

"HOPPETY BOB."

BY A CITY MISSIONARY.

IN the wilderness of dingy brick on the Surrey side of the Thames there is a short cut from one street to another, called, if I remember rightly, Raymond's Folly. Hurrying through the Folly on one occasion, for the sake of its short cut, I could not in spite of my haste, help stopping for a moment to glance at a couple of pictures, as Hogarthian in their contrast as any two depicting the careers of Tom Idle and Francis Goodchild. The frames were the open doorways of two adjoining houses.

In one room a hulking bricklayer's labourer, powdered with white dust on his unkempt hair, bristly beard that had not been mown for a fortnight, and lime-splashed clothes that were never doffed to go to church, was lifting his heavy head and shoulders, like Dr. Watts' sluggard, from the rickety table on which they had been sprawled—a table slopped with beer, and littered with the fragments of a broken pipe. His stupidly-glazed eyes—the orbit of one of them puffed and purple from a recent blow—showed that he had a good deal more than enough beer already; but he had roused himself into semi-consciousness to growl a sleepy curse, and shake a cowardly fist at his wife, because she did not go at once to fetch him "another pot." It was no wonder that even she, poor, pinched, tattered, terrified creature, plucked up courage to linger for a moment with the broken lipped jug in her hand. A baby was hanging at her skinny breast, and two or three scared, half-starved little ones were tugging at her scanty skirts. When children are whimpering to mammy for bread, and yet the lazy bread-winner insists on having beer, a woman must find it hard work to keep her vow to "love, honour, and obey." What a mockery the Marriage Service must seem to her—and the dreams she had when she listened to it, arrayed in abnormal splendour, and bashfully returning the fond glances of "her new lord, her own, the first of men," looking as smart as any gentleman, and even more loving than in the earliest days of their "keeping company."

In the other room—propped up with a patchwork pillow in a wicker arm-chair, something like a frontless blackbird's cage—sat a dwarf. He was deformed as well, and one leg hung springless and shrivelled as a broken, withered twig. There were traces of past, as well as twitches of present, pain, in his drawn face; and yet it looked not only intelligent, but cheerfully benevolent. A musk plant, trained on a fan frame of liliputian laths, stood on his window-shelf, and above it hung a linnet in a cage. Wherever you see birds and flowers you may be pretty sure that the tenant of the house or room is of a gentle disposition. The musk plant and the linnet were no deceptive signs. Whilst the