souls to Christ.

I have a ward, if I may call her so, who has only me and God to look to for a home. She is a sweet young lassie of fourteen. I was the means under God of bringing her parents to the Saviour, and I was with both of them when they died. I pitied the dear child, then only seven years old. There were none to care for her, and I couldn't bear to leave the poor orphan to the cold charity of a pitiless world, so I adopted her, and a dear good daughter she has been to me. Yes, I should like to have my Alice near me when I die. She is at a school in York, and I would like, if..."

"Hush, dear friend," said Millie, "there are no ifs for your sake. David will go and fetch her *home*," and the good woman laid a steady emphasis on that word.

"God bless you. God bless you a thousand times for that word," said Caleb, fairly overcome. "Now I haven't a single care."

The next day Alice came at eventide, and Caleb's greeting showed how the child had grown around his heart; and when she told him how kind Mrs. Grisewood was, how she had told her to call her "Mother," and that that was to be her happy home, Caleb said:

"Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Don't weep, my Alice; I am going to *my* home. You oughtn't to weep for that. You will join me on some happy day—distant may it be!—and until then our Father in heaven will care for you, as through these dear, kind friends, He has cared for you now."

It was evident that the evangelist was sinking day by day and hour by hour; but every evening he had the whole household by his bed, and with what little strength he had, he joined them in singing his beloved 'songs of Zion'. And in his weakness God gave him two more precious souls to be the crown of his rejoicing by and by; for Ned, who was melted in spirit at the meetings in the barn, found the Saviour as the invalid "preached Jesus" on his bed; and Mary, who had come home to help her mother, was led to put in *her* claim for

the unspeakable gift, and got it, to the abounding joy of her mother's heart.

One peaceful Lord's Day afternoon it was very evident that the end had come. "When the sun sets", he said, pointing to the reddening light that played upon the casement, "my sun will rise, rise up to the throne of noon, never to set again through all eternity. Oh, how rich I feel! How unutterably sweet and precious is my Saviour's love! Call them in, all of them, and let them float to heaven on the wings of a song!"

The household were hastily gathered round his bed. On one side stood Alice and Mrs. Grisewood, close by his pillow; on the other side stood the miller and his son Jacob, and the rest were disposed around the bed. He bade a loving farewell to each of them in turn; and to each of them gave a 'good man's blessing'—a blessing which had then and there the effect of a heavenly benediction. It seemed to all of them as though his white head was haloed with a glory from the skies; and as he clasped his thin hands, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and poured out his soul in prayer, the chamber seemed to be fragrant with the atmosphere of heaven.

"Now," said he, "the hour has come, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory." Here he paused, and then with a strange exulting cry he said, "I can see it, I can see it! It shines in the hand of my Redeemer! O my dear, dear friends, sing, sing me a song of victory!"

But there was no voice, only the quiet sobbing of those who waited and wondered.

"My brother David", said he, turning to the miller, whose features were working with restrained emotion, "you can sing 'O crown of rejoicing that's waiting for me'".

But there was silence only. How could they sing with that choking in the throat, that "farewell" still upon their ear? He looked round upon them as if in wonder at their silence, a look that changed to one of love and half of pity, and said—

"Never mind, dear friends, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. I'll sing!"

Then calling up his fleeting powers for one final effort, he who had been singing for his Saviour so sweetly and so winsomely for years, broke forth into his sweetest and his final strain. His hand, transparent as an angel's might be, was lifted, and his face shone, as from his parted lips came flowing softly, sweetly like an angel echo:

"I am now a child of God,
For I'm washed in Jesu's blood;
I am watching, and I'm longing while I wait;
Soon on wings of love to fly
To my home beyond the sky,
To my welcome, as I'm sweeping through the gate.

Burst are all my prison bars,
And I soar beyond the stars
To my Father's house, the bright and blest estate.
Lo, the morn eternal breaks,
And the song immortal wakes;

Robed in whiteness, clad in brightness,
I am sweeping through the gates!"

There was a pause. The song ceased, but the singer retained his attitude with elevated hand and uplifted eye; a rapt look of wondering recognition came upon his face. He tried to speak; but what he said those weeping listeners never heard, doubtless it was heard 'within the gates'. He fell back upon his pillow, and his pulse was still! Caleb Goodall had gone home!

I have little more to add. David Grisewood and his godly wife continued to live and thrive at Burnham Mill. Their son Jacob seeks to shepherd a little company of believers who worship in a neat commodious mission hall in the middle of the village of Burnham Lee; and whatever time he can spare from the work of the mill is devoted to his "Master's business."

Alice Goodall, for she had taken the name of her adopted father, is a helper in his good work, and is likely to be a 'help-meet' for him by and by. The rest of the young folks are each doing well, and walking aright in their several life-paths; and one and all of them hold in loving memory Caleb Goodall, the man with the knapsack, the noble evangelist, the 'sweet singer in Israel', who brought so rich a store of blessing to the home of the miller of Burnham Lee.