

Our Young Folks.

A USEFUL GIRL.

Sleeves to the dimpled elbow,
Fun in the sweet blue eyes,
To and fro upon errands
The little maiden hies.
Now, she is washing dishes
Now, she is feeding the chicks,
Now, she is playing with pussy,
Or teaching Rover tricks.

Wrapped in a big white apron,
Pinned in a checkered shawl,
Hanging clothes in the garden.
O, were she only tall!
Hushing the fretful baby,
Coaxing his hair to curl,
Stepping around so briskly,
Because she is mother's girl.

Hunting for eggs in the haymow,
Petting old Brindle's calf,
Riding Don to the pasture
With many a ringing laugh.
Coming whenever you call her,
Running whenever sent,
Mother's girl is a blessing,
And mother is well content.

FLASH, THE FIREMAN.

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

The suggestion was made with so much delicacy that, before they could think of the strangeness (to them) of the proceeding, Mrs. Foster, Patty, Tilly, and Flash were kneeling with Laura and Mr. Belcher, while the latter, in words in which praise and prayer were combined, gave thanks for the merciful deliverance, and asked that personal salvation might be given to all who there knelt together.

'You will let me come and see you often, will you not?' asked Laura of Mrs. Foster, as the farewells were being said. Then she charmed Tilly and Patty by kissing them affectionately, and declaring that she *must* get know them both better.

When the visitors had taken their departure, there was of course, very much to be talked about. First, there was the fire and the wonderful bravery of Flash, which, as he now learned for the first time, was specially noted in the daily papers; and then came the story of the ministry of kindness to him in the beautiful home of the Belchers. Tilly said it was 'almost like a chapter of a book'; only, to make it come right, the young lady 'ought to fall in love with Flash, and marry him right off.'

'Right off, you call it, Tilly! Why, you wicked little rogue, that would be *wrong* off as anything must be that would rob me of you; and, in spite of the presence of his mother and sister, he put his arm round the laughing girl and kissed her. Well, you see, dear reader, the laws of etiquette are somewhat different according to the different strata of society; besides, Flash had been a sailor, and sailors are noted for their odd ways. Above all, he truly loved tall, lady-like Tilly; so we must excuse him.

After tea, the front room was, as usual, left undisturbed for the pair, and together they talked of many things. There was the never-ending topic of their coming wedding, and the 'pros and cons' connected with it. Then, somehow, their talk drifted back to the previous night, and the kind treatment of Flash by the Belchers.

'There's one thing that I've thought of to-day,' said Flash in the course of their talk, 'that is, that they never gave me any brandy or wine to revive me; and once this morning Miss Belcher said to me so gravely, "I hope you are a teetotaler?" Of course I told her the truth, and both she and her father said they hoped I soon would be. It was very dangerous, Mr. Belcher said, for a man in my profession to take any drink at all, because I needed to be strong-nerved and perfectly steady.'

In serious tones, Flash continued—'Have you heard that poor Ted Wheeler was killed last night at the same fire, after I was taken to Mr. Belcher's? Miss Belcher spoke of it this morning, and said it had been hinted to her father that the poor fellow had had "just a little drop," and went to—'

Here Flash was startled by the sudden action of Tilly. She had been unusually quiet

ever since that prayer scene before Mr. and Miss Belcher left, and now she buried her face in her hands on Flash's shoulder, and wept and sobbed bitterly.

He strove to comfort her, asking all the while, 'What's the matter, Tilly, dear?'

It was some little time before she was sufficiently composed to speak; then in low, humble tones she said, 'O Flash! I have wanted to tell you all that was in my heart for months. Do you remember the party the night after you came home from sea?'

'Why, yes, Tilly; what's that got to do with your crying?' asked Flash in astonishment.

'Don't you remember what I did, dear Flash? Oh, I have never ceased to be ashamed of myself, and I have sometimes trembled lest you should be so ashamed of me that you—you—would leave off loving me. And oh! if you had done so, I am sure, my heart would have broken. Yes! we may call it what we like, Flash; but I was *drunk* that night.' Quiet tears of shame rolled down the flushed face of poor Tilly, which were, however, speedily wiped away by Flash, who replied soothingly,—

'*Drunk*, Tilly! You must not say that. Of course we all had more than we usually do, because of the occasion—just enough to make us "cherry-merry," you know. Besides, my darling, if there is any blame, you must put it on my shoulders, for I remember how I pressed you—almost forced you, to drink one thing and another.'

'But, Flash, dear, don't you call people drunk who are out of their senses with drink?'

'Yes, Tilly, but you did not lose your senses,' replied our hero.

'Flash!' Here the grave face of Tilly was turned up to his, as she asked, 'Do you think if I had been in my senses I should have behaved as I did, and taken your cigar and smoked it before all those people? O, Flash, dear, I want to be good—I want to be a better girl altogether, more fit to be your wife, and to help you; and that prayer this afternoon only makes me long the more. Will you mind much, dear, if I am a teetotaler—and—and—?'

It was difficult for Tilly to say all she wanted to say—to express the deep soul-yearning that possessed her, as it often is with us all, even when those to whom we speak are most dear to us.

As she talked, the face of Flash had assumed a very thoughtful expression; and in tender tones he said, 'And what, Tilly? Go on, my girl. Don't be afraid to speak.'

'And try to be good, Flash.'

Poor Tilly! many another soul has summed up all its unconscious yearnings in that expression, 'Try to be good.'

Drawing the still weeping girl closer to him, Flash said, very softly, 'To be good, Tilly! Why, I don't understand you quite. It seems to me you are the very best girl in the world.'

'Good to you, Flash,' replied the girl. The next words came a little shyly, hesitatingly, 'but I mean good to God. You see, Flash, ever since that night of the party, when I had to sleep in Patty's bed, we have talked over these things a great deal together. God bless her! she is a good girl, if ever there was one; and she has made me see myself to be so different to what I thought I was. I don't mean that she has preached at me, and in that way tried to make me ashamed; but it's just because she seems so pure and good that I feel how wicked I am. I believe she is a Christian, and don't know it. She's too good and too humble to think or say anything in praise of herself; but she often says she wishes she "had some one to help her" to be what she desires.'

Flash was very quiet, and Tilly went on,—'Do you know, dear, that Patty could not sleep that night? And she told God in the darkness of the room she would never touch another drop of drink; and she has kept her word. Flash, dear, you won't be angry with what I am going to ask, will you?' Tilly took his hand, and, looking into his eyes, saw that they were unusually bright, and that glistening tears stood full in the lids.

'Angry, dear? Not a bit of it. I believe you're on the right tack; so ask away, old darling.' For a moment, however, he made it impossible for her to go on by sealing up her

lips in a very pleasant style. As soon as the seal was removed, Tilly said, blushing, 'You know, Flash, if we are to be married, how many hours I shall be alone, and I shall never know what danger you may be in. But if I knew that you never took any drink—that you were a real teetotaler, my mind would be so much easier. Will you sign the pledge, dear?'

Flash was surprised, but not displeased. At the same time he was hardly prepared to promise, as he put it, 'straight off the reel.' Still, enough was said to fill Tilly's heart with hope, and to lead her to expect better things in the future.

CHAPTER VI.

MOCKERY AND MIRTH, DEATH AND DIVERSION.

'What's up? Oh, a benefit, guv'nor, a sort o' concert like, Got up by his mates, for the widow of Fireman Mike. 'Tain't to be s'posed he could leave her lots of tin; 'Cos why? He allus spent his rhino in beer and gin. So old Buffer Bounce has lent his club-room free, And— But I must leave you, sir, they 'spects a song from me.'

It was eight days after the fire which we have tried to describe. Forty-eight hours had seen Flash back at his station, fit for duty though still plastered a little about the face. He made very light of all that occurred to him that night; but an unusual gravity rested on him and on each of the others at the station. They had been brought face to face with death. While Flash lay, receiving kind nursing, in the house of Mr. Belcher, friendly hands were bearing upon a shutter, to a desolate home, the lifeless form of his mate, Ted Wheeler, who, losing his balance, as he was passing along a stone coping on the house adjoining the burning building, had fallen upon the spiked railings in front of the house. Compared with the majority of the firemen, the deceased was quite an elderly man. He had left a widow and seven children; and it was decided among his late mates to do something for them.

One of the first points was to find out 'what house he used.' Thank God, such a question is *not quite* so customary in these days as it was a score of years ago, when every man, of the lower or middle classes, was expected to use some special public-house, more or less, for an evening resort.

Ted Wheeler had, unfortunately, had a house in that sense of the word—a house where very much more of his earnings had been spent than could ever be lawfully spared from his home and wife and children.

The landlord had, very ostentatiously, offered to lend his large club-room *free* (?) to the friends of poor Ted's wife and children, who wished to get up a 'benefit concert.'

'Free!' How he spoke that word, as if he had not been paid for it, over and over again, out of the recklessly squandered wages of the dead man, during many years of his life. 'Free!' Why! did not every sober, sensible thinking man and woman who would attend that concert know that the room would be paid for that night a score of times from the profits of the drink consumed there?

Well! perhaps the landlord's dupes did not think. At least it did not seem like it, for they extolled his generosity before his face, as behind his back, to such a degree that he succeeded in raising that bloated face quite a half-inch higher out of his red, wrinkled, pimply neck, as he declared, again and again, that he 'Oped 'e 'ad a 'art that could feel for a poor widdar an' 'orphanas.' What a mockery the whole thing really was!

It was known that poor Ted Wheeler had been just a little bit 'fresh' when he scaled that roof, and essayed to climb that coping. And there were not wanting men among those at his station, who privately declared that, but for the drink, 'Old Ted' would 'a done that bit all right.' Yet they purposed raising a little money for his widow and orphans, by further obligations to the greedy Moloch—Drink, which devoured that husband and father with its insatiable and cruel appetite!

The room was large; and soon after the hour advertised for the concert, it was filled in every part. The chairman for the evening was evidently well up in his work; and his happy knack and genial humor did much to keep the machinery moving smoothly.

His few opening remarks were of a feeling nature, and every reference which he made to the 'poor widow and her helpless offspring,' called forth expressions of sympathy from all parts of the room.

(To be continued.)

HOW MUCH SLEEP IS NEEDED.

That the amount of sleep required by different individuals is decidedly different has almost passed into an axiom. Persons who are very energetic naturally require a great deal of sleep, and children and young people who are growing require at least nine or ten hours of sleep. Invalids or people advanced in life should sleep as long as they can, as there is no restorer of tired nature like sleep. To get a refreshing sleep the brain must cease to act. It would be curious to trace how many cases of irritability, or of functional diseases of the nerves, are due to lack of proper sleep. Little children should literally go to bed with the chickens. They should have an early supper, and be put to bed directly after. This should be kept up till the child is seven or eight years old, when the bedtime hour may be seven. A growing child should certainly go to bed as early as eight o'clock. The old Norman law, which commanded that all fires should be covered and lights put out at the ringing of the curfew bell, though looked upon as a tyrannical measure, was from a hygienic point of view, a wise one. Considerable harm has been done by arbitrary rules in the matter of sleep. The fact that Napoleon was able to exist with six hours' sleep, if it were true, proves nothing but his exceptional endurance. It is said that General Grant once said that he could do nothing without nine hours' sleep. There has been considerable discussion as to what is the best position in sleep. Most physicians will say you should lie on the right side, but no definite directions can be given. A weakness of the lungs may cause the sleeper to rest more comfortably on the left side. Again, in depressing illness the patient usually lies flat on his back, and this position seems, in general, to contribute the greatest amount of rest to the muscles, yet few people would find it a comfortable one. A position which has been advocated with considerable show of reason is that of lying partly on the face. Probably no healthful person sleeps altogether in either one of them, but varies his position during his resting hours. The best bed coverings are light woollen blankets. The impervious cotton quilts so much used are the most unwholesome of any covering. A hair mattress is conceded now to be the very best bed, and a good hair bolster is the most wholesome head rest. Sleeping with a number of pillows under the head is certainly injurious, as it tends to raise the head into a cramped unnatural position. The fashion of double beds is one greatly to be deprecated, and two single beds placed side by side are taking their place in many cases. *Good Health.*

LEOPARD SHOOTING.

The first time that I saw a wild leopard in the jungle might have been easily also the last time for my seeing any wild leopards. I was creeping along under the trees on the slope of one of the little hills at Chittagong, just inside the tangled fringe of briars and grasses at the edge of the covert. I was stalking, or rather sneaking, after one of these beautiful pheasants which we used to call the mathoora (*Euplocamus horsfieldi*), and listening for its footfall on the dry leaves, for this pheasant rather disregards the precaution of moving silently.

Suddenly there was a slight noise of a broken twig on the projecting branch of a tree almost overhead in front of me. A glance showed to me a leopard stretched out along the branch and gazing earnestly into the bushes below it.

The leopard was hunting the mathoora after his fashion, hoping to pounce upon it from the tree. He was so intent on his work that he seemed not to have heard or smelled or seen me. In a moment I raised my gun and fired a charge of No. 5 shot into his head just behind the ear. The leopard fell dead almost at my feet, nearly all the shot having penetrated the brain. But if I had not been so lucky as to see the leopard, and also to kill it, it might perhaps have jumped down on me and broken my neck, or in its dying struggles it might have bitten and mauled me. It was great luck for me, but bad luck for the leopard.

It was a very handsome young beast, apparently full grown, though leopards vary so much in size and length that it is not easy to say when one of them has reached maturity. This adventure happened many years ago. I still have the animal's skin, but it looks rather dingy and dirty now. — *Longman's Magazine.*

An English writer states that within the present century, the number of English-speaking people has multiplied six times—from 21,000,000 to 126,000,000.