

SMITING THE ROCK.

THE stern old judge, in relentless mood,
Glanced at the two who before him stood—

She was bowe'd, and haggard, and old,
He was young, and defiant, and bold—
Mother and son; and to gaze at the pair,
Their different attitudes, look, and air,
One would believe, ere the truth were won,
The mother convinced, and not the son.

There was the mother; the boy stood nigh
With a shameless look, and his head held high.

Age had come over her, sorrow, and care;
This mattered but little so he was there,
A prop to her years and a light to her eyes,
And prize as only a mother can prize;
But what for him could a mother say,
Waiting his doom on a sentence-day?

Her husband had died in his shame and sin;
And she a widow, her living to win,
Had toiled and struggled from morn till night,
Making with want a wearisome fight,
Bent over her work with a resolute zeal,
Till she felt her old frame totter and reel,
Her weak limbs tremble, her eyes grow dim;
But she had her boy, and she toiled for him.

And he—he stood in the criminal dock,
With a heart as hard as a flinty rock,
An impudent glance and a reckless air,
Braving the scorn of the gazers there;
Dipped in crime and encompassed round
With proof of his guilt by captors found,
Ready to stand, as he phrased it, "game,"
Holding not crime but penitence, shame.

Poured in a flood o'er the mother's cheek
The moistening prayers where the tongue
was weak,
And she saw through the mist of those
bitter tears,
Only the child in his innocent years;
She remembered him pure as a child
might be,
The guilt of the present she could not see;
And for mercy her wistful looks made
prayer
To the stern old judge in his cushioned
chair.

"Woman," the old judge crabbedly said—
"Your boy is the neighbourhood's plague
and dread.

Of a gang of reprobates chosen chief;
An idler and rioter, ruffian and thief.
The jury did right, for the facts were
plain;

Denial is idle, excuses are vain.
The sentence the court imposes is one—
"Your honour," she cried, "he's my only
son."

But tipstaves grinned at the words she
spoke,
And a ripple of fun through the court-
room broke;

But over the face of the culprit came
An angry look and a shadow of shame.
"Don't laugh at my mother?" loud cries
he;

"You've got me fast, and can deal with
me;
But she's too good for your coward jeers,
And I'll—" then his utterance choked
with tears.

The judge for a moment bent his head,
And looked at him keenly, and then he
said—

"We suspend the sentence—the boy can
go—"
And the words were tremulous, forced,
and low,

"But, say!" and he raised his finger
then—
"Don't let them bring you hither again.
There is something good in you, yet, I
know;

I'll give you a chance—make the most of
it—Go!"

The train went forth, and the old judge
said—

"I meant to have given him a year in-
stead.

And, perhaps, 'tis a difficult thing to tell
If clemency here be ill or well.
But a rock was struck in that callous
heart,
From which a fountain of good may start;
For one on the ocean of crime long tossed,
Who loves his mother, is not quite lost."
—Canada Christian Advocate.

FAITHFUL MIKE.

BY JOSIE KEEN.



N 'one of the upper
rooms of a
poor, dilapidated
tenement-house,
around which
strong winds were
fiercely blowing,
and seemingly
striving to enter
every crack and
cranny, there lay
a sad, emaciated-
looking child. Little could the thin
blood running through those veins
add warmth to the poor body; and
evidently there was no fire in the
rickety stove, if indeed there had been
since early morning.

"I'm so cold," said Ben with a
shiver. "I do so wish mother would
come home!"

The words were hardly uttered
when there was a knock at the door
and a sturdy boy, in striking contrast
to the little sufferer, softly opened the
door, thrust in his head, and after
peering around cheerily called out:

"Hallo, old fellow! Be's that you
curled down in your corner? I
thought you were alone, and as the
wind is blowing great guns and rattling
the windows most to pieces, I
came up to see how you are getting
along!"

"Thank you, Mike. It's dreadful
lonely up here, and I was wishing,
oh! so much, that somebody would
come in."

"Don't wonder. Sure and indade
it must be dreadful tough to stay so
many hours alone as ye's do. How is
the rheumatics to day?"

"Bad, real bad, Mike. And these
cold March winds make me shiver so.
I can't get any rest."

"Sakes alive! And nary a bit of
fire in the stove. Hugh! see if I
don't set the critter agoing."

And away darted the good-natured
Irish boy to beg or borrow some coal.
Soon clattering feet were heard on the
stairs, and Mike, with his face in a
broad grin, exclaimed:

"Sure, didn't I be after telling ye's
I'd make a haul somewhere? See
now if I don't scare up a fire in a jiffy."

"Oh, Mike! where did you get that
pail of coal! I hope you did not—"

Benny paused and shut his teeth
tight. How could he ask if the coals
were stolen when Mike, with his
cheeks extended was puffing and blowing
to start a fire to warm his poor
shivering, aching limbs? And yet he
felt as though he must protest against
their use, if Mike had not come
honestly by them.

The boy had heard and understood
the half-uttered words.

"There, sonny, just you keep still;
the grocer around the corner gave
them to me, when I told him who they
were for. Never ye's fear that Mike
will be after stealing coals for the like
of ye's; for don't I know you would
sooner freeze to death than warm
yourself with stolen coals! I hain't

been up here in this room so often for
nothing. Mike will never be a jail-
bird so long as he remembers your
sweet face and patient ways. More
ready to starve, sure, than eat a
mouthful of stolen fruit. My, how
mean I felt, when you would not take
so much as a bite out of that big
apple I hooked from off the old
woman's apple-stall."

Ben gave a faint, happy smile and
replied, "You see, Mike, it's dreadful
hard to lie here and suffer all day
long; and when I think of the beauti-
ful home above, ready for all who try
to do right, I would not, for the
world, do anything that might shut
me out of it. I guess it won't be very
long now before the Shepherd comes
for me."

Mike shook his head, but could not
say a word. Ben, no doubt, was right,
for he plainly saw that every day the
poor child grew weaker and weaker;
his eyes had become more sunken, and
his face so pale and pinched, it made
one sad to look at him, and yet he
was so patient, at times even cheerful.
Mike could not quite understand it,
for downstairs there was such groan-
ing, cursing, and swearing, if any one
was the least bit sick.

Mike had been one among them,
and at first felt great reluctance, and
a sort of awe upon entering the quiet
sick room above, but Mrs. Green's
earnest appeal, "Mike, I wish you
would now and then look in upon my
poor boy, while I'm off working?"
could not be resisted, and he had since
learned to consider it a pleasure to do
anything he could for the poor little
chap, "almost an angel," as he said.

It had not always been thus with
Ben and his mother. Once they had
been in comfortable circumstances,
when the husband and father had been
led astray by drink. The habit once
formed, it seemed as though he was
possessed of an evil spirit. Loving
words had no power to save, and he
rapidly sank into an untimely grave,
leaving debts and a tarnished name.

Ben had tried hard during the
winter to help his mother by earning
a little at shoveling snow. He took
cold, however, had inflammatory
rheumatism, and now seemed likely
to leave her quite alone. His life,
though, had not been without its
sacred influences. Some of the hard
drinkers downstairs could not easily
forget the earnest pleading words he
had sent down to them; and Mike
never forgot what the poor child had
said to him about swearing, drinking,
and stealing; it kept him from many
a sinful temptation that might have
led him far astray.

And thus Benny, without pledge or
badge, had unconsciously been acting
the part of a brave fearless little tem-
perance cadet, while Mike had been
faithful to his trust.—N. Y. Observer.

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THERE are two sides to everything,"
said the lecturer. "I repeat it, there
are two sides—" At this juncture a
tired looking little man stood up in the
front seat to say: "Well if you've no
objection, I will just step out and see
if there are two sides to this hall. I
know there is an inside, and if I find
there is an outside you'll know it by
my not coming back. You needn't be
alarmed if I shouldn't return." And
as he walked up the aisle he was fol-
lowed by the admiring eyes of the
whole audience.

PRESIDENT GARFIELD'S
MAXIMS.

POVERTY is uncomfortable, as
I can testify; but nine times
out of ten the best thing that
can happen to a young man is to be
tossed overboard and compelled to sink
or swim for himself. In all my ac-
quaintance I never know a man to be
drowned who was worth the saving.

If the power to do hard work is not
talent, it is the best possible substitute
for it.

It is one of the precious mysteries of
sorrow that it finds solace in unselfish
thought.

The granito hills are not so change-
less and abiding as the restless sea.

In their struggle with the forces
of nature, the ability to labour was
the richest patrimony of the colonists.

For the noblest man who lives there
remains a conflict.

We hold reunions, not for the dead,
for there is nothing in all the earth
that you or I can do for the dead.
They are past our help and past our
praise. We can add to them no glory,
we can give them no immortality.
They do not need us, but for ever and
for evermore we need them.

Throughout the whole ebb of natural
existence we trace the golden thread
of human progress toward a higher and
better estate.

After all, territory is but the body
of a nation. The people who inhabit
its hills and valleys are its soul, its
spirit, its life. In them dwells its
hope of immortality. Among them, if
anywhere, are to be found its chief
elements of destruction.

It matters little what may be the
forms of national institution if the
life, freedom, and growth of society are
secured.

Finally, our great hope for the
future—our great safeguard against
danger—is to be found in the general
and thorough education of our people,
and in the virtue which accompanies
such education.

Be fit for more than the thing you
are now doing.

If you are not too large for the
place you are too small for it.

BEAUTIFUL ANSWERS.

A PERSIAN pupil of the Able
Sicord gave the following ex-
traordinary answers:

"What is gratitude?"
"Gratitude is the memory of the
heart."

"What is hope?"

"Hope is the blossom of happiness."

"What is the difference between
hope and desire?"

"Desire is a hope in leaf; hope is
the tree in flower, and enjoyment is a
tree in fruit."

"What is eternity?"

"A day without yesterday or to-
morrow; a line that has no end."

"What is time?"

"A line that has two ends; a path
which begins in the cradle and ends
in the tomb."

"What is God?"

"The necessary being, the sum of
eternity, the merchant of nature, the
eye of justice, the watchmaker of the
universe, the soul of the world."

"Does God reason?"

"Man reasons because he doubts;
he doubts, he deliberates; he decides.
God is omniscient; He never doubts,
He, therefore, never reasons."—Ex.