

Under the License Law.

BY E. K. RAUER.

SCENE I.

Brought me like a vision bright,
Brim full of mirth and glee,
Plays a boy whose very loveliness
Gladdens the heart to see.

His face is fair, his eyes are blue,
His cheeks are rosy red;
Long shining curls of golden hue,
Are clustering round his head.

A father's pride, a mother's joy,
From the moment of his birth,
A gentle, loving, noble boy—
Too innocent for earth.

SCENE II.

The scene is changed: a mother sad,
Her lonely vigil keeps,
Watches and waits with aching heart,
While all the household sleeps.

Where is my darling boy to-night?
What keeps him out so late?
Weeping, she looks and listens,
When! Hark! Yes, that's the gate.

And voices, too, her mother heart
Is sinking now with fear,
Rising, she opens wide the door,
Oh! bring him quick in here.

Struck by a comrade whom he loved,
Killed in a drunken row,
And the mother's reason leaves its throne
As the colour leaves her brow.

SCENE III.

In prison cell, a handsome youth
With grief is stricken low,
For he, while maddened by the drink,
Had struck the cruel blow.

Killed him! say you? my dearest friend,
And drove his mother wild;
And my poor mother; what of her?
I am her only child.

Licensed to sell! Licensed to sell!
We read and thought we'd go
In there and have a jolly time;
No fear of law, you know.

Licensed to sell! Licensed to sell!
To blight, to blast, to kill,
To erase the brain, and cause a crime,
The prison cells to fill.

He sells, and all the better lives;
I drink, and must I die?
Is this, my father, what you did,
Voting for License High?

Take care ye men, who make the laws,
Your boys may be like me,
You license men to sell the curse,
Who shall its victims be?

A CHILD'S SONG.

It was a still midsummer evening, and the glowing tints of the setting sun bent their lingering lustre to the beautiful picture framed in Farmer Raymond's doorway—just the sort of a view that kindles the soul of the artist into some of his most striking impressions. It was only the farmer's child, little Bessie Raymond, that made this glorious picture in her sweet, unconscious innocence.

She felt the evening breeze drifting through her tresses and fanning her forehead, cool and pleasant; she drank in the fragrance it brought to her from the neighbouring fields: she gazed out at the glowing western sky and the deep forest beyond, till her heart became too full to contain its gladness. Yielding to the inspiration of the hour, she imitated the birds in their choral response to nature, and her exuberant spirit found vent in song.

She tossed back the wealth of golden curls from her face, and sung, with all her soul in it:

"There is a happy land, far, far away."

Sweet and clear rose the child-notes on the evening air; and, though Bess knew it not, more than one paused to listen, and more than one heart was touched and softened by the refrain.

John Raymond was a hard, unbelieving man. It was very reluctantly that he had consented to permit Bessie to enter the Sunday-school; yet it was there that she had learned the song which so often of late made him pause in his work and half question, "What if, after all—?"

"Where saints and angels stand."

There was a momentary vision of a sainted mother and an angel sister, and Farmer Raymond found the old question coming up: "What if, after all—?"

So he milked his cows harder and faster than ever, but his thoughts would follow the words of the song. And then, what an old, old song it was! He had sung it himself, many times, with his sister, when they were children. Their mother taught it to them. He believed it all then too. That was before he had become absorbed with the one thought of making money.

"O how they sweetly sing!"

"I wonder if they do? After all, who knows?" But there were others besides this hard, doubting man to whom the influences of that song were directed.

In a neighbouring cottage lay a suffering invalid, whose life was steadily ebbing away. The last frail thread would soon be broken. Through the open casement floated the rich, full music. The song was completed. Another followed, and another; and O how it refreshed and strengthened the soul of the sufferer!

Then came the final and closing one. She drew her pillow nearer to the window.

"O bear me away on your snowy wing,
To my eternal home!"

Could anything be more appropriate for her than these words which the child had so unconsciously chosen? Was it, indeed, Bessie Raymond singing? or had the angels lent some invisible power of rapture to her song, till that lingering, waiting spirit could almost feel the sweep of their wings around her while she drank it in?

Some one else heard that song, and sent up a glad thanksgiving. It was good, patient mother Brown, bent with age and stone blind, sitting on the porch, feeling a sense of the beauties around her, which she had not looked upon for many years. The storms of life had beat very hard upon her path. She knew it was not far now, for her, to the "peaceful port where wayworn travellers rest." And yet she felt sometimes that it was such a long journey. Would she ever reach it? But heaven seemed very near to her to-night while Bessie sung of the "bright and happy land." Then these words fell upon mother Brown's ear, and they truly did sound to her like a stray echo from some seraphic harp:

"There is a land, a happy land,
Where tears are wiped away
From every eye by God's own hand,
And night is turned to-day."

Her lips moved audibly; a tear trickled down her cheek. O that blessed place of rest! How near it seemed to hear!

The song died away. There was a momentary hush.

Said grandma Brown: "I declare, it is just as good as goin' to meetin' to hear Bessie Raymond sing."

To which some one replied: "If to sing the spirit and with the understanding be the mode of song-worship, so far as that part is concerned, it is a great deal better than going to meetings that we have attended."

John Raymond finished his milking, and on way to the house he repeated, this time aloud: "After all, those words may be true!"

"What do you say, John?"

"Nothing—nothing. But I was just thinking, our Bessie will make quite a good singer; she has the opportunity; and I am determined she shall have all we can give her."

Yes, let your children sing. Sing with the encourage, help, teach them to sing. Explain the import of the words, that they may sing "the spirit and with the understanding." Can any form of worship be more acceptable to the Deity than the hymns of love and praise flowing from the lips of pure and innocent childhood? We of us has not, in some hour of trouble, been refreshed and gladdened by the power of a song, though all unconsciously, perhaps, to the singer. But how doubly melting is the familiar strain we have learned and sung at home!

Yet there are homes, and many of them where the children's songs are not permitted to be heard; where they are silenced by the harsh frequent "Hush!"

Are you nervous? Then silence your nerves, but do not, O do not silence the songs of your children. How many sad thoughts and dull headaches have vanished in song! Then, we repeat the children sing.—*Christian Standard.*

TOUCHES OF NATURE.

BY WM. C. PRIME, LL.D.

In the Abbott collection of Egyptian antiquities in possession of the New York Historical Society is a bundle of wax tablets, looking not unlike school-boys' slates of our day. They were wax tablets (serving the same purposes with the slates) of the school-boys in an Egyptian school in the Ptolemaic period. How they came to be placed in a tomb we have not time now to conjecture. Perhaps they were an offering to a dead scribe. They are the record of many interesting things, but I am writing now about the perpetuation of records of little things, of small trifling and unimportant mental actions. One of the boys had a copy, a line of Greek, set by a master across the top of the tablet. (Young boys may need to be told that the tablet was covered with a black waxen composition, in which the boy could make marks with a sharp stick, a pencil; and he could erase a mark by smoothing down the wax with the blunt or flattened end of his stick.)

"This boy had worked along just as modern boys work in their copy-books. Probably he got weary. At all events, he came to a point, as a boy has done, when the pencil would go wrong in spite of him. He misspelled a word. He fully erased it, smoothing down the wax, wrote again, and it was again wrong. He smoothed the wax and wrote the word once more, and once more his wearied brain and his pencil went wrong. What did he do? Just what you, my boy, would have done, I fancy. Some of you would exclaim, "Confound it!" Some boys in the upper class might say "Darn it!" The small Egyptian boy only said, but with his pencil scratched, a Greek word (*phthazesthe*, it seems to be) which means about what one means who says "Deuce take it." And there it is to-day, the record of a school-boy's little quarrel with his own perverse brain, in days before Cleopatra was born.