

TELLING FORTUNES.

“**T**ELL tell you two fortunes, my fine little lad,
For you to accept or refuse;
The one of them good, the other one bad—
Now hear them and say which you choose.

I see by my gifts, within reach of your hand,
A fortune right fair to behold;
A house and a hundred good acres of land,
With harvest fields yellow as gold.

I see a great orchard, with boughs hanging down
With apples, russet and red;
I see droves of cattle, some white and some brown,
But all of them sleek and well fed.

I see droves of swallows about the barn-door;
See the fanning mill whirling so fast;
I see the men threshing out wheat on the floor—
And now the bright picture has passed,

And I see rising dismally up in the place
Of the beautiful house and the land,
A man with a fire-red nose on his face,
And a little brown jug in his hand!

Oh, if you beheld him, my lad, you would wish
That he were less wretched to see;
For his boot toes they gape like the mouth
Of a fish,
And his trousers are out at the knee.

In walking he staggers now this way, now that,
And his eyes they stand out like a bug's,
And he wears an old coat and a battered-in hat,
And I think that the fault is the jug's

For the text says the drunkard shall come to be poor
And that drowsiness clothes men with rags,
And he doesn't look much like a man, I am sure,
Who has honest hard cash in his bags.

Now which will you have? To be thrifty and snug,
And to be right side up with your dish,
Or to go with your eyes like the eyes of a bug,
And your shoes like the mouth of a fish?
—Alice Cary.

GWINE TO RIDE UP IN THE CHARIOT.

“**N**OW, Pussy,” said Mr. Morgan, as he kissed his little daughter, “you must take good care of things while papa is gone.”

“I will, papa,” was the earnest reply.

“I dislike to go away,” continued her father. “Everything is very dry and there have been fires west of us; but Patrick and Hannah are faithful and you are worth a half dozen any day.”

“Don't worry, papa, dear,” said Milly, gaily. “Just go and have a good time. We shall be all right.”

The morning of the third day was clear and pleasant. A breeze from the opposite direction during the night had blown away the smoke, and with it went the fear from the heart of the poor old black woman. So they all went to work with a will. Pat was re-hingling a barn; Hannah was baking, and Milly was acting as little maid of all work to the sable cook. She washed dishes, buttered pie-plates and cake-tins, occasionally leaving her work to dart into the sitting-room, to

assure herself that everything was in order for the home-coming of her loved ones.

“Gwine to ride up in de chariot
Sooner in de mornin’”

she sang. But hark! What was that? A cry of terror or distress. She flew to the door, followed by Hannah. They saw Patrick crawling towards the house on his hands and knees.

“The prairie is on fire!” he shouted, adding immediately: “Howly Mother, be merciful! for it's helpless I am intirely.”

The prairie was, indeed, on fire, though at some distance. Pat, from his perch on the barn, had spied it, and, in his haste to get down and give the alarm, had slipped on the ladder and fallen to the ground, severely spraining an ankle.

“Ye must burrun a sthreak, Miss Milly, and just as quick as iver ye can, for the fire is a-coomin' like an express train.”

Milly understood—she had often heard of it—and already the matches and some bits of paper were in her hand.

“Where, Pat,” she cried.

“Out forninst yon wire fence. I'll draw wather, and Hannah must carry it till ye, to shprinkle the ground this side yer fire.” And Patrick dragged himself painfully to the well.

Milly did as she was told, and everything succeeded bravely. The fright had a wonderful effect on Hannah's rheumatic limbs, and she carried water on the double quick.

On came the great fire, nearer and nearer. Milly could hear the roaring and hissing of the flame, the trampling and snorting of horses, and the bellowing of cattle, as they raced for life.

At the right and left of her fire they passed, but the child scarcely noticed them. She dimly saw, through the smoke, several gaunt prairie wolves dash by; but it seemed perfectly natural and she had no thought of fear. She was saving her home.

With wet blankets she whipped back the fire, when it threatened to come where it should not. At last, she had the satisfaction of seeing so wide a belt of burnt land between her home and the great fire that she felt sure they were safe, and she started to seek a refuge from the blinding smoke in the house her efforts had saved; but, borne on the wind, far up in mid-air, came sailing a blazing mass of straw, and, to Milly's horror, it fell on the house-roof. With almost super-human swiftness, she ran toward the new scene of danger. Up the stairs she darted, catching, as she ran, a broom. From a dormer window she climbed out on the roof, and with her broom shoved the flaming straw to the ground, where it was quenched by Pat.

Hannah was by this time at the open window, with water, for Milly to pour on the now blazing roof. She caught a pail and dashed the contents on the flame, unheeding that her own clothing was on fire; but Hannah saw, and, seizing a bed-quilt, she climbed out of the window, almost as quickly as Milly herself had done, and wrapped it about her pet, to smother the flame. Hannah had done her best, but before she reached her the calico dress was burned literally off, as was nearly all her clothing. The blaze was easily extinguished, but it had done its work.

Their hearts clouded with terror and forboding. Mr. Morgan and Edith drove toward home that afternoon over the blackened desert, that had been so beautiful but two days before. The shadow lifted as they came in sight of the cozy farm-house, standing safe in an oasis of green.

“Thank God!” said Mr. Morgan, and Edith responded “Amen!”

But when they reached home they found Sorrow enthroned, awaiting them.—Milly—wise, gentle, brave Milly—burned almost past recognition, lay up in the bed, her charred curls blackening the pillow. The father and sister saw it was too late for remedies. Milly was dying! She did not appear to suffer, but lay unconscious, though at intervals she murmured little snatches of the hymns she loved best. Suddenly she sang, and her voice was clear and strong as ever: “Do chariot! do chariot! its wheels roll in fire.”

A long silence followed, broken only by the laboured breathing of the little martyr. Then she sang, softly and slowly:

“Swing low, sweet chariot, comin'—for to—carry—”

The heart-broken watchers listened to catch the remaining words, but they never were sung, unless, it may be, the strain was finished in the upper home.

Unseen, the mystic chariot had swung low.

THE TOBACCO HABIT.

HON. Neal Dow, writing for young men in the *N. Y. Independent* says: “Your success in life will depend as much, perhaps more, upon what you save as upon what you earn, and you have now started out to make a future for yourselves, with a habit of useless expenditure that will certainly make your life a failure. That is my view of it. This habit of wastefulness, to speak of the tobacco habit only in that way, without reference to the other evils of it, will influence you in all other matters of expenditure; so that you cannot possibly succeed in life if you continue the course you have now entered upon. Expenditures, like savings, increase rapidly and enormously if there be added to them the annual compound interest, which is the proper way to regard them. You have no idea, you say, what your expenditures will amount to in a series of years, reckoned in that way. I can tell you very nearly what they will be. You are now about twenty years of age. When you are thirty, your seventy-five cents a day, being about two hundred and seventy-four dollars a year, will amount to more than three thousand dollars; at forty years of age it will be more than nine thousand dollars; when you shall be fifty years old the sum will be more than twenty thousand dollars; at sixty years of age you will have wasted in that way nearly forty-one thousand dollars; and at seventy years, the amount will be more than seventy-six thousand dollars. It is quite worth your while to consider whether this expenditure will be a waste or not, whether it will be a wise or foolish investment of your earnings.”

When I see a youth beginning the tobacco habit, he seems to me to be riveting to his leg a clog which he will

in after life drag along painfully, regretting bitterly the folly of his young, thoughtless days, when he so foolishly encumbered his future, and, looking, perhaps, with no kindly eye upon those, his older friends or relatives, who ought to have warned him in his inexperience of the folly he was about to commit. Thousands of Christian men and women, who know all this and more of the evils of the tobacco habit, have never warned their young friends against it.

THE BLIND POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

IT is a remarkable fact that the extended and complicated details of the Post-office Department of Great Britain are controlled by a gentleman who would seem to be disqualified for the position on account of blindness.

Prof. Henry Fawcett is one of the most extraordinary men who ever took part in an English administration. He is totally blind, having lost his sight, when a young man at Cambridge, by the explosion of a gun. Notwithstanding this painful drawback, which would have incapacitated most men from taking part in public life, Mr. Fawcett has shown a power of study which has resulted in his being one of the best-informed men of his time. He is a distinguished political economist, a profound mathematician, and widely read in all matters of history and literature. Perhaps the most singular of his accomplishments, considering the fact of his being a blind man, is his dexterity as an angler, he being able to handle the rod and fly with extraordinary success. In the House of Commons he is greatly respected by all parties. An attendant guides him to the door, and there ready hands are always to be found to direct the sightless minister to his place. He is a sound and lucid, if not a very attractive, speaker, having a wonderful command of facts and figures, which thanks to his acute memory, he masters with marvelous rapidity and retentiveness. Mr. Fawcett has of course many devoted friends to help him, and is also blessed with a peculiarly accomplished wife, whose attainments in literature and science are almost as great as his own.

Mr. Fawcett has displayed remarkable vigor ever since he was appointed to the office of Post-master General. His policy is one of solid, practical reform; and in his own person he represents, perhaps more than any other public man now living, the strong, enlightened common sense of the English nation. No minister who ever had charge of the Post-office has, in the space of time during which he has been in power, effected so many useful changes in his department as Mr. Fawcett has done. He introduced a new system of money-orders, or checks for small sums, which has proved of great advantage to the public; and not less valuable has been the plan by which the Post-office receives stamps as deposits in savings banks, an innovation successfully introduced in order to carry out Mr. Fawcett's favourite and excellent idea of offering to the poor every possible facility for practicing the virtue of thrift. He is also contemplating cheaper telegrams, and a new and improved parcel post.—*Christian Weekly.*