

TOMMY'S DEATHBED.

"**B**UT hush! the voice from the little bed,  
And the watchful mother bent her head.  
'Mammy, I know that I'm soon to die,  
And I want to wish them all good-bye.

'I shouldn't like any here to say,  
'He didn't shake hands when he went away;  
He was glad to be off to his harp and wings  
And couldn't remember his poor old things."

'In Heaven I never should feel content  
If I hadn't been kind before I went;  
So let me take leave of them, great and small,  
Animals, people, and toys, and all.'

So the word went forth, and in no great while  
The servants entered in solemn file,  
The stout old cook, and the housemaid Rose,  
And the aproned boy with his smutted nose.

So each of the women, with streaming cheek,  
Bent over and kissed him and could not speak;  
But he said that they must not grieve and cry  
For they'd meet again in the happy sky.

'Twas longer and harder to deal with Jim—  
The child grew grave as he looked at him,  
For he thought to himself, 'He bets and swears,  
And I hardly believe that he says his prayers.'

'Oh, Jim, dear Jim, if you do such things  
You'll never be dressed in a harp and wings.'  
He talked to the boy as a father should,  
And begged him hard to be grave and good.

The lad lounged out with a brazen air  
And whistled derisively down the stair,  
But they found him hid in the hole for coal,  
Sobbing and praying in grief of soul.

Old 'Bever' came next, sodate and good,  
And gazed at his master and understood,  
Then up we carried in order due,  
'Maris,' the cat, and her kittens two.

Proud purred the mother, and arched her back,  
And vaunted her kittens, one white, one black;  
And the sweet white kitten was good and still,  
But the black one played with his nightgown's frill.

He stroked them all with his poor weak hand,  
But he felt they could not understand,  
He smiled, however, and was not vexed,  
And bade us bring him the rabbit next.

He welcomed 'Punch' with a loving smile,  
And hugged him close in his arms a while,  
And we knew (for the dear child's eyes grew dim,  
How grievous it was to part with him.

His mother he bade, with tearful cheek,  
Give 'Punch' his carrot three days a week,  
With lettuce-leaves on a cautious plan,  
And only just moisten his daily bran.

Then next we brought him, one by one,  
His drum and trumpet, his sword and gun;  
And we lifted up for his fondling hand  
His good grey steed on the rocking-stand.

Then close to his feet we placed a tray,  
And we set his armies in array;  
And his eyes were bright with fire and dew  
As we propped him up for his last review.

His ark came next, and pair by pair,  
Passed beasts of the earth and fowls of the air;  
He kissed good Joseph, and Ham, and Shem,  
And waved his hands to the rest of them.

But we saw that his eyes had lost their fire,  
And his dear little voice began to tire;  
He lay quite still for a little while,  
With his eyes half closed and a peaceful smile.

Then 'Mammy,' he said, and never stirred,  
And his mother bent for the whispered word;  
'Give him his carrot each second day,'  
Our Tommy murmured, and passed away."  
—*London Spectator.*

AN exchange says: "When we see a string bean we are always impressed with the idea that it is extravagant to waste so much string on so little bean.

A SPARTAN HERO.

MANY hundreds of years ago—a long time, in fact, before the Holy Child was born—there lived a little boy in Sparta, which, you may not know, boys, was a part of Greece. Sparta was composed of the bravest men that ever existed—as, indeed, why shouldn't it be! For every little boy was taken away from his mother when he was seven years of age, and educated by the State, as they called it—that is, they were not allowed to live at home with their brothers and sisters; but at an age when our boys are just out of kilts and into knickerbockers, they were taught not to love their mothers and the rest of their home friends, but that they were to live and die for their country, and she must occupy the first place in their affections. They were taught, too, that it was a mark of weakness to love home or home friends. And that was not all. They were taught that it was very unmanly to love easy habits or to indulge themselves in any way. They were given only the poorest and coarsest of food, often not enough of that. They were made to suffer from cold and hunger and thirst, and were often beaten or tortured in other ways. That was in order that they might be able to bear all the privations of a soldier's life, when they were men, without complaint. And the boy who could undergo all the tortures of hunger and cold and whipping with the most unflinching spirit, who could bear it all gladly for Sparta's sake, was considered a hero. There was one Spartan lad especially who was considered such a hero that his example was held up for years before Spartan youth, and his story has come down to to-day. Let me tell you about him.

The Spartan youths, as I told you, were given only a small allowance of food, and sometimes even were allowed only what they could steal. I suppose this was in order that they might be able, when grown men and in a foreign land, to steal their rations when they could not get them otherwise. This does not look just right to you and me, boys, does it? But, then, there are many things about war that are hard to explain so that they will look very well to a moral reasoner.

Well, the little Spartan whom I referred to one day stole a fox, so the story goes, and hid it under the short cloak he wore. Evidently he had not become very proficient in the art of stealing, for he was found out. Now the Spartans applauded a boy who could steal and not be found out, but punished him roundly if he were not skilful enough to conceal his theft. So when they discovered the fox's tail under that cloak, the poor little fellow, who had been taught to steal, and that disgrace lay only in being found out, was arrested and ordered to be flogged till he confessed. So his tender, quivering back was bared and he was beaten with a scourge, which is a dreadful whip with several "tails" to it.

The lashes fell thick and fast, until his back became raw and bleeding, but the boy stood without a word of confession or pain. As the blows fell, the fox, which the boy still held tightly, became frightened and struggled to get away. But the brave boy was determined not to give up an inch to man or beast, and only held him the tighter and uttered no sound.

The fox with its sharp teeth and claws tore the tender flesh of the boy's breast, while the lashes fell unmoici-

fully on his lacerated back. Finally he fell to the ground—dead! And then it was found that the fox had torn his way to the boy's very heart, and, as the tradition says, "eaten it out." That was Spartan courage, and that boy was held up as a brave example for the Spartan boys to follow.

Now, how do you think, boys, you would like to have lived twenty-five hundred years ago, and been a Spartan hero?—*Ex.*

WHY HE WAS A THIEF.

A PROMINENT citizen of one of our large cities, on leaving his house one morning a short time ago, found thrust under the door a pamphlet containing the first three chapters of an illustrated romance, entitled "The Doom of the Betrayer." There was a picture on the cover of the pamphlet of a woman with hair streaming, and two or three dead bodies lying around.

"Ha!" she shrieked. "It is done! The avenger is satisfied!! The command of the Mystic Three has been obeyed!!!"

Without concerning himself as to the Mystic Three, Mr. Blank determined to find out something about the author, publisher, and readers of this production, of which it was asserted twenty million copies had been sold during the year.

The information was easily obtained. The writer he found to be a middle-aged man who had served a term of imprisonment in the penitentiary, and had taken up the business of writing this class of stories as being more remunerative than stealing, and quite as congenial to his tastes. He was a bloated drunkard, whose every sentence was garnished with oaths and obscene jokes.

The publishers were sharp, unscrupulous business men, who from the sale of this and like publications had amassed fortunes. They lived in luxurious dwellings in a fashionable quarter. Their printing-house covered half a square. The circulation of these books, cheaply bound and sold for a trifle, was enormous, though fortunately it did not reach the millions claimed for it.

The first purchaser of these dime novels that Mr. Blank found was his own office-boy, who had been an eager reader of them for two years. He was the only son of an honest fellow employed as janitor in the establishment.

Old Jack and his wife had but one hope and interest in the world—their boy. They had saved and pinched from their scanty earnings to keep him at school and to clothe him better than themselves. Mr. Blank, from regard for his parents, had taken the boy into his office and given him every opportunity to rise.

"I'll see you a gentleman before I die," his old father said to him, with glistening eyes.

But the boy gained other notions of life from the books which he read. He robbed his employer the very week after the latter found the novel at his door, and escaped to enter a gambling-house in the West. Mr. Blank had found cause and the effect.

There is a large class of working-people who read the *Companion*, whose hopes for their children are as high as were poor Jack's. Do they know what books their children read at recess, or between working-hours?

They forbid them to drink liquor, yet they allow them to take a fiery poison into their minds and souls, which will start every latent vice into vigorous growth.—*Youth's Companion.*

COLD WATER ARMY PLEDGE.

**G**OD help me evermore to keep  
This promise that I make!  
I will not chew, nor smoke nor swear,  
Nor poisonous liquors take.

For poison drinks are very bad.  
I know the names of some:  
Ale, brandy, whisky, wine and beer,  
With cider, gin and rum.

I'll try to get my little friends  
To make this promise too;  
And every day I'll try to find  
Some temperance work to do.

—*Exchange.*

SATAN'S CHAIN.

WHILE coming from our Sunday-school-room I heard two boys before me talking.

"Wasn't it strange what our teacher told us this afternoon about Satan's chain?" said Charlie.

"Yes," replied Jimmy, "but I know it is all true; and I tell you I don't want the old fellow to get too strong or too long a chain around me."

"Nor do I," said Charlie, "but I never thought that Satan could slip such little things into his chain for links. How can a boy help getting mad when others tease him as some of those chaps at school do me?"

"Miss Seymour said 'getting mad' is one of Satan's best links, and that he is glad to have us use it, for then he is sure we will soon want others."

"That is true, for when I am mad the bad words slip from my tongue before I know it, and I often feel just like hitting somebody too. The other day I hurt little John Miller just because I lost my temper, but he was so provoking! There were three links slipped into the chain for me that day."

"I believe we boys have more links added to our chain on account of our tempers than from any other cause. I know my temper has led me into many troubles."

HINDOO SERVANTS.

ONE very great inconvenience arising from "caste" among the Hindoos falls heavily upon European residents in India, by obliging them to have a large number of servants, for the simple reason that each will only do one thing, and they will not help each other. The bearer will not take a tea-cup off the table, nor the khidmutgar pull the punkah.

One lady was asked by another, recently arrived in the country, how many servants she had.

She replied: "I am not sure, but we are very moderate people. I can soon reckon."

They were nearly thirty in number—a waiting-maid, an under-woman, a sweeper, a head bearer, a mate bearer, six under-bearers, khansaman or house steward, three table attendants, a cook, a gardener and a water-carrier, a washer-woman, a tailor, a coachman, two grooms, two grass-cutters, a man to tend to the goats, and two messengers. And all these servants will only wait on their own employers, so that every one visiting must take his own.