

# Work and Employment

## A Transformation

An Extract from the Book *Yet Not I* by Rev William Hallam  
pp. 102-105

One morning in the spring, while the cold of winter still continued and the frost was sharp, a man came to me in the vestry begging ... and told me he had a wife and five children who were starving. I said, 'Well they may as well starve ... if you will not turn your hand to some steady work to maintain them. You are an able-bodied man, in good health; and by the look of you, I should say you are sharp enough to be a clever work man, if you choose.'

He replied that he had no work, and could not get any. I met this difficulty by offering him employment at once, which would enable him to support his family. ... He said he did not care to do that work; besides, he would not mix with such company as I had there for something! I replied, 'I greatly admire your self-respect: I only wish you had a little more of it, and then you would give up this disreputable begging life...'

Then he began to whine and coax me with tears, ... I remained inexorable and said, '...but you must work if you wish me to help your family...' Then he became angry, ... then threatened ... [But] finding these devices were not successful, he changed his tone, and said he really did not know which way to turn. Would I lend him a little money – just a sixpence?

'No,' I said. 'I have no money for lending. I will give you work: and I think, for your children's sake, you ought to take it ... What can you do?'

He smiled, and said, 'There are few things I can't do.'

Then I returned with him to his garret and saw his wife and five children ... [who] were delighted at the prospect of work. ... In the meantime, I supplied the party with coals, soup, bread, and other necessaries; calling in now and then to see how they went on. ...

The little garret soon turned into an active factory ...

He turned out a most clever and careful man. ... He was soon in great request. ... He was trustworthy, and bore a good testimony wherever he went; indeed, he became a real missionary of the gospel wherever he went ... showing what the grace of God could do in a family and proving that there was no necessity for lapsing into all the squalor and untidiness of the place.

Thus, in the darkness ... we were not without God's witnesses here and there who shone out like stars in a cloudy night.

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