

The Drummer-Boy.

"CAPTAIN GRAHAM, they were sayin'
Ye would want a drummer lad,
So I've brought my guid boy Sandie,
Though my heart is wofu' sad,
But nae bread is left to feed us,
And nae siller to buy more,
For the gudeman sleeps forever,
Where the heather blossoms o'er.

"Sandie, make your manners quickly,
Play your blitheest measure true—
Gie us 'Flowers of Edinboro'
While you sifer plays it, too.
Captain, heard ye o'er a player
Strike in truer time than he?"
"Nay, in truth, bravo Sandie Murray
Drummer of our corps shall be."

"I gie ye thanks—but, Captain, maybe
Ye will hae a kindly care
O'er the friendless, lonely laddie,
When the battle wark is sair;
Our Sandie's aye been good and gentle,
And I've nothing else to love,
Nothing—but the grave off yonder,
And the Father up above."

Then her rough hand lightly laying
On the curl-circled head,
She blessed the boy. The tent was silent
And not another word was said;
For Captain Graham was sadly dreaming
Of a benison long ago
Breathed above his head, then golden,
Bending now, and touched with snow.

"Good-bye, Sandie." "Good-bye, mither,
I'll come back some summer day;
Don't you fear—they don't shoot drummers
Ever. Do they, Captain Gra—?
One more kiss—watch for me, mither;
You will know 'tis surely me
Coming home—for you will hear me
Playing soft the reveille."

After battle. Moonbeams ghastly
Seemed to blink in strange affright,
As the scudding clouds before them
Shadowed faces dead and white.
And the night-wind softly whispered
When low moans its light wind bore—
Moans, that ferried spirits over
Death's dark wave to yonder shore.

Wandering where a footstep careless
Might go plashing down in blood,
Or a helpless hand lie grasping
Death, and daisies from the sod;
Captain Graham walked swiftly onward,
While a faintly beaten drum
Quickened heart and step together;
"Sandie Murray? See; I come!

"Is it thus I find you, laddie?
Wounded, lonely, lying here,
Playing thus the reveille?
See—the morning is not near."
A moment paused the drummer-boy,
And lifted up his drooping head;
"O, Captain Graham! the light is coming,
'Tis morning and my prayers are said.

"Morning! See the plains grow brighter,
Morning, and I'm going home;
That is why I play the measure,
Mither will not see me come;
But you'll tell her, won't you, Captain—"
Hush, the boy had spoken true;
To him the day had dawned forever,
Unbroken by the night tattoo.

Auntie Parsons' Story.

I TOLD Hezekiah—that's my man.
People mostly call him Deacon Parsons,
but he never gets any deaconing from
me. We were married—"Hezekiah
and Amariah"—that's going on forty
years ago, and he's just Hezekiah to
me, and nothin' more.

Well, as I was saying, says I:
"Hezekiah, we aren't right. I am
sure of it." And he said: "Of course
not. We are poor sinners; Amy; all
poor sinners." And I said: "Heze-
kiah, this 'poor sinner' talk has gone
on long enough. I suppose we are
poor sinners; but I don't see any use
of being mean sinners; and there's one
thing I think is real mean."

It was jest after breakfast; and, as
he felt poorly, he hadn't gone to the
shop yet; and so I had this little talk
with him to sort o' chirk him up. He
knew what I was comin' to, for we had
had the subject up before. It was our

little church. He always said: "The
poor people, and what should we ever
do?" And I always said: "We shall
do nothin' unless we try." And so
when I brought the matter up in this
way, he just began bitin' his toothpick,
and said: "What's up now? Who's
moan? Amariah, we oughtn't to speak
evil one of another." Hezekiah always
says "poor sinners," and doesn't seem
to mind it, but when I occasionally say
mean sinners, he somehow gets on easy.
But I was started, and I meant to free
my mind.

So I said, says I: "I was goin' to
confess our sins. Dan'l confessed for
all his people, and I was confessin' for
our little church.

"Truth is," says I, "ours is allus
called one of those 'feeble churches,'
and I am tired about it. I've raised
seven children, and at fourteen months
old every boy and girl of 'em could
run alone. And our church is fourteen
years old," says I, "and it can't take a
step yet without somebody to hold on
by. The Board helps us, and General
Jones, good man, he helps us—helps
too much, I think—and so we live
along, but we don't seem to get strong.
Our people draw their rations every
year as the Indians do up at the
agency; and it doesn't seem sometimes
as if they ever thought of doing any-
thing else.

"They take it so easy," I said.
"That's what worries me. I do not
suppose we could pay all expenses, but
we might act as if we wanted to, and
as if we meant to do all we can.

"I read," says I, "last week, about
the debt of the Board, and this week,
I understand, our application is going
in for another year, and no particular
effort to do any better, and it frets me.
I can't sleep nights, and I can't take
the comfort Sundays. I've got to
feelin' as if we were a kind of per-
petual paupers. And that is what I
meant when I said, 'It is real mean!'
I suppose I said it a little sharp," says
I, "but I'd rather be sharp than flat
any day, and if we don't begin to stir
ourselves we shall be flat before very
long, and shall deserve to be. It has
just been 'Board,' 'Board,' 'Board,'
this last fourteen years, and I am tired
of it. I never did like boardin'," says
I, "and, even if we were poor, I
believe we might do something toward
settin' up housekeepin' for ourselves.

"Well, there's not many of us:
about a hundred, I believe, and some
of these is women folks, and some jest
girls and boys. And we all have to
work hard and live close; but," says
I, "let us show a disposition, if nothin'
more. Hezekiah, if there is any spirit
left in us, let us show some sort of
disposition."

And Hezekiah had his toothpick in
his teeth, and looked down at his boots
and rubbed his chin, as he always does,
when he's going to say somethin'. "I
think there's some of us that shows a
disposition."

Of course, I understood that hit,
but I kep' still. I kep' right on with
my argument, and I said: "Yes, and
a pretty bad disposition it is. It's a
disposition to let ourselves be helped
when we ought to be helping ourselves.
It's a disposition to lie still and let
somebody carry us. And we are grow-
ing up cripples—only we don't grow.

"Kiah," says I, "do you hear me?"
Sometimes when I want to talk a
little he just shuts his eye, and begins
to rock himself back and forth in the
old armchair; and he was doin' that

now, so I said: "Kiah, do you hear?"
And he said: "Some!" and then I
went on. "I've got a proposition,"
says I. And he sort o' looked up and
said, "Hov you? Well, between a
disposition and a proposition, I guess
the proposition might be better."

He's awful sarcastic, sometimes. But
I wasn't goin' to get riled, nor thrown
off the track; so I jest said: "Yes;
do you and I get two shillin's worth
apiece a week out of that blessed little
church of our'n, do you think? 'Cos,
if we do, I want to give two shillin's a
week to keep it goin', and I thought
maybe you could do as much." So he
said he guessed he could stand that,
and I said: "That's my proposition;
and I mean to see if we can't find
sombdy else that'll do the same. It'll
show disposition, anyway."

"Well, I suppose you'll hev your
own way," says he; "you most allers
do." And I said: "Isn't it most allers
a good way?" Then I brought my
subscription paper. I had it ready. I
didn't know jest how to shape it, but
I knew it was something about "the
sums set opposite our names," so I
drewed it up, and took my chances.
"You must head it," says I, "because
you're the oldest deacon, and I must
go on next because I am the deacon's
wife, and then I'll see some of the rest
of the folks."

So Kiah sot down, and put on his
specs, and took his pen, but did not
write. "What's the matter?" says I.
And he said: "I'm sort o' shamed to
subscribe two shillin's. I never signed
so little as that for anything. I used
to give that to the circus, when I was
nothin' but a boy, and I ought to do
more than that to support the gospel.
Two shillin's a week! Why, it's only
a shillin' a sermon, and all the prayer-
meetin's thrown in. I can't go less
than fifty cents, I'm sure." So down
he went for fifty cents, and then I
signed for a quarter, and then my sun-
bonnet went onto my head pretty
lively; and says I: "Hezekiah, there's
some cold potato in the pantry, and
you know where to find the salt; so,
if I am not back by dinner time don't
be bashful; help yourself." And I
started.

I called on the Smith family first; I
felt sure of them. And they were just
as happy. Mr. Smith signed, and so
did Mrs. Smith; and Long John, he
came in while we were talkin', and put
his name down; and then old Grandma
Smith, she didn't want to be left out;
and so there were four of 'em. I've
allers found it a great thing in any
good enterprise to enlist the Smith
family. There's a good many of 'em.
Next I called on the Joslyns, and next
on the Chapins, and then on the Widdie
Ohadwick, and so I kept on.

I met a little trouble once or twice,
but not much. There was Fussy Fur-
bur, and bein' trustee, he thought I
was out of my spear, he said, and he
wanted it understood that such work
belonged to the trustees. "To be
sure," says I, "I'm glad I've found
out. I wish the trustees had discovered
that a leetle sooner." Then there
was Sister Puffy, that's got the asthma.
She thought we ought to be lookin'
after "the sperritocalities." She said
we must go down before the Lord.
She didn't think churches could be run
on money. But I told her I guessed
we should be just as spiritual to look
into our pocket-books a little, and I
said it was a shame to be turnally
beggin' so of the Board.

She looked dreadful solemn when I
said that, and I almost felt as if I been
committin' profane language. But I
hope the Lord will forgive me if I took
anything in vain. I did not take my
call in vain, I tell you. Mrs. Puffy is
good, only she allus wanted to talk so
pius; and she put down her two
shillin's, and then hove a sigh. Then
I found the boys at the copper shop,
and got seven names there at one lick,
and when the list began to grow, peo-
ple seemed to be ashamed to say no,
and I kep' gainin' till I had just an
even hundred, and then I went home.

Well, it was pretty well toward
candle light when I got back, and I
was that tired I didn't know much
of anything. I've washed, and I've
scrubbed, and I've baked, and I've
cleaned house, and I've boiled soap,
and I've moved; and I low that almost
any one of that sort of thing is a little
exhaustin'. But put your bakin' and
movin' and boilin' soap, and all to-
gether, and it won't work out as much
genuine tired soul and body as one day
with a subscription paper to support
the gospel. So when I sort o' dropped
into a chair, and Hezekiah said, "Well,
I was past speakin'," and I put my
check apron up to my face as I hadn't
done since I was a young, foolish girl
and cried. I don't know what I felt
so bad about; I don't know as I did
feel bad. But I felt cry, and I cried.
And Kiah seen' how it was, felt kind
o' sorry for me, and set some tea
and my cry, and so mingled my drink
with weepin', I felt better.

I handed him the subscription paper,
and he looked it over us if he didn't
expect anything; but soon he began
saying, "I never! I never!" And I
said, "Of course you didn't; you never
tried. How much is it?" "Why
don't you know?" says he. "No,"
I said, "I ain't quick in figures, and I
hadn't time to foot it up. I hope it
will make us out this year three hun-
dred dollars or so."

"Amy," says he, "you're a prodigy
—a prodigal, I may say—and you don't
know it. A hundred names at two
shillin's each gives you \$25 a Sunday.
Some of 'em may fail, but most of 'em
is good; and there is ten, eleven, thir-
teen, that sign fifty cents. That'll
make up what fails. That paper of
yourn'll give us \$1,300 a year." I
jumped up like I was shot. "Yes,"
he says, "we shan't need anything this
year from the Board. This church,
for this year at anyrate, is self-sup-
porting."

We both sot down and kep' still a
minute, when I said, kind o' softly
"Hezekiah," says I, "isn't it about
time for prayers?" I was just chokin',
but as he took the Bible he said, "I
guess we'd better sing somethin'." I
nodded, like, and he just struck in. We
often sing at prayers in the morning,
but now it seemed like the Scrip-
ture that says: "He giveth songs in the
night." Kiah generally likes the
solemn tunes, too; and we sing "Show
Pity, Lord," a great deal, and this
mornin' we sung "Hark, From the
Tombs a Doleful Sound," 'cause Kiah
was not feelin' very well, and we
wanted to chirk up a little.

I jest waited to see what metre he'd
strike to-night; and would you believe
it? I didn't know that he know any
such tune. But off he went on "Joy
to the World, the Lord is Come"
tried to catch on, but he wolt off
lickerty switch, like a steam engine.