



Death's Premier.

It chanced upon a certain day,
That Death, whom all of us obey,
Wishing a little more support,
Held by his Stygian lake his court.
Another Premier was wanted:
One who, at least, should not be taunted
With lack of subjects; forthwith came,
Fever and Gout, the latter lame,
And War, who writes in blood his name.
Where are three who could so kill?
Heaven, earth, and hell attest their skill;
When who should enter? General Plague;
His claims were anything but vague.
Death, for a moment, held the scale,
As doubtful who should his speech begin,
Drunken Intemperance staggered in.
Fever and Plague, and War and Gout,
Looked at each other, then ran out.

—'Alliance News.'

A Letter from God.

(By John P. Guckes, in the 'National Advocate'.)

The hour of midnight had just struck. Anxious with watching and waiting were the eyes of the woman at the window, and old and careworn the face that should have been young and happy.

One more glance up and down the cheerless, deserted street, and then she knelt at the bedside for the ninth time since the early evening.

'Father in Heaven, dear, dear Father in Heaven!' she cried out fervently, 'hear me! hear me! for thy dear Son's sake. Many, many times I have called upon thee, and though it does not seem that my prayers have been answered, yet have I faith in thee. O Father, I beg thee with all my soul to save my poor husband from the fearful power of drink. And yet, if it be not thy will, I pray thee, O I beseech thee, with all the poor strength I have, to take him now to Heaven ere he has wandered farther from thee—'

The woman stopped suddenly in the middle of her prayer. A warm little hand had fallen upon her shoulder, and a little voice asked, 'Mamma, what is the matter? Why do you ask God to take papa to Heaven?'

Startled at the sudden appearance of the child in her fluttering night dress, and frightened at her question, the woman jumped to her feet, clasped the little one to her breast and sobbed, 'Oh, Nellie, dearie, you musn't ask me such a question. You shouldn't have been listening to my prayer. There are things you cannot understand. Run off to bed like a good little girl, and leave mamma alone.'

Obediently but reluctantly the child turned to leave the room. At the door she paused. 'Mamma, do you really want papa to go to Heaven?' she asked.

The mother answered the child only with a nod of the head and an agonized, puzzled stare. What could she say?—She could not explain all to the child, nor could she confess that she had prayed for something she did not want. The child had been taught carefully to pray for those things that were good in the sight of the Lord.

And with that nod from her mother, the little daughter passed out of the room and to her bed.

A long weary hour passed. The woman still sat at the window. Hark! What was that? An unsteady footfall on the street, a fumbling at the door, a heavy body clumsily ascending the stairs, a tottering form in the doorway. There he stood, the man that had promised before God to love and cherish her.

'Anna, why aren't you in bed?' he muttered thickly. 'Get to bed there, and don't—hic—ever stay up so late again.'

She obeyed silently. She longed to throw her arms about him, to weep upon his neck

and beg that this should be the last time. But it would be useless; the tears were dry; she had gone through the scene too often. Besides, he was never himself when in this condition. She would wait until morning; perhaps she could say something to him then.

She closed her eyes in pretended sleep. For a long time she heard her husband muttering things to himself, drawing off his clothes with oaths, and throwing his shoes about with idiotic chuckles.

At last he crawled into bed, neglecting to turn out the light. In a few moments he had passed off into a heavy slumber.

The woman left her bed quietly, arranged the clothes he had thrown about the room, and turned out the light. Stealthily she stepped into the next room, leaned over the bed and kissed the sleeping child. 'Good night, darling,' she whispered lightly.

But the child was awake, and replied, 'Good night, mamma dear.' Then suddenly she sat up in bed and exclaimed, 'Mamma, I've found a way to send papa to Heaven!'

'You are dreaming, baby,' said the mother, frightened again, but trying to smile. 'Lie down and go to sleep.'

Fearful lest the child might ask another question that could not be answered, the woman left the room quickly, and in a moment lay beside her husband again.

He was fast asleep now. She leaned over and kissed him many times, whispering little prayers all the while. At last she turned over with a sigh and went to sleep herself.

The sun was high when she awoke. Her husband was still asleep, but he awoke as she got up. She dressed herself quietly and then turned to him.

He was sitting up in bed, looking at her shame-facedly. There was a bright red spot upon his forehead.

'Harry!' she cried in sudden horror. 'Dearest, are you hurt? Your head! Your head! Is that blood?'

The man put his hand to his head, jumped from the bed and stood before the mirror. There, pasted in the middle of his forehead, was a postage stamp.

'A stamp!' he exclaimed. 'Why, Anna, what does this mean? Did you put it there?'

'No,' she replied.

'You must have,' he rejoined. 'It was not there last night. What did you do it for?'

'I didn't do it. I don't understand it. When I—'

'But I understand it, mamma,' interjected a little girl, running into the room.

'You!' exclaimed the father and mother in one voice.

'Yes,' returned the child, 'and the postman will soon be here to take you, papa.'

'To take me! Where?' asked the astonished father.

'To God in Heaven,' answered the child. 'I put the address right on the front of your coat, so they wouldn't miss it, and I put the stamp on your head while you were asleep. I thought that was a good way to send you to God.'

The woman gasped and fell fainting into the arms of her husband. Trembling, and with face white and drawn, he caught and held her, 'Get a glass of water quick, Nellie!' he cried; and the daughter hastened to obey.

He held his wife in his arms, dashed the water into her face, and fanned her tenderly. Her eyes opened and looked at him blankly.

'Tell me, Anna,' he demanded, anxiously, 'what does it all mean?'

The woman shuddered. Her lips moved, but she could not speak. She motioned to the child.

'Nellie,' said the father, taking the little hand in his, 'tell me, child, why you put the stamp upon my head?'

'To send you to Heaven. You're a letter or God,' was the child's fearless reply.

'A letter for God!' The man's face grew deathly white. 'Why?' he asked hoarsely.

'Why, because mamma wants it. Every night when you go out, she kneels down at her bed and begs God to make you a good man. But she always says if he won't make you a good man, then he should take you to Heaven now. That's why I'm sending you to God.'

The man's whole body heaved with emotion. He lifted his wife to a chair, ground his teeth together and clenched his fists as though forming a mighty resolution, and then fell upon his knees and buried his face in his hands.

'O God!' he cried in agony, 'make me a better man! In Thy sight I sinned a thousand times. Give me strength never to sin again. Make me worthy of such a wife and daughter.'

A Corner on Smoke.

If smoking on the streets, street-cars, and other public places is not a nuisance, there is no such thing as a nuisance. For no one can smoke in these public places without compelling those to imbibe the smoke who do not wish to do so,—and that, too, at second-hand, when it is doubly befouled.

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