

## The Wild Sower.

BY ELIOT M. THOMAS.

Up and down the land I go,  
Through the valley, over hill;  
Many a pleasant ground I sow,  
Never one I reap or till;  
Far and flail I never wield,  
Leave no hayrick in the field.

Farmer goes with leathern scrip,  
Fills the harrowed earth with seed;  
In the self-same score I slip  
Germs of many a lusty weed;  
Though I scatter in his track,  
I possess nor bin nor sack.

He sows wheat, and I sow tare,  
Rain and sunshine second toll;  
Tame and wild these acres share,  
Wrestling for the right of soil.  
I stand by and clap my hands,  
Cheering on my urethra bands.

Mine the cockle in the rye,  
Thorned thistle, large and fine,  
And the daisy's white-fringed eye,  
And the dodder's endless twine;  
Mine those fingers five that bind  
Every blade and stalk they find.

Mine the lilies, hot and bright,  
Setting summer meads on fire;  
Mine the silkwood's spindles white,  
Spinning Autumn's soft attire.  
Golden-rod and aster then  
I bring up by bank and glen.

Whose fleeth to the woods,  
Whose buildeth on the plains,  
I, too, seek those solitudes,  
Leading on my hardy trains:  
Thorn and briar, still man's lot,  
Crowd around the frontier cot.

Many serve me, unaware,—  
Shaggy herds that ceaseless roam,  
And the rovers of the air  
Passing to their winter home;  
More than these upon me wait,—  
Wind and water bear my freight.

Thus, a sower wild, I go,  
Trafficking with every clime,  
Still the fruitful germs I sow  
That shall vex your harvest time;  
Otherwise, ye toll-steeped men,  
Eden's case were come again.

## The River of January.

(See first page.)

PROBABLY no place on earth is more inappropriately named than Rio de Janeiro. There is a tradition that an early Portuguese navigator, when exploring the coast of Brazil, entered this bay in the month of January. From the great size of the bay, which extends inland seventeen miles and has an extreme breadth of twelve miles, he supposed that he had discovered another river similar to the Amazon and Orinoco, and he forthwith named it Rio de Janeiro, which in English means River of January. Whether this is in reality the origin of this misnomer or not, it remains applied to province, city, and bay. To northern ears the sound is cold. Our rivers in January are not inviting except to venturesome skaters, but January and June are the same upon the placid waters of Rio bay. Perpetual summer smiles upon its verdant islands, and no icy winds blow from the heights which surround it. Our engraving shows one of the cascades on the upper waters of this river.

In the time of Oliver Cromwell the magistrates in the north of England punished drunkards by making the drunkards carry what was called the "drunkard's cloak." This was a large barrel, with one head out, and a hole in the other, through which the offender was made to put his head, while his hands were drawn through two small holes, one on each side. With this he was compelled to walk along the public streets.

## Hard Times.

BY SYDNEY DAYRE.

"I've got a job, mother!"  
"True, Bob?"

"Yes, a whole cord of wood to sell. Got in ahead of every one else. Followed a load on the street till it got to the place where they'd bought it, and got the promise of it."

Bob straightened up his thin, awkward, overgrown figure with great pride, and then began poking the fire.

"Take care, Bob," cautioned his mother, "the wood's most gone."

"But there'll be an extra dollar to-morrow, don't you see? Fifteen cents I'm to pay Jim Johnson for the loan of his saw and buck, I'm goin' to buy fifty cents' worth of wood, and goin' to get a pane of glass for the window; and then, Kitty," bending over a little girl who lay on a miserable bed, "something'll be left for you. I'm going to get you some of those jolly nice white rolls you saw at the baker's one day—yes I am, Kitty! and somethin' else I sha'n't tell you till you see. Just wait till I come home to-morrow! The first job I've had for all my tryin'! I wish the hard times were over."

Bob mused a few moments on all the weary miles he had walked in search of work through cold, storm and snow, since the day when, a few weeks ago, the daily newspaper had lengthened its routes and discharged some of its carrier boys, he among the number.

"Who's hard times, anyway, that they all talk about?" said Kitty, pressing a cold little hand to her feverish cheek, as she turned her restless eyes towards him.

"Why, it ain't anybody, Kitty; it's only that it's hard to get work, and hard to get money, and hard for poor folks to live."

"Yes,"—mother shook her head with an expression of woeful realization on her face. "The glass works is closed up, so there's boys and men out there; and they're sending the girls out of the shops; and people that giv' out their sewing before, does it themselves now—that's how 'tis I get so little,—and mills and factories shut up."

"I should think," said Bob, looking gravely into the fire he had stirred into a feeble blaze, "that rich folks would try all the more to give poor folks work, such times."

"They say they can't, somehow," said his mother.

"P'raps," said Kitty, "they wouldn't have enough money themselves to last till hard times was gone, if they did."

"P'raps so," said Bob, "Never mind," he added briskly, "the lady I'm to saw for gets lots of wood, and maybe she'll hire me again, and maybe you'll get more sewing, mother, and then we'll get the mattress from the pawnshop, and buy some stuff to make Kitty well; and then it won't be hard times any longer, will it?"

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"It'll take an hour to thaw it out," said Bob, as in the dim light of the following morning he broke into pieces with a hatchet the corn-bread, frozen to the solidity of a stone.

"There'll be warm water soon, and then I can soak it, Bobby."

"I guess I'd better not wait, though," he said, crunching between his teeth some of the flinty morsels. "You see, it's most a day's work, and I want to show 'em that I'm equal to it, so I'll be the surer of gettin' more. Now,

I'll move your machine by the stove, mother—it's queer how the poor thing seems to be like folks, and wants to be warmed up before it'll go. Too bad, Kitty, to have to take my coat off you, but the stove's gettin' nicely warmed up now, and I've got an iron on it for mother to put to your feet." He took the coat which had been over her, but stopped to carefully tuck about her the bit of bedding before putting it on. Then, with caressing pat and a cheery good-bye, he went out into the bitter, biting, stinging cold.

It seemed to enfold his thinly-clad frame in a clasp which might well seem worse than the grasp of death to any but a boy still bearing, through hardship and privation, the blessed spirit of youthful hope, braced by loving solicitude for still feebler ones. The heavy sticks of wood seemed to greet him with a friendly look as he went at his work with hearty good-will.

But as the hours wore away the boy began to realize that something besides mere energy and will purpose is necessary to the carrying one through a day's hard work in the atmosphere of a Northern winter. All his resolution could not keep off the frequently recurring dizziness and faintness which seemed at times almost to overwhelm him with an impulse to fling himself down upon the pitiless snow beside him. He tried to laugh it off and fight it off, yielding to it once or twice only far enough to sit down for a moment on his saw-buck and rest his head on his trembling hand, springing up suddenly with a fear that some one might see him and think him unfit for hard work.

Finished at last it was, and piled with extra care and neatness to the last stick, each one of which had grown heavier and heavier. Then Bob stood in the comfortable kitchen and waited for the mistress to come and pay him.

"Eighty cents!" she said, offering him some change.

"I—thought—ma'am, a dollar was the regular price."

"Yes, but you're a boy. You don't expect a man's wages, do you?"

"It's a full cord, ma'am, isn't it?" said Bob, meekly, driven to say more than he otherwise would have ventured, by the strength of his longing desire to fulfil his promise to poor little Kitty.

"Yes, I know. But it's very hard times, and people can't expect what they used to get. There's plenty ready to do all I want done for that."

Bob knew it. More than one sawyer had come into the yard that day, looking with hungry eyes at his job and speculating on the chances of any more work to be had there. As the lady turned away he walked slowly out.

"It must be the warmth of the kitchen," he said to himself as he was forced by the sick feeling in his head and the weakness in his knees to sit down on the step outside.

Mrs. Brainard had no thought of being unkind or unjust. Months before, when her husband had informed her of the pressure which was tightening upon his business affairs, she had dutifully and practically accepted his suggestion of retrenchment in home expenses. She had cut down on her charities, worn her last year's cloak, made over for the children dresses and flannels which she had been in the habit of giving away, and industriously laboured through the plain sewing she had heretofore given out. Naturally inclined to be generous, and full of

sympathy for suffering which really came under her notice, she had made up her mind that liberal giving must be deferred to a more convenient season, and had closed her ears to the cry of the destitute which arose on every side.

She had been dressing to go out, and having returned to her room, was leisurely brushing her cloak, when she saw the boy she had just paid coming out of her back yard. He essayed to cross the street, and her attention was drawn to his singular manner. She watched for a moment his stumbling, apparently careless steps, and then with an expression of dismay, hastily threw on her wraps, ran down-stairs and out into the street. It had not been all crowded, but she had seen the boy, when directly in its middle, look first one way and then the other with a startled, confused expression, putting his hand to his head. Whether he had then fallen or been thrown down by passing horses, she had not been able to perceive, but she saw him quickly raised, placed upon a sleigh, and driven around a corner. Hurrying after, she could see men carrying him into a tenement house at the distance of about two blocks. She followed, and opening the door quietly, entered and stood inside, unnoticed by those who were anxiously occupied with him.

"He ain't hurt, is he?" asked a woman's appealing voice.

"No, I think not," said a gentleman with a professional air, pushing back a ragged gingham shirt from a bony arm, in search of a pulse. "What has he eaten to-day?"

"Well, about nothing, I guess. His breakfast was all frozen up, and he wouldn't wait, for fear of not getting more work."

"Any lunch?"  
"Likely not.—It's thawed now, Bobby," she said wistfully, offering it as he opened his eyes. "You'll eat some now, won't you?"

Bob raised himself and took a staggering step or two towards the child.

"I ain't got it for you, Kitty," he said, with a half sob. "Twas only eighty cents, and it was a glass of red jelly I was goin' to bring you—and the white rolls—"

"Never mind talking now, my boy," said the doctor, kindly, holding to his lips something he had poured into a cup. "Clear case of starvation," he said, whispering to Mrs. Brainard as he came to offer her a chair. "Plenty of such cases this winter, you know. God only knows how these poor bear so much in the way of hunger and cold. And when hard work is added, nature is strained to her last point of endurance—sometimes beyond it."

"And what then?" asked Mrs. Brainard with her face turning a little pale.

"Death." He laid a coin on the sewing machine, and hurried away, after saying to his mother,—

"Give him something nourishing—in small quantities at first."

"Stop!" said Mrs. Brainard, laying her hand on the woman's arm, as she again pressed upon Bob the uninviting looking corn-bread. "Oh! is it you, Mrs. Finley?"—recognizing with a further sinking at the heart the face of the woman whom she had told some time before that she could give out no more sewing until better times came. The hollow eyes and sunken cheeks—poverty-marks worn deep during dreadful months lived through since then—