

"How do you know she stole them?" asked Latimer, who still held the sugar-tongs in his hand, and had calculated their value to a sixpence.

"Because I know she did. Nobody is going to shake a pair of sugar-tongs into the street."

"No, you don't know any such thing! Look here, girl—Agnes! come here. Now tell me the truth. Did you find these tongs?"

"Yes, sir, I did," replied Agnes, firmly.

"I know you did," said Latimer.

"It's a lie! she didn't," retorted Mrs. Latimer. "She stole them."

"See here, woman!" and Latimer again showed his teeth in a manner that betokened no good—"Just see here! now take my advice, and don't call my child a thief again, for I won't stand it—I won't!"

"I wonder what you'll do!" replied Mrs. Latimer, who understood the threat.

"I'll knock your head off of you, that's what I'll do."

"Oh yes! I've heard that threat before. But, you're like some dogs, your bark is worse than your bite."

"Shut up!"

Mrs. Latimer turned away with an air of contempt, and resumed her attack upon Agnes.

"You lying little huzzy, you!" she said. "Now tell me the truth, or I'll limb you."

"Indeed, indeed, mother! I found them!" answered Agnes.

"It's a lie! you didn't; you stole them, you little thief, you!"

Latimer was drunk enough to think and care little about consequences. At these words, he started up, and, swearing furiously, made towards his wife. Seizing her by the throat, he drew back his arm, and with his clenched fist struck her several severe blows, while she screamed in terror, and struggled to free herself from his vice-like grasp.

A scene like this, the frightened children had never before witnessed in their home of misery. Agnes joined her cries with those of her mother, and opposed her feeble strength against her father, in the vain effort to bear him back; while the little boy caught hold of him on the other side, and screaming in terror, struggled to drag the strong man away. The few articles of furniture in the room were thrown about the floor, adding to the noise and wild excitement of the dreadful scene. Not until other occupants of the house came rushing in, did the infuriated man cease to rain down his heavy blows upon the shrinking body of his almost senseless wife. As he released his grasp, she fell, with a long wailing cry, upon the floor.

One of those who entered the room, or rather only came to the door, seeing what was passing within, rushed down stairs and into the street. There was a police office close by, and an officer, to whom this individual gave information of what was occurring, repaired to the house, and arrested Latimer while he was yet raving and swearing like a demon. In the hands of an officer, he became instantly as submissive as a child. The wife and children now sued with tears for his release, but their entreaties had no effect. Latimer was taken off and committed to answer for his conduct. In the morning, his case had a hearing, and he was placed in confinement for a month. Here he was visited by his wife, as often as she could get admission; and she managed, at each time, to bring in unobserved by the keepers, a small quantity of liquor.

On the very day of Latimer's release from confinement, he became furious from intoxication, and beat his wife so badly that she was not able to go out for a week. Fearful quarrels and brutal violence were now of almost daily occurrence. The debased husband, and equally debased wife, rarely spoke to each other, except in a way to provoke reproof, and lead, perchance, to blows.

Home had, now, so little to attract and so much to repulse the children, that they kept away from it as long as possible when they went out, and several times remained away all night—enticed into dens of infamy and crime, to be plundered of the small gains of their day's efforts at begging and stealing, while they slept. The cause of their absence was never truly stated. But it mattered not, so far as the consequences visited upon them by their parents were concerned. They were cruelly beaten each time they staid from home all night. At last, so intolerable became the condition of Agnes and her brother, that they determined, after having suffered most dreadful beatings from their drunken parents, that they would not return to them any more. An old wretch, who sold rum, and permitted persons of the worst character to harbor on her premises, encouraged them in this, and for so much a night, gave them a place upon the floor, where they might sleep, and an old quilt to cover them. They had no better accommodations at home; and were more comfortable, in at least one respect, for they were freed from the abuse of their parents, and from the hearing and sight of their fearful quarrels. But they saw and heard things in this den that their eyes should not have seen, nor their ears heard.

It took a week for Latimer and his wife to discover the fugitives, when they were taken home and punished.

### Dr. Guthrie's "Plea for Drunkards."

The subject of Drunkenness, our national curse and shame, is in one respect, a fitting subject for Dr. Guthrie's treatment, and in another an unfitting. To describe its ravages, suits his heart-born homely eloquence and vivid picturesqueness of description; to suggest its cure is not within his peculiar powers, as it has indeed proved too deep a problem for those from whom, on the practical question, greater things might have been expected. In the one department, he speaks as few have spoken before; in the other, he has nothing to offer but what has before been tried with disastrous failure. In pictures, he is powerful, as almost none but himself can be; in proposals, he is weak as other men.

Dr. Guthrie's eloquence of description and denunciation will, however, render a real service against the enemy. Injunction and warning, it may be said, have not succeeded hitherto;—that is a mistake—we are better as to this vice than our fathers were, and much of the improvement cannot but be owing to what was forcible and eloquent in the great deal that has been written and spoken. There is but too ample room yet for the use of the same means; and it is hard to believe that words so stirring, and alas! so true as those of this "Plea," can be spoken altogether in vain. Few will read passages like this without almost tears and trembling:—

Give that mother back her son, as he was on the day when he returned from his father's grave, and in all the affection of his uncorrupted boyhood, walked to the house of God with a weeping mother leaning on his arm. Give that grieved man back his brother, as innocent and happy as in those days when the boys, twined in each other's arms, returned from school, bent over the same Bible, slept in the same bed, and never thought that the day would come when their brother should blush for brother. Give this weeping wife, who sits before us wringing her hands in agony, the tears dropping through her jewelled fingers, and the lines of sorrow prematurely drawn on her beautiful brow—give her back the man she loved, such as he was when her young heart was won, when they stood side by side on the nuptial day, and receiving her from a fond father's hands, he promised his love to one whose heart he has broken, and whose once graceful form now bends with sorrow to the ground. Give me back, as a man, the friends of my youthful days, whose wrecks now lie thick on this wreck strewn shore. Give me back, as a minister, the brethren whom I have seen dragged from the pulpits which they adorned, and driven from the sweet mansions where we have closed in this happy evening with praise and prayer, to stand pale and haggard at a public bar. Give me back, as a pastor, the lambs which I have lost—give me her who, in the days of unsullied innocence, waited on our ministry, to be told of the way to heaven, and