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Joe Broggs;

OR,

NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.

BY D. McFADYEN.

PART I.

RAIN fell in torrents—the night was dark—clouds scudded across the sky—no sound was heard but the moaning of the trees and the roaring of the wind, as it swept through the streets. All kept within doors, and were thankful for the bright fires and cosy rooms and happy family circle.

Looking out of the window into Princess Street might be seen a woman, her clothes threadbare, her face pale and careworn, carrying in her arms a child—the thin shawl around which scarcely saved it from the cold blast. The woman's hair was wildly blown about her shoulders, and her shivering arms were bare to the elbows. She passed and left us thinking—thinking of the woe in our cities—of the sad hearts, the hopeless hearts—the broken hearts of our great cities.

She made her way to the House of Refuge. Full of fear and shame, she approached the place and tremblingly knocked for admittance. An official came, asked the usual questions, and heard the old, old tale of woe—of a drunken father and a brutal husband.

"Well, Mrs. Broggs, you may stay here to-night. We will see what can be done for you in the morning. It is a fearful night."

"Yes, sir," she answered, "a fearful night for me," and with a low cry she fell to the floor in a swoon. The child—poor, sickly, little Em, was picked up by a pauper, around whom three or four other unfortunates gathered. The excitement over, they grouped around the fire, and old Norman, who made his home there, broke out with,—“I

never knowed the likes on it. Seven years ago Joe Broggs had a big farm with 'osses, and cows, and everything. He tuck to drinkin' and bettin' and playin', so his place soon went to flitters. Then he solled out and come here, and 'tween drinkin' and loafin' he came to want. I never had his chance. Now he is 'orsler for old Simes at the Central. Yes, he went from bad to worse, and from worse to here.

That there woman is his wife. I knowed her when—"

Dong! Dong! Fire! Fire!! Fire!!!

The story teller stopped. Broggs was forgotten. Outside was a seething mass of people making for the fire.

"Where is it?"—"Which way?"—"It is the



THE WOMAN'S HAIR WAS WILDLY BLOWN ABOUT HER SHOULDERS.

court house!"—"No, it is the Central, where Simes keeps."—"Out of my way!" Curses and murmurs, smoke and rain, cries and trampling fill the midnight air.

Onward pressed the crowd to Simes' hotel. The second story was now ablaze. Women were seen running hysterically from window to window,