

## THE IRON WOLF.

"I conducted, two months ago," said a clergyman, "the funeral services of one of my parishioners. He had been a farmer. Forty years ago he had commenced work with one hundred acres of land, and he ended with one hundred. He was a skillful, industrious working-man, but he had laid by no money in the bank. I understood the reason as I listened to the comments of his friends and neighbors.

"'It was always a warm, hospitable house,' said one. 'The poor man was never turned away from that door. His sons and daughters all received the best education which his means could command. One is a clergyman, one a civil engineer, two are teachers – all lead useful and happy lives.'

"Said another: 'Those children sitting there weeping are the orphans of a friend. He gave them a home. That crippled girl is his wife's niece. She lived with them for years. That young fellow who is also weeping so bitterly, was a waif that he rescued from the slums of the city.'

"And so the story went on – not of a miser who had heaped dollar upon dollar, but of a servant of God who helped many lives, and had lifted many of them out of misery and ignorance into life and joy.

"On my way home from the funeral I stopped at the farm of another parishioner, who said to me in a shrill, rasping tone:

"'So poor Gould is dead! He left a poor account – not a penny more than he got from his father. Now I started with nothing; and look here,' pointing to his broad fields. 'I own down to the creek. D'ye know why? When I started to keep house I brought this into it the first thing,' taking an iron savings-bank in the shape of a wolf out of the closet. 'Every penny I could save went into its jaws. It is surprising how many pennies

you can save when you've a purpose. My purpose was to die worth \$100,000. Other folks ate meat; we ate molasses. Other folks dressed their wives in merino; mine wore calico. Other men wasted money on schooling; my boys and girls learned to work early and keep it up late. I wasted no money on churches, sick people, paupers, and books. And,' he concluded triumphantly, 'now I own to the creek; and that land with the fields yonder, and the stock in the barns, are worth \$100,000. Do you see it?'

"And on the thin, hard lips was a wretched attempt to laugh. The house was bare and comfortless; his wife, worn out with work, had long ago gone to her grave. Of his children, taught only to make money a god, one daughter, starved in body and mind, was still drudging in the kitchen; one son had taken to drink, having no other resource, and died in prison. The other, a harder miser than his father, remained at home to fight with him over every penny wrung out of their fertile fields.

"Yesterday I buried this man," continued the clergyman. "Neither neighbor nor friend, son nor daughter, shed a tear over him. His children were eager to begin the quarrel for the ground he had sacrificed his life to earn. Of it all he had now only enough to cover his decaying body. Economy for a noble purpose is a virtue; but in the house of some it is avarice, and like a wolf, devours intelligence, religion, hope and life itself."

– *Friendly Companion.*

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