

the window came strains of a clear, girlish voice, singing, "Home, Sweet Home." I stood a moment in thought. How often, oh, how often in the past, had I heard that heart-touching melody! On board the ocean steamer, among strangers on a foreign shore; in health, when strength was given to me in greatest measures, and during a long sickness, when the shadows of death seemed drawing nigh, and I was wistfully peering forward to the eternal home, dear friends oft times mingled with holier strains the ever welcome "Home, Sweet Home." Many recollections came rushing o'er my mind; gratefully I offered a little prayer of thanks to that kind Father who had guarded me so long and so well, turning my feeble steps once more homewards, though perchance but to die. Thus did I stand in reflection outside the gin-palace. The singing ceased. A young girl of some fourteen summers came and looked out of the window. It was the publican's daughter. As she raised her hand to draw the curtains one could see the golden bracelet on her wrist, and the chain around her neck, glittering in the gaslight. I was turning away, when suddenly I heard a little weak voice humming, "There's no-o Place Like 'ome." I looked down. There on the pavement, at the step of the public house, sat a poor ragged little lass, seven or eight years old perhaps, no hat on the rough unkempt head, no shoes on the swollen feet. She was strumming her small shivering fingers on the hard stone step, "Making b'lieve, sir, to play the pianner," and singing in a suitable tone to that cheerless accompaniment, "Home, Sweet Home." It was the child of the publican's victim. I regarded her closely; I drew near unnoticed and heard her muttering, "It's sumthin' to be Miss Emily, she's got a pianner and everythin' 'cos 'er father keeps the pub. I ain't got nothin', because my father spends all his brass there. I'm sure as how I kud play like 'er if somebody 'ud show me. Hallo! father's inside, I can 'ear 'im." She pushed the door a little open, and peeped in, "Hallo, father; can I come in?"

"No, — yer; you — little pig, cut off home."

She drew hastily back, and ran a little distance away; keeping her eyes fixed on the public house door, to see if her father came out. Poor thing, she would have liked to stay in the gas and glitter. Her home, no doubt, was dark and dreary enough.

I followed her quickly, "Here, little one; here is a penny for you."

"Thank you, mister."

"You should stay at home with your mother," said I.

"I ain't got none," she replied. "The bobbies were after 'er, 'cos one day when she was drunk, she hit old Missus Jenkins over the nut with a pot. Mother Jenkins is in the hospital ever since, then the bobbies come after mother, and so she bolted."

"And who is at home now?" I asked.

"No one. Mother took the young un' with 'er. Old Mother Potts looks arter me; but she's nearly allus tight. She's there in the pub now with father."

"Where do you live?"

"Just down the alley there, the fust 'ouse. I'll show yer, sir, if yer likes."

"Yes, my little dear, do. Here is another penny."

She took me round the corner down a close alley. I could not see for a minute or two as I passed from the main road into the gloomy shadows of this narrow way.

"Here it is, mister," said my little guide. She pushed the door and went in. "Oh, there ain't a bit of candle. Never mind, I'll get a light in Mother Pott's room."

She went into another room, and came back in a moment with a little bit of tallow candle stuck in a gingerbeer bottle. I was able by the flickering light to see a little around me. It was a veritable drunkard's home. A rusty stove that had remained unwarmed for many a month, a chair without a back, a table with one leaf hanging off and a leg broken, a couple of sacks in the corner, a publican's almanack nailed on the wall—that was all the room contained.

My little friend began to speak again.

"When I've got a bit of light I ain't afraid to stay here by myself; but if I ain't got a light I sits there on the step and watches the people go by the alley till the pub is shut, and then I goes and lays down there, and makes b'lieve to be sleeping when father comes in. He's allus tight, yer know, and he'd give me what for if he caught me sitting here."

"Does your father often stay out?" I demanded.

"Oh, every night, 'cos he earns a lot of money now."

"And have you nothing to eat?"

"Oh, Mother Potts gives me sumthin' when she's in a good temper, and ain't tight. She lives upstairs, and she ain't a bad sort 'cept when she's tight. She said as how she'd knock two bob a week out of father to get me sumthin' to eat. When I ain't got nothin' I just goes and asks the ladies and the gen'l'mens to give me a 'apenny and then I buys a ha'porth of peas-pudding; and if I gits another penny I buys a sav'loy too. The tuppence you give me, mister, 'ul just do proper for me to-night."

"Do you go to school?" I asked her.

"Yes, sometimes. The School Board man is allus arter me. Father blistered my back with his strap once 'cos I told the School Board man

where we lived. But now I knows all the School Board men, and I easily slips 'em."

"When do you go to school?"

"Oh, arter a summons. But father moves, you know, and then they don't know where to find 'im."

"But why do you not go to school?"

"An't got no clothes. Look 'ere, I ain't nothin' on 'cept this fro k and petticoat. A lady give me hat and boots, and a jacket, three times, but they're all in pop. Mother put 'em up the spout at Holdem's. Then the lady said it wasn't no good giving me anythin'. She said she'd take me home to live with 'er, but father says I sha'n't go anywheres while he's alive."

The candle began to splutter a little.

"Oh, mister, the candle's going out! I must get a 'apenny un out of the tuppence, and then I'll get a sav'loy and peas-pudding as well."

"Do you ever say any prayers?"

"Wots that? I don't know."

"Have you never heard of God?"

"Oh, yes! Father says, 'God blind me,' when he's wild and savage."

"Have you ever heard of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes! Father ses that, too, when he's wild. But I must go and get the candle now, mister; I can't do without light."

Poor little miserable! Ah, indeed she has need of light! thought I, as she ran off in front of me.

As I passed the gin palace, I could not resist the temptation to peep in a moment. There stood the father at the bar. A big, hulking fellow; his face that copper-colored, heavy, bloated, habitual drunkard's face; a face scorched by its besetting sin; God's image blotted out, and the mark of the beast graven in its place.

Then I gave a glance at the interior of the publican's parlor. Ah! that was very different from the wretched "homeless" home I had just left. How bright, how cosy, how comfortable everything seemed.

That night my mind was filled with bitter reflections as I walked homewards, thinking over all I had seen: the two singers, their song, and the contrast of their homes. Alas! how many such scenes do the lights of the gin palace shine upon. How many children worse than fatherless are growing up in our midst, knowing nought save sin and wretchedness; the innocence of childhood blasted, the joys of infancy unknown. God help them! for help they need. Perchance in His own time, good men working as His instruments, a day will dawn in this England of ours when a new generation, freed from the heaviest curse of the race, will lift their voices in glorious melody, singing in truth, "Home, Sweet Home; there's no place like Home."—*A. C. R. M. Self, in Temperance Record.*

Our Casket.

"Well, Dick," said a doctor to a polite man, whose wife he had been attending, "how is your wife?" "She is dead, I thank you, doctor."

A full-bearded grandfather recently had his beard shaved off, showing a clean face for the first time for a number of years. At the dinner-table his three-year-old granddaughter noticed it, gazed long with wondering eyes, and finally she ejaculated:—"Grandfather, whose head you got on!"

According to the *Toledo Blade*, a physician of that city recently gave a patient some medicine, with instructions to "take a teaspoonful in water. The patient got into a bath-tub full of water, and took his medicine according to instructions, and in duo time recovered. Which deserves the credit, the water or the drug?

A Long Island Dutchman, in reading an account of a meeting in New York city, came to the words, "The meeting then dissolved." He could not define the meaning of the last, so he referred to a dictionary, and felt satisfied. In a few minutes a friend came in, when the Dutchman said: "Dey must have very hot wedder in New York. I ret an account of a meeting vero all the peoples had melted away."

A countryman sowing his ground, two smart fellows riding that way, one of them called to him, with an insolent air, "Well, honest fellow," said he, "it is your business to sow, but we reap the fruit of your labors." To which the countryman replied, "It is very likely you may, for I am sowing hemp." There is more in this story than meets the eye at first glance. It contains the secret of the French Revolution.

"Are you troubled with a cough?" asked Yeast of Crimsonbeak while at church. "Very much!" replied Crimsonbeak. "How long have you had it?" further questioned Yeast. "Had it! Why I haven't got it!" "I thought you said you were troubled with a cough!" "So I am," responded the facetious man, turning around and looking at the parishoner behind him, who was coughing violently: "but it's that man's cough behind me!"

A lady had in her employ an excellent girl, who had one fault. Her face was always in a snudge. Mrs. — tried to tell her to wash her face without offending her, and at last resorted to strategy. "D. you know, Bridget," she remarked in a confidential manner, "it is said if you wash your face every day in hot soapy water it will make you beautiful!" "Will it?" answered the wily Bridget, "sure it's a wonder yo niver tried it, ma'am."