

His Mother Drinks Gin.

There are schools at which those who are ragged learn of those who are well dressed; but sometimes the well dressed may learn useful instruction from the ragged. At a penny a lesson much valuable knowledge may be acquired from the professors, more infamous perhaps than famous, but yet very communicative and apt to teach. In passing from Broad Street to Tottenham-court Road this afternoon, I took a lesson from these instructors, whose school is kept in the open street. There are in London many peripatetic philosophers who, after the ancient fashion, convey their learning to their pupils whilst walking in the open air. My attention was attracted by half-a-dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged children I had ever seen. Ireland could not produce much wiser specimens; they ran from house to house apparently in sport, stopping occasionally to look down into an area. The occupiers and servants, however, did not seem to regard it as sport, for in their harshest tones they called out to the children to go about their business, as though they were beasts of prey prowling about for food. Perhaps they were juvenile thieves, but this I do not know; but as they passed by I stepped towards one of them, and in a gentle tone I said, "My little boy, how long is it since you washed your face?" He held down his head and said nothing. I then put a few questions in order to obtain some explanation of the mass of rags and filth that stood before me. I found that there was a ragged school, but he did not go; there were churches and chapels, but he went to none. I then asked, "Have you no mother?" when the biggest of the party, a boy about fourteen years of age, came forward to reply for his younger, and more bashful companion.—"His mother drinks gin!" What a sentence was this! how full of meaning! and that which some Christian ministers, statesmen, and philanthropists will not learn, this boy knew! and in one short sentence this ragged philosopher expounded the cause of poverty and filth, of absence from school and from church. Having turned to my instructor I found a boy, very clean in face, but without shoes, stockings, or shirt, and with as much remains of jacket and trousers as would permit him, and hardly that with decency, to appear in the street. I said, "And how do you know his mother drinks gin?" "Because I live in the same house," he replied. "And where does she get the money to buy the gin?" I asked. "Why, sir, she sells flour, and such things, and as soon as she has got a little money she spends it in gin." "And do none of the children go to school, or to church?" I asked; to which he answered, "The three young ones don't go nowhere, but the oldest daughter what's married goes to chapel." "And how my smart fellow," said I, looking my new friend in the face, "What makes you so ragged?" "Why, sir," he said, "I lost my place of work, and I have not been able to get another, and I sold my clothes to buy me some bread." I then added kindly, and in a low tone, "But I hope you don't drink gin as his mother does." To which he answered very frankly, "I have no money to buy gin." "Well my boy," I said, "I see that you know that gin does much mischief, and I would advise you to look for work, and to make up your mind never to do as his mother does." I do not, in general, approve of giving to persons in the street of whom one knows nothing, and where it is doubtful what use will be made of it, at the same time I do not like to take up a poor person's time by asking questions, and then disappoint the hope which I have perhaps excited; and so, taking out a penny, I said, "This is a very small sum, but if you spend it in bread it will be useful to you." "Yes sir, that it will," and with a hearty "thank you, sir," the boy went on his way with much glee, leaving on my mind a feeling of great interest for this immense mass of the London population; and an increasing respect for their talents and good conduct, as far as their circumstances permit. In this conversation, too, I learned, not only that sobriety is connected with attendance at school, and at places of worship, but also with common cleanliness; for whilst receiving instruction from my shoeless, stockingless, shirtless, and ragged, but clean-faced tutor, I saw how it is that the boy's mother does not teach him to wash his face. "Is there no water in the house in which you live?" I asked; to which he replied, "No sir, not in our house, but she could get some if she liked at the house round the corner." Here, then, are two evils, houses without a supply of water, and inmates without a desire of obtaining it when it can be had. There is a boy of fair promise, growing up in rags and filth, in ignorance and heathenism, because his mother drinks gin.—*Temperance Chronicle.*

To Catch Men and to Keep them.

The work of Temperance Societies is twofold, first to catch and then to keep; first to reclaim the drunkard, and then to retain him in sobriety. This was the beautiful description of ministers of religion,—“fishers of men.” All suitable arts and hooks and baits and nets they were to use; and when they had caught the fish, they must bring them safely to the land. In like manner the advocate of Temperance, the “drunkard's friend,” tries by tracts, by lectures, by tea parties, by conversation, and by the winning force of example, to draw men from the dangerous company of tipplers to the safe ground of sobriety. But when this has been done, the work of benevolence is not over. Care must still be exercised lest they fall back into their former habits. A little consideration will show how great a danger there is; and how much need of friendly oversight. Although when a man signs the pledge and abstains from strong drink, he has, to a certain extent, emancipated himself from his chains, yet it must not be forgotten that the power of habit is not easily overcome, and that a return to former practices is very easy, until new habits have been formed. It is precisely in the interval between the forsaking of old habits and the forming of new ones, that the Temperance philanthropy is most needed. There has been the habit not only of drinking at certain hours, but at certain places with certain inviting accompaniments. There has been the addition of society, music, dancing, reading the newspaper, and perhaps theatrical performance; probably also skittles or cards or games of some kind; and the incipient tetrateter finds a void which it becomes the duty of wise men to fill up. Let not those hours hang heavy which used to be spent in the tavern or tap-room! Let not the life of sobriety appear dull, gloomy, and melancholy, so as to leave an impression that however desirable it may be, it is impossible to bear it. Let there be cheerful rooms and friendly converse, and newspapers, and books, and periodicals, and interesting lectures on the wonderful works of God. The magnet which the landlord of the public house holds up to attract the man is very powerful; it becomes necessary to present a magnet still more powerful to draw the other way. Every place should have its reading room open to members of Temperance Societies, at a penny a week, if not at all hours, yet as at Ipswich, from Six to Ten every evening.—*Temperance Chronicle.*

Little Henry's Holiday at the Great Exhibition.

SPANISH WINE JAR.

Papa.—Here is a great Jar.

Henry.—But you do not call this ugly thing one of the 'Lions,' papa?

P.—Yes, I do; because it teaches me something. It makes me think. This great jar is a wine cooler, and is sent from Spain. That country being to the south of Europe, and opposite to Africa, has a very warm climate. When the wine has been made it must be kept cool, therefore it is poured into jars like these, which are put down into the earth.

Rose.—But what were you thinking about it, papa?

P.—I was thinking it might teach us a sad truth:—Riches may lead to poverty.

The Spaniards, with the gold they once procured from America, were the richest nation in Europe. They were so rich that many found they need not work to live; they became “gentlemen,” and “grandees.” But too many, when they thus gained gold, lost the habit of industry.

H.—Which is worth more.

P.—Certainly. The people have never been very industrious since. And this jar reminded me of the fact. The wine manufacture is perhaps the principal one in Spain. Living under a beautiful climate, if the people worked hard, and cultivated the soil, it would yield them great riches; but no, that would cost them great labor; and the grapes grow there without trouble. Again, the process of pressing the grapes, and fermenting their juice, are so simple, that the wine manufacture is very easy. Another source of riches in Spain, is tobacco, which is also easily cultivated and manufactured; but the manufactures which require great industry and attention, are not flourishing.

Their merino sheep yield a fine and peculiar wool, but the greater part is exported as “raw material.” The natives of Spain ought to yield much wealth. Long before America was discovered, the Romans used to speak of this country, and of the house-