

Till one cried "Father!" then he raised
his head

With such a look: I see it to this hour—
And turning, stamp'd down hard the new
laid sod,

Mutt'ring with half-clench'd teeth, "One's
gone, thank God!"

"One's gone!" I echoed, glancing where
my own

Slept in her grave: "and thou can'st tread
that spot

So rudely, speak those words in such a tone!
Art thou a father?" "Would that I
were not!"

Facing quick round his questioner to scan,
Made answer stern that miserable man.

Dark scowling from beneath his close-knit
brow,

His gloomy eye full fix'd on mine, he said,
"Children may be good gifts to thee, and
thou

May'st love them living, and lament them
dead;

But mine are born to misery and despair;
They're better off in heaven, or any where."

'Ye're of the Factories,' I began, but he
Broke in with horrid laugh, 'Aye, who
can doubt

That same, that sees us? Fact'ry hands
are we—

Their mark's upon us, and it don't wear
out.'

And dragging forward one poor girl, 'Look
there!'

He shouted out, and laid her shoulders bare.

Tearing the ragged shawl off, "That's fresh
done—

They sent her home scored black and blue
last night,

To serve as mourning for the little one—
We've no black rages—and that's a goodly
sight

For parent's eyes—that poor demented thing—
He was born straight and healthy, Duke or
King

Might have been proud of him—sharp-wit-
ted too,

Aye, 'cutest of them all—till his time
came

For the curs'd mill: They strapp'd him
on to do.

Beyond his strength: he fell against a
frame,

Struck backward—hurt his spine, the doctors
say,
And grew deformed and foolish from that
day.

Sir, when your young ones are in bed asleep,
Mine must slave on—in dust, and steam.
—and see,—

You may with yours, the Lord's day holy
keep

In his own house—'tis more than I can do,
(Brute as you think me,) from this rest that
day,

Poor little wretches, to drag mine away!

I've been myself a wretched Fact'ry boy—
Untaught, uncared for,—a poor foundling
too,

I never felt the feeling you call joy,
Nor leap'd nor laugh'd as happy children do,
But I liv'd on, and married like the rest
In reckless folly. And I say 'tis best

To die a sinless child, as mine lies there.

With aching pity, tenderly I strove

To sooth the wretched man in his despair—

I talked to him of seeking strength above,
He shook his head—of comfort found in pray-
er—

He groaned out, pointing to the grave, 'There,
there.'

But we must seek him in his home distress,
Where ague struck his helpless partner
lies,

Nursing a wailing baby at her breast.

That drains her life blood with its scant
supplies—

And we must try what Christian love can do,
For the sick soul, and staking body too:

And oh, my children, fervent be our
prayer

This night before we sleep, and day by
day,

That from our country, this good land and
fair!

The mortal plague spots may be wiped
away,

Ere from her heights, like guilty Tyre she's
hurled,

The wonder and opprobrium of the world.

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