



THE FARMER'S TALE;

OR,

THAT WAY WON'T DO.

FARMER BROOKES was a free-spoken man of the old school. He wore a red waistcoat, always rose with the lark, worked as hard as any labourer on the farm, and never was absent from his pew on the sabbath day. One day he had been engaged along with his men at sheep

washing and shearing, down by the stream in the valley. On his return home in the evening, he, as usual, read a chapter from the large family Bible, and spent a short time in prayer. As the fire burned pleasantly, he began after supper to tell his children and grandchildren, who lived with him at the farm, the following tale.

“If my father had not taken me in hand when I was a youngster,” said he, “I should have turned out a scapegrace. Mother (and a kinder woman never milked a cow or skimmed a cream-pan in a dairy) sadly let me have my own way; and so, being an only child, and a little weakly too, I got into a foolish habit of wishing, and hoping, and intending, instead of doing. It says in the Proverbs (xix. 15), ‘An idle soul shall suffer hunger,’ and I believe it. Idleness never answered, and never will, and least of all in the trade of a farmer.

“Well, as I said, my father took me in hand, and high time it was that he did. One day, as I looked up at the pear-tree that grew against the side of the house, ‘Mother,’ said I, ‘I wish I had that pear at the top there, for it is the finest on the tree.’ ‘Wish again,’ said my father, who, without my knowing it, happened to be within hearing; ‘wish again, Harry,’ said he; ‘but it’s ten to one against your getting it by wishing for it; that way won’t do.’ Saying this, he fetched the long ladder, and putting it against the house, mounted it quickly, and brought down the pear. Away he went, eating the pear, and leaving me to profit by the example he had set me.

“A day or two after this, when I wanted to

ride out on the pony, I said, 'Mother, I hope Tom or Joe will come in soon, that they may saddle the pony for me.' 'At it again,' said my father, who was standing near; 'at it again; but it's my private opinion that your hoping will never get the saddle on his back. You must find out a better way of going to work; for that way won't do.' He then walked straight to the stable, saddled the pony for himself, and setting off with him all at once on a canter, shouted out to me, 'Try another way, Harry; for that way won't do.'

"When night came, being fond of going a mushrooming, I told mother, in the hearing of my father, that I intended to go to Low Meadow Close in the morning, to get the mushrooms. When the morning came, however, I lay a-bed like a sluggard as I was; and, when I got up, dawdled away my time for an hour. At last I set off; but hardly had I walked a hundred yards, before I met my father with a large basket heaped up to the very top. While I had been idling, he had gathered every mushroom in the close. 'I thought how it would turn out,' said he. 'Intending to do a thing is all very well, so far as it goes; but it must be followed up with something better. Another time, Harry, you must do something more than intend; for that way won't do.'

"In the afternoon of the same day he took me out with him into the rick-yard. 'Harry,' said he in a kind way, 'it may be God's will that, when I and your mother are gone, you may have to manage the farm yourself; now you will never be able to get on by wishing, and hoping, and intending; that way won't do, Harry.'

““ Look at these hay-ricks. Do you think that by wishing I could ever have got them together? No! the scythe, and the hay-fork, and the rake, were set to work lustily. We were at it early and late, and made hay while the sun shone; and here the ricks are. Wishing is a bad trade—you must leave it off; that way won't do.

““ Look at these corn-stacks; there are no better in the parish; but how did they come here? It was not by hoping for them. We ploughed and we sowed. We set to work in earnest with the sickle. God, in his goodness, gave us seed-time and harvest, and the grain is now safely thatched in for the winter. You must leave off only hoping; for that way won't do.

““ Look at the sheep yonder, in the big turnip-field. There are twenty score of them, beside what are in the meadow and stubble-fields; but if I had only *intended* to see after them, I should never have seen such a flock on my farm. They have been tended, as you know, Harry, by night and by day, in summer and in winter. Do give your mind, then, there's a good lad, to working instead of wishing; and to setting a good example, instead of only hoping and intending. You have got into a bad way that won't do; once more let me tell you that you must leave it off, if you mean to prosper.

“ My father, by the kind way in which he spoke to me, found the road to my heart, and I made up my mind that Harry Brookes should no longer be the sleepy, dawdling, idle, heavy-heeled boy that he had been. I left off wish-

ing, and pulled off my coat to work, as my father had done before me. I was no longer satisfied with hoping for anything, or with intending to do a thing; but laboured lustily with heart and hand, until my father, before he died, saw in me a son that he was not ashamed of. God, of his goodness, has blessed me in my basket and my store, in my going out and my coming in; and I have reason, if any man in the world has, to cry out against giving way to idleness; for that won't do.

“More than fifty years have passed away since my boyish days; but often have I thought of my father getting the pear, saddling the pony, and gathering the mushrooms, as well as of his kind remarks about the hay-ricks, the corn-stacks, and the sheep in the turnip-field; and I have great reason to be thankful that God of his goodness moved my mind to attend to his words.

“But if wishing, and hoping, and intending, won't do for this world, it is not at all likely to do for the next. Sinners as we are, we can do nothing to save ourselves, and very little to honour Christ Jesus, who died for us on the cross; but for all this, we are bound, looking to him for his grace, to do all we can for his glory. An idle Christian is worse even than an idle farmer, and he has no more reason to expect to prosper without being in earnest than the farmer has to expect to prosper without industry; for if it is said to the farmer, ‘Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds,’ Prov. xxvii. 23; to the Christian it is said, ‘Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,’ Matt.

xxvi. 41 ; and ' Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10."

Here farmer Brookes finished his tale by saying, " The sum total of all I have told you is this,—Fall not into the habit of being idle, either in earthly or in heavenly things ; for that habit is a bad habit, and that way won't do."

THE LIST OF THE KING'S LYNN BOYS.

The sheet is broad, and smooth, and fair ;
The list is long ; and then
Each boy his name has written there
With a willing heart and pen.

WE have lying before us a list of names which has afforded us much pleasure. There is a library attached to the National School at King's Lynn, and the boys who subscribe to it, some time ago, were made very happy by a handsome grant of books from the Religious Tract Society.

When boys are made happy, they sometimes forget those who have added to their enjoyment ; but this was not the case with the King's Lynn boys, for they soon sent off a letter, on a large sheet of paper, to the Religious Tract Society. The following lines are a correct copy of it :—

" St. John's National School, King's Lynn.

" To the Committee of the Religious Tract Society.

" Gentlemen,—We, the boys of St. John's National School, King's Lynn, subscribing to the library established for the use of the school,