

The Coming of the King.

ALL day long we watched and waited,
 Waited at our darling's side,
 While her frail bark slowly drifted
 Out upon a shoreless tide.
 We had wept in bitter anguish,
 We had prayed with burning tears,
 While our hearts drew back affrighted,
 Looking down on the lonesome years.
 All in vain our tears and pleading,
 All in vain our sorrowing;
 We could only watch and listen
 For the coming of the King.

O, the terror of the coming
 Of the grim and ghastly foe!
 O, the darkness of the pathway
 Where our darling's feet must go!
 O, the glory of the summer,
 Bending skies so blue and clear,
 And the splendour of the roses,
 And the bird-songs far and near!
 Must she leave this world of beauty,
 All the joy our love could bring,
 And lie down in darksome silence
 At the coming of the King?

Came he solemnly and slowly
 As a lord who claims his own,
 Touched the white hands clasped together
 And they grew as cold as stone.
 Suddenly the blue eyes opened,
 While our hearts grew faint with fear;
 In their depths in solemn rapture
 Faith and hope were shining clear.
 Did she see the golden portals?
 Hear the songs the blessed sing?
 "Perfect peace," she softly murmured,
 At the coming of the King.

When the days are long and lonely,
 Summer days most sweet and fair,
 When we gather in the gloaming,
 Round our darling's vacant chair,
 Say we softly to each other,
 "Fairer scenes than we can know,
 Sweeter airs and softer voices,
 Made our darling glad to go."
 Shines her happy face upon us,
 Still a smile is lingering;
 So in patient trust we tarry
 For the coming of the King.
 —Advocate and Guardian.

"Turn the Key."

In one of the narrow courts lying to the westward of Ludgate Hill, and under the shadow of St. Paul's at sunrise, there lives a man who goes by the somewhat singular cognomen of "Turn the Key." His real name is Matthew Gray; but he only hears it from the lips of his nearest friends and such as have learned to respect him. I am glad to say that neither are few nor far between.

By trade he is a wood engraver. Not one of those delicate-fingered men who so skilfully interpret the artist's work on the wood, and give us those magnificent pieces of modern art which adorn the best works of the day; but a ruder craftsman, employed to engrave advertisement blocks for posters.

He was quick at his work, and having a good connection with some of the larger advertising agents, did remarkably well for several years prior to his marriage and after it. Then the leprosy of drink got hold of him.

He began in his youth, as others do, with his "regular glass" at meals. As time advanced he took one to "moisten his pipe before going to bed." Next he had an occasional glass between, and finally he took so many that food

became occasional and drink fearfully regular.

So old is the story, and so generally known, that I feel I am trespassing upon the patience of my readers by telling it. We all know how common are such fallings off. There is no living man in this great country who has not seen a score of cases like it. Enough, then, of the preliminary part of my story.

Matthew had fallen, in spite of the tears, pleadings, and remonstrances of an affectionate wife, in spite of the gift of two children, and in defiance of the palpable evil the fatal habit was working in his mind and body. The unnatural thirst, the miserable craving, was ever upon him; work and home-ties were alike neglected for the dirty, brawling public-house.

And yet, as he fell, he struggled against his fall—feebly, no doubt, but still he struggled. In the morning he would rise with fresh resolves to have no more of it, and go sturdily to the attic where he worked, and sitting down on his stool, put out his pad and arrange his tools. Then came the fatal whisper, "Have one glass—only one; it will freshen you up and carry you through your work of the morning."

He knew the fallacy of that whisper, but he went; and all the morning the light through the window fell upon an empty room and idle tools. Late in the day he would return, despairing, and in a slipshod way do part of the work that ought to have been well done hours before.

As usual in such cases, his employers soon learned to distrust him. Unpunctuality, bad work, and the evidence of his failing, drove the best of them away, and the rest offered him—what he was obliged to take—less for his labour.

Bound in the fatal chains, moody and despairing, he lived on, with his sorrowful wife and children around him. Mrs. Gray was a good woman, and regularly attended a place of worship with her little ones. Her husband, however, had never done so: example and affectionate urgings had been thrown away upon him.

"Do give the dreadful drink up, Mat," said his wife one morning. "Pray to God to give you strength, and he will not fail you."

"There's no good in prayer," replied Matthew, moodily. "I've tried my best; but as soon as I get to the bench I'm called away by a voice that is too strong for me."

"It's too strong for many of us," returned his wife. "What good does it do you?"

"None," he said. "I'm not the man I was since I took to it; in fact, I feel I am no man at all—I'm a brute."

He sat back in a chair with folded arms, gazing gloomily at his two children, who stood in a corner of the room whispering to each other fearfully, and wondering why their father frowned so at them. He was not

frowning at his children, however. Matthew Gray had fallen, but he had not yet acquired the ferocity which drink gives to some men. He had no desire to maltreat the offspring God had given him.

They were pretty children—a girl and a boy, respectively four and five years of age. The boy was the elder, and a most intelligent little fellow. His wistful blue eyes unconsciously shot keen arrows of reproach at his unhappy father as he looked at him that day.

"Jane, I can't stand it!" said Matthew Gray, rising hurriedly. "If things go on as they are, I shall kill myself."

"Don't talk so wickedly, Mat," said Jane, laying her hands upon his shoulders. "Your life was given you to use to the glory of God. It is not your own to take away."

"And of what use is my life to me or to any one?" he asked.

"It would be of use and a blessing to many," replied his wife, "if you gave up drink."

"Ay! there it is," rejoined Matthew. "I wish I could give it up. And if I could only feel always as I feel now it could be done; but I know as soon as I try to settle to my bench I shall have a thirst upon me, and out I shall go."

"If I sat with you, Mat," she said, "do you think you could overcome it?"

"I'll try, Jane; but I've doubts of it."

They went up stairs together, and Matthew began his preparations for his day's work. Business had not entirely fallen away from him, and he had enough to do for that day at least. At first he seemed resolute, and drew up his stool and sat down. He took a tool in his hand and paused. Jane saw what was coming, and put herself between him and the door.

"It's a coming on me," he said hoarsely; "I must have one glass."

"No, no!" she cried; "keep here, Mat. It may break the chains, and with God's help they shall never be round you again."

"I can't begin without something," he said, rising. "I'm all to pieces. Let me go; I'll come back surely when I've had one glass!"

"No, Mat, it can't be," cried Jane.

"I shall break past you," he said, advancing, "and begone, unless"—he paused, as if some great thought had suddenly been given him—"unless you turn the key."

In a moment it was done. Jane, inspired with a new hope, closed the door, turned the key, and put it into her pocket.

"Now, Mat," she said, "I'll not let you have it. You must take it by force."

He sat down again, trembling. The temptation to do so was upon him. For an instant the horrible idea trembled in the balance. His wife understood all. "O merciful Father!" she murmured, "spare him for our blessed Redeemer's sake." The prayer was breathed, and

the answer came. Matthew Gray turned, and resting his elbows upon the bench, buried his face in his hands. Great drops of perspiration fell from his brow.

Jane said nothing to him then. Nor when he suddenly began his labours did she speak. A good half hour had elapsed before a word passed between them.

"Jane," he said suddenly, "I nearly did it."

He did not specify what "it" was; there was no need to do so. Jane, in reply, quietly said, "It was a merciful God who spared you."

No reproach, no suggestion as to what her own sufferings would have been, no threat as to what she would have done had he so far forgotten his manhood. He drew his hand across his eyes, and came over and kissed her.

"Jane," he said, "the thirst is leaving me. You shall come up every morning and turn the key."

"So I will, Mat," she replied, "until you can turn it yourself."

"If you will listen to me," Jane replied, "you shall do it to-morrow."

He looked at her incredulously; but she met his look with a hopeful smile. "Mat," she said, "it was prayer that saved you from striking me. Indeed, it was that, and nothing else. If you doubt me, kneel down now, and see what strength will come of it."

"But I can't pray," he said; "I haven't done such a thing since I was a boy. I don't know a prayer. I've near forgot even that which I learned at my mother's knee."

"Kneel," she said; "be earnest; give yourself up to thoughts of your Saviour, and power to pray will come."

Husband and wife were in that room for two hours together. God heard their prayers. The little children were called up to play in the "shop," as Matthew called his attic. They came wondering, and the boy on entering put a question which was unconsciously another arrow.

"Isn't father going out to-day?"

"Oh, no," replied his mother, "father is going to work, and you must play quietly."

"I am so glad," said the boy; "a'n't you, Jenny?"

Jenny hid her gladness, and they both promised not to disturb their father at work, and Jane went down to her household duties. When she was gone the children experienced yet another surprise. Their father called them over and fondled them. He had never been unkind, but since he had taken to drink he had not been very demonstrative of affection. The boy, looking up, saw tears in his father's eyes.

"Father," he said, "why are you crying?"

"Don't be afraid, darling," was the reply; "I am crying because I am so happy."

It was new to the boy to learn that there were tears of joy, and he looked somewhat doubtfully; but he was

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