

like the most sordid rags, were being carried to a donkey-cart at the entry. So Mabel had no choice but to get down at the flaring front, and enter for the first time, the swivel door with its brazen decorations—push her way between some women with baskets of mackerel, who were treating their friends, and make up to the bar, rich with marble and metal, and ask one of the men in white shirt sleeves and aprons for Mr. Alterton. "The master's busy, miss," replied the man, with a stare, "a-getting out the people at the back, for we're a-going to enlarge the premises, and never could heject them afore."

Just at this moment, Tom Horncastle, who was in the back ground, saw her, came forward and undid the barrier that enclosed the bar, and let her through. Mabel had an awkward consciousness of swollen eyes, and of her sudden coming needing explanation, so she was glad to hurry into the interior of the house, and, with a hasty greeting to Tom, to call Susan, and ask to be shown to a bed-room, where she collected her thoughts for an interview with her father.

The room she had entered was to the back, and opening the window for a little air, she saw, to her surprise, that the house or shed from which the people were removing was unroofed, and the windows taken out. The voices in the court were loud enough for her to hear such phrases as—"Ah! they was a bad lot, never paid no rent all the blessed time they stayed."

"Veil! and s'pose they didn't! vas that any reason why ven the lodger fell sick, they should have gone and unroofed the house to get 'em out?"

Then followed a clamor of voices, taking different sides in the dispute, and her father's name as landlord was uttered with every force of imprecation; one screeching virago, inconsistently enough summing up her denunciations with these words—"The devil 'll get his hone; and so ould Alterton 'll find."

Such speeches and scenes were not likely to soothe poor Mabel, and it was a relief when she was told her father was wanting her in the drawing-room.

In her narration to Mr. Alterton, she softened the conduct of Lady Burnish, and passed slightly over Delamere's name; but her father's indignation ran very high. "What!" said he, "scorn my daughter! What are they? I've helped to build their fortune, high as they hold their canting heads. I'm glad, my girl, you've left; though I'd have managed for all to be in readiness for you to go to Bath if I'd known how matters stood. But do you drop a line to Miss Germaine after dinner, and tell her you're coming. I'll take a run down to Bath to-morrow afternoon with you, for it's hot and close here, and noisy too, may be."

Accordingly Mabel employed the afternoon in writing to Miss Germaine; to her she could open her heart, secure of faithful, if not affectionate counsel. Spite of her grief, she felt a comfort in the thought that she had acted as the friend of her youth would approve. That Miss Germaine should estimate the effort she had made in refusing Delamere, she did not expect, for youth is apt to think its trials a deep that sympathy cannot fathom. Nor did she quite expect her opinions as to her father's trade would be fully understood, though, thanks to the example and testimony of one of the best of men and ministers in Bath, Mabel had grown up clear in her views of the personal duty of strict temperance, and had, as we have seen, carried them out.

The weather harmonized with her feelings; for the bright, fine day closed in clouds and heavy rain. It seemed, however, to make but little difference below, except that the casual customers staid the longer, and the hum of voices was the louder. Long after Mabel had retired for the night, she heard the shout of the drunkard, the shrill jibe of the scold, the cry of the child, wildly mingling with the constant splash and patter of the rain on the windows and pavement. During those wakeful hours she reconsidered the past and present, and her heart communed with God in prayer for future guidance. To live free, quite free of the monster vice she saw around, that had met her everywhere, was her ardent desire—her settled purpose. A strength not her own imbued her whole nature, and converted impulse into principle, enthusiasm into decision.

Ah! little did she know that a more dismal scene than any that she had been called to witness, was, during that very night, passing within a few paces of her window!

At the top of the court there was a tramps' lodging-house; and during the evening, a woman, drenched with rain, crawling along, reached the door of Mr. Alterton. She paused, holding the iron rails at the side, as if she thought of going in. Then turning up the court, either weak or irresolute, she crouched herself down in the doorway of the lodging-house, a little sheltered by a weather board that projected from the top of the front door over the step. The wet oozed from her tattered garments that flapped around her. A girl, who was waiting for her father to come out of the Tinn and Noggin, noticed that as this creature—this bundle of wet rag, walked up the court she staggered, and came to the conclusion, the most probable in that region, that she was drunk, and laughed out a low jest to a dirty boy smoking a pipe at the corner—"Wet inside and out." Meanwhile several of the people who went to lodge there, passed the crouching figure on the step, some saying, "She's waiting for somebody;" others, "She had enough, the rain 'll cool her;" at length one told the woman of the house who came out and looked at her.

"What do you want here?" said she, shaking the heap.

"I don't know! let me alone!" replied the stifled voice.

"Ah! that won't do; you go about your business, you can't stop here."

"Haven't you a bed for her, mother?" said a rough man, rummaging his pocket, and finding a few coppers, amid some buttons and broken ends of tobacco pipe.

"No; I aint no bed for such a pack of sludge as that, she'll be best at the station. I don't know her, and I aint a-going to have them 'ere raw lobsters a putting their claws into my crib, as they did 'tother night, for such as she. Soh! get up, ma'am! or I calls a Peeler to you. Stir your stumps. That's it. I know'd you could walk, if you tried," she added, as the poor creature rose. "What do you say? No money? No—and I've no bed. Go to the workhus; and if they won't take you in, go and sit in Vestminster Road, and they'll purvide you with a bed, and maybe board and lodgins, for a month arter."

There was a laugh within the passage at this dismal jest, and the wanderer tottered down the court, looked wistfully at the door of the public-house, out of which Tom Horncastle emerged, collaring a boy, whom he said was a "smasheer." In the crowd that this incident collected, the poor creature slunk away into the dismal night.

In two hours after, all was fast closed and at rest, save, indeed, the clouds; they continued to pour out their contents, and again, with even feebler steps, the bedabbled creature came to seek a lair. She stood a moment on the door-step, she had twice attempted to enter; then groped, blindly, with her hands along the side wall, until she came to the window-sill of the empty tenement, from which the casement had been removed. Some instinct of self-preservation must even yet have lingered in that brain, dark with heavier clouds than those above her weltering form. She dragged herself painfully over the low and broken barrier that separated the room from the court, and fell heavily along a floor nearly as wet, from the drifting of the rain, as the pavement. It was the last effort of expiring nature. Grief, destitution, famine, in successive waves, had beat upon her, and now there she lay, wrecked! None to lift the dying head, to close the glazing eye, to wipe the clammy brow! There's a strong cramp draws up the knees—a spasm contracts the hands and distends the mouth. Oh, Death, be merciful! Lay thy cold hand quickly upon that broken heart, and freeze it up for ever.

(To be continued.)

Girls and Boys.

LEAVING HOME; OR, WHAT WILL PROMISED HIS MOTHER.

Down the long and dusty hill!
The daily coach is coming.
It makes a cheery, lively noise,
Like hive of bees loud humming.

"Coming, mother; here it is?
The stage its halt is making.
Trunk all packed, my ticket bought;
A kiss let me be taking."

Whispered low behind the door,
What then was mother saying?
Willie's eyes their fire flashed,
But hers 'mid tears were praying!

"Never, mother; no, indeed!
I will not touch it ever;

Drink that kills I will not sell,
Or hand from arm I'll sever."

Brave Will! forget it not
Amid the city's rattle.
Stand for right; though sharp the fight,
You'll never lose the battle.

In this jostling life, where men
May help or hurt each other,
Think of him who's at thy side;
He bears God's stamp, a brother.

Not for money, not for fame
Thy strength in life be spending.
Live for God and live for man,
And for the life unending.

—Rev. E. A. Rand.