

Selections.

THE SILVER PIECES.

The silver pieces were surely hot
In the traitor's burning hand;
But oh! the agony they had wrought,
Can we ever understand?
The rabbis look on their dupes' remorse
With a Gallo's listless mood,
And judge unmeet for the sacred purse,
That fearful price of blood.

There are pieces of silver, small and great,
With a traitor's record still,
Transferred to the Church collection plate
From the drunkard's miser's till.
Are the modern rabbis all too blind,
In their cringing gratitude,
The rust of a cankering curse to find
On the price of human blood?

Not all the art of a sophist plea
Can hallow the harvest gain
From the field of a drunkard's destiny,
Where his offsprings glean in vain;
'Tis judged in the all-discerning light;
'Tis weighed in the scales of God:
Who claims to stand in his Maker's sight
With the reeking price of blood?

And what though the liquor magnate raise
A church in the city square,
And his name 'mid a flattering halo blaze
On a gorgeous table there:
Yet a stifled groan in its every stone
Would challenge the pious fraud:
And the pealing bell in its throbbings tell
A story of tears and blood.

A Judas-Memorial burying place,
Or a vault inscribed to Cain,
Had surely come with a fitter grace
From the ruin of soul and brain!
When the sand-based towers shall totter
and sink

In the dread o'erwhelming flood,
Woe! woe! to the fabric reared in drink
With its horded price of blood!

O when shall this cruel barter cease
Of the bodies and souls of men;
And the welcome year of a glad release
To the captives come; O when—
Each man to his brother proving true
In the faith and fear of God,
And a love that grows in the nearer view
Of the Saviour's priceless blood?

—W. Maxwell in *Irish League Journal*.

BILLY'S SEA SECRET.

BY ISABEL MAUDE HAMILI.

"How's the child, 'Liza?"

"I don't see as he's any better; the doctor don't say much except keep him warm and give him plenty of nourishment."

The man who had asked the question sat down with a gloomy look on his face and stared into the fire. The room was comfortless; what furniture remained had evidently seen better days, and there was an absence of care and an untidiness about the place which betokened systematic neglect on the part of the housewife.

"It's the sea as he wants, but he'll never get it; same as th'other one as died in th'ospital. Childer all dies as lives in this Greenwood's Court."

"Who says as Billy won't get to the sea? It 'ud look better of you, 'Liza, if you said less and did a bit more," and as he spoke William Jennings gave a comprehensive glance at the general aspect of the desolate, dirty room. It was enough; the woman turned on him like a fury, arms akimbo, as she faced him, her eyes gleaming dangerously.

"You dare say one word to me, Bill! you as drinks th' money as ought to buy Billy the things as he needs, you as comes home so drunk as Billy ludes hisself away from you; you as has made me what I am! Was any house cleaner than ours when we was first married? If Billy dies, its you, his father, as has killed him."

A faint cry of pain was heard from the adjoining room, at which the expression on both angry faces altered in a moment to one of tenderness, and the woman's voice ceased.

"Hold your tongue, and get out th' way; I'll see what th' little chap wants," said the man roughly, but not unkindly.

It was a pathetic sight that met the father's eye when he gently opened the door of the room in which his only child lay. On an old sofa, which did duty for a bed, propped up by pillows, was a boy of six or seven years of age. His little thin hands were lying idly on the counterpane, on which was a wooden horse,

and one or two other broken toys. But, oh! how beautiful, in spite of illness, he was. Eyes of a blue that painters love to paint: fair hair that caught the gleams of sunlight in its curls, and a smile that those who saw never forgot.

"Oh! Father! I'm glad you've come; I've had such a nasty dream," and the fair head nestled confidently against the workman's rough, corduroy coat.

"Have you, Billy? Tell me, you ain't afraid of me, are you, kiddy?" And there was an anxiety in the tone the child was quick to detect. He looked up smilingly and answered:

"No, dad, I'm never afraid of you, I loves you so big, only—only,"—and the childish voice sank to a whisper, "I like to be in bed, or under the table, when you've been at those nasty Red Lions and Black Bears, 'cause then Billy thinks father's a bit ashamed, and he'd rather not see Billy till he's his dear old self, that's all. I ain't afraid of you, I runs away cause I thinks you'd rather I did, don't you see?" with some anxiety in his tone.

Dear child! The innocent subterfuge of trying to make himself believe that he was not afraid of his own father, and explaining the reasons of what might be thought fear, brought a lump into the big man's throat, and there was a suspicious moisture in his eyes as he looked at his boy. No, Billy was not afraid of him now, only when—"Curse it," he muttered, under his breath.

"Billy, would you like to go to the sea?"

The child, weak as he was, almost jumped out of bed, and exclaimed, "And see the big, white horses rushing up to the people and then rushing back, and sobbing like and m-o-o-ing," and he made a low sort of mournful noise. "Oh, father! it would be like heaven, wouldn't it?"

"I don't know about that, exactly; gettin' on, I daresay."

Silence for a moment or two, during which time William Jennings made a great and holy resolve. He never could tell, when speaking of it afterwards, whether he prayed or not; he only knew that a great sweeping desire passed over him to give up the drink, and that in some unconscious way he cried, "Oh, God, I will!" and God heard that faint, far off cry.

"Every pain and every fear, every doubt, is a cry after God. What mother refuses to go to her child because he is only crying, not calling her by name!"

says one of God's present day saints. George Macdonald.

"Billy, should we have a secret?"

"Oh, yes, father, do let's; just you and me."

"What shall it be about—the sea?"

The child clapped his hands in glee.

"Ye-, the sea! the sea!"

"That I'll put a bit of money under your mattress every Saturday, and in a few week's time we'll look if there's enough to take you to the sea."

"Oh, father! but where will the money come from?" and the little pinched face looked woefully anxious.

"Daddy'll see; don't you fret."

The boy put his arms around the man's neck, and whispered, but what Billy whispered is another secret.

From that day there was a change in William Jennings. At first his wife thought he must be ill, and could not understand it, but when at the end of the week he gave her twenty-five shillings in-tead of the ten or twelve, as he frequently did, she burst into tears.

"Nay, lass, you maun't do that, better days is in store for you and th' kid, I'm hoping."

At hearing the unusual kindly tone of voice, Eliza's tears flowed faster, and she murmured through them,

"Then Billy'll get to th' sea, and—live Oh, Bill! it seems as if we was in a new country. I'm so happy."

Poor woman! The relief from the long pent-up agony about her child, the fear lest she should see him die before her eyes, as two before him had done, seemed too much, and she could hardly restrain her emotion.

Billy's eyes danced with joy when the first half crown was stowed away in a little black bag under the old mattress.

"Dad's and my 'sea secret'; we are proud, ain't we, dad," he said, "and you'll go right on now, and never stop saving till there's enough for us all three to go, 'cause I shouldn't enjoy it if you and mother wasn't there too."

Whenever William Jennings felt the

terrible craving for beer, and the temptation to have a glass proved well nigh overwhelming, he heard the voice of his child saying, "You'll go right on now and never stop," and the poor fellow would struggle against the evil, and in his way ask God to help him.

It was a red letter day in Greenwood's Court when William Jennings took his wife and boy to the sea-side. The neighbors could hardly believe their eyes as they watched the three sally forth, Billy (in an invalid chair) laughing and saying he'd be walking when he came back, Eliza in a new bonnet and jacket, happiness beaming in every line of her face; and, lastly, William, in a new bowler and brown tweed coat and trousers. True, the cut was not the newest, and a critical observer might have said they were too large, but William, and Eliza, who had been with him the night before to buy them, had pronounced them "fine, a bit of real good stuff"; therefore it mattered nothing to anybody else.

A happier trio never spent a week at the sea, and Billy gained strength rapidly. It was a proud day for him when he walked slowly from his chair up the garden walk, and the father and mother, seeing the good the salt breezes were doing him, talked over a little plan which they propounded to Billy with some trepidation, namely, that he should stay on alone for another three weeks at a home for delicate children. At first he demurred strongly to being left, but after a visit to the place he consented.

"Father would have been dreadful disappointed if you hadn't, Billy, 'cause he's going to save all the money he used to spend in that horrid beer for you to stay here a bit, so as to get quite strong and well," his mother told him on the day they were leaving.

If Greenwood's Court had rejoiced when Billy went away, it rejoiced far more the day he returned walking, his cheeks rosy as an apple, and his blue eyes bright with health and joy. The fact is, Mrs. Jennings, of No. 3 Greenwood's Court, held an impromptu "At Home," and if the guests came in somewhat soiled dresses, and hair not dressed in the latest fashion, what mattered it? They all rejoiced over Billy's recovery, and that was enough for the happy mother. Billy, rejoicing in the newly found use of his limbs, was sent to the nearest confectioner's for a quarter of tea and some cakes. Whilst the kettle was boiling Mrs. Jennings took the opportunity of telling her friends "as how it was all the money Bill had saved from drink, and she hoped as his example would be a help to 'em all. We're so happy ourselves," she continued, "we want to help everyone else on to the same road."

Subdued murmurs of applause from the company, and, as Billy just then returned laden with the cakes and tea, and the kettle boiled, Mrs. Jennings left her words to simmer. It was a grand "At Home," at which each one drank out of her own cup (Eliza Jennings' supply of crockery not being equal to the occasion), and Billy handed the cakes round with the grace of a courtier, and on taking their departure each guest declared "it were a deal sight better nor sitting in a pub. drinking your senses away."

Billy never looked back after his month at the sea, and, better still, his father never looked back in a spiritual and moral sense, and though his son is now a young man of nineteen or twenty, whenever either father or son want to save anything towards some special object, they always laugh and say, "We must have a sea secret."—Alliance News.

OUR YOUNG SOLDIERS.

Field Marshal Lord Wolseley, lately addressed the boys of the Duke of York's school. After impressing on them to join the service with a strict determination to adhere to temperance principles, he said: "Personally, I should prefer that you should become total abstainers. The curse of our army and our race is drink, and those who are teetotallers have a great advantage over those who are not." Such advice as this coming from the commander-in-chief, when publicly addressing a number of lads, who will one day hold responsible positions in her majesty's army, should have weight with our civilian population, justly proud of the courage and patience displayed in the protracted campaign in South Africa.—Royal Temperance.

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