

THE TOBACCO PEST.

BY JOEL SWARTZ, D.D.

I RODE to Chicago in a pullman one day—

I rode in a pullman a day and a night;  
A cloud of blue vapour hung over the way,  
But the stars of cigars were constantly bright.

I lapsed in a dream and rode by a stream  
Of tortuous bank and terribly rank—  
A filthy and oozing and streaming offence,  
A loathing and horror to every sense.

It seemed to glide with an ominous sweep,  
And on it I saw were many asleep;  
Bedrenched and benumbed, and dressed for  
their graves,  
They drifted along till lost in its waves.

Though sleeping they moaned a wretched refrain;  
The river was red with the blood of its slain,  
For it seemed a huge serpent, and it crushed  
in each fold  
The bodies of those whom it overrolled.

As far up and down as my vision could reach  
I saw the dense crowds press down to the beach,  
And there by the flood the multitudes sat,  
And in the vile stream they constantly spat.

And they spat and they puffed, and they snuffed  
and they chewed,  
They laughed and they cried, were civil and rude;  
But the smoke still ascended, and it seemed  
every whit,  
Like odors exhaled from the bottomless pit.

I saw they all pressed still nearer the bank,  
And they puffed, and they snuffed, and they drank,  
The snuffing and chewing and puffing came first,  
The drinking came next to quench the keen thirst.

With little distinction of culture or rank,  
The multitudes pressed to the verge of the bank;  
The rich and the great, the titled and fair,  
With the low and the vulgar were visible there.

O shame! in the van of a bank-crowding crew,  
When the wind swept aside the vapour of blue,  
I saw a black coat and a fine silken hat,  
A gold-headed cane and a parson's cravat!

And I thought of the seat where the scorners do sit,  
And the wages of sin and the woes of the pit;  
And I heard, as I thought, from a drink-tainted breath  
A whisper: "We're nearing the portals of death!"

Affrighted, I woke, half stifled with smoke,  
And, turning to glance at the person who spoke,  
I saw, as I heard the shrill whistle blow,  
The spires and domes of grand Chicago.

A GIRL IN BLUE.

THIS was just the way Helen looked when her cousin Carrie peeped in at her from the crack in the door that led to the dining room. And this was much the way Carrie talked to herself about it:

"There she sits in her elegant new morning dress, nothing in the world to do but amuse herself, and I must stain my hands paring potatoes and onions and I don't know what for dinner. A dress with a train, and she only sixteen! only two years and a few months older than I am! How would I look in a train! I never expect to have such an elegant dress as she has on this minute, and it is only her morning dress. To-night she will wear the lovely garnet silk trimmed with white lace. Think of me in my old blue flannel! It is all I have to wear. I don't see why there should be such a difference between cousins!

I wish Helen had stayed in New York. Why she wanted to come to see the country in the winter is more than I can understand. She isn't homesick a bit. I just think I'll stay at home to-night. Almost all the girls wear new dresses, and my old one will look older than ever beside Helen's grand one."

"Carrie," called that young lady's mother, and Carrie went to the kitchen. There she gave her hands to the potatoes and her thoughts to the discouragement around her. At last she spoke of them aloud:

"Mother, I don't believe I'll go to-night after all."

"Not go to Kate's party! Why, what has happened? Is the child sick?"

"No'm, I'm not sick; only discouraged. I don't want to go and wear that old blue dress, and that's the truth. I shall look different from any of the others, and seeing me with Helen will make everybody notice it more."

"My child, Helen's father is worth a million, and your father isn't worth a thousand dollars besides what it takes to support his family."

"I know it ma'am; I'm not finding fault, only I don't want to go and be looked at, that's all."

The mother looked very sober, and something beside the steam that puffed out of the pudding dish made her eyes moist. Carrie split a large potato savagely in two, and looked gloomy. Then the mother said, speaking low:

"Won't you disappoint a good many people to-night, daughter? Isn't Kate depending on you to help with the charades and the music?"

"I can't help it, mother. People must not depend upon me. Most every girl has a new dress for to-night, and I can't be going there just to help other people have a good time when I know I shall feel mortified all the evening."

"Can't you? Why, daughter, even Christ pleased not himself."

After that, not another word was said in that kitchen for nearly an hour. Carrie finished the potatoes and ran away. Where she went or what she did, mother did not know; but when she came to set the table her face was pleasant to look at, and she stopped on her way to the pantry to kiss her mother.

"I'm going, mother, and I'll have as nice a time as I can, and not grumble a bit."

She looked very pretty in her blue dress, with its deep lace collar and bright ribbons in her hair. At least her mother thought so, though when Helen came down in all the glory of her garnet silk and gold bracelets, there was certainly a difference.

It wasn't a young people's party entirely; in fact it was a sort of a family gathering, to which all the city aunts and uncles and cousins had come; and there were some elegant dresses there, and Carrie in her old blue one, did really feel a good deal alone. Yet she went cheerfully through the evening, helping with the charades and the music—helping in a dozen quiet little ways that nobody knew about, and yet trying to keep out of notice as much as possible.

Cousin Helen played and sang, and did both very nicely, while Carrie only played accompaniments for others to sing.

Later in the evening there was a whispering between two of the city

cousins and presently it became known that Mr. Ames, who was Uncle Howard's college friend, was a wonderful singer and would entertain the company if anybody could be found who would play for him.

"I wish he would sing 'The Storm King,' for us," said Aunt Alice; "it is the most wonderful thing! I would like to hear it. Helen couldn't you play it for him?"

"I! No, indeed; his music is all awful hard, and he is awfully particular; and that piece I don't know, any way."

But Aunt Alice was determined that her mother should hear "The Storm King." She talked with Mr. Ames, and then she moved among the guests trying to find one who was willing to play the accompaniment. Not a cousin could be found. They were all afraid of the great singer and the difficult music. At last the girl in blue got ashamed of herself.

"Aunt Alice, I will play it," she said, coming out from the corner.

"You!" said Aunt Alice in surprise, for Carrie was one of the youngest of the cousins. "Do you know it?"

"No, ma'am, I don't know it; but I can play from the notes."

Then did Helen look at her young cousin in respectful astonishment.

"Can you play pieces that you do not know?" she asked her.

"Why, yes," said Carrie laughing. "I can if they are not very hard. I ought to. I have taken lessons steadily for three years."

"Well, but I have taken lessons for almost five years, and I can't do it."

And Carrie played the accompaniment, which really was difficult, and played it so well that Mr. Ames, the great singer, told her he had never had a player who pleased him better.

And don't you think she forgot all about her blue dress, until her attention was called to it in a very strange way.

"She not only plays remarkably well," said Mr. Ames to his wife, "but she is the best dressed young girl in the room."

"Yes," said Mrs. Ames, "I noticed that; all the rest of the young people are over dressed. She must have a sensible mother."

They did not know that Carrie stood behind them and heard it all. But really I think it did her good; just as honest compliments often do good. It made her realize that there were two sides to the question of fine dresses.—*The Pansy.*

BANDICOOTS.

BY A TELUGU MISSIONARY.

I WONDER how many of our young people know what a Bandicoot is? The name is a Telugu word, and means "pig-rat." Seema-bandicoot is the name Telugus give to a guinea-pig. The Bandicoot, however, is not confined to the Telugu country; but is found all over India. Although so very common, we never saw one till yesterday; and then we saw thirteen, all stretched out in a row, dead.

Bandicoots are very fond of beans, peas, corn, etc., and live in fields and gardens. The other day, I gave the gardener some peas to plant, and next morning we found the peas all dug up or eaten. I noticed several big holes in the garden like Woodchuck holes, and they told me they were Bandicoot

holes, and that it was the Bandicoots that had eaten the peas. So I sent for some men called Yannadies, who are very clever at catching rats, snakes, etc. They soon found the thieves of our peas, and brought to my study door four immense Bandicoots, five smaller ones, and four little bits of ones that hadn't opened their eyes yet. I gave the Yannadies twelve cents, and they put the Bandicoots into a basket, and carried them home to eat them. As the Bandicoots live on grain, their flesh is said to be very good—not unlike young, fresh pork. But I shouldn't like to eat pig-rats, nor other rats. Would you?

But we have worse things in the garden than Bandicoots. The other night, when the girls returned from prayer-meeting, they found a big Toddy snake on the school veranda. They screamed, of course, and the boys ran over to see what was the matter; and they soon killed the snake. The Toddy snake is very poisonous, and those bitten by it are almost sure to die within an hour or two. It is called Toddy snake because it is often found on or about the Toddy tree, or Plymira. Next to the Cobra, the Toddy snake is the most deadly snake we have—except that old "Serpent the Devil." We have him here, too, and he makes bad work among our people in India, just as he does in America. His sting is the most deadly of all, and there is but one cure for it—the blood of Jesus Christ.

I captured a big scorpion in my bathroom the other day, which measured eight inches long. He looked very ugly, but his sting is not so bad as a little yellow scorpion, not bigger than your little finger. If it had stung me—and I was very close to him—it would not have killed me, but it would have made me vomit and froth at the mouth, and caused great pain. If it were to sting a baby, it might die. Some day perhaps, I'll tell you about lizards.

A WORD TO THE BOYS.

ASHAMED of work, boys!—good, hard, honest work? Then I am ashamed of you—ashamed that you keep the feet untrammelled, ready for any emergency; second, as soon as you can find that the horse is running away, with all the power of the right arm jerk the horse's head to that side of the neck, at the same time springing to the left of the vehicle ready to jump. As soon as done immediately jerk the horse's head to the left side of the neck and change your position to the opposite side of the carriage. Repeating this with all one's strength and as quickly as possible, the horse must stop his speed. Under this treatment it is impossible for him to proceed, but it must be done quickly, so as not to allow the horse to straighten his position or to turn around. I have been runaway with several times, and have always tried Rarey's plan with success."

WHEN a clergyman remarked there would be a nave in the church the society was building, an old lady whispered that she knew the party to whom he referred.

I SHOULD like to make life beautiful—I mean everybody's life. It spoils my enjoyment of anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out from it.