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NOTICE.

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Temperance Department.

THE TRAGEDY—ACTED EVERY NIGHT.

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., NEW YORK.

SCENE FIRST.—A dingy room, with a dull light in it; on an old and ill-used sofa a pale, jaded woman in a half-asleep. We may study the room till she awakes.

Something of former respectability in it. Bookcase, for example, with glass doors—now a general depository of odds and ends; carpet of nice pattern, but sorely faded, and worn into ragged holes near the windows; window-curtains once there, as appears by the poles, once gilt, now disclosing their native pine; chairs unstable, and of several patterns; a small clock on the mantel-piece, the newest looking thing in the place, that strikes with a quick, whizzing sound, as if it had caught cold and rushed through its striking nervously, as if ashamed of itself, and glad to be gone with it. But it wakes up the woman from her dog-sleep.

"Twelve o'clock, and Tom's not home yet. Well, I wonder where he is. What am I to do? I'm dead tired; I wish I could go to—"

Ring at the door bell violently and continuously, and she goes to open the door; returns accompanied by a youth of about fifteen.

While the poor mother, in evident fear, lays out a supper, let us take a survey of him. His face is the oldest of him, two or three years older than his body; traces of good features—eyes for example; lips thickened and swollen, and cheeks flabby and tallow-colored. Clothes unmatched; part shabby, part flashy; all smelling strongly of tobacco smoke.

"Where were you, Tom?" timidly said the mother.

"Oh, enjoying myself."
"I know; but where, Tom?"
"Oh! at Hallack's; all the fellows were there."

"And where then, Tom?"
"Oh, nowhere; took a walk."
"Tom, you were somewhere else; you were drinking; I know it."
"Oh yes! the fellows turned in at the corner and had a drink."

"Tom dear, I am—you'll break my heart."
"Come now, stop that, mother. If a fellow works hard all day he must have some fun when he can, without being cross-questioned; and pushing the empty plate away, and rising with a movement that upset his chair, Tom slams the door after him, and goes to his bed.
"God help me! what can I do?"

Yes; God help you, poor weak mother! You gave up the reins to a headstrong boy too soon. And now you cannot get them back.

SCENE SECOND.—The same room, darker and more dismal, bookcase and clock gone; no carpet; a woman, old and feeble, with a look of constant terror. Long past midnight. Several times she has moved about, started, listened, drawn her old shawl around her bent shoulders, and then flung herself down again. At length there is knocking, and Tom comes in. He is a man now, in size and years, but with a defiant and dare-devil look that makes you turn away from him. His breath is heavy with drink and his clothes look as if he picked them on chance out of a heap.

"Tom dear, you're killing yourself, and you're killing me too. It's past three o'clock, and I'm—"



REV. JOHN HALL, D. D.

"Come now, shut up, old woman; I know all that by this time pretty well, I guess. You just get to your bed, and I'll take care of myself."

"Tom, I don't want to go till you're ready. I'll wait."

"Come, old woman, here's your candle. I'm old enough to mind Number One."

And the poor mother goes. He would abuse her, strike her, as he has many a time done, when quite drunk, if she did not. She goes to bed, but not to sleep—to think and weep. Yes! she thinks. Tom is not her oldest child. She had another, Willy, who died at the age of two. She remembers the little curly head, the smooth brow, the waxen hands that lay in the small coffin, beside which she and her husband stood and wept bitterly. She was broken-hearted. All the world looked like a grave to her. It was many a day before she was content to think that God should take her child. And then Tom came. She thought of him as a baby, of his baby tricks, of his boyish ways, of her pride in him. And now! Ah! she thinks there are heavier blows than death can strike. There are greater griefs than a child's dying. And the poor crushed, confused spirit wanders to and fro, from the coffin of dead Willy to the living sorrow of her life; and then come broken thoughts of God. Perhaps she had been wrong to Him. Perhaps she was seeing it now. Perhaps He would pity her. He knew a parent's heart. He was "Our Father;" and then she thought of her mother, and remembered her mother teaching her "Our Father." Oh! how long ago and far away that appeared! Ages of sorrow lay between. And she went over "Our Father" to the very end. Thus diverted from her griefs, and soothed and worn out, the poor

gray-headed, heart-broken old woman went to sleep.

As for Tom, when his mother left the room, and was quiet, he produced a bottle he had brought in; he raked up the coals in the stove; he drank again and again; and then flung himself on his bed and slept the drunkard's sleep.

SCENE THIRD.—The same room, better furnished; some things in it, and a sewing-machine in the space by the window. The old mother gone—dead and buried. Tom has married. That is his wife, with a print gown of flaming color, and enormous ear-rings. She had been a domestic, but got tired of her stint, saved money, and set up a sewing-machine, and thus was free to go to the theatre, where she met Tom, walked with him, received his proposals, and at length married him, a year ago. It is past eleven o'clock when Tom comes in, to find his wife's brows black as night, and an ominous silence, threatening a storm.

"Got any supper for a fellow, Bess?" is Tom's introduction of himself.

"Get your supper where you spend supper-time," is the snuff response.

"Get me my supper, Bess," he shouts out, stamping his foot, and trying to look the bully.

"Not if I know it," is the stolid reply.

He raises his hand, as if to strike her.

"Don't do it, Tom, I advise you; if you hit me you'll rue it. Isn't your old mother you have to knock about, mind you?"

Tom is a coward at heart. He dare not strike her; but he takes up his hat, slams the door, and goes to a basement saloon close by; and it is not till dinner-time next day she sees him again.

SCENE FOURTH, AND LAST.—The same room, but very dreary and empty. The sewing-machine has been pawned; the new things are

gone, and the old look older and older. Bessie is a mother, with a pale, sickly baby; she was long ill—is weak yet; and she has been in the womanly weakness of these mournful months completely beaten down and cowed by her brutal husband. Poor Bessie! she was not radically bad; only gay and foolish. She did not respect Tom, but she wanted to "change her life, and she thought she liked him," and could get on with him. But Tom has grown worse—much worse. He is hardly ever quite sober. His associates are the vilest, male and female. He has just been in a dance-house, where some maudlin compliments to a frequenter of the place are flung back to him with contempt, for he is known to be without a cent. "Get away; what business have you here? Go home to that washed-out rag of your own."

In the temper this stinging insult produces Tom tumbles home late at night to find Bessie asleep; no coal for the stove, and no supper. There is an altercation; abusive language; fierce retort; blows. If the demons can get any peculiar joy out of human sin and woe, it must surely be when they see the sweet wine of married life turned into the bitter vinegar of hatred and strife; when they see a man's hand uplifted to fell to the ground the trembling woman he swore to love and cherish. And they saw this in Tom's room—they, and the old man, with his grandson, that sold newspapers and apples, and lived in the opposite room. The old man and his grandson saw that poor creature knocked down with his clenched fists. They called out to him. Her very helplessness angered him. "I will kill you outright and be done with it!" and he took up a chair and aimed a blow at her. She thought, "He will not hit the child," and held up her babe. Too late; the blow had been aimed at the child; the child had

child! and fell too. The old man and the boy saw it. They brought the police. Bessie they found sitting on the ground bleeding, hugging to her bosom the little body, groaning out at intervals as if nobody was there. "Oh, my murdered child! my murdered child!"

Yes; murder, with the extenuating circumstance that he was drunk. Curtain falls upon Tom on his way to prison for ten years.

As you did I, reader, turn from the tragedy, we moralize: "Something very wrong in the social mill that grinds out results like that; wonder could we do anything to mend it? At least we can dedicate this outline to all the unsuspecting young women who are thinking of marrying drunkards, and all the mothers who are spoiling their sons by giving them their own way."

THE LANDLORD'S VOW.

BY MRS. M. A. HOIT.

Late one evening in December there came a feeble knock at our door, and I hastened to open it, half expecting to find some shivering beggar waiting for admission. But what was my surprise to find little Nellie Perry, a child scarcely three years old, who was the daughter of our nearest neighbor. How she came to our door was a mystery that I could not solve, for poor Nellie had been an invalid for many a day, scarcely able to walk across the floor of her own little room. But there she stood in the darkness, shivering like a leaf in the autumn winds; and as the lamplight fell upon her pale face, I discovered an unnatural wildness in her large, black eyes, and she seemed paralyzed with some terrible spell. I seized the child and lifted her into the room; and as I placed her in the arm-chair by the glowing fire, I tried to find out the secret of her visit. But the child only stared wildly about the room, and not a word came from her pale lips. Just then a thought occurred to me, and in a moment I comprehended the truth. I called out in a startled tone to my good husband, who was quietly dreaming upon the sofa, and he sprang up, half bewildered, and enquired what was the matter.

"Go over to Perry's quick, John; for I know that they are in trouble." And I pointed at the child, who was seated by the fire.

He needed no second bidding, but, hastily seizing his heavy overcoat, rushed out into