

door after them and left her alone, she raised her eyes upward, and murmured, "God bless and reward the dear children!"

It was a bleak, Winter night; and as the little adventurers stepped into the street, the wind swept fiercely along, and almost drove them back against the doors. But they caught each other tightly by the hands, and bending their little forms to meet the pressure of the cold, rushing air, hurried on the way they were going as fast as their feet could move. The streets were dark and deserted, but the children were not afraid; love filled their hearts, and left no room for fear.

They did not speak a word to each other as they hastened along. After going for a distance of several streets, they stopped before a house, over the door of which was a handsome, ornamental gas-lamp bearing the words, "Oysters and Refreshments." It was a strange place for two little girls like them to enter, and at such an hour; but after standing for a moment, they pushed against the green door, which turned lightly on its hinges, and stepped into a large and brilliantly lighted bar room.

"Bless us!" exclaimed a man who sat reading at a table; "here are those babies again!"

Ady and Jane stood still near the door, and looked all around the room; but not seeing the object of their search, they went up to the bar, and said timidly to a man who stood behind it pouring liquor into glasses—

"Has Papa been here to-night?"

The man leaned over the bar until his face was close to the children, when he said in an angry way—

"I don't know anything about your father. And see here! don't you come here any more; if you do, I'll call my big dog out of the yard and make him bite you."

Ady and Jane felt frightened as well by the harsh manner as by the angry words of the man; and they started back from him, and were turning toward the door with sad faces, when the person who had first remarked their entrance called out loud enough for them to hear him—

"Come here my little girls."

The children stopped and looked at him, when he beckoned for them to approach, and they did so.

"Are you looking for your father?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Ady.

"What did that man at the bar say to you?"

"He said Papa was not here; and that if we came any more he would set his dog on us."

"He did?"

"Yes, sir."

The man knit his brow for an instant. Then he said—

"Who sent you here?"

"Nobody," answered Ady.

"Don't your mother know you have come?"

"Yes, sir; she told us to go to bed, but we couldn't go until Papa was home; so we came for him first."

"He is here."

"Is he?" and the children's faces brightened.

"Yes he's at the other side of the room asleep. I'll wake him for you."

Half intoxicated, and sound asleep, it was with great difficulty that Mr. Freeman could be aroused.

As soon, however, as his eyes were fairly opened, and he found that Ady and Jane had each grasped tightly one of his hands, he rose up and yielding passively to their direction suffered them to lead him away.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed a man who had looked on in wonder and deep interest; "that's a temperance lecture that I can't stand. God bless the little ones!" he added with emotion, "and give them a sober father."

"I guess you never saw them before," said one of the bar-keepers lightly.

"No, and I never wish to again, at least in this place. Who is their father?"

"Freeman, the lawyer."

"Not the one who, a few years ago, conducted with so much ability, the case against the Marine Insurance Company?"

"The same."

"Is it possible?"

A little group had now formed around the man, and a good deal was said about Freeman and his fall from sobriety. One who had several times seen Ady and Jane come in and lead him home

as they had just done, spoke of them with much feeling, and all agreed that it was a most touching case.

"To see," said one, "how passively he yields himself to the little things when they come after him. I feel sometimes, when I see them, almost weak enough to shed tears."

"They are his good angels," replied another. "But I am afraid they are not strong enough to lead him back to the paths he has forsaken."

"You can think what you please about it gentlemen," spoke up the landlord, "but I can tell you my opinion on the subject: I wouldn't give much for the mother who would let two little things like them go wandering about the streets alone at this time of night."

One of those who had expressed interest in the children felt angry at this remark, and he retorted with some bitterness—

"And I would give less for the man who would make their father drunk!"

"Ditto to that," responded one of the company.

"And here's my hand to that," said another.

The landlord finding that the majority of his company were likely to be against him, smothered his angry feelings and kept silence. A few minutes afterward, two or three of the inmates of the bar-room went away.

About ten o'clock the next morning, while Mr. Freeman, who was generally sober in the fore part of the day, was in his office, a stranger entered, and after sitting down, said—

"I must crave your pardon beforehand for what I am going to say. Will you promise not to be offended?"

"If you offer an insult I will resent it," said the lawyer.

"So far from that, I come with the desire to do you a great service."

"Very well; say on."

"I was at Lawson's refectory last night."

"Well?"

"And I saw something there that touched my heart. If I slept at all last night, it was only a dream of it. I am a father, sir, the thought of their coming out in the cold winter night, in search of me in such a polluted place, makes the blood feel cold in my veins."

Words so unexpected coming upon Mr. Freeman when he was comparatively sober, disturbed him greatly. In spite of all his endeavors to remain calm, he trembled all over. He made an effort to say something in reply. But could not utter a word.

"My dear sir," pursued the stranger, "you have fallen at the monster intemperance, and I feel that I am in great peril. You have not, however, fallen hopelessly; you may yet rise if you will. Let me then, in the name of the sweet babes who have shown, in so wonderful a manner, their love for you, conjure you to rise superior to this deadly foe. Reward those dear children with the highest blessing their hearts can desire. Come with me and sign the pledge of freedom. Let us, though strangers to each other, unite in this one good act. Come!"

Half bewildered, yet with a new hope in his heart, Freeman arose, and suffered the man, who drew his arm within his, to lead him away. Before they separated both had signed the pledge.

That evening, unexpectedly, and to the joy of his family, Mr. Freeman was perfectly sober when he came home. After tea, while Ady and Jane were standing on either side of him, as he sat by their mother, an arm around each of them, he said in a low whisper, as he bent his head down and drew them closer—

"You will never have to come for me again."

The children lifted their eyes quickly to his face, but half understanding what he meant.

"I will never go there again," he added: "I will stay at home with you."

Ady and Jane now comprehended what their father meant, overcome with joy, hid their faces in his lap and wept for very gladness.

Low as this had been said, every word had reached the mother's ear; and while her heart yet stood trembling between hope and fear. Mr. Freeman drew a paper from his pocket and threw it on the table by which she was sitting. She opened it hastily. It was a pledge with his well-known signature subscribed at the bottom.

With a cry of joy she sprang to his side, and his arms encircled his wife as well as his little ones in a fonder embrace than they had known for years.

The children's love had saved their father. They were indeed his "good angels."—Sel.